

**An exploration of the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of  
“international” academics from different disciplines at a UK university**

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Signature:

**Dedication**

*To my mum and dad,*

In the name of Allāh,  
The Most Beneficent (Ar-Rahmān) and The Most Merciful (Ar-Rahīm).

### **Abstract**

The internationalisation of higher education in the past decade has brought about dramatic changes in the profiles of staff and students in UK universities. The number of international students are estimated to rise to 7 million by 2020 by the OECD (2011) at all levels of education in many parts of the world and particularly in English speaking countries (Davies, 2003; Jackson, 2010). Also, one in four academics had a non-UK nationality in 2010-11 according to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2012: 4) apart from the linguistically and culturally diverse, latecomer UK-domiciled academics.

In such an atmosphere, there is an increasing trend in research on international students and teachers who are speakers of English as an additional language (EAL) especially in TESOL. Nevertheless, there are few studies into the experiences of the academic staff as speakers of EAL who are working at a UK university. Therefore, this research examined the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of ‘international’ academics from different disciplines in the internationalising contexts of higher education in the UK.

Fifteen academics who are speakers of EAL at an intercultural UK university were interviewed with a semi-structured format. The participants shared their stories and experiences of the phenomenon “being an ‘international’ academic/lecturer”, which contributed to the development of a deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges they underwent in terms of language, academia and interculturality.

The participants shared their language-related experiences and attitudes towards the “(non)native-like” language use as bi-/multi-lingual speakers, the challenges of teaching and researching at an internationalising university and their accounts of experience of interculturality and approaches to (non-)essentialist cultural descriptions as “international” academics.

## Acknowledgements

*Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.* And when Allāh intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it, and they will find besides Him no protector.

(The Qur'ān, Ar-Ra`d (The Thunder) Chapter 13: 11).

O mankind, indeed We have created you of a male and a female and made you peoples and tribes *that you may know one another*. Indeed, the most honoured of you in the Providence of Allāh is the most righteous of you (the one who has the highest level of consciousness and pious action of conscience). Indeed, Allāh is Ever-Knowing, Ever-Cognizant.

(The Qur'ān, Al-Ĥujurāt (The Rooms) Chapter 49: 13).

All praise is due to Allāh; and blessings and peace be upon His messenger and servant, Muhammad, and upon all the previous messengers and whoever follows His guidance until the Day of Resurrection.

These two verses from the Qur'ān, which summarise the human history at both macro and micro levels have also guided my story that includes the shorter Ed.D journey within my longer life journey. I believe that attaining knowledge is a kind of worship when kept in touch with the Creator. Knowledge is a gift from Allāh Almighty "The Omniscient" (see Al-Baqara (The Cow) chapter, 2: 31). That is how knowledge increase result in promoting ethics, virtue, conscience and awareness. In short, value rather than price and existence rather than what exists are prioritised in contrast to the current education system. I would like to say that I have changed in any step of my educational life (I cannot conceive a non-educational part of life which is a test itself), and will go on to change until the end of my life as self is always "under construction" through the continuous form of action. We may not change the world, but we may change ourselves as individuals. This is something that I can do for me, and this is something that you can do for you!

In the search of the truth, I view every human being and every trace of the existents in the nature; i.e. the created, as the signs/evidence of the Truth alongside the verses in the Qur'ān, the word of Allāh. Therefore, with a thirst of knowledge in the name of Allāh I aspire to read every person as a representation of the existent,

beyond of which is the light of existence. So, here I call for all: "Come on, let's meet and know each other!" because to know the other is both to transcend the self and to know the self in return.

I acknowledge these verses from the One behind my motivation to go for the topic of this thesis exploring the self of academics from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds within the agenda of the current higher education. I would also like to pay tribute to the academics who took part in this study. I feel honoured to have been able to look through their life windows, which they opened for me in order to share their on-going personal and professional journeys.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction to the study

Knowledge is to know knowledge.

Knowledge is to know yourself.

If you know not who you are,

What is all this learning for?

What is the point of learning?

It is so that one knows the Truth.

Thus do you learn but know not,

Then it is just toiling in vain.

Yunus Emre (1240-1321).

(Translated by me).

### 1.1 Overview

One is more likely to understand and know others by knowing oneself first: it is an ontological and epistemological question of knowing and being, and a question of ethics beyond the knowledge of knowing and being. My commitment to the research topic “the relation of self to the other” is the first research activity in phenomenological research, ‘turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world’ (van Manen, 1997: 31). This thesis sets out an attempt to place some of the perennial problematic questions of intercultural communication, including the link between the individual and the collective or the self and the other at a deeper level of complexity.

The open-heartedness of the self and the invitation to others constitute the heart of issues in today’s highly intercultural, cosmopolitan and global world. Rather than approaching this world from a neo-essentialist point of view, this sublime view hints universal tenets that yield a dialogue with new entities, locations and structures. Holliday (2011) also addresses such an alternative and universal “grammar” of culture after critically examining the main features of intercultural communication within the context of global politics and problematic Western ideology that permeates intercultural processes. Dismantling the ideological processes as opposed to “being as they seem”, he shows how a dialogue between national structures and creative universal skills can be carried to new locations.

With this non-essentialist and critical cosmopolitan perspective in mind, I specifically chose to conduct research on the “native and non-native English language speaking teacher dichotomy” within different disciplines at a university in the UK and on

“international” academics’ experiences of the university system and intercultural communication due to the internationalisation of education. In the broad sense, I focussed on their linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences while working at an internationalising British university. I have been really excited to learn further about this area as it includes the West/Non-West and Native/Non-Native Otherisation even if it may seem to intend “nice” global Centre-Western perspective at first sight (Holliday, 2011).

## 1.2 Setting the scene

In today’s globalised world, in which thousands of international students enter programmes of higher education in countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and many European Union countries, university administration and teaching staff come face-to-face with the growing cultural, racial and linguistic diversity whose impact is felt in many education-related fields, including policy, curriculum, pedagogy, teacher education, teachers’ work and language education research (Gearon, Miller, Kostogriz, 2009). While bi- and multi-lingualism may be recognised and even valued in some parts of the world, this is frequently not the case in predominantly English-speaking countries such as Australia, the UK, the USA and Canada (*ibid.*: 4). There is a language policy that recognises the value of multilingualism in the European Community which is highly conscious of the need for citizens to develop multilingual competence (European Commission, 2008). Nevertheless, there is little recognition of how challenging diverse classrooms can be in European Union policy (*ibid.*). Therefore, there is a need to explore the needs of pre- and in-service teachers who must face the reality of multiple languages, voices and cultures in their classrooms (Gearon et al., 2009). Also, pedagogical practices in all disciplines need to be more responsive to the multicultural composition of society, especially in the face of the internationalisation process of education. One of the challenges in the complexities of diversity is ideological and “concerns the neglect of difference and diversity as consequential” (Kostogriz, 2009, as cited in *ibid.*: 8), and there is a danger for diversity and contextual complexity to remain in the background under teacher performance and accountability pressures. However, as Cummins (1997) argues, ignoring the intersections between power

and pedagogy can result in the perpetuation of coercive and exploitative structures within education.

### **1.3 My motivation and rationale for the study**

I began this journey with an intense concern for issues of “non-native English speaking (NNES)” or “international” academics, interculturality and intercultural education. My initial interest in the internationalisation of universities started long before I came to study at the University of Exeter, when I was working as a research assistant at an English Language Teaching Department of a state university in Turkey. Turkish universities have not been an exception in applying new strategies which will give way to the internationalisation of universities in Turkey. In parallel to these shifts, English language learning and teaching has gained more importance (Demircan, 1988; Oral, 2010), while English as the indispensable capital of the “modern and fully developed” countries is imported like a commodity to be consumed with great greed.

Through my participation in the Ed.D modules in Exeter on the meaning and practice of professionalism and the nature of educational research, I moved toward a new way of thinking about sociocultural and critical issues in teaching and learning contexts. Through the module “Critical Issues in Teaching English”, I became more aware of the positioning of bilingual or multilingual teachers as non-native English speakers, the spread of World Englishes and intercultural communication from different perspectives and showed a growing interest in their issues as an “international” academic who has been doing her doctorate of education in an internationalising university too. Moreover, conducting a study on English language teacher educators’ “real world” approaches to professional learning (Kani, 2014), I looked more deeply into the professional views of “native and non-native English speaking” (NES and NNES) teacher-educators who worked in various higher education contexts in different parts of the world with a focus on the meaning and practice of professionalism in their lives. Starting out with these issues in TESOL, I have realised that there are a considerable number of “international” university teachers who are engaged in World Englishes in different disciplines. Especially with the promotion of internationalisation strategies across

universities in the UK as around the world, universities have sought ways to accommodate more and more international students and teaching staff. This has led to a shift from monolingual and cultural landscapes to linguistically and culturally diverse contexts, which has also highlighted the issue of intercultural communication among international and home staff and students.

Drawing on previous studies on exploring experience in intercultural settings, I saw that these studies were mostly from international students' perspectives; however, there was little research into international academics' perspectives. In the internationalisation process of higher education, there is a recent interest on the language socialisation and internationalisation process of ESL students in multilingual settings and the "native-non-native English speaker" distinctions in TESOL up to date. However, to the best of my knowledge, there is no critical or interpretive study as to what it means to be an academic who is positioned as international and who is a speaker of English as an additional language. Therefore, I came up with the research questions of this study, whose answers would fill a gap in the literature by contributing to the construction of knowledge about linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of international academics at internationalising universities and to the theorising with regard to intercultural communication. Thus, the main focus of the research was on *exploring* the linguistic experiences of international academics as speakers of English as an additional language (EAL), addressing NES-NNES dichotomy from their perspectives and *understanding* their professional and intercultural experiences and challenges in teaching in the internationalising higher education context of a UK university. The main agenda was to understand the perspectives of international academics about their experiences of teaching in an intercultural context.

Another reason I aspired to explore this issue is that as a would-be teacher educator in academia in Turkey, a country that is the western of the east and the eastern of the west, who acts as a research student in the international setting of a UK university now, I am aware of the interface between global dynamics and education in my own personal and professional life. This study into the lives of these academics has opened wider realms of perspectives on the issues of linguistic and

cultural positioning. It has also raised awareness about the processes of internationalisation in both my ongoing professional learning and that of anyone interested in academia in addition to its contribution to TESOL and interdisciplinary fields. In so doing, I have problematised “the native- non-native fallacy” in questioning the concepts “Self and the Other”, and attempt to suggest a new dimension to and outlook on the conceptualisation of this issue in the literature.

In line with my research purposes, the overarching question guiding this study is ‘What are the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of “international” academics who are speakers of EAL in teaching at an internationalising British university?’ Related subsidiary questions are as follows:

- 1- What are the academics’ language experiences and attitudes towards “non-native”-like language use as bi-/multi-lingual speakers?
- 2- What are the academics’ perceptions about their experiences and challenges of teaching at an internationalising UK university?
- 3- What are their accounts of experience of interculturality and approaches to cultural descriptions as “international” academics?

#### **1.4 My journey into the world of paradigms and methodologies**

At the beginning of my Ed.D courses in 2011, I started to read about, and was profoundly impressed by, the shifts of paradigm in research and TESOL. Having myself been trained in the ELT in the EFL context of Turkey before my Ed.D, I learnt all the mainstream methods and approaches in this field by thinking that I was critical enough to see wider perspectives when I need to tailor them according to my own context. When I came to the UK, which offers an international setting, I looked at my own and world ELT contexts. I had an opportunity to see that people are sometimes like fish and that they do not know the sea as they are in the sea. As a transition from aquarium to oceans implies, I learnt that the reality we perceive will always reflect an insufficient picture as we construct, reconstruct and sometimes deconstruct it. Leslie Marmon Silko (1997: 27) describes the problem with the metaphor of mapping:

“A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view” does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings.

This assumes the viewer is somehow outside or separate from the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on.

Therefore, I felt the same concern as Becher and Trowler (2001), who view the polarisation between the worlds of sciences and the humanities as superficial and conceptually flawed. I was ready to think, discuss, engage in tasks, draw on my own experience in roles as a learner, trainee, teacher and researcher, reflect, research, read and critically re-read key positions and issues throughout my journey. My openness to new ideas has triggered off a sparkle that illuminates the existence of many more numerous and more subtle boundaries and complexities. For example, when I and all participants were asked the question "What is learning?" in the Stage 1 of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) programme at the university, I could not resist thinking in an overarching way that encompasses all the perspectives from cognitive and behaviourist, social, cultural accounts of learning to social-political stances that are mostly invisible and reflected as neutral in mainstream education. Likewise, the answer presented was restricted to the cognitive taxonomy by Bloom to indicate intended learning outcomes while emergent ways were mentioned cautiously as well. This reminded me of my days in the educational sciences class of my undergraduate study, when I was first taught about the cognitive and behaviouristic accounts of learning that prevail in the accountability, planning and assessment fields of educational settings. However, now I could not help questioning the definition of learning presented as a change in one's own or another's capability (Eraut, 1997: 556), which is still very valid. Firstly, I was completely in agreement with the word "change". Rather, I preferred to posit a definition appealing to positivist, interpretive and critical paradigms as "a process of discovering, falsifying or confirming, exploring, problematising or critiquing something new (knowledge) to be assimilated, accommodated, conceptualised, reconstructed or deconstructed according to one's own experience till another point comes up in an ongoing way" (my own definition). I think this reflects how much I consider a complex epistemological and ontological perspective when faced with a concept, and this has also opened me to adopt an interdisciplinary framework to find a place for my study within the complex world.

Tempted by the native-non-native speaker dichotomy in my critical issues course, I realised the broader relations between global politics and World Englishes and their impact on the internationalisation in higher education within different disciplines surpassing the boundaries of TESOL. This issue has been closely related to how the perception of intercultural communication itself is the product of a Centre, western, chauvinistic ideology of superiority (Holliday, 2011). As the research questions required me to get in-depth descriptions of meanings for individuals of their lived experiences -- experiences about what it means to be an 'international' academic -- I took a phenomenological approach towards the methodology, conducting semi-structured interviews with 15 academics and taking memos during the data collection.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

A number of recent studies have sought to capture the lived experience of international students (Rich, 2011; Montgomery, 2010; Gill, 2007; Al-Omrani, 2008) and of ESL teaching staff or international teaching assistants and associates (Lee, 2009; Han, 2008; Choi, 2007; Jensen, 2007; Kamhi-Stein, 2004, Fraga-Canadas, 2008; Holland, 2008). However, to the best of my knowledge, there are none which have sought to investigate the ideological, situated and critical cosmopolitan nature of interculturality in the international teaching world of higher education. Such an approach has the potential to reveal the complexity of intercultural communication from international academics' perspectives in the lived local reality of internationalisation of UK universities. As the focus of the study is on different disciplines within this framework, it can demonstrate how far, and in what ways, the rhetoric of interculturality is experienced in both hard-soft and applied-pure academic disciplines. The insights from this study may make a potentially important contribution to both theoretical and practical development of a sense of critical cultural awareness. Universities which support the intercultural learning and teaching through educational enhancement units may offer training for academics for dealing with international students in this direction. In so doing, they may also critically interpret what is or is not realised in practice and what has still to be done alternatively.

## 1.6 Outline of the study

In chapter 2, I will provide some contextual background information to the study and definition of key terms with an account of the discourses of internationalisation and higher education, the native/non-native speaker dichotomy and intercultural communication. In the following chapters, I will present the research design, data collection and analysis procedures, along with the research results and subsequent discussion of the findings. As a consequence of the study's implications, I will conclude by outlining how the current study contributes to the wider world of TESOL and interdisciplinary research. Finally, I will present some important recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2. The review of literature

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will first outline the national and institutional discourses relating to the internationalisation of higher education (HE) in the UK, which international academics (i.e. the participants in the study) will experience and negotiate. To understand these aspirations for the internationalisation of HE, it is important to highlight the related concepts of globalisation and internationalisation. Therefore, I will also explain these interrelated concepts in this chapter. Subsequent to explaining where internationalisation comes from and giving the variety of conceptions of internationalisation, I will focus on the internationalising process of HE contexts in the UK. Next, I will focus on one main actor of the internationalising process of HE in the UK – “international” academics, whose growing figures and statistics are tabulated. Lastly, I will focus on internationalisation in the university which forms the setting for this study, after displaying the background of the current international arena in the UK.

Secondly, I will discuss the fallacy of the “native” and “non-native” English speaker (NNES) dichotomy. I will do so because of the way in which these labels influence how international academics are perceived by themselves and others. Thirdly, I will explore the issue of intercultural communication, as another issue which is shaped according to global politics. The common point which I will be arguing in these sections, in relation to intercultural communication and NNES dichotomy is that there is a perception of difference produced by a Western-centred ideology of superiority which constructs ideological imaginations of both themselves (West) and others (Holliday, 2011). After discussing these issues, the necessity of conducting research into the experience of “international” academics will be presented with a display of the lack of studies on their experience within intercultural settings of different disciplines.

### 2.2 Reconsidering “internationalisation” in higher education

This study examines the experiences of international academics in a British university in terms of their language performance, practices of university teaching

and research, and intercultural communication. Their presence in British universities is one of the most visible manifestations of the “internationalisation” of British higher education that has received much attention, not only in the academic literature, but also in the media, government policy statements and institutional strategy documents (Tian & Lowe, 2009). Prior to raising some fundamental questions about this “internationalisation” process, I will begin with a (necessarily) selective review of the considerable literature on higher education internationalisation. This will provide the prerequisite background to the presentation and discussion of the study. Therefore, I will look at where the term internationalisation comes from, problematise the variety of conceptions of internationalisation and present the definition which will be utilised in this thesis. This study of internationalisation is one that focuses on the actual experiences of the people who inhabit these spaces in the university (i.e. academics) rather than on institutional strategy. This “personal” research focus will be utilised in order to identify important implications, both for institutional strategy, and for ensuring best practice (*ibid.*). Such a view of internationalisation has previously been labelled “transformative” or “personal” (Turner & Robson, 2008) or -- in a slightly different context -- “deep” (Appadurai, as cited in Tian and Lowe, 2009). However, the term that best describes my approach in this study, as I shall discuss below, is “existential internationalisation” (Sanderson, 2004).

When we look at where the term internationalisation comes from, we can see that it is by no means new. On the contrary, the term has been used for centuries in political science and governmental relations. But its popularity and usage in the education sector is only really considered to have soared since the early 1980s (Knight, 2004: 9). Discussions about internationalisation dominated both HE research and policy literature during the 1990s and into the early 2000s (Turner & Robson, 2009: 14).

As Tian and Lowe (2009) state, researching and writing about the internationalisation of higher education is problematic as the concept itself is variously interpreted and commonly conflated with other similar ideas, notably those of globalisation and multiculturalism. One influential definition is that proffered by

Knight (as cited in Fielden, 2011: 7), which has since been variously restated and "updated". Knight provides a broad definition when she states that internationalisation is: "the process of integrating an international/inter-cultural and/or global dimension into the goals, functions, teaching, learning, research and services and delivery of higher education". Knight (2004) begins by indicating that the internationalisation of higher education is a response to the impact of globalisation, thereby ascribing a cause and effect relationship to the two phenomena. Tian and Lowe (2009), however, find this claim difficult, as they believe that it forces our understanding of internationalisation to be contingent on an interpretation of globalisation, which is itself contested. Gacel-Avila's (2005) position, that globalisation is a contemporary *context* for internationalisation, is valuable in that it opens more space for an independent conceptualisation of internationalisation and offers greater scope for it to be seen as a possible corrective for less desirable manifestations of globalisation (Tian and Lowe, 2009).

Sidhu (2004) takes this point further when she claims that "the will to internationalise" is often attributed to the influence of globalisation, but should not be treated as an objective "given". Instead, she suggests, we need to understand it as a discourse that may be variously constructed in the "conjoint relations between knowledge and power" (*ibid.*: 51). In this sense, Clyne, Marginson and Woock (as cited in Dixon, 2006: 320) argue that "the relationship between globalisation and international higher education is predominantly viewed within universities as one of the manifestations of the neoliberal discourse of globalisation. Dixon (2006: 331) points to "the very dilemma that is present in globalisation -- that of the dominance of economic imperatives and Westernisation in the creation of one world over the peaceful and productive interaction between nations --", and to the presence of the same dilemma in international programs of universities too. She explains the positioning of a university in this dilemma shifting between the marketing face clearly linked to globalisation that has been "lost" to a neoliberal discourse (Clyne et al., as cited in *ibid.*: 320) and the face of the benefactor, a provider for the public good (*ibid.*: 331):

The marketing face is clearly linked to globalisation. This face tends to be downplayed in international relations, as it shares the negative connotations of the economic imperatives and Western dominance aspects of globalisation and as it is at

odds with the face of the university as benefactor. The downplaying or masking of the marketing face is achieved by the highlighting of the face of the benefactor. The positioning of the university thus shifts between these faces.

Jones (1998) does not see this so much as a dilemma, but rather as the basis for distinguishing between globalisation and “internationalism”, a concept which offers an alternative foundational ideology for internationalisation to that of a Western hegemonic neo-liberalism. While rejecting an economic reductionist view of globalisation, Jones is clear that the underlying logic of globalisation is “the creation of a new world economic order” (1998: 145), and he contrasts this with internationalism’s focus on the “promotion of global peace and well-being” (1998: 143).

Indeed, Jones (*ibid.*) views UNESCO as the institutionalisation of the ideals of internationalism in education. UNESCO (2003, as cited in Tian & Lowe, 2009: 660) itself recognises globalisation more broadly as a “set of economic, social, technological and cultural structures and processes”. It is, however, afforded an essentially economic basis in that these arise “from the changing character of the production, consumption and trade of goods and assets that comprise the base of the international political economy” (*ibid.*). In the same vein, Altbach and Knight (2007) recognise “economic, political and societal forces” of globalisation. Nevertheless, their discussion in relation to globalisation’s impact on internationalisation continues in terms of “global capital” and “knowledge industries”.

Fielden (2011: 7) defines “internationalisation” as all the activities that have international implications. HEIs, he suggests, are actually encouraged to produce “internationalisation strategies” (rather than international strategies) as this allows for more than just a focus on the recruitment of international students (Fielden, 2011: 7). Fielden’s definition does appear to have been adopted by a number of HEIs. However, as Fielden suggests, it is possible that “there can be a key difference in their focus, with an emphasis either on increasing the international reputation of the institution or concentrating on developing students as global citizens” (Fielden, 2011: 12). This means that some internationalisation strategies will primarily be institution-centred, while others will be student-centred; however, the two types of strategy do not have to be mutually exclusive (Fielden, 2011: 13).

Internationalisation strategies are also usually linked to other strategic areas including the overall corporate plan (umbrella strategy for all strategies), teaching and learning, human resources, finance, research, estates, communications and marketing and alumni and development strategies (*ibid.*: 13). In addition, these strategies differ greatly in the extent to which they include activities on campus (“internationalisation at home”). Nevertheless, most recent internationalisation strategies typically comprise two common features: an assumption that increasing the recruitment of international students is possible, and a statement about the importance of international partnerships (*ibid.*: 14).

The variety of conceptions of internationalisation points to the range of different perspectives and institutional contexts from which the discourse emerges, in addition to identifying conceptualisations of internationalisation as ideologically constructed (Turner & Robson, 2009: 16). Tian and Lowe (2009: 662) argue that “there is a need for a clear conceptualisation of, and personal and institutional commitment to, a form of internationalisation that is not beholden to a particular contemporary view of globalisation”. The essential point, for me, is to go beyond the “symbolic” and “globalist” international orientations with a commitment to markets and an economic rationale and to see that “transformative” internationalisation can be *personal* rather than *institutional*, depending on the world-views and ideological commitments of academics rather than managerial strategies (Turner & Robson, 2008: 33). Recent accounts have focused on exploring the more varied concerns of academics rather than confining their discussions to theoretical, policy or market areas (e.g. see Pherali, 2012; Trahar, 2011; Luxon & Peelo, 2009 for the studies in the UK; Saltmarsh & Swirski, 2010; Green & Myatt, 2011 for the ones in Australia; Huang, 2009; Collins, 2008; Alberts, 2008 for those in the USA). This is because if the impact of internationalisation is felt as profoundly as expressed in the literature, it must be experienced keenly by those most intimately involved in the process. This shows that an exploration of academics’ experiences within such an environment can make a useful contribution to the broader discourse. Since my interest here is with international academics, my focus is on the transformation of academics’ world-views as a result of their living and working experience. Though “international” is a description of overseas staff on arrival versus “home” staff, Turner and Robson

(ibid.) argue that it is a better label to use in describing those who emerge from such a transformative experience, whether they be “home” or “overseas” students/staff. It is this kind of personal, transformative internationalisation that I focus on in this research.

Sanderson (2004: 14) provides the philosophical and ideological underpinnings to this notion of personal transformative internationalisation, and he coins the term “existential internationalism”. The term draws on this idea that one can understand oneself better by gaining greater understanding of the Cultural Other (ibid.). He considers the fear of the unknown as being at the heart of our historical constructions of and reactions to the Cultural Other. He starts by recognising Knight’s (2004) statement that the internationalisation of higher education is a response to globalisation, and he goes on to turn this relationship on its head, drawing on the Appadurai’s (as cited in Tian and Lowe, 2009: 663) distinction between “weak internationalisation, which invites those from ‘outside’ to engage on the basis of the acceptance of the host’s knowledge and ethics”, and “strong or critical internationalisation in which communities are genuinely open to and willing to debate without prejudice the knowledge and ideas of all members” (Sanderson, 2004: 14). As explained at the beginning of this chapter, I view this kind of internationalisation more promising for humanity “in the face of the domination of present neo-liberal, neo-conservative and implicit neo-colonial agendas influencing politics, economics and culture” (Sanderson, 2004: 16); and, as Tian and Lowe (2009: 663) add, “higher education” as well, which I will seek to explore here too.

In this section, I have looked at how the term internationalisation has been defined and explained and what types of internationalisation in HE there are. I have also problematised the variety of conceptions of internationalisation and presented the definition that will be utilised in this study.

In the next sections, I will set the background for the internationalising process of higher education in the UK, one of the main actors of which are internationalising academics. After drawing on the HE policy context in the UK, I will provide more details about international academics in UK higher education institutions. Then, I will associate the setting of the present study with the overall context.

## 2.3 A historical analysis of the UK HE policy context

In this section, I will first discuss both the UK higher education (HE) policy context and the evolution of internationalisation through a historical analysis. Consequently, I will elaborate the requirements placed on those responsible for teaching and learning so that the academics' professional experiences in the sample institution coming through in the explicitation of data could be situated.

Internationalisation has come to be believed as being synonymous with the quest for quality and status in the UK HE, and evidence suggests that this issue is more dependent on government policy than is any other response to change (Humfrey, 2011: 649). This resulted in teaching and learning in the university sector to be more closely aligned to national policy at present than may have been the case in recent times (*ibid.*), and this is the policy context in which the findings of this study regarding the international academics' professional experiences are presented.

The very nature of HE learning and academic work is on both local or national and global levels (Sadlak, as cited in *ibid.*). That is why the university is, of its essence, international (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, what tells much about the social, political and economic environment in which the university exists is the manner in which this international aspect is defined and valued (*ibid.*: 650). The stage that HE has now reached is described as the rise of a new kind of free trade. However, this free trade is in minds (Wildavsky, as cited in *ibid.*), for it is viewed as both a commodity and a service and is included in the general agreement on trade in services (GATS) (WTO, as cited in *ibid.*).

The history of the UK HE sector began some eight centuries earlier with the medieval universities drawing students from beyond the immediate region. It subsequently evolved from guild organisations of teachers and scholars, with all the advantages of peripatetic autonomy, to institutions receiving patronage and material endowment, codified privileges and finally permanent accommodation in or near towns (Humfrey, 2011: 650). With the rapid increase in the numbers of universities in Europe, these institutions were already part of the interacting organisations which composed the emerging force of nationalism (Cobban, as cited in *ibid.*). Since then, the universities must have realised that "academic freedom, in any purist sense,

was a chimera and that society would not tolerate or financially support academic groupings without exacting some kind of quantitative return" (*ibid.*).

After the growth in the number of civic universities, which were identified as national assets with the evolution and development of the industrial revolution during the following five centuries, the debate on the function of the university within the society ranged more widely to less specific and instrumental outcomes such as "raising the intellectual tone of society, cultivating the public mind, ... supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm" (Newman, as cited in Humfrey, 2011: 650). At this point, the expansion, and indeed continuation of emergent universities depended on a source of public sector income regularly and properly distributed by government. This led to the establishment of the University Grants Committee (UGC) in 1919, and this meant that "HE was recognised as a public, as well as an individual, economic benefit" (Humfrey, 2011: 651). In the 1970s, because of universities being significantly dependent on the taxpayer/electorate contribution from 1946 onwards, the government focussed on rising HE expenditure in line with the number of UK students and introduced an increase in fees for non-UK students, the presence of which has been recognised as a vital income stream just over 30 years later (*ibid.*). In 1980, the government and the universities faced off in a battle of political ideology when the former deemed "immigration caps to be both necessary for security and national manpower management", while the universities saw them "as restricting academic mobility, university income and research ranking" (Humfrey, 2011: 652). With the strength of the government challenge, there was a clear shift in the concept of the role of universities from creations of the state to creatures of the nation state, or from the supported by the government to the supporters of the government (Newby 1999; Scott, as cited in *ibid.*: 653). With the introduction of the international fee for all non-EU students including Commonwealth members by the government legislation in 1981, Humfrey (*ibid.*) noted that:

The British universities, who had never suggested differential fees, and indeed had argued passionately against them, were now left to face a future with declining international student numbers and a reduced public sector subvention. It is possible that this was the moment that the UK HE system woke up to the importance of

marketing and the idea of recruitment for, rather than selection of, international students.

The top priority for the universities to build the number of well-qualified international students back to the pre-1981 figure was achieved with their new marketing and promotion role (*ibid.*). This was followed by the Polytechnics, reaching the branding advantage of the ‘university’ in 1992, when they also secured the status and the income generation that international student recruitment provided (*ibid.*). In 1997, concerns were now about responsible recruitment and the commoditisation of HE; “institutional managers are beginning now to wake up to overseas students’ value as fee fodder” (Niven, as cited in *ibid.*: 656). Considerable academic debate on the role and definition of internationalisation as a concept in HE was discussed in chapter 2; therefore, I will express the growing concern of the narrow focus of internationalisation activity, which is also related to the theme of this section, through the concept of “open commercialism” in the British universities, which is “a shift from “classical” internationalisation, stressing ideas of mutual understanding, towards a frankly cash benefit motive” (Chandler, as cited in *ibid.*: 657).

While government, “having in some sense compelled the universities to take this route, was little in evidence in this context over the next decade”, the work of the British Council was at arm’s length, yet connected to the government through the Foreign Office (*ibid.*: 654). In order to attract potential students in competition with the recruiters such as the USA, the government supported a dispensation that allowed international students in the UK HE sector to engage in valuable work experience in 1999 (*ibid.*). The universities demanding the amendment of this legal circumstance from the government were successful in that “the financial needs of these students were alleviated but many academics considered that students would have been better served, especially at Ph.D. level, had they been free of the need to seek paid employment” (*ibid.*). All of the government interventions, centred on visas, UK Border Agency (UKBA) regulations, work permits and other immigration issues over the next eleven years, indicated that “the universities were national organisations although with international dimensions” (*ibid.*: 655) such as “international terrorism, pandemics, currency volatility and competition for services” (*ibid.*: 658). This is the stage where all students, academics and stakeholders share

their experiences within the reality of the sample UK HE institution (see 3.4), and I hope that the accounts of participants in this study will provide remarkable feedback to such institutions as long as primary importance is given to “the acceptance of feedback and the willingness of institutions to work with that feedback to improve provision” (*ibid.*).

In a climate of increasing budgetary constraints due to the decline in government funding and the consequent need to generate income of their own, most UK universities have been transformed “from largely state-sponsored status into semi-independent institutions with a substantial responsibility for covering their own running costs” (Taylor & Braddock, 2005-6: 361). They are responding to the expanding demand from industry for commercially usable research through research partnerships; this trend as well as the worldwide increase in student demand is supported by government research funding policies (*ibid.*). In this commercialisation process, “internationalisation has been driven largely by the marketisation discourse that has come to prevail in HE over the past couple of decades” (De Vita & Case, 2003: 384-5). The marketisation discourse, based on a purchaser/provider model, requires treating education as a commodity to be packaged and sold on open national and international markets by institutions acting as enterprises (*ibid.*: 384). There are two problems which can be said to arise from the commercialisation process in each of the two main areas of university business-research and teaching (Taylor & Braddock, 2005-6: 361): “One problem concerns its effect on academic freedom and its consequent effect on the quality of university research. The other concerns the commercialisation of university teaching”. This has given rise to:

a major shift in UK HE towards increased accountability and greater managerialism and surveillance enforced ‘in the name of students’ through quality assurance systems. These procedures are designed to measure the performance, effectiveness or ‘efficiency’ of teachers as ‘sellers’ and the ‘quality’ of the ‘commodity’ with reference to the satisfaction of students as ‘customers’. Although rationalised in terms of ‘satisfying customer needs’, such standardisation results in a diminution of educational experience as overworked teaching staff struggle to deliver programmes over which they have less and less professional discretion in terms of content and modes of delivery (De Vita & Case, 2003: 392).

The findings of this study regarding international academics' professional experiences are compatible with these concerns and views offered in a spirit of realism in the literature. Taylor and Braddock (2005-6: 361) assumed that the trend towards commercialisation is irreversible; however, they argued that:

- (i) commercialisation can threaten academic freedom and, thereby, the quality of university research,
- (ii) that it can promote a false and damaging market-based conception of a university education, but
- (iii) that these are not inevitable effects of commercialisation, provided appropriate measures are taken by education leaders.

After presenting the findings of this study about the academics' professional experiences in chapter 5 in line with the concerns discussed in the backdrop here, I will offer appropriate suggestions to overcome the threats and to preserve the virtues of universities under the new dispensation of commercial aims in the last chapter.

## **2.4 Internationalising higher education in the UK**

To date internationalisation in HE has generally been supported by the UK government, as evidenced by the two Prime Minister's Initiatives (Fielden, 2011: 9). While the first (PMI1) in 2000 was a five year programme that aimed to increase the UK's market share of international students, the second (PMI2) began in 2006 for another five years with broader aims to (*ibid.*):

- \* Better position the UK in the global student market, increasing HE recruitment by 70,000 and further education by 30,000.
- \* Double the number of countries sending more than 10,000 students to the UK.
- \* Show improvements in the satisfaction ratings of international students with their UK experience.
- \* Achieve significant growth in the number of strategic collaborations between UK and overseas universities.

Over the past decade, many universities have re-evaluated their roles and approaches towards learning in line with these initiatives and in the face of globalisation by marketing themselves more effectively internationally, and focusing on specific challenges associated with it (Bourn, 2011: 559). While international strategies have tended to be influenced primarily by economic considerations

(Middlehurst, 2006), as Caruana and Spurling (2007) noted, there is evidence of moves to re-think the curriculum and life of the university. Bourn (2011: 562) summarised these differing approaches as “a university-led approach influenced by economic and market forces and a student-led approach linked to the needs of a ‘knowledge society’”. He added that (*ibid.*): “Most of the universities that have consciously promoted an economic approach to internationalisation have been conscious of their status within higher education league tables and have tended to be older, well-established institutions.”

Tian and Lowe (2009: 660) also looked at studies of the internationalisation of higher education at the systemic or institutional level, whether in terms of strategy or practice, and saw two conclusions commonly emerging, as a result of these initiatives:

1. International student recruitment is the most significant internationalisation activity in terms of visibility, scale and institutional impact (Toyoshima, 2007; Haigh, 2008).
2. The dominant motivation behind internationalisation activity is economic (Jiang, 2008; Haigh, 2008).

Toyoshima (2007) supported the first point that international student recruitment is the most significant internationalisation activity. Also, Toyoshima presented the differences in different type of universities, adding that elite universities in the UK play down the economic motive for internationalisation, whilst those more recently established and with less of a research orientation are suggested to be more prepared to recognise its importance. Bolsmann and Miller (2008) also found a range of discourses around the recruitment of international students in their study of 16 British universities, but their conclusion was that the economic competition rationale is dominant. I have concluded that the difference between the elite and newly established ones are that the elite universities have already established a system which put internationalisation strategies into action. Therefore, they do not need to establish their credibility all over again as the new ones have to do. They have already drawn the attention of international students from all over the world, thus have a choice to be more selective. However, the new ones have focussed more on recruitment than selection due to their concern for marketing the brand of their recently established universities. In a comparison of these two types of

universities, elite ones can be suggested to highlight other concerns more than the economic motive for internationalisation, though the economic approach still prevails among most of them.

The marketisation discourse of internationalisation outdoes the academic-cultural climate of the UK policy statements whether explicitly stated or otherwise (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008; Koutsantoni, 2006; Naidoo, 2003; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005; Yang, 2002; Walker, 2001). This is driven by the fact that universities need to establish their economic viability and place in university rankings in an era of funding cuts (Tian & Lowe, 2009). Tian and Lowe (2009: 661) put forward that:

Even when university authorities express their motivation to internationalise in terms of gaining international reputation this must be interpreted in the context of a positional competition into which universities have been thrust under the pressures of a neo-liberal discourse of globalisation, the knowledge economy and competitive advantage.

This dominant discourse appears to be supported by the UK government, who emphasise the economic benefits of internationalising higher education (DIUS 2007, House of Commons Education and Skills Committee 2007, as cited in Willis, 2010). Haigh makes the point brutally: "In theory, internationalisation is a process for the education of planetary citizens ... In practice, internationalisation is about income generation for cash-strapped higher education institutes" (2008: 427). In other words, the higher education sector is subsumed into the global economy as "Higher Education Inc. (*ibid.*)

Much -- indeed most -- of the contemporary "internationalisation" of HE is, as proposed by Tian and Lowe (2009: 661), a response to globalisation. However, it appears to be a largely unmediated, unreflexive response that impoverishes the concept of internationalisation with a narrow, neo-liberal globalist (Naidoo, 2003) agenda rather than a broader internationalist one in HE (*ibid.*).

## **2.5 International academics in UK higher education institutions**

One possible definition of international academics is all staff who are non-UK domiciled or a particular category of overseas academics and researchers -- namely

those who are not from the UK or EU member states, in line with the definition of international students in the literature (Hyland et al., 2008; Leonard et al., 2004; Ramsay et al., 2007). However, this study will not adopt this definition, because my focus in this thesis is on the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of academics who speak English as an additional language (EAL), and who have moved to the UK for some reasons (mostly to take up a teaching and researching position). Therefore, the term “international” academics encompasses all non-UK domiciled and latecomer UK-domiciled academics in my study. EAL speaking academics can also be used to refer to my participants. However, it does not entail the meaning of the term “international”, which is more encompassing with reference to their language use, professional status and intercultural experiences. Therefore, I will use the term “international” which is more encompassing and more common in academic statistics, though the concept and meaning of being “international” is also a complex issue, as elaborated on in the “findings” chapter.

The number of staff from overseas has risen from little more than 4,000 in 1996-97 to around 11,000 in 2006-07 (HEFCE, 2008: 26). Some other details about non-UK nationality academic staff in recent years shown in tables and figures are as follows:

- Academics with non-UK nationalities comprise one-fourth of the academic staff population in the UK (Table 2.1) and they were concentrated in roles which were non-permanent, less senior or in engineering and mathematics departments (HEFCE, 2012: 4).

**Table 2.1** Comparison of staff by nationality in 2010-11 (HEFCE, 2012: 4).

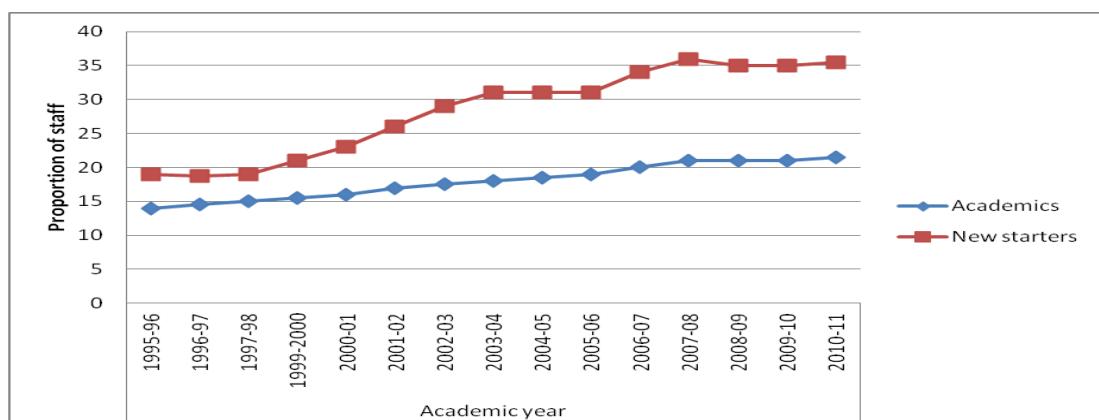
Nationality	Academic Number of staff	%	Professional and support Number of staff	%
EU	16,060	13%	6,395	4%
Non-EU	14,195	12%	6,425	4%
UK	89,070	75%	134,200	91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,325</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>147,020</b>	<b>100%</b>

- The proportion of non-UK nationality staff with non-permanent contracts (39%) is twice that of those on permanent contracts (20%). Considering the proportion of non-UK nationals by job group, the proportion decreases as seniority of job increases (Table 2.2) (HEFCE, 2012: 29-30).

**Table 2.2** Proportion of academic staff who have a non-UK nationality by job group (HEFCE, 2012: 29-30).

Job group	% of non-UK nationals	
	2008-09	2010-11
Professors	16%	17%
Senior academics	16%	18%
Academics	23%	25%
Assistant academics	37%	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>

- In Figure 2.1, which looks more closely at the increasing proportion of non-UK nationality, the proportion of non-UK staff is higher in the academic new starter population than the whole academic population, 37 per cent compared to 25 per cent in 2010-11 (HEFCE, 2012: 31). Furthermore, the proportion has increased at a faster rate for new starters than for all academics, a 19 per cent increase compared to 12 per cent between 1995-96 and 2010-11. These figures show that the proportion of international academics has increased more than the proportion of all academics in fifteen years in line with the internationalising trend of HEIs in the UK.



**Figure 2.1** Proportion of non-UK nationality staff comparing academics with academic new starters (HEFCE, 2012: 31).

## **2.6 Internationalisation in the university which forms the setting for this study**

Being one of the well-established universities in the UK, the university in this study is responding to the internationalisation process driven largely by the marketisation discourse that has come to prevail in HE over the past couple of decades (De Vita & Case, 2003: 384-5). Influenced by the UK HE policy context displayed in section 3.2, it has also taken actions to compensate the decline in government funding and cover its own running costs such as increasing the student population and investing in commercially usable research through research partnerships. It is a medium sized university in England with a total student population of over 18,000 students in 2012, among which over 4,000 are classified as international students. Regarding the observations made above, it would seem that it is not markedly different from its competitors in its approach to internationalisation. The university website explicitly puts forward its 2015 strategy in a direction which will further its global competition in higher education across the world steadily through growing the proportion of international students and postgraduate students, and strengthening relationships with universities of global standing. Its internationalisation strategy, issued in the 2011-2012 academic year, promotes the marketising nature of globalisation and also draws on the academic cultural discourses mentioned above in its presentational material. The university is explicit in its commitment to expanding its recruitment of non-EU students and in its aspirations for 25% of the student body to be comprised of international students by 2020. In addition, it is equally explicit about its commitment to broadening its perspective on overseas work taking place in a context of bi-lateral and multi-lateral internationalisation through partnerships with countries in South Asia, the Gulf, North America and Europe, as well as in its ambitious aim to be a world-class university.

In order to control the effect of financial pressures on university teaching and learning, university administrators are supposed to make it a priority to protect the university's academic and teaching standards. There are also independent bodies that monitor these standards and that are now commonly appointed by governments (Taylor and Braddock, 2005/6). Teaching and designing courses are generally based on academic staff research interests to my knowledge. All faculty

members (old and new, foreign and local) are provided with mentors to make them aware of the standards and disciplinary practices at the institution. The university runs some training courses and sessions for new university staff on how to teach international students, as part of its strategy of "Equality and Diversity". Though these courses aim at equipping staff with the knowledge of approaches and strategies to enhance the learning of international students, to the best of my knowledge, there has not yet been research into the experiences of academic staff in the international and intercultural setting of the university. This thesis, therefore, is expected to contribute to the understanding of real practices and experiences of international academics at a UK university.

Outlining the discourses that are significant to the ways that universities construct their understanding of internationalisation, I have discussed the context in which the university is currently taking actions at the institutional and international levels, rationales and discourses in its agenda. This context would impinge on the experiences of the international academics that are the focus of the present study, either directly or indirectly.

The following section concerns the next focus of this study: native and non-native speaker dichotomy and fallacy.

## **2.7 Problematising the native/non-native speaker dichotomy**

Mainstream linguistic theories traditionally focus on native speakers as the only reliable source of linguistic data (Chomsky, 1965); it is therefore not surprising that there is only a limited amount of work on the self-perceptions of "non-native speaker" English teachers prior to the 1990s (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). This may result from the sensitive nature of these issues because they were generally regarded as unequal in knowledge and performance to native speaker teachers of English (Braine, 2005). There is considerable discussion and controversy over the terms native speaker and non-native speaker after the 1990s (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Braine, 1999, 2004, 2010; Canagarajah, 1999; Davies, 1991, 2003; Inbar-Lourie, 2005; Liu, 1999; Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Moussu & Lurda, 2008; Phillipson, 1992; Selvi, 2011; Shakouri & Shakouri, 2014). However, some scholars (Faez,

2011; Moussu & Llurda, 2008) have suggested that this literature was oversimplistic in its approach and produced a problematic dichotomy. The difficulty of finding satisfactory definitions resulted in listing the characteristics of native speakers instead (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001; Davies, 1991, 2003; Kachru, 1992; Medgyes, 1994; Paikeday, 1985; Rampton, 1990; Cook, 1999).

The native speaker concept, which is rich in ambiguity, reflects both myth and reality, as Davies (2003; 2006) explains. Davies (2006: 144) defines the native speaker, to begin with, as one who can lay claim to being a speaker of a language by virtue of place or country of birth or adoption. This evokes the further sense of ascription that a person does not choose to be, cannot help being a native speaker (*ibid.*). The cognate of native, naïf (both through old French), meaning natural, also implies the sense of not being able to help it (*ibid.*). This definition covers the sociolinguistic (country of birth or adoption) and psycholinguistic (not being able to help oneself) features of the native speaker (Davies, 2006). Considering that one may wish to change identity or to adopt a new group, the natural and the native can be in conflict because:

What one has to demonstrate both to the old group and the new groups is that the natural and the naïf are in harmony, that as well as consciously adopting the new group, at the same time one can't help it, that the adoption is without apparent effort (David, 2006: 144).

In Davies' view, being a native speaker is only partly about naïve naturalness (not being able to help what you are); it is also, more importantly, about groups and identity: "the point is of course that while we don't choose where we come from we do have some measure of choice of where we go to" (Davies, 2006: 145). Hence, Davies suggests that "native speaker" could be redefined according to one's choice to become a native speaker.

In terms of the discussions about language teaching and learning, the native speaker turns out to be both a process (native-speaker-like behaviours used in the preparation and investigation of learners) and a product (the native speaker criterion that is appealed to as a measure of success in learning, teaching and research) (*ibid.*). These features seem to provide a set of criteria to assess the success of

learners; however, it is useless in that providing its own circular definition of itself, it is like:

the healthy person in medicine or indeed any state of assumed perfection where the only definition seems to be negative, a lack of malfunction: thus the native speaker would be someone who is not a learner (etc) rather than someone who is something positive (Davies, 2006: 145).

Being such an apparently fundamental idea, it is so elusive that it must be taken with a very large pinch of salt (*ibid.*) despite its pride of place given by some linguists “as the only true and reliable source of language data” (Ferguson, as cited in *ibid.*). Drawing attention to language use rather than language knowledge, Ferguson writes that “much of the world’s verbal communication takes place by means of languages which are not the users’ mother tongue but their second, third or nth language, acquired one way or another and used when appropriate” (as cited in *ibid.*: 431).

Paikeday (1985) considers the practical importance of the native speaker and points to employment discrimination against those who lack the “ideal” native speaker characteristics. Paikeday (1985: 88) emphasises that “native speakership should not be used as a criterion for excluding certain categories of people from language teaching, dictionary editing and similar functions”. He also disagrees with its definition as a person being able to claim an inherent hold on the full extent of the language (*ibid.*). Arguing that the native speaker “exists only as a figment of linguists’ imagination”, Paikeday (1985: 12) recommends that the term “proficient user” be used to refer to all successful speakers of the language. Associating the term “native speaker” with an individual’s identification with a language, Rampton (1990) suggests using “expert speaker” to refer to all individuals who can use the language successfully. Cook (1999), on the other hand, discussing that there is a qualitative difference between the cognitive processing and language competence of monolingual and bilingual speakers and that linguistic repertoires are overlapping, proposes “multicompetent and L2 user” be used to promote a positive image of individuals who speak more than one language, instead of considering them as failed native speakers.

As the terms discussed above are informed by language ideology, under the concepts of native/non-native speaker lies a monolingual/monocultural ideology that views linguistic identity as fixed and unitary (Davies, 1991; 2003; Inbar-Lourie, 2005; Medgyes, 1994; Benesh, 2008). Resisting the traditional notion of native speaker superiority, Phillipson (1992: 185) coined the phrase "the native speaker fallacy", referring to the false hypothesis that "the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker" proposed at the 1961 Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language in Makarere, Uganda. He argued that non-native speakers can master the correct forms and appropriate uses of the language and challenged the uncritical acceptance of assumptions about "native speaker" language teachers.

Phillipson (2009) expanded the idea that the phenomenon of linguistic imperialism survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a post-colonial endeavour of core English-speaking countries to maintain dominance over peripheral (in many cases developing) countries. In his words, "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992: 47). He also emphasised that a misbalance of powers between the "native" and "non-native" speakers perpetuates the emergence of inequality and hierarchies, and at this point the latter are "internalised subconsciously and serve hegemonic purposes" (Phillipson, 2009: 40). He establishes a link between the English language and discrepancies in social, economic, political and linguistic statuses and finds the secrecy or invisibility of language policies which silence the rights of underprivileged speakers of English from "the outer and expanding circles" and prescribe compliance with the inner circle standard as the most harmful influence of linguistic imperialism. Furthermore, it is important to highlight the effects that native speaker fallacy can have even in more developed contexts such as Japan. Kubota (2002: 21) highlighted the danger of the native speaker fallacy in her criticism of the Japanese education policy, which is based on the "native speaker myth" or "the idealisation of a native speaker as someone who has perfect, innate knowledge of the language and culture and thus is the best teacher of English". Kubato (2002) revealed that the manifestation of linguistic imperialism in the context of Japan was

related to racial prejudices, referring to those Japanese people who suspect black English language instructors not to be able to deliver the North American or British varieties appropriately.

Although research into EAL speaking professionals who are concerned with these critical issues in TESOL (Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005; Braine, 1999; 2005) has drawn attention within the last two decades, most research so far has approached them as a single group under the label “non-native speakers” (NNs). This label includes a negative particle to claim an identity or better a “non-identity” and does not identify any particular characteristic of this group except for the negation of their native speaker condition (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Secondly, the identity they claim not to have (i.e., native) is a particularly elusive one, as illustrated in extensive discussions by Paikeday (1985), Rampton (1990), Liu (1999), Brutt-Griffler & Samimy (1999), Davies (1991, 2003), and Faez (2012). Moussu & Llurda (2008: 337) summarise the problems of categorising speakers which were taken-for-granted in the previous research as follows:

No feature, other than birth within a fairly homogenous linguistic community, has been discovered to support the existence of a ‘native speaker’ identity. Ultimately, what appears to be the most distinguishing feature is simply whether one considers herself a native speaker of a given community and is recognized as such by other speakers in the community. A concept that is so elusive to characterize, and which has been so loosely applied to all speakers who would not meet the rather subjective and discriminatory criteria to belong to the ‘native speaker’ category, is prone to suffer from overgeneralization.

Drawing a detailed account of how NNs are categorised as the “Other” by the dominant group of NSs, Holliday (2005; 2008) reveals how this ‘otherness’ entails a necessary simplification and suppression of complexities as in “culturism” (Holliday, 2005), the most common examples of which are found in the generalisation of the other, typical of racism and sexism. Culturism, and more particularly, “native speakerism”, causes a stereotypical myth by which the “other” (i.e., the NNS) is regarded as “uncritical, static, rigid, with a fixed view of knowledge, intellectually interdependent, wishing to preserve knowledge, good at memorizing”, who also needs “to be trained, treated sensitively, understood, involved, given ownership, empowered”, finds decision-making difficult, and prefers frontal teaching as she is exam-oriented” (Holliday 2005: 21).

As most research studies were informed by such assumptions regarding the broad category of NNSs, they lacked any further detailing of the particular conditions and settings of that 'group of speakers' and any distinction of different circumstances and characteristics within the group (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). I feel the need to go beyond this reductionist labelling and take the discussion about the necessity of the use of terms with caution into account in the literature. In this respect, I find using bi/multi-lingual or EAL speakers as the appropriate terms to use. I believe these terms are inclusive and comprehensive enough to acknowledge that it is not a deficiency but an asset to be able to speak it as an additional language. The other views giving privilege to nativeness are rather colonising and patronising while expecting EAL speakers to meet up to the native use of English or nativeness. This, however, can be resisted by many as it may impede EAL speakers' right to express their identities in their own ways through their context-bounded use of 'accents'. The focus of this thesis is aimed at contributing to the studies about this group of speakers which I refer to as EAL speakers by looking into their linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences in teaching at a particular international university setting by promoting, developing, and advancing self-awareness of EAL speaking academics in different fields. I now turn to a consideration of the discussion about intercultural communication which is closely intertwined with the experiences of EAL speaking academics who deal with positioning, and being positioned, through different discourses.

## **2.8 Intercultural communication from a critical perspective**

This thesis deals with the intercultural experiences of EAL speaking academics, which requires a closer look at the issue of intercultural communication. This can be approached from different perspectives, which are based on different understandings of "culture" and "inter". Therefore, firstly, I will consider a discussion of the meaning of "culture" to be followed by a discussion of the meaning of "inter" in the next paragraph. The discussions into the nature of culture include the dichotomy between essentialism and non-essentialism (Keesing, as cited in Holliday et al., 2004). The former sees "a culture" as a physical entity which has homogeneous traits spread evenly in relation to a country (like food, dressing styles, music etc.)

and a language, and which has an onion-skin relationship with mutually exclusive larger or smaller cultures which are essentially different from each other (*ibid.*). On the other hand, the latter perceives culture as a social force with complex characteristics which are difficult to pin down, and which can be associated with a value, relate to any type or size of group for any period of time and be characterised by a discourse as much as a language (*ibid.*). In the non-essentialist view of culture, people can move through a complex multiplicity of cultures which can flow, change, intermingle, cut across and through one another both within and across societies (Holliday et al., 2004: 4). While important and influential in framing our lives, national structures do not confine or explain some very important aspects of our cultural behaviour (Holliday, 2011). In this thesis, culture and intercultural communication will be dealt with as movable concepts with fluid and negotiable boundaries from a non-essentialist perspective. This perspective is, thereby, open to the possibility of underlying universal processes that provide people from all cultural backgrounds with the cosmopolitan potential to dialogue with and transcend national structures (Holliday, 2011). Though this cosmopolitan potential may have always been there, it is becoming more evident than ever in the globalising world.

The term “interculturality” (despite its wide adoption and different conceptualisations regarding the process of meaning making and its potential and purpose), remains without a precise definition. It also has the potential to become a cliché which fails to deal with the inherent complexity within the concept. Embracing a non-essentialist understanding of culture raises important questions in terms of the feasibility of the concept. Firstly, from a non-essentialist perspective, there is not even a need to talk of interculturality, as “inter” implies the essentialist “betweenness” of monolithic cultures. Non-essentialism puts emphasis instead on all human interchanges, wherever they take place, in a dynamic state of flux and hybridity as it is much more challenging to identify and separate cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009: 39). Therefore, the view of interculturality underpinning the study reported in this thesis draws on the intercultural encounters between people -- and not between cultures -- though people may be considered to be influenced by different sociocultural, linguistic, political and economic backgrounds that have an impact on their position across the global contact zones.

Essentialism shows people's individual behaviour "as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are" (Holliday, 2005: 17; Dobbin 1994, Grimshaw 2007, Holliday 1999, Jensen 2006, as cited in Holliday, 2011: 16). As discussed at the beginning of this section, it is in many ways the default way of thinking about how we are different from each other, which is presumed to be natural and normal, and there is only a small step from essentialist thinking to chauvinistic statements that carry the meaning of a grossly simplistic, exaggerated and homogenous, imagined, single culture. Such discourses of "Othering" are so powerful that anyone "divergent" according to the essentialist definition is thought to be not a "real" Chinese, Middle Eastern or Western; "the serious implication here is that people are not allowed to step outside their designated cultural places" (Holliday, 2011: 5). In contrast to essentialism, which claims certainty about what sort of people can be found where, non-essentialism draws a more complex picture which is less easy to talk about.

While appreciating the artificiality of such dichotomies and the existence of many in-between and cross-over positions, Holliday (2011) uses the term neo-essentialism to refer to the dominant approach within the sub-discipline of intercultural communication studies which follows the dominant essentialist work of theorists like Hofstede, while claiming a more liberal and, non-essentialist vision. Hofstede does acknowledge the dangers of ethnocentric stereotypes such as "all Dutch people are honest" (Hofstede, 2001: 14) and recognises that a culture can be "any human collectivity or category: a profession, an age group, an entire gender, or a family" (ibid.: 10) However, he makes a tight comparison between national cultures as complete and self-sufficient social systems with the certainty of precise, measurable behavioural formulae, which enables each system to govern the way in which the behaviour of individuals can be 'scored' within dimensions' such as individualism-collectivism etc. (ibid.: 29).

With this view prevailing during the past 20 years of globalization, there is an incomplete rejection of essentialism and cultural oversimplification while claiming to celebrate cultural diversity. That is to say, important essentialist elements are still

maintained through Hofstedian categories of difference, and others like them (Gudykunst et al., 2005; Jandt, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 2001; Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2000; Triandis, 2004). This causes behaviour which goes against national stereotypes to be framed as an exception to the essentialist rule, rather than as a reality in its own right. Holliday associates this inconsistency of essentialism due to an inherent lack of criticality (Delanty et al., 2008: 14; Jordan & Weedon, 1995; Kim, 2005). Overall, there is a need to problematise the essentialist reading of culture and embrace non-essentialist understandings of culture. This is important to avoid the production of unhelpful stereotypes of people that invokes an “us-and-them” outlook on the concept and the definition of the world as a mosaic of bounded and discreet groupings (Pieterse, 2004) aligned with the modernist project of nation building (Holliday, 2011; Rizvi, 2008; Delanty, 2006).

These issues can be addressed by adopting a critical cosmopolitan approach, in which common perceptions of culture are recognised as being ideological and constructed by political interest (Holliday, 2011: 2). This view acknowledges cultural realism in that there *is* a cultural truth hidden by ideological constructions though many established “truths” about culture are in fact socially constructed, which means that there are unrecognised cultural realities whose real nature needs to be learnt from the margins that Western definitions have specified (Hall, 1991). These definitions of margins and the centre are very complex, and the terminology- “the West and non-West”, “Centre and Periphery”- which any discussion of global Othering has to utilise, is clumsy and has the potential of cloaking the necessary sense of complexity in cultural realities. Alongside the acceptance of cultural difference and the importance of nation, it is also vital to place intercultural communication at a deeper level of complexity which transcends the fixity of a Centre-Western concept of nation (Holliday, 2011). In contrast to neo-essentialism (which regards complex, blurred and negotiable cultural realities as exceptions and divides the world into national categories neatly), critical cosmopolitanism (which derives from within a broader sociological and anthropological viewpoint) recognises the complexity and normality of shifting, overlapping, swirling and combining discourses and literacies (Ahmed & Donnan, 1994; Delanty, 2006; Grande, 2006). The following table (Table 2.3) (Holliday, 2011: 14) illustrates “the

definitions and certainties of a neatly organised world in *modernist* neo-essentialism with imagined certainty in accountable theories of difference" versus "the acknowledged complexity in a process of negotiation at every level within an unequal world marked by ideology in *postmodernist* critical cosmopolitanism".

**Table 2.3** Images of culture (Holliday, 2011: 14).

	Neo-essentialism	Critical cosmopolitanism
Culture	National culture remains the basic unit.  Diversity is exception to the rule	Non-essentialist.  Acknowledges a fluid complexity with blurred boundaries.  Diversity is the norm.
Approach	Modernist- ideology only exists within the culture that is being described.  Liberal multiculturalism- different but equal national and ethnic cultures.  Cultural relativism- the protection of difference.  Positivist- a priori neutral cultural characteristics drive the analysis.	Postmodern- both the subject and the methodology of investigation are ideologically constructed.  Recognition of deep Centre-Periphery inequality.  Emergent Periphery cultural realities struggling for recognition.  Contestation of principles  Interpretivist- observation open to emergent, complex realities.
The world	Global cosmopolitanism- globalisation defined by the Centre image of a global political and economic order.	Vernacular cosmopolitanism- The Periphery claiming the world.
Intercultural concerns	'Us' comparing 'our' culture with 'theirs'.	All parties looking critically at cultural texts everywhere.

Postmodernism, which underlies critical cosmopolitanism and was inspired by Kuhn's (as cited in Holliday, 2011) blowing apart the modernist illusion that science was neutral and untouched by ideology, is sometimes accused of cultural relativism (Holliday, 2011). Thus, cultural relativism may wrongly be attributed to the second

column of the table- critical cosmopolitanism. However, this notion is different from a non-essentialist view of diversity. In fact, the notion of respecting other cultures for what they are and protecting differences is ironically the stated position of neo-essentialism. For example, there is a common assumption among language educators from the English-speaking West- “we shouldn’t expect *them* to be autonomous like *us*; we should respect *their* culture for not allowing it” (Holliday et al., 2004; 2005: 82). Critical cosmopolitans see this statement as a preoccupation of an otherising and patronising view that falls back on neo-essentialism while opposing essentialism by denying the foreign Other the possibility of autonomy, which in one way or another is a universal (Holliday, 2011: 15).

Instead of imagining the deficiencies of a whole culture as in collectivism or criticising a practice because it is “cultural”, a healthier approach is to consider the instrumental efficiency or moral implications of a particular cultural practice for the parties of intercultural encounters. It needs to be borne in mind that there can be complacency and ignorance of underlying prejudice even in practices constructed by their participants as “progressive”. This is why the ideological contestation over the images of culture has the potential to be influential on the methodological concerns for intercultural studies.

In examining the intercultural experiences of the participants in my study, I will avoid making thin descriptions of discrete cultures. However, such descriptions are found in most research into the outcome-based assumptions of the intercultural/ cross-cultural encounters described as intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; Jackson, 2008), intercultural awareness (Alred et al., 2003), and intercultural or global personhood or citizenship (Kim, 2008; Arnett, 2002). With this concern in mind, this study argues against overly simplistic intra-psychological and cognitive models of learning and linear views of intercultural adaptation (e.g. Kim, 2008; Deardorff, 2006; Chen & Starosta 2005, 2008; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Berry, 2004; Alred et al, 2003; Killick & Poveda, 1998; Byram, 1997). It shows a commitment to filling the gap in addressing the de-politicising tendency in the vast majority of studies into interculturality (see references above) (Holliday 2011; Holliday et al., 2004; Jiang, 2008). It also aims at developing more robust accounts which take seriously the

wider social, cultural, economic and political discourses within which othering and representation in intercultural encounters are positioned and situated. Hence, power differentials need to be accommodated into any attempts to theorise interculturality, which should be acknowledged to engage people as situated in sites inevitably full with conflicts and problems (Loenhoff, as cited in Rathjie, 2007). Therefore, this thesis seeks an understanding of *interculturality -- despite* the global streams from a critical and non-essentialist perspective -- by exploring its meaning in this sense.

## **2.9 The need to focus on the experiences of international academics from different disciplines in UK Higher Education**

Despite the considerable visibility of academics from abroad in UK universities, there has been little in-depth research on the mobility and recruitment of such academics and their impact on the internationalisation of British HE (Kim, 2009: 398; Kim & Locke, 2010: 32). There are some studies about academics from English-speaking countries who are assigned to offshore teaching projects (Dunn & Wallace, 2004; Garson, 2005; Gribble & Ziguras, 2003; Poole & Ewan, 2010). Tables 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 provide a synthesis of the literature identifying key studies, their theoretical or conceptual frameworks and how these informed the studies.

Overall, I am not aware of any studies specifically related to the linguistic, intercultural and professional experiences of international academics from different disciplines in international settings in the UK, although there are some studies into “non-native English speaking (NNES)” teaching staff in TESOL departments in the U.S (Table 2.6). For example, Han (2008) sought to explore the factors of language, pedagogy and culture which four international teaching assistants (ITAs) and their undergraduate students perceived as influential on intercultural classrooms. Han showed that students perceived the ITAs as using ineffective teaching techniques, lacking in their command of English -- especially accent and aural comprehension – and being unaware of cultural differences and the sociocultural backgrounds of the students. The ITAs, on the other hand, found themselves as well-prepared teachers not too much concerned about non-nativeness of English. She found that there was a need to awaken both ITAs and students to World Englishes and to the existence of different accents among non-native speakers. She also suggested that the

variety of learning and teaching methods be included in English class and that the sociocultural differences in learning and teaching English be considered.

**Table 2.4** Meta-analysis of key studies about international academics (IAs) in higher education institutions (HEIs).

Author, Year	Focus of study	Theoretical perspective	How it informs the study	Instrument	Participants	Location
Luxon & Peelo (2009)	Teaching practices of IAs.	Interpretivism (implied)	Exploratory, qualitative approach Grounded theory	Pilot language courses for teaching, Focus group and individual interviews	32	UK
Trahar (2011)	The effect of diverse student population on the current teaching and assessment practices in HE.	Interpretivism	Exploratory, qualitative approach Narrative inquiry with a focus on experience	Narrative interviews	4 IAs (out of 10)	3 HEI, UK
Pherali (2012)	The meaning of IAs' lived experiences both as a "foreigner" and academic member of staff.	Interpretivism	Exploratory, qualitative approach Hermeneutic phenomenology	In-depth interviews	7	5 HEI, UK
Saltmarsh & Swirski (2010)	IAs' experiences of transition to work and community life.	Interpretivism (implied)	Exploratory, mixed method approach	An online survey for demographic information; interviews.	12	Australia
Green & Myatt (2011)	The personal and professional experiences of new IA staff	Interpretivism (implied)	Exploratory, narrative research	Story collection via group/individual discussions	8	Australia
Collins (2008)	The key issues for foreign-born faculty coming to US academe.	Interpretivism (implied)	Exploratory, mixed method approach Survey research	A survey employing a mix of open, closed and Likert-scale questions	30 IAs and 334 students	US
Alberts (2008)	The challenges and opportunities of IAs in the classroom.	Interpretivism (implied)	Exploratory approach, mixed method of analysis	Essay collection from students; interviews with professors.	300 students and 12 IAs	8 HEI, US

Huang (2009)	IAs' cross-cultural teaching experiences	Critical interpretivism (implied)	Critical qualitative approach Narrative inquiry (the use gendered stories of tragedy and comedy)	One-semester of classroom observations, individual semi-structured interviews	4	US
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**Table 2.5** Meta-analysis of key studies about IAs speaking English as a first language in HEIs.

Author, Year	Focus of study	Theoretical perspective	How it informs the study	Instrument	Participants	Location
Dunn & Wallace (2004)	The experiences of Australian academics teaching in Singapore.	Post-positivism (the authors accepted the real 'reality' of the context albeit imperfectly apprehendable)	Qualitative approach Naturalistic inquiry	Classroom observations; semi-structured interviews.	5 transnational academics and 23 students and alumni	Singapore
Garson (2005)	An American faculty's academic employment and life in Cairo.	Interpretivism (not expressed)	Qualitative approach	Self-report of reflections on and understanding of the author's experiences.	1	Egypt
Gribble & Ziguras (2003)	The preparation of Australian academics teaching offshore.	Interpretivism (not expressed)	Qualitative approach	Interviews during a formal training program.	20	3 HEIs in Australia
Pool & Ewan (2010)	Academics as part-time marketers in university offshore programs	Interpretivism	Exploratory, qualitative approach A case study	Semi-structured, in-depth interviews	15	Australia

**Table 2.6** Meta-analysis of key studies about EAL speaking professionals and international teaching assistants (ITAs) in TESOL.

Author, Year	Focus of study	Theoretical perspective	How it informs the study	Instrument	Participants	Location
Han (2008)	The challenges of ITAs in the intercultural TESOL classrooms.	Interpretivism	Exploratory, qualitative approach	Interviews, observation and narratives	4 ITAs and 17 students	US
Holland (2008)	ITAs' lived experiences of teaching and learning in the classroom.	Interpretivism	Naturalistic/ qualitative inquiry, multi-case study approach	Document analysis, classroom observations of teaching sessions, and individualized interviews.	7	US
Bang (2011)	NNESTs' TESOL professionals' identity constructions and negotiations as pedagogical border crossers between the US and Korea.	Critical theory (with a focus on language ideologies)	Qualitative and hermeneutic approach Narrative inquiry	Casual conversations, autobiographical accounts, virtual discussions through blog entries, in-depth interviews, and e-interviews.	4	US
Lee (2009)	NNESTs' experiences and pedagogical approaches in the classroom and the challenges they face in the teaching profession	Interpretivism	Qualitative, multi-case study approach	Face-to-face interviews, email communications, classroom observations, review of lesson plan materials.	5	US

\*Whenever the label "NNEST" (non-native English speakers/speaking teachers) is used to refer to EAL speaking professionals, it is due to the use of the term in the studies mentioned.

In another study into three “NNES” university teaching assistants’ (TAs) professional identity constructions as ESL teachers in the U.S., Choi (2007) discussed the discourse of the “native and non-native speaker”, as explained in section 2.7. Choi collected various qualitative data such as written reflective logs, responses to a questionnaire, field notes from classroom observations, interviews and email correspondences, following these EAL speaking (my term) TAs for eight months. Choi found that the three TAs revealed varying degrees of understanding of themselves as English teachers, based on their unique life histories and linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A participant considered only native speakers or individuals with a degree from English-speaking countries as legitimate English teachers. Another participant, however, put forward that only those with ample experience in an ESL context could be such teachers. Therefore, there were multiple and sometimes contradictory discourses of being a competent English teacher. One of them experienced “being treated as a second-class citizen compared to native speakers of English when tutoring in Korea” (*ibid.*: 107). Despite their shared ESL teacher identity, the participants’ thoughts and belief systems were affected in varying degrees by the subtle power of the dichotomised notions of nativeness and non-nativeness (Choi, 2007). All in all, they referred to the importance of institutional and supervisory support for “NNESTs” to conceive of themselves as qualified and competent teachers of English (*ibid.*).

Holland (2008) conducted a qualitative inquiry in her doctoral dissertation to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experience of a select group of ITAs and to explore the processes that they are engaged in while learning to teach at a U.S university. She collected data through document analysis, classroom observations of teaching sessions, and individualised interviews. Findings mainly pointed to the incongruence between ITAs’ preconceived expectations about their role as a teacher and the reality of their actual experience (*ibid.*: iii). They were under the influence of their personal, idiosyncratic beliefs about teaching and learning in acts of teaching process which helped them learn how to teach by integrating new information with what was already known. However, these beliefs were often contradictory to what was valued by undergraduates, faculty advisors, and university administrators, and the multiple intersecting roles that they needed to

embrace interfered with this process of learning to teach. To recap, Holland (2008) situated the complexity of the ITA problem within the context of the constraints and challenges of the larger system of the US higher education system and recommended examining the sometimes unstated philosophical/epistemological worldviews that underpin the experiences of the ITAs.

Bang (2011) conducted a doctoral thesis about NNES professionals' identity constructions and negotiations as pedagogical border crossers between the U.S. and Korea. She used critical theory, as an epistemological consideration and narrative inquiry, as a methodological tool. Multiple qualitative methods were utilised to substantially investigate different aspects of language ideologies: casual conversation, autobiographical accounts, virtual discussions through blog entries, in-depth interviews, and e-interviews. A hermeneutic process was used to analyse data of the Korean NNES professionals' identity constructions. Findings showed the influence of English as one of the gatekeepers and as a form of capital on the participants in Korean society from K-12 through graduate program. Due to their lack of proficiency in English, NNES professionals (participants) were also found to be marginalized from English language education with the implementation of English-only classes in Korea. This further led them to be drawn into gaining U.S. degrees in a U.S. TESOL program, to increase their oral proficiency of English, and to construct their "hybrid" teacher identities. She highlighted the ideological influences on NNESTs' beliefs and attitudes toward English language education in the U.S and Korea, and suggested implications for restructuring of TESOL curricula.

To the best of my knowledge, apart from these studies focusing on the "non-nativeness" of the university staff specifically in TESOL, an interdisciplinary perspective with an attempt to explore and critically engage with linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of academics speaking English as an additional language (EAL) from different departments in higher education has not been considered in any studies. Therefore, while problematising the concept of "nativeness" and linguistic and cultural otherisation, in the present study I explore the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of "international" academics

from different disciplines of higher education. It is in this fresh context that I hope to fill the gap in the literature.

## **2.10 Summary**

In this chapter, I have critically reviewed the existing literature related to three concepts: the internationalisation of higher education institutions, native/non-native English speaker dichotomy and interculturality. I then turned to a consideration of the necessity of conducting research with a particular focus on the experiences of international academics from different disciplines in British HE. The next chapter will focus on the research design of the study.

## Chapter 3. The research design

### 3.1 Introductory overview

This chapter explains how the research methodology was developed and gives an account of the research design of the study, beginning with a description of the research aims and research questions. This is followed by a description of my phenomenological research, along with the details of the research context and participants. Next, I will discuss the method, the data collection and analysis, and the presentation procedures I undertook to gain a greater understanding of the topic. Following on from this, I will address the broader issues of ethicality and credibility and draw on my position as a researcher for this specific study.

### 3.2 Research aims and questions

The broad aims of the present study are:

- 1- To explore the participants' perspectives about being academics who are speakers of English as an additional language (EAL) through their linguistic experiences and challenges.
- 2- To find out the challenges about their professional experiences in teaching in higher education institutions.
- 3- To explore the intercultural experiences that inform their approaches to cultural descriptions and positioning as "international".
- 4- To inform the stakeholders of the higher education institutions with a focus on internationalisation about further insights into how the changes and adjustments can be done in the light of academics' experiences and about the strengths and benefits that intercultural exchanges through such implementations may be providing the teachers, the students and the institution.
- 5- To fill a gap in the literature and provide the first study of this type with regard to the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences and perspectives of "international" academics as speakers of EAL about teaching in different disciplines

at intercultural higher education institutions in the UK. At the same time, to contribute to the existing literature in relation to teacher experiences in intercultural contexts of higher education, intercultural communication and internationalisation at higher education institutions.

The overarching question guiding this study is, “What are the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of ‘international’ academics who are speakers of EAL in teaching at an internationalising British university?” Related subsidiary questions are as follows:

1. What are the academics’ language experiences and attitudes towards “non-native-like” language use as bi-/multi-lingual speakers?
2. What are the academics’ perceptions about their experiences and challenges of teaching at an internationalising UK university?
3. What are their accounts of experience of interculturality and approaches to cultural descriptions as “international” academics?

### **3.3 My phenomenological research journey**

My research aimed to explore the meaning several individuals attached to their lived experience of the phenomenon of being an international lecturer and to re-interpret these associated meanings (e.g. the meaning-making of “non-native-like” language use, positioning as bi-/multi-lingual speakers or as an insider or an outsider through their linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences). In this sense, the phenomenon of interest identified in the present study is what it means to be an international lecturer as a speaker of EAL. In this section, I will explicate my phenomenological research journey, as I have drawn on phenomenology both as a philosophy and a research methodology. Then I will move to address the perspectives that have impacted my understanding of phenomenology in this research journey.

First, it is important to explore the historical roots of phenomenology as a movement, because our understandings of different views of phenomenology are not stationary, but rather dynamic and evolving, even today (Speigelberg, as cited in Laverty, 2003). Therefore, the views presented here need to be seen as having

changed and developed over time, not as static entities (Laverty, 2003). Consideration is first given to the similarities and differences which exist within the phenomenological movement.

The phenomenological movement is considered to have emerged around the turn of the twentieth century, and Franz Brentano is thought to be the precursor, Edmund Husserl the founder, and Martin Heidegger an eminent exponent (Crotty, 1998). As Crotty (1998: 61) claims, phenomenology was “thoroughly imbued with -- indeed predicated upon -- the spirit of social constructionism, and declared itself from the start as being a philosophy of radical criticism”. The phenomenological movement launched under the founding statement ‘Back to the things themselves!’, where the “things themselves” are considered to mean the underlying essence of everyday life (ibid.).

Laverty (2003) proposes that the common features of the phenomenology of Husserl and the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger and Gadamer are that they concern the uncovering of the life world or human experience as it is lived -- reclaiming what is perceived to have been lost through the use of empirical scientific explorations within the human realm. The philosophical differences among these theories emerge within the realms of ontology and epistemology. Husserl’s early educational focus in the scientific paradigm is seen to have influenced his conceptualisations of consciousness and the relationship of the knower to it, in that he attempted to shed light on the one-sidedness of exact scientific experience based on merely external physical appearances (Gadamer, as cited in ibid.). Husserl’s focus was mainly on the epistemological question of the relationship between the knower and the object of study. On the other hand, Heidegger focused on the ontological question of the nature of reality and “Being” in the world (Laverty, 2003: 14).

There are as many styles of phenomenology as there are phenomenologists (Spiegelberg, as cited in Dowling, 2007: 131): Its forms are located in the positivist (Husserl), postpositivist (Merleau-Ponty), interpretivist (Heidegger) and constructivist (Gadamer) paradigms (Racher & Robinson, 2002). Crotty (1998) identifies two main versions of phenomenology. He argues that the first is *pure*

(philosophical in Giorgi's (2000) term) phenomenology as espoused by its founding European philosophers. The second is "new" phenomenology as a research methodology embraced frequently by nurse researchers in North-America. Barkway (2001) summarised the main differences between traditional European and American phenomenologies:

In this original [pure] form, phenomenology is a critical methodology that invites us to revisit our conscious experience and open ourselves to the emergence of new meaning or at least the authentication and renewal of our present meanings. It is essentially a first-person experience. However, particularly in the North American context, it came to be applied to the study of other people's experience, which is reported in the third person and, as Crotty argues, to be linked with and informed by the intellectual tradition of that continent (Barkway, 2001: 192).

Caelli (2000: 368) infers that these differences may represent new ways of applying phenomenological philosophy to inquiry, and that "it is more than probable that changes to methodology reflect philosophical and methodological choices made by researchers". She reminds the critics of American phenomenology of the need to reflect on the fact that "changes to methodology may well have resulted from the fact that the approach is being used for research rather than for the solitary philosophical reflection of Husserl and Heidegger" (*ibid.*: 373). She suggests that both the traditional and the American modes should be considered during research processes. To summarise these points then, while the traditional European approach emphasises the pre-reflective experience of being in the world as a philosophy, the American mode allows for the exploration of experience *per se* from the perspectives of participants as a methodology (*ibid.*).

Being aware of the differences between these traditions, I have undergone a phenomenological research journey as a first-person experience, through which I pondered on the philosophical underpinnings of my study – ontology and epistemology. This was in the sense of European "philosophical" phenomenology, while exploring my own understanding of the research phenomenon itself as the *object* of my experience. That is to say, my experience of conducting this research caused me to reflect on the viewpoints regarding the nature of reality. Phenomenology has differing streams depending on the viewpoints about the nature of reality held by the researchers (Annells, 1999). In agreement with these scholars, I too see reality (the world and objects in the world) as existing before our

consciousness and as perceived by our consciousness. I have been inspired by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, who frequently invoke the idea that there is a “world always already there”, but who are also far from being objectivists (Crotty, 1998: 10-44). I have come to know constructionism and phenomenology as: “so intertwined that one could hardly be phenomenological while espousing either an objectivist or a subjectivist epistemology” (Crotty, 1998: 12). Both constructionism and phenomenology were in line with the thought that “objectivity and subjectivity need to be brought together and held together indissolubly”, and this is precisely what constructionism argues too, mirroring the concept of intentionality in phenomenology (*ibid.*: 44). To embrace this notion of intentionality means to reject both objectivism and subjectivism equally and to bring to the fore the “interaction between subject and object”, in and out of which meaning is born (Crotty, 1998: 44; van Manen, 1997: 20). Drawing on these notions of philosophical phenomenology, I too see the interaction between subject and object as inseparable. As Moustakas (1994: 28) noted, this “knowledge of intentionality requires that we be present to ourselves and to things in the world, that we recognise that self and world are inseparable components of meaning.” (see 3.7 for an explanation of how this interaction takes place through the concept of bracketing viewed as persistent curiosity).

Methodologically, my research is in line with the “new” methodological tradition from the North American context, which came to be applied to the study of other people’s experience, and which is reported in the third person. As Barkway (2001), Giorgi (2000) and Dowling (2007) noted, the choice between types of phenomenology needs ultimately to be based on the nature of the questions being addressed.

As Caelli concludes (2000), undoubtedly, both the traditional European and the American approaches to phenomenology are of value to researchers. The traditional European approach is necessary to critically engage with the analyses of the reality and the knowledge of the reality for a deeper understanding of our philosophical assumptions. The American mode helps explore the more situated nature of the human condition and uncover the meaning of lived experience from the situated perspectives of the people who participate. My research focuses on a

subjective understanding of the experience of the phenomenon from the participant's perspective as in what Crotty calls "new" phenomenology. This includes previously interpreted descriptions of experience given by research participants, which "provide a broader canvas on which to paint a description of a phenomenon than is provided by traditional phenomenology alone" (Caelli, 2000: 373). All in all, I have reflected on both European philosophical phenomenology and the new, North American, methodological phenomenology. I have adopted the philosophical notions of pure phenomenology while pondering on ontological and epistemological assumptions as a first-person experience. Also, as the new version of phenomenology is suited to my research questions, it has guided my methodological choice.

Looking for a suitable research design for my study, I experienced major difficulty in finding literature that provides guidelines on conducting phenomenological research. There is an appropriate reluctance on the part of the researchers who use phenomenology to prescribe techniques and to focus too much on specific steps (Holloway, Hycner as cited in Groenewald, 2004: 6). Also, Hycner (as cited in Groenewald, 2004: 6) added that one cannot impose method on a phenomenon "since that would do a great injustice to the integrity of that phenomenon". McManus-Holroyd (2007) considered that engaging in phenomenological research is no easy endeavour, as it requires a commitment to engage with its philosophical underpinnings as a way of moving toward clarifying the conditions of understanding. She indicates that: "No method or set framework exists upon which researchers are able to rely to clarify the conditions of understanding" (*ibid.*: 10). It is, in fact, hard to find detailed guidance on methodology for phenomenological studies. However, there are some in existence, and as Groenewald (2004) suggests, these might be needed by novice researchers. It was these suggestions (Hycner, as cited in Groenewald, 2004) that I worked on in the development of my own design, which will be set out in 3.7.

Next, I will discuss the location of the research participants, the ethical considerations, the data collection, data-storage methods used, and the *explication* (analysis) of the data.

### 3.4 Participants

The academics who teach in various disciplines with different years of experience in their field at one university in the south of the UK were chosen according to a common point of selection criterion: speaking English as a second or an additional language; therefore, the study participants were selected based on purposive sampling. In this study, my sampling strategy can be considered as both purposive/convenient in so far as I have focused on a target group of international academics/teaching staff who are reasonably representative of the wider population of international higher education programs in the UK, and to whom I had easy access. On the other hand, it can also be described as theoretical sampling in that it also has the potential to generate new understandings of important constructs (Patton, 2002: 238). The reason why I focused on international staff in different disciplines is that the challenges that international teachers as speakers of EAL face in intercultural contexts may not be exclusive to one field, but common to all disciplines at internationalising universities.

Considering their profiles, they mostly had teaching experience both in their country of origin and in the UK, and from a wide range of disciplines, including both hard and soft sciences such as Computer Science, Engineering, Education, Business Studies, Languages, Politics, Law, Sociology. They were from various countries in Western, Southern and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Southern Asia and the Far East. The participants included four women and eleven men. This was not reflective of the gender balance at the university. The gender balance was not related to the focus and the sampling criteria of the study. As one of a number of strategies undertaken to protect the anonymity of the participants, I elected not to provide their country of origin or nationality, but only the names of the regions that the countries belong to. Also, instead of the specific subject areas like economics, biology or anthropology, the names of the larger disciplines like social or natural sciences, business studies or humanities were employed for the same reasons -- in order for the participants to feel comfortable to talk about sensitive issues. This anonymity did not affect the direction of the interpretation of the interviews, as these were not necessary to include; rather, this prevented their experiences from being

essentially reduced to specific groups of people in certain countries or departments. Table 3.1 below provides an overview of the demographics of the academics that were the focus of the study. To protect the participants' anonymity, I asked them to use preferred pseudonyms during the study, and to write them on the consent forms at the beginning of the interviews. These pseudonyms are employed in the following table. Where an English pseudonym is employed for an international academic, this is done to reflect their own preference to adopt an English name.

**Table 3.1** The profile of the international academics that were the focus of the study.

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Ethnic region	Department	Years of experience in teaching
Ali	Male	Middle East	NLS	5-10
Paul	Male	South Europe	EAS	5-10
Sylvia	Female	West Europe	SS	15-20
Bobo	Male	South Europe	HUM	5-10
Omar	Male	Middle East	NLS	15-20
Anna	Female	West Europe	SS	15-20
Yusuf	Male	Middle East	HUM	1-5
Koz	Male	Africa	EAS	10-15
Silvan	Male	Middle East	SS/HUM	1-5
Samir	Male	South Asia	EAS	1-5
Sara	Female	East Europe	EAS	20+
Lim	Male	Far East	NLS	15-20
Julia	Female	West Europe	SS	15-20
Saroj	Male	South Asia	EAS	20+
Joe	Male	Far East	SS	5-10

The key to the acronyms: Natural and Life Sciences (NLS), Humanities (HUM), Social Sciences (SS), Economics and Administrative Sciences (EAS).

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

In this study, ethical approval for the research was granted by the Graduate School of Education's Ethics Committee (Appendix 1). I frankly discussed my paradigmatic position and ontological and epistemological assumptions. This was out of my

commitment to ethically responsible research because these also have an impact on the researcher's ethical positioning. As the focus of the research was on the individual's personal experiences, the research demanded that the participants share their understanding of their positioning in relation to others in their personal and professional lives, and this meant that, except for reasonable considerations, a researcher cannot protect the individual from the intrusion to their personal and social world (Josselson, 1996). As a natural consequence of this intrusion, the individual is likely to participate in self-reflection and question their choices, practices and behaviours, which may lead them to self-doubt (Attard, 2008) or reinterpret their positions and identities (Gee, 2011). Recognising the impact of the research process on the participants, I was also mindful of the risk of the researcher performing a self-serving bias (Bar-on, 1996); that is why I strived to explicitly state my position as the researcher and my theoretical underpinnings, acknowledging that the research was of value for the participant as well as the researcher. Hence, recognising that I cannot take sole responsibility for the potential consequences of the research, I paid attention to a number of ethical considerations in order to minimise the influence of participation on the individuals interviewed. As tools for reflexivity on the research process, I utilised the British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines for educational research (2011) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) code of ethics and conduct (2009). Below is a summary of the ethical considerations based on the guidance from the BERA and the BPS in the first three sections and the context-specific considerations made in the fourth and the fifth.

### **3.5.1 Informed consent**

All the participants were fully aware of the process and the purpose of the research prior to participating. They were asked to sign a consent form which outlines all that was expected of them in terms of their participation and experiences in the study. The consent form also indicated their rights as a participant such as withdrawing from the study at any time, and they were also informed about the anonymity and confidentiality of their names and the information they provided. I sent a blank consent form to each participant along with the invitation letter which they signed

and returned. They kept a copy of this for themselves. They were informed of what the research project was going to be about, its nature and purposes, what their participation consisted of, how their participation will benefit the research process, and how the results were going to be disseminated and used as Smith et al. (2009) and Chase (1996) stated.

With respect to the precise steps I took in my interaction with the participants, at the start of the investigation I articulated the research objectives of the proposed project to them, both in written email letter (Appendix 2) and verbally in our meeting. I also reminded them of the fact that the results of the study covering any experiences they report will contribute to the portrayal of the needs, challenges and concerns which international staff have at universities, and to the conceptualisation of intercultural communication. I attached a copy of the consent form (Appendix 3) along with the emails explaining my study. The potential interview participants were informed about my student/researcher status just in case possible participants from my own university would not want to be involved in an interview, as the researcher could not assure them of full protection from the intrusion into their lives. This issue led some of the international academics to decline to participate in the study. It is understandable that the invitation to be involved in the study means for the participants that they are under the power exercised by the researcher over them; that is to say, they are engaged in a dilemma of whether to conform to the social norms and agree to participate, or choose not to, and justify their decision. Lastly, the form of the participation was left with the choice of the potential participant, and the ones that accepted agreed on signing the form, which was specifically emphasised by some, while not adhered to by others.

### **3.5.2 Engagement with the participants**

My contact details, such as the telephone number and email address, were given to the participants for possible face to face or email conversations related to the focus, content or process of the research at any stage of their involvement. I sent a copy of the verbatim transcription of their interviews to the participants so that they could make necessary changes and additions to the data, or to anonymise the specific information they gave during the interview. These practices reminded them

of their right to withdraw at any stage within the research process. Further details about their continuous engagement in the research process will be clarified in the data collection and analysis sections of this chapter.

### **3.5.3 Protection of the participants**

During and after the interviews, in every stage I came to, I kept in my mind that my participants' rights, interests and wishes should be considered first when choices were made during the report of the data. For example, whenever I ended up with a confusion related to an interpretation of an extract from their interviews, I shared my comments with them and asked them to clarify the point that they tried to make. I refrained from any expression of details that would have made their position explicit as international academics. Whenever they touched upon sensitive issues, I discussed these with them in terms of their dissemination to a wider audience, and I included such issues when they wanted their voices to be heard. I also acknowledged that my personal experiences, understandings and perceptions impinged on the data interpretation as the researcher. With this in mind, I was faithful to my participants' accounts in a way that would represent their stories by protecting their 'authenticity'.

### **3.5.4 Gaining Access**

During the time at which I was about to commence data collection, I was taking a professional course about 'learning and teaching at higher education as an associate fellow'. As part of that course, I was able to contact many teaching fellows from various disciplines, which was a step for me to announce my study. The head of that programme was helpful in giving me the names of the people who were responsible for the staff at each department, and she also sent emails of invitation to the course participants on my behalf, after I sent her my research description in one paragraph (as in Appendix 2). First, I sent an email to the head of departments in order to introduce my research study and state my intention to interview international academics whose first language was not English. Then they sent the letter of invitation to all the teaching staff on my behalf, and I started to get emails from volunteering academics who were interested in taking part in my study. In

order to reach a heterogeneous community of participants from various disciplines, I checked the international staff from the website of departments and introduced myself to them by meeting them personally in their office hours; thus I visited every departmental building and managed to get interview appointments with participants from different academic fields.

### **3.5.5 Local ethical considerations**

In line with data protection, and as a measure to avoid potential harm to the participants, all the audio recordings of the interviews were downloaded to a password-protected area of my computer, and the original recordings were deleted from the recorder. The interviews were conducted in the academics' offices or pre-booked rooms in their campuses, according to their preference, to provide them with a comfortable atmosphere and an element of privacy while reducing possible interruptions. Due to the participants' schedules, I had to do more than one interview on the same day, but I scheduled a substantial time lapse between each participant to ensure confidentiality and privacy for each individual. Generally speaking, however, I carried out one interview per day so that I could focus on each one. This also allowed me enough time to note down any details, comments or interpretations that came to my mind during or subsequent to the interviews, and to refresh my mind before I became engaged in the next one. After each interview, I set aside a certain time to reflect on the finished interview and to take some notes/memos on my research log. This enabled me to think back on the interview, and to identify any particular feelings or emotional moments, such as the making of a witty comment by the participant, as they were narrating a story.

## **3.6 Data Collection**

The fifteen individual interviews were conducted over a period of approximately nine weeks. This was due to the length of the interviews (twenty-nine questions plus follow-ups; in Appendix 4) and the participants' time availability. The interviews with each participant lasted for about one and half hours, except for one which lasted for five hours in total due to the participant suffering from attention deficit disorder (ADD). In order to establish a comfortable atmosphere in which we can talk about

each one of interview topics, we made two sessions at different times and places, to allow enough time for the participant to finish what they wanted to say about each issue.

The central aim was “to understand people’s actions and their experiences of the world, and the ways in which their motivated actions arise from and reflect back on these experiences” (Brewer, 2004: 313). Therefore, the overall aim was to reflect the voices of international academics as speakers of EAL at an international university in the UK. My main research instrument was in-depth semi-structured interviews concerned exclusively with the experiences and challenges of international academics. These were specifically about the meanings they describe as emerging from their pre-programme, current experiences of both in class and out of class lives and future plans relevant to their present lives. Such interviews particularly seemed suitable to investigate each participant’s lived experience -- of understanding and making sense of their positioning and being positioned as an ‘international’ staff. The processes of data collection included the piloting and main stages, as explained below.

### **3.6.1 Piloting**

A pilot study was undertaken to 1) determine what international academics from both applied/pure and hard/soft sciences thought and felt about the initial interview questions; 2) determine what improvements and/or changes needed to be made to the main interviews in terms of their content, focus and format before implementation. Eight international academics, including two academics from each major department of both hard/soft and pure/applied disciplines, were interviewed to probe key issues of interest or concern for international academics from different disciplines, to see if there were any possible differences and/or similarities that may emerge from their fields, and to improve the applicability and the inclusivity of the questions selected in the main interviews. The pilot study served to define a clearer research focus, elicit relevant themes and issues and refine research questions. It was also useful in getting a better idea of the most pressing concerns of academics regarding language, profession and relationships with people in an HE context.

These initial interviews began the process of expanding and redefining ways of exploring experiences of academics.

After the piloting of my interview, I changed the wording of initial questions to simpler and more open prompts in order to elicit stories that recounted teachers' professional and personal experiences that included specific incidents and particular moments in their lives and careers. Despite the uncertainty of giving up the control of a fixed interview format, such interviews with extended narration create possibilities for power-sharing and greater equality, which yields genuine discoveries about a phenomenon.

Lastly, the experience of piloting the interview prompted me to rewrite my research questions by changing the participants' name from NNES to "international". I was aware of this label at the start of the research, and I used it on purpose to refer to the literature written on this concept. However, some participants resisted the distinction between non-native English speakers and natives, and this made me change the term into "international". They also resisted the idea that international staff are in an isolated situation. Instead, they shared many stories that demonstrated that their position was more advantageous in terms of communicating with the students. For this reason, I reshaped my research questions by covering both positive experiences and strategies of dealing with any challenges, instead of just focusing on concerns and difficulties they had as a "NNES" university teacher. Such concepts as "international" or "home" may be homogenizing in terms of a group of people, as suggested by Trahar (2012). On the other hand, my intention in this study was to use 'international' to refer to the already existing prior data which could be associated with the interpretations in this study. I also aimed at exploring whether the participants see themselves positioned in this way and opening a space for their voices, rather than marginalising a group under a label, as can be understood from my research objectives.

### **3.6.2 Conducting the interviews**

Individual semi-structured interviews were selected for several reasons: First, they are effective in gathering information in a sensitive, flexible and, if required, delicate

manner (Mills, 2001). Second, they enable the researcher to make richer and more accurate inferences than close-ended tools of data collection (Pajares, 1992). Third, they are useful for capturing the personal perspectives of interviewees. In this sense, they are "a valuable way of gaining a description of actions and events especially for events that took place in the past or ones to which you cannot gain observational access" (Maxwell, 1996: 76). Among the many means of data gathering for the analysis of lived experience -- of which phenomenological study is an obvious type -- van Manen (1997) also favours the interviewing of individuals when gathering their reflective recollections. Therefore, the semi-structured individual interview, as the main tool to gather information, served to explore the EAL speaking academics' perspectives, understandings and experiences in an in-depth and confidential manner. The prerequisite starting point was the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Patton, as cited in Han, 2008). Interviews generate insights and concepts. The point is not to generalize about them, but to understand how and why the participants came to have their particular perspective (King, 2004). This leads us to the core value of the interview format in that:

...it allows both the interviewer and the interviewee to explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved, which results in an implicit or explicit sharing and/ or negotiation of understanding in the interview situation which is not so central, and often not present, in other research procedures. Any misunderstandings on the part of the interviewer or the interviewee can be checked immediately in a way that is just not possible when questionnaires are being completed, or tests are being performed (Brenner, Brown and Canter, 1985: 3).

Patton (as cited in Han, 2008: 90-1) identifies four types of qualitative interviewing: The informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, the standardized open-ended interview, and the closed, fixed response interview. During my interviews, I drew upon the general interview guide approach which provided a framework which covered the topics and issues in a more systematic and comprehensive way than in the informal conversational interview. I also utilized parts of the standardised open-ended interview which provided a set of predetermined questions. On the one hand, I was mindful to remain conversational and situational in order to increase my participants' interest and willingness to

participate. On the other hand, I was making use of a succinct set of open-ended questions determined in advance. This compensated for the weakness of the general interview guide approach in that it may inadvertently omit the important and salient topics (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, my interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, which gave the participants ample room to discuss the topic. To this end, I utilised some predetermined, guided questions on which I could build more questions during the interview (Erlandson et al., 1993). For example, I prepared an outline of topics and issues prior to the interview. For example, as a warm-up question at the beginning of the interview, I said "Tell me anything about yourself beginning from your birth and educational years till today". The key themes involved a timeline of their lives with a focus on, but not limited to, their linguistic, intercultural and professional experiences. To maintain a sense of biographical sequence and significance, I also included the following sub-themes:

- Background information -- their educational, sociocultural and linguistic background and what led them to apply to the programme and work in the UK
- Previous experiences of living and teaching in an intercultural/western context and their significance
- Experiences of the intercultural context of the university and their programme as a teacher to date and their significance.
- Experiences/ Challenges of university life and living in the UK more broadly and their significance.

After opening the interview with the general question about their background, I remained fairly conversational and informal, similar to the informational conversation interview. Through the accounts of their educational and professional years, I pointed out certain moments where they made important decisions such as their transition to the UK and, where appropriate and relevant, I asked my open-ended questions within the stream of the conversation. These questions facilitated organization and helped with post-interview analysis. However, I adhered to them with flexibility in terms of their sequence and in line with the naturalness of creating questions and answers.

In designing these interviews, I also drew keenly on the principles of narrative research (explained below) to deeply engage with the individual academic's

interaction with the workplace and their interpretation of their own experience. Loftus and Higgs (2010: 377) argue that phenomenology and narrative research can be combined to allow research to engage with the individual's subjective experience and explore the relationships between individuals and their practice environment. There is a close relationship between phenomenology and narrative inquiry in that "narrative is a powerful tool that people can use for interpreting the world around them" (ibid.: 384). They suggested that phenomenology and narrative inquiry are two approaches that can enable us to explore the ontological nature of becoming and being a professional within a social circumstance. In this way, narratives can be viewed as "culturally provided artefacts that individuals can use as interpretative tools to make life and work meaningful" in that (ibid.: 384-386):

Each story can have several layers of meaning and that there are interactions between the different stories we live out. Personal narratives interact with professional narratives in complex ways. Agency, intentionality and subjectivity are combined in the stories we live out, and narrative inquiry permits us to engage with these various aspects of individual subjectivity and draw out their meaning.

In this research, my participants told their stories of being an international academic or a speaker of EAL in England and revealed their attempts to make sense of their communication and intercultural exchanges with others in their academic and personal life worlds. The focus of my attention was not just the individual, but the individual in social context and engaged in social practice, by the help of both narrative inquiry and phenomenology. Chase (2003: 81) also considered that the best way to conduct in-depth interviews in any qualitative research is to make use of narratives in order to focus on people's actual stories with social characteristics during the course of actual interviews. This results from two principles of narrative research (ibid.):

The first is that narration is a major way in which people make sense of experience, construct the self, and create and communicate meaning. The second is that personal narratives, no matter how unique and individual, are inevitably social in character.

That is, I looked both at the multilayered stories that people use to make sense of their world, and also at the underlying assumptions that permit these stories to be meaningful within their own context. In this sense, "phenomenology studies the subjective experience of living out and using these narratives" (Loftus & Higgs

(2010: 386). Ricoeur (as cited in Lindseth & Norberg, 2004: 149) emphasised the relationship between these two as follows:

We have a pre-understanding of life, which finds expression in the shape of stories. We organize our experiences so that they answer questions like: 'what', 'why', 'who', 'how', 'with whom', 'to whom' and 'for whom'. A story is a whole, which gives meaning to particular events, which give meaning to the whole story. A story constitutes a dialectic between the past, the present and the future.

Lindseth and Norberg (2004: 148), therefore, pointed out that "the most basic way to gain understanding of our own experiences is to narrate them and to listen to others' narratives." Because narrative interviews are an appropriate method for disclosing the meaning of lived experience (Mishler, as cited in ibid.), the interview in this research study consisted of semi-structured open-ended questions that focus on specific life stories and detailed accounts of events and experiences rather than brief answers or general statements. For example, here are some guiding open-ended questions to elicit narratives related to their intercultural and professional experiences:

- When was your first culturally diverse experience, and with whom? Tell me a story about living abroad as a minority/ examples of interaction with other cultures.
- What kinds of things have you learnt after coming to the UK? Anything that changed your views and actions after your experiences.
- Have you encountered any challenges as an immigrant/ as a speaker of English as an additional language (EAL)/ as an international lecturer? (What was it like to be a(n)...?)
- How did you first become aware that you were having difficulties in teaching as an EAL speaker?"
- Please tell me about a specific time when you had a language-related difficulty. (How/when was it/what did you do to cope with it?)
- Where do you consider as home in the world? Why? Can you describe the place you associate with being home?

While I prepared a detailed interview guide with a flow, I also paid attention to what Chase suggested (2003: 83). Apart from the first major opening question that invites a life story, I asked questions that follow from close listening to the narrator's story rather than asking questions from my interview guide. The reason is that a well-constructed interview guide prepares researchers to be open to a wide range of stories that participants may tell and that it helps them to know what in general they want to hear about (ibid.). However, as Chase (2003: 84) suggested, once

interviewers are prepared in this way, inviting and listening well to the interviewee's particular story should be their main goal. In this way she added that "many of the interview questions will be answered without even being asked"; therefore, she found that "preparing to listen well by writing a thorough interview guide is a critical but underemphasised part of the research process" (*ibid.*).

I was also aware that storytelling could occur at unexpected times during the interview process, and that the interviewer's emotional attentiveness and engagement, together with the degree of reciprocity in the conversation, are more important than the specific wording of a question. Therefore, I paid attention to both structural wording and the internal dynamics of the interview. Instead of short-answer questions, I preferred to ask questions that invited an extended account like "Tell me what happened?" Also, to probe further about a general description, I planned to continue with a follow-up question like, "Tell me why that particular moment stands out?" Thus, from time to time, I kept listening to them until they needed a confirmation, an explanation, or an addition from me by nodding or talking. I was mindful of the moments when I had to give more probes to elicit their life-world experiences and ask for concrete examples, explanations and stories of what they initially said or what they were concerned about. Sometimes I just waited for the right moment to come to ask my questions as 'an on-the-spot follow-up of the participants' answers' (Kvale, 2007: 65). Therefore, as suggested in the literature, I decided on the sequence and wording of the questions in the course of the interview, in accordance with the flow and relevance of information (Martella et al., 1999). At the end of the interview, I asked the academics if they wished to add anything else. When the interviews were finished, the academics stated that they were happy at being able to contribute to my study and wished me good luck, while I expressed my thankfulness and added that I would send them the written interview protocols for their engagement in the interpreting process.

### **3.7 Explication of the data**

Hycner (as cited in Groenewald, 2004) warns researchers that the term "analysis" usually means a "breaking into parts" and hence often a loss of the whole phenomenon, and that this has dangerous implications for phenomenology.

Instead, Hycner uses “explication”, which implies an “investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole” (*ibid.*), as a way of transforming data through interpretation. I, therefore, used this term by taking on the holistic sense it carries and followed the guidelines that Hycner (as cited in *ibid.*) suggested for the explication process, which has five “steps” or phases:

- 1) Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.
- 2) Delineating units of meaning.
- 3) Clustering of units of meaning to form themes.
- 4) Summarising each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it.
- 5) Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

The first issue of “bracketing and phenomenological reduction” is seen as a fundamental strategy in phenomenology, differentiating the chasm between phenomenology as a philosophy and a research endeavour (Dowling, 2007: 136). However, there is an incongruity of using bracketing as part of the methodology (LeVasseur, 2003). Seeing the tensions around the implementation of bracketing and the lack of uniformity of conceptions and methods of bracketing, as Tufford and Newman (2010) suggested, I developed my knowledge about different perspectives of bracketing and explored both its challenges and benefits.

Bracketing as originally espoused by Husserl (as cited in LeVasseur, 2003: 415) is that “the philosopher could take a purely reflective attitude toward the world as a whole and so obtain a perspective from which absolutely certain and foundational philosophical knowledge could be obtained”. However, it was considered as an untenable project by the existentialists such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, as they hold that “we are connected inextricably to the world and thus cannot get free of our projects and intentions” (*ibid.*: 416). LeVasseur (2003: 417) believed that a more sympathetic interpretation of Husserl’s notion of bracketing can bridge these seemingly irreconcilable viewpoints, as she clarified:

Husserl articulated a keen difference between the natural attitude, our everyday attitude toward the world, and the philosophical attitude, a reflective and questioning perspective. I believe that a distinction focused on bracketing the natural attitude, --

that is, bracketing the everyday assumption that things are only as they appear to our unreflective consciousness -- would be possible within the interpretive paradigm and serve as a bridge to the philosophical attitude.

That is, LeVasseur suggested regarding bracketing as “extending only to our natural attitude, that is, to the ordinary lack of curiosity with which most of life is lived” (*ibid.*). In this way, she emphasised bracketing the natural attitude, “that quotidian and incurious way of being, rather than emphasising the temporary nature of the brackets” (*ibid.*). In this way, she asserted that what we achieve is that “a momentary suspension of theory is effected by an awakened and passionate curiosity -- the very antithesis of the natural attitude that Husserl wanted to overcome by philosophical reflection” (*ibid.*: 418). This sense of bracketing can be perceived as another figure of the hermeneutical circle (Schleiermacher, as cited in *ibid.*) as she explained (*ibid.*):

In the hermeneutical circle, we make progress toward sense and meaning by questioning prior knowledge, thus expanding into new horizons of meaning. Yet, we never fully arrive, because to arrive would merely represent another stage of pre-understanding. Instead, each turn in the circle opens new horizons and possibilities yet resists dogmatic conclusions, because the ongoing project of reflective questions keeps the possibility of new experience and understanding alive.

She illustrated this with a few moments when we cannot see an object inside a bag but just place our hand into the bag and exclaim “Oh, it’s just a bird’s nest!”. We would have this fresh experience of the object in the short interval in which we were poised between perception and recognition, when our prior knowledge came flooding back into consciousness. “It is this interval -- where momentarily we are disposed of our assumptions by an upstart curiosity -- that new perception of the thing might occur.” (*ibid.*: 418). She believed that “the dialectic between this momentary new impression and our old understandings constitutes something similar to the hermeneutical circle”, and this is the notion of bracketing as she wishes to define it (*ibid.*: 419). She identified a notion of “persistent curiosity” (Peggy L. Chinn, as cited in LeVasseur, 2003) as staying persistently curious about new phenomena, and described the subsequent dialectic between fresh experience and prior conceptions as essential in phenomenological research.

Lastly, the use of the term “bracketing” is criticised, as it carries with it an “exactness and finitude of mathematics” (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004: 272).

Therefore, “bridling” is preferred to bracketing, because it “invokes the thought of being respectful, or humble, to that which it bridled in order not to dominate, violate it, or ‘swallow’ it as ‘bracketing’ seems to do” (*ibid.*). It is explained as follows (*ibid.*: 272):

This phenomenological attitude and reflective stance means ‘bridling’ our immediate and spontaneous understanding of the world, so that the pre-understanding does not effect our understanding in an uncontrolled way. Bridling means that we include phenomenological reflection in that primordial relationship with the world, and because the meaning of ‘the thing’ is an open infinity, bridling thus means that we do not make definite what is indefinite, that is, we do not ascribe meaning to things in just any way (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2003).

While further work remains to describe how the method of bracketing can be best accomplished (*ibid.*), Giorgi (as cited in Dowling, 2007: 136) argued that bracketing is properly done in the analysis phase of the research. It “usually relates to the researcher examining their prejudices in order to allow them include the views of the respondents” (*ibid.*). I adopted the notions of “persistent curiosity” (Peggy L. Chinn, as cited in LeVasseur, 2003) and “bridling” (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004) in my research, in that I saw bracketing as a hermeneutic move that enables the researcher to sustain her curiosity as instrumental to phenomenological method (LeVasseur, 2003). Also, in line with the notion of persistent curiosity, bridling is a term embracing our endeavour to keep ourselves curious and open to know the other in a respectful way.

When it comes to the second phase, delineating units of meaning is a critical phase of explicating the data in which the extracts that are seen to shed light on the researched phenomena are extracted or “isolated” (Creswell 1998; Holloway, Hycner, as cited in Groenewald, 2004). In this phase, the interviews, which were audio-recorded, were transcribed verbatim according to the principles of “process transcribing” (Chase, as cited in Chase, 2003: 92), which focuses not only on content but also on non-lexical such as pauses, sighs, stammering, and laughter plus facial expressions and body language. The next stage was to read the data several times on different occasions to become familiar with the whole amount of information and to reflect on participants’ responses. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) suggested that the analyst must first gain an overview of the data coverage and become thoroughly familiar with the data set. To answer the research questions, the

list of units of relevant meaning extracted from each interview were carefully scrutinised, considering the literal content, the similarities and the differences among the units of meaning according to the non-verbal and para-linguistic cues, and the weight or chronology of events (Hycner, as cited in Groenewald, 2004).

After eliminating the clearly redundant units (Moustakas, 1994), in the third phase of clustering the list of relevant units of meaning to form themes, I was mindful of our everyday meanings and opened myself to new understandings. I tried to seek a fresh perception of the world that participants pictured and to see what emerges for us beyond our received notions (Crotty, 1998: 82). This is a process of identifying key features and relationships which should be imaginative, artful, flexible and methodical, scholarly and intellectually rigorous at the same time (Richards, 2003). Therefore, I looked for identifying themes and patterns in the data which represented academics' responses describing their experiences and perceptions. The words of van den Berg, translated by van Manen (1997: 41) profoundly express the task of phenomenological researchers in these words:

[Phenomena] have something to say to us — this is common knowledge among poets and painters. Therefore, poets and painters are born phenomenologists. Or rather, we are all born phenomenologists; the poets and painters among us, however, understand very well their task of sharing, by means of word and image, their insights with others — an artfulness that is also laboriously practised by the professional phenomenologist.

In the fourth phase, I wrote an interview summary about the content of the entire interview, making use of the memos I noted down during or immediately after the interviews. Then, I spent the most time on developing first-level and in-vivo codes and writing them in the margins of the transcript and worked on what Chase (2003: 92) called 'interpretive comments' which are made by focusing on specific elements such as:

- \* Any differences between what the person was communicating and saying,
- \* The interaction between me and the interviewee (does it hinder or facilitate his or her story or ideas?),
- \* What is particularly interesting or important,
- \* What social factors help our understanding of the situation,
- \* Anything relevant- like the repetition of the themes throughout the interview.

I also returned to the participant for their validation and made any necessary modifications. Completing the follow-up work for each of the interviews through these four stages, I came to the last stage: looking for general and unique themes for all the interviews, and made a composite summary (Hycner, as cited in Groenewald, 2004). In this process, I made use of Nvivo 10 data analysis software and also followed the guidelines described by Chase (2003: 95). First of all, I separated my codes and interpretive comments from the transcripts under the pseudonym of each participant so that I could study my initial analyses. Secondly, I looked at my lists of codes and my interpretive comments for all of the interviews and tried to name several broader categories that pull together sets of specific codes or ideas expressed in my interpretive comments. Then, I explained in a paragraph or so the meaning of each category and what kinds of material it collected from my interviews. After this categorising process, in order to show how the material from the transcripts fits into each category, I returned to the transcripts and I sorted coded transcripts under each category with the pseudonym of the participant on it to establish the relationship between the accounts of participants. This was a form of comparative or horizontal analysis to complement the first stage of vertical analysis, wherein each interview was analysed separately (Flores, 2005). To illustrate, here is an extract from the coding list about the meaning of the first category of the broad theme -- intercultural experiences:

- A sense of belonging (ref: Koz, Samir, Yusuf, Ali, Joe, Saroj, Omar, Julia, Sylvia, Paul, Sara, Bob)

Summary: Talking about the fact that the place(s) where academics feel a sense of belonging/ consider as home in the world is/are hard to specify exactly as a result of complex relationships and experiences in their lives, which also implies that it is even less absolute to label or categorise them as home or international within the university.

Examples: Mixed views on where they belonged in the world – some belonging to ‘home countries’ or wherever the family is, others feeling in-between, being a European or a ‘world citizen’ more globally and lastly belonging to anywhere or nowhere.

Themes and sub-themes were identified as “structures of experience” in relation to van Manen’s “existentials” which are the theme types that act as guides for

reflection on the data under analysis: the lived space (spatiality), body (corporeality), time (temporality) and human relation (relationality) (van Manen, 1997). In what follows I will be turning to the research issues about credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability, including the engagement of the participants with the data analysis.

### **3.8 Issues of quality**

The intention of the research was to contribute to the development of a more detailed understanding of the experiences of international academics at different disciplines regarding the language use, university teaching and interculturality by capturing a more concrete picture of their needs and challenges in the face of internationalisation of higher education. In this respect, transferability was an important issue to address, as one of the research aims is to contribute to the existing literature. Therefore, I was interested in ensuring that the findings of the study would be presented in such a way that would increase their credibility for the intended audience – those professionals who may be engaged in policy and practice for internationalisation in higher education. This stance led me to present the extracts from participants' accounts which go, hand in hand, with my own interpretations.

"Truth" or trustworthiness is a long debate in the social sciences. It is shaped according to the ways of thinking about validity and ethics situated within different perspectives. In this piece of research, I acknowledged that the individual's experiences are immersed in and shaped by discourses of market economics, organisational imperatives and industrial issues, and so on (Garrick, 1999: 148). Therefore, as a researcher in the social sciences, I recognised the historically and contextually situated nature of the individual's stories, which makes any interpretation of lived experiences beyond a matter of individual authenticity due to the dialectical interaction of the context and the individual (Garrick, 1999: 154). Moreover, I was clear about the research purposes, followed a methodological path not reliant upon one-best-way approach, and paid attention to ethical considerations as detailed in section 4.6. Furthermore, as presented in the data analysis section (4.8), I relied on detailed transcripts; paid attention to language and structural

features of discourse and interpreted similarities and differences among participants' accounts to increase the credibility of my analysis and presentation of interviews (Mishler, as cited in Riessman, 2008: 193).

In line with these principles that I followed, a number of steps were taken to ensure credibility and trustworthiness, and to give robustness to the study. First, as explained in the sections 4.6 and 4.7 concerning the data collection and ethical procedures, I made use of such techniques as promoting an atmosphere of trust, building rapport and ensuring comfort and ease for the academics. All the procedures explained in detail in these sections were expected to contribute to the authenticity of the information, the willingness of the academics to cooperate, and to the credibility of the findings. Lastly, after the transcription of each interview, I performed the "member-checking" process, which is one of the stages of analysis for enhancing credibility in naturalistic research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Cohen et al., 2007). This helped me to interpret each participant's world through their own eyes, and prevented me from judging or representing them in ways that they would either not recognise or perhaps not agree with (Lyons, 2007: 164).

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter explained the overall research design, research aims, research questions, methodology, the nature of the participants and the research context, data collection and analysis, and presentation procedures and steps taken with regard to research issues and ethicality. Fifteen international academics were interviewed individually, and the total time taken by all interviews amounted to approximately twenty hours. In the following chapters, I will discuss the research findings regarding the international academics' experiences and perceptions in their role as a teacher in the different higher education departments, along with their challenges and concerns as speakers of EAL.

## **Chapter 4. Linguistic and professional experiences in the accounts of international academics**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter -- the first of two that elaborates on the findings and discussion of my analysis of the accounts of academics -- I focus on the discussion of the findings of the primary analysis of the data I went through. This primary analysis is the thematic analysis of the 15 participants' (international academics) accounts of linguistic and professional experiences and encounters during their life and teaching journey in the UK. These results address subsidiary questions 1, 2 and 3 posed by this study (see chapter 3, 3.2) under the main question "What are the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of "international" academics who are speakers of EAL in teaching at an internationalising British university?" Related subsidiary questions are as follows:

1. What are academics' language experiences and attitudes towards "non-native-like" language use as bi-/multi-lingual academics?
2. What are academics' perceptions about their experiences and challenges of teaching at an internationalising UK university?
3. What are their accounts of experience of interculturality as 'international' academics?

This is followed by chapter 6, which addresses my third research question. It includes the findings of the second-level coding of the data, with a particular reference to their accounts of experience of interculturality resulting from living and working in this international context.

In this chapter and the next, according to the procedures and the reasons explained in the discussion of the data analysis in chapter 4 (see 4.8), the results of the explication are presented under three main headings, reflecting the broad categories of significant experience related to the research questions which will be unfolded throughout the two chapters. These main headings are: 1. Language, 2.

Professional experiences: The mismatch between institutional and personal aims, 3. Intercultural experiences: Being ‘international’. Under these main headings, further sub-categories are identified as follows:

1. Language
  - Linguistic background
  - Attitudes to “(non)native-like” language use
  - Further concerns about language performance
2. Professional experiences: The mismatch between institutional and personal aims
3. Intercultural experiences: Being “international”
  - A sense of belonging
  - Feeling like an outsider or an insider
  - Approaches to cultural descriptions

Under each theme and sub-theme, the different significance attached to this by participants will be unpacked and, where appropriate, comments will be made about the results. This will also be supported with the illustrative extracts from individual participants’ interviews. Participants will be referred to by the pseudonyms provided in table 3.1 in chapter 3. Home countries will be referred to using random letters of the alphabet (J, B etc.) for the purpose of anonymity.

As academics from different backgrounds, the participants have approached their lives in the UK with a sense of self-awareness, responsibility and the characteristics that they gained through their relationship with the significant others around them. In addition, they also developed a system of values towards others and the self, which would orient them towards positioning their own place and others’ in different ways in their teaching lives in an intercultural context. Acknowledging the varied sociocultural background they have, in section 4.2 below, I focus on their linguistic experiences which impinged on their interactions in the UK, and on whether they perceived themselves as a non-native speaker or as a bi-/multi-lingual speaker, thereby influencing their positioning of the self as an international lecturer in the UK.

## 4.2 Language

This section relates to the participants' previous and current linguistic experiences, particularly to their perceptions of being an EAL speaker in the past and during their current teaching in the UK. It answers the question: "What are their language experiences and attitudes towards "non-native-like" language use as bi-/multilingual academics?" It therefore gives important evidence about how the participants view the concept of "non-native English speakers (NNES)" and how they perceive themselves in intercultural encounters as an EAL speaker. In this sense, it will provide insights into their positioning of the self in the intercultural teaching context of being a UK university lecturer. First, their views on English language learning (ELL) experiences and in parallel to that the use of their mother tongue will be explored through their linguistic background. This will help understand how their attitudes and previous language experiences affect their perceptions of being an EAL speaker and interactions with people. This will be followed by a discussion of their attitudes towards "(non)native-like" language use and their views on the NES-NNES distinction, which also reveals how they see their own positions as "international" teachers who are speakers of EAL.

Lastly, expressing their views on ELL experiences, I will elucidate the problems which impacted their use of language and ways of communication with other people, and their teaching among a mixed group of students from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds like themselves. These people included students, staff and local people, be they English as a first language speakers or EAL speakers.

### 4.2.1 Linguistic background

Academics' accounts revealed that their previous experiences of ELL played an important role in the linguistic, socio-cultural, psychological, intellectual and academic aspects of their lives. Their lives were affected by the view of English as a matter of gaining prestige and status. The quality of the English language education in the country of origin was another factor affecting their lives. These factors caused

some to feel the fear of not being able to learn English and the attrition of the proficiency in the mother tongue.

For Samir, who was from a former British colony, ELL was a matter of gaining prestige and status in the “home” country. He offered the following observation about his family, society and his ELL experiences:

It is an official language; rather, we can say mostly educated people and people who have had higher education would know English. Considering my background I was born in a big city, and I had a middle class family. My mother was a lecturer etc. I should have known English better, but I don't because my parents thought that the children should be sent to local language school because it is blah blah.

He chalked his parents' preference of not sending him to an English-medium school up to political and social ideas of that time which, he found, was “a mistake”. As he went to a vernacular language school, which he thought was “absolutely useless”, he said that he still did not have a good grasp of English and that if he had gone to an English medium school, it would have been better. In his local community, he recounted that there was only one more person who was not going to the English medium school, and that was his older sister. Thus, he started ELL at the age of eleven with a grammar-based system. He said that he was always afraid of not being able to learn English, which most people doing his career do not speak as their mother tongue. He added that it is the language of colonial powers, and that the rich and the affluent or privileged can speak English, while the people who cannot speak English have a lower social status. “That's why people are afraid of English”, he concluded, and stated that he shared a general feeling echoed by most people in his country:

You are the poor guy or you get identified as somebody who is not that smart and not that affluent not that respectable, but if you are afraid of something, when you are trying to learn something and you are afraid of not being able to learn, then you are not going to be able to learn it. Then it just kills your ability to learn and the way it is perceived is also the way it is taught. Also it is ingrained in the teachers in the other students in society that one has to be able to speak in English if you want to be part of a social circle then it becomes a kind of very important criteria, and it tests you all the time so it becomes very difficult to learn the subject, learn the language especially and so then I was always afraid as 95-97% of the population is in my country.

After he did his ten years of schooling, he finished his A-levels, Bachelors and Masters all in English-medium schools. However, even then he said he could barely

ask a question, and not really communicate much. He did not have many friends with whom he would have to speak in English. After finishing his Masters degree, he started teaching, and this is actually when he believed he learnt how to speak in English. His level of language proficiency affected the way he taught and communicated with his students, who had all sorts of accents around the world, as he reveals in the next section 4.2.2.

Samir went on to explain that because of the status of English in his home country, the extent of language proficiency affected the strata of the people in the society, and this led to the fear of not being able to learn English, and consequently having a lower status in the society. Koz and Saroj, who were also from former British colonies like Samir, also referred to how English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in schools affected their ELL. Koz said that EMI was a factor behind “how he could speak English well, maybe with an accent”. For Saroj, who had similar conditions as Koz’s with reference to getting education through EMI in a colonised country, there was a relation between intellectual development and language use. As he stated: “When you go to the university, people talk in English, and English determines their thinking and affects their intelligence”. Ray (2013: 53-4) seemed to support what Saroj said when he stated, “Your language is the mirror of your brain, and language patterns determine your thinking”. Like Samir, Saroj also mentioned that well-educated people are the people who are supposed to learn English and that this perpetuates the spread of English among the same class of people, while also giving English the status as the language of science.

Learning English was seen as a matter of gaining prestige and status in the “home” countries. for the participants who all went to English-medium schools, Koz, Saroj and Samir (after ten years of schooling during his A-levels, bachelor’s and master’s). This resulted in the fear of not being able to learn English and the feeling of insecurity and inferiority. They revealed how their ELL experiences affected their psychological state, because the knowledge of English was seen as an important advantage in the world of scientific and intellectual developments. Furthermore, Saroj also mentioned that these developments in the spread of English meant that their intellectual lives were shaped by English as well. The effects of these fears

and psychological pressures on them about “not being able to learn it and being labelled as a pauper or a second-class citizen or a less intelligent person” continue even until today, when their previous experiences have still affected their proficiency in their mother tongue and their way of thinking in L1.

The special status attributed to English also affected their socio-cultural and academic lives because it caused attrition in the proficiency of their mother tongue. For example, Saroj described how he travelled to an English-speaking country in his childhood, and after returning to his own country as an adolescent, he could only pass exams in his mother tongue by getting private courses about his own language. Later he went to EMI schools through all his education life and, due to the status of English among the society, he said “over time it got more and more English” among family members, and he came to a stage where he could just speak a few words and phrases in his mother tongue. He said that he liked to talk to his mother in his mother tongue now, as much as he could. This was a source of regret that he alluded to in his accounts when I asked him if he found learning subjects in English easier than learning in his mother tongue:

I don't even know. Probably not- no because I learnt everything in English- Geography, History, Physics, Chemistry Biology etc. It was the first medium. I learnt J (his own mother tongue) as a second language, and I was never that good at it, and then we went to England when I was quite young for 4 years, and then I further forgot J language. The only real language I know is English, so, is that good?

After my email contact asking him to clarify the quote from his interview, during which he seemed thoughtful and unsure, he agreed with my interpretation that he was not sure about whether he found learning subjects in English easier or whether learning them in his mother tongue would have made a difference, because he did not have the choice to study in both languages and see the difference. The point was not about the language, but about the obligation of learning it as the first medium or the maximum exposure to English. He meant that if it had been another language, then his learning would have been in that language, complementing to his previous quote about the fact that language affects your thinking and intelligence. He further mentioned during the interview that having grown up with all the native languages as the mishmash of colours, he ended up with speaking none of them properly, or as proper as English. He did not have the right to education in

his mother tongue as he was obliged to learn, use and live with English as a postcolonial language. This led him to shape his academic and daily life in English in accordance with the importance attributed to this language from the society. Exemplifying the attrition of his mother tongue from his linguistic experiences, he talked about the other side of the coin where the pragmatic spread of English results in the decay of native languages:

It helps in practical world, but clearly it is leading to decay in native languages. However, native languages are great. They are also continuing because they are really old, historical, strong and spectacular with 50-60 million people speaking it just like German or French you know by a lot of people.

Supporting Saroj's point about the effect of the maximum exposure to English on the mother tongue, another lecturer, Anna, who has been living in the UK for a long time, also made reference to the attrition in her mother tongue. She started her academic career in the UK and she had some concerns about using her mother tongue in academic contexts where it is used rather than English:

Now I'm really concerned when I give presentation in D (her language) if I go to a D conference where they expect to be fluent in D, but I'm not that fluent anymore because especially I don't use my academic D so that's probably more becoming a concern with time here than in D context. I'm here for years. How things work, how people relate to each other, working relationships, academic processes you know I have worked as an academic in the UK- *that's where I am home as an academic* (Italics indicate emphasised speech.).

It can be concluded from her words that whatever the language she built her career in is, it is that language that makes her feel like at home in academia, and this language is English, rather than her mother tongue. Therefore, the attrition in her mother tongue in academic contexts, even if not in daily life, makes a difference in her sense of attachment and belonging to a specific context regarding her profession. Speaking, acting and thinking by means of English is so strong that she thought being good at a language means being at home. Since she had her son, she has started to speak D (her mother tongue) now at home, which made her think more about the language because she switched and worked more on that. She said that she knew she dreamt in English and considered English as her main language now. Also, as she only read and wrote in English for publications, she thought she would find it a real struggle to publish in D because her academic thinking was English, and since she switched and only spoke D at home, it felt like a translation

act both ways. Even if she could still speak D in daily life well in contrast to Saroj, she could feel the constraints of the lack of academic terminology and knowledge in her mother tongue in her academic career, which also shows the language she based her intellectual development on was English. It can be concluded from both Saroj's and Anna's accounts that as the language one speaks and one's thought system are related to each other, the boundaries of intellectual capacity is affected from the conceptual frameworks within that language which also builds on the new developments in the cognitive, social and cultural life.

Julia, Sylvia, Anna, Paul, Joe and Omar made reference to the quality of language education which affected their educational lives in different directions and their teaching lives afterwards. Julia, Anna and Sylvia were content with the language teaching, while Paul was not so content and went to a private English school in England because he realised that he would not be able to talk properly in English. Making a critique of her own context in terms of the status of English, Julia suggested her nationals are quite keen to show off their English language ability, even if it is not always that good.

It was obvious that the status of English and the quality of language education at home affected their performance in communication with people in the UK. The poor language education system that Joe experienced, and the exceptionally well-planned language education that Omar received were influential in their transition to the UK, as well as on their intercultural experiences at their work places and daily lives. There was a clear emphasis in the accounts of ELL which affected their linguistic background and led some of them (Joe, Paul) to seek ways to improve English through their own efforts. Samir, Joe, Paul, Ali, Lim and Silvan were obviously more disadvantaged than the rest as they had to struggle with the language barrier due to the education systems in their home countries, and overcame this barrier through taking extra language courses or by throwing themselves into real life situations while they worked as academics. Similar to Koz, Samir and Saroj, the others also showed how English was perceived as a language that is accepted as important to learn in their countries.

More details about how they approach the use of English as an “international” language will be provided in the next section, which reveals their attitudes to native and non-native-like use of English and the positioning of their own language use.

#### **4.2.2 Attitudes to “(non)native-like” language use**

The academics’ views on the dichotomy of “native/non-native English speakers” -- which puts native teachers at a more advantageous position -- and their awareness of the use of English at an international level (World Englishes) were explored in an attempt to indicate how they position themselves as bi/multi-lingual speakers of English. Therefore, international academics revealed their views of English used by “non-native speakers”; in other words, their attitudes towards the influence of (non-)nativeness on the use of English (for example; whether they regarded (non)native-like English accent as a(n) (dis)advantage, how they approached the process of getting used to accent differences and how they perceived (non)native language teachers as a learner of English) and, lastly, their perceptions about the position of English as an international language.

The first point of view about the use of English as an additional language was related to their views regarding accents; for example, whether they see accent as “normal” or even as an advantage among “NNESs”. Secondly, the focus was on whether accent is an obstacle for communication and intelligibility or not in their teaching lives. Therefore, the former point deals with their beliefs and assumptions, whereas the latter is about their actual practice and performance. In this sense, their perceptions on speaking English with an accent and their actual performance will be clarified below.

Academics who made it obvious in their ELL experiences that it was a matter of prestige to be able to speak English well, had different views of speaking with or without an accent as an indicator of (non-)nativeness. Namely, Koz, Samir and Saroj, who were from a sociocultural and political context which regarded English language proficiency as having a high status in the post-colonial society, were proud of being able to speak English well. This was the case no matter how painful the process of learning may have been for Samir and caused Saroj to fall behind in

speaking his own mother tongue which is the local language of his home country. First, Samir was critically aware of the pressures that were produced in people's lives from the psychological and social aspects as an insider of the same system, and he saw his accent as a variety among many and an advantage to be able to understand and associate himself with his students or people from different backgrounds. However, he still found it difficult to get used to different accents in his class and to sound sufficiently intelligible with his own accent to his students despite his communication with people having different accents back in his home country as understood from his words:

We always had a house, with people from various social strata, various religions and the rich and the poor of various kinds so, it is probably easier for me to mix, but still it is not that easy then you come over here and you have a class half full of Chinese. You know first you have got to accept that you have an accent right?

During the stream of conversation, while the topic was not about accents, Koz emphasised his accent as something which would be better if he does not have it on the top of his good level of proficiency as he said: "I could speak English well, maybe with an accent". It seems the assumption that nativeness should be the ideal level and accent to be achieved still lingers on in their minds, as revealed from Samir's and Koz's accounts. However, having a good grasp of the language also outweighed having a native-like accent. Even if Samir found non-nativeness as an advantage in terms of having a sense of relatedness with students in the intercultural context of the university, he experienced the difficulty of sounding sufficiently intelligible and the process of getting used to the accents of other students.

Lim also recounted his experiences related to communication with international people and asserted that having a native-like accent is not enough to be able to communicate if a person has never been exposed to different accents and varieties of English use. In this sense he claimed that speakers of EAL are at an advantage more so than the monolingual speakers of English:

For foreigners I think it's much easier to understand each other internationally. Once I went to a research institute in Japan and during my doctorate level in M we all had international professors and visitors accompanying them for a few days. We had no problems to understand each other in Japan, but the first day I arrived in England the secretary came to me to do something. It was very embarrassing- I could fully

understand what she said but she had problems to understand what I'm saying. Later on I realised while communicating with international students or NNES people, they all think, guessing, paying particular attention to what you're thinking and follow your lead. But NESs never think it. They just listen. If the pronunciation is very different to them they just use their ears and follow the sound but don't look at you and follow what you are saying.

He mentioned a strategy he used in teaching both international and British students to make up for any chances of gaps in communication due to his accent:

If there are more international students, teaching is easier. If they are all English, just remind them to think to follow rather than just listen. Before every module starts, I tell them "Listen hard and stop me when necessary" because of my accent.

After working in different districts within the UK, Anna was also aware of language differences, and she talked about her observations concerning different accents in the UK:

Irish accent is clear and easy for D people (like herself) unless you come from the countryside. However, British accent just sounds quite artificial compared to the accent of international students. The intonation going up and down all the time - can you pass me the butter please? (imitating). Nobody really talks like the queen or the 'proper' British English today. International students don't speak British English. They slightly have a tendency to do an American accent- it is a neutralised way of speaking in English that all the others can understand, and you get an ear for the Spanish, French and Italian strong accent- all the different ways of how people pronounce English- this kind of international experience really teaches you to be able to listen to a wide range of versions of Englishes and try to find a common language amongst that- if you live in the country, you have to get used to localism and that can be much more challenging because there is no book that tells you about it. No way that you can read up on it. There is much higher English in City K than in City Z with a working class, so class is very strong in the UK, and you can hear that in the language.

Like Lim, she highlighted the importance of getting used to different uses of English both within and outside the UK, and regarded this experience really as being important for communication rather than having a native-like standard British accent. She also shared her thoughts about her pronunciation:

I think twice when I pronounce something I know. Even though I mispronounce things and students know I mispronounce them, they know what I mean. If I need a very specific word, it doesn't come to me, I do think. It actually happens in your language as well.

Joe and Saroj also supported Anna's views in the sense that having a non-native-like accent is natural and that communication is important. When Joe first came to the UK, pronunciation and listening were really hard for him. He always taught

English students, so he thought that his English was okay now after many years of teaching in the UK. He always asked them if they were not sure because when he said something and wanted a response, he sometimes did not know how to spell and he just used the strategy of "Ok I am a foreigner so I am allowed to make mistakes, so just ask me" and he said: "They don't mind."

Sylvia also changed her attitude towards her use of English and gained confidence after being one of a few people who had an A grade in a very intensive teaching certificate programme, though at the beginning she was really worried if she would be good enough because she was the only non-native speaker in the group. She felt she had something to offer as she could understand those learners from a similar language and cultural background like herself. She even suggested that her accent could be singled out as advantageous in such an international place, as she related:

Are they a problem to make mistakes and to be a non-native English speaker (NNES)? We haven't felt this as a problem in the classroom and sometimes being NNESs, some people find it easier to understand than a native speaker because I don't have a local- well I have my own accent of course in my English but- this is what sometimes seems to be the case that NNESs find it easier to understand other NNES rather than English people, who I suppose might use more idioms and contractions and speak less clear and faster.

Another lecturer, Bobo, who regarded non-nativeness "as an extra thing to take into account" until having a good level of proficiency, also put more emphasis on language proficiency and good expression, accepting different accents as natural while stating his experience of language use as an EAL speaker: "Of course you may come across all sorts of accents. That is another issue if you are able to say the things that you want to say in another language." He used to teach in English as well in A (his home country) in the last few years. Then he picked up some pace when he was a student in the university and reached "a kind of normal level" in his words when he was in the UK, so he did not have language concerns.

Whereas Ali emphasised intelligibility and the appropriate use of language according to the needs of the students rather than nativeness, and found ways to express himself as clearly as possible while improving his listening comprehension, for Paul, nativeness on behalf of the language teacher was very important. He said

his preference was “of course” English speakers, meaning speakers of English as a first language or at least someone who does not speak his mother tongue as he thought the classroom language should be only English and even he said: “for that you need to be forced to speak in English and you should avoid Gs (his nationals) at that moment”. Samir, looking from a different perspective from Paul’s, leaned towards a “native” speaker as a language learner, but his criterion was not related to the nativeness. Rather, he explained that from his ELL experience, he preferred native teachers as he saw they emphasised fluency over accuracy in their evaluation of the proficiency of students in the class, in contrast to NNESTs who emphasised correction over fluency in their classrooms. Therefore, like Ali, he highlighted the characteristics of the teacher, such as teaching styles or pedagogical preferences rather than the nativeness.

Sylvia said she really welcomed the way that Englishes in plural are being conceptualised increasingly by accepting that there are different ways of talking. As she mentioned:

There is not one way of using English, and considering that there are more people who use it as a non-native language or who use it as an official language which may be their second language to their mother language.

The academics’ views (except for Paul) show that nativeness is not an important factor which puts them at a disadvantage while communicating; in contrast, non-nativeness may be quite an advantage to establish rapport and empathy with the international students they teach. This is obvious reflected in the accounts of Samir, Sylvia, Ali, Koz, Lim, Anna, Bobo and Sara, who all gave importance to the intelligibility, communication, clear expression, a good level of proficiency, fluency, effective teaching and the accommodation of student needs over nativeness, native-like accent or correctness. When it comes to their views on the position of English, as a reflection of their role in the use of English as an international language, some of them (Joe, Julia, Sylvia, Yusuf and Saroj) offered their observations regarding how, on the one hand, English is owned by the people in the world as a result of strategic planning or economic reasons, while leading to the loss of other languages, on the other hand. Sylvia, Sara and Samir mentioned how they thought that the international community speaks English well or sufficiently well

to be able to communicate, and they welcomed the way that Englishes in plural are conceptualised and questioned the idea of “one type of correct or standard English”. Joe, Anna, Julia, and Saroj gave examples of how English became a dominant and economically the most important language from their home countries and affected the language of the science, film, music and advertisement industries, and they also accepted English as an obligation to learn for practical purposes. Saroj and Anna had concerns about the attrition of their mother tongues, while Yusuf viewed it as “a well-deserved and natural situation” for the inner-circle English-speaking countries due to their strategic planning and economy.

#### **4.2.3 Further concerns about language performance**

Academics had further concerns about their language performance which impacted their communication with students, colleagues and local people. These issues were associated with familiarity with colloquial language and vocabulary use, expressing emotion, humour and identity in L2, having different cultural expectations about communication and meaning-making/ being (un)able to read between lines.

Regarding the use of colloquial language among students, Paul and Ali felt that there was a barrier in their informal conversation with students. Anna told an anecdote about a gap of communication when she was less confident with her language proficiency in her initial years of teaching:

When I was a PhD student in X University, I started to teach British students on the undergraduate level. In that class we had a lot of students from countryside and farmer boys, and their slangs were just incredible, and I know I had to ask three times to get what he was talking about and I just really didn't know, and then I have just made up what I thought he said, but it wasn't, so that was quite embarrassing in this sense. That example sticks to my mind.

The second issue was related to expressing emotion, humour and identity in L2. Moving beyond the classroom atmosphere, some academics shared their reservations about using the subtleties of the English language to communicate emotion and humour, as Sylvia identified with the following issues:

I can always do serious conversations because my English is quite good, but I can't do fun in English. To joke with English people is really really difficult or in a shop if somebody makes a laugh to say something witty back I still can't do it, sometimes I just: “Hehehe and walk (role-playing her situation when she pretends to have understood the joke and joins others' laughing)”. Then maybe half an hour later.. so

that's the thing I felt and then I'm still having quite a lot about this fun because I can't do this kind of and this is what makes life really nice if you can have a quick humour in encounters with people whom you don't know.

She added some more observations about having different cultural expectations about communication, and she expressed what she found as different from her lifestyle and ways of communication in Y (her home country), and how these differences affected her feelings in the process of communication:

I think it is about just getting used to a different system, different ways of doing things, different foods and shops. Even if I don't come from a long away and we share a lot of things, when I meet someone in Y (her country), we always shake hands with somebody's hand. Here sometimes I'd like to shake their hands and then I think I know they don't do it here so I don't. These are very small things and not a problem but sometimes somehow you feel like it's not complete like that.

The other thing Sylvia was not so sure about was that she could not read what was going on in the street if she walked in a street, heard some noises and looked around to know what was going on exactly:

I think I know whether it is dangerous or not or maybe not exactly, but I think I know whether it is "oh not dangerous or dangerous I need to run", but here sometimes I really don't know. Are they going to beat up someone or are they going to call somebody else for help or are they just making fun of each other and is that just humour? I can't judge the situation, but that's just things that other people must have as well as me.

She related the reason why she found this difficult to 'the drinking culture' and to different expectations people have when they go out like most participants:

In this country, to be honest, people drink so much, and then I don't know what happens. Some people go out and expect to blow and be violent somehow; some people don't of course- maybe they want to get away from their routine lives. You have to have this tolerance of not knowing exactly what's going on and just don't shake hands kiss or hug if you're not sure- don't think.

Bobo also illustrated cultural differences he explored from a few English friends who struck him as kind and polite to him, and they seemed to have very peculiar conception of life which is very different from the one in his country. He found it very show-like, like a TV show as he thought people were pretending to be polite all the time and they behaved differently in the UK. He said that he paid attention to using more polite forms in his communication in the UK: "You show more respect for basic situations and circumstances. In different contexts you can say the same things but you have to use different wordings. I take a softer approach to say the same things."

As another extract regarding the different cultural expectations about communication, Koz, coming from a context where ‘the lecturer was the boss’, recounted his memory with a professor as a surprise for him during his student years in the UK:

I remember seeing one very important professor you know the guy saw me on the road ‘Hello Koz’. I was shocked. I wasn’t used to saying hello to you, a big Professor. You know I did see him he walked up to me and said: “How are you?”

He said in his country the younger one has to greet the lecturer “because he is your superior, not him greeting you” and he found it good that there is no gap between students and him. As he concluded: “We are all human beings. We are all people.”

For Julia, it was difficult to be able to read between the lines and make meaning during communication. This was similar to the memories that Sylvia narrated. Explaining why sometimes she found teaching international students easier, Julia identified her worry about finding new answers out of tricky statements that are “very British” as she related:

I find it quite tricky sometimes to read between the lines, and it is a very British thing you know. I am still learning it now after 10 years. You think that’s not what they mean. When they are saying this, they actually mean that, and that is still very very tricky, and you just miss out on a lot of cues.

She exemplified from her experience in different occasions:

An obvious example is that British people say that is very interesting. What they mean is “I’m not interested in it at all. This is just a stupid idea”. Basically, ‘they are interesting’ means ‘stupid idea’ you know generally. Another thing like that you know, I can be in a meeting and I think I would always, in B (her country) you just say if things are not going well, we should do this or change that and you discuss that in a meeting and here in the UK they are still having that meeting and people are going ‘blah blah blah’ and everybody talks and very nice and maybe yes we should do that and that might be an idea oh yeah and then they all go away and that was a stupid meeting you know and they would all start talking about how they are not going to do this and how his ideas are rubbish and you know, why didn’t you say that in the meeting? I would be at the meeting and I would say what I was hoping you know and everybody would go away and say, no, no. I still find it quite difficult to still read between the lines and I find it quite difficult in terms of identity.

She also highlighted the difficulty in expressing her sense of identity in the English language, and she said that when she arrived in the UK, she had to carve out her own identity again because in her country, she was quite a vibrant kind of person

talking in a vibrant style, whereas in English she felt that she could not do this because she does not have the vocabulary that is needed. As she explained:

I didn't have the vocabulary at least that is needed to be vibrant in the ways in which you use language. You know the little twinkles to make a language interesting. I can speak English, but it is on a good conversational level, not ok as for a sense of humour. I like the English sense of humour, and I think I am good enough to understand it, but to use it is a different matter. You become more subtle and you learn different ways of saying things in time but yeah I find that people in the UK are all very serious for instance. I am not a serious person at all, but initially they said you know she is really serious and I thought 'Me? I don't think so' but it is just the way in which they saw me because I was using the language in a particular way.

It can be understood from Julia's accounts that languages are important in how people shape their identities which are formed in the subtleties of languages, and that this is a barrier for some people, as is reflected in Sylvia's and Julia's extracts. As language usage plays a crucial role in a speaker's involvement in social interactions, and particularly in teaching, the language performance of teachers whose first language is not the language they use in teaching and daily life varies immensely according to their individual differences. To understand such possible differences in their language use, I will look firstly in this section at the linguistic backgrounds of the participants from different parts of the world. Another important issue was related to an understanding and an appreciation of the types of English used in higher education by the academics, regardless of the language variety they speak or the context in which they teach. The perspectives of university teachers about English used by EAL speakers around the world (World Englishes) also showed their approach to their use of English while teaching home and international students or establishing relationships with the staff. This section also became useful for accounting for the reasons behind the participants' language performance and for making sense of experiences and encounters in the early part of their transition to the life and university teaching in the UK. In the following section, I will go on exploring academics' professional experiences and challenges, with a focus on teaching within the commercialised university system.

#### **4.3 Professional experiences**

This section will deal with the mismatch between institutional and personal aims in the participants' professional lives affected by the marketisation of higher education.

This single overarching theme emerged in response to the research question: "What are academics' perceptions about their experiences and challenges of teaching as international staff who are speakers of EAL at an internationalising UK university?"

Participants found the factors related to the in-class experiences easier than the demands of broader university policies. The most cited factor affecting their teaching environment was the complex system of commercialising within universities at the institutional and broader levels. The points that were related to this challenge could be classified under three sub-headings: financial dependence on students and its impact on the demands on the academics, the imbalance between teaching and research and other administrative restrictions affecting their academic freedom. Before presenting the academics' accounts, I discussed both the UK higher education (HE) policy context and the evolution of internationalisation through a historical analysis in chapter 2.

Now, I will present the findings of this study in line with the concerns discussed in the backdrop, and in the next chapter, I will offer appropriate measures and suggestions to overcome the threats and to preserve the virtues of universities under the new dispensation of commercial aims.

A dimension that impacted the way in which academics teach was the amount of fees paid by the students and the role given to the teachers. Anna commented on this in the context of D, her home country, and in England:

In D, you don't pay fees. Here we talk about consumers, and we talk about very specific expectations students have. They frighten me like "I'll come with my father or my lawyer if my marks are not what they expect". Things like "I have paid my fee, and I can't fail the course" is nothing you can argue in D because you are not..- you pay a couple of hundreds of pounds for the bureaucratic organisation of course, but you don't pay fees for the study- Everybody can study in D.

She mentioned another factor associated with her teaching context and job stability: the power of student evaluations which stems from the financial dependence on students and the criterion of the government including student voice for supporting universities. Relating this to her past learning experiences as well as her current teaching context, she said:

When I was taught, there was no sense that the lecturer really thought about how I can support you on your learning- for example, here this is part of what we do because it is also part of what we are assessed to do so students' feedback goes to our feedback as the lecturer, so if I get a feedback that students can't follow what I am talking about, I have to justify that and it goes onto my records kind of thing. It has an implication on how I progress as a lecturer etc.

Concluding that universities are more independent of many concerns in her home country, she also highlighted that it does not mean that they do not care about their students; rather, that it provided the academics with more freedom to take initiatives in the , such as asking a student who has not read the article to leave. She said she cannot ask people to leave here because it is much more "school-like" than a university. She then spoke about the 'additional role' of the lecturer in the UK to 'bring' students through the course, and also revealed what students expect here of a lecturer: 'a good and effective one' as "probably somebody who gets you through assignments as well but also who engages you or who finds ways for you to be able to follow". She differentiated between the university system in her own view and the current system which she likened to that of a high or secondary school, where teachers take a step-by-step guided approach towards fulfilling a set of goals or intended learning outcomes. In her own view, the university should be a much more open and, moneywise, independent space where creativity and agency are valued so that critical learners and educators who are willing to be within that system can construct or sometimes deconstruct knowledge and practice.

On prompting her about her thoughts as to whether an effective teacher can be defined differently in different places, Sara remarked that it really depends on one's perspective:

To me effective is effective, and from the teacher's perspective what they are teaching the student is exactly the same in every country; however, here everything is money. They DON'T CARE (with a highly rising tone) what the students are learning. All they care is 'ARE THEY GONNA GET ENOUGH MONEY?' They don't care about the rest. So, effectiveness is something they don't care. I'm stupid that I'm still teaching effectively. Half of the staff here have no motivation. They don't want to teach, and they do the minimum. Students are all aware of it, and they are saying this. That's why this department is not gonna survive for too long. It's going down now already.

This situation is the reverse of what Koz said, as his department was getting bigger in terms of the number of students each year, no matter how much the fees had risen. Therefore, it is important to be mindful that each lecturer talked about the specific context of the department s/he worked in, while they had common experiences regarding the broader system of higher education.

Comparing and contrasting the systems in his country and in England, Paul also mentioned the controlling mechanism of the university which does not allow much space for the lecturer to take initiative about the time of classes – such as when he has a problem or a conference to go to, which requires the delay of the class. Under such a circumstance, he said:

Here you have to communicate this to many people and then you have to organise and get another lecturer instead temporarily, whereas in G (his country) you can just put a small note outside your door and you don't do the lecture or compensate it another time and nobody will complain more or less while here if you don't do a lecture there will be a lot of complaints, so you have to plan this much in advance here.

In a similar vein to Anna, Paul added that here the focus is on the university as an industrial sector; he related this to commercial purposes and the export of the education:

Everything is as a service for the students who are like customers. It is a huge difference for example between G and English Universities because here it is an industry you can say and you can feel the difference in this case. You see how here the university is considered an industry that you have to sell mainly abroad because it is a sector that is really important for Great Britain in general.

Supporting Anna, Sara and Paul, Julia clearly expressed how the commercialisation of universities decreases the quality of education:

That affects it a lot I think, the fact that it is all about getting in more students, more money and I find that students have to pay a lot more so they think they can buy their education and it is quite difficult sometimes to deal with students that think that they can come in and don't really have to do a lot of work but they will just get a diploma or a certificate because they have paid £9,000 for education and I don't like the fact that PhD students are paying students here. Yeah I think that is not a very good development.

She mentioned she would prefer the model in her country where a person doing a PhD gets paid as a member of staff- s/he is not a student. As a result of this system, she added: "There is a strong competition, and you get better PhDs for it, so the

government pays a lot for universities and students pay less. It is therefore seen as more of a right rather than a commodity which you can buy." Thus, Julia identified two ways she could see of how a university functions:

There are two issues. There are the universities as a sort of academic place in a very romantic way. Because you are looking at global knowledge, it needs to be international "by definition" as a very romantic way. On the other hand, it is quite good at being a business, so you know internationally it is bringing in money and that's why on a business level that's their international strategy.

While Sylvia displayed how the university system -- with high fees -- plays a role in people's decision to get a higher education, Omar drew a comprehensive picture from the administrators' perspective, revealing how the business-like universities affect all the stakeholders, including teachers and students. He mentioned that universities have become a commercial environment with managers and administrators brought in to run the university instead of academics. Indeed, academics only make decisions based on numbers and statistics. As he elaborated:

If there are 5-10 students on a programme then it is deemed not economically viable from the administrative point of view to teach students 4 hours of lectures a week. It is not economical due to the amount of time that I give them because the return is less than what the university is putting in terms of staff salaries, rent for the rooms, the electricity bill, the gas bill and so on, so what the administrator will then come and tell me is that you should now reduce your teaching hour to do 2 hours per week instead of 4 because what you are doing is not economical, so they start...

Omar continued to tell more about the commercialised administrative system which also resulted in the centralisation of timetabling for the last few years. He recounted that timetabling used to be done locally, and the academics in his department would have all local rooms they could book as they wished in the building. As the timetable was local, they could control it, and all academics of the department were within the building. He told that later the central timetabling was eventually run by a private external company on behalf of the university, so that they could optimise the efficient use of any rooms in the building. He explained the consequences of this:

Once students from this building have finished their lecture here they have to run for the next lecture somewhere else. So that affects our teaching of course and students ability to learn because 10 minutes before the lecture finishes they are putting their books in bags because they want to run to catch the next lecture which is in another building.

In addition to the changes in administration, Omar observed that there was another change about the academic voice and freedom:

The board of the members of academics is now diminishing and all the instructions are coming from higher up and propagated down to members of staff rather than the other way round, so it's a one way communication.

Similar to Omar, Julia demanded the university staff to have a higher-stake status within policy makers. She stated:

What good universities would do is to give people more academic freedom to develop interesting ideas without saying "Oh, no, we should do this" because it is a business, if you need to have blue sky thinking.

She illustrated how some of the brightest people working in universities in the country are often portrayed as "being deranged, sitting in their offices with their big hair and like that 'urgh' (imitating)". She discovered that the amount of money that the government is spending on academic research "very very little" compared to a lot of other countries in the world. She considered telling academics "Oh we want you to study this because it is for our economic benefit" as a very short sighted idea. In parallel to Julia's concerns, Omar gave an interesting answer to my question as to whether he is finding the work he has to do okay: "Yes, it is enjoyable if I am allowed to do it". He talked about how he is not sometimes allowed to do it because of administrative restrictions, such as the contact hours with the students, the lack of resources or facilities for teaching -- sometimes because of the limited amount of money available for teaching as most of it goes towards research equipment for example. He said that he would like to spend more time teaching students but he cannot because his time is limited, and he has to teach a set number of hours that are prescribed by the administrators. This, he said, was the same in all institutions because of the emphasis on research, especially for the top 20 universities.

A lack of trust is another issue within the managerial system of the commercialised university. Relationships in this system are based on the implementations of the predetermined sets of missions, which leads to a tight controlling mechanism. Saroj attributed this to the lack of internal motivation and care in response to the demands of the system and, instead, the driving force of administration with monetary interests and said experiments have shown the lack of trust leads to untrustworthy behaviour: "If you don't trust anyone and monitor me, then I am more likely to not be

trustworthy." He exemplified the signs of the lack of trust by the procedures followed for the double-grading and checking of exams that have to be tested by two people, even if you are a professor. He said that there is a lack of trust at every level where "people are monitoring people who are monitoring people" and that no one is doing their job. Another example he gave was related to the influence administrators have on the selection of staff to join the university, despite their lack of expertise within any given academic department and the lack of knowledge about the candidate's work or research, or research or how s/he interacts with the department:

The dean played a bigger role in hiring senior faculty than the senior professors which is bizarre, which is one of the reasons amongst the few things that upset me in my previous university. It is a question of more efficiency or of what works. How can a person who does physics make decisions or evaluate choices on behalf of another department? It doesn't make sense.

Samir made a critique of the whole education system about the role of the universities today, and it invoked the question as to whether universities have a philosophy of education beyond the concern of meeting the demands of the economy. When it comes to the start of the commercial universities, Omar recounted how he felt it all started about five years ago when administrators focused on teachers in a negative way:

They terminated the contracts of all members of staff who were good teachers and they have been recruiting members of staff who focused on research and research income for the last 5 years. Actually the university has a clear income strategy and so the focus is not so much on the excellence of research but the research income. Most of the staff now merely focus on research, and that's why most of their time is occupied writing grant applications and they are research fellows who have fellowships, which means that they have money to work for 3-5 years on research only with possibility of money being paid to the college to find someone else to do their teaching. That doesn't help.

He went on to explain how the focus on the research income leads to a shortage of teaching staff and an imbalance in the distribution of the research and teaching roles. He shared examples from his own department:

It is not stipulated by these fellowship awarding institutions that colleges have to find a replacement for their teacher for this to happen. Those people do research full time and the few members of staff that are doing both research and teaching 6-7 years ago are now heavily involved in teaching. Because of this imbalance because they want to focus more on the research, they refuse to teach, and if you go and tell them something to do, the more income or grant applications they have, the more they are

like 'Oh I don't think I can do...' or 'I have 4-5 grant applications I am maintaining which involves me trying to...'

According to his comments, this all began when the university realised that the government had started cutting research funding to universities and that the limited funding forced universities that want to remain as a top 20 or a top 10 university to fight for survival so that money from the government will continue to come in for research within the next 5-10 years. At the same time, it gave universities an opportunity to ask that tuition fees be increased up to £9,000 for them to survive. So, as Omar said, "they took something and gave them something else to try and balance it, and the only thing they probably needed to do to survive was to ignore teaching, so teaching started to slowly go down and then it started picking up" as he said. Universities commercialising the academic environment have its consequences. However, Omar observed some recent changes about the focus on teaching:

Now it seems to be slowly returning back because they are now realising the significance of student income from undergraduate teaching because 70% of say college income comes from students but not from research because of the increase in student fees, so now they are slowly but gradually and steadily putting more focus on teaching and education, and universities are realising this so they are putting more resources in terms of money for the staff who are mainly responsible for teaching only.

He associated this change with the effect of the research assessment system at the university:

There is a double-down cycle in terms of the attention, the focus and resource allocated by the university towards teaching and education. It was very high at the beginning but then the results of the university research assessment exercise were very low, so they focused more on research targets. As they focused more on research, the teaching went down. Then when the assessment period had finished they started to focus on teaching, so the teaching improved, and when research peaked and then other research assessment exercises were coming next, so the teaching did suffer and now we are nearing the research assessment period, things start to improve.

Samir, Sylvia and Joe also referred to the difficulty of finding a balance between teaching and research, as promoted by the universities, and the way in which they are forced to work in this performative culture of the neo-liberal university as the following extracts show:

In these international universities they don't really care about the students. The university is a big money making machine. That is it and therefore not really interested in students, it is very evident that people in the faculty, everybody will tell each other that 'Okay, research is the main thing' - who cares about teaching right and probably they can do that because their machine works fine. They don't need to put extra efforts to make the machine run.

(Samir)

Anybody who wants to find a good job has to have a large number of good publications; otherwise, it's really difficult to find a job because that's how universities recruit academic staff at the moment. We have to show how much we have published and how good quality it is according to the Research Excellence Framework. They encourage a research intensive file showing how many outputs we have.

(Sylvia)

I can do also without teaching. It is not very important thing of all the activity here as a researcher, but of course teaching is something that sometimes motivates you also to go on with your research.

(Joe)

Considering the challenges academics encountered according to the analysis of their accounts, it can be concluded that there is a conflict between what the academics think a university or an effective lecturer should be for or do, and the current university system, which is dependent on economic-centred governmental policies. These economic concerns reflect on the amount of student fees. As a result, these perpetuate the hierarchy among the universities in the ranking tables. On the other side, it is understood from an international academic perspective that they feel pressurised under these demands from the institutions -- the policies of which are reinforced by the global economic forces -- and that they feel themselves like voiceless implementers who are supposed to play the game according to the rules stated by Omar, Sara, Anna and Julia. The problem they detected stems from the one-way communication which excludes the voice of academics and puts them under the pressures of bringing more research income and leading the students through their degree program. In addition to the challenges participants expressed in the earlier sections, there was a strong emphasis on the following aspects of the higher education system to be dealt with in order to be more efficient: the status and the academic freedom that university teachers and researchers have in policy-making, too much emphasis on the business model rather than quality, the

imbalance between teaching and research for the sake of ranking tables, the administrative restrictions, the lack of trust resulting in heavy bureaucracies.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the fact that my research questions were not initially focused on departmental differences and that many of the points made by these academics were the same, regardless of their disciplinary backgrounds. Therefore, this has not been the focus of the findings section. Also, when the findings were considered across different disciplines, it should be considered that it is hard to make generalisations and comparisons across different disciplines, because the purpose of the study was to explore academics' individual accounts of experiences. Personal experiences and disciplinary practices may be different from each other. However, it was obvious for me from the data, that some differences may have been experienced. For example, the Business School, which had a bigger international academic and student community than the rest, may have felt the pressures more keenly owing to the make-up of the student cohorts. In hard sciences, I also saw some differences regarding the allocation of financial resources to research rather than teaching equipment. These points also relate to the literature, where all disciplines were found to have undergone changes in relation to the expansion of the student population, and where this can be associated with a more market-driven educational system (Johnston, as cited in Karagiannis, 2009). Such a system has placed great pressures upon universities to excel in both research and teaching and to produce graduates with market-relevant knowledge and skills (*ibid.*: 76). Nevertheless, as Barnett (2011: 41) noted, value positions towards market activities differ across both universities and disciplines even within a single institution independently of each other. Moreover, academics from the hard sciences in this study agreed that government policies that directly encourage and promote scientific research may inevitably drive research and teaching apart (Karagiannis, 2009). The academics from applied hard sciences noted that this division was also apparent in the allocation of financial resources to research rather than teaching equipment. Most academics from both hard and soft applied sciences did not see much difference among both international and home staff in terms of decision-making. Moreover, all academics from both hard and soft sciences inevitably felt forced to allocate teaching a second priority to their research, as they

struggled to meet increasing demands and respond to the implementation of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) rating system. Nevertheless, they wished to conduct teaching effectively hand-in-hand with their research interests, and many found that their research experiences and knowledge largely informed the content and style of their teaching practice. Overall, the effects of the marketised university system on academic freedom, research, teaching and administration were obvious in all academics' interviews, regardless of the disciplinary differences.

In this section, academics provided substantial accounts of their professional experiences and challenges in varied departments with a focus on the institutional and systematic differences. They dealt with issues related to how they perceived institutional aims and their roles in realising these aims, even if they felt it was contradictory to what they believed.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter provided academics' accounts of linguistic and professional experiences and challenges in an attempt to answer the first two research questions. We first elaborated on the academics' language experiences before and after coming to the UK as another way to understand their journey before. We then focused on their further encounters and challenges in teaching at the university.

The next chapter attempted to answer the third research question which addressed the issue of interculturality from the academics' perspectives. This included their personal accounts of interculturality, which provided insights into how they constructed self and other; where they felt a sense of belonging; how their intercultural experiences played an important role in their feeling like an insider or outsider; and how they perceived cultural differences and positioning.

## Chapter 5. Intercultural experiences: Being “international”

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the third aim of the study. That is participants' intercultural experiences which inform their perspectives in their accounts of encounters with cultural and linguistic others while working at an international UK university and living in different settings. The sub-themes which belong to the main heading "Intercultural experiences: Being 'international'" are as follows:

- A sense of belonging
- Feeling like an outsider or an insider
- Approaches to cultural descriptions

As a contribution to the dilemma related to labelling staff members or people like international or home, about which there is very little published research in the literature (Trahar, 2011; 2012), I explored what these words mean from "international" academics' perspectives by asking questions like "according to who and which perspectives make one international and home" and "how this affects their views and positioning by themselves and others". Bearing this dichotomy in my mind, I started to seek answers to the question of where they feel "home" is in the world. I hoped that this would yield some conclusions about how they construct their identities as a lecturer from a culturally and linguistically different background. This was closely connected to the intercultural experiences they undertook in the UK or elsewhere, which brought out the issue of positioning and being positioned by others. As a result, I found remarkable examples of interculturality in their personal and professional lives, which orientated them to shape their stance towards their "selves" and the other. These experiences consisted of real or perceived instances of racism, prejudice or discrimination due to ethnicity or non-nativeness, which led them to find ways and strategies to deal with these issues. Lastly, they developed particular views of cultural differences prior to or after these experiences, changed some of their views or subscribed to the old ones in different ways, which reflected a mixed picture of imagined and established cultures with emerging experiences from both essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives.

## 5.2 A sense of belonging

Participants notably considered their country of birth as their home in the world, although this choice was more dominant for some of them (Koz, Samir, Yusuf, Ali) than the rest. The sense of belonging they felt was based on complex relationships and experiences, which makes it more difficult to classify their choice of 'home' according to certain criteria. For example, Joe was in an in-between position regarding both the country of birth and England where his current family was. As he explained:

Joe: Now my life is all surrounded by the English people yeah it is interesting.

Me: You feel like you are in a mono culture now?

Joe: That's a good point actually, yeah probably yeah.

Me: Where do you consider as your 'home' in the world?

Joe: K, of course it's K (his country of birth), but having said that all my family is here so I have 3 children, so probably this is home it is really funny though when I was talking to my wife, all our children they are from X (in England). They go to X school. This is their home, so it should be mine too. It is a really interesting question actually.

He went to K once for the last 5-6 years for a lecture, and he said K was not the kind of K which he knew about 20 years ago any more. In two sentences that were completely within the stream of conversation, he revealed he missed K in another spontaneous dialogue about the fish in England:

Me: How do you find fish here?

Joe: Fine, nice fish but not like fish at home.

The word 'home' was meaningful here as he made reference to his home country though I did not ask about it.

Julia also had complex feelings regarding her sense of identity. She said "Oh now in the UK" as the place where she felt was her home and that she felt very much part of the community in Wales. She thought "That enhances your own sense of "so this is okay, this is where I belong now". Since most of her family were now living amongst other Welsh people, she said "We feel a little bit more Welsh. I feel more Welsh than English I would say". However, she also stated that "I am B (her nationality). I wrote that down in the census at least and I don't think I would want to go and apply for a British Passport. I am very happy with my B Passport." She mentioned that they were quite happy to be B people living in the UK and that her

children had B Passports but not British Passports. She thought her children were becoming more Welsh because they grew up in a very Welsh community and because her daughter was very fluent in Welsh. She said: "My children were born in the UK. This is definitely home, yeah not B (country). (Me: Why?) I don't know. I think it is because we are family." She also added "I have a real European identity more than a British identity, and maybe nowadays more than B. Although I have B passport, and I grew up there, but I would call myself European. I would be quite happy with a European Passport." Her quotes reflected many aspects of the sense of belonging she felt. After years of living in the UK, she thought she must belong to the place where she was now; that is the UK; however, even if she developed a sense of belonging to where she was at the moment as she lived with her family and her children grew up and spoke the language of that community (Welsh), she wanted to maintain her country of origin as the place where she came from in her passport. In this sense, she felt as an insider in Wales after living and speaking the language for years, while she deliberately chose the European identity rather than the British one, which showed that she passed from an outsider to an insider in the UK. However, for the reasons she would give later in the interview, she was going to hold a position as a deliberate outsider as a 'European' and more as a B to give a response to and resist the positioning around her. In another dialogue about what she has learnt since coming to the UK, she elaborated on this identity shift:

Julia: I think if anything I have learnt to become more European and probably slightly more B, *just to show your difference* but I don't know.

Me: Because of other people's perceptions or because you feel so?

Julia: I think both, I mean when you come to the UK you are seen as an outsider and you are trying to sort of develop that kind outside perspective yourself in a way and it is how people perceive you. "I was the European" you know and in the UK they are very good at saying "this is the UK and everything else is Europe" as though they are not part of it somehow, they say "You are from Europe". Yeah you are from Europe as well. They somehow see mainland Europe as something else, and I always felt that they saw themselves slightly different. I don't know I think, I think people see you as European. Because you are from B they don't exactly know where, and I think in a way people project that on you, so you become more European because people see you as that and, I think *you also want to reinforce your own identity as being different from British*. We make a conscious decision to speak B language at home and we want to maintain that.

She mentioned that she maintained contact with a few friends of her nationality in the UK, mostly for the sake of family members. For example, she wanted her children to be able to study in another country if they want to. That was why their children learned English, Welsh and B language just to keep their futures as open as possible -- she wanted them to have an international outlook rather than just look at the UK. She found living abroad precious to see things very differently, rather than going on holiday abroad. She said:

Because you are going into a new environment and you have to deal with ‘that yourself’, you learn a lot about the new environment which is very enlightening not just because you learn a lot about this country but you also learn a lot about your country where you were originally from and you see things in a different perspective.

Like Julia, Sylvia and Paul felt that they were European, and Sylvia said:

Nation plays a role insofar as I’m not from here, and people notice that I’m not from England. It is more what I’m not rather than what I am. Having lived in the UK for 15 years, and having acquired UK citizenship, also make me a resident of this country, but it doesn’t make me English. My dual citizenship is a recognised identity. It’s not what I feel- it is just official.

While commenting on her nationality in the country of origin, Sylvia saw herself from the perspective of others who position her in the UK as ‘not’ being an insider but a person from another nation. She implied that references made to her identity in the country of origin would mean that she did not belong to where she lived now, and this resonated with “what she was not” in her perspective. It was like from the perspective of a native of the UK who saw an immigrant as an outsider. Therefore, rather than seeing her differences related to her country of origin as things that she had or things that made her who she was, she saw herself through the way people look at her and adopted their thought that “the references to her country of origin were not about one of *us* and not about *what makes us who we are*”. This positioning by others did not make her impose recognition of her differences like Julia; rather, she developed a sense of multi-layered identity, rather than English identity, even though official documents allowed her to have dual citizenship.

In contrast to Joe and Julia who considered the new place they lived as their home ‘now’, Koz who had a family with a child for more than 10 years in the UK, said “My home is P” without hesitation and continued:

Yeah, you have a home here in the UK, if anyone asks me where is my house I would say P, and I don't know how to describe it. I know that's *where I feel emotionally attached*- one place- and my family house is there, so one part of my family is there.

Though the first place participants mentioned as home was always their country of origin (where they were born and brought up, and where their families lived), a few of them found the question tough or tricky to answer. Some of them (Julia, Joe, Paul and Saroj) opted for a second alternative: "My home is where I live, so my home is X (in England)." Therefore, these participants developed a sense of belonging both to their country of birth and to the new place where they currently lived.

Saroj, who had been thinking a lot about this 'difficult' question, was also in an in-between position as he mentioned respectively that he belonged to his country of birth, the new place where his family is, and to the world as an international citizen: "I do hope that I live like an international citizen so, in that sense, it is not completely clear that I feel fully aligned to J or to the UK or to the US. I like to have a broader identity."

Sylvia, Bobo, Sara, and Samir also felt a sense of belonging to many/multi-layered places as 'a world citizen', whereas Samir had a different point of view about this concept: "We can't be world citizens with such visa restrictions" and he grounded this in the issue of racism, and associated the challenges for being a world citizen with power issues in the world and the imbalance of the use of resources, in the past, as well as now. He remarked that "I think that this label 'being a world citizen' is something they use in their own ways." He based his way of thinking about 'home' on anywhere in the world where he can contribute to the economical and social development of the deprived – to help them to have more access to equal opportunities -- rather than within the boundaries of countries. Omar also saw home as "wherever it is a decent place, where a human being is considered and treated as a human and their rights are recognised", and then he added more: "I don't care where that is. For me what I feel attached to- that's how I interpret the world-: the responsibility for my family and work."

For Sara, the situation was even more different- belonging to nowhere or anywhere, but feeling like going back to her country of birth after more than 15 years in the UK. She described her feelings as follows:

You never belong to neither where you go nor where you go back. I feel more foreign now when I go back to Z (her country of birth). They criticise me about everything from my way of speaking to my clothes. I don't fit in with their lifestyles as well, so after you go out of where you were born once, you can't fit into anywhere and you just come from the World- the Earth. I adapt to where I am but I just can't fit into it, but my ideal place to live in the future is Z. I have been waiting for that since I came here. People are not aware of this, but we live like slaves here. I don't want to work for money any more. I have different ideals now like going back, dealing with arts and literature and writing autobiographical novels.

She explained the dilemma she felt about her sense of belonging by seeing anywhere in the world as a place where she could adapt to for a living and ended up by saying that "I belong to nowhere" because the positioning of others both in her home country and in the UK made her feel alienated in both places. However, she still felt a longing for her home country when she saw it from her own perspective and this was obvious from her future plans about that place.

It can be concluded from this section that the place(s) where academics feel a sense of belonging/ consider as home in the world is/are hard to specify exactly. This is as a result of complex relationships and experiences in their lives, and it also implies that it is even less absolute to label or categorise them as home or international within the university. This can be understood from mixed views of where they belonged in the world – some belonging to "home countries" or wherever the family is, others feeling in-between, being a European or a "world citizen" more globally and, lastly, belonging to anywhere or to nowhere.

It was interesting to note that their construction of self in relation to their place of belonging was very much connected to an emotional dimension coming from their experiences of (not) being recognised as the person they position themselves to be. The issue of recognition led some of them to shift from an outsider to an insider and a deliberate outsider as a "European" in a bid to highlight their differences and to find the same sense of identity which they felt in wherever they belong to in the new place that they have moved into as well. Therefore, if they did not get acceptance from the new place, they tried and sought for new ways of getting themselves known as such, which may reveal that they show a resistance to being othered and impose recognition in spite of the negative experiences of interculturality. Thus, the participants' perceptions and feelings of self and other were constructed through the

multiple-way communication among their own nationals, internationals and UK nationals. They were also affected by the wider economical, social, political and cultural discourses, at the centre of which the issue of power lies. This is illustrated best in Samir's call for being recognised as a person with the same rights and opportunities as the rest of the world: "I say I am a world citizen. Nobody cares, right?" In so doing, some emphasised what they felt they belonged to and the recognised identity in the official documents like passports which also caused them to be labelled as home or international staff member or person. In the next section, the reason for their feelings of emotional attachment or isolation will be revealed more explicitly through their accounts of interculturality, which led them to feel like an insider or an outsider and develop different attitudes towards their positioning by others and reshape their positions.

### **5.3 Feeling like an outsider or an insider**

The most frequently stated issue among academics was real or perceived prejudice based on racism, discrimination and prejudice. This, in turn, was based on their ethnicity or 'non-native status' which caused some to feel like an outsider, seek for ways to be an insider or to get their own position accepted by others. These experiences also affected their senses of belonging and views of interculturality in different ways. Experiences of interculturality resulted in academics' developing different forms of learning, going through changes or seeking defensive ways or strategies in the following ways: becoming aware of cultural and linguistic positioning, feeling inferiority, superiority or confidence, (not) resisting recognition, and retreating to the safe zones of communication.

Samir started to encounter issues of discrimination and prejudice in his home country before coming to the UK, and mentioned how history was being taught to students in his country with a distorted image:

They had written history in a manner that is always Xs and Ys fighting against each other and even now people actually believe these things, even now text books try not to say it but they don't tell the real history. They are talking similar stuff. So people in my school (in H country) actually believe that Muslims should go away etc.

He was resistant to the visa restrictions applied in the UK, which he found was racist, and he pointed out the inequality among the societies due to "a history of

colonisation which made ‘this part of the world’ rich” though he also accepted the positive things he observed in the UK. Therefore, Samir changed his beliefs about the UK after coming there. He said he always knew that this country is racist, but it turned out not to be as racist as he had expected. Looking at this country he thought the world and human race are becoming more non-racist. As he explained:

It may go up and down but in general they are coming towards a non-racism and this society is one of the societies which is at the forefront- this is also what I feel. I definitely think that it is a lot behind than what they think and other people are not as behind as they think but I think they are at the front and there are many things about this society which are worth learning from, for example, their laws, their patience, curiosity and their attitude towards science.

Unlike Samir, who changed his views in a positive direction about racism in the UK after coming there, Sara felt like an outsider after she came to the UK, although she said she had never experienced culture shock during her time in the UK. Also, she went to Germany, and felt very close to German people and did not have any culture shock there either. She remarked how her views about the German people changed after she lived there:

I was taught that German people are racist, but I saw they are not at all like that. I have lots of friends there. On the other hand, though I live in England more than a decade, I don’t have even one British friend but many international ones. The British are very racist. They otherise you no matter what you do, even if you work miracles. You cannot cosy up to them. I invited them to my house, made parties, barbecues with them. The next day I say ‘Good morning’ to them. My husband is English. They greeted him but not talked to me again (Silence). I don’t speak to those that don’t have a word with me either anymore. Another time there was a British friend once who was a vegetarian and I would respect her, but because I don’t eat pork, she always used to make fun of me. I respected her preferences, but why wouldn’t she?”

Sara’s intercultural experiences in two different countries led her to break up some of the stereotypes in her mind, though she found that establishing relationships with the local people in the UK difficult -- even impossible -- after many attempts of bridging the gaps and obstacles for communication. She also mentioned her disappointment from her personal experience, together with her international students, in a bid to enhance relationships with the home people:

They always say "Why don't the foreigners integrate?" (with a high pitch and an unbelieving tone) They try. I try (a very high pitch). I have been killing myself for more than fifteen years. They do not want us. They do not accept us. They would not integrate with us. My students who try to mix with English students all tell me how

they try and kill themselves to work in teams, and they are not accepted so they end up working in foreign groups. English people are extremely racist. I have a friend whose wife is English in Z (her home country). They lived in there for 40 years. Their children speak the Z language, while their mother didn't learn a single word. She is stubborn. They don't want to communicate or integrate. Then they push you because they don't like foreigners; they don't want them to integrate. There is this prejudice.

In the end, after a series of failures in communication, she gave up trying to sustain the one-sided attempts to integrate with locals and retreated to her own group of nationals or multi-nationals, through which she could feel a sense of communal belonging. In addition to her experiences in Germany and the UK, she told about racism and sexism in the U.S., even though she did not experience it at first hand:

If you are a woman, it means you have no brain in the US. I worked and lived there. They don't treat people as equal. They are EXTREMELY sexist in America, and they are EXTREMELY EXTREMELY racist. I lived in Washington D.C. Nobody ever told me that Washington D.C., which is the capital city, is actually the city that is divided into segregated areas. Whites don't live in the same areas as Blacks. Blacks cannot pass the White areas. Whites cannot pass the Black areas and Hispanics'. Nobody also told me that actually 18 to 20 percent of the population is white. Ok what about me- did I have any problems? No. According to Whites I was White. According to Hispanics I was Hispanic. According to Blacks, I was Black. So I was free.

Supporting what Sara observed in the U.S., Saroj, another lecturer who had lived, there, added that:

They all tend to be groups, the first thing you notice- even if you go into the dining hall in the US- is that the black students sit together, and the white students sit together. The blacks sit apart by choice. They don't want to sit with the whites. That was the most visible thing.

Whereas this separation was by the choice of each group of people according to the picture of grouping among white and black people, Saroj disagreed and said that this "choice" was a forced one. He also commented on the issue of discrimination too: "Clearly there was discrimination in the 90s when I first went to the US but there was a lot of positive discrimination by the mid 2000s. They liked the idea that you were a foreigner." However, Sara felt strongly that this seemingly "cute" attitude towards people from different countries was not real. She expanded on this by stating:

They always talk about "celebrating diversity" on paper. Everything about equality is on paper. I don't believe on paper. There are certain things that changed. If you don't like a nationality, you are not allowed to say anything negative, but what they haven't done is to change the mentality. You see my neighbours don't talk to me, but they don't say anything bad to me. They are still very racist to me as they are not changing

their mentality, so equality is only on the paper and in the words, but it is not real. It is a shame that we are in the world so racist. We discriminate so much. You want everybody to look like US. Actually if we enjoy this variety, the world would become a better place, so I LOVE a multicultural environment.

Regarding the issue of equality, Samir, was willing to accompany anyone irrespective of their class, race, gender etc. He could establish rapport with them due to his previous experiences with people from various ethnic backgrounds in his home country. However, he felt he was the most outsider among his colleagues who were from various backgrounds and married to British people. I inferred that he attributed being an insider in the UK to having a British passport/nationality either by marriage or by being born in the UK.

Similar to Samir, Sara was from a country having a history shaped by many rulers and colonies, which made her gain a lot of intercultural experiences before going abroad. Nevertheless, she revealed how much she had difficulty in terms of people's attitudes and felt isolated when she first came to the UK. She gave a helpful example:

In England, when I first came- you don't see this anymore- every time I got on the bus here if they are English people, they would put their bags next to them and never allow me to sit next to them because I'm a foreigner and if there was a place next to me even if the whole bus was full nobody would sit. Now there are much more foreign students so they're getting used to it; they didn't have this before. I used to feel so isolated because you wouldn't see anybody foreigner. My husband said the first time he ever saw a Black person he looked weirdly. Because he didn't see such a person before, but in my country we have seen everything, so for us it's fine.

Koz also commented on a similar situation:

If I see someone behaving in this funny way (discriminating), I laugh at them- they are ignorant, but I get annoyed when it is someone who knows me, who works with me tries to discriminate against me. For me it is not an issue, if someone is not coming to sit with you on the bus and you go somewhere you know, the way I look at it if one is white and you go to one part of Africa you are going to be different. People are going to notice you are different, so it is okay what they should not treat you, they should not put in a disadvantaged position, because you are different- that is the point.

Koz and Sara both spoke about similar reactions from the society in the UK. They thought that if a group of people who are from similar racial and ethnic background come across a foreigner from a different race who has a different appearance, they may naturally give similar reactions. In essence, the issue was whether this

difference causes discrimination, alienation or otherisation towards them. Both Koz and Sara had to face this kind of attitude, which resulted in feelings of isolation, frustration and anger, especially if it was from people they knew personally. They also had the feeling of indifference and the use of satire, irony or sarcasm if it is from other people in the society. Sara's experience as a student in the UK before becoming a lecturer also affected how she positioned her identity and opened ways for her to learn more about self, as understood from her remarks on her student years back in Z and here:

When I first came here to do my master's, I became disappointed because I got A star from all the assignments except the first one with 20% of the study time I had during my bachelor's in Z. Here I understood that we are a society that depreciates ourselves. Z people are intelligent and well-educated though we never get satisfied with what we do and how we are.

In terms of the beliefs she changed after coming to Britain, she remarked:

I used to think after I came to Britain, all the English people or those colonial powers make us believe that we were not intelligent as if we were not as good as them. I actually believed I was a secondary kind of human as if Europeans were humans and we were not they convince us. When I came here I realised how wrongly they have been. I'm more intelligent than they are. Actually my ideas just we are better than they are. I cannot understand how they convince people of thinking themselves "second" as if we were like slavery kind of thing.

Her experience of living in the UK as a student and a lecturer enabled Sara to question her old beliefs and assumptions which were instilled in her and her co-nationals' minds. She shifted from a sense of inferiority to, more than an awareness of the self-value, superiority over the people in "the West", while trying to confront the feeling of inferiority. In one of her accounts, she vividly recalled her very first moment of teaching, as if it were yesterday. She started by saying "I wasn't sure whether they would actually think as a teacher I'm intelligent or as good as them. I always say I went to an interview, and they said 'Start' by very first course...". Commenting on a two-hour lecture that she gave, she said that she wondered what the reaction would be when she finished. In the end, her students all stood up and applauded her. Then the head of the department came and asked "What did you do? I don't know why? They love you!" It can be understood from her anecdotes that the feeling of acceptance and recognition as an "international" lecturer from the first moment of teaching -- despite the lack of the teaching certificate -- enabled her

to break up her feelings of inferiority, gain confidence and feel like an insider among her students. This acceptance was most strongly reflected in her manager's reaction "They love you!".

Like Sara, Sylvia explained the change in her attitude and confidence after being one of a few people who had an A grade in a very intensive teaching certificate programme, though at the beginning she was really worried if she would be good enough because she was the only non-native speaker in the group. Sylvia said that she sometimes felt like an outsider, but she clarified this: "It has something to do with my own confidence. I felt I wasn't accepted by others, but it was nothing to do with the other people. It was part of my problem". Later on, she understood the value she could offer the students as an international lecturer who can associate herself with other students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Yusuf and Omar made reference to some people having prejudices about their religion- Islam:

We as Muslims believe it is a complete religion. As mentioned in the Koran everything you need in life is in Islam but you need to apply this. A problem caused by a so-called Muslim immigrant or businessman for example make the picture very bleak and labels all Muslims in the country as terrorists or dishonest people, so I sometimes tell people "Read about Islam. Don't only listen to people without reading. Go, buy yourself and read then say whether you like this or not because- this happens also- some people judge Islam according to Islamophobia, but after reading about Islam, they realise that it is not the truth and sometimes they convert to Islam.

According to these academics, the positioning of their belief under the influence of the media or according to the wrongdoings of a so-called Muslim was the main cause of the prejudice according to these academics. This reminded me of a metaphor about the reality and the false image: this situation was like confusing a jar of honey (Islam) with a jar of poison (a false demonised image) which robs one of the joy of tasting honey.

In another example, Joe explained that he felt like an outsider due to his personal experience of being looked down on by locals because of his use of English:

When I talk to new people, people used to say "Oh your English is really good" but people don't say this anymore. Because you recognise, if you speak K (his language) then I might say your K is really good, what that means actually not perfect, good but

not perfect, so actually people are looking down on you when they say that, "Oh yeah *your English is really good*" then "Wow that is well done for example you learnt to speak English". People can't say that to me anymore.

Similar to Sara, Joe mentioned that: "I have a lot of international friends but not really British friends. I only know one British friend in the end, which was really good, but again nothing to talk if you don't have any common topics, why would you want to be friends?" Another lecturer from the Far East, Lim, did not have any British friends either and made comments supporting Sara and Joe, sharing his rule of living and teaching as such:

If you live in England you have to adapt to the normal way of teaching. We actually adapt to English culture. Basically you come here to work in an English University not in a M University. As a newcomer I accept that I need to adapt to culture and education system in one direction. I don't have English friends. It is difficult to make. I don't feel I need to have this effort. We have our own friend cycle. Everybody is busy. That's fine but some Ms (other people from his nationality) tend to try very hard to make British friends.

The difference between Sara, Lim and Joe is that Lim and Joe did not find making friends with British people essential, and kept their own circle of friends of different nationalities or from their countries. Contrastingly, Sara tried to keep in touch with British people and got frustrated in any negative situations. All of them also tried to adapt to the English culture by accepting what they found in the UK; however, while Lim and Joe consented to one-way adaptation, Sara found that she could not fit in with this one-direction communication and started to question the system and the assumptions she encountered. One of the things that she found discriminatory was related to the different approaches towards international and home staff as she answered the question as to whether she felt anything about it as follows:

Always, but you can't say it. They have this. OF COURSE naturally (pitch up). They never consider me in any of the promotions. Several years ago they took somebody without a PhD. She didn't even have a Master's degree, and at the end what happened? She only survived for two years and she didn't. Of course! Always!

She mentioned she always heard such stories from other departments as well. Samir felt lucky to be employed as a full-time teacher by the university with a non-British passport: "People took risk on me by employing me because I think I was not a British not just a citizen I was not British at all, I am culturally, very, very Z (South Asian). I am not very good at English mannerisms" He attributed his employment as

a success despite his nationality, so to him his nationality seemed to be an obstacle for his employment until then. As an example he gave to show his difference, he told that he loved rain in contrast to people here, and that he did not know what autumn means before coming to the UK. He further believed that his culture, nationality and passport were significant factors that affected his job application to him.

In other departments which are more multicultural, there were no other comments on feeling like an outsider from other participants. Paul even said: "You don't feel that (being international) as a problem because maybe the British are a minority". He found the communication among the staff to be generally good: "The communication amongst the member of staff is more or less the same everywhere. There could be some competition but usually it is very friendly at the moment. In my case it has always been very friendly. I didn't have any problems with communicating so far." Paul expressed his feelings about communicating with people: "Of course with Europeans you feel more comfortable because you share the same culture but at the end people who come from Asia is not a problem I think." He seemed to be less welcoming towards the unknown other than the rest of the academics, which may be as a result from his limited experience of intercultural exchanges. Julia felt that being an international lecturer was an advantage in finding the job: "I was hired because I was international and I had international connections, and that seemed very appealing. I think it would be odd if there wasn't an international environment." There was a general impression that there was no difference between international and home staff in terms of decision-making too as Julia voiced:

There is no difference. I mean our ... (someone from a high position) here is B (nationality), so I would be surprised if there is a difference. I don't feel it like that. I really hope that I would like to think that there is no difference.

Sara agreed on this ironically though:

We always participate because we give our ideas. English people are passive. They don't. They only cry alone in the toilets then they go off with depression. We comment and when we actually comment, we are considered aggressive. *We are all barbarians because we deliver ideas.* Sorry I'm being too blunt.

Omar mentioned no difference between international and home staff in terms of decision-making like Julia. He said that both staff are even *forced* to perform administrative duties:

Whenever a member of staff reaches a senior level, whether they are home or international, they will be forced to be involved in the decision making process unless they try and find a way around it politically or otherwise so that they don't get involved in that process and they just focus on the research but one way or another they will be given an administrative duty that involved making important decisions at the university like stopping or changing a programme, diverting some of the funding in the financial planning or purchasing more teaching equipment.

Koz did not feel any different from any one else and he kept an open mind by "thinking about others a lot, thinking about family, helping other people" as he remarked: "It is part of me. Here as well I think with my colleagues I am more than happy to help out. *I feel it is we it is not me.*" He did not want to make a distinction between international and home staff in terms of the communication. He also added: "In the department I don't see myself as international. I don't think so. I don't think of myself as different from anybody else".

Anna never had an experience where she felt "if I were English, I would have had a better experience so if that suits to job interviews or anything really. I have never felt because I'm D, I've had disadvantages." She also cast it under a positive light:

What is really positive in a sense, *I have never felt people are constantly aware that I'm not D.* Sometimes they laugh about me and 'Oh that sounded a bit funny and do you mean like this? Or I have to ask 'Do you mean this?' And you know although I'm here for almost ten years, there are still so many things I don't know, so obviously you have to immerse yourself as there are things that I haven't experienced myself in this country. That sometimes limits what I can say, but then I can add another dimension.

Considering different experiences academics had regarding the attitudes towards "international" staff and the degree of decision-making, Koz, Anna, Julia, Paul, Bobo, Silvan and Omar expressed their positive feelings about their departments in terms of equal opportunities; on the contrary, Sara had negative experiences and perceptions about her department. While Koz was against the label of being 'international', asserting that he is not different from anybody else, Paul, Julia and Anna wanted to highlight that they are international and seemed proud of being different as international staff. As for their experiences of positioning and being positioned by others outside the university, at some point in their lives in the UK,

most of them had an incident of prejudice and discrimination. These negative encounters provided them with an awareness of cultural and linguistic positioning, the strength of overcoming difficulties by recognising themselves and led some to impose recognition while directing others to retreat to the safe zones of communication. These diverse experiences of interculturality also shaped their views of cultural differences which they had already got from their own worlds or the views that they formed through their dialogue with others from different cultures. In either case, they became aware of the distinctions between "this" and "that" culture as they found such categories around them. What made a difference in their lives in essence was their own stance, degree of understanding and response towards these cultural resources. As discussed in the literature review (Holliday, 2011), these imagined and established worlds of culture may be taken for granted as normal and innocent in people's lives, while they may actually position people under certain descriptions and labels in order to promote the dominance of the interests of some people over others. Ironically, these "others" may unconsciously become submissive to this vicious system as they are deceived to believe that they have the equal rights as the rest; this was realised by Omar, Sara and Yusuf, and this realisation was the first step taken to be free from this system. In the next section, through their views of cultural differences and experiences of interculturality, I will look at their awareness of these divisive mechanisms and approaches towards taken-for-granted cultural labels or stereotypes.

#### **5.4 Approaches to cultural descriptions**

Participants' accounts reflected emerging experiences of "multiple worlds/cultures" which affected how they viewed themselves in relation to others and which were also affected by others' positioning created by the structures and discourses of culture and language in "the imagined and established world" (Holliday, 2011). As a continuation of the section above, I will go on examining these established and emerging worlds by giving examples from their intercultural experiences that resulted in their (not) challenging assumptions stemming from the normalised "essentialist culture and language discourses" such as the West and the East, "individualist-collectivist", "us-them" distinctions and stereotypes, acknowledging

and valuing differences and seeing beyond the cultural other. In this way, I find it important to explore how participants draw different meanings from their intercultural experiences. These experiences may vary from situation to situation but have the following in common even if sometimes covered deep inside them: the human factor. This is found in the core of every point of view beyond all cultural and other distinctions and categorisations made by all sorts of different mechanisms which Holliday calls discourses.

Some of the “innocent” or normalised discourses (Holliday, 2011) informed by cultural resources or global politics were obvious in their comparison of the countries while the degree of questioning assumptions and stereotypes was not the same. For example, accounts by Yusuf, Omar, Saroj and Sara were outstanding in terms of showing their awareness of the system in which people are enforced to follow certain ways of thinking, living and behaving. These academics questioned the value given to the human beings compared to the value of commodities and felt that they are being positioned as just a cog in the wheel of the system that is “supposedly” for the ultimate good of all.

Yusuf experienced a change in his approach to life and his home country by challenging the traditional views and separating them from his religion, Islam. In drawing this distinction, he saw new ways of living and behaviours which are, in fact, not contradictory but complementary to the idea of fairness promoted by his religion. Thus, he differentiated between the effects of the upbringing related to cultural wrongdoing and “the essence of Islam, which promotes the idea that you should respect the other and reflect it through the behaviour and manners in society or that men and women are equal but not identical”, as he exemplified.

Having a more critical outlook on his own society and life in the UK, he also gave some examples in the UK that he saw as opposite to his beliefs and his concept of freedom, though he highlighted that he respected everyone here as a part of the multicultural society, while he internally felt it was not right- “the sense that you can do whatever you like, there is no problem at all...When I saw these things, I realised the value for me of being a Muslim. The only impression I had was that in our lives

we are blessed with what is called Islam and we should keep it, and this is my point of view." He also changed his view about the UK after coming here:

One thing is in C they were always giving us the image that when you go to the UK, people are drunk in the streets, it is very easy to have a relationship with a lady and you can do whatever you like, but when I came here I discovered that these people are wrong. People here sleep early and wake up early and they are very careful in driving and working. They apply a lot of things which are related to Islam but they lack the belief at the spiritual level in the UK. It is a materialist society, business money, a very systematic one, a very nice one but no spirituality, so this is one of the reasons why I started thinking about coming back to C. I don't think I can stay here the whole of my life even if I have the chance.

After his transition to the UK, Yusuf challenged both his old views and the ideas which, he perceived, guide people in the UK. Together with questioning assumptions and making cultural contestation, Yusuf also had his own pre-judgements about different cultures, which caused him to make a distinction between cultures in the UK and his country. He understood that he was affected by the established discourses about "the civilisation in the West", though he could make constructive criticism towards his country, and acknowledge different perspectives while still having a sense of belonging to the lifestyle in his country of origin.

Contesting the essentialist culture and language discourses about the West and the East, Julia could recognise the similarities in differences despite the generalisations like "this and that" culture, as she differentiated between the English, the Welsh and her co-nationals under the influence of the global position and politics:

I align myself more with Welsh politics than English politics. It relates to a different attitude I think the Welsh being slightly different, they see things very different and I can see that too. There is a different feel to the country as you see Wales as a different country, and the Welsh people certainly do that. I feel that they want to develop their country and there is a real strong vibe of "Okay we need to do something".

Another extract from her accounts show how she made a distinction between "this-that" culture and "they-we":

They are English. They do the things their way. They like their independence I think. They want to be different. That's why they do everything different: They drive on the other side, have two taps in the sink, so many different things from the rest of the Europe.

Samir used particular social and political structures influential in his personal trajectory as he said: "My life attitude is definitely given to me by my parents and my particular secular, modern, futuristic and humanist values from my country." As in Samir's statement, Lim used such descriptions in his examples; however, in a departure from Samir, his approach was critical enough to see the difference between how concepts are constructed and how they cover the reality like a similar example to the two faces of the medallion:

People say Chinese people are more pragmatic and more like determined and aggressive. I am sure if you talk to individual Chinese people, it is different.

China is a capitalist branded under a socialist country. Western and probably well-developed countries are branded as capitalist but they are doing the socialist things.

Democracy is not real I feel. Sometimes it is quite superficial I think. They try to do this equally and everybody is equal from the appearance. I think that's back to their own benefits. If they don't, they'll be in danger. There are lots of talented people outside.

In contrast to Lim, who was quite critical about these political discourses, Yusuf seemed to be under the influence of the innocent, nice 'West as steward' discourse in global politics and used "they-we" distinction with a feeling of looking up to the West: "This sense of democracy and justice is everywhere in the West but ...our problem lies in ourselves. We should start from education, which is the main thing."

Omar was also wary and critical of the attitude of people towards the roles imagined for them, their retreating from claiming the ownership of their lives, and giving up their resistance to injustice where they lived:

There is a huge wall coming down on you and you are the only one who bears the consequences of the wall that crashes you. No point in holding the collapsing wall. Leave it. There is no will from the people to change and to move forward. They don't recognise they are human beings and that they have rights, then there is no point.  
(Discourses of the imagined world; questioning the normalised essentialist culture)

There are 3-4 parties with the same overarching aim to advance people in the UK, whereas in there why to ignite the hatred? There must be an interest other than the country.

(Global position and politics; "they-we" distinction)

In the history it is not worse than actually what is happening now. British policies conducted in South- North Africa.. That's their understanding and their mentality. The only problem is our people don't say "Why should I follow them, why should I look up to them as my model?" Maybe I can adapt the political system to my own system but not take them as role models. It goes back to us in our countries. It's up to us to think and to say what is acceptable. The choice is ours at the end of the day. What limits is

the imposed political regime, but they don't have the right to decide how we should live, what I should eat, how other countries should run their system and economy.  
 (Global position and politics; "they-we" distinction)

There was a strong resistance to the imposition of systems in his words, and bells were ringing for changing the rules in his mind; however, he thought that this belief in real change should come from within the people in the society themselves, or else it would be useless in striving to change the world. Though he may not change the world by himself, he could change one person -- himself.

Rather than making generalisations like "this and that" culture, Joe had a non-essentialist and critical view, which differed from the other academics, and he marked this out as one of the things he learned from his experience of interculturality:

I really hesitate to say well in general ... people do in general English people do... you know because you just cannot say that, that again is one of the things I start thinking you know so that is really good, yeah maybe that's the change. I used to think oh in general ... but now really not maybe you can but..

Academics' statements about culture provided insights about 'innocent' essentialist discourses of culture and language with the denial of ideology, the West and others, and stereotypes (Holliday, 2011). Critical cosmopolitan discourses -- examples of cultural travel, contestation, innovation and respect – were also apparent. These discourses may have been governed by cultural resources like education, language, religion, tradition, lifestyles etc. and global politics in complex ways. Participants subscribed to, were ambivalent about or rejected several discourses at the same time or at different times for various reasons consciously or unconsciously. I presented these statements from different cultural worlds/ discourses that were evident in participants' accounts during their journey as an "international" person and lecturer with their transition to the UK. I paid attention to the essentialist discourses which involve generalisations, or non-essentialist ones which differentiate between personal and cultural features, while providing evidence from their accounts.

## 5.5 Summary

The findings from the analysis of fifteen accounts discussed in this chapter revealed that the very different experiences of interculturality afforded by participants' personal and professional journeys in the UK enabled them to undertake a profound process of critical reflection that opened them up to new feelings and ways of thinking to different degrees. These accounts seem to contain a number of features which add depth and texture to the developmental trajectories of international university academics. Their experiences in terms of the following aspects were overlooked in the existing research literature. We explored their personal and professional experiences informed by their sociocultural and linguistic background. We found challenges in the teaching profession that resulted from the conflict between individual and institutional aims, and from their experience of barriers in language and communication. Lastly, we looked into their intercultural experiences overlapping with their professional journey. For most participants, the transition afforded opportunities to become aware of linguistic and/or cultural positioning and being open towards others to different degrees. Some of them questioned many assumptions they inherited from their respective countries of origin, changed their beliefs and/or had to deal with real or perceived cultural and linguistic prejudice based on their ethnicity, race or non-native status. I first wanted to know where they felt a sense of belonging to, so that I could understand more about how they position themselves in response to others. Then, I dealt with the most frequently stated issue, real or perceived prejudice based on their ethnicity or race through their experiences of interculturality. These experiences have provided them with intercultural learning and learning about the self and other. Learning is found to be a change in their ways of thinking, feeling and acting. We lastly looked at the main cultural, economical, political and social differences among different countries that impinged on participants' views of cultural differences.

## Chapter 6. Discussion, conclusion and implications

### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to report on a study into “international” academics’ meaning-making of their experiences in language and communication, profession and interculturality in various departments of an internationalising university in the UK. My intention, as outlined in chapter 1, has been to interrogate bi/multi-lingual academics’ understanding of some assumptions about “native/non-native speaker” language use, the experience of being an “international” lecturer and the rhetoric of interculturality, as a result of their living and working in the UK. In conducting the study I have explored their linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences during their working as an EAL speaking academic in an inductive way, which resulted in a recurring theme which emerged in relation to their profession: the challenges of teaching at a commercialised university. I have also adopted a non-essentialist critical cosmopolitan perspective on interculturality (see 3.3 for a detailed explanation). In this spirit, I have also discussed other linguistic and ethnic-related issues while exploring the phenomenon of being an EAL-speaking academic at an intercultural UK university.

In this chapter, I will first summarise the key findings of the study in relation to the research questions as the main contributions to the knowledge. I will then conclude with a discussion of the implications, limitations and suggestions for possible future research directions regarding the culturally and linguistically diverse contexts of universities.

### 6.2 Key Findings

This section discusses the study’s key findings with respect to the following research questions under the main question “What are the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of “international” academics who are speakers of EAL in teaching at an internationalising British university?”, as outlined in section 1.3:

1. What are academics' language experiences and attitudes towards "non-native-like" language use as bi-/multi-lingual academics?
2. What are academics' perceptions about their experiences and challenges of teaching at an internationalising UK university?
3. What are their accounts of experience of interculturality as "international" academics?

### **6.2.1 Research Question 1: Linguistic experiences**

The key findings regarding the participants' language experiences and attitudes towards "non-native-like" language use as bi-multi-lingual speakers are as follows:

**Being an EAL speaker or a "loser": English as a post-colonial language – ELL** experiences were influential on the participants' linguistic, sociocultural, psychological, intellectual and academic lives, and English as a post-colonial language had deep effects on individuals' way of thinking and living in diverse ways. This was the case not only for participants from a former British-colonised country but also for the rest of the academics from Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The quality and the system of language education differed in their countries of origin, in accordance with the emphasis attached to the status of English. This also affected their English proficiency and attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of building a career in academia and gaining status in the society. While all the academics gave evidence of how English was perceived as a language that is important to learn in their countries, this importance and the priority of English given over other languages resulted in some tensions within their intellectual and psychological worlds. For example, its prevalence has been evident in the education systems in which English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is adopted at the expense of other native languages, and in academia in which scientific and intellectual developments are promoted in English. This caused a fear of not being able to learn English, the feeling of insecurity and inferiority and the attrition in the mother tongues both in the academic and sociocultural lives of some participants, as evidenced in their accounts in 4.2.1. The effects of these fears and psychological pressures on them about "not being able to learn it and being labelled as a pauper or a second-class citizen or a less intelligent person", have continued for years --

even until now -- in terms of the proficiency in their mother tongue and their way of thinking in L1. The prolonged maximum exposure to English caused first-language attrition in their daily lives. This also became the reason for feeling a sense of belonging to the place where English is spoken and being home for some academics. Their accounts were important to show that the language one speaks and his/her thought system are related to each other (Ray, 2013; Vygotsky, 1962; Whorf, 1971), and that the boundaries of intellectual capacity are affected from the conceptual frameworks within that language which also builds on the new developments in the cognitive, social and cultural life. Their ELL experiences also revealed that the role and status of English were prioritised in their countries to the extent that English linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992; 2009) continues to prevail as neo-imperialism, as a result of which "the assumptions that English is the language of the privileged and the language of the science or that it is easy to learn" are promoted and taken for granted.

**The influence of nativeness on the use of English –** The second key finding concerns the participants' attitudes towards the dichotomy of "native/non-native English speakers". As detailed in 4.2.2, most of the participants viewed the features attributed to non-nativeness such as accent, natural and normal. They gave importance to the intelligibility, communication, clear expression, a good level of proficiency, fluency, effective teaching and the accommodation of student needs, rather than nativeness, native-like accent or correctness. A majority of them also suggested that speakers of English as an additional language (EAL) have advantages over monolingual speakers of English in that they are experienced in listening to the varieties of language use. This seemed to indicate that the process of getting used to different uses of English both within and outside the UK is important for communication rather than simply having a native-like standard British accent. As a result, they disagree with the assumption that NES are privileged over the "NNES", suggesting that the use of the terms "NNES and NES" are discriminatory, because a non-element is attributed to EAL speakers as "others". The findings from the participants' accounts about the use of terms like NES and NNES are in parallel to the discussion in the literature. In chapter 2, section 2.7, I discussed why these terms are problematic, and why it is important to approach

terms (like ESL, EFL, ELF etc.) with caution by considering whether or not these terms are appropriate to use by those inside the Periphery's social and cultural context (Holliday, 2009; Phillipson, 2007b; 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). While most of the participants viewed this concept from such a critical perspective, a few of them were under the influence of the taken-for-granted assumptions that the status of English as a "coordinating" language among others is natural.

**Further concerns about language performance** – This third sub-theme was related to the challenges that the EAL speaking academics had while communicating with their students, colleagues or local people -- such as familiarity with colloquial language and vocabulary use, expressing emotion, humour and identity in L2, having different cultural expectations about (non-)verbal communication and meaning-making/ being (un)able to read between lines. While some of these concerns such as comprehension, the knowledge of vocabulary, and the expression of emotions, were also revealed in a study on the "NNES" (EAL speaking) teaching assistants' experiences in the classroom (Han, 2008), the issues related to identity and meaning-making were emerging themes. As detailed in section 4.2.3, exemplifying these concerns from the lecturer's lived experience, the lack of vocabulary that is needed to be as vibrant person as one can be in his/her own language constrained some academics to express their senses of identity in English. In addition to the impact of the language on thinking and intellectual development as explored from the accounts of participants like Samir, Saroj, Koz and Anna about their linguistic experiences, the findings of this study supported the view that the language used also has an important role in how people shape their identities which are formed in the subtleties of languages.

### **6.2.2 Research Question 2: Professional experiences**

**The interplay of economic concerns with the university system** – The second key finding is the strong suggestion arising from the data that, for the majority of the participants, the broad institutional aims that they have to conform to were in contradiction to their individual views of what the philosophy of the university should be and how it should function. Therefore, to my more general question about their professional experiences related to teaching at an internationalising university, a

single overarching theme emerged: the challenges that stem from the commercialising university system. This was evident in their accounts about financial dependence on students and the demands on the academic, the difficulty in finding a balance between being a researcher and a teacher in the performative culture of the university as part of a survival game, and other institutional challenges affecting their academic freedom.

The comparison and contrasting of both opportunities and challenges in different university systems where some academics (e.g. Anna, Saroj, Paul, Koz) worked throughout their careers, helped shape their views about how to improve the university system. Also, they conceived different alternatives to the current university system and expressed their expectations about turning it into a much more dynamic and open space. This coheres with their individual voices that call for creativity, agency, and financial independency for critical learners and educators who are willing to work within that system to construct or sometimes deconstruct knowledge and practice.

### **6.2.3 Research Question 3: Intercultural experiences**

The key findings regarding the participants' personal accounts of interculturality revealed the significance of the sense of belonging due to the emotional connectedness with the family, the country of origin, their relationships with others, positioning and being positioned as a result of the (un)fair treatment in communicational exchanges, and the responsibility and the value of doing justice to knowing others by bracketing one's prejudices and generalisations. The following themes were evident in explaining the significance of these findings:

**The complexity of positioning the self: where I feel I belong, where others say I belong, what my identity card says –** The first key finding regarding the sense of belonging that the participants felt is the complex and diverse nature of positioning oneself based on relationships with others, as revealed by the data. While the thought that “the new place is my home now” resonated with some of the participants, as they unfolded the “whys” of this thought, they revealed its relation to their sense of belonging to where their present families are by showing the impact

of the relationships on the concept of home. The feeling of being home in terms of academia was also attributed to the relationships built. Moreover, it was related to the workplace in which the professional identity is constructed since the beginning of the career. This was the new country, the UK, again rather than the country of origin. However, the new place was not the only or the first choice of the place where they feel "home" in the world for these participants, and, more dominantly, they also expressed belonging to their country of origin where their extended families live as well, which led to an "in-between" position about their sense of belonging. As a result, the position of "in-betweenness" became more clear for those who came to the UK with their families. Also, their reactions varied according to the different relationships that they developed with others and feelings of in-betweenness. Being positioned as outsiders from another continent/ country or considered to be "European", which is found to be a label against them (even though the UK is a part of the EU), some of them perceived it as a positive term associated with a broader concept of belonging than their ethnic identity. In this way, some of them showed resistance to being otherised for some time in another way by trying to impose acceptance and recognition by others as they wanted to be recognised. Their attempts for seeking recognition resulted in disappointment for and resulted in a retreat to "a safe house in the contact zone" (Canagarajah, 1997: 193). This allowed them to retain their self-worth and to establish relationships with other nationals. This resulted in their adopting another broad concept as another reaction to the in-betweenness they felt: belonging to the Earth, belonging to nowhere or belonging to many places. Also, while the concept of being a world citizen was put forward by some of them, it was also criticised for being an ideology-laden concept that is used by the privileged class of the world, according to their own interests. It was also perceived to be a useless concept for a person with visa restrictions, as understood from Samir's reaction: "I say I am a world citizen, who cares?". In addition to the relationships influencing their sense of belonging, this feeling of isolation was also attributed to the neo-liberal system which is perceived as an enslaving vicious circle in which people are serving the system like a robot, being aware or mostly unaware of their situation. This caused them to feel dissatisfied with the place where they are now, leaving them face to face with

feelings of insecurity and alienation from their own self and others. On the other hand, even the participant who concluded that the place of belonging is nowhere or everywhere, meaning that any places are easy to adapt to for living after the intercultural experiences gained but also easy not to feel an attachment to, still set her future dreams to be realised in the country of origin. This strong feeling of belonging to the country of origin -- where they had their past experiences with their extended families that were still there -- was among their statements about the place where they belong to. This preference was more dominant as the first choice for some than the rest though. Lastly, the identity card or the passport was also referred to as an official document that states the recognised identities of the participants. This was perceived to be as a restricting or liberating document that determines one to be "a world citizen", especially by the participants who are classified as from "the outer circle countries" which some perceive as a discriminatory label that deemed some countries to be inferior to other countries. Another view of ID cards, in relation to the aspect of emotional connectedness, was that they either played or did not play a role in their sense of belonging. This depended on the reasons stated above such as the connection with the new place, the reactions from the new society and their attempts to encounter these reactions.

**In a quest for recognition: Being an "other"** – This dominant and recurring theme was explicitly evident in the accounts of the majority of the participants. It provides the rationale for the participants' feelings of emotional attachment or isolation through their intercultural experiences. Dealing with real or perceived prejudice and discrimination based on race, ethnicity or non-nativeness affected their views of intercultural exchanges and senses of belonging in different ways. As detailed in section 5.3, experiences of interculturality resulted in academics' developing different forms of learning, going through changes or seeking defensive ways or strategies in the following ways: becoming aware of cultural and linguistic positioning, feeling inferiority, superiority or confidence, (not) resisting recognition and retreating to the safe zones of communication where they felt they could retain their self-worth. However, having mentioned such actions or changes in this way, I must be cautious not to over-simplify the matter because these points were expressed in varying degrees in the participants' accounts, mainly due to their

meaning-making of their previous experiences. That is why, exploring the lived experience of intercultural exchanges, I heed the differentiated and non-linear nature of intercultural learning and strategy development rather than the discreet outcomes of interculturality, as in a linear process consisting of the movement from one discrete stage to another.

The changes in their views towards self and the cultural and linguistic other, and their sense of belonging as mentioned above, has been referred to as “positional shifts”, that is the ways in which particular encounters with others lead them to generate new understandings of their cultural, social and personal subjectivities vis-a-vis others, and to take up new positions and new lines of action (Sole, 2007: 206). Moreover, there were also some common points to be considered as inter-related components of interculturality -- such as committing to an on-going dialogue with linguistic and cultural others, working out how to live together and developing strategies to manage relational dilemmas (Rich, 2011).

The very decision taken to come to the UK, and to teach abroad and to study overseas before that (for most of them) was an indication of a commitment to dialoguing with difference. It also involved ontological risk (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992) due to the possibility of encountering ways of being and doing which would challenge their ontological positions. Also, as a result of this commitment, they put efforts into establishing relationships with others, which might be seen to have defined the ways in which they were able to live together. This mindfulness is referred to as being aware of their own and others behaviour in the situation and paying focused attention to the process of communication taking place between them and dissimilar others (Ting-Toomey, 1999:16). This process, which is understood to be both “felt” and “thought”, is related to the following concepts in the literature: the concept of recognition (Taylor, 1994) and the right to impose reception and audibility (Bourdieu, 1977).

Taylor highlights the importance of being recognised by others in the way we recognise ourselves, and how misrecognition through a process of othering can lead to a negative sense of self, particularly if “the people or society mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves,” (Taylor,

1994: 27). This might lead to a greater determination of our own selves and an endeavour to “impose reception” (Bourdieu, 1977: 648) and audibility.

Such issues around recognition and audibility were evident in all the accounts about being an “Other”. These challenges resulted in a sense of inferiority and superiority or self-worth as a positive appreciation in different degrees. This also led some to retreat to safer contact zones (Canagarajah, 1997: 193) of other nationals with an air of resignation (Sara, Lim, Joe) or to take a proactive stance in repositioning the self in their quest for recognition (Julia, Samir, Silvan, Anna).

**To generalise or not to generalise...** – Considering the complexity of interculturality in the participants’ views of cultural descriptions, I was mindful of drawing on the range of discourses which they felt attached to, in line with the complexity of their positioning and being positioned, as outlined in the sections about their sense of belonging and the experiences of being an “other”. Othering, which is built on the idealisation of the Self and the demonization of an imagined foreign Other, is sustained into modern times through an ancient narrative of the cultural disbelief in the non-Western Other. It is often pictured as an individualist and clever few defeating an imagined large, despotic collectivism, as pointed out by Holliday (2011: 94):

This disbelief can be so deep that it becomes an innocent response to the unknown. The imagined features of the Other become routine and considered real. There is a general denial in everyday thinking of the ideology that underlies Othering so that few people acknowledge that they are implicated.

This imagined belief becomes the established system which is viewed as “normal”. On the other hand, other emerging discourses may evolve in the periphery appreciating deeper cultural complexities lost under the imagined and established categories of culture. It is possible for people to subscribe to, be ambivalent about and reject the normalised discourses informed by categories of cultural action, such as statements about culture, cultural resources or global politics, either at the same time or at different times (Holliday, 2011). The participants in this study also reflected the complexity of positioning by taking in-between positions in dealing with these traditional expectations and stereotypes. They also exhibited differing

degrees of learning about self in relation to linguistic and cultural other, which is seen to comprise of two main elements: becoming more open to the other and learning about linguistic and cultural positioning of self and others (Rich, 2011). As I have dealt with being positioned as the Other (culturally or linguistically) in the previous section, I now turn to their responses and approaches to the cultural descriptions by looking at their degree of openness. This is seen to relate to acknowledging and valuing different perspectives, recognising similarity in difference, questioning assumptions and stereotypes and seeing beyond the cultural other. The following table (Table 6.1) would be an example that displays how participants may have different degrees of awareness in their strategies and responses to cultural discourses, which can be real or imagined. I have chosen these four participants, because they represent the varying degrees of overlapping features regarding the approaches and responses to the other in the accounts of all participants.

**Table 6.1** An example about the analysis regarding the participants' awareness of and openness to the other.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Awareness of and openness to the other</b>			
	Acknowledging and valuing different perspectives	Recognising similarity in difference	Questioning assumptions and stereotypes	Seeing beyond the cultural other
<b>Julia</b>	•		• *	
<b>Samir</b>	•	•	• *	•
<b>Sara</b>	•		• *	•
<b>Yusuf</b>	•	•	• *	•

Asterisks (\*) in the third column means that questioned some of the discourses while still being subscribing to other cultural descriptions, while no asterisk means that the participant questioned and rejected some of the discourses after subscribing them before.

As detailed in Table 6.1, the participants could still subscribe to certain practices as innocent or normal while rejecting others. Therefore, their accounts indicated a

complex ambivalence within which they were both aware of and took part in the shifting discourses such as the West, “this and that” culture distinction and “tradition” (see 5.4 for a detailed interpretation). For example, Yusuf both questioned the traditions and values in the West and in his country, and came to an understanding of differences. He also perceived the established “morality of helping” “the imagined deficient Other” embedded in liberal multiculturalism in the West discourse as being normal and innocent. Therefore, an awareness of the self and the other may be hindered by the beliefs that take people further away from acknowledging Othering and result in commodifying aspects of the non-western Other rather than appreciating deeper cultural complexities (Holliday, 2011: 94).

Seeing beyond the linguistic and cultural other, one recognises that the use of cultural and linguistic labels cannot reflect the real picture of people’s identities which are as complex as their own and which need to be dealt with from a perspective that does value an understanding of each (human) being. Each human being, in this view, is a unique and unexplored territory connected to many others, rather than being an isolated island essentially categorised under certain labels or practices superficially attributed to a group of people. This awareness requires leaving the prejudices behind as much as possible, bracketing our views and experiences and going back to the newborn “illiterate/uneducated or uncultured” self -- to be able to enter into places awaiting us, to make fresh meaning, to sometimes deconstruct and reconstruct our conceptualisations, to be open to change and to be courageous enough to go through uncertainties. This can be realised by going beyond our safe zones as a sort of “disturbed equilibrium” (Dewey, 1938) and continuing the demanding business of being exposed to risk. In this way it is possible to see what Koz said “We are all human beings. We are all people.” or, like Joe, to feel the hesitation to make generalisations based on cultural descriptions imagined and established in the outside world, the baggage of which we carry with us in our minds. It may also be possible to get rid of the baggage once or for all, depending on the situation confronted, but at least once at the beginning of each chance to be familiar with ways of being and doing first-hand.

### **6.3 Contribution to knowledge and implications of the study**

In terms of theoretical, empirical and practical contributions, this thesis has made a number of contributions. Firstly, considering the paucity of research on the lived experiences of “international” academics and on EAL speaking academics’ experiences of language performance, teaching profession at an internationalising university and interculturality in different disciplines, the present study makes a useful contribution to the literature about speakers of EAL, internationalising higher education and intercultural communication within the UK context. The findings of this study are parallel to some findings of the previous studies on international academics, as can be seen in Tables 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 on the following pages.

The second major contribution of the study is that it was informed more by the data collected through a bottom-up approach which values the voice of EAL speaking academics rather than existing theories (Jackson, 2010; Kim, 2008; Deardorff, 2006; Chen & Starosta 2005, 2008; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Berry, 2004; Gudykunst, 2003; Alred et al, 2003; Arnett, 2002; Heyward, 2002; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Killick & Poveda, 1998; Byram, 1997). This also yielded important practical implications for policy-makers having a role in determining strategies for higher education and internationalisation in that policies framed and practices implemented by governments and HEIs prove effective when they are in cooperation with the stakeholders and take into account how academics and students’ lives are impacted. This study opened the space for the critical discussion of the reflections of the EAL speaking academics on the commodification of HE, together with their responses to linguistic and cultural positioning within this arena. I would suggest the current HE policies and strategies be revised in line with further critical research on the responses of the stakeholders, including both “home and international” academics and students through both large-scale studies that identify possible cause-effect relationships and major trends, and micro-scale inquiries into the personal stories, lived experiences and wider discourses that penetrate below the surface.

**Table 6.2** IAs' linguistic experiences in key studies compared to the findings of this study.

My findings different from others	Similarities between this study and others	The additional findings of key studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effect of previous language learning experiences.</li> <li>• The quality of the English language education and the attrition of the proficiency in the mother tongue on the linguistic, socio-cultural, psychological, intellectual and academic aspects of their lives: Being an EAL speaker or a "loser".</li> <li>• Further concerns about language performance: familiarity with colloquial language and vocabulary use, expressing emotion, humour and identity in L2, having different cultural expectations about communication and meaning-making/ being (un)able to read between lines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advantages of being an IA: "Foreignness" as a teaching resource, exposing students to a different perspective (Alberts, 2008); utilizing their non-native status as a positive source in teaching (Lee, 2009), the reward of the experience of teaching abroad (Dunn and Wallace, 2004; Saltmarsh &amp; Swirski, 2010).</li> <li>• Being exposed to different accents and varieties of English use (Lee, 2009).</li> <li>• Concerns about understanding students' accents and being understandable to them; expressing themselves in the way they wanted (Han, 2008; Bang, 2011; Huang, 2009; Saltmarsh &amp; Swirski, 2010; Luxon &amp; Peelo, 2009), ideological influences on beliefs and attitudes toward English language education (Han, 2008; Bang, 2011; Huang, 2009).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discriminatory hiring practices; issues of credibility; preferences for NES teachers (Lee, 2009).</li> <li>• Finding culturally appropriate ways to ask for and receive critical evaluative feedback from the off-shore students and tutors. (Gribble &amp; Ziguras, 2003; Dunn &amp; Wallace, 2004)</li> </ul>

**Table 6.3** IAs' professional experiences in key studies compared to the findings of this study.

My findings different from others	Similarities between this study and others	The additional findings of key studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges related to financial dependence on students and its impact on the demands on the academics.</li> <li>• The imbalance between teaching and research and other administrative restrictions affecting their academic freedom.</li> <li>• The one-way communication which excludes the voice of academics and puts them under the pressures of bringing more research income and leading the students through their degree program.</li> <li>• The implementations of the predetermined sets of missions, which leads to a tight controlling mechanism.</li> <li>• Finding factors related to in-class experiences easier than the demands of broader university policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges related to bureaucracy and administration (Luxon &amp; Peelo, 2011).</li> <li>• Incongruence between ITAs' preconceived expectations about their role as a teacher and the reality of their actual experience (Holland, 2008).</li> <li>• Learning to teach by participating in acts of teaching (Holland, 2008).</li> <li>• Balancing the demands of teaching, research and service (Collins, 2008).</li> <li>• Coping with intensive teaching and being responsive to students' heightened time constraints (Gribble &amp; Ziguras, 2003).</li> <li>• Adjusting to the system without sacrificing their own principles (Alberts, 2008).</li> <li>• The centralisation of marketing within institutional structures and the demand for deliberate strategies to achieve this outcome (Poole &amp; Ewan, 2010).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different challenges due to a temporary/permanent transition to a new country like accommodation, living costs and logistics, the process of mastering the departmental organisational culture and obtaining permanent residency rights, irrespective of nationality and language background (Pherali, 2012; Saltmarsh &amp; Swirski, 2010; Green &amp; Myatt 2011; Collins, 2008; Lund et al., 2007).</li> <li>• Defensive or self-critical responses to teaching problems initially (Green &amp; Myatt, 2011).</li> <li>• Projecting a deep faith in and hope for a utopian image of learning communities in the future, while grappling with noviceness and sociolinguistic factors (Huang, 2009).</li> </ul>

**Table 6.4** IAs' intercultural experiences in key studies compared to the findings of this study.

My findings different from others	Similarities between this study and others	The additional findings of key studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Developing different forms of learning, going through changes or seeking defensive ways or strategies.</li> <li>•Being aware of the responsibility and the value of doing justice to knowing others by bracketing one's prejudices and generalisations.</li> <li>•Approaches to cultural descriptions ; the essentialist discourses which involve generalisations, or non-essentialist ones which differentiate between personal and cultural features.</li> <li>•Their reactions to these discourses: (not) challenging assumptions stemming from the normalised "essentialist culture and language discourses" such as the West and the East, "individualist-collectivist", "us-them" distinctions and stereotypes, acknowledging and valuing differences and seeing beyond the cultural other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Dealing with the difference in cultural norms and behaviours (Green &amp; Myatt, 2011; Lund et al., 2007; Alberts, 2008; Han, 2008).</li> <li>•Feelings of loneliness and dealing with challenges related to their "race", colour and gender (Collins, 2008);</li> <li>•The openness of other colleagues or students and its effect on IAs' positioning; the lack of appreciation of the encounters with people from different backgrounds (Trahar, 2011); valuing difference (Luxon &amp; Peelo, 2011), the sense of cultural acceptance (Saltmarsh &amp; Swirski, 2010).</li> <li>•Feeling a sense of belonging to two or more places; a shift in their identity from self-depreciation to a deepening sense of self-worth (Green &amp; Myatt, 2011).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Difficulties regarding establishing research links and collegial networks (Pherali, 2012).</li> <li>•Perceiving the support offered by local academics in terms of language and teaching as a threat to both their status and identity (Pherali, 2012).</li> <li>•Garson's (2005) personal experiences in Cairo: helping him divest himself of a great deal of personal baggage and opening the door to many discoveries; being flexible, knowing the areas where he retains some rigidity and accepting that characteristic in himself as he does in others.</li> </ul>

Another contribution relates to the methodology that I used to explore intercultural, linguistic and professional performance; i.e., the phenomenological approach. I believe that this proved to be an effective way of examining the phenomenon of being an international academic. Moreover, as a useful counterbalance to the tendency in the much of the literature to highlight the *cultural* part of interculturality, which assumes intercultural encounters to be places where culturally bound subjects meet (see references above), this study emphasises the *inter* part of intercultural by foregrounding it through a non-essentialist perspective that suggests a critical cultural awareness towards a cultural prejudice created by the Centre-West's ideological vision of the rest of the world, deeply coloured by a denial of this prejudice (Rich, 2011; Holliday, 2011). Hence, this study is the first to explore the aforementioned research aims through its methodology under such a perspective.

In this sense, I believe that this study contributed to both the theorising and the methodology of cultural awareness studies that need to address prejudice, ideology and issues with the Centre-West, which were missing in previous research on intercultural studies and that were largely based on "innocent" unfamiliar cultural events, practices, behaviour and values as stated by Holliday (2011). In this way, I have given space to decentred understandings by withdrawing from imposing definitions on the Periphery through neo-essentialist solutions to the miscommunication, and by listening to the academics' voices from within the Periphery. Moreover, beyond exploring the decentred voices of EAL speaking academics who are positioned as 'international' and "NNES" in this study, the findings of this study also suggest that those in the centre position have to value the uncertainty and complexity of voices by making "the familiar" strange- which is to put aside established descriptions, seek a broader picture and look for the hidden and the unexpressed- rather than rendering invisible the voices in the periphery. This aim underpinning the present study is also crucial for those in the centre in relation to power if they are going to appreciate the deep sense of not being heard in the face of a profound inequality of who is defining whom. It is also important if they are going to restrain themselves from defining, categorising, and imagining the one other than the self so that this 'one' can find space to claim the world in his/her own terms. Through this study, I explored the position of this "one" which was

largely unsaid and invisible; i.e., the unsaid position of EAL speaking academics, by locating and consciously putting aside established descriptions and labels.

With the approaches stated above, this study has made an important contribution to an understanding of wider discourses which position the centre and the periphery in relation to power, and which informs views and experiences of interculturality. Specifically, their accounts of “multiple worlds/ cultures” to which they felt a sense of belonging indicated the interplay of complex relationships and experiences in their lives with their views of interculturality, positioning the self and being positioned by others in line with the structures and discourses of culture and language. The fluidity of the feeling of belonging intertwined closely with the multi-facetedness of their intercultural encounters also implied that it is even less fixed or absolute to label or categorise them as “home” or “international” within the university from a critical cosmopolitan and non-essentialist perspective. Hence, in contrast to the previous intercultural studies focussing on outcome-based models with an essentialist and positivist view of “culture” (Kim, 2008; Deardorff, 2006; Chen & Starosta 2005, 2008; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Berry, 2004; Gudykunst, 2003; Alred et al., 2003; Arnett, 2002; Heyward, 2002; Killick & Poveda, 1998; Byram, 1997), this study highlights the fluid complexity of culture with blurred boundaries, specifically foregrounding the ideological, situated and critical cosmopolitan nature of interculturality in the international context of the higher education. This is done by giving examples from the assumptions resulting from the normalised essentialist culture and language discourses such as the West and East, “individualist-collectivist”, “us-them” distinctions and stereotypes. These assumptions were or were not challenged by participants who developed different intercultural views. Their views differed according to the distinctive experiences of interculturality, cultural and linguistic positioning and real or perceived racism, discrimination and prejudice based on their ethnicity or “non-native status”. In this way, it promotes a point of view through which all parties look critically at cultural texts everywhere, rather than a perspective of “us” comparing “our” culture with ‘theirs’ in an artificial ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction in intercultural concerns.

Secondly, the reflections of the discourses have been shown through the lenses of participants whose linguistic experiences highlighted their understanding of the positioning as “NNES” and attitudes towards “(non)native-like” language use, alongside dealing with prejudices and ostracism of the cultural differences. More specifically, the impact of their previous experiences of English language learning (e.g. the view of English as a matter of gaining prestige and status in the “home” country, the fear of not being able to learn English, the attrition of the proficiency in the mother tongue, the quality of the English language education at “home”) on their current language performance and positioning of the self in relation to the elements of (non)-nativeness were revealed. Thirdly, this study has yielded important findings in relation to the commodification of education in parallel to the commercialisation of the higher education evident in the participants’ accounts. This was found to be connected to the system in which people work almost robot-like and live the imagined life accordingly, as Saroj, Omar, Yusuf and Sara made frequent references to.

The challenges related to the professional experiences of academics are not exclusive to the sample institution but common in today’s universities; however, there are possible measures to be taken to overcome such difficulties, which might be suggested to the Vice-Chancellor of the sample institution. There is a noteworthy proposal about moving from “internationalisation” to an approach called global perspectives, which means, as Schoorman (2000) suggests, an approach that challenges dominant notions of learning and encourages a balanced representation of perspectives from around the world. This approach includes the following perspectives (Bourn, Mackenzie, & Shiel, as cited in Bourn, 2011: 566):

- understanding our situation in a wider context,
- making connections between local and global events,
- developing skills and knowledge to interpret events affecting our lives,
- learning from experiences elsewhere in the world and
- identifying common interests and exploring wider horizons.

Specific disciplines and bodies of learning need to integrate these perspectives into their approaches to teaching, learning and curriculum design, while re-conceptualising the fields of study (*ibid.*). Considering the move from internationalisation to global perspectives, time, space and opportunity should also

be given to explore wider questions regarding the purpose, function and role of HE in the twenty-first century (*ibid.*: 569). Also, as Haigh (2014: 22) suggested, the main task for internationalisation teams and senior managers in the university system, is to support “the emergence of a more sustainable, more ethically conscious, more global, world view and a plural, multi-layered, vision of the university and its world”. It is of paramount importance to reconcile the commercial approach of the university and academic quality standards (Pitcher, 2013). This balance can be found through making time for staff involvement and consultation in the process of change (Harloe & Perry, as cited in *ibid.*) Lastly, I found that academics have limited opportunities to interact with their students and colleagues due to time constraints. Therefore, drawing on the activities recommended for institutions (adapted from Alberts, 2008), I suggest that the mentoring scheme at the university be expanded to a supportive mechanism that could ease the transition of international staff into UK academe as well. In this scheme, international staff should be provided with one mentor from the UK as well as a foreign-born mentor who can better understand the struggles non-UK professors go through. Students should also be told about the benefits they can get from having non-UK lecturers so that they approach their lecturers with an open mind and make an effort to understand. This can be done via the meetings among students and their mentors. Moreover, further reports of difficulties that both students and teachers were having in terms of language can be collected, and as a pragmatic response to these reports, a kind of language improvement class can be initiated for EAL speaking academics who have just started teaching, because professional development programmes do not usually deal directly with the language issues which some teachers certainly face (Luxon & Peelo, 2009). A form of tutorial support tailored to individual language and teaching needs and timetables might also be more effective, since groups of individuals tend to be so different in terms of their levels of language.

In the light of these conclusions, I go back to the quote that I gave at the beginning of my thesis about a call for all: to know the self to understand the shared meaning making with the other. Rich (2011: 253) drew a tentative conclusion about the

ethical orientation towards the other that underpins this, which clearly needs further investigation.

As a result of doing this thesis, I am now in harmony with how I felt before coming here, adhering to my inner self-belief that the more you learn the more you realise how little you know, as Socrates enlightened. This is what I can adopt in this ongoing journey full of renewing complex bodies, beings, ideas floating on the air all the time. How many of us see them? You are maybe on the way of tracking this pursuit now. As an anecdote, a world-famous violin player played his violin the whole day in one of the busiest underground points of a metropolitan city, and not to be surprised, the number of people who showed the grace of stopping for a few moments and listening to this great composer was less than the number of fingers in one hand though people would usually rush to buy the quickly-sold out tickets for his concerts. Therefore, the point is to be awakened, aware of things that we take for granted or that are awaiting us to be discovered or in a more interactionist perspective to be emerged. Throughout the Ed.D, I have been bombarded with the enlightening moments of my career, or personal life in a real sense, learning to cope with uncertainties on the way. Learning to cope with uncertainties has been two-folded. One fold has been related to understanding my research topic both theoretically and practically, i.e. the concepts that I have explored in the literature review at the theoretical level, and the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of the participants in their lived worlds in the actual sense. These levels were interrelated in that the real life experiences of academics indicated a level of complexity which cannot be expressed in clear-cut ways but through the interplay between the fluid interactions among persons and their emotional attachment and the sense of belonging, as a result. Exploring such complex relations required me to gain the ability to cope with uncertainties. Also, the chapters of the thesis have continuously been shaped through the process of reading, writing and establishing the links between the data and interpretations. This double hermeneutic process itself was an invaluable way of practising this type of learning on the way to the end of just one research journey whose answers have yet been leading to new questions to be explored, as expressed below. I think I could make it to be like one

of those few people catching the beauty of the piece of music, taking this journey just out of my passionate pursuit for learning new things by my complete free will.

#### **6.4 Critical reflections on the study, limitations and possible future research**

The study is one that has been developed out of my own interest in better understanding the position of EAL speaking academics with regards to language use, teaching profession and interculturality in the internationalising contexts of higher education. Especially despite a number of studies coming out about international student experience, an understanding of the experiences of 'international academics' took very little attention. However, there have been some important shifts in understandings of interculturality, language and globalisation, notably in the work of Holliday (2011; 2013), Kumaravadivelu (2003; 2008); Phillipson (1997; 2007a; 2009), Pennycook (1994; 1998), Modiano (2001; 2009) and Fairclough (2006). Drawing upon these, I have developed my understanding of these experiences of my participants and discussed them on a stronger basis.

With respect to the study design, with hindsight that there are a number of things I might have done differently; nevertheless, I suggest that the phenomenological approach employing in-depth semi-structured interviews was the most suitable one for the present study considering the limitations. While the findings of the study highlighted the importance of examining experiences and changes over prominent stages of life (ELL experiences, transition to the UK, intercultural and professional experiences in different periods), a limitation to the design in this study is that data were retrospectively collected, thereby relying on the recall of each participant regarding the transition to the UK. Also, the findings are specific to 15 EAL speaking academics working at an internationalising UK university and cannot be generalised to a wider population. I recommend that in the future studies, researchers use a longitudinal qualitative design to gather accounts over the course of their transition to the UK and explore how experiences change over time. Secondly, the future research can include a smaller number of interviewees and follow-up interviews in a long run with a focus on their personal and professional life histories as a whole starting from their birth to date when they became a lecturer in the UK. In this study,

time constraints of academics did not allow me to do more than one or two interviews.

Another promising direction of research would be to include the overlapping issues of EAL speaking academics in different disciplines as there is a clear and ongoing need for more exploration of interculturality and linguistic experiences in the higher education institutions. Given the growing number of international students and academics/academics, this study is expected to serve as an example for other institutions, different parts of the country, and universities with large numbers of international academics versus those that are fairly homogeneous in their ethnic makeup. Moreover, English as a first language/monolingual speakers teaching at different disciplines can be included to explore the perceptions and experiences of this population of academics as a basis for comparison with bi-/multi-lingual English-speaking teachers. Furthermore, home and international students may also be included in an attempt to get a better understanding of their teachers and their interactions with their EAL speaking and first-language speaking academics. Lastly, larger scale studies across many more universities could add further insights in different directions, which I believe this thesis will be thought as the basis for and felt as a useful contribution to the new ways of thinking about the scope of the research on teaching at internationalising contexts of higher education.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.



## Certificate of ethical research approval

### MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site:  
<http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications> and view the School's Policy online.

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**READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER** (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

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**Your name:** Zeynep Gülsah Kani

**Your student no:** 610049311

**Return address for this certificate:** 17 Mount Pleasant Road EX4 7AD Exeter/Devon The UK

**Degree/Programme of Study:** Ed.D in TESOL (Full-time)

**Project Supervisor(s):** Dr. Philip Durrant and Dr. Alexandra Allan

**Your email address:** zgk202@exeter.ac.uk; zgulsahkani@gmail.com

**Tel:** +44(0)7405218222

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**I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.**

**I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.**

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**Signed:** Zeynep Gülsah Kani      **date:** 07/05/2013

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## Certificate of ethical research approval

**TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:**

*AN EXPLORATION OF THE LINGUISTIC, PROFESSIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES OF 'INTERNATIONAL' ACADEMICS FROM DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES AT A UK UNIVERSITY*

**1. Brief description of your research project:**

This study aims at exploring the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of 'international' academics in the intercultural context of a British university. Under this overarching aim lies understanding their accounts of experience of being an academic positioned as 'international' and 'non-native' speakers of English in this context. Therefore, their stories and experiences of the phenomenon "being an 'international' academic/lecturer", which contribute to the development of a deeper understanding about the experiences and challenges they underwent in terms of language, academia and interculturality are explored by means of qualitative phenomenological research informed by critical interpretivism (Holliday, 2011).

**2. Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):**

The participants are 'international' academics who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and who work in different disciplines at the university. As this study aims to explore how EAL speaking academics interpret and make sense of their linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences in different disciplines at a UK university, the participants were chosen in this direction. The reason why I focused on international staff in different disciplines is that the challenges that international teachers as speakers of EAL face in intercultural contexts may not be exclusive to one field but common to all disciplines at internationalising universities.

**Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:**

**3. Informed consent: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document.** A blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: Each consent form MUST be personalised with your contact details.

Informed consent will be obtained from the participants prior to the study by using the University of Exeter consent form. Consent forms will be personalised with my contact details and the specific details about the aims of my project and their role in the study.

**4. Anonymity and confidentiality**

The participants are assured of confidentiality and anonymity at the outset. To maintain and protect privacy the researcher will not use the real names of the participants and the site of the research study. The nationalities of the participants may be anonymously stated by mentioning the broader continental names instead of countries according to their consent.

**5. Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:**

Semi-structured interviews as the main research instrument will be conducted with EAL speaking academics for the data collection, and the researcher's journal on the research process will be employed to complement the interviews in order to generate an in-depth understanding of the meanings academics attribute to as emerging from their experiences. During the interviews, first, some questions about their background information such as their years of experience will be asked, then questions about their understanding the challenges and opportunities they come across will follow. None of the methods specified above cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress.

**6. Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recording interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or**

Data collected through interviews and notes from opportunistic conversations and email exchanges will be stored in a secure cabinet to which only the researcher has access. After the submission of the final version of the thesis, data will be destroyed.

**7. Special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.**

Any arrangements will be made in terms of the meeting point, date and time for the interviews according to the needs of the participants.

**8. Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):**

None.

**This form should now be printed out**, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

**N.B.** You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 25/10/13 until: 31/10/15

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): P. L. D. J. date: 25/10/13

**N.B. To Supervisor:** Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference: 2 | 13 | 14 | 4

Signed: N. B. Run date: 25/10/13  
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

## Appendix 2

### **Email letter of call for participation**

Dear Academician,

I am a professional doctoral student in TESOL, in the Graduate School of Education, the University of Exeter. For my research study I am exploring the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of international academics whose first language is not English within different disciplines in UK higher education; therefore, I would like to invite international academic staff whose first language is not English working in any discipline at the university to participate in an interview about their professional and personal experiences, in particular relating to language use, teaching and research, and interculturality.

All information about the names of the participants, their nationalities and departments will be treated as confidential and anonymous. Any experiences you report will contribute to the portrayal of the needs, challenges and concerns which international staff have at universities and to the conceptualisation of intercultural communication. Thanks very much for your cooperation in advance.

If you would like to participate, please get in touch with me by email or at the address below:

*Zeynep Gülsah Kani*

*Researcher doing a Professional Doctorate in TESOL,*

*Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA)*

*The Graduate School of Education*

*The College of Social Sciences and International Studies*

*The University of Exeter*

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### Appendix 3



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### CONSENT FORM

**Dear Academician,**

I am a professional doctoral student in TESOL, the Graduate School of Education. I will explore the linguistic, professional and intercultural experiences of 'international' academics who are speakers of English as an additional language from different disciplines. Any experiences you report will contribute to the portrayal of the needs, challenges and concerns which international staff have at universities and to the conceptualisation of intercultural communication. All information about the names of the participants, their nationalities and work places will be treated as confidential and anonymous. Thanks very much for your cooperation in advance.

Please sign below if you are assured that you have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project and if you understand that:

- there is no compulsion for you to participate in this research project and, if you do choose to participate, you may at any stage withdraw your participation and may also request that your data be destroyed,
- you have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about you,
- any information which you give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations,
- if applicable, the information, which you give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form,
- all information you give will be treated as confidential,
- all interviews will be voice recorded and for further analysis,
- audio data will be downloaded from recording devices at the earliest possible opportunity, and then deleted immediately from those devices,
- electronic data will be stored in my password protected account on the University of Exeter U-drive,
- the researcher will make every effort to preserve your anonymity.

.....  
(Signature of participant)

.....  
(Date)

.....  
(Printed name of participant)

.....  
(Pseudonym you would like to be called)

One copy of this form will be kept by you as the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher.  
Contact phone number of researcher: +44 (0)7405218222

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

*Zeynep Gülsah Kani on [zgk202@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:zgk202@exeter.ac.uk); [zgulsahkani@gmail.com](mailto:zgulsahkani@gmail.com)*

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in an anonymised form.

Revised March 2013

## Appendix 4

### **Interview guide**

***Key Themes:***

- Background information- their personal and professional background and what led them to apply to the programme and work in the UK
- Previous experiences of living and teaching in an intercultural/western context and their significance
- Experiences of the intercultural context of the university and their programme as a teacher to date and their significance.
- Experiences/ Challenges of university life and living in the UK more broadly and their significance.

1. Tell me anything about yourself-

- Childhood- school experiences/ university years- What is your educational-cultural background? Where did you receive most of your education? How much of this has influenced your views on teaching and learning?
- Language learning experiences- How was the English language education? What do you think about English used by “non-native speakers”? Did you have any NES/NNES as a language teacher during your school years? Any preferences?
- Your choice of major as the BA degree/ any certificates to teach/ any challenges to find a job- What influenced your choice to enter the teaching profession?
- Any previous job experiences- Why did you choose to do that?
- Years of employment/teaching experience at the university or private educational institutes in the UK or other countries.
- Your decision to go and find a job abroad/ your motive to leave for the UK/ for how long are you here?/ the process of transition to here/ any changes in your world view.

2. Where do you consider as home in the world? Why? Can you describe the place you associate with being home?

3. Have you done a lot of travelling?
4. When was your first culturally diverse experience, and with whom? Tell me a story about living abroad as a minority/ examples of interaction with other cultures.
5. What kinds of things have you learnt after coming to the UK?
6. Are there any experiences that changed your views and actions?
7. Have you encountered any challenges as an immigrant/ as a speaker of English as an additional language (EAL)/ as an international lecturer? (What was it like to be a(n)...?)
8. What have you learnt as a person and as a lecturer/academic- for example anything that challenged your beliefs as a result of being in a culturally diverse environment?
9. Do you think teaching at the university is different from teaching in your previous workplaces? Are you freer now than at that time?
10. How did you feel after coming to the UK as an international staff from a different cultural background?
11. When you first came to the UK/ England, what differences/ similarities did you see in terms of, for example,
  - the way of life
  - the work place and society
  - the culture of schools
  - the definition of an effective teacher
  - your experiences of teaching students- the way that students learn new information/ interact in the class and respond to classroom management or control between here and in your own country?
12. Were there any differences between your beliefs about them and the reality? How do you respond to differences between British culture and pedagogy and your own? Anything that changed your views and actions after your experiences?
13. What aspects of the teaching style here have surprised you?
14. What are the easiest and the most difficult aspects of teaching?
15. What concerns did you have when you first started to teach as an EAL speaker here? How comfortable do you feel now? Do you feel more comfortable while teaching overseas students?
16. How did you first become aware that you were having difficulties in teaching as an EAL speaker? Please tell me about a specific time when you had a language-related difficulty. (How/when was it/what did you do to cope with it?)

17. What differences are there between your past teaching experiences (in your home country or other international settings) and your present experiences in the UK?
18. What challenges- conflicts do you have in the British university/ education context?
19. To what factors do you attribute these conflicts?
20. How can we reach an agreed-upon/common understanding to cope with these conflicts?
21. Is there little or enough communication between the native speaker and non-native speaker teachers? Do you feel teachers respect the different cultures and treat each other fairly?
22. How many percent of the staff in your department are international? Is there a special in-service teacher training programme for native speaker teachers or for both “NES and NNES” groups as a support system?
23. What are the qualities of “NNES/international” teachers that you have met?  
(young- lacking of courage- first travel experience etc.)
24. How are they treated/ seen professionally by admins- are they qualified enough in terms of educational background and experience? Participation in decision-making?
25. How do you see yourself in terms of teaching experience and qualifications compared to other ‘international’ teachers?
26. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
27. Do you have an intercultural classroom? If yes, does the intercultural composition of the classroom have an effect on your teaching (positive or negative)? (The proportion of international grads and undergrads- the typical number of students in your seminars- the type of seminar activities- arrangement of desks and the class- any specific actions taken to support the learning of overseas students)
28. What did you learn about being in a multicultural class?
29. Are you finding the work you have to do ok? What to change in academia?

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