

**Identity Matters: Stories of Non-native English-speaking Teachers'
Experiences under the Shadow of Native Speakerism.**

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis develops a better understanding of the lived experiences of NNES teachers, coming from diverse racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and the complex negotiations and constructions of their professional identities against the prevalent NS fallacy in the Arab Gulf states. This study employs a Postcolonial theoretical framework. In order to unravel NNESTs' perspectives and understand how they make sense of their experiences, this study adopts a life history approach.

The results suggest that participants view *nativeness* as a fixed identity, dependant on elements, such as being born into a language and learning it in early childhood. The participants had both confidence and concern about their linguistic abilities, which indicated that their non-native identity resulted in complex situations for them to deal with. The findings also revealed that the participants managed to find ways in which to inhabit these non-native identities confidently and to construct themselves as effective teachers who did not have to be NSs by nature.

The participants narrated that the issue of pronunciation and accent had a significant impact on their professional identities. NS norms in accent was seen as eliciting stereotyped judgements of NNESTs as the inferior Other, and resulting in hiring policies that were greatly skewed against NNESTs. The participants also believed that stereotyped notions about the superiority of education acquired from the Center privileged NESTs in employment and led to the devaluation of indigenous knowledge.

The participants also spoke about encountering direct and indirect challenges, which made it difficult for them to position themselves as legitimate teachers of English. They also believed that perceptions about the superiority of the NS would be impossible to overcome in the near future since the language policy of the Gulf states was strongly intertwined with its economic and political interests. The study, therefore, provides recommendations for theory, practice, and policy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BS	Bachelor of Science
CELTA	Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
DELTA	Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
EdD	Doctor of Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EIL	English as an International Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
G1	Grammar of the First Language
G2	Grammar of the Second Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MA	Master of Arts
MEd	Master of Education
MS	Master of Science
MSc	Master of Science
NES	Native English Speakers
NESTS	Native English Speaking Teachers
NNESTS	Non-Native English Speaking Teachers
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
NS	Native Speaker
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
TL	Target Language
WE	World Englishes

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In the current globalized world, the realm of English language teaching (ELT) is characterized by certain facts: English has come to become the world's first truly global language (Crystal, 2012), and NNSs (Non-native Speakers) outnumber their NS (Native Speaker) counterparts by four to one (Medgyes, 2014). Nevertheless, in some parts of the world non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) are often perceived as having a lower professional status in the profession in comparison to their NS counterparts (Medgyes, 1992; Thomas, 1999; Borg, 2006; Butler, 2007; Mahboob, 2010; Braine 2010). Although there is little linguistic or pedagogical basis for making this comparison (Canagarajah, 1999a), this perception often results in discriminatory hiring practices towards NNESTs (Braine, 1999; Flynn & Gulikers, 2001; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford, 2004; Clark & Paran, 2007; Selvi, 2010; Mahboob & Golden, 2013). As a result, some NNSs may struggle to asserts their legitimacy as teachers of English (Amin,1997; Thomas, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999a; Liu, 1999; Maum, 2002; Lin, Kubota, Motha, Wang & Wong, 2006).

The discriminatory treatment of qualified NNESTs and lower professional status in relation to their NS counterparts is said to be connected to the “native speaker fallacy”, i.e. the tenet that “the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 193). Questioning the prestige of the NS as the ideal teacher, several scholars have asserted that the ideology linking pedagogy and competence with nativeness is irrelevant and, that well-trained English language educators from any circle are capable of teaching English (see Paikeday, 1985; Rampton, 1990; Davies, 1991; Kachru, 1992; Swales, 1993; Cook; 1999; Mahboob, 2005). Institutionalized efforts to overcome discriminatory practices, such as the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) position statements were issued in the years 1992 and 2006. Despite the critique and the institutionalized efforts the assumption that the ideal teacher is a NS continues to dominate the ELT profession (Wang, 2012).

Using the NS as a benchmark for teaching employment can cause NNESTs to suffer from low self-esteem (Medgyes, 1994)), and the “I-am-not- a native-speaker syndrome” (Suarez, 2000, para 10). In addition, many NNESTs have found it difficult to construct and negotiate their identity as legitimate and credible TESOL professionals (see Canagarajah, 1999a). As a result, the global ELT industry has been criticized for positioning the NS as the ideal English teacher and thereby establishing a false dichotomy between NESTs and NNESTs (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Furthermore, mainstream SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research has been critiqued for its tendency to situate the process of learning exclusively in the psychological domain without taking into consideration the social, economic, cultural, political, or physical domains in which language learning takes place (Pennycook, 1999). Scholars such as Pennycook (2001), have highlighted the necessity of placing the deliberation of language learning and teaching in its sociocultural, political, and historical contexts, and to investigate issues of power, inequality, difference, resistance, class, race, and gender. As a response to this call, this thesis explores the professional identities of NNESTs, whose professional standing in the field of TESOL and applied linguistics has historically been considered inferior, or at best second-class in comparison to their native English speaking (NES) counterparts (Phillipson, 1992).

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study came about in an effort to answer several general concerns related to the professional identities of the NNESTs employed in the tertiary [post-secondary education at a college or university] setting in the Arab Gulf States. One of the most striking features of ELT in the Arab Gulf states in the tertiary setting is the presence of a community of largely White, Western, native-speakers of English. A majority of the English language teaching staff are NESTs (Syed, 2003; Ali, 2009; Karmani, 2009). Thus, the hiring practices in the ELT profession in the tertiary setting in the Arab Gulf states seem to reinforce the existing native speaker fallacy whereby “expertise is defined and dominated by native speakers” (Canagarajah, 1999a, p. 85) and NNESTs are seen as less instructionally qualified and less linguistically competent than NESTs (Lippi Green, 1997; Maum, 2002).

My interest in researching the area of the professional identities of the NNESTs was sparked by my own experiences as an NNS who is an Indian national and has been engaged in the teaching of English at the tertiary level in one of the Arab Gulf states, that is, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A number of experiences in my own professional life have made me acutely aware that, due to the prevalence of the NS fallacy, carving an identity as a legitimate teacher of English can be fraught with some difficulties for an NNS.

I have taught English as adjunct faculty in an offshore campus of an international university in Dubai for more than five years now. An adjunct position has never been forced upon me. Rather, I have deliberately avoided seeking a full-time position so as not to compromise on time spent with my family while I pursued my doctoral studies. I must also add that I have never experienced any discrimination on account of my NNS status at the institution I have taught in. On the contrary, my experience at the institution has been a very pleasant and cherished one. This is because I have always been made to feel that I am a very valued member of the English language centre of the university. This appreciation has been conveyed to me at various times during informal conversations as well as email exchanges relating to work matters. I have also shared a very warm relationship and good rapport with my students. This warmth is reflected in the positive feedback I have received on my student evaluation reports.

I love the English teaching profession and I have found teaching English a very enriching and satisfying experience ever since I made a conscious choice to move away from an office job in Hong Kong in the early 90s. This switching of jobs entailed adding to my academic qualifications. The first step in this direction was completing my Bachelors degree in English literature, which had remained incomplete on account of my early marriage. I followed my Bachelors degree with a Master's degree in English literature. By this time I was a mother of two small children and was also teaching EFL at a secondary school in the UAE. Around this time, I felt a desire to move to adult teaching, and I therefore registered for a CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) course.

A few days into the course, which consisted of both NS and NNS candidates, it

became evident that a few of the NNS candidates who were experienced and qualified teachers dominated the others in terms of their knowledge of the English Grammar. As we approached the end of the course, conversations among the course mates often veered towards the discussion of job prospects. My course mates and I had attended an observation of teaching practice at the British Council in Dubai, and some of the NNS candidates expressed an interest in applying to teach at the British Council. During such discussions it was said by some of the NNS coursemates that the British Council only hired NSs and not NNSs. This made us wonder whether NSs were accorded a different status in comparison to NNSs in the ELT profession.

The differential status became more apparent when at the end of the two-week intensive course, one of our CELTA coursemates, who served in a leading international bank, offered a teaching job to a young British coursemate. The British coursemate had been offered a job in a department that offered English language training to the bank's employees. The British coursemate had no prior experience of teaching English and neither did she have any educational qualifications that related to the teaching of English, except the CELTA certificate. None of the more experienced and qualified NNS candidates had been approached for the job at the bank. The relative ease with which the British coursemate had secured the job at a reputed international bank, even before the course had concluded, underlined the privileged status that is conferred upon NSs in the ELT profession.

I, myself, could not ascertain the veracity of the rumours about the British Council as a few weeks after the CELTA course had concluded, I was invited for an interview at the university where I had taken the CELTA course. My interview was successful, and ever since I have taught at the university with some interruptions whenever my teaching duties have impacted my doctoral studies.

During the course of my teaching experience a number of incidents served to underline the NS privilege that is manifest in the ELT profession. One of this relates to being told by a senior NS colleague, when discussing my future employment prospects, that all I lacked in my resume was a Western degree. Here, I must add that the irony that my two-week intensive CELTA course

carried much more value than my 2 years long Master's degree [acquired from India] and had qualified me to teach the tertiary level had not been lost on me. I did eventually enrol for postgraduate studies via distance learning at a British university. While I was aware that a doctoral degree from a British university could considerably add to my cultural capital, I was primarily motivated to pursue my studies at the British university as it provided me with the convenience of furthering my studies while continuing to reside in the UAE.

Another incident relates to being told by one of my Chinese students that he had decided to discontinue his studies in Dubai and that he would be pursuing his English classes in the United Kingdom (UK) since he had not learnt 'correct' English in Dubai. I felt that the student's dissatisfaction with his English lessons was related to his inability at acquiring an NS accent [on account of being taught by an NNEST] than the quality of teaching he had received.

One more incident relates to the rejection of my proposal to present at a regional conference a few years ago. My proposal focussed on World Englishes and NS norms in pronunciation, as during the course of my teaching I had noticed that there was not much awareness amongst the teachers about the legitimacy of localized varieties of English. However, I was informed that my proposal had been turned down in favour of proposals that focussed on far more interesting aspects of language teaching. I could not help but wonder whether there was a certain reluctance to focus on issues that challenged the NS privilege, as the very previous year my proposal to present my findings of a research conducted on Computer Assisted Language Learning, a relatively safe and non-threatening topic, was readily accepted at the same conference.

These experiences have served as a catalyst in prompting me to explore how NNESTs in the Arab Gulf states position themselves in their educational contexts, and study how the NS fallacy and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers impact upon the construction of NNESTs' professional identities. The first concern was to create an understanding and acknowledgement of what it feels like to be an NNEST in the Arab Gulf states today. The second was to explore how the preference for NESTs might result in practices and attitudes that lead to the marginalization and discrimination of NNESTs in the Arab Gulf states. Another concern was to bring to the forefront

actual voices and views of the English teachers themselves so that rich perspectives on the complexity of ELT in the Arab Gulf states can be obtained. These voices can provide an insightful understanding of NNESTs' work lives: about their perceptions of legitimacy; how they engage with local, contextual factors such as the attitudes of administrators, students, and NS counterparts towards themselves; as well as more comprehensive factors, such as sociocultural ideologies, and institutional policies. The chief aim of the study is to understand the process(es) through which NNESTs can be empowered to recognize, acknowledge, and contest dominant, ideological discourses that position them as less than ideal, or incapable professionals.

1.3 Research Aims and Significance of the Study

The fundamental purpose of this study is to attempt to understand how NNESTs in the Arab Gulf states construct their identities as English teaching professionals and explore how the native speaker fallacy impacts their professional standing. The thesis, thus, aims to develop a better understanding of the lived experiences of NNEST teachers coming from diverse racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and the complex negotiations and constructions of their professional identities against the prevalent NS fallacy in the Arab Gulf states.

While a growing body of TESOL scholarship, in different teaching contexts, has explored how NNESTs construct their identities and has investigated the factors that affect their self-perceptions and beliefs (e.g., Amin, 1997; Polio & Duffy, 1998; Braine, 1999; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Thomas, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Zacharias, 2010; Nagatomo, 2012; Canh, 2013; Chung, 2014), studies that have focussed on NNESTs' professional identities and explored the impact of the NS fallacy on their professional lives in the Arab Gulf states, are almost non-existent. As a result, currently, the literature is sparse on the influence the NS fallacy has on the professional identities of NNESTs in the Arab Gulf States.

Insight into the lived experiences of NNESTs in their classrooms and the larger workplace has the potential to develop, on the one hand, a better understanding of how NNESTs' identities are constructed, and on the other, to raise consciousness about the ways in which power relations are constructed and operate, and the extent to which historical, socio-economic, and political

practices structure educational inequity. Furthermore, an exploration of NNESTs' professional identity construction can facilitate a better understanding and conceptualization of the support NNESTs' may need. Thus, it can contribute towards informed decisions to establish better working conditions of NNESTs. In addition, the findings of this study can direct the attention of the developers of teacher education courses in the Gulf region towards the consideration of issues relevant to NNESTs' when preparing NNSs for employment. Finally, this study is also significant in that it gives NNESTs in the Arab Gulf states a voice in their profession, and supports them in recognizing and establishing their position as equal partners in the field of ELT.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the aims of this thesis, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How do the non-native English teachers working in the tertiary setting in the Arab Gulf states construct their professional identities?
2. How does the 'native speaker fallacy' and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers impact upon the construction of these professional identities?

1.5 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Thus far, chapter one has provided the rationale, significance aims and research questions of the study. The second chapter will illustrate the setting of the study and describe the socio-economic and political issues that surround it. Chapter three provides a review of the literature that is relevant to the present study and introduces the theoretical framework that guided the research process. Chapter 4 explains the research methodology, method, data collection and analysis. The chapter will also include discussions relating to issues of trustworthiness and the ethical considerations of the study. The themes that emerged from the research will be presented and analysed in chapter five. Chapter six will discuss the salient points of this analysis. Finally, chapter seven will provide a brief overview of the findings, the implications, the limitations, a few suggestions for further research and the conclusion to this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the professional identities of NNESTs in the tertiary setting in the Arab Gulf states. With that in mind, this chapter has two goals: (1) to provide relevant background information about the educational, socio-economic and socio-cultural context in which the investigation is conducted; and, (2) to offer an overview of both the historical and economic context in the Arab Gulf states due to which NESTs have come to be viewed as superior and more competent English teachers in comparison to NNESTs.

To that end, the chapter is divided into three sections. Addressing the first goal, section 2.1 provides a brief background of the Arab Gulf states. Addressing the second goal, Section 2.2 outlines the historical and economic factors that have created the conditions for the spread of English language education in the Arab Gulf states. This section also briefly discusses hiring practices in the Arab Gulf states, which largely remain skewed towards NESTs, especially White teachers. Finally, section 2.3 touches upon the impact of such a hiring policy on socio-cultural and linguistic aspects in the classroom.

2.1 The Arab Gulf States

The six Arab Gulf states, hereafter referred to as the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman are situated in Southwest Asia. The general culture and education in these states has been influenced, over the centuries, by their shared history, the Islamic religion, the Arabic language, their unique strategic geographic location, and oil (El Sanabary, 1992). The discovery of oil during the 1930s and 1940s, transformed these countries from wide expanses of desert lands, inhabited by small Bedouin tribes, into nations with highly developed urban cities which have all the modern infrastructural facilities that exist in most developed countries (Sultan, Metcalf & Weir, 2012). A common Muslim and Arab heritage connects states of the Gulf region. Islam predominates, not only as the religion of the majority of the population, but more so as a way of life that tends to permeate

all facets of an individual's life— private, social, economic, political and educational.

2.2 ELT in the Gulf States

An issue, which dominates the political, social and economic development in the Arab Gulf in the early 21st century is that the Gulf states are seeking to move away from natural resource-based economies to knowledge-and information- based economies (Fox, Mourtada-Sabbah, & Al Murawa, 2006), and have embarked on a rapid and massive educational programme in order to meet the challenges of the post-oil era. Notably, the transition to knowledge-and information- based economies came to be tightly interwoven with a certain discourse that laid importance on the English language as a means to modernisation (Fusell, 2011). In this regard, Troudi (2007) explains that literacy in English amongst the workforce is considered as “not only a sign of development but is a key to competitiveness in the world market” (p. 6).

The urgency of modernization required quick results and instead of depending on locally generated measures to implement language policy measures, which would have entailed a lengthier and more labour-intensive mode of social development, the expansion of English was seen as a quicker and easier strategy (Karmani, 2009). New curricula were imported from the Center (Kachru, 1986) and a large majority of native English speaking faculty and staff were employed to administer these new rapidly developing institutions. As Smith (2008) elaborates, the Gulf states “may be in the process of creating the world's most globalised higher education system ... [one] which is largely built upon standards, systems, and faculty imported from Western Europe and North America and which operates almost entirely in English” (pp 20-21).

In the tertiary institutions, where the content is mostly taught through English, there is often a notable lack of English proficiency in many students. While most students who come from private schools do not seem to have any major problems with English proficiency, English can be problematic for students who come from public schools (Al Mahrooqi, 2012; Al Harbi, 2015; Forawi, 2015; Alotaibi, Aldiahani & Alrabah, 2014). Systematic issues such as poorly-trained teachers, outdated methodology, stress on rote learning, teacher-centered classes, inappropriate or inadequate textbooks, minimal exposure to English in

class, large class sizes and poor assessment methods are seen as impacting the delivery of successful English programmes in public schools in the Gulf region (Clarke, 2006; Fareh, 2010; Hozayen, 2011; Rabab'ah, 2002; Syed, 2003). As a result, a large majority of students, who have received their education in public schools require additional English language tuition in their foundation year of study in order to bridge the gap to tertiary level English medium education (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010; Randall, 2010; Al Mahrooqi, 2012; Malcolm & Majed, 2013).

The influx of students into the foundation English program every year requires a significant number of teachers to teach them. Thus while some English teachers work as subject teachers on various undergraduate programs, the majority of them serve in the foundation programs. At the tertiary level, the teaching of English remains “heavily centralized and firmly rooted in the core English-speaking countries of the West”, exclusively determining “which language components” are taught, “which approaches” are most appropriate, and what the student is required to do (Karmani, 2009, p. 93). Advertisements for teaching positions often imply that only English speakers from the English-speaking West need apply. Employers insist on hiring English teachers from American/Canadian/British cultures, warranting that teachers have in depth knowledge of these cultures by either being born into the culture or having spent considerable time in the West (Ali, 2009). In well-established tertiary educational institutions the majority of the English language teaching staff are *native speakers* of English from the Center (Syed, 2003; Ali, 2009; Karmani, 2009).

Although there are English teachers whose first language is not English, that “the majority tend to be hired from Anglophone countries such as the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland etc.” (Hudson, 2012, p.2) illustrates that NESTs are privileged in employment. The small number of teaching positions available to NNSs in well-established universities can result in competition among NNESTs for the limited job opportunities. For teaching candidates from the Periphery (Kachru, 1986), qualifications from an English-speaking country are considered an important requirement for employment in such institutions.

While NNESTs are a minority in well-established and prestigious universities the situation is different in smaller colleges and private universities. The majority of the teaching staff here comprises NNSs. Most of the smaller colleges and private universities are unable to match the salaries and offered by the more well-established and prestigious institutions and as such they mostly employ NNS teachers. The NNESTs employed in the Gulf states, both in the public and private institutions, come from a range of national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. The majority of them are Arab expatriates, the others being South Asian (primarily Indian and Pakistani nationals), or East European nationals.

The active encouragement of English-medium Western higher education for its citizens, with the aim of enhancing their productivity in the globalized economy of the 21st Century by the Gulf states, demonstrates that a modernist or a consumerist approach to English is espoused by the Periphery (Kachru, 1986) and not only the Center (Kachru, 1986). Thus, in the Arab Gulf states, NNSs play a major role in the spread of English in the region. Such a scenario is representative of Canagarajah's (1999b) assertion that, in general, Periphery (Kachru, 1986) education perpetuates the native speaker fallacy.

It is also noteworthy that the unique economic condition of the Gulf states, where the exponential inflows of oil revenues circa 1960-80 have fuelled the acquisition of higher education infrastructure, is essentially the reason why NNESTs have come to be viewed as the ideal and target teachers of English in some institutions. The situation would be entirely different in less prosperous countries where NNESTs are the norm and employment laws do not permit the privileging of the national teachers over expatriates, especially in public education.

The label Center (Kachru, 1986) refers to the "industrially/economically advanced communities of the West" (Braine, 1999, p.79). In particular, the Center (Kachru, 1986) denotes the "traditionally 'native English' speakers of North America, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, which claim ownership over English" (Canagarajah, 1999b). Distinct from the Center (Kachru, 1986), the label the Periphery (Kachru, 1986), refers to the under developed countries where English is a second or foreign language.

While the terms Center/ Periphery (Kachru, 1986) still have widespread use in scholarship, this linguistic categorization has been problematized, as the actual situation is said to be more complex (Appadurai, 1990; Pennycook, 1994). In particular, it has been asserted that ‘transcultural flows’ (Appadurai, 1996) between English and other languages, set in motion by postmodern globalization, have resulted in more multilateral and fluid relationships between languages. The new reality of geopolitical relationships illustrates varied utilization of language in new forms of cultural production that arise from intersecting scapes of people, media, ideas, technology and capital (Appadurai, 1996; Canagarajah, 2007; Higgins, 2011). Consequently, “the new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex overlapping disjunctive order, which can no longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (Appadurai, 1990, p. 296).

Acknowledging the problems associated with such a linguistic categorization, the terms the Center (Kachru, 1986) and the Periphery (Kachru, 1986) have been used in this study to distinguish between “the traditionally English-speaking center communities (which claim ownership over the language) and those periphery (Kachru, 1986) communities which have recently appropriated the language” (Canagarajah, 1999b, p, 4). In this study the terms the ‘Center’ (Kachru, 1986) and the ‘Periphery’ (Kachru, 1986) are used in a restricted sense. The Center refers to North America, Britain and Australia (overlooking New Zealand as most NESTs in the Gulf belong to North America, Britain and Australia and rarely from New Zealand). The Periphery is used to refer to East Europe, the Middle East, South Asia (India and Pakistan) and Africa.

2.3 Cultural and Linguistic Distance in the Classroom

NS teachers are a source of diversity in the Gulf classroom, and even though some utilize contextually situated pedagogy, wide gaps are said to persist in NESTs’ knowledge of local socio-cultural communities and languages (Syed, 2003). There are situations where Western faculty, knowingly or unknowingly, infringe on the cultural and religious beliefs of Arab students (G-Mrabet, 2010). For instance, gender and attitudes towards gender roles is seen as one of the major sources of potential problems in the classroom (Hudson, 2012). University education in the Gulf has traditionally been gender segregated, except for a few private institutions. For the teachers coming from a Western

background, the difference between their own perceptions of appropriate gender roles in society and those of the students and the society in the Gulf states often causes a major shock. Teaching contexts specific to Arabic culture have gendered expectations, which can impact classroom interactions. This mostly affects women, “since they usually sit separately from men, speak in a very soft voice, avoid speaking in front of the group or participate in peer activities that include opposite sex” (Filatova, 2015, p. 21).

Research conducted by Palmer (2013) at two universities in the UAE, revealed that along with mixed-gender difficulties in the classroom, the majority of conflicts centred around the use of inappropriate material, by teachers; lack of respect for religious customs/events; and the perception of the Western teacher as the Other by the students. Similarly, research carried out by Al Jadidi (2009) in Oman revealed that students believed that NESTs lacked cultural awareness, and so they taught whatever they came across regardless of the sensitivity of the content and its possible effect on students.

In addition, educators from Western English-speaking countries are said to lack the linguistic knowledge necessary to surmount the sometimes-wide gap in the teacher-student relationship (Syed, 2003). Lack of knowledge of students’ L1 can impact the explanation of difficult concepts; translation of particular words/vocabulary; classroom management and building rapport; giving immediate, comprehensible feedback and pointing out differences between the grammatical structures of each language (see Cook, 1991, Cole, 1998; Pacek, 2005; Al-Jadidi, 2009; Zacharias, 2010; Tatar & Yildiz, 2010; Al Shammari, 2011, Wang & Lin, 2014, Song & Castillo, 2015). The inability to use the students’ L1 can be a limitation in view of the fact that many students in the Gulf states struggle with the transition from predominantly Arabic-medium high schools to English-medium universities (Mustafa, 2012; Roche, 2013; UNESCO, 2011). Thus, the policy of overwhelming reliance on NSs has ramifications for the cultural and linguistic dynamics that pervade the Gulf’s classrooms.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has attempted to put into context the historical, educational and socio-economic aspects in relation to the growing importance attached with the

learning of the English language in the Gulf states. In addition, the prevalence of discriminatory hiring factors in the Gulf states, as well as the issues of cultural and linguistic gaps in the NESTs classroom were briefly reviewed in this chapter. Each of these issues needs to be elucidated in more detail in order to comprehend the complex dynamics in which the subjects of this research currently practice. The next chapter, the literature review, will discuss relevant literature and research that has been conducted pertaining to the questions of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

3 Introduction

This chapter discusses the key constructs of the study, and reviews the relevant literature in the field. It also presents the theoretical framework that underpins this study. In order to do this, it is divided into three sections. The first section discusses some of the key constructs that form this thesis, namely the NS/NNS dichotomy and the native speaker fallacy. The second section introduces and discusses another key construct of the study, that is, professional identity. Finally, the third section presents the theoretical framework that underpins this study, namely, postcolonial theory.

The first section begins with an overview of the native and the non-native speaker dichotomy. This is followed by a discussion of the criticisms levelled against the NS/NNS dichotomy. The section concludes with a discussion of the impact the native speaker privilege has on the field of TESOL. The aim here is to give a sense of how the term NS has developed and how the NS construct contributes towards the marginalisation of NNESTs in ELT.

3.1 The NS/NNS Dichotomy

Currently there is no clear consensus on the definition of a NS. In discussing the NS/NNS dichotomy, academics such as Kachru (1987), McKay (2002) and Nayar (1994) believe that the NS norm sprang from Chomsky's (1965) notion of an "ideal speaker-listener" (p.3). According to Chomsky (1965), a native speaker of a language is an "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community who knows its language perfectly" (p. 3). For Chomsky, linguistic competence is based on an innate and intuitive knowledge of what is grammatical and ungrammatical in a language, and that is what gives the native speaker superiority. This idealization positions the *native speaker* as an indisputable authority on judgements in grammar and use.

Selinker's (1972) concepts of *interlanguage* (IL) and *fossilization* served to further propagate the native speaker as the most appropriate linguistic benchmark (see Kato, n.d.; Llurda, 2005; Mahboob, 2010). Selinker (1972) conceptualizes *interlanguage* as the systematic and structurally intermediate

status between the native and target language (TL), which is independent of both the learner's L1, and the TL. *Fossilization*, on the other hand, is conceptualized as "the real phenomenon of the permanent non-learning of TL [target language] structures, of the cessation of IL learning (in most cases) far from expected TL norms" (Selinker, 1992, p. 225). This definition of *fossilization* defines language learners in terms of their deficiencies in relation to native speaker (target language) norms. The terms *interlanguage* and *fossilization* idealize the NS in their implication that the goal of a second language learner is to be just like a NS, and that if one fails to achieve this objective then s/he has fossilized (see Bhatt, 2002). In a similar vein, Long's (1981) emphasis on the role of native speakers in their ability to provide ideal language input further consolidated the idealization of the NS model in SLA. Long stated that: "participation in conversation with NS... is the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA" (p. 275).

The theories of *interlanguage* and *fossilization* (Selinker, 1972), and *ideal language input* (Long, 1981), among others, are viewed as sustaining and reinforcing the privileging of the NS in SLA and applied linguistics, and ultimately in Educational Linguistics and TESOL. Together, they reinforce the *deficit discourse* (Bhatt, 2002) since learner language is perceived as 'deficient' by definition (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997). Thus, the "idealized NS model" creates a monolingual bias in SLA theory that "elevates an idealized native speaker above a stereotypical *non-native* while viewing the latter as a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence" (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 285). Criticizing the NS/NNS dichotomy several scholars have attempted to reconceptualise the NS construct.

3.1.1 Criticism of the NS/NNS Dichotomy

Various researchers have questioned the dichotomy of native versus non-native speakers by critically analysing the constructs of the native speaker and the mother tongue. At the heart of their conclusion is the contention that there exists no such thing as a *native speaker* or a *non-native speaker*. The practical significance of the term the *native speaker* was highlighted by Paikeday (1985), who drew attention to the employment discrimination suffered by those who lacked the *ideal* native speaker attributes. He challenged the notion of an

embodied NS and stated that the construct “ exists only as a figment of linguist’s imagination”(p.12).

Davies (1991, 2003) views the native-non-native distinction as a sociolinguistic construct that can be overcome within certain circumstances. He debunks the myth of the *idealized native speaker* and discusses what the NS knows and does. Referring to the grammar of the first language (L1) as G1 and the grammar of the second language (L2) as G2 (in the sense of the intuitions a speaker has learnt about the grammar of a language), Davies proposes six characteristics of the NS:

1. The native speaker acquires the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker in childhood.
2. The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his/her Grammar 1.
3. The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the Grammar 2, which are distinct from his/her Grammar 1.
4. The native speaker has a distinct capacity to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries . . . and which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of complete lexical items . . . In both production and comprehension the native speaker exhibits a wide range of communicative competence.
5. The native speaker has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels).
6. The native speaker has a unique capacity to interpret and translate into the L1 of which she/he is a native speaker. Disagreements about an individual’s capacity are likely to stem from a dispute about the Standard or (standard) Language. (2003, p.210)

According to Davies (2003) NNSs can achieve all the characteristics except the first, in the case of adult learners. Davies (1991) argues that membership as a native speaker in a speech community is largely a matter of self-ascription, with the notions of confidence and identity lying at its core (see Rampton, 1990). He states that despite popular perception, the NS (and NNS) construct, “is classically, social, just as culture is” (2003, p.214). This suggests that,

sociolinguistically, the NS represents a reality, through identity, confidence and power.

In an attempt to step beyond the NS-NNS dichotomy and the dominance of the linguistic norms for English associated with the Center (Kachru, 1986), scholars have employed the concept of ownership to probe speakers' ideological stances toward English. Widdowson (1994) and Chisanga & Kamwangamalu (1997) posit that speakers in the postcolonial world may appropriate English at the grammatical level for their own contexts, thus owning the language by changing it to suit their own local purposes, divorced from the norms of the Center (Kachru, 1986). They argue that when a language becomes as widely used as English is, norms and standards can no longer be determined only by NSs.

Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) also criticize the notion of the NS, and label it as the *idealized native speaker* in view of the “abstracted notion” of a White monolingual speaker “from which ethnic and linguistic minorities are automatically excluded” (p.546). Questioning the pedagogical relevance of the construct of the NS, Rampton (1990) suggests that TESOL professionals should instead take into consideration questions about *language expertise* (proficiency in a language), *language inheritance* (the ways in which individuals can be born into a language tradition that is prominent within the family and community), and *language affiliation* (the attachment or identification individuals have for a language whether or not they nominally belong to the social group customarily associated with it). Suggesting that focus be shifted from “who you are” to “what you know” (p.99), Rampton advocates the use of the term *language expert* instead of the NS.

Other scholars have also offered alternatives to move beyond the perennial nomenclature of NS, such as proficient users of English (Paikeday, 1985), English-using fellowships (Kachru, 1992), multi-competent speaker (Cook, 1999), and competent language user (Lee, 2005). Even though alternatives proposed by these researchers have both linguistic and ideological merits, none of them have been widely used to replace the terms native speaker and non-native speaker in the language teaching profession. Observing this, Clark and Paran (2007) argue that the stress on language

competence has been unsuccessful in eliminating the use of the labels NS and NNS.

Acknowledging the problems that accompany the terms, NESTs and NNESTs, these terms have been used in the thesis for practical purposes, and they have a very confined meaning in this study. For the purposes of this study, NESTs have been used to refer to teachers who speak English as their first language, and NNESTs for teachers who speak English as their second language.

3.1.2 The Impact of the Native Speaker Privilege on TESOL

By the time the term *native speaker* appeared in the circles of TESOL, it was already a consequential term, entwined in issues relating to linguistics, race, ethnicity, and country of origin, among others (Selvi, 2014). Mahboob (2010) asserts that these terms and abstractions epitomize “a hidden ideology that privileges the NS... [and] helped give authority to the NS model in SLA and, by extension, in language teaching models” (p. 3). Different aspects of the TESOL profession (e.g. theory, research, publishing, instructional materials, assessment, teacher training and hiring practices) have traditionally operated under the definitive and detrimental influence of the NS construct (Braine, 2010; Canagarajah, 1999a).

The phenomenon of the native-speaker privilege also referred to as *native-speaker fallacy* (Phillipson, 1992), *native speakerism* (Holliday, 2005, 2006), and *idealized native speaker* (Leung et al., 1990) has deep cultural foundations. The *native speaker fallacy*, first identified by Phillipson (1992), refers to the pervasive belief in TESOL that “the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker” (p.185). Based on this misconception, NSs are perceived as having linguistic, phonological, and communicative competence, thus being viewed as ideal teachers of the English language. Holliday (2005) added to the discussion of NS privilege by raising the notion of native speakerism— “an established belief that the ‘native-speaker’ teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which springs the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (p. 6). The notion of the *idealized native speaker* suggests that only White people are NSs and as such, are better qualified than teachers of colour (Amin, 1997, 1999; Curtis & Romney, 2006). The standard language ideology also serves to perpetuate the belief that NSs

are the ideal language teachers of English. The notion here is that native speakers are the ideal users of the language and serve as the best models for language learners. Such a language teaching approach that insists on using authentic, naturally occurring English for instructional purposes privileges NESTs, making them "custodians and arbiters not only of proper English but of proper pedagogy as well" (Widdowson, 1994, p. 387). Thus, the issue of ownership of the language also becomes crucially significant at the level of norms and standards in language teaching. NSs are often perceived as the legitimate *owners* of the language, and therefore privileged as teachers, experts and trainers. NSs are assigned (or assign to themselves) the rights and responsibilities not only of saying what is correct, grammatical or acceptable in a language but also of controlling the theory and practice of teaching in and research on the language (Widdowson, 1994; Mc Kay, 2002).

The NS privilege in TESOL is damaging at many different levels: it leads to unprofessional favouritism (Medgyes, 2001) and consequently frequently results in hiring discrimination (Clark & Paran, 2007; Flynn & Gulikers, 2001; Selvi, 2010; Mahboob & Golden, 2013), and diminished job prospects of NNESTs in ESL settings (Braine, 1999; Mahboob et al. 2004). Program administrators and other gatekeeping stakeholders often accept and function under the native speakerism/native speaker fallacy paradigm, which, by definition, typecasts NNESTs as less instructionally qualified and less linguistically competent than their NEST counterparts. (Lippi-Green, 1997; Maum, 2002). It has also been found that an overwhelming majority of websites that recruit language teachers for language schools in China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand portray the ideal candidate as a young, White, enthusiastic NS of English, coming from a predominantly White country, where English is the official language (Ruecker & Ives, 2015). While these websites prioritized nativeness and used this as the standard, in cases where NNSs possessing NS competence would be accepted, it was implied that they were likely to be more critically examined and would have to meet higher standards in other areas.

It is "the tendency to equate the native speaker with white and the non native speaker with non-white" that underlies the basis of discriminatory attitudes against non-Center professionals, "many of whom are people of colour"

(Kubota & Lin, 2009, p.8). Consequently, passing as a NS is determined by external judgements “that have nothing to do with the language, and everything to do with skin colour” (Pennycook, 2012, p. 95). Furthermore, due to their non-native status, NNESTs often have their experience, expertise and professional legitimacy questioned by their students and colleagues (Braine, 1999).

Stereotyped notions that students and parents have about authentic language teachers can cause NNESTs to feel disempowered (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999). This may result in the “I-am-not-a-native-speaker syndrome” (Suarez, 2000) or “the impostor syndrome” (Bernat, 2009) in NNESTs, which can affect their teacher persona, self-esteem, and thus, their in-class performance (Selvi, 2014).

In a recent article, Cook (2016) observes that while SLA researchers’ reliance on the NS is now more veiled, research still largely falls back on the L2 user conforming to the standard of NSs. Cook (2016) also claims that while there has been academic support for basing teaching on L2 user goals, situations, roles, and language and utilising methods that take into cognizance the students’ L1, the ground reality remains the same. He points out that not much has changed in regards to syllabuses and examinations. He adds that published coursebooks continue to emphasise the roles of the “powerful native speaker”, and the few L2 users that find mention in coursebooks tend to be portrayed as “humble foreign students” (p. 187).

These concerns and situation of discrimination against NNESTs has resulted in an increasing number of academics raising their voices against native speakerism (Canagarajah, 2002; Holliday, 2005; Rajagopalan, 2004; Moussu & Lurda, 2008; Holliday & Aboshiha, 2009; Mahboob, 2010). The emergence of the critical approaches in TESOL and applied linguistics, the diverse uses and users of Englishes (World Englishes), the reconceptualization of English as an international language (EIL) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) have also seriously questioned the validity of the pedagogic models that is based on the NS’s English usage. In sometimes similar and sometimes dissimilar ways, these frameworks have critiqued the taken-for-granted or unquestioned superiority of the notions such as ‘Standard English’, ‘the NS model’ and they have offered a more liberal and democratic view.

The World Englishes (Kachru, 1985) perspective on ELT is one, which values the richness in diversity of English (Davies, Hamp-Lyons, & Kemp, 2003) and argues for “the importance of inclusivity and pluricentricity in approaches to the linguistics of English worldwide” (Bolton 2005, p. 204). Like World Englishes (WE), EIL too highlights the complex sociolinguistic reality of the English language. The EIL paradigm, originally proposed by Larry Smith (1976, 1978, 1981, 1983), and developed by scholars (such as Tomlinson, 2003; Widdowson, 1997; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009) draws attention to the international functions of English and its use in a range of cultural and economic spheres by speakers of English from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds who do not speak each other’s L1. The EIL paradigm “rejects the notion of a single variety of English which serves as the medium for international communication. English, with its pluralized forms, is a language of international and intercultural communication” (Sharifian, 2009, p. 2). Similarly, the emergence of ELF and the works of its proponents (such as Jenkins 2000, 2006, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2010, 2011, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2006) has been shifting the focus from NSs to NNSs. ELF includes “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p.7). In ELF, deviations from the NS norm are not viewed as inferior, and NNSs are not seen as “failed natives” (Cook, 1999, p.196) but as legitimate users of the language.

Along with the emergence of the WE, EIL and ELF frameworks, a series of institutionalized measures have also been taken against the unfair treatment of NNESTs in the TESOL profession by the passing of resolutions entitled “A TESOL Statement on Non-native Speakers of English and Hiring Practices” (TESOL, 1992), and “Position Statement against Discrimination of Non-native Speakers of English in the Field of TESOL” (TESOL, 2006). However, in spite of all these initiatives, discriminatory hiring and practices continue to persist in the field of TESOL (Selvi, 2014).

3.2 Professional Identity

This section introduces and discusses another key construct of the study, that is, the professional identities of language teachers. It then builds further on this by synthesising and critically evaluating the relevant literature in the field of the

professional identities of NNESTs. This section concludes by providing the theoretical justification for this study.

3.2.1 Language Teacher Professional Identity

Within the field of ELT, an ever-expanding body of research has studied the notion of teacher identity (e.g. Baurain, 2007; Brown, 2005; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Johnson, 2006; Johnston, 1999; Morgan, 2004; Norton, 1997; Pavlenko, 2003; Le Ha, 2008; Samimy, 2008; Tsui, 2007; Zacharias, 2010). These efforts have “helped capture the complexities of who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers” (Johnson, 2006, p.236).

Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnson (2005) have outlined three predominant themes in understanding language teacher identities. First, identity is not a fixed, stable, unitary, and internally coherent phenomenon but is multiple, shifting, and in conflict (Gergen, 1991; Norton Peirce, 1995; Sarup, 1996; Weedon, 1987). By the same token, it is transformational and transformative. This means that teacher identities can be revalued, negotiated and re-constructed. Varghese et al. (2005) point out that a critical element here is that of the primacy of agency since individuals are able to shape their identities through agency - i.e. their actions and activities. Thus, there exists a dialectical relationship between identity and agency (Roth, Tobin, Elmesky, Carambo, McKnight & Beers, 2004). Second, identity is not context free; instead, it is negotiated in specific sociocultural and political contexts. Interlocutors, institutional settings, and so on affect the ways English language teachers view and interpret themselves (Duff & Uchida, 1997). Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) also found a similar aspect of language teacher identity. They introduced the concepts of assigned identity —the identity imposed on one by others—and claimed identity, the identity or identities one acknowledges or claims for oneself. Third, identity is constructed, maintained, and negotiated to a significant extent through language and discourse (Gee, 1996; MacLure, 1993). Grounded in post structural theory, this conceptualization perceives language (or discourse) and identity as mutually constitutive. Identity construction, then, is a matter of struggle because the individual struggles to make sense of his or

her subjectivity by participating (or being restricted from participating) in various discourses.

Research has also highlighted self-image, self-esteem, job-motivation, task perception and future perspective as components of professional identity (Kelchtermans, 1993). Some other components of teacher identity identified by researchers are self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995; Gibbs, 2003), beliefs about teaching and learning (Williams & Burden, 1997), knowledge (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004), beliefs, values, motivation, job satisfaction, commitment (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006), and emotions (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Day et al., 2006).

3.2.2 The Professional Identities of NNESTs

A number of researchers have investigated NNESTs' perceptions of themselves as ELT professionals, and what they think of the native and non-native conceptions. In a survey carried out between 1995 and 1996 in a teacher-retraining course in Hong Kong, Tang (1997) asked 47 NNESTs questions about the proficiency and competency of native- and non-native-speaking teachers of English. The results revealed that a very high percentage of respondents believed that NESTs were superior to NNESTs in speaking (100%), pronunciation (92%), listening (87%), vocabulary (79%), and reading (72%). In contrast, NNESTs were felt to be associated with accuracy rather than fluency. Some of the respondents commented that the learners could learn "accurate," "correct," "natural" English from NESTs. The results of the study illustrated that the NNESTs perceived their NEST counterparts as far superior in oral and aural proficiency.

The advantages to being NNESTs were related to their source language and their status as L2 learners. The respondents found the shared mother tongue a useful instructional tool in teacher-student interaction. NNESTs' previous L2 learning experience was perceived as providing them with a good understanding of the difficulties and weaknesses experienced by their students. NNESTs' familiarity with the local society was seen as providing them with a unique identity as agents of change in language policy and facilitators of the administrative mechanism in the schools. This bridging role between authority figures and students was not viewed as being fulfilled by NESTs.

The personal narratives of Thomas (1999), a first language speaker of Indian/Singapore English who taught English in Canada, highlight the fundamental issue of credibility that confronts NNESTs. Her research revealed the covert and overt discrimination that NNSs encounter in various ESL contexts. Thomas narrated the initial disappointment her students experienced when they came to know that their English teacher was a foreigner with a different accent. She also spoke about the prejudice NNSs faced in hiring practices and their lack of visibility or absence of representation in academic journals and executive boards of professional organizations. Thomas described such challenges to NNESTs' credibility as unnerving if not debilitating, since they can make NNESTs nervous about their "ability to succeed" (p.10). She added that NNESTs "are not merely 'strangers in academia'; rather they are often positioned as "strangers on the periphery" (p.5). Thus, her narratives reveal that the issues of credibility that NNESTs face lead to marginalized identities.

Addressing the problem of the status of NNSs in the ELT field, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) introduced a graduate level seminar in TESOL at a university in North America, where students, all L2 users of English, were invited to examine the NS/NNS dichotomy via their own teaching experiences and self-representation. Drawing on the principles of Freire's (1993) critical pedagogy, the seminar enabled many of the students to find a new relationship with their contexts, examine the causes of their powerlessness, and generate a new sense of agency as teachers and scholars. The students reflected on, and analysed the complex issues that faced them in their professional lives. The question of whether NSs or NNSs are better language teachers was often voiced as irrelevant, if not detrimental. A more pertinent question, according to the participants, is how qualified they are as EFL/ESL teachers or what kind of competence they can provide. Several students grappled with the social construct of non-nativeness, which assigns to the L2 speaker the identity of a permanent learner. One student stated that by directing the focus of the non-native teacher towards native-like proficiency, the whole profession had become "very much distressed" (p.423), since non-native teachers end up complaining about their inability to acquire native-like proficiency. The authors' findings demonstrate that NNESTs should not be expected to have to take

responsibility for their own identities in conditions that are not of their own making. Given the complex circumstances of their professional lives, where a considerable emphasis is placed on native-like proficiency, it is not only difficult for them to take responsibility for their own identities but it is also asking too much of them.

Swan (2015) highlights how English language teachers in a variety of South-east Asian contexts redefine their professional identities according to elements which do not comprise native speakerism but which arise from professional beliefs about their teaching, understanding their students' requirements and understanding the role of English in their contexts. With informal interviews conducted with 15 teachers of English from seven countries, she shows how individual teachers prioritise and delineate professional matters with a level of confidence, which is not impaired by native speakerism. Contextual knowledge, linguistic diversity, together are revealed to be empowering elements that allow multilingual teachers to establish a strong professional identity.

3.2.3 Theoretical Justification for the Study

In short, the review of the literature demonstrates that regardless of whether there is any such thing as a *native speaker* or a *non-native speaker*, the *native speaker* construct has a considerable impact on NNESTs' lives. The literature review also shows that the professional identities of NNESTs are conflicted and evolving, and constructed in divergent multiple ways within multiple and intersecting discourses. NNESTs often face issues of credibility that challenge their teaching ability because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Perceptions of Standard English as the only legitimate form of the language and monolingual White NSs as the only legitimate speakers and owners of English make it difficult for many NNESTs to assert their legitimate status as English teachers. Furthermore, preferences for White teachers over NNESTs among authorities, parents and students also makes it difficult for NNESTs to claim their identity as legitimate teachers of English. Thus, it is fair to state that the dichotomy of native versus non-native speakers and the notion of the NS fallacy lie at the centre of NNESTs' identity construction.

The cited research demonstrates that the professional lives of NNESTs warrant further exploration, especially in consideration of the dominance that the NS

fallacy continues to exert in the field of ELT. The studies that have explored professional identities of NNESTs have overlooked the impact the NS fallacy and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers has on NNESTs' professional identities. Thus, in order to gain a broader understanding of how NNESTs' identities are constantly negotiated and transformed by their experiences in their profession, aspects such as factors that motivate NNESTs to become English teachers, their self-ascribed identity, beliefs about effective English teaching and notions of self-efficacy, the impact of NS norms in speech, the privilege associated with Center (Kachru, 1986) qualifications, challenges to teacher credibility and perceptions about measures that can make ELT a more equitable domain need to be explored. These aspects have been neglected in studies that have explored the professional identities of NNESTs. This study aims to provide these additional insights. Thus, the current study builds on and contributes to work in the area of the professional identities of NNESTs.

Furthermore, much of the research just cited has focused on NNESTs in Asia and the United States (US). As far as the researcher knows, there are yet no reports of studies undertaken in the Gulf states that have explored the impact the NS fallacy has on the professional identities of NNESTs. That the overwhelming majority of the English language teaching staff at the tertiary setting in the Gulf states are NESTs (Syed, 2003; Ali, 2009; Karmani, 2009) illustrates that hiring practices in the Gulf states are considerably influenced by the native speaker fallacy. Therefore, clearly, there is a need to explore the lived experiences of NNEST teachers in the Gulf states, and the complex negotiations and constructions of their professional identities against the deeply embedded NS fallacy and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers, in the Arab Gulf states— a gap that this present study hopes to attempt to fill.

3.3 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

This section provides the theoretical framework of the study, namely, postcolonial theory. It presents a brief overview of postcolonial theory and the postcolonial perspective of ELT and the NS/NNS dichotomy. This section also provides a brief description of the postcolonial notions of the Self, Other and how this categorization leads to a problematic identity formation. This is done with view to outlining how postcolonial theory provides me with a framework to

address the question of the identities of English teachers in the Gulf states and how they see themselves.

3.3.1 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is a vast and contested area that defies easy definition or simple thematic and theoretical delineations. Postcolonial theory, in its broadest sense, can be conceptualized as an interdisciplinary family of theories that share a common political and social concern about the history and legacy of colonialism and how it continues to shape people's lives, well-being, and life opportunities (Young, 2001).

As a body of scholarship, it has evolved from the works of humanities and social science scholars such as Bhabha (1994), Gandhi (1998), Gilroy (2000), Hall (1996), McConaghy (2000), Said (1978), and Spivak (1994). It is grounded in diverse disciplinary perspectives (for example, cultural studies, political science, literary criticism, sociology), that converge on a few key points: the need to revisit, remember, and interrogate the colonial past and its aftermath in today's context; the need to probe the genesis of racialized, classed and gendered inequities, both past and present; the need for critical investigations of peoples' experiences of colonialism, and their continuing manifestations; the intentional decentring of dominant culture so that the viewpoints of those who have been marginalized become starting points for knowledge construction; and the need to widen the understanding of how conceptualizations of race, racialization, and culture, and Others [the projection of stereotyped, essentialized and often racialized cultural characteristics, differences, or identities upon a group of people by another, more powerful group] are constructed within particular historical and current neo-colonial contexts (Gandhi, 1998; McConaghy, 2000; Reimer Kirkham & Anderson, 2002).

Postcolonial theory analyses the effect of colonial power structures that are pervasive in the economic, cultural, social, political, and the intellectual milieus of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Some of the fundamental concepts in postcolonial theory include: the role played by various forms of representation and otherness (e.g. Said, 1978), nationality and identity (e.g. Fanon, 1963; Memmi, 1965; Nandy, 1988), transnational hybridity of cultures and peoples (e.g. Bhabha, 1994), marginalization/subaltern [person or group of people in a

particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture] voice and the re-evaluation of history (e.g. Guha, 1982; Spivak, 1988), and resistance as oppositional or a process of mimicry (e.g. Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1967). Postcoloniality, for its part, “is a salutary reminder of the persistent ‘neo-colonial’ relations within the ‘new’ world order and the multinational division of labour” (Bhabha, 1994, p.6). Postcolonial theory is also concerned with questions of agency and how the marginalized “subject in a post-colonial society” is able to “resist imperialism and thus to intervene in the conditions which appear to construct subjectivity itself” (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 2003, p.10).

The notion of ‘post’ in postcolonial is used to indicate how the inequitable social and power relations inherent in the colonial condition has not passed, but rather how the historical context of colonialism is connected to contemporary neo-colonial conditions (Hall 1996). Thus, the ‘post’ in postcolonial is “not to be understood as a temporal register as in ‘hereafter’, but as a marker of a spatial challenge of the occupying powers of the west by the ethical, political, aesthetic forms of the marginalized” (Dimitriadis and McCarthy 2001, p.7).

3.3.2 Postcolonial critique of ELT

Within the field of English teaching and applied linguistics, an apolitical approach to the English language is predominant (Pennycook, 2001). The advocates of the apolitical approach assert that the global spread of English is natural, neutral and beneficial (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 2006). This *laissez-faire* or the modernist stance concerning the global role of English views is underpinned by the belief that the English language fulfils various practical needs (Buripakdi, 2014). The fundamental basis of the apolitical approach to ELT is the belief that English learning contributes to economic growth (Brutt Griffler, 2005; Lee, 2012; Pinon & Haydon, 2010; Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Erling, Seargeant, Solly, Chowdhury & Rahman, 2015). Another important belief is that English has become a *lingua franca* [a common language that is used for communication among speakers of different languages] or the “language of globalization *par excellence*” (Bambgose, 2006, p.647). As the *lingua franca* of the whole world, English “fosters cultural opportunity and promotes a climate of international intelligibility” (Crystal, 1997,

p.32). Within the wider discourse of English as a global language, English is also characterized as the language of international commerce, of science, of technological progress, and of human rights (see Ammon 2001, Toolan 2003, Graddol 2006). These rather benign perceptions, commonplace in academic and popular discourse, reflect a belief “that ELT is somehow a ‘good’ thing, a positive force by its very nature in the search for international peace and understanding” (Naysmith, 1986, p. 3).

However, this perception of ELT has come under increasing criticism from various scholars (e.g. Holliday, 2005; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992; Canagarajah, 1999b, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, Shin & Kubota, 2008). From a postcolonial perspective, ELT and the spread of English is viewed in more problematic, critical terms, and some of the central philosophies that underpin the current state of ELT are traced to historical colonial formations. The postcolonial perspective sees language education as implicated in the discourses of colonialism and globalization in post-colonial societies, both in regards to the history of the expansion of the English language and as the site in which much of Western European knowledge and culture, including knowledges and practices influential to TESOL, were produced (Pennycook, 1998, 2001). Pennycook (2001) explains that, within this context, “ELT needs to be seen not only as a tool in service of Empire but also as a product of Empire” (p.19).

In a similar vein, Kumaravadivelu (2006) suggests that the colonial practices manifest in the history of English and ELT have “four inter-related dimensions - scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic” (p.14). He explains:

The scholastic dimension of English is related to the ways in which Western scholars have unscrupulously furthered their own vested interests by disseminating Western knowledge and by denigrating local knowledge. The linguistic dimension pertains to the ways in which the knowledge and use of non-English languages were made inconsequential for applied linguistic inquiry. The cultural dimension emphasizes, rather unproblematically, the connection between English language and Western cultural beliefs and practices. These three dimensions are linked to a vitally important economic dimension that

adds jobs and wealth to the economy of English speaking countries through a worldwide ELT industry. Collectively, then, these four colonial dimensions have served, and continue to serve vested interests in applied linguistics. (2006, p.14)

Following the same line of thought, Pennycook (2001) claims that, “there are deep and indissoluble links between the practices, theories and contexts of ELT and the history of colonialism” (p.19). He problematizes the inequalities ingrained within the language of TESOL and claims that the colonial constructions of Self and Other, of the ‘TE’ and ‘SOL’ of TESOL remain in many domains of ELT” (Pennycook, 2001, p.22). This Self/Other dichotomy views the Self as unproblematic, civilized, modern, and developed, while the Other is represented as the opposite of everything the Self thinks of itself – inferior, backward, primitive, undeveloped, less cultured, and less intellectually capable (Hall, 1992; Holliday, 2005; Pennycook, 1998).

Pennycook (2001) adds that the discourses of colonialism, of the superior ‘Self’ and inferior ‘Other’, have adhered to English and continue to permeate TESOL, evident in the ways ELT is constructed and practised: from the dichotomisation of TESOL professionals into native and non-native speakers to the images constructed around English as a global language and the assumptions and generalisations made about problematic learner cultures. This colonial categorization process, which is embedded in socio-political and economic relations of power, inherently privileges some while marginalizing others. Consequently, it contributes to the construction of social inequality. Thus, postcolonial critics view the contemporary spread of English as perpetuating racist and cultural stereotypes despite the end of colonialism, creating a static Other (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a; Said, 1978).

As an intellectual movement, post-colonialism has provided an avenue for resisting and writing back to the colonial domination of power, restoring the voices of the colonized people of colour and women and highlighting how colonial power has been exerted through constructing the *exotic* Other and making the colonized wish to speak the colonizer's language (e.g., Fanon, 1967; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988). The process of resistance to the colonial discourse involves the liberation and legitimization of oppressed voice, which

are reflected in language policies in education in many post-colonial societies (Shin & Kubota, 2008).

3.3.3 Postcolonial Insight into the NS/NNS Dichotomy

Pennycook's (1998) discussion and conceptualization of ELT within a broader context of colonialism provides insights into the nature of the NS fallacy. The postcolonial perspective views the NS fallacy in ELT as a reflection and continuation of colonial constructs and practices. ELT. Viewed in this perspective, ELT is a site where images of a modern, progressive, scientific, masters of a technologically superior methodology Self [NESTs] and a conservative, backward and technologically inferior Other [NNESTs] are constructed and reconstructed (Holliday, 2005, Pennycook, 1994). Thus, the "cultural constructs of colonialism" (Pennycook, 1998, p. 156) facilitates the West to perceive itself in self-flattering opposition to the non-Western Other (Pennycook, 1998; Said, 1978).

The dichotomy that divides the world into NS and NNSs, is considered by Pennycook as "one of the most insidious constructions that has emerged from the glorification of English and the denigration of other languages" (2001, p.156). This categorization, embedded in colonial constructions of the Self and Other, limits teachers' ability to assume new relationships based on respect and equality, constructing a problematic identity based on superiority and the unequal distribution of power. Dominant models of race are seen as underpinning the perpetuation of colonialist discourse about the superiority of the Self (Pennycook, 1998, Said, 1978). The political aspect of English also has an important role to play in this dichotomy between the superior Self and the inferior Other (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1998). Deeply entangled in postcolonial realities of dependency, modernization and development (Kabel, 2009), and embedded in issues of power, it raises questions such as: "Whose English is the standard? Whose norms are to be followed?" (Le Ha, 2007, p.51).

For this study, which is concerned with understanding the process(es) through which NNESTs can be empowered to recognize, acknowledge, and contest dominant, ideological discourses, postcolonial theory is particularly relevant. What makes postcolonial theory particularly relevant to this study is that postcolonial theories foreground particular analytical dimensions congruent with

the goal of redressing the inequities experienced by NNESTs. These analytical dimensions focus attention on the various forms of inequities organized along axes of race, culture, gender, and class (Browne, Smye & Varcoe, 2005).

I employ postcolonial theory to critique the dominant and hegemonic native speakerism that pervades the ELT landscape of the Gulf countries. I utilize postcolonial theory to promote the voice of the subaltern (Spivak, 1988), and value “local knowledge systems, ways of learning and local concerns” (Hoff & Hickling-Hudson, 2011, p.8). The voices of the twelve teachers in this study come from a space that has been marginalised and largely ignored in the dominant Western ELT discourse. I therefore use postcolonial theory to explore the ways that power and control can be taken back by means of resistance to the negative consequences of Western colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 2003).

3.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed the key constructs of the study and reviewed the relevant literature in the field. This chapter has also provided the theoretical justification for the study, and presented the theoretical framework that underpins this study. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology employed for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4 Introduction

This chapter gives an account of the research design of my study beginning with a discussion of the research methodology and the methods of data collection adopted for this study. Subsequent sections focus on my position in the study, data collection procedures including sampling, piloting of research instruments and the actual data collection process. Towards the end, I have described the data analysis procedures. The chapter concludes with a discussion of research quality issues.

4.1 Life History Approach

In order to explore NNESTs' perspectives and understand how NNESTs make sense of their experiences, this study adopted a life history approach. Why NNESTs choose teaching, their sense of self-efficacy, their beliefs about teaching and learning, knowledge, and the impact the *native speaker fallacy* has on their professional lives are key elements of this study. In order to unravel these aspects of NNESTs' identity and agency, it is necessary to understand the teacher closely (Casey, 1992; Goodson, 1981; Nias, 1989; Osler, 1997). My epistemological starting-point, therefore, positions the life experiences of the teacher at the core. It recognises the relationship between the teacher's biography, current work, career, and the prospects for the development of educational systems (Goodson, 1981; Casey, 1992). From this starting-point, the use of a life history approach is especially pertinent to the question of exploring individuals' identities (Chaitin, 2004; Dhunpath, 2000).

This approach coheres around the presentation, in narrative form, "teachers' personal stories, their beliefs, their values, and their interpretations of educational issues within various social and cultural contexts" (Avraamidou, 2015, p.1). Life histories are useful for learning about teachers' experiences and lives as stories or narratives are "the closest we can come to experience" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994, p. 415). It enables understanding a teacher's life and work in relation to the meaning they have for the individual teacher (Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1992; Denicolo & Pope, 1990). Life

histories illuminate “the most important influences, experiences, circumstances, issues, themes, and lessons of a lifetime” (Atkinson, 2002, p. 125). Thus, the stories that teachers tell are a fitting tool for analysing teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, practice, and identity (see Shulman, 1987; Elbaz, 1983; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Watson, 2006). In educational settings, the life history approach has been well utilized in the exploration of teacher identity (Simon-Maeda, 2004; Roach, 2005; Guzmán, 2010; Halse, 2010; Newman, 2010; Mockler, 2011; Ling, 2014).

Life history is about lived experiences. In the context of educational research, it also explores the personal dimensions of teacher identities. It assumes that the connections between professional and personal life are complex and not separate from each other. As pointed out by Goodson and Sikes, “life history does not ask for such separation: indeed it demands holism” (2001, p.10). In the exploration of teacher professional identity, life history is a highly suitable methodology to adopt since an understanding of teacher identity, “of what it is to become and be a teacher is inextricably connected to the personal and life circumstances of teachers themselves” (Mockler, 2011, p. 162).

Furthermore, teachers’ professional identities, referred to as “stories to live by” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999, p. 4) provides each teacher with a “special place and orientation” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999, p.93) and a narrative thread or plot line that teachers draw on to make sense of themselves and their practice. Thus, storytelling allows teachers to engage in “narrative ‘theorizing’ and, based on that, teachers may further discover and shape their professional identity, resulting in new or different stories” (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 121). The multiple and subjective nature of human experience and thus the Self makes life history a suitable methodology to better understand the multiplicity of identities and the subjective nature of the self (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). While narratives open the possibilities to multiple and shifting identities, they can also provide a sense of unity at the particular point of telling. This is because personal narratives connect the multiple identities of our lives into a pattern that explains sense of self and ultimately “lends coherence to identity” (Lysaker, Lysaker, and Lysaker 2001, p. 55).

Life histories focus not only on the narrative of action but they also enable

understanding participants' stories "against the background of wider socio-political and historical contexts and processes" (Biesta, Hodkinson & Goodson, 2005, p. 4). The life-history approach is thus thoroughly a contextual method. The stress on context-dependent knowledge enables a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behaviour is not simply about rule-governed acts (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In view of the fact that professional identities tend to be formed within multiple contexts, a life history approach is useful in not only illuminating the complexities of the participants' lived experiences, but is also helpful in providing a contextual understanding of how historical, political, cultural, societal, institutional, familial and personal circumstances and events (Cole & Knowles, 2001; James, 2002) shape the participants' roles as English teachers in the Gulf states.

Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the professional identities of teachers, not only context, the aspect of time is also central to what I aim to achieve. The temporal aspect is significant to my research in view of the fact that teacher identities are made up of experiences in the past, present, and imagined future (see Dewey, 1938; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and they do not remain fixed or stable; instead, they change over time. This means, who and what we are is influenced by "who and what we have been, on the experiences we have had and on the consequent attitudes and values we hold. Our past contributes to our present and, thereby, to our future" (Sikes and Everton, 2004, p.25). In other words, significant historical elements, when connected, help give meaning to the present (Cole and Knowles, 2001). Teachers' lives, in this sense, are constructed at different levels, which need historical contextualization, in order to be examined and understood (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bogdan & Bilken, 1982). Life histories, then, are invaluable since they do not "fracture life experiences" but furnish "a means of evaluating the present, re-evaluating the past and anticipating the future and offer a challenge to other partial accounts" (Letherby, 2003, p.89).

Life history research has not merely been concerned with scripting lived experiences, but with utilizing the potential of story telling as political action that disturbs prevailing repressive orthodoxies (Ellis, 2002; Plummer, 2001; Tierney, 2000; Goodson, 2000; McLaughlin & Tierney, 1993). A fundamental guiding principle for life historians has been to *give voice* to less powerful groups,

(Goodson, 2000; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; McLaughlin and Tierney, 1993); those, whose lives and histories go unheard, undocumented - ordinary, marginalized and silenced lives (Riessman, 2008). In this sense, life history research operates as political responses, broadcasting *voices* that are “excluded from or neglected within dominant political structures and processes” (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.20). This political and emancipatory nature of life history scholarship is in line with the theoretical perspective employed for this study, namely, postcolonial theory.

Thus the particular ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the use of life history approach in this study are as follows: *reality* is constructed and experienced in different ways by different people; *reality* is constructed by historical, social, political and factors; knowledge is essentially contextual; and knowledge can be emancipatory.

4.2 The Life History Interview

Life history interviews were the source of data generated in this study. The life history interviews aimed to generate in-depth, personal accounts of how the participants made sense of their life experiences and how these experiences impacted their professional lives. An open-ended interview prompt— “Tell me about yourself, your background...” was used to initiate the interviews, and gather key information relating to participants’ place and date of birth, family, cultural, linguistic and educational background. The open-ended prompt served as an invitation to each participant to construct a narrative detailing particularities of their experience and “contextualizing them in a specific time and place” (Kramp, 2004, p.114).

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 5) to give “direction to the interviews” (Floyd, 2012, p. 227). Although, the questions existed prior to the commencement of the interviews, the mode of interviewing remained non-directive. Furthermore, the ordering of questions was not slavishly followed. Instead, the questions in the semi-structured schedule were viewed “as a checklist of topics” that needed to be covered by the end of the interview (Miller, 2000, p.97). These questions also served as “ jumping off points” that were designed to evoke lengthy, discursive responses from the participants (Miller, 2000, p.97). While the semi-structured format allowed me to

maintain my overall focus, at the same, it gave my participants a degree of freedom to make contributions beyond the questions in the interview schedule. At times, some of the participants digressed from the topics of the interview, but this was permitted as long as the digression had some kind of relevance to the topics of the interview.

The semi-structured interview schedule was organized around a set of predetermined, open-ended questions. Open-ended interviews allow teachers to speak for teachers and about teachers so that their knowledge, experiences, and practices can be rendered into professional knowledge (Ornstein, 1995). Thus, open-ended questions were crucial to this study. They provided richer, deeper and fuller responses in eliciting the participants' underlying beliefs, insights, experiences (Cresswell, 2002), and generating discussion around the central focus of this study, namely, the exploration of the professional identities of NNESTs and the impact the NS fallacy has on their professional identities. The open-ended questions also enabled me to “construct answers without unnecessary prodding” (Riessman, 1993, p. 54). Questions such as, ‘How did it begin?’ and ‘What happened then?’ were used to invite participants to translate their personal experiences into stories.

Following suggestions by Floyd (2012), the themes that formed the basis for the semi-structured, open-ended interview schedule were informed by the study's specific research questions (see section 1.5 of Chapter 1) and my literature review (see Chapter 3 for this). Recognizing the significance of situating one's personal and professional identity within the temporal context of a life experience, the life history interview began by exploring participants' past experiences, to understand the composition of their identities, their “stories to live by” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p.4). The participants were therefore asked to tell about their background and why they became English teachers.

In view of researchers having identified a number of factors affecting NNESTs' professional identity formation, including: self-efficacy (Day, 2002), self-image and beliefs about teaching and learning (Rajagopalan, 2005; Llurda & Huguet, 2003; Yang, 2000) the participants were also asked questions that explored their perceptions about various aspects that related to their teaching practice,

namely, elements that contribute towards effective English teaching, their self-efficacy, perceived advantages and disadvantages of being an NNEST.

The dichotomy of native versus non-native speakers, the notion of the NS fallacy and issues of pronunciation and accent also lie at the of NNESTs' identity construction (see 3.2 for this), therefore the participants were questioned about these aspects too. Inclusion of questions relating to the value attached with Center (Kachru, 1986) education was influenced by the researcher's own awareness of the prestige Center (Kachru, 1986) qualifications carried in the Gulf states. This aspect was considered appropriate for the study in view of the fact that school contexts and norms have also been identified as a factor that influences NNESTs' identity formation (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; Xu, 2012).

4.3 My Position within the Study

Narrative researchers engage in intense and transparent contemplation and questioning of their own position, values and (Trahar, 2009). Exploring researcher stance and engaging in reflexivity is viewed as a mechanism by which the researcher may demonstrate credibility and dependability (McCabe & Holmes, 2009). In this section, I outline my role within this study. The specific contextualities that directly impact my research position in this study are my insider-outsider status, and my interest in the emancipatory nature of Postcolonial theory.

Within the research context, I see myself positioned simultaneously as an insider and outsider. From an insider perspective, I too am an NNEST employed in the teaching of English at a university in one of the Gulf states, namely, the UAE. My teaching experience has provided me with an understanding of the kinds of constraints that NNESTs, in the Gulf region face in their professional lives. English is not my mother tongue but I am fluent in the language, like my participants. Thus, I can relate closely to the sense of marginalization that NNESTS experience when they are categorized as linguistically deficient teachers. Like the majority of my participants, I too am a Muslim. I therefore share the same cultural background as my Muslim participants. I share another similarity with my Arabic- speaking participants. I can read the Arabic language [though I cannot speak the language well].

Furthermore, my mother tongue Urdu, borrows heavily from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Due to this, I am able to utilize my L1 as a linguistic resource in the classroom, in particular with students belonging to the Gulf, the Middle East and Iran. This is an ability I share with my Arabic-speaking participants.

My insider status was very useful, as it equipped me with a pre-existing knowledge of the context of the research (Bell, 2005). It also provided me with the “ability to ask meaningful questions,” and the ability to “project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under study” (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001, p. 411).

However, my identity as a life history researcher, who was a doctoral student at a university in the UK, positioned me as an outsider in the study. Furthermore, my Indian ethnicity also made me distinct from all but one of my participants. However, my position as an outsider, within the power relations of the research, seemed to be outweighed by the insider identity and relationships I shared with my research participants. It seemed to me that the participants viewed my outsider status positively, as it offered them a medium through which they could share and bring to the limelight their accounts of marginalization and discrimination. This was probably the reason why the participants were very forthcoming about the stories of their lives, with some of them insisting that I ensure that this research was published and reached wider audiences in the field of ELT.

Another aspect of clarifying my position within this research entails articulating my “conceptual baggage” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 32). This study is informed by postcolonial theory. I use the instruments offered by postcolonial theory— undoubtedly a Western perspective, to decolonize Eurocentric thought and offer a trenchant critique of established binary categories (the NS & NNS). In offering analysis and commentaries on the professional lives of NNESTs, whose histories have been substantially shaped by colonial discourses in ELT, postcolonial theory seems as a suitable conceptual tool. I employ postcolonial theory to speak for the subaltern. It is not that the subaltern cannot speak for themselves. They do speak, but altering the colonial constructs of the Self and the Other necessitates that these voices be raised to a crescendo. My research initiative is therefore an attempt at contributing to that crescendo. Thus,

postcolonial theory is an integral part of my own personal and professional initiative towards contributing towards the empowerment of the marginalised NNESTs of the Gulf states.

My position as an insider-outsider, and my interest in the emancipatory nature of postcolonial theory, each guided my epistemological decisions— the methods I used, as well as the analyses that took place. The researcher reflective journal (discussed in more detail in section 4.8 of this chapter) is one tool that I used to analyse introspectively these biases that were brought to bear on this study. With that stated, I must add that I lean heavily on Richardson (1990) who views writing as a site of moral responsibility. He states:

Narrative suggests an answer to the questions (...) how and for whom should we write? (...) if we wish to use our privileges and skills to empower the people we study, then we need to foreground, not suppress, the narratives within the human sciences. How and for whom we write lives matters. (p. 65)

4.4 Participants

Twelve non-native teachers of English participated in the study. The sample of twelve participants lies within the typical range of participants in qualitative research of between 5 and 25 (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). My aim was to provide a wide spectrum of NNESTs belonging to diverse linguistic backgrounds and nationalities. This diversity in sample was important in view of the fact that the NNESTs who are engaged in the teaching of English at the tertiary setting in the Gulf region are not a uniform or homogenous group; instead, they comprise citizens of the Gulf states, as well as expatriates belonging to different Asian, Middle Eastern and East-European nations. Thus, a small sample size may not have been able to capture the complexity of the identity negotiations of NNESTs adequately. The sample was however restricted to twelve as a larger number of participants would have compromised the data analysis, due to the data becoming unwieldy, with too many data and complexities to explore (see Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In order to collect qualitatively rich data the participants were chosen deliberately under the general principle of purposeful sampling. Dörnyei (2007) calls this kind of sampling the “criterion sampling” in which “the researcher

selects participants who meet specific predetermined criteria” (p.128). The criteria that the participants needed to fulfil were that they had to be NNSs of English who taught English at the tertiary level in the Gulf states. I posted requests for voluntary participation in my study on the TESOL Arabia email list [a mailing list for members and non-members of TESOL Arabia— a not-for-profit teachers' membership organisation devoted to the professional development of its members, who are mostly based in the Gulf region].

Teachers who expressed interest in participating in the study were mailed a participant information sheet (see Appendix 2) that provided more detailed information regarding the research topic, the significance of their role in it, their time input, the research etiquette that would be followed, and the contact details of my research supervisors so that particular concerns or complaints could be addressed. Following this, I set up individual interview appointments with the participants who had responded to my first and second invitations. Nine teachers who met the criteria were from the UAE and the remaining three were from Oman, Kuwait and Qatar. No teacher had volunteered to participate from the other two Gulf states: Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

The interviews for this study were conducted between January 2014 and August 2014. I asked the participants to first complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 4) before I interviewed them. The questionnaire sought basic details pertaining to the demographic and academic background of the participants. The following table presents a summary of the basic information about the participants:

Table 1.1: Participants' Basic Details

	Name	G	Age	Nationality	Qualification	Gulf State currently teaching in
1.	Amira	F	56	Emirati	BEd, MA, PhD	UAE
2.	Daniel	M	60	Indian	MA, MPhil, PhD	Oman
3.	Fatima	F	40	Egyptian	BEd(TEFL), CELTA, MA (TESOL) final year student	UAE

4.	Ghada	F	45	Lebanese Canadian	BA, BS & MA (TESOL) final year student	UAE
5.	Haifa	F	38	Egyptian	BA, MA, PhD	Kuwait
6.	Helena	F	52	Polish	MSc (Plant Biology), MEd in Educational Technology and English Language Teaching, CELTA, DELTA	UAE
7.	Julia	F	37	Polish	MA, CELTA, DELTA, EdD Student	UAE
8.	Khaled	M	40	Sudanese American	BA, MS(TEFL), PhD	Qatar
9.	Manal	F	48	Jordanian	BA, MA, PhD	UAE
10.	Noor	F	43	Syrian	MEd (ELT), EdD	UAE
11.	Ramy	M	36	Lebanese	BA (English Litt. & Lang.) MEd, CELTA	UAE
12.	Yana	F	52	Russian Canadian	B.S. Engineering, MA TESOL	UAE

4.5 Piloting the interview

Pilot testing of the interview was conducted in order to refine the interview schedule and determine its feasibility and usefulness (Creswell, 2009). The pilot interviews were conducted with three NNESTs. A written invitation, explaining the purpose of the pilot was provided to these interviewees and their informed consent was taken prior to conducting the pilot. The interviewees taught English at the tertiary level and were Albanian, Italian and Lebanese nationals. The interviews lasted at least an hour. After the pilot interviews were conducted, I requested that the participants provide any inputs or feedback in terms of the relevance and coverage of the interview questions to the topic of the study. I also asked them to comment my style questioning, in particular, how comfortable they felt answering my questions and whether I had displayed attentiveness and a caring attitude. The interviewees suggested no changes.

After the completion of the pilot interviews, additional questions were added to the interview schedule. Some of these questions explored participants' perceptions about the privilege attached with education acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986). The other questions sought to probe the issue of pronunciation and accent in more depth. My own understanding of the significance with which these two issues were viewed in the Gulf region influenced the decision to add further questions to the interview schedule.

The interview data from the Lebanese participant was included in the study after seeking his explicit consent. The decision to include his interview, as against the other two interviewees, was influenced by the fact that he was interviewed on his day-off. As such, I was able to extend his interview to beyond an hour and seek more in-depth answers. The other two interviewees were my female colleagues and had stayed back after work to participate in the pilot interviews. I was aware of their family obligations and as such it was not possible for me to extend their interviews beyond an hour. The Lebanese participant chose to answer the questions that were added to the interview schedule by email.

4.6 Data Collection Procedures

Prior to conducting the interviews, each participant was informed that audio recordings of the interview would be made and explicit consent for the same was taken before the interviews were conducted. The interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy in the data.

Out of the twelve interviews, nine were conducted face-to face in the UAE and the remaining three were conducted via Skype [a popular Voice over Internet Protocol technology], with the participants residing in Oman, Kuwait and Qatar. A call recorder downloaded from the Internet was used to make audio recordings of the interviews.

Recent years have seen increasing attention to the use of new communication technologies in qualitative research (Hannah 2012; Cater, 2011; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). Interviews conducted via Skype have various advantages and disadvantages. Evans, Elford, & Wiggins (2008) have observed that the use of Skype allows both the researcher and the participants

to remain in a safe location without infringing on each other's personal space; thus, ensuring a neutral yet personal location for both parties throughout the process. Preto & Pocknee (2008) describe advantages of Skype in relation to its expense (no-cost use); the good quality of audio, video, and chat methods; and the ease of adding callers to conferences. Hay-Gibson (2009), on the other hand, has pointed out disadvantages, such as: when the participants are unfamiliar with holding a conversation over Skype, when the participants show reluctance to using technology, and when participants are visually or hearing impaired. For this study, Skype proved to be a cost-effective tool for interviewing the participants who resided outside the UAE. It also allowed the interviews to be scheduled as per the convenience of the participants. The audio quality was good both during the interviews and in the recordings.

The use of Skype did not appear disadvantageous in any way as all the three participants appeared to be at ease with this mode of communication and all the three interviews generated rich narrative accounts of the participants' lives. I chose to only record the audio of the interviews, as I was aware that the use of video recording devices could make some participants uncomfortable or influence them to respond differently (see Maschi, 2016). The decision to avoid video recording was not a disadvantage since access to the verbal and non-verbal cues in the Skype interviews provided an authenticity level, which equalled that of face-to-face interviews (Sullivan, 2012). In order to ensure that the participants were not inconvenienced by the interviews, all the Skype interviews were conducted on a day and time nominated by the participants.

With the purpose of offsetting the power differential between researcher and participant, the face-to face-interviews were also held at a time and place nominated by the participants. Participants were asked before each interview to choose a place where they would feel relaxed and comfortable, and which also contributed to reflection and conversation. In some cases the interviews were held at quiet cafés, in one case at an empty ladies mosque in a shopping mall, in another case at my home, and in three cases at another location of the participants' choice such as my office or an empty classroom at the participants' university campus.

The relaxed and intimate nature of setting of my home, the ladies mosque

and the cafes appeared to contribute greatly to the stories the participants had to tell. While my office and the empty classrooms did not match the relaxed ambience of the other locations, participants said they felt at ease there since they were confident that they would not be overheard or interrupted there. Furthermore, there were no restrictions on the amount of time available for interviews held at the university campus as the interviews were held on non-instructional days.

As with many life histories, a basic chronology was adhered to with the initial phase of the interview centring on the participants' childhood and family background. The initial phase of the interview, where the questions were less probing in nature, helped the participants settle into the narrative mode. Almost all the participants were very eloquent when they talked about their past and their childhood and this flow of conversation served as a springboard for delving into more complex life experiences later on in the interview.

Before moving to the remainder part of the interview, I encouraged the participants to explain in detail critical episodes or significant incidents that stood out in relation to the questions asked, and also the effects those incidents had had on their life experiences. This helped me to identify the personal and contextual factors that had influenced the participants' construction of their professional identities. While the schedule of questions for each interview was used very flexibly, with the sequence of questions changed to suit the flow of the conversation, additional questions and prompts were added where relevant with the quality of interaction reaching what Burgess calls a "conversation with purpose" (1984, p.102).

All the participants appeared to speak freely and expressed themselves with very little prompting on my part. This implies that a sense of trust and rapport had been developed with the participants and consequently a good interviewer-interviewee relationship was established (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The participants narrated stories of marginalization and discrimination that they had encountered at various points in their professional sphere, without any obvious sense of awkwardness, as they probably had the confidence, that being an NNEST myself, I would understand the situation and not be judgemental about their professional abilities.

The interviews usually lasted an hour and forty-five minutes. At the conclusion of each interview, I asked each participant whether there was anything else that he/she wanted to add. The unravelling process in the life history interviews was reported as a satisfying experience by some of the participants, as after the conclusion of the interview, they stated that it was the first time in their life that they had ever reflected on their professional life in such depth. Some others stated that the interview had provided them with an avenue to voice the accounts of discrimination and marginalization they had experienced in their professional sphere; stories which they had been unable to tell anyone else before.

These stories of discrimination and marginalization raised specific “ethical and emotional dilemmas” (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.46) for me. I was perturbed whether it was enough for the participants to just talk to me on this, or whether I should direct them to report those matters to their superiors or the management. However, I was also concerned that this intervention on my part could result in unexpected and even adverse consequences for their careers. To mitigate these kind of risks, I refrained from advising the participants about how they could deal with the discrimination they had encountered in their workplace. I was more comfortable with such a non-interventionist approach, as I was not seeking to “interrupt the participants’ lives” (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.45). What gave me comfort was that I was “broadcasting the participants’ voices” (Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.45) as they were heard.

The recorded interviews were transcribed as soon after as possible and returned to the participants for respondent validation, thus providing them with the opportunity to review what they had said, make amendments, and add or remove points before the analysis was begun.

4.7 Data Analysis

For this study, thematic analysis, searches for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997), was applied to the life history interview data. In view of the fact that multiple participants and multiple narratives constituted this study, the thematic approach was employed since it is “useful for theorising across a number of cases” (Riessman, 2005, p.3). In this regard, Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik

(2014), explain that thematic analysis is probably best suited to multiple case studies because it facilitates the comparison of “the narratives in a data set, of establishing shared themes, as well as highlighting individual difference” (p. 78).

The process involves the identification of themes through “careful reading and re-reading of the data” (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p. 258). It is thus, “a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis” (Fereday & Muir Cochrane, 2006, p. 82). Such a “rigorous” thematic approach can yield an “insightful analysis that answers particular research questions” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.97). Furthermore, thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist method, which details experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which explores the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are a result of a range of discourses functioning within society. It can also be a *contextualist* method, sitting between essentialism and constructionism. The *contextualist* method concerns how people make meaning from experiences and how society influences these meanings in a social context. In other words thematic analysis can reflect reality and even “unpick or unravel the surface of ‘reality’” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.81). In view of the fact that the impact of the wider social context is an important consideration in the exploration of the individual life experiences of the participants and the meanings they attach to them in this study, the flexibility of thematic analysis makes it an appropriate approach for this study.

The data analysis was conducted through six phases, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Phase one involved familiarizing myself with the data. In order to immerse myself in the data, to the extent that I was familiar with the depth and breadth of the content, I made verbatim transcripts of all the interviews myself. The process of transcribing, which involved focused multiple listening of the interviews, provided me with a valuable opportunity to immerse myself in the data, and this yielded a deep and insightful understanding of my participants’ life histories. In view of the fact that “transcription facilitates the close attention and the interpretive thinking that is needed to make sense of the data” (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999, p. 82), these insights could otherwise have been undiscovered had someone else transcribed the interviews.

Transcribing the interviews myself was a time-consuming process, however, it ensured accuracy in the transcriptions. In view of Riessman's (1993) advice that the story *is* the data, it must be carefully transcribed, ensuring accuracy was an important consideration for me. I transcribed the interviews in their entirety, and avoided transcribing only portions of the interviews. Since the purpose of this study is to tell the life histories of the participants in their own words, it was important that complete transcripts were made of everything that the participants said about their lives. The fundamental objective here was ensuring "accuracy of meaning" and capturing "the meaning conveyed in the words used by the storyteller" (Atkinson, 2002, p.134).

During the process of data transcription the initial thoughts and ideas were noted down as this is considered an essential stage in analysis (Riessman, 1993). I sought to record these initial thoughts and ideas about the participants' life histories sensitive to the fact that "some voices (knowledges) are silenced and other voices and knowledges dominate the airwaves" (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001, p.112).

The second phase involved the production of initial codes from the data. To code the life history data transcripts and note recurring patterns, I used a qualitative data analysis software program called NVivo (version 10.1.3). Initial codes were generated across the entire data set, in a systematic manner, by the identification of features of the data that were seen as relevant to the research questions. Coding was done using the inductive approach; this involved reading, rereading, and coding of the life history data. As a result, the emergent codes reflected the feelings, perceptions, and views of the participants. Throughout the coding process, I was attentive that "the research participant's voice and story are her or his truth," and therefore as the researcher my role was to present their truths (Lemley & Mitchell, 2012, p. 222).

I coded one transcript at a time following Riessman (2008). In the process of coding, I also recorded the questions and observations that were arising in my mind and the interpretations I was making in relation to the data. The process of recording questions and observations continued through all the phases of the data analysis and gave me a deeper understanding of what the data was reflecting or was not reflecting. The process of coding helped in organizing the

data set into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005) from which key themes were developed and identified in the third phase. The search for themes involved examining the codes and the collated data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (candidate themes) and gathering all relevant data to each candidate theme. The entire data set was given equal attention so that the repeated patterns within the data did not remain unnoticed.

The next stage involved the refinement of the candidate themes. Candidate themes that did not have enough data to support them were discarded, whereas those that could collapse into each other (e.g., two apparently distinct themes might form one theme) were combined (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The review and refinement of the themes was conducted at two levels: reviewing themes in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the whole data set (level 2), generating a thematic map of the analysis. This review helped ascertain that the themes accurately represented the data set as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additional coding also took place at this stage to ensure that no codes had been missed in the earlier coding stages.

On getting a clear understanding of the various themes and how they fitted together the data analysis progressed to phase five. This phase involved developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, determining the 'story' of each and how it related to the overall story that was evident within the data. It also involved deciding on an informative name for each theme.

The sixth stage involved the final analysis and write-up of the report—including the selection of particularly vivid and compelling extracts from the raw data, which capture the essence of the issues within the themes. Disconfirming, negative, and deviant cases were also described and explained. This was because I was not just looking for agreement in the life histories, and I did not want to overlook dissenting and “diverse points of view” (De Chesnay, 2015, p.xvi).

4.8 The Issue of Trustworthiness

Like other qualitative approaches, life history rejects the notions of validity, in any form, as entirely inappropriate and inapplicable (Smith & Heshusius, 1986;

Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Leininger, 1994). Instead, the goal of qualitative approaches is trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness denotes the care taken to present credible qualitative research. In this study, trustworthiness was established by means of an intentional transparency on the part of the researcher in a variety of ways.

First, the interview protocols were provided in advance to each participant. This enabled them to think through and reflect on their memories and life experiences. I also maintained a research journal with the purpose of recording a detailed history of the research process as it unfolded. My research journal served as a context for reflecting on my research and any issues that came up. It served as a location where I could examine my own “personal assumptions and goals” and clarify “individual belief systems and subjectivities” (Russell & Kelly, 2002, p. 2). This introspective process cultivated a holistic approach to addressing issues of ethical considerations surrounding my study. Finally, the use of member checks also contributed towards a sense of transparency about this life history research. Each participant of this study was provided with an opportunity to review and address any errors within the transcripts, in order to accurately portray their stories. This process, usually referred to as respondent validation (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p.36), aimed towards the democratization of the research process where voices other than the researcher’s are included in the data generation.

Since life history, like other narrative studies, looks at the interpretations of personal realities, therefore to have trustworthiness, it must also achieve verisimilitude. Verisimilitude means that the life histories must “ring true;” they must have believability – where “audiences must experience a congruence with their own experiences of similar, parallel, or analogous situations” (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995, p. 31). It is not supposed to be a literal (factual) truth; instead, it is writing that positions the audience into the world of the narrative itself. In other words, in order to establish verisimilitude, narratives must be crafted in such a way that they aid in the understanding of the subjective world of the participants (Eisner, 1997; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Webster & Mertova, 2007) and create a sense of believability and truthfulness of experience.

Versimilitude, in this study, was established by extensive reading and re-

reading of the interview transcripts, reflecting in my researcher journal, and by making use of writing techniques that constructed a report that is clear and believable. Ultimately, my objective in this study was not to learn of historical truths. Instead, it was the personal meaning made of these historical truths by the participants that this study seeks. As Polkinghorne (2007) advises:

Storied evidence is gathered not to determine if events actually happened but about the meaning experienced by people whether or not the events are accurately described Storied texts serve as evidence for personal meaning, not for the factual occurrence of the events reported in the stories. (p. 479)

I have therefore, crafted the life histories of my research participants in a way that honours their voices and their life experiences.

4.9 Ethical Considerations in the Study

The relational nature of life history requires that researchers pay careful attention to all aspects of ethical matters (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Gill, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). There are long-term responsibilities for the researcher since participants' lives will continue to unfold in the future, after research texts are written and published (Huber, Clandinin & Huber, 2006). Thus, a life history approach should be based upon an ethic of care throughout the research process.

Since my study explored issues of NNESTs' professional identity formation, I was very aware of the ethical problems that could result from conducting a study such as this. Because of my insider status, I knew that questioning the participants about their professional lives could very likely evoke stories of marginalization and discrimination. This could be problematic for the participants, as it would portray the institutions they taught in, negatively. In a teaching context where teachers have little if any means of seeking redress, should they be unfairly removed, and where expatriate faculty have limited job security, often linked to benefits such as housing, children's education and medical insurance, etc., it was essential that every participant feel that participating in this study did not jeopardize their personal and professional standing and well-being in any manner.

In this study, I therefore began by obtaining the informed consent (see Appendix 3) of all the participants. The informed consent form stressed that participation was voluntary and that the participants had the right to withdraw their participation at any point in the research process. The consent form stated my intention to protect the participants' confidentiality, and the limits of confidentiality. The consent form explained that information given by the participants would be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which might include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations. It further promised that the participants' anonymity would be preserved. To protect my participants' confidentiality and ensure that they are not harmed in any way with having their stories told, I used pseudonyms. Furthermore, none of the institutions where the participants taught have been named in the research report.

There were instances where some of the participants spoke about having experienced discriminatory behaviour at the hands of some of their NS colleagues and the management of the institutions they worked in. The use of pseudonyms for the participants and the decision of not naming the institutions they worked in proved to be critically important, as disclosure of the real identities of the participants or the names of the institutions they worked in could have led to the loss of their jobs. In this sense, the use of pseudonyms appeared to have empowered the participants and contributed to a sense of ease among them, as it allowed them to speak about their experiences and lives without fear. There were also instances where some of the participants went on to narrate other instances of discrimination they had experienced, but requested that those incidents not be included in this research project. The participants feared that the circumstances of those incidents would make them easily identifiable to the concerned parties. Fully cognisant of the delicateness of the matter, and aware that participation in my study had made my participants vulnerable to harm at several levels, I felt ethically obliged to protect them from potential harm. Therefore, I assured them that their request, that those incidents not be included in my study, would be fully complied with. As such, those narratives have not formed part of my study.

Throughout the study, I remained mindful of the power imbalances that operate in research relationships. A crucial ethical concern was ensuring that the

participants' stories were represented "respectfully" and that I did not use my "narrative privilege", in other words my "narrative power, to demean or belittle" my participants' lives (Bathmaker & Hartnett, 2010, p.16). Therefore, I bore in mind the significance of language and weighed-up words and phrases carefully while writing the research report. Sharing the transcripts with the participants and asking them whether they were still happy for me to use what they had told me, was another way in which I sought to address the power imbalance between the researcher and the participant.

Closely linked to the issue of power, is the issue of voice in life history interviews. Since the data that results from life history interviews is conceived of as a collaboration between the researcher and the participant, it raises difficult epistemological, political and moral questions for the researcher: Whose story is it? What is the relationship of the researcher's story to the story told in the final text? In this study, the stories produced are clearly presented as co-constructions between the researcher and the participants, and both are NNESTs. I have tried to ensure that both voices are heard by constantly and consistently reflecting on the data. An account of my positionality (see section 4.3) in this study provides information on my own "voice, stance, assumptions and analytic lens so that the reader is abundantly clear on whose story is whose" (Connolly, 2007, p.453).

Another major ethical concern was to have a voice for each participant. Thus in the telling and re-telling of the story the caring and equal relationship between researchers and participants was particularly important (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Explaining the role of stories in contemporary research on teaching, Carter (1993) proposes story as "a mode of knowing that captures in a special fashion the richness and the nuances of meaning in human affairs" (p.6). It is therefore important for the researcher to allow the participants to first tell their stories and to be cognizant of allowing all the participants to have a voice in the research. As such, during the interviews I took care that each participant had sufficient time to think and to talk about their life experiences.

4.10 Summary

This chapter has set out the research plan of this thesis that will explore the lived experiences of NNESTs in their workplace, and the complex negotiations

and constructions of their professional identities against the prevalent NS fallacy. The investigation employs a life history approach. Analysis of the generated data involves thematic analysis, and the findings will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the major considerations of this investigation were to study how NNS teachers in the Gulf states construct their identity as English teachers and how the 'native speaker fallacy' and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers, impacts upon the construction of these professional identities. This chapter presents various elements of the data in relation to the study's specific research questions as particularized in Chapter 1. In this regard, this chapter is divided into five sections. Section 5.1 will report on the factors that had motivated the participants to become English teachers. Section 5.2 will report the participants' perceptions about elements that contribute towards effective English teaching and their own self-efficacy as English teachers. Section 5.3 will detail matters of self-identity. In close relation to this, section 5.4 will relate into the role of pronunciation and accent on the professional identity of NNESTs. Perceptions towards the privilege attached with degrees acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986) will be presented in section 5.5. Lastly, section 5.6 will give an account of the challenges the participants faced due to the NS fallacy. This section also presents findings relating to participants' views about whether perceptions about the superiority of the NS can be changed, and measures that can establish ELT as a more equitable domain.

5.1 Becoming an English Teacher

In relation to the question about the factors that had motivated the participants to become English teachers, it was found that the participants had taken up the English teaching profession due to a variety of reasons. Although, their reasons for becoming English teachers varied, most of the participants stated that once they had started teaching, they developed an intense liking and attachment for the profession.

Noor and Daniel told me that they had been drawn towards the English teaching profession from their childhood. This liking for the profession had led Noor to immerse herself in the language: reading stories, listening to

audiocassettes and watching television programs in English, even though she did not understand everything she read or listened to. Awarded a scholarship for standing first in her city and third all over Syria in high school, Noor chose to study English to move closer to fulfilling her childhood dream. Daniel came from a family of teachers in India. The day he completed his Master's degree, he was offered a job in a college. He readily accepted the job as "there was no thought at all of going for any other job." He loves the teaching profession and believes that "teachers are born, not made."

The love for the English language had brought Manal and Fatima into the profession. Manal was offered a scholarship to do her BA as she had stood 6th in high school in Palestine. Marriage and a baby, in quick succession, followed her undergraduate degree. She began her professional life three years after she had graduated, as "for a married lady, the best profession would be that of a teacher." She stated that she loved her job and that her teaching was inspired by a profound desire to help her students. After high school, Fatima joined the faculty of Education although she had minimal interest in teaching. Her sole objective was improving her English language skills. Growing up in metropolitan Alexandria (Egypt), meeting tourists every now and then, made her think that if she improved her English, she would be able to "talk to tourists more fluently."

In contrast, Haifa, Khaled, Julia and Amira neither had an inclination towards the teaching profession, nor the English language. Upon graduating from high school in Saudi Arabia, Haifa wanted to take up Medicine but due to certain restrictions on expatriate population, she was left with no choice but to enrol for a degree in Education in Egypt. She told me that she started to love her discipline and "developed a very positive attitude", especially during practical training at schools. Later while working part-time in Egypt, she discovered that she was good at teaching. In Khaled's case, his university in Sudan had admitted him to the college of Education, the department of religious studies. Khaled was not interested in the subject and he was able to seek a transfer to the English department.

Julia had completed her Master's in Art History in Poland and was awarded a scholarship to do her Master's in English and American literature in the Netherlands. She moved to Sweden to join her husband who was doing his

PhD there, and she taught in a high school there. When Amira was in secondary school in Ras Al Khaimah [an Emirate of the UAE], she was inclined towards Political Science and Medicine. She secured the first position in her secondary school and wanted to study further, but as was the custom in most Emirati families at that time, she was married after completing school. She got the opportunity to study at a university two years after her marriage and registered for an undergraduate course in Education. She said that her decision to choose the teaching profession was strongly influenced by her father who considered teaching “the work of prophets” and all teachers “messengers”.

Yana, Helena and Ghada had acquired undergraduate degrees in the field of Science. Although Yana had always liked languages and wanted to be a translator or interpreter, it was a very competitive area in the then Soviet Union. So, she became an engineer instead. She pursued different jobs in Soviet Union and then Canada. When she moved to the UAE a few years ago, she was able to fulfil her desire to pursue a career in languages. She registered for TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) courses and then the CELTA. Helena on the other hand had studied agriculture and specialized in Biology in Poland. She had also studied English and French for a year. Later, when she moved to Egypt with her husband and son, she discovered that her opportunities to work in her field were very limited. She found a job in a nursery school, which “was a very enjoyable” experience for her.

Born and raised in Lebanon, Ghada was forced to leave for the US after high school, in order to escape the civil war that had engulfed Lebanon. She acquired two undergraduate degrees in Biology and Medical Technology in the US and served in the Medical college of Ohio, as well as the American University of Beirut. However, she stated that she “could not tolerate” laboratory work as she had to “deal with machines most of the time”. A change of career became possible some years later when joined a language centre near her house in Abu Dhabhi as an English teacher.

Ramy, a Taekwondo professional for over 12 years in Lebanon remembers that he would communicate with his friends in English most of the time, whereas most people in Lebanon only spoke Arabic. A promising athlete, he said that he experienced “disappointment at many levels” when due to corruption, he lost

the scholarship that was offered to him to study and train in Spain, Hungary and South Korea. Later, favouritism in selection denied him the chance to represent Lebanon in the 2000 Olympic games. It was a severe blow and he wondered, “What is the next best thing? I cannot just wait for Taekwondo!” Upon his friends’ suggestion that he take up English teaching as a profession, Ramy registered for a Bachelor of Arts (BA), and followed this with Master of Education (MA) and CELTA.

5.2 Elements that Contribute Towards Effective English Teaching

The participants believed that the salient elements that contributed towards effective English teaching were knowledge, passion for the profession and personal qualities such as patience, empathy and understanding. Most of the research participants identified knowledge of the subject matter as the most important element that contributed towards effective teaching. Sound knowledge of second language theories and teaching, as well as a strong background in teaching EFL methodology were also considered crucial.

To these elements, Khaled and Fatima added the aspect of knowledge of the context. Fatima claimed that knowledge of the subject matter had to be “combined with knowledge of how to apply it”. In this sense, attention must be paid to “who they [learners] are, where they are coming from and their linguistic background.” She explained that if the subject matter was not “manipulated to fit the group of learners that a teacher has to deal with, it will remain useless.” According to her, the subject matter should be broken down so that it “matches the age, background knowledge and learning styles of a particular group of students.” She added that her bilingual status, worked to her advantage in applying this complex network of pedagogical skills:

Even if I stick to the rule of speaking English all the time in the class, I still can understand what they are speaking, when they are whispering or saying, “We didn’t get this one” or “How did you understand that?” That’s feedback for me. Nothing, nothing is missed by me as a teacher in the classroom, and I gear my teaching to that!

Passion for the profession was also considered to be an important element, which contributed towards effective English teaching. According to Haifa,

passion for teaching the English language had to be supported with “other things”, like researching the content area well and improving one’s teaching skills. She further stated that intensive reading to overcome problem areas in teaching was akin to seeking “professional advice ... like seeing a doctor”. The other participants also laid stress on professional development. Investment in on-going professional development programs and activities was viewed by them as playing a crucial role in strengthening the knowledge base and enabling a well-equipped repertoire of teaching skills and techniques.

Personal characteristics such as being understanding, caring and empathetic with the students were also stressed upon by the participants. Helena believed that effective teaching demanded a sense of genuine care for the students, and attention to “things like patience; being professional; going through the pace of the lesson and maintaining interest as well; being enthusiastic and interested in your field”. In a similar vein, Daniel stated that teachers could make a great contribution to their students’ learning and motivation by treating them with “a lot of patience”. He added that he often gave his students individualized assistance beyond his consultation hours.

Underscoring the humanistic aspect of teaching, Khaled stated that teaching was not just about content and pedagogy; rather, “it was about improving the quality of life inside the classroom.” Like Khaled, Julia viewed a positive learning environment as a crucial element of effective English teaching. She emphasized the importance of striking a good rapport with the students. She observed that sometimes students who were weak in English “compensated by being noisy and disruptive” in the classroom. She had noticed that in such cases, teachers often “get so angry, they are red in the face and start shouting and get confrontational.” Julia believed that such reactions would not accomplish anything, and instead proposed that teachers take conscious efforts “to be kinder and friendlier to students.” According to her, this meant developing an understanding that “sometimes, when you have a difficult class, you just cannot take them [the weaker students] where you are taking other students.” This did not mean, “letting go of control of the class,” rather it meant empowering the students to “learn at their own pace.”

Julia also added that establishing a good rapport with students often meant

overcoming fears of how students might behave in the classroom. She narrated that when she first started teaching at a university in Abu Dhabi [the capital of the UAE and the largest of the seven Emirates that comprise the UAE], she felt “a little bit intimidated by the students”. This was because these students were more affluent, well travelled and well spoken in comparison to the students she had taught earlier in Al Ain [a city in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi]. She said she would “put on this very stern persona in the class” just to impose her role as a teacher:

I remember one morning, one student said, “Miss, if you smile you will make this class so much nicer!” And I realized, “Why am I so angry? I come to class already stressed and ready to fight the students.” I was like, “Yes, I think if you smile and just relax a little bit and talk with some of the students then your relations with the students will go easy”. If you focus on what the students think about me, “Are they going to ask me something I don’t know?” then you are setting yourself up for failure. That was a nice class. The problem was with me, I was angry even before I even started, just to make sure I was not going to be questioned!

Ghada, who taught foundation English to female Emirati students, also stressed that students should be dealt with empathetically. According to her, an empathetic professional who “teaches from the heart”, touches students’ lives in many ways:

Your students will feel it because there is emotional intelligence here. We are actors on stage, but the students can see through the act. If you really care about the outcomes of the learning, they can feel that. Especially the Emiratis, they can feel it very strongly. Emirati people have this very emotional side to them ... they want to feel that you care about them. I don’t teach the whole time ...I give them advice. Sometimes I just talk about health. I make them aware about other issues...kind of empowering them and educating them in other areas because they are so shielded. Once you do that, they feel that you are the window to the world for them, and they love that!

Ghada’s narrative reveals that an empathetic and understanding attitude can

enable “students to expand their self-images beyond the confines of conservative cultural values and practices” (Simon-Maeda, 2004, pg. 430).

5.2.1 Self-perceived Sense of Self- efficacy

When questioned about their own perceived sense of self-efficacy, that is the extent to which a teacher is confident enough about his or her ability to promote students’ learning (Bandura, 1994), all the teachers expressed confidence in their abilities. They attributed this confidence to their academic credentials, knowledge, and sensitivity to their learners’ needs

The participants described themselves as competent teachers and attributed this confidence to their academic credentials. They claimed that their qualifications had equipped them to assume the responsibilities of teaching English at different levels. Most of them asserted that they had taken their studies very seriously and had worked hard as students. These assertions are consistent with Llorca’s (2006) statement that most NNESTs undergo intensive teacher education and academic study programmes in order to qualify to teach the language.

The participants believed that their education had provided them with a good knowledge of teaching in relation to subject matter, language proficiency and pedagogical knowledge. Manal’s confidence is expressed clearly in the following assertion:

It’s a foreign language, but I am a PhD holder. I have read a lot. I have spoken a lot [at conferences]. I have written a lot [contributions to scholarly journals]. So, I can claim to be a very good user of English. As an NNEST, I can claim to be an excellent user [of the language].

Five out of the twelve participants had either acquired or were currently pursuing a Master’s degree in English or Education. Out of the remaining seven participants, six had doctoral degrees while Julia was a doctoral student. The attributing of their positive self-confidence to their academic accomplishments indicates that the participants perceived a relationship between academic knowledge and notions of self-efficacy. The participants further stated that they were confident about their efficacy as English teachers because they were knowledgeable practitioners. They informed me that they had worked hard over

the years to build their knowledge base and improve their skills. Most of them indicated that they devoted a considerable amount of time to reading and researching the content area they taught. Ghada stated that whenever she encountered any subject area she did not know much about, she made sure that she attended sessions in conferences devoted to those areas and even went as far as approaching specialists in that area. She stated, “I have knocked doors. I am like that ... I just go and learn. I am a very curious person. I educate myself about every area I don’t know.”

According to the participants, in-depth knowledge of ELT had enabled them to utilize modern and student-centred methodologies in the classroom. Amira narrated:

I never open a book and start reading [in the classroom]. I always have a task; I always have a challenge. Because I read a lot, I attend a lot of conferences. I think I am knowledgeable enough to say that I have good knowledge of all things related to applied linguistics to deliver it to my students. My belief is not teaching; my belief is learning, and I can say that I know what I am doing.

Pedagogy— Wow! I am wonderful. I train student teachers and I am always hunting for any new methods [of teaching]. And, technology adds a lot to the classroom. I think I can create an eclectic method that fits any type of learner. I think methodology is my game; I love it!

The participants also attributed their confidence in their self-efficacy as English teachers to the sensitivity they had towards their learners’ needs. The participants affirmed that they did not see teaching as lecturing all the time. Instead, they tried to make the learning of English an enjoyable experience for their students. Noor stated that her classes were “very friendly” and that she gave her students “the freedom to discuss topics of their interest.” Similarly, Daniel added that he sought to establish “good classroom interaction” with his students to make the classroom “very lively and full of positive vibrations.” Daniel stated that he does not favour “the traditional, direct kind of lecturing”, and that he likes his students to be active participants in the classroom. He

added that the rapport he shared with his students gave him the confidence to state: “I think I am one of the best teachers.”

Both Daniel and Ramy stated that they often incorporated music in their teaching. Ramy said that he liked “busy classes” and that he often employed group learning in his classrooms to get students “moving and talking.” He also did not mind extending himself beyond the customary role of a teacher and added, “I think I motivate the students very much because I am a clown in the class. I don’t care if I look like a donkey. Nothing is taken personally.”

Fatima claimed that her sensitivity to her learners’ needs, “that is learners’ needs in general terms, not just linguistically” helped her to negotiate learning in the classroom:

... that is the need to learn the language first of all....(laughs), or if they have to, or if they need counselling to start the learning process. I think it is important for the teacher to be sensitive to these issues because they may cause difficulty for him/her [the teacher] to teach.

She explained that her attention to negotiating learning in the classroom was prompted by the fact that a majority of her students were not really interested in academic achievement. Most of her students were working adults who had been sent by their employers to improve their English language proficiency. Fatima said that she had a keen understanding that her students had “a different agenda or a hidden agenda”, and if she did not reach a middle ground, with them her achievement “wouldn’t happen”:

My approach is to acknowledge the fact that they are not interested. I talk to them about it and find us some deal to work with, where I can teach and they can hopefully learn. So, sometimes it is important for negotiations to take place.

I found it successful, so far, to promise them what they want, once we get what they are required to do done. For example, if they want a day out, “Okay, we are going to take the day out. I promise a day out once we finish learning organizing and writing paragraphs using sign words.” So, it’s a give and take.

Like Fatima, Khaled also believed that his sensitivity towards learners, especially the fact that underlying motivational factors could “result in classroom behavioural issues” helped him to teach successfully. The awareness that a majority of his students were “distracted by many factors”, and the idea that “they are forced to learn English, it is not something they choose” helped him to focus on the practical aspects of teaching. In such a teaching context, he perceived himself as having the ability to motivate his learners by moving beyond the prescribed curriculum, and amending or supplementing it according to his students’ needs.

5.3 Matters of Teacher Identity

This section first presents findings in response to the question whether participants looked at themselves as NSs or NNSs of English. Following this findings are presented in relation to perceived disadvantages and advantages associated with a NNS identity.

5.3.1 The Question of Self-identity: NS or NNS?

For the majority of teachers interviewed for this study, subject (or Self) positioning, was revealed to be an important component of identity negotiation (Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002; Oakes, 2001; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappan, 2003). While the teachers considered themselves highly proficient users of English, none of them categorized themselves as belonging to the NS group. The following statements by Helena, Haifa and Yana show that the teachers’ self-positioning inside the NNS category is based on variables such as ethnicity, nationality and cultural background:

Helena: I would consider myself a highly qualified English teacher with near-NS proficiency. I don’t fall into the category of a NS because I was not brought up in an English country, and I did not go to a school where I was taught in English. I would say I am a NS of English in terms of teaching English, but there are issues of culture as well [which don’t make me a NS].

Haifa: Of course I am an NNS and I am proud of that. I have never been to any foreign countries. I got my Master’s and Phd from Egypt. I did a great job to improve my proficiency in conversation, speaking and so on but I am

an NNS, and I am proud of that.

Yana: I still identify myself as a Russian person so I am an NNS, but like a competent NNS.

Noor asserted that she was not a NS as she was “still correcting” the pronunciation of some words, she had learnt a long time ago. However, she did not consider herself deficient in the language. She explained, “I have excellent writing skills. I have good listening skills. I can understand what people say and I can read English.” She preferred to construct her identity in terms of competence:

For me, it is not being a NS or an NNS. For me, it is being a good teacher, a teacher who will contribute to the learning of the students. A teacher who will teach students how to speak well ... clear, understandable English. It is not the American way, or the English way, or the Canadian way. English is English for me. What matters is accuracy.

Daniel also constructed his teacher identity in terms of language and stated, “Even if somebody says that you are like a NS, I would never accept that. I am Indian, and I have my own identity. I speak like an Indian”. Like Noor, he also refused to attach any symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to native norms of English and instead, with strong personal agency, created more space to negotiate his legitimacy by drawing on the discourse of World Englishes (Mc Arthur 1993, 1998; Kachru, 1992) in his classroom:

I always tell my students, “You should speak like an Omani. You should speak Omani English, not the British English. Don’t try to imitate them. We have different kind of Englishes now. This is no more a monopoly of the British or the American.”

While some teachers did not express any discomfort with the binary division between NSs and NNSs (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Arva & Medgyes, 2000), it was considered problematic by other teachers. Khaled expressed his aversion for the binary classification, and perceived the dichotomy as “assigning unwanted identities that may inhibit both the teacher

and the learner”:

I try not to identify myself using these categories...I think a better term that is more empowering is: bilingual or multi-lingual. If I am described as an NNEST, it would create a barrier between me and my success, and whatever I am doing ... because I will always feel inferior and psychologically speaking will not be able to achieve because it is difficult for me...this is a foreign language.

Julia also expressed her discomfort with the term the NNS due to the impact the NNS label has on the professional standing of NNESTs:

It makes you feel like you are deficient in something ... you are lacking something. I am not lacking something. I am just different and I don't see why I should identify myself in relation to something I don't actually care about. It's like calling a woman non-man.

The participants also spoke about the NNS label as being problematic due to the negative influence it had on their employment prospects (see section 5.6.2) and on their professional standing. Daniel narrated that in his university, NESTs were paid higher salaries and enjoyed better perks than NNESTs. He added that this difference was apparent even in the type of accommodation the faculty was provided with. He said that while NESTs were given villas as staff accommodation, NNESTs were allocated apartments.

Like Daniel, the other teachers also indicated an awareness of the “crucial significance of native/non-native labelling” to their professional status, “as well as the possible gap between self and perceived identities”(Inbar-Laurie, 2005, p. 269). Noor looked at herself as a well-qualified teacher who actively participated and presented in various workshops. She would often be nominated to represent her college in various events, but when it came to promotion or employment she felt that her non-nativeness disqualified her. She told me that this made her feel discriminated against. She added that recently, “by chance”, she had come to know something:

I came to know that some of those [NESTs] who have lower degrees, and are less qualified are taking higher salaries than me...far higher

salaries ... a big difference between what they are getting and what I am getting. And I did not understand this why. When I went to the HR and checked, she said, "Are you a NS?"

Haifa too felt that it was due to her non-native identity that she was marginalized in the ELT profession. Ever since she had come to Kuwait, she had become aware that biases existed against NNSs, as only NSs were hired as full-time teachers. Haifa was frustrated that she was unable to get a full time teaching position even though she had done "lots of research", had a very good "grasp of the language", and was "knowledgeable. She expressed frustration that even though she had presented in many conferences and worked on her professional development, she was restricted to part-time teaching. She stated that this influenced her self-image a bit "because it was not like this in Egypt."

5.3.2 Self-perceived Disadvantages

When questioned whether the participants believed that their NNS identity had been disadvantageous for them in the teaching of English, Daniel, Khaled and Noor stated that they did not perceive any disadvantages of being an NNS. The other participants asserted that they did not see their NNS identity as a limitation, but believed that NESTs might have slight advantages over NNESTs in terms of their knowledge of idioms, their flair for the language, and their pronunciation. The following section presents the findings related to the perceived disadvantages.

5.3.2.1 Idiomatic Language and Verbal Phrases

In relation to self-perceived disadvantages as NNESTs, Ramy and Amira stated that NESTs possessed a better knowledge of idiomatic language and verbal phrases. Declaring his knowledge of idiomatic language and expressions as between 30-40%, Ramy stated that this gap would become evident to him during his informal conversations with close NS friends when sometimes "they would say something", and unless he related it to the context, he would not be able to understand what they meant.

While Ramy attributed this difference to the fact that he did not use such expressions in his day-to-day life, Amira related it to cultural awareness (Tarnopolsky, 2008) and declared, "If you don't live in the culture, you will not

know them [phrasal verbs].” She told me that this self-perceived difference, did not impact her sense of professional self-identity negatively. She added that the investments that she had made in acquiring and updating her knowledge of language teaching gave her the confidence to construct her self- image positively:

If you asked me 10 years ago, I would say they [NESTs] are more developed than me. They knew the new trends more. They were in a place where things were more updated. But, nowadays, I doubt we lack anything. If it’s methodology, we know it. If it’s using technology, we have done it. Ten years ago, I wasn’t that competent in using it, but not anymore.

5.3.2.2 Command of the Language

The participants stated that NESTs had an inherent advantage over NNESTs in terms of their fluency, spontaneity and command over the target language. However, they also expressed the opinion that this perceived gap did not limit NNESTs from transmitting ideas and helping students learn the English language.

Haifa believed that her “spoken proficiency” might be deficient in comparison to NESTs, and even if she tried “to work at that”, there would still be a “perceivable” gap. However, she emphasized that she did not really consider this deficiency a disadvantage. She believed that her academic credentials, her interest in professional development and contributions to international journals placed her on equal footing with NESTs.

While Helena expressed confidence in her subject knowledge, she stated, “A very well-educated NEST will always have an advantage over an NNEST of the same level ... not in their knowledge of the language but in their feel for language.” Julia shared this perception and believed that an educated NS with the same level of education as her might possess “more flair with the language” and would be “able to come up with witty things to say on the spot” while she did not “have that kind of thing.” She also felt that NNESTs tended to carry over some errors from their mother tongue unknowingly:

... in collocation choice or in some features of grammar that don’t exist in

your mother-tongue. There are some things I have to always check for, like articles. That's a famous thing for Slavic speakers ... cause we don't have articles in Polish. So, when I write, I always double-check this thing, and past simple, present perfect. Especially that it is used differently in American and British English. So, these are kind of headache areas for me specifically.

Manal differed and believed that not just the NNESTs, but also the NESTs could not claim knowing everything about the English language. In terms of her own relation to English as a second language, she stated that while there may always be a word or two she may not be familiar with, it wouldn't pose her any difficulty since she could "still guess it [the meaning] from the context".

5.3.2.3 Pronunciation and Accent

In addition to idiomatic language and command of the English language, as self-perceived disadvantage the participants raised the issue of pronunciation and accent. While Ghada and Manal expressed confidence in their own pronunciation skills, they pointed out that NNESTs' pronunciation and accent might be considered deficient in comparison to that of NESTs by people who viewed the NS model as the correct and legitimate one.

In contrast, Julia stated, "I can make pronunciation mistakes or accent mistakes; I am aware of that." Similarly, Fatima expressed some reservations about her own pronunciation. She drew an analogy about her pronunciation needs with that of her NS colleagues' attempts at speaking Arabic:

I can't stop laughing whenever they speak Arabic. And I keep hoping that they do not get the same feeling when I speak English in front of them...(laughs).

Yana also raised the issue of accent. She narrated that because she was Russian, her accent was perceived as deficient, and this had influenced the allocation of teaching functions and responsibilities to her. She taught IELTS (International English Language Testing System) preparation courses at a federal institution in Abu Dhabi. Her students were Emirati nationals who worked in various corporations and government organizations. She taught them reading, grammar and vocabulary skills, but she had never been allocated to

teach speaking. Yana said:

We teach students from different companies; they are our clients. In the contract, they state, “We want NSs.” It’s one of their conditions. My managers and coordinators may not feel that way, but because the clients demand it...Some students also might say, “Oh, I don’t like her accent”, and this could jeopardize the contract.

Yana did not believe that she could not “teach speaking” since she had been living in English speaking countries for the past 25 years. She acknowledged that she may not have had “the *right* accent”, but pointed out that teachers “with the Scottish accent and the Liverpool accent” were allocated speaking classes at her institution because they had the “*right* accent according to the Inner Circle area!”

5.3.3 No Self-perceived Disadvantages

In contrast to expressions of apprehensions about the command of the English language and pronunciation and accent, Daniel, Khaled, and Noor stated that they did not believe that their non-native identity disadvantaged them in the teaching of the English.

While Daniel conceded that NESTs “may be at a better advantage with the knowledge of the language”, he pointed out that NESTs “didn’t have to make a special effort to learn English”. He, on the other hand, had to make a special effort. In that sense, even though English was his second language, he had acquired a high level of “fluency and flair for the language.”

Khaled told me that in the past he used to think that his pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency were not at par with NESTs. He no longer believed that this was the case. He explained that his engagement with Critical Theory and scholarship in the area of EIL (Smith, 1976; Tomlinson, 2003; Widdowson, 1997; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009) had helped him to demystify the “notion that NSs have superiority over NNESTs”. He now viewed himself as a qualified teacher, and believed that “all qualified teachers are the same irrespective of their linguistic background.”

Noor perceived herself as a well-qualified and knowledgeable ELT professional;

someone whom even the NSs turned to for knowledge. Indicating that she had “a love for learning new things”, she prided herself on her ability to research the piece of knowledge she had to teach. In contrast, she had noticed that NESTs believed that, because they were NSs of English, they did not need to learn any more. She related an incident of the previous year when she was teaching the same subject as an American colleague. The American colleague admitted to having “no clue about the subject” and told her, “Noor, I know that you have more experience than me ... I don’t have the time to read this book that we are going to teach.” Noor told me that before every lesson, she would explain the lesson to him “and then he went to the class to teach.” Such incidents, accentuated her understanding that “it is not necessary to be a NS.” She added that even the NESTs “know in their heart” that NNESTs are capable, and competent, teachers, and that the only advantage they have over her “is that they are NSs and the policy here prefers the NSs over NNSs.”

5.3.4 Self-perceived Advantages

When questioned whether the participants believed that their NNS identity had been advantageous for them in the teaching of English, the teachers identified various advantages, namely, shared learner experience; good grasp of English grammar; shared L1 and shared cultural background. These findings will be presented in this section.

5.3.4.1 Shared Learner Experience

The teachers believed that they had more awareness of the factors involved in the English teaching/learning process than NESTs, since they had undergone the experience of learning English themselves, unlike NESTs who had acquired the language naturally, although they might have studied it formally later on (Celik, 2006).

The participants said that the shared language learning experience had provided them with an intrinsic understanding of their students’ situation and needs and helped them to relate to students in a way that NESTs could not (Medgyes, 1994; Moussu, 2006, Tang, 1997). The shared learner experience had helped the participants “get into the skin of the foreign learner” (Seidelhofer, 1999, p.243), and enabled them to simplify the learning experience of their students according to their needs. Fatima elaborated on this:

The distance [from the English language] that I have, as an NNS, this distance served me well to learn the language, and it does serve me well again in teaching it ... because I am instantly in the shoes of my learners, learning the Simple Present for the first time, or how to build a paragraph. I instantly shape the experience according to the learners' needs because I know these needs ... I have been there! I would like to call this, really, personalized subject knowledge. So, in my understanding a NS may have done a very similar course to what I may have done, but our understanding is very different because of the distance, learning a foreign language requires.

The shared language learning experience and difficulties of learning the English language was also perceived as enabling NNESTs obtain an intrinsic understanding of the anxiety that learning a new language causes. The participants said that this understanding had helped them develop a more sensitive and empathetic attitude towards their students' common language learning experiences and their problems with it (Arva and Medgyes, 2000; Barratt and Contra, 2000, Hadla, 2013).

Julia was able to relate to the stress a learner undergoes "where someone asks you a question in a foreign language". She remembers when she was a student of EFL, there were instances when "you have the teacher repeating the same thing and you still don't know what it means." Julia stated that it was the first-hand experience of such situations that gave her "empathy for allowing her students to take more time, or fail, or not understand". She narrated that sometimes in her university, she would hear her NS colleagues say in very frustrated tones, "How come they [the learners] don't know this? How come they [the learners] don't understand?" Julia pointed out that those NESTs do not realize that "many times students don't finish assignments because they actually did not understand what they were supposed to do, as it was explained so quickly, "and especially if they are NSs, they can sometimes speak very fast."

The teachers also pointed out that NNESTs presented successful learnermodels to their students. They were viewed as examples of people who had come from the same learner background as the students but had become

proficient second language users (Lee, 2000; Medgyes, 1994, 1999). Haifa explained that the NNESTs' success in learning a foreign language was seen by students as something that was possible for them to emulate:

So, the image is that I am an NNS, and I have been through it [the foreign language learning experience], and I did it. So, this gives them a lot of positive motivation. This is different from a NS, who is a far-fetched model for them ... you [the NNS student] can never be like him one day!

5.3.4.2 Good Grasp of English Grammar

The participants also stated that learned knowledge of the rules of grammar, through conscious study, had made them more knowledgeable and effective teachers of English grammar than their NS counterparts (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Wang & Lin, 2014).

Helena said that when she was a student she “had to pay special attention to things” she did not have in her own language, “like the definite and indefinite articles, and the present perfect.” She explained that it was due her detailed and intensive study of grammatical concepts and structures that she was able to give accurate explanations to her students. She further stated that her intensive engagement with the grammar of the English language had provided her with an instinctive understanding of “which angle to approach the subject from”. Amira also stated that the formal instruction she had received in the rules of grammar was a valuable advantage:

I know the rules, and I know how to apply them. They [NESTs] speak spontaneously but they don't know the rules. Me, knowing grammar better than them, ... can you believe it? They speak accurately and fluently. Yes! But if you ask them about metalinguistics: Why? When? or What?... even the passive voice. They have trouble with it!

Similarly, Fatima asserted that her NNS teacher identity was definitely an advantage for her learners, and that students developed better grammar skills when taught by NNESTs (see Medgyes, 1992, 1994, 2001; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford, 2004; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Moussu, 2006, Hadla, 2013). She claimed that her experience of learning English and encounters with a language that was foreign to her had

fostered an analytical approach in her. This in turn had led her to employ useful learning strategies (Wang & Lin, 2014). She explained that as a student, she “didn’t take things as a whole”; rather, she “broke them down.” This is how she had taught herself the grammar of the English language and encouraged her students to do the same. She believed that this approach had helped her students a lot.

5.3.4.3 Shared L1

The Arabic-speaking teachers perceived the L1, which they shared with their students, as a valuable resource that facilitated both instruction and communication. These teachers stated that their knowledge of Arabic had provided them with an intuitive understanding of where their students’ language difficulties lay (Mc Neil, 2005). These teachers also believed that, because they shared their students’ mother tongue, they could identify their language mistakes more accurately than NS teachers (Alwadi, 2013).

The Arabic speaking NNESTs added that when their students struggled with certain structures, such as the verb ‘to be’ and the present perfect tense, they possessed the insight that it was because these structures did not exist in Arabic language that the students were facing those problems. The participants stated that because they shared the same L1 as their students, they were able to predict their students’ mistakes even before they occurred (Cheung, 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2010; Mahboob, 2004; Medgyes, 1992; Pacek, 2005, Alwadi, 2013). Articulating this point, Ghada stated:

I know why they are making certain mistakes! Even in their writing, I know why their mistakes are the way they are...why they write a word in the beginning of the sentence instead of the end. I can understand—they are translating literally from Arabic.

The teachers also narrate that the shared L1 helped them to provide comprehensible instructions and intensive explanations (Wang & Lin, 2014). Amira said that whenever she has students whose English language proficiency is very low, she resorts to Arabic to make herself understood:

Once, I taught student teachers, who knew no English, although they

were studying at the university level. They were not majoring in English. They were doing Maths and other subjects, but they needed to do one course in English. And these students, sometimes, even if you told them in slow, easy, simple English, they wouldn't get it. So at that time, I needed to translate.

Khaled also believed that bilingual teachers “who share the same linguistic and cultural background as their students have advantage” over those who do not. He informed that in his university, in a marked departure from the previous administration, which frowned upon the use of Arabic in the English classroom, bilingual teachers had been appointed to provide Arabic language support to students whose English proficiency was low.

The shared L1 was not only viewed as an important instructional tool but also as a valuable resource that facilitated teacher-student communication, where weak students found approaching the NNS teacher a simple matter (Tang, 1997). Amira narrated that sometimes her students came to her to discuss particular matters. Often when the student would start to speak to her in Arabic, she would insist, “You must say it in English.” Amira stated that If the student was very weak in English language, it would become a struggle for the student to communicate with the teacher:

So imagine, if I will say, “No! No! No!” But a NS will have to say, “No, No, No”, because he/she doesn't know the language. But I say, “All right, relax. I will listen to you in Arabic.” Sometimes, when the student is not so competent you have to listen to her in Arabic; there is a message that needs to be passed!

Thus, the shared L1 was perceived as facilitating communication between students and NNESTs because students could code-switch to Arabic, if communication in English failed.

5.3.4.4 Shared Cultural Background

The Arab participants viewed the social background and cultural values that they had in common with their students as an advantage in the classroom. They stated that due to this shared background, they were able to understand their students better than their NS teachers (Alwadi, 2013). As “insiders of the culture

in which they teach", (Seidlholfer, 1999, pg. 236), they perceived themselves as better positioned to judge the appropriacy of teaching resources; establish a deeper bond with their students, and avoid cultural conflicts in the classroom.

These teachers indicated that their shared socio-cultural background gave them a better insight into students' perceptions towards what they considered unacceptable content and teaching practices than NESTs. A clear commonality arising from the shared Islamic heritage of the Gulf countries is that religion is seen as a very important component of the society and tensions may surround the discussion of culturally sensitive topics. In such a teaching context, the NNESTs considered themselves as better positioned to choose those teaching resources that were compatible with local cultural and religious norms.

Manal stated that her shared cultural background helped her to scrutinize teaching materials so that the texts did not contain "photos of ladies showing their bodies" as these were deemed offensive by her students who comprised locals, Gulf nationals, Indians and Pakistanis. In a similar vein, Fatima claimed that it was the shared religious values that provided her with a discerning understanding of "what would encourage the students ... whether a certain picture or topic would interest the students or would demotivate them."

The teachers pointed out that the Arab NNESTs' insight into the sensitivity of the issue of gender segregation, both from social and religious perspectives, helped them to conduct mixed classes in conformity with the cultural expectations of their students. This sensitivity was instrumental in helping Manal deal successfully with delicate situations where shy and anxious female Emirati students would come to her saying that they did not want to present in front of males. Manal narrated that while she would project an understanding attitude, at the same time, she would try to motivate her students gently, "No *habibti* [my love]. You need to do it! When you go to the work place you will be faced with this." Manal added that because the student saw her as an insider she would agree to present in the classroom. According to Manal, students appreciate the sense of comfort they share with their NNEST teachers:

They feel they don't have this barrier, so it could be the affective factors. "She's an Arab. She will understand." They are open to you, and they

can convey their concerns to you, but when it comes to an American, Canadian or British or whoever, there is a barrier.

Similarly, Ghada told me that students were more comfortable with their Arab NNS teachers, and shared close bonds with them:

As an NNS, but of Arab origin, they can benefit more from me. Sometimes, I give them examples from religion. I can say, “During *our* Eid [festival]...” Once you say *our* Eid, they feel comfortable. They feel like they can associate with you. This adds to the comfort where you remove this grey area from the middle ... you remove their fears and anxieties.

Amira narrated that students often had “social and psychological problems”. She stated:

Some students are frightened of talking to foreigners. A lot of them will feel there is a barrier. I cannot tell her [the NEST], but her [the NNEST], I can.

Daniel echoed Amira’s sentiment that students had a closer bond with their NNS teachers, and as such felt comfortable sharing their personal problems with them:

This is because our culture is quite different. The Asian culture is quite different. We are more informal. The students come to me with their personal problems, family problems also. I don’t think they do that with the NESTs.

The teachers also believed that they were better positioned to avoid conflicts that take place between teachers and students due to miscommunication and lack of understanding of culture. Noor related an incident that took place in her college when some students had misplaced their books and came to class without them. Their NS teacher tried to explain to them the importance of caring for their books and told them, “Hold your IELTS book like you hold your Holy Quran [the Islamic sacred book, believed to be the word of God].” Noor narrated that the students found this statement very offensive, and they made a big issue

out of it. Noor explained that the NS teacher was unaware of the sanctity with which Muslims regard the Holy Quran, and did not know that her students would see its comparison with any other book as derogatory.

Fatima narrated that the issue of student punctuality was also very a “controversial one”, and often caused conflicts in the classroom. She said that while “most NSs would be as imperative about attendance as they would be in their own home countries”, her own understanding that cultural norms concerning punctuality were more relaxed in the Arab culture, helped her to negotiate boundaries and avoid upsetting the students:

What matters for my student is that he is in the classroom, no matter when he stepped in. It isn't a big issue for him to be late 5 or 10 minutes. However, for the Western teacher, it may be a very great deal.

The participants also said that they served as conduits of relevant cultural information to their NS counterparts. Khaled's NS colleagues would approach him for information concerning the local culture and language. Similarly, Fatima's NS colleagues used her as a cultural reference and asked her questions such as, “Do you think this is acceptable?”, or “If I did that, would it be considered unacceptable by the students?”

5.4 The Issue of Accent and Pronunciation

This section presents findings in relation to the issue of accent and pronunciation. This section first presents participants' perceptions about their own pronunciation. It then presents perceptions about the perceived role of accent in their teaching context. This section concludes by presenting findings related to the issue of adaptation of accent.

5.4.1 Self-perceptions about Pronunciation

Except for a few participants, namely, Daniel, Amira and Ghada, the rest of the participants acknowledged that they had had reservations about their pronunciation at some point in their teaching career. However, most of them added that these problems were more pronounced during their initial years as English teachers. They added that with experience and conscious attention to word stress and intonation they had overcome those problems to a large extent.

According to Ramy, because he was not “born an English speaker”, he had “minor pronunciation issues with words” he had never heard before. Giving the example of the word ‘plagiarism’ he said, “I don’t recall how I used to pronounce it, but I do recall that a student actually corrected me. And this is during the second year of my teaching.” He further acknowledged that, “unless I have seen the word ... I have experienced the word, I may have a problem saying it.” He stated that in order to avoid errors in pronunciation, he would scrutinize his teaching materials carefully before going to class.

Like Ramy, Amira stated that she goes through her teaching materials carefully, and said that she was always “prepared” before going to class. She professed strong confidence in her pronunciation: “It [pronunciation] was not a big challenge for me”. Attributing this confidence to her interest in phonetics, since her student days, she stated, “Phonetics, phonology and how to teach phonetics was something that I liked...I can transcribe any word.”

Julia, Yana and Khaled, on the other hand, stated that they had not always been confident about their pronunciation. Julia stated that with the increase in her experience in teaching English, she had acquired more confidence in herself as a teacher, and no longer worried about her pronunciation. She however added that she was aware that the pronunciation of a teacher was viewed as “a serious issue”. Yana also felt more confident about her pronunciation now as “everyone” understood her. However, she nursed a desire “to sound more like a NS”, but felt that she probably could not do much about it. Wondering whether it would be possible to bring her pronunciation closer to that of a NS, if she did “some kind of a course”, she informed me that she had a collection of CDs called ‘American Accents’ that she often listened to. However, the desire for a native like accent seemed to be fraught with some tension since she conceded, “I would like to sound different but I think if I sounded differently, it wouldn’t be me.”

While Khaled had not been confident about his pronunciation earlier, exposure to the theories of EIL (Smith, 1976; Tomlinson, 2003; Widdowson, 1997; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009) had helped him to negotiate a more empowered identity (Pavlenko, 2003). He now believed “that there is no superior

pronunciation and that intelligibility is what matters". In contrast, self-perceived language needs had persisted in Fatima. This had affected her confidence in modelling pronunciation to her students. She stated that pronunciation had always been a weak area for her and that she had always worked on improving it. She recalled that during her CELTA course, one of her instructors had commented, "Fatima, you are not drilling as often as we usually do in a CELTA course". Fatima replied that being an NNS, she did not think herself capable of modelling pronunciation, and instead she "might ask students to repeat after a recorder or from a website". Fatima added that these feelings of inadequacy had persisted in her, despite the encouraging comments of her instructor, "No. I think you can do it. You are more than capable of doing it!"

Noor did not believe that her pronunciation was deficient when she used to teach in Syria. However, a shift in her teaching context from Syria to the UAE saw a shift in her identity as a legitimate speaker. She narrated:

I was confident when I was in Syria because we were all NNSs. When I came to the UAE, I started worrying about my pronunciation, when I had some people correcting some of the words that I had learnt wrongly.

This shift in her identity underscores the notion that identities are, in fact, situated (McNamara, 1997; Young, 2008), and transform as one transitions from one socio-cultural context to another (Cote & Levine, 2002; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Noor said that she was not too worried because she could see that her English was clear to most people. However, she felt the need to improve her intelligibility when someone would say, "Do you mean this or that?" She said that she made conscious efforts towards negotiating not only her linguistic competence, but also her identity as a competent teacher by "attending more lectures, and more conferences." She increased her exposure to English so that her "mind would internally program" her "oral language and self-correct some words".

Like Khaled and Noor, Daniel and Ghada also emphasized intelligibility over NS norms in pronunciation. They pointed out that students were more comfortable in NNESTs' classes. They added that NNESTs tend to speak slower than NESTs, and that their speech is more clearly articulated than NESTs. Ghada

said that her students, especially those at lower levels, often complained about their NS teachers. The students would tell her that they “really have a hard time, as NSs tend to swallow some parts of words when they connect one word with another” and due to this they “kind of miss what was said.” Ghada added that the students at her university often told her, “We prefer you because we can understand you.”

5.4.2 The Role of Accent

“Well, it gets you the job or it doesn’t!” Fatima’s succinct statement summarized the impact accent was perceived as having on the professional standing of NNESTs in the Gulf region. The participants were unanimous in their perception that ELT in the tertiary domain in the Gulf created negative stereotypes of NNESTs, and represented “accent-based linguistic hierarchization with Center (Kachru, 1986) norms being given privileged status while local features” were “suppressed to the lower end and presented as errors (Luk & Lin, 2006, p.10). According to the participants, the inequalities resulting from such a language ideology was evident in the role that NS accents played as gatekeepers to English teaching jobs, favouring a monolingual elite (Pennycook, 1994; 1995; Ricento, 1994; Crystal, 1997; and Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

5.4.2.1 NS Accent and Stereotypes

According to the participants’ English accent and perception created stereotypes, which privileged the figure of NS in the ELT profession. They also claimed that the issue of accent was strongly connected with attitude and affective factors. In this regard, Julia stated that accent was “something that people often judged NNESTs on.” According to Helena, a lot of significance was attached with an NS accent in the Gulf states because “the Arabic culture is the culture of first impression, in general.” Amira, who is Emirati, articulated the preconceived notions concerning the perceived superiority of the NS accents in the UAE:

We, as UAE nationals, respect someone who speaks English fluently with a British accent or American. We think they are the best, although they may not know anything. We have this! This is in our culture!

”Oh, *Masha ‘Allah* [an Arabic phrase used to show appreciation for a

person or happening]! He/she [the NS] speaks English very well.” We have this! Any accent like the Indian accent, or Filipino accent or the Egyptian ... We don’t like them ... We make fun of them.

Amira used the metaphor of the ‘knot’ to explain the strength with which the NS stereotype was embedded in the UAE:

We call it *al aqadah* [the knot] in Arabic. We have this! Before our forefathers knew nothing, and those people [the British colonisers], they taught us things, ... they just gave it to us! We feel that they came here to bring us only fortune, and we appreciate that!

Amira stated that the Emirati people looked at the British with admiration and appreciation as they believed that the British had ushered in a more comfortable way of life. She added:

Before we suffered. We didn’t have machines to get water... we didn’t have machines to go by boat or raft. They [the British] brought us machines. They made our life easier, so we respect them.”

The connection of the appreciation of the British with the notion of Whiteness, whereby it exerts its influence as an invisible standard against which all Others are racially and culturally defined, and made inferior (Kubota & Lin, 2006), becomes apparent in Amira’s following comment:

The British are clean and beautiful and they are fair...(laughs). They are a sign of beauty, cleanliness. They have soap! They have shampoo! So, they [the Emiratis] like it.

When I pointed out to Amira, that in current times, not just the British, but all nationalities and ethnicities had access to soap and shampoo, Amira laughed and replied, “... but this *Western knot* [the stereotype] is still there!”

Amira observed that although, in contemporary times, racial stereotypes were no longer applied to other professions, they had nevertheless persisted in the field of ELT:

I think this is now only in English language teaching. In other issues ...

No! For example Indians ... we think they are fine, very strong. The Chinese: they are coming ... very strong.

But English ... (laughs). We say give the bread to the baker.... [***Give the bread to the baker even if he eats half of it.*** An Arabic proverb which means: Give the job to a person who knows how to perform it best even if it will cost you much].... (laughs).

5.4.2.2 The NNS Accent and Decreased Employability

The participants believed that accent played a critical role in the employability of NNESTs, and that it had become even more important than teachers' academic credentials. Julia stated, "If someone has a very heavy accent ... difficult to understand, they won't get the job." The issue of accent was also seen as closely connected with race in determining professional identity (Levis, 2005). Amira recalled that when she was the head of the English department of a university in the UAE, students would call her to inquire whether the summer courses offered there had any British or American teachers. Her reply in the negative, that the British and American teachers were away on a holiday, would elicit the response, " Okay. We don't want to enrol." Amira pointed out that such a situation existed despite the fact that the university recruited only those NNESTs who had native-like accents, and were American nationals. Amira added that she had faced such a situation "so many times".

Khaled and Julia said that notions about the superiority of NS accents had led to inequity in the recruitment process. They explained that it had become an unwritten policy to screen CVs, so that teachers from India, Pakistan and even some African countries such as Kenya were not considered for faculty recruitment. Khaled served as a member of the recruitment committee of his university. He stated that while the administration had a somewhat legitimate argument against employing NNESTs "as they [the administration] say the students complain", there was an ambivalent attitude towards unintelligible Western accents:

... we have quote-unquote NSs who have very strange accents and the students actually complained to us, teachers, that they don't understand them[NNESTs]. So, this is a pity in the profession ... not only in Qatar, but

I think it is represented in other Gulf countries as well.

The discriminatory attitudes towards NNS accents seemed to be more marked in the ELT domain than others. Julia narrated the difficulty that students at her university reportedly faced with some Korean professors, as some of them were reportedly incomprehensible:

They give lectures ... no one can understand them, but they are not English teachers. So, that's the difference you see! They work for Nuclear Engineering, which is a highly specialized field.... so people let them go. But the students can't understand the lectures at all. So there's certainly a certain discrimination here. Yeah?

The narratives of the teachers illustrate that the preference for Center (Kachru, 1986) norms in accent had created stereotyped notions of the NESTs, which links them with greater teaching competency and legitimacy. In such a setting, the perception of NS accent as a valuable commodity, a veritable “badge of identity” (Buruma, 2003, greatly limits the employability of NNESTs.

5.4.2.3 Adaptation of Accent

When questioned whether they had ever changed their accent, some of the participants stated that they would adapt their accent on various occasions to bring it closer to NS accents. These participants said that in social situations involving their family and friends, they spoke without any care but in classrooms, job interviews and during presentations in conferences, they made a conscious effort to modify their accent and paid attention to the enunciation of words to bring their accent closer to Center (Kachru, 1986) norms.

Yana stated that it was “important to sound as close to an NS as possible” and that NNESTs who did not have a native-like accent should “strive for it”. Haifa added that L1 dominated accents left a “very bad impression” on students, “the recruiter’s attitudes towards the teacher”, as well as “perspectives of people about the teacher”. Expressing inadequacy in their accents, these teachers aspired to be near-native in their accents, as they believed that it was incumbent upon them to provide their students with models of how they should converse. Yana admitted that she would be acutely conscious about her accent when she would be in the classroom and tried to pronounce words “correctly”.

Acquiring an NS accent was an uncontested and unquestioned canon for Yana, as she felt that when one is teaching, “You just have to!”

The correlation of accent with creating a good impression was seen as a very strong one, one that even surpassed academic credentials and work experience. An NS accent could not only secure jobs, it could also convince administrators about NNESTs’ abilities to teach English. When asked why Manal chose to modify her accent, she replied:

Because, I want to work. Firstly, and most importantly, I always wanted people around me, my management, my students, the president, and the vice-president of the university ... I want them to believe that I can teach English.

Similarly Haifa said:

We [the NNESTs] always try to work on our accent and we are aware that this is a problem. It’s a part of your identity, a part of your self-image, a part of how people will perceive you as a teacher. If you want to make a good impression you have to have a near- native accent ... you have to admit that!

I am sure if you ask any NNEST, he/she won’t be happy if he/she doesn’t have a near-native accent, and he/she will try to work on that. It’s a fact.

You won’t be proud of that, for sure.

Viewing the NS speaker as a “yardstick for intelligibility” (Golombek and Jordan, 2005, pg.520), Haifa conceded “when I talk to my NS colleagues, I try to keep a British or American like accent. I have to keep that [NS norms of accent]”.

Like Haifa and Yana, Julia also seemed to link intelligibility with NS norms of accent. She stated that she had never worried about her accent in relation to her students’ reactions towards her, but she had “worked on her accent” due to her interest in phonetics and phonology. She added that a non-foreign accent helped her blend in with her colleagues. In a work environment where her colleagues were mostly NSs, acquiring an NS accent was “an identity thing”:

You don't want to look foolish, yeah. You don't want to have a heavy accent. You know what I mean. I don't want to have the stereotypical Russian accent. It was mostly for me, trying to improve my accent. It would be for me trying to fit in with my colleagues, and also for social reasons. Here in the UAE, most of my friends are English and American. So, you don't want to be a dumb friend ... (laughs).

In a teaching context, which predominantly comprises of NSs, a near- native accent is thus perceived as providing homogeneity, as well as membership in a Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998) of legitimate teachers. These narratives highlight that the mastery of the NS accent is perceived as value-adding social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991), a capital that many NNESTs aspire for, and strive to attain.

While these teachers stated that that NNESTs often felt compelled to put on accents, they also conceded that accent adaptation posed a lot of difficulty. Haifa declared that an NS accent was “the most difficult thing to acquire if the teacher hasn't developed it ... if the teacher hasn't been to a foreign university, or hasn't travelled abroad. So it will take a lot of time to work on that.” According to Manal, L1 accents could be modified only to a certain extent, and could not be acquired completely. She believed that it was difficult to acquire accents for those above the age of 13 and stressed, “no matter how good you are, there will always be a little difference.”

In contrast, the other participants asserted that they did not modify their accents. Ramy stated that he was confident about his accent, and that he had never had any concerns about it. He told me that he was an avid traveller, and had been to 28 countries. He had studied 7 languages. As such, he believed that his speech was no longer L1 dominated; instead, he felt it conformed to “a near-native hybrid accent.”

Helena stated that “there was never a time” in her teaching career that she had worked on her accent. However, she felt acquiring an accent was “important for certain situations.” Such a situation arose when she “was interviewed for the CELTA” and she tried “to impress the people” who were interviewing her by putting on a NS accent. However, she added that adapting one's accent was a

difficult matter in view of the existence of “so many different accents in the UK itself.” She stated it was therefore “kind of hard to tell” which was the “ideal accent.”

The statements by the following participants demonstrates that they considered their non-native accent to be strongly linked with their personal identity, and believed that modifying their accent would mean losing their own identity:

Noor: This is my accent and I never tried to be like a British or an American or whatever. This is me!

Daniel: I am Indian and I have my own identity.

Ghada: Even when I was in the US, I had friends who were Lebanese, and were trying to adopt the accent. I never did! I was proud of my accent. I still am! I don't want to lose my identity. Being unique is one of my special qualities. I want to prove myself as a NNS, and I am doing that by working on my skills.

Khaled narrated that while he had never tried to change his accent, it had become closer to NS accents unconsciously and “automatically”. He stated that this was due to the fact that he had lived in the US for many years, first as a student and later as a teacher. In contrast, Fatima stated that she would consciously try to make herself sound British or American during her university days, but “with some experience” she had learnt that it did not really matter as long as she did not have a heavy accent, and people could understand what she was saying.

Amidst the various statements expressed in support of and against the adapting of L1 accents to Center (Kachru, 1986) norms, Julia highlighted the practical aspect of students getting used to a variety of accents in the current, highly globalised world:

A modern student of English has to be able to adapt to different accents. He/she will deal with people from India, Pakistan, New Zealand, Ireland, Scotland ... and different parts of America have different accents.

5.5 The Value of Education Acquired from the Center

This section focuses on the prestige that is attached with higher degrees acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986). It presents findings related to the impact this perceived prestige could have on NNESTs' employability and the allure for higher degrees from the Center (Kachru, 1986) among NNESTs.

5.5.1 The Prestige Associated with Education Acquired from the Center

All the participants were unanimous in their perception that a lot of significance was attached to education acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986), and that it greatly improved NNESTs' chances of employability in the Gulf states. The participants told me that educational institutions in the Gulf states had a strong fascination with the Center (Kachru, 1986), especially the US and the UK. According to them, this had impacted hiring policies whereby recruitment was considerably tilted in favour of teachers who had studied in Center (Kachru, 1986) countries or had acquired their academic credentials from Center (Kachru, 1986) institutions.

Manal stated that degree from a Center (Kachru, 1986) institution constructed a very positive image in the eyes of employers, and led people to evaluate one favourably "even before they come to know who you are." She added:

To them [the employers], now you know everything! You are highly knowledgeable! It's the remains of colonialism!

Similarly, Noor said that it had now become a norm to associate a Center (Kachru, 1986) education with excellence. She pointed out that in reality this did not apply since "not all the universities are good ... not all of them are reputable. Many of the online universities are not recognized universities." However, none of these considerations mattered to employers, since "if you are a NS from one of those universities, you are accepted."

In spite of having her Master's degree and her Doctorate from reputable British universities, Noor narrated that she still faced hurdles since "being an NNS it [the Western degrees] is not helping me now". She explained that since her doctoral degree was acquired via distance learning, it was not being recognized by her college. She added that English teachers who belonged to the English speaking West were not subjected to such stringent criteria and "even if some

NSs have got their certificates from non-reputable universities, they have credit over you.” She expressed frustration that there were no clearly laid down criteria for recruitment:

So, this is really sad. Do you look at the qualification, the skills, and the qualities of the teacher or do you just look at the nationality regardless of other things? I have been here for long, and I can see, talking to other colleagues, they face the same problems.

Interestingly, Helena who is Polish, White and blond-haired, someone whose outward appearance matches that of a Caucasian NS, had a different experience to relate. Helena narrated that because her degree was from a British university, the administration at the federal institution in Abu Dhabi, where she was employed “did not look that much into the fact that it was a distance learning course.” However, she had heard from her colleagues that this did not apply in the case of Arab nationals and their “employability level is quite low actually. They have to provide the proof that it is not a distance learning course.”

The question, “Do you have a degree from a foreign country?” figured prominently in job interviews of NNESTs. Haifa said that the moment she would inform the interview panel that she had graduated from Egypt, “they [the interviewees] start to change their attitude and they won’t listen more”. Alluding to a hierarchy in preferences, Haifa said:

It is like a policy: the NS first and if they can’t find NSs, they have to be graduates from foreign countries. The last option will be those who have graduated from Middle Eastern and Asian universities. It is a fact ... we have to admit it!

Khaled believed that it was because his Master’s and PhD degrees were acquired in the US that he had been able to secure a teaching job in Qatar. Similarly, Yana declared that her Russian qualifications did not count. She narrated:

I have a Bachelors degree, which is good, but from a Russian university...who cares? But, the fact that I got my Master’s from a British

University... so that saves me! (laughs)

Fatima pointed out that not just degrees acquired while residing in the Center (Kachru, 1986) but even those acquired from offshore campuses of Center (Kachru, 1986) universities in the Periphery (Kachru, 1986) were viewed as more valuable than those acquired in local universities:

If I do my PhD from my home country, and I apply for the same job with another Egyptian who has got his/her PhD from the American University in Egypt, that would be looked upon as a better and higher qualification.

Some of the participants who had served in faculty recruitment and promotion committees narrated that university administrators explicitly stated preference for those NNESTs who had degrees from Center (Kachru, 1986) universities. Helena told me that a friend of hers who had finished his studies in Poland applied to teach at her institution in Abu Dhabi, as there were some vacancies there. When Helena submitted his CV to the dean, the first question he asked was, "Where did he finish his studies?" The dean further added, "We prefer people who finish their studies in Western countries."

Daniel shared a similar story. Due to the re-structuring of the foundation program in his university a few years ago, Indians, Pakistanis, and teachers from other Asian countries were asked to leave. However, if any NNEST had a Western qualification, "they [the administration] wouldn't mind". Daniel taught English literature, not language, therefore he was unaffected by these changes. Daniel served at the promotion committee in his university and narrated, that the year before, the committee had come across "a very good and impressive CV from Kerala [a state in India] ... good publications and everything was fine":

The applicant was teaching in a college in Oman. We all agreed that we should take him, or at least interview him. The final approval was to be given by the dean. So, we sent his CV to the dean, and he said, "No. No. He doesn't have any Western qualifications. We cannot take him."

Daniel further added that while his university privileged Center (Kachru, 1986) qualifications, they were aware that this could be construed as discrimination. So, they tried to give the impression that they were not discriminating against

NNESTs. This was reflected in the dean's comment, "Even if he is an Indian it doesn't matter at all. But he/she should have a Western qualification." Julia's experience while serving at the interview committee of her university is resonant with similar cases, and she pointed out that if one had "a Master's degree or even BA from a Western university", the person would be "pretty much guaranteed a job."

Except Haifa and Daniel, all the other participants had higher degrees that were acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986). All of Haifa's higher degrees had been earned in her home country, Egypt. She believed that education acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986) was "far better" than education gained in the Periphery (Kachru, 1986). She said that Center (Kachru, 1986) universities employed a "totally different perspective and approach to teaching", and that universities in the Middle East lagged behind the Center (Kachru, 1986) in terms of their professionalism and methods of teaching. She told me that when she had graduated from her university in Egypt, she felt a "gap" in her proficiency.

She narrated that she had to work on filling that gap, "independently by doing research, by reading, by attending a lot of conferences." While she believed that she "did a great job" in bridging the gap, she was certain that had she graduated from one of "the prestigious universities, say American or British", she wouldn't have suffered this gap in her proficiency.\

Although Haifa has a PhD, she has not been able to secure a full-time teaching position in Kuwait. This §had made her acutely aware that her academic credentials acquired from the Periphery (Kachru, 1986) were not being accorded much symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). The power that a degree from the Center (Kachru, 1986) had in positioning an NNS as a legitimate teacher of English was not lost on her, and she commented in an anguished tone, "I wish I could have graduated from an English university. Of course, it would have made a big difference in my life...of course!"

Daniel also believed that Center (Kachru, 1986) universities offered better facilities. Like Haifa, he also expressed sadness that he was unable to acquire his PhD from the US. He told me that many years ago he had registered for a

PhD in India. At the same time, he had also received an offer of place in a PhD programme at the University of Ohio. Taking up this offer would have meant leaving his teaching job. This was not an option he could consider as he had a wife and two sons to support by then. He narrated feeling “very bad” about not being able to take up that opportunity. His sense of disappointment and sadness were to a large extent mitigated when both his sons acquired their higher degrees in the US. While his elder son had studied at the University of Arizona, his younger son had pursued his studies at Harvard. When Daniel visited Harvard for his son’s convocation, he could not help noticing that the “vast library and infrastructure” there was better than those in India. Both his sons were very well settled, and Daniel credited their successful careers to their American qualifications. He stated, “ So, definitely a Western qualification matters.”

For Noor and Amira, getting their degrees from the UK was the fulfilment of aspirations they had nurtured since their childhood. Since her childhood, Amira had been “crazy about studying abroad”. She had envisioned studying at the Oxford University, when she was just a small child, and could not even pronounce the word ‘Oxford’ correctly. When offered an opportunity by the UAE government to do her Master’s abroad, as part of an initiative to encourage local Emiratis, she chose to study in the UK. Later, when she enrolled for a PhD, she again chose to study in the UK, as she was “looking for a university that had a really strong background.” Her decision was also influenced by the fact that at that time facilities for tertiary education were very limited in the UAE.

Noor had a different dream; her dream was to be a “good English teacher.” In order to fulfil this dream, she acquired a Master’s and later a Doctorate via distance learning from two “very reputable” universities in the UK. She informed me that her decision to choose the UK was governed by her belief that she had to “go to the source.” She considered the acceptance of her applications by the British universities, her “biggest achievements in life.”

Manal had a PhD from Egypt. Although a high qualification, her PhD had not done much to boost her professional prospects. Manal believed that her PhD had not added much to her symbolic capital because it was from an Egyptian university. She narrated that a few years ago she tried to assist a friend by

offering to teach English at his management-training institute. Her friend commented:

That's great Manal, but I need to be frank with you. What would attract people to this institute? It's not this institute! Don't be upset with me. You are an NNS. You did not graduate from a Western university. I really like you, but maybe not many students will enrol.

Manal said that this comment prompted her to enrol for a second PhD from a British university, in the hope that people would then “believe” in her certificate. Helena, Julia, Ghada, Ramy and Fatima, on the other hand, said that they chose to pursue their higher degrees in Center (Kachru, 1986) universities, not because of the privilege they were thought to carry; instead, they were prompted by factors such as convenience and affordability. Helena informed me that because she was working for the British Council in Egypt, when the opportunity arose, “the simplest and the most reasonable thing to do” was to apply to an English university. Julia, Ghada, and Ramy enrolled in distance learning programmes at offshore campuses of Center (Kachru, 1986) universities in the UAE. Returning to their home country to further their education was not possible, as that would have meant resigning from their jobs.

Fatima stated that her decision to pursue an MA at a leading British university was primarily influenced by the choice of modules that were offered by the university. Improving her employability was not her “number one principle”. She had a lot of questions pertaining to the field of TESOL, and she selected the institution that offered courses, which addressed her areas of interest. The awareness that her degree might not be recognised in the UAE since it was acquired via distance learning did not deter her. She narrated that she had “so many questions” in her head and she “wanted to learn.”

5.6 The NS Fallacy: Challenges & Overcoming Perceptions about the Superiority of NESTs

This section first presents findings in relation to the challenges that the participants narrated they faced to their credibility on account of the NS fallacy. Next, findings relating to participants' views whether perceptions about the superiority of the NESTs could be changed are presented. This section

concludes by presenting findings relating to participants' perceptions about measures that could make ELT in the Gulf states a more equitable domain.

5.6.1 Challenges that undermine NNESTs' legitimacy

Daniel, Amira, and Julia stated that they had never faced any outward challenges to their credibility. On the contrary, the remaining teachers stated that their credibility had been challenged from time to time. They said that these challenges had come from their students, NS counterparts and administrators. Some of the participants spoke about the indirect challenges posed by the persisting unbalanced power relations.

Some of the participants reported that their students had sometimes challenged their legitimacy. These instances were more frequent when the participants were new to the profession. Helena believed that these challenges took the form of "tricky questions" or outward expressions of "resentment". She said that her answers to questions relating to grammar were sometimes followed by the comment, "Are *you* sure it is like that?" Helena said that she would adopt a more self-confident stance to try and convince her students, that she was qualified to teach, and therefore she was a legitimate teacher of English. By doing so, she would try to convey to them that they had no right to undermine or underestimate her abilities only because she was an NNS.

Khaled had taught writing courses at a community college in the US, and remembers that the students would always try to challenge his authority. One of the students would bring a tape-recorder into the classroom. He also remembered a comment on his student evaluation, which stated that the student "couldn't understand half of what was said in the classroom." Khaled viewed this as a challenge to his authority, and did things a bit differently in the next course. He stated, "I tried to make sure that I am clear on everything I say. I asked a lot of questions to make sure that they understood."

Khaled further stated that from his conversations with students at his university in Qatar, and the findings of studies he had conducted there, he had come to know that a majority of students perceived no real difference between NSs and NNSs. He added, "Actually the students were very happy to see NNESTs come into their classroom." He said that a minority, however, believed that nativeness

was the criterion for effective teaching (Mullock, 2003), and that NESTs were superior teachers (Tang, 1997).

Khaled narrated that a semester ago, during presentations, a student had used a word that Khaled had not come across before. Although Khaled was unfamiliar with the word, he was able to perceive that the word was not being used correctly. Khaled's question to the student whether she was certain that she had used the word in the right context drew a sharp retort, "I am sure. *You* can check it." Khaled felt that this curtness in response might be a reaction from a student towards a teacher whom she perceived as an NNS.

Yana felt that NNESTs were easier targets to pick on. She believed that when students did not want to study, they often tried to find faults in the teacher, and came up with excuses like, "I don't like her accent." Describing such incidents as very "painful", she narrated one particular episode in a class which consisted of very influential and "arrogant" students:

They were chosen not because of their academic achievements but just because of *wasta* [clout]. We were supposed to prepare them for IELTS, and after that they were supposed to go abroad to study. They were very lazy. They didn't want to do anything. They certainly were very resentful, and in particular, one guy was always missing classes. When it came to giving the final grades, I gave him a very low grade, which had made him fail.

The student was furious, and because he was an important person, the management called a meeting. The student complained that Yana was a "bad" teacher, and had an accent that he did not understand. The supervisor sided with the influential student, and the student's grades were changed. Yana felt "awful" that her non-nativeness had been used against her and believed "that wasn't the true reason" why the student had got low grades.

Yana added that along with the issue of accent, stereotyped notions of Russian women that her Emirati male students, made it very difficult for her to construct her identity as a legitimate teacher of English:

Russians in particular, as you may know, some of the women are in the

wrong profession...prostitution. And our students, they go to hotels and see them. And, when a Russian teacher walks into the classroom they are like “ Why is *she* teaching us?”

Yana said that because she was older now, the students did not associate her with the negative stereotype as much as before and she felt “much more confident now”.

Noor narrated feeling challenged when NESTs were given privilege and preference over NNESTs in research forums conducted in her college. Her submission of a proposal for participation to the head of the research committee, an American, drew the reply, “Sorry, we have enough presenters now.” When Noor looked at the list, slots were still available for people and she noticed that none of the NNESTs’ names were there. When Noor inquired about the empty slots on the list, he replied: “Well, they are for other colleagues.” Noor insisted that she be allowed to participate as she already had a presentation ready and empty slots were still available. The head of the research committee replied, “Noor, as you can see from the list, most of the presenters are NSs.” Noor was offended and questioned him that the call for proposals did not state that only NESTs were invited. On receiving a non-committal and indifferent response from him, Noor took up the matter with the dean and was asked to submit her proposal to him. After the dean’s intervention, Noor was allowed to present at the research forum. Noor could not fail to notice that she was the only NNEST who had presented at the research forum.

Noor further stated that while no one would explicitly state that NSs would be given more privileges, one could feel it here and there “in meetings...the way you are addressed...the percentage of allowances to conferences you might attend.” She said that other NSs were given permissions to go to different conferences during the year, sometimes for a week to ten days. However, she was denied on two occasions in a year because the administration said it would disturb the teaching schedule.

Like Noor, Manal also alluded to indirect challenges that challenged her legitimacy and emphatically stated:

No! No! No! No one has come and challenged me. But, you don't need to be challenged directly because you have been challenged indirectly!

She believed that discriminatory hiring practices in the UAE had greatly undermined her legitimacy as a teacher. She stated that even though she had sound academic credentials; was actively involved in professional development; presented at conferences and published regularly, what stared her in the face instead was “a very ugly reality” that she was “not eligible”:

You don't belong to the superior category. You will *never* be a part of such a category no matter how knowledgeable you are. By the end of the day, you need to enjoy some privileges, you are not enjoying.

I have not been treated fairly when compared with NSs. No, I have not!

At a certain point when you need to send to your son say 50,000 Dirhams for his university fees, then I can see that even though I am improving myself, yet I cannot make it, when X and Y can...you know American, British or whoever.

Manal's voice choked with emotion as she expressed regret at her decision of becoming an English teacher:

May be ... May be, if I could go back in time to the moment when I was 17, and went for my first university degree, if I could see the future I would not have decided to go for the English language major. Maybe instead, I could have decided to go for my language [Arabic]. People would have respected me, and there would have been no such ugly issue of being a non-native speaker of English ... struggling to find a job ... struggling to prove myself. I wouldn't have to go through all these sufferings. This is my feeling...this is why I am crying.

The participants' accounts reveal the disempowering effects the stereotyped notion of the NNS has on their identity construction as legitimate teachers of English (Amin, 1997; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Rajagopalan, 2005). The narratives reveal that these participants' identities, on

the whole, are a site of struggle (Pierce, 1995; McKay & Wong 1996; Armour, 2004).

5.6.2 The Impact of the NS Fallacy on Employment Prospects

The participants believed that the NS fallacy created stereotyped notions of the NS teacher, and had a considerable negative influence on their opportunities for employment in the Gulf states. Helena and Amira differed from them.

Helena stated that employment prospects in the Gulf region tended to be influenced by matters such as “having the passport, like the British or the American passport”, she added that she herself had not experienced any prejudice towards her Polish passport. She believed that her qualifications had been an important factor in her getting a teaching job. Amira also accepted that NESTs were preferred, but she asserted, “Others will get the job as well.” She said that the criteria for recruitment was based on language competency and teaching experience. She added that the field of ELT was an “an open market and everybody can participate.”

In contrast, the remaining participants asserted that the employment prospects of NNESTs were very limited and that the stereotype of the NS impacted NNESTs’ employment prospects negatively. They pointed out that many job descriptions in the Gulf region stated an explicit preference for NSs, and those that did not implied that NSs were preferred by their emphasis on qualifications acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986) or the nationality of a Center (Kachru, 1986) country.

The participants narrated stories of failed attempts at seeking teaching positions in other institutions. Yana’s teaching experience had been limited to just one institution in Abu Dhabi. Having served there for eight years, she had applied to some other universities in the UAE but was rejected every time. Every institution that Ramy had applied to for a full-time teaching position, had asked him, “What is your other passport?” Calling such discriminatory attitudes an “insult” to his identity, he deplored the fact that he was treated differently from an NEST even though, “...you [the NNEST] are just like any other person— you studied; you fought your battles; and you stayed long hours doing the writing.” It appeared that Ramy’s non-nativeness had positioned itself as a glass ceiling, where the

greatest difficulty for him had been getting his CV through. He said:

I just want them [the administrators] to meet me! Just see me! This is what the challenge has been!”

The sense of desperation that even though she possessed more experience than many other NSs applying for the same job, Fatima would get “pushed aside”, because she did not look like a NS, came pouring out in the most unlikely of places, a job interview:

I honestly don’t remember the questions, but I went on and on about the fact that I don’t have to be blonde with blue eyes to prove that my English is good. And, I think that upset the interviewer who was of course a NS. I went out of this interview knowing that I would not be called back. That left me with such an uneasy feeling that I can still remember what it felt like!

It seemed that the notion of the stereotyped NS teacher was more strongly entrenched in certain Gulf countries than others. While Khaled’s American passport, and higher degrees acquired in the US, had played an important part in securing him a teaching position at a university in Qatar, they were not sufficient to position him as a legitimate teacher of English in the UAE. He explained that certain universities in the UAE, he had applied to 3-4 times, took no more than 5-10 minutes in e-mailing him a letter of rejection. Conversations with people who knew those universities revealed to him that the universities had a preference for NSs.

Julia, who is Polish, had managed to get “a very good job” in the UAE. However, she believed that her non-nativeness was certainly an influencing factor as “there was some struggle” in securing that job. Getting this job was a struggle despite the fact that by then she had acquired 4-5 years of teaching experience and was also a doctoral student. According to Julia, for an NNEST to be able to overcome negative stereotypes, the NNEST had to be “super-duper”:

If you are not an NS, it is extremely difficult to get a job. You have to have a lot of publications. You have to be a doctoral student ... You have to jump over so many hoops before you are even considered. Whereas,

someone who can come with an MA degree, a fresh graduate from Australia, he is getting an interview now without any problem.

In order to overcome the NNS stereotype and improve her prospects for employment, Julia had been presenting every year at the conferences both inside as well as outside the UAE. She was also active in publishing. She explained that this was the “only way” she had. She added that had she just “stagnated”, she would have stood “no chance against other qualified NSs”, even if their academic qualifications were the same as her. She added that some of her NS colleagues who had Master’s degrees and some teaching qualifications had never presented in conferences. “It definitely affects” her that a NS would “get a job easier than” she ever would.

Haifa, who had been unable to secure a full-time teaching position in Kuwait shared Julia’s frustration. She said, “Here in Kuwait, being an NNEST means a lot of hard times to get a job.” The frustration had set in because no matter how hard she tried or how good her students’ evaluations were, she believed that she was not appreciated as a language teacher. Voicing her inability to “comprehend the criteria for choosing an English language teacher”, Haifa found the situation hard to come to terms with because she “cannot understand what is going on.” She added that what made this inequity in hiring policies a very desperate situation for NNESTs was the fact that “no one will listen” to them as “this is the policy”:

Whenever there is a NS— this is perfect. This is the one we want to hire. This will give a lot of prestige to the university.

They think, we will get a lot of money if all the teachers are NSs, and even look as foreign language speakers ... Looking, not just speaking as NSs. It makes a big difference ... It gives them a lot of money. If you look Egyptian, Asian, it makes a lot of difference to them.

Apart from the value attached to NS accents, it seemed even the citizenship of a Center (Kachru, 1986) country added to NNESTs’ symbolic capital. Both Khaled and Yana affirmed that their citizenship of the USA and Canada, had played an important role in their getting teaching jobs. A few years ago, Ghada applied to teach at a university in Abu Dhabhi when she came to know that that

the university was hiring a lot of English teachers. She told me that the only requirements the university had was a Western education and a Western passport.

Even though at that point Ghada had no teaching qualifications, and both her undergraduate degrees acquired in the US, were in areas completely unrelated to English— Biology and Medical technology, it made no difference whatsoever in her getting the job. Ghada stated, "...believe it or not; this was the criterion!" She added that a lot of deserving candidates from the Periphery (Kachru, 1986) were not considered eligible:

Absolutely, you have to have that [a passport from a Center country]. I have seen people with degrees from Lebanon and Syria, and I know how much they have suffered. They [the university administration] wanted a NS with a passport. It didn't say that in the paperwork, but it's the unspoken thing

The devalued cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) whereby NNESTs' "scholastic achievements and academic qualifications" remain "misrecognized and even ignored" (Song, 2013) often results in self-marginalisation (Widin, 2010). This self-marginalisation was evident in Manal's case. She told me that she no longer applied to better paying and more prestigious institutions in the UAE like Zayed University or the Higher Colleges of Technology as she was certain that she would not be "accepted" by them:

I do not want my CV to be rejected after all my studies, two PhDs, many conferences, many publications... and if I apply to any institution and my application gets rejected.... No, I don't want that.

The accounts provided by these participants demonstrates that their legitimacy negotiation seems to be tightly interwoven within power relations, where factors such as national origin, Whiteness, linguistic capital and devalued cultural capital play crucial roles. The insistence on Whiteness and linguistic norms of NSs not only consolidates 'fixity' (Bhabha, 1994) between the Self and the Other, but also supports unequal relationships (Amin & Kubota, 2004; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Ramanathan, 2006).

5.6.3 The Possibility that Perceptions about the NS teacher as the Superior Teacher would be Overcome

Yana and Amira believed that perception that the NEST was the superior teacher would be overcome in the future. Amira believed that times were changing and that hiring preferences were no longer solely dictated by native speakerness. Indicating that aspects such as the length of teaching experience, research background and language proficiency were more important considerations than native speakerness, she stated, "If you are competent, you will get the job." She added that every time she had appeared for a job interview, and an NEST had got the job, it was not because the NEST was perceived to be better than her but because the NEST "had more experience and had published" more than her.

Yana also shared Amira's optimism. According to her the silence that surrounded the privileging of NESTs in the Gulf states was gradually dissipating. She believed this was because the English language had acquired a global dimension. Yana felt that the increase in the number of NNESTs employed in the sphere of ELT had led to a greater awareness of issues that concerned them. She claimed that the discourse relating to the NS myth was a "hot topic" nowadays, and that discussions were taking place about it in conferences and research forums. She also saw this research as a step in that direction and stated that it was something "which would never have happened a few years ago."

From first-hand experience she had noticed that an NNS who taught English did not raise as many eye brows as before. She reminisced, that earlier in social gatherings, customary greetings would be followed by questions about where she came from and what she did for a living. Yana's reply that she taught English would evoke surprise and sometimes even scepticism. She stated that some people would just start laughing in her face, like it was a joke, "Oh, how can *you* teach English?" The fact that these "annoying" incidents were not as frequent as before made her believe that the NS stereotype had started to give away.

However, the remaining participants were insistent that the NS stereotype was very deeply entrenched in the Gulf states, and would be nearly impossible to

overcome in the near future. Some of the participants believed that this was so because diktats issued in preference of NESTs came not just from the administrators but higher authorities, the policy makers. These participants stated that policy makers blindly favoured hiring NSs as they considered it a veritable truth that all NSs were excellent teachers. According to Ramy, what made this situation difficult to come to terms with was the fact that people who were themselves non-native speakers were projecting “wrong images” of NNS teachers.

Fatima felt that perceptions about the superiority of NESTs would be difficult to overcome, as the language policy of the Gulf states was strongly linked with its “economic and political policies.” Similarly, Julia added that “tertiary level education management saw English language education as some kind of a product” and English language teachers as the managers of a factory:

They don't see it as a human experience or a social experience. A lot of management here doesn't understand what language education really means. They have a very old-fashioned understanding of language teaching, which is product-oriented and assessment-oriented. And they think, that if they get a NS here, this 'native speakerism' will *flow* over from the teachers to the students.

According to Julia, policy makers had adopted a singular approach, incognisant of the underlying “tension between a NS coming from the West and a local student: the feeling of superiority on the side of teachers and a lack of understanding or appreciation of the local culture.” Julia said she saw “examples of this everyday” when “the teachers dismiss the students.”

She told me that one of the NS teachers complained to her, “I was talking to students about Animal Farm and they did not know what Communism is. How can they not know what Communism is?” Julia expressed exasperation that the NEST had expected barely seventeen-year-old students, who belonged to the Middle East, to have a very good grasp of American and European history “and when they [the students] fail they are just called stupid.” She added that NESTs often exhibited a lack of awareness of their students' familial and social situation responsibilities when they complained about tardiness:

A 17-year-old boy, as soon as he gets the driver's licence, he has to be a chauffeur for the whole family. So yes, they will come to class 5 minutes late because they had to take 3 siblings to school, and they have to pick up mum to take her to hospital.

I think some American and English teachers don't understand how the Emirati families work, and the responsibilities the male students have.

Julia pointed out that administrators as well as policy makers had not yet realized that the NNESTs had a role in the Gulf states as they could mediate, "We are not seen as Western ... We are somewhere in between. So maybe we can relate to the students a little better." Julia's statements imply that the failure of policy makers to recognize the suitability of NNESTs to the unique socio-cultural make up of the Gulf states was evidence that the NS stereotype was likely to continue for a long time.

The participants also asserted that the opportunities for employment would never change, and that NNESTs would continue to be subjected to unfair criteria. As a result, Noor was considering emigrating to a Center (Kachru, 1986) country in order to acquire its passport. Ramy also stated that he saw emigration to the Center (Kachru, 1986) as the only way by which he could counter the NS fallacy:

I am leaving in a couple of months, so that's the way I deal with it. When I see how Westerners are being treated in this part of the world... Well, I have the right as well. You know, I can get a very trivial ... trivial degree from a stupid university in Canada. But hey, I am still Western educated! They [the administrators] just don't know how stupid that is ... to them it's a Canadian passport, Western educated. Bam! You are in! Your salary is 25,000 Dirhams!

Like Noor and Ramy, Haifa's futile search for a full time job in Kuwait over the past nine years had made her feel that she did not have any prospects there. She had made plans to return to Egypt and declared, "That's the only choice I have."

5.6.4 Measures which participants feel could Establish an Equitable Domain

The participants suggested various measures to overcome the NS fallacy in the Gulf states. Pointing towards the shortage of programs in the Gulf region that “prepare local teachers to assume the responsibility of teaching English”, Khaled stated that as long as attention was not paid to preparing local or bilingual teachers, the dependence on foreign expertise would continue. He proposed remedying the situation by focussing on teacher education and inclusion of components that “prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in such an environment and raise their awareness of all the different and critical aspects of teaching English.”

Some of the participants put the onus of securing a more equitable teaching domain on the NNESTs themselves, and asserted that NNESTs must equip themselves with knowledge and polish their pedagogical skills. Amira laid emphasis on NNESTs improving their English language proficiency since “many NNESTs don’t speak correct English, which is why they don’t get the job.” Like Amira, Noor also drew attention to the fact that “not all NNSs who teach English are good teachers”. According to her if NNESTs wanted to be treated well, they needed to work hard on improving their professional skills.

Khaled believed that NNESTs could confront the NS fallacy at an individual level by raising students’ awareness that “English is now an International language and we need to learn it as such instead of following Western models.” He also proposed making the students aware of the fact that “there are many legitimate speakers of English and there are many varieties” so that students “should be able to at least recognize this variety.” However Khaled pointed out that NNESTs had very limited influence in the changing perceptions of other stakeholders. He stated, “They [NNESTs] can only do so much.”

The participants stressed that administrators move beyond the consideration of nativeness in teacher recruitment. They stated that administrators needed to develop and enforce more comprehensive criteria that included aspects such as teachers’ qualifications, experience and competence. The participants believed that this would be possible only when concrete measures would be taken to raise awareness at the political level and at the policy makers’ levels in the

Ministry of Education.

However, the participants' doubts that this could happen any time soon was reflected in Yana's statement, " Sometimes the people who make these decisions have nothing to do with education and for them it [privileging NESTs] will always be okay." Some of the participants believed that re-educating all the major stakeholders and changing the way they thought entailed changing a lot in the theory and literature surrounding the NS stereotype.

Haifa claimed that the NS fallacy was dominant in the Gulf states in spite of students experiencing difficulties in the classrooms of NESTs:

They [the students] feel that it is hard; it is difficult ... There is a gap between themselves and the NESTs. They hate it, and they are scared of them [the NESTs]. They [the administration] force them to go to the NSs classrooms ... they force them because they are almost empty. No one wants to register for their classes. They want to go to the NNSs because they feel more comfortable...they will find someone to talk to, someone who understands them...there's no gap.

According to Haifa, despite students' difficulties in NESTs' classrooms, NSs continued to be privileged in the Gulf states due to an absence "sound research at the moment to rely on." She proposed measuring and comparing students' attitudes and motivation in both NESTs' and NNESTs' classes to counter the NS fallacy. She believed that quantitative empirical research would be particularly useful in this regard:

We can of course depend on people's perspectives, but people just believe statistics in the end.

So, we have to end up with tangible evidence ... we have to find sound, valid, standardized, reliable measures to compare the results of classes of NSs and NNSs.

Like Haifa, Julia also believed that research findings would dispel the myth of the NS. She advocated investigating the presumption that the NS was the best user of language. Claiming that "the ideology that a NS equals to a perfect user

of language doesn't stand" she said:

It's a wrong assumption. The NS is a good user of the language, a fluent user of the language but not in academic contexts. Every NS is not going to be a university student.... and we are thinking about tertiary level education, right?

So, if you take standardized exams like the IELTS, if you give it to any random NS, I am sure you won't get straight 9s.

I am not a perfect user of my native tongue! It's all about education, I think.

Julia further added that NESTs in the Gulf states were not going to question the NS fallacy, as it privileged them and positioned them "in a superior position":

It has to come from the NNESTs to keep the agenda going. To research this topic and present it at conferences until it becomes a proper TESOL issue. It is an issue in some respects, but NNESTs need to probe it in more depth.

Julia and Haifa's statements highlight the imperativeness of directing NNESTs' efforts towards producing "socially situated knowledge that addresses local problems using indigenous epistemologies" (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001, pg.79) in order to successfully combat the NS fallacy that is deeply entrenched in ELT in the Gulf states.

5.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of this study in relation to the study's specific research questions. In the following chapter I will discuss the findings in relation to the wider literature, and the theoretical framework, which underpinned the fieldwork, conducted for this study.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6 Introduction

This study seeks to provide a better understanding of how NNS teachers in the Gulf states construct their identities as English teachers, and the impact the NS fallacy and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers, has upon the construction of their professional identities. Having presented the findings, that were collected by means of life history interviews of 12 NNS teachers in the Gulf states, this chapter will now discuss and interpret the main findings in relation to the research questions, the wider literature, and the theoretical framework (Postcolonialism) which underpins the fieldwork conducted for the study.

This chapter is organized into three sections. In the first section, I address the first research question by presenting the complex ways in which the participants constructed their identities as English teachers in the Gulf states. In the second and the third section, I address the second research question by attending to the impact the NS fallacy had on NNESTs' professional identities. The second section relates to the following aspects: 1. The privilege associated with Western Epistemology; 2. NNESTs' pronunciation and accent; and 3. The challenges that undermined NNESTs' professional legitimacy. The third section addresses teachers' views about whether perceptions about the superiority of the NS can be changed and measures that can establish ELT as a more equitable domain.

6.1 Becoming an English Teacher

The teachers involved in this study had taken up English teaching due to a range of intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic reasons. Noor, Daniel, Manal and Fatima were drawn to English teaching due to their intrinsic love for the English language and for the teaching profession. Intrinsic motives— demonstrated when an activity is taken up due to interest, enjoyment, or inherent satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2002; Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002), predict relatively better levels of instructional effort and persistence (e.g., how much teachers prepare for class, how long they stay in the profession) and professional development (e.g.,

how receptive they are of new instructional methods and in-service training opportunities (Watt & Richardson, 2008). Intrinsic motivation to teach also contributes towards embracing a greater mastery-oriented approach in professional practice (Malmberg, 2008).

A different motivation underlay Manal's decision to join the teaching profession. Her statement that "*for a married lady, the best profession would be that of a teacher*" signifies the family friendly nature of the teaching occupation (Jarvis & Woodrow, 2005; Williams & Forgasz, 2009)— a profession that fits in with family life. The shorter workdays and work year, as well as vacations that coincide with those of one's children make teaching an attractive profession for those who wish to balance work and family needs (Podgursky, 2006; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). It is very likely that these fringe benefits, which allow more time for the family, appealed to Manal who was a young wife, and also had a small baby to look after.

Manal's statement that her teaching was inspired by a profound desire to help her students demonstrates an alignment with the altruistic principle which views "teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job, a desire to help children succeed, and a desire to help society improve" (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000, p. 117). Like Manal, Amira too drew on the altruistic principle to explain her decision to choose teaching as a profession, thus lending credence to the claim that altruistic motives are very dominant for females, (Johnston, Mckeown, and Mcewen, 1999; Zehir-Topkaya and Uztosun, 2012; Yu'ce, Sahin, Koc,er, & Kana, 2013).

Amira stated that her decision to become a teacher was strongly influenced by her father's view that teaching was the work of prophets and that all teachers were messengers. This perception of the noble nature of teachers' roles, and special status in a society where people usually view teachers as role models and sources of knowledge and wisdom (Tilaar, 2002) can be related to the importance Islamic society places on learning in general. In this regard, Kaylani (2006) explains, "the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book, is filled with sayings exhorting the pursuit of learning for both males and females" (p. 86). Even the Arabic words for teacher, *ustath* or *mu'allam* signify respect and status. Thus, it seems that Amira's earliest images of and beliefs about teaching were

influenced by “deeply imprinted images of teaching” that resonated “in the wider culture” (Chong, Ling & Chuan, 2011, p.31).

The initial interests and academic pursuits of the remaining participants were in areas that were very different to the English teaching profession, namely, agriculture, medicine, biology, medical technology, engineering, art history, and taekwondo. The narratives of these participants suggest that a range of extrinsic reasons had motivated them to join the teaching profession. Extrinsic reasons relate to aspects of the job, which are not inherent in the work itself and represent tangible benefits, which include seeking a high salary, job security, career status, social respect, or fringe benefits (Moran, Kilpatrick, Abbott, Dallat, & McClune, 2001; Brookhart and Freeman, 1992).

In spite of the fact that intrinsic reasons had motivated only four of the participants to join the English teaching profession, most of the participants stated that once they had started teaching, they developed a liking for the profession. For example, due to restrictions on expatriate population from enrolling in public universities in Saudi Arabia, Haifa was unable to take up a degree in Medicine in Saudi Arabia. She enrolled for a degree in Education in Egypt. However, she stated that she developed a very positive attitude during her practical training and started to love her discipline. Similarly, Helena stated that on getting the opportunity to teach at a nursery school, she found teaching a very enjoyable experience.

For Ghada, the opportunity to teach at a language school provided a welcome relief from the non-personal and mechanical nature of laboratory work. Participants’ accounts that teaching was an experience they enjoyed and liked are consistent with claims that women “like working with children” and do “not choose to place themselves in a work situation where they would be unhappy” (Brinia, 2012, p. 186). Interaction with students and others, which the teaching profession provides, is said to be the most satisfying aspect for teachers and also one of the key reasons that keeps teachers in the profession (Gold & Roth, 1993; Clarke and Keating, 1995; Sassen, Matei & Bernaus, 2003; OECD, 2006; Urdan, 2014).

Participants’ accounts that they liked and enjoyed teaching suggest that they

looked at the teaching profession as a valued field, and a life-long career. Such a situation would be expected to be promising for their careers since a strong motivation to teach is said to be associated with job satisfaction and lower levels of teacher burnout (Dolunay, 2002; Kan, 2008). Yet, later accounts of the participants reveals that while the participants had joined the teaching profession with idealised images of teaching and teachers, the prevalence of native speakerism in ELT in the Gulf states, had a profound negative impact on the motivation and satisfaction of most of the participants. Thus, this aspect of their teacher identity was not a fixed notion; rather, it was subject to interpretation and self-evaluation (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) in the light of the reality of their professional lives. The situation, therefore, appears to be more complex than is evidenced in relation to this one point, 'reasons for choosing the teaching profession'; something which I will now explore in relation to the postcolonial discourses of native speakerism in ELT.

6.2 The Question of Self-identity: NS or NNS?

In section 5.3.1, we saw that each participant chose to categorize him/herself as an NNS. The participants stated that they considered themselves as highly proficient users of English but did not view themselves as NSs of English. The participants' self-ascribed self-positioning inside the NNS category was based on a number of features, namely, ethnicity, nationality and cultural background.

Helena, for example, did not see herself as a NS since she was not brought up in an English country. Having grown up in a culture that she felt was distinct from the English culture, and having studied in a school that did not teach in English, she believed that it was only natural that she categorizes herself as an NNS. Like Helena, Haifa also believed that because she had never lived nor received her higher education in the Center (Kachru, 1986), she did not qualify for an NS membership. A sense of strong affiliation with her Russian ethnicity restricted Yana from identifying herself as an NS. These participants' conclusions that nativeness constitutes a fixed identity, dependant on interlinked elements such as being born into a language and learning it in early childhood, is consistent with the claim of scholars such as Medgyes (1994), Cook (1999) and Brutt Griffler and Samimy (2001).

The participants seemed to view the distinction between NSs and NNSs as a

simple and straightforward matter, a perception that contrasts with claims that there is no clear-cut definition of a NS and that the notion of the NS presents numerous inconclusive complexities (Phillipson, 1992; Kramsch, 1997; Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997; Norton, 1997; Cook, 1999). The participants' distinction between NSs and NNSs as two distinct categories of people rests on the principle that the ethnicity, nationality and culture are things, which an individual is born into. An individual is thus a native speaker of the L1 learnt in childhood, referred to by Davies (1996) as "bio-developmental definition" (p.156). Thus, these participants view identity as a fixed, unitary, internal phenomenon based on the stable native/non-native core of the self as "as the imprint of a monolithic culture embodied in the individual" (Clarke, 2008, p.26). Being a NS in this respect is a virtually unchangeable "historical fact", with later-learnt languages never acquiring the status of native languages (Cook, 1999, p.187).

The participants described themselves as highly proficient users of English but at the same time were unequivocal in classifying themselves as NNSs. They did not have any reservations in classifying themselves as NNSs, and they often expressed pride in their non-native identity. Haifa's following statement, "*Of course I am an NNS and I am proud of that*" suggests that she views her non-native status as closely linked with her own personal identity. This personal identity which represents the answer to the question, "Who am I?" (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Weisskirch, 2008) is cherished and valued not only because it affirms the participants' ethnic and cultural affiliations but also because it embodies traits that make the participants unique and distinct individuals.

Daniel's statement, "*even if somebody says that you are like a NS, I would never accept that. I am Indian, and I have my own identity. I speak like an Indian*" shows that he perceives his non-native identity as closely connected with his own personal identity, one that cannot and should not be altered. Daniel's wholehearted embracing of his personal identity implies that he does not encounter any identity crisis in terms of which identity to project in the classroom. His confidence was unlike some other NNESTs in Petric's (2009) study who by birth represented their own native language and culture, but by profession felt "obliged to represent a foreign language with its cultural load" (Medgyes, 1999, p.37).

It is this intrinsic connection between non-nativeness and personal identity that forms the basis of his rejection of the monolingual NS as a legitimate model for L2 learning. His advice to his students that they speak like Omanis and not imitate Western accents suggests that he believes that an individual's native language permeates his/her personal identity, and as such should be embraced as a distinctive and important marker of an individual's personal identity. He therefore rejects the notion that second language learning also entails acquiring a second identity (Brown, 1994). These narratives suggest that a non-native identity is not a shameful or a problematic position to inhabit. On the contrary, one's non-nativeness is closely intertwined with one's personal identity and cannot be understood separately.

Although the participants claimed confidence in their identities as NNS, they also spoke about the ways in which NS teachers might have some advantages over them. According to the participants, these advantages related to NS' knowledge of idioms and verbal phrases, their flair for the language and pronunciation. Julia spoke about being aware that she could make pronunciation or accent mistakes, and Fatima expressed some reservations about her pronunciation. Ramy added that gaps relating to idiomatic language and expressions would arise during his informal conversations with close NS friends, when sometimes he would be unable to understand some things they said, unless he related them to the context. The participants saw these gaps as natural. They believed that unlike the NSs, their cultural knowledge of the English language was limited since they had been brought up in a country where English was not the first language.

The participants also considered the linguistic gaps as minor in nature and stated that they did not restrict the transmitting of ideas and helping students learn the English language. Also, these gaps did not seem to affect the participants' teacher identity much. According to Haifa, her academic credentials, interest in professional development and contributions to international journals positioned her on par with NESTs. Similarly, Amira narrated that the investments she had made in acquiring and updating her knowledge of language teaching had offset the perceived linguistic gaps.

Significantly, while these gaps were considered minor in nature, they were also

seen as insurmountable. According to Helena this was because an NNEST could never match an NESTs' understanding of the language. Similarly, Julia added that an NS with the same level of education as her might possess more flair with the language and would be able to come up with witty things to say spontaneously while she could not. She also explained that NNSs often tended to carry over some errors from their L1 unknowingly. Manal, however, differed and stated that not just an NNEST, but also and NEST could not claim knowing everything about the English language.

These narratives demonstrate that the participants had both confidence and concern about their linguistic abilities. They were confident, but not always. In fact, the issue of linguistic gap appears to be more complex than it first seems, and it suggests that their non-native identity is still complex for them. However, what is significant is that the self-ascribed linguistic gap does not undermine them completely. Instead, the participants viewed themselves as NNS teachers who were competent and highly proficient in the use of the English language, a finding that is in direct contrast to findings of other studies where the participant NNESTs have described the dichotomy as confidence affecting, and related feelings of self-stigmatization stemming from the perception of their linguistic competence (Tang, 1997; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Rajagopalan, 2005; Bernat, 2008; Al Wadi, 2013; Chung, 2014).

This suggests that the participants of this study manage to find ways in which to inhabit their non-native identity confidently and to construct themselves as effective teachers who do not have to be NSs by nature. This is important, because it shows a reworking of the NNS identity as a more positive one. This reworking, on the one hand, does not reject the NNS identity, and on the other, refuses to see the NS as the most favourable one.

While the participants aligned themselves with a non-native identity, they expressed dissatisfaction and discomfort with the binary NS/NNS classification. Julia felt that the NNS label constructed NNESTs as deficient and lacking. Similarly, Khaled believed that the dichotomy assigned "*unwanted identities*" that restricted the NNS teachers and learners. Thus, the NNS label was perceived as evoking negative stereotypes. The NNS label not only aroused

negative perceptions, it was also considered to have a considerable negative impact on the professional standing of the participants. The participants spoke about experiencing discriminatory behaviour in various areas: employment, salary, perks, and opportunities to participate in conferences. Expressing his aversion for the manner in which the NNS label assigned disempowered and marginalized identities, Khaled expressed his preference for the terms bi-lingual and multi-lingual teachers instead of NNS teachers.

6.3 The Value Associated with being a Knowledgeable Practitioner

The narratives revealed that the participants' positive and confident self-images as English teachers could be attributed to the agency they had exercised towards strengthening their knowledge base. According to the participants this was achieved by various means, such as: adding to their academic credentials, researching the content area well, and developing pedagogical skills by means of continuous professional development.

The participants' accounts suggest that it was their identity as *knowledgeable practitioners* that had enabled the participants to view the linguistic gap that marked them from NSs as minor. Even though the gaps were considered insurmountable— despite being *worked at*, the gaps were not felt to define the participants. In fact, the exercise of agency towards acquiring an identity as a knowledgeable professional seemed to have enabled some of them to transcend their non-native identity. For instance, it gave Helena the confidence to describe herself as an NS in terms of teaching English. Manal, who grew up in an Arabic-speaking environment, now considered herself an “*excellent user*” of the English language. Noor, who saw herself on a continuum, trying to *unlearn* the incorrect pronunciation she had learnt a long time ago, was able to reconstruct not only her linguistic competence but also a more positive teacher identity. She constructed her self-identity as a well- qualified and knowledgeable ELT professional, someone whom even the NESTSs turned to for knowledge. Noor's anecdote that she would help her American colleague prepare for his lesson before he entered his classroom offers a cogent deconstruction of the image that the ESL/EFL enterprise has created and perpetuated of the NS as the “unquestionable authority of not just language ability but also of expertise in its teaching” (Nayyar, 1998, p.287). In particular, it implies that “the keys to determine a qualified English teacher are not based on

their (non-) nativeness status, but through other criteria, such as formal education, linguistic expertise, teaching experience, and professional preparation” (Yang, 2011, p. 21).

It seems that the investments made towards strengthening the knowledge base had not only enabled the participants to gain confidence in their linguistic proficiency, it was also instrumental in helping them construct their identity as effective teachers of English. For example, Amira stated that about ten years ago, she used to believe that her NS colleagues were better than her in using technology and the latest methods of teaching. However, she now considered herself as being on an equal footing with her NS colleagues. She credited her extensive reading and participation in conferences for the utilization of modern and student-centred methodologies in her classroom. Amira’s narrative reveals that her investment towards strengthening her knowledge base led to a shift in understanding that not just subject-matter, pedagogical aspects are also relevant to teachers’ personal and professional role conception (Beijaard, 1995). This shift in her teacher identity towards the pedagogical dimensions of teaching implies a concern with creating effective teaching and learning environments for her learners.

Studies which have explored both subject-matter expertise and teaching methodology have revealed that the knowledge and skilled use of a range of effective pedagogy contributes to high levels of student engagement and academic progress (Wenglinsky, 2002; Gustafsson, 2003; Wayne & Young, 2003). Amira’s self-declared interest in “*hunting*” for new teaching methods resonates with the claims of other participants that they did not see teaching as lecturing all the time. Instead, they tried to ensure that the learning of English became an enjoyable experience for their students. Noor said her classes were friendly sites where students could discuss topics of their interest. Daniel said he refrained from employing the traditional, direct kind of lecturing so that positive vibrations dominated, Ramy did not shy from taking on the role of a clown in the classroom in order to improve student motivation. These narratives imply that the investments made towards strengthening the knowledge base not only added to knowledge of the subject matter but also to the pedagogical aspects of language teaching.

The finding that the pedagogical aspects of language teaching constituted a valued component of the participants' teaching practice is contrary to findings of previous studies (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005) which suggest that in comparison to NESTs, NNESTs tend to use more traditional teacher-centred or curriculum-centred approaches and depend more on the use of textbooks and very structured lessons. The situation in the Gulf states is no different in this respect. While the "unwitting association" of NESTs with "a modern educational background" (Mc Laren, 2011, p.185) persists, NNESTs are "routinely vilified for supposedly peddling antiquated or outmoded methods of language teaching based on a bland series of rote-learning and memorisation techniques" (Karmani, 2009, p. 93).

6.4 Alternative Teacher Identity as Caring Teachers

The data reveals that the participants viewed personal characteristics, such as being understanding, caring and empathetic towards the learners as integral parts of their own teacher identity. Underscoring the humanistic aspect of teaching, Khaled stated that teaching was not just about content and pedagogy, it was also about "*improving the quality of life inside the classroom*". This statement suggests that teaching responsibility was seen as going beyond the delivery of externally prescribed curricula or facilitating simply the acquisition of the English language. Rather, it also involved a "pastoral pedagogy in which authority and dedicated compassion frame relationships characterised by close pedagogic attention" (Seddon, 2009, p.14).

The caring attitude towards the learners often led to the voluntary extension of the Self beyond the academic and professional role of a teacher. For instance, Daniel often provided his students with individualized attention outside his consultation hours to assist his weak students. He believed that treating his students with a lot of patience would impact their learning and motivation positively. Ghada, who taught female Emirati students believed that an empathetic professional who "*teaches from the heart*", touches students' lives in many ways. Conscious of the fact that her students led very shielded lives, she sought to become their "*window to the world*". Her classroom interaction sometimes diverted to providing advice to her students and also discussions concerning health and other important issues. She viewed the dispensation of advice and dissemination of information as a way of empowering her students

“who sometimes live a cloistered existence” (Walters, Quinn & Jendli, p.153).

The participants’ caring attitude towards their students also extended to taking out the time to listen to their social and psychological problems. Amira indicated that her students had various social and psychological problems. These problems cannot be solely attributed to the pressures of coping with the requirements of a university life. The rapid urbanization and modernization that has swept traditional Gulf societies in recent decades has ushered in different social changes, and not all of them have been positive in nature. As Abdulkhaleq Abdulla (2010) remarks:

The effects include the unequal distribution of oil wealth, a considerable amount of psychological dislocation and disorientation resulting in increasing social alienation, growth of a highly individualistic culture, conspicuous consumption, a deepening of dependency and the presence of large number of foreigners. (p.15)

Furthermore, new phenomena such as a change in the status and roles of women, the decline of traditional authority, delays in marriage, rise in spinsterhood and high divorce rates (Al Kazi, 2008) have been noticed. Although teachers are not counsellors, students with personal problems often view an empathetic and caring teacher as someone they can trust and confide in. Such an individual “is the first line of defense for students experiencing personal problems” (Coleman, 2001, p.107). When students confide about their problems, teachers listen since “showing care includes listening to the students, not only when they are in the classroom, but also about their particular lives and/or personal problems (Rubio, 2009).

According to Amira, while students have apprehensions about confiding in NESTs, as they perceive a barrier between themselves and NESTs, they are comfortable about talking about their problems with their Arab NNS teachers. Attributing this sense of comfort to the shared informal cultural background of the students and NNS teachers, Daniel also claimed that students felt more comfortable sharing their personal or family-related problems with NNESTs.

Manal stated that while students experienced a barrier between themselves and

their NS teachers, they shared their concerns with her as the students believed that an Arab teacher would understand them. Similarly, Ghada believed that her Arab identity was beneficial for her students, as her students were more comfortable with her. She often drew on examples from Islam, the religion she shared with her students. She explained that the moment she used the word “*our*” to discuss aspects of the shared religion, she established a common ground with her students. She believed that the close bond that she shared with her students helped alleviate their fears and anxieties in the language learning classroom.

These narratives indicate that the Arabic- speaking participants believed that the shared socio-cultural identity of the NNESTs helped them establish close bonds with their students. This engagement between the participants and their students appears to raise “their mutual relationship to a more personalised support level” (Tran & Nguyen, 2014, p.55). Viewed in this perspective, these participants’ teacher identity acquires a new dimension, that is, of a sincere and understanding confidante.

The Arab participants’ caring attitude towards their students could also be attributed to their close understanding of the local teaching context, namely, the linguistic background of the learners and the underlying motivational issues. Awareness of the underlying contextual factors gains significance in view of the fact that while government-funded tertiary education in the Arabian Gulf region is often delivered through the medium of English, the English language proficiency of the majority of local students is quite low. This low proficiency is said to be rooted in their prior learning experience with poorly trained teachers, out-dated methodology, an emphasis on rote learning, teacher-centred classes, inappropriate or inadequate textbooks, minimal exposure to English in class, large class sizes and poor assessment methods in public schools (Clarke, 2006; Fareh, 2010; Hozayen, 2011). These factors are attributed to making the sudden transition to English as the medium of instruction at the tertiary level difficult for many students who have studied in public schools. In addition to the low language proficiency, a large number of students in the Gulf states are also viewed as having have low intrinsic motivation to study. Such a situation has often been attributed to the rentier state model [a state which derives a large proportion of its income from external sources, most generally from the sales of

resources such as oil and gas] in the Gulf states offers “life subsidies (free education and health care, subsidies per child, no-interest loans for home purchase, wedding grants, and artificially low utility rates, among others)” to its nationals (Walters, Walters & Barwind, 2010). Due to this, national students’ motivation for studying and learning in higher education is said to be low.

In view of the poor language proficiency of students who came from public schools, Fatima looked at the breaking down of the subject matter according to her students’ age, their background knowledge and their learning styles as crucial for the success of her teaching. She believed that unless the subject matter was manipulated to fit her learners, it would remain useless. She narrated that her bilingual status functioned as a valuable resource in the application of the complex network of pedagogical skills. Students’ whisperings in their L1 not only provided her with instant feedback on the pedagogical practices implemented by her but also helped her gauge students’ levels of comprehension. The shared L1 acquired substantial significance in the case of Amira’s low-level English proficiency students. It not only allowed her to code-switch to Arabic in order to provide comprehensible instruction, but also helped in conducting discussions with students who were very weak in English. Thus, the shared L1 operated as a significant element of the participants’ teacher identity as caring teachers, which was predisposed towards the notion of support and a pastoral ethic of care towards their students.

The Arabic-speaking participants were thus able to construct an alternative teacher identity for themselves, in the socio-cultural context they operated in, an identity as a caring teacher. Participants’ narratives provide insightful accounts of how they function in their professional landscape and how they appropriate, shift, adapt to and even re-invent themselves in response to their students’ needs. This alternative, positive identity comes from participants’ valuing “what they know” rather than “who they are” (Rampton, 1990, p.99). The participants’ care for their students, best interpreted as stemming from their altruistic motives (Stiff, Dillard, Somera, Kim, and Sleight, 1988), gains importance in view of the fact that an extensive body of research has highlighted the importance of close, caring teacher–student relationships for students’ academic self-perceptions, school engagement, motivation, learning, and performance (Hayes, Ryan, &

Zseller, 1994; Kim, Solomon, & Roberts, 1995; Osterman, 2000; Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Ryan, Pintrich, & Midgley, 2001; Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998).

6.5 The Issue of Pronunciation and Accent

6.5.1 Stereotyped Notions about Pronunciation and Accent

The issue of pronunciation and accent was perceived as having a significant impact on the professional standing of NNESTs. The participants believed that L1 influenced accents tended to leave a very bad impression on students' and recruiters' attitudes. According to the participants, these impressions emerged from stereotyped judgements, which viewed NS norms in speech as prestigious and L1 dominated accents as erroneous and unsuitable for English teaching.

Amira narrated an anecdote about students' refusal to enrol in classes taught by NNESTs. The students' refusal to accept NNESTs as teachers, even though only those NNESTs were employed who had 'native-like accents' and were American nationals, seems to suggest that the students' perceptions of the ideal teacher of English rested upon binary categories such as NS= Standard English speaker= superior teacher= White teacher, as against NNS= non Standard English speaker= inferior teacher= non-White teacher. The students' preference for NESTs can be attributed to a mind-set that categorizes speakers of standard varieties as having "greater moral and intellectual worth than speakers of unofficial languages or non-standard varieties" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 15).

That such representations of the Self and the Other were "neither natural nor neutral", and were impacted by and reinforced "binary thinking within, unequal relations of power" (Kubota, 2004, p.44) is evident when the participants' narratives illustrate that NS norms in accent elicited not only stereotyped judgements of NNESTs as the inferior Other but also resulted in hiring policies that were greatly skewed against NNESTs. For instance, Yana narrated that she was not allocated speaking classes for fear of students' disapproval. Julia and Khaled informed that, at their university, applicants' CVs would be screened so that teachers from India, Pakistan, and some African countries were not selected for faculty recruitment. These examples highlight not only how NS norms in pronunciation and accent have a negative impact on the employability of NNESTs, but also the subtle strategies by which language is

utilized as an instrument of control, coercion as well as repression (Bourdieu, 1991). Furthermore, Fatima's statement "*Well, it [accent] gets you the job or it doesn't!*" demonstrates that academic and professional credentials, ostensibly the most important considerations for faculty recruitment, tend to be ignored and matters relating to accent gained precedence.

Khaled's narrative that NESTs were privileged in hiring despite students' complaints about "*strange*", unintelligible Western accents implies that a social order is perpetuated that positions native varieties of English on the top and non-native varieties, especially those spoken by non-Whites, at the bottom. Amira's statement that while British and American accents evoked respect and admiration, Indian and Filipino accents were made fun of also portrays the stark contrast in the status of the Center (Kachru, 1986) and Periphery (Kachru, 1986) variants of speech. Such a situation resonates with an imperial education system where language, in particular accent, is "interpreted as a marker of one's place within a hierarchy of socially constructed ethnicities or classes" (Ahern, 2007, p. 9).

The narratives also reveal that even though the participants viewed themselves as highly proficient and competent teachers of the English language, stereotyped notions about NS norms in speech had considerably dented the confidence of some of the participants regarding their own linguistic abilities and sense of legitimacy as teachers of English. Yana nurtured a deep-seated desire to sound more like a NS. Her dissatisfaction with her pronunciation is reflected in her continuous attempts to alter it by listening to a collection of CDs called *American Accents*, and her belief that enrolling in some kind of a course would bring her pronunciation closer to that of NSs. Interestingly, it does not seem that her pronunciation was actually deficient and needed *altering*, as by Yana's own admission, her speech was intelligible to "*everyone*". A similar case of pronunciation needs being more imaginary than real is evident in Fatima's perception that her students would be better off repeating words after a recorder or a website instead of her. This lack of confidence had persisted in her in spite of her CELTA instructor's assertion that Fatima was more than capable of modelling pronunciation for her students.

The lingering of the feelings of under-confidence about their L1 influenced accents suggests that the attitudes of these participants towards their own competence in teaching English seems to be strongly affected by notions such as ownership or legitimate use of the language (Llurda, 2015). The predominance of the Standard English ideology that the English language is, first and foremost, the language of its native speakers, and should be used and taught to non-native speakers in its standard form (Prator, 1968; Quirk, 1990; Trudgill, 2008) seems to have established NS norms in speech as a prestigious commodity. As a result, these participants, who otherwise describe themselves as highly proficient in the English language, tend to constantly assess their linguistic abilities against the NS standard. This constant self-critique of linguistic abilities seems to breed self-consciousness and in turn self-perceived language needs in them. Thus, it is fair to state that the ideology of Standard English not only plants seeds of self-doubt about language abilities in highly proficient NNESTs, it also fosters an uncritical attitude whereby NNESTs can often view their L1 influenced accent as a problem.

6.5.2 Adaptation of Accent

The data also reveals that while NS norms in pronunciation and accent exerted its presence in the ELT domain as a powerful commodity, a value-adding social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991), it was one that some NNESTs too wished to appropriate. This was attempted by means of adapting accents to bring them closer to Center (Kachru, 1986) norms. Some of the participants narrated that they would make conscious attempts to modify their accent whilst in their classrooms, job interviews and presentations in conferences. These attempts at the modification of speech parallels the phenomenon of postcolonial 'mimicry', in other words, of the colonial linguistic and cultural practices and 'hybridity' described by Bhabha (1994).

The adaptation of accent seemed to construct a more positive version of the Self in various ways. Manal believed that a modified accent made her employable, and also convinced important stakeholders about her capability to teach English. Haifa's contention that the acquisition of an NS accent formed a part of NNESTs' teacher identity, their self-image and how people perceived them as teachers, indicates the crucial role an NS accent has not only in

creating positive conceptualizations about the Self but facilitating membership in the Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998) of legitimate teachers.

The adaptation of accent also seemed to enable overcoming feelings of embarrassment experienced in social situations that involved NSs. Julia narrated that most of her friends were English and Americans, and whenever she was with them, she was self-conscious that her Polish accent could make her appear “*dumb*” and “*foolish*”. Her attempts at *improving* her accent were directed towards a more personal objective: obscuring her foreignness so that she could “*fit in*” with her NS friends. These instances demonstrate the crucial role that NS accents play in securing colonial linguistic hegemony, on the one hand, and in molding the linguistic habitus of NNESTs’ in postcolonial Gulf states, on the other.

Interestingly, the attempts at adaptation seemed to be intertwined with some measure of ambivalence and reservation. Accent adaptation was essentially bound up with the understanding that the Other, itself a site of great cultural diversity can never fully be integrated into the West, that it is led to “mimic” than replicate Western ways of being, “that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 1984, p.126), a process that inevitably results in hybridity rather than sameness. Haifa’s confession that a complete acquisition of NS accent was not only a difficult task but one that took a lot of time indicates that she was aware that attempts at accent adaptation tends to be limited by certain factors. Similarly, Manal alluded to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) which states that language can be acquired only within an optimal period, extending from early infancy until puberty and that language learning, which takes place outside of this critical period tends inevitably to be marked by non-native like features (Lenneberg, 1967).

Haifa’s admission that even though a near-native accent was essential to forming a good impression, it was not something an NNEST would be proud of indicates that NNESTs are not necessarily at ease with the notion of changing their accent. Instead, a sense of guilt and shame accompanies accent adaptation. This is because accent adaptation also means divesting oneself of one’s own personal identity. This remorse is clearly expressed in Yana’s following statement, “*I would like to sound different but I think if I sounded*

differently, it wouldn't be me." Yana's unease with accent adaptation seems to be rooted in the perception that speech styles, like accents, "have social meanings" as markers of a speaker's personal identity (Knops & Hagen, 1987, p.91). However, the participants' persistent efforts at molding their accents demonstrates that their pragmatic concerns are swept away in the face of the privilege that NS norms carry.

Accent adaptation appears to have become a natural response of these participants to the market forces prevalent in the Gulf region. Their embracing of "the ways that the social system transfigures them" and turning "a blind eye to its injustices" is a kind of "mimesis that involves the subject's active divestment of his or her original social position, identity, and markers" (Ahern, 2007, p.9). Feelings of inadequacy towards their L1 dominated accents, and attempts at mimicry of the Self tend to foster in the Other, an unquestioning attitude. The participants' uncritical and unquestioning attitude is demonstrated by Yana's declaration that when one is teaching, *"You just have to!"*

The conviction that it is important to sound as close to a NS as possible, seems to suggest that the question whether education should impart "variety tolerance" (Kachru, 1987, p.221) has not been considered by these NNESTs. The issue of variety tolerance, raised by Julia, Daniel and Khaled in their interviews, has considerable relevance and value in contemporary times. In the highly globalized current times, students need to get used to a variety of accents, since exposure to varieties of English would facilitate their communication abilities when confronted with different kinds of English uses and users (Kachru, 1992; Modiano, 1999; McKay, 2002; Canagarajah, 2006).

The adaptation of speech to fit in socially with NSs also highlights that NNESTs unquestioningly take on the burden of intelligibility on their own selves without considering whether it should be a "shared undertaking" (Kachru, 1987, p.221). That they do not indicate the use of negotiation strategies, whereby successful communication becomes a two-way process instead of one, suggests that these NNESTs place the burden of responsibility for successful communication solely on themselves, "forgetting that in native-native talk this burden is always shared" (Reed, 2012, p.161).

The participants' unquestioning attitude and acceptance of the ideology of Standard Language and turning of a blind eye to its injustices stands in direct contrast to some of the other participants who seem to resist the hegemony of the colonial discourse. Factors such as a strong sense of personal identity, an awareness of the advantages of L1 influenced speech and engagement with theories of EIL had enabled these participants to successfully resist the colonialist representations of NS norms in speech and endorse L1 influenced English.

Ghada's strong sense of personal identity and pride in her own accent held her back from resorting to accent adaptation as a means of adding to her symbolic capital. Instead, she sought to counter the NS fallacy by improving her professional skills. Some of the other participants claimed that because their students' found NNESTs' accents more intelligible than NESTs, they valued their L1 influenced accents. Ghada said that her students complained that they had a difficult time understanding NESTs as they tended "*to swallow some parts of words*". Her students had also told her that they were more comfortable with NNESTs' accents as they spoke slower than NESTs, and their words were more clearly articulated.

Khaled had not been confident about his pronunciation early in his career but his introduction to theories about EIL (Smith, 1976; Tomlinson, 2003; Widdowson, 1997; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009) had enabled him to negotiate a more empowered identity. Khaled's engagement with an alternative discourse, that critically discussed the implications of teaching English as an international language (e.g. Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2007), whereby native-like proficiency was no longer viewed as the ultimate objective for learning and teaching English; nor as the standard used for determining English teachers' professional abilities (Kachru & Nelson, 2001; Kachru, 2005; McKay, 2002), helped him cultivate the understanding that there was no "*superior pronunciation*". Thus, factors such as a strong sense of personal identity, an awareness of the advantages of L1 influenced speech, and engagement with theories of EIL (Smith, 1976; Tomlinson, 2003; Widdowson, 1997; McKay, 2002; Sharifian, 2009) exerted a positive and forceful impact on these participants' sense of professionalism and language proficiency, and helped them to construct themselves as legitimate teachers of English.

6.6 The Issue of Education Acquired from the Center

The study reveals that a considerable importance is attached with degrees acquired from Center (Kachru, 1986) universities. Participants' accounts that the question: *"Do you have a degree from a foreign [Center] country?"* figured prominently in NNESTs' job interviews, highlights that a degree from a Center (Kachru, 1986) university was perceived as immensely valuable in faculty recruitment.

Manal stated that a higher degree from the Center (Kachru, 1986) instantly constructed images of a *"highly knowledgeable"* individual. The fixity of such stereotypes seemed to have led to an uncritical association of all Center (Kachru, 1986) universities with notions of academic excellence. It also appeared that the discourses that privileged education acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986), had positioned the NS as the superior, ideal and desirable target teacher.

Manal's use of the word 'now' in the statement, *"To them [the employers], now you know everything"*, indicates that the acquisition of a degree from the Center (Kachru, 1986) was seen as supplementing, and filling-in gaps in a knowledge that was perceived as deficient and inadequate. The assumption that teachers educated in the Periphery (Kachru, 1986) would not boast the same modern, student-centred and pedagogically sophisticated approach to language teaching (McLaren, 2011) in comparison to those educated in the Center (Kachru, 1986) often forms the basis of the devalued perceptions of indigenous knowledge.

It appears from participants' comments that an unwritten policy had come to be introduced in faculty recruitment, whereby education from the Center (Kachru, 1986) had become an important criterion for faculty selection, one that could not be waived off. This is demonstrated by Haifa's statement that interviewees' attitudes towards her would change, the moment they would come to know that she had graduated from Egypt. The unquestionability of Western cultural values norm is further illustrated in the dean's emphatic response, *"No, No. He doesn't have any Western qualifications. We cannot take him"*, when suggested that an NNS applicant with an impressive professional profile be called for an interview.

The hegemony of the norm constrains and marginalizes Haifa, who despite having a PhD, is unable to secure a full-time teaching position in Kuwait. These narratives highlight the process of cultural production and domination, which Spivak (1990) calls the 'worlding of the West as world'. In this process the Center's (Kachru, 1986) interests are projected and naturalised as the Periphery's (Kachru, 1986) interests. That the Center's (Kachru, 1986) interests have become universalized and naturalized in the Gulf states is clearly evident from the fact that even though it is not an official requirement that teachers have higher degrees from the Center (Kachru, 1986), it appears to have become an important criterion in determining the suitability of a teacher by employers.

In direct contrast to the difficulties NNESTs face in employment, Julia's comment that an NEST with even "*a Master's degree or even BA from a Western university*", would be "*pretty much guaranteed a job*" underlines the crucial position that the stereotyped notion of the NS fallacy occupies in ELT in the Gulf states in legitimizing "the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization" (Bhabha, 1994, p.67).

The legitimization of Center (Kachru, 1986) norms and competencies, by means of the NS fallacy, can have deep implications for the professional identity of NNESTs. It can lead NNESTs to buy into the restricted version of Western education as superior, and synonymize it with opportunities for employment and professional advancement. The importance NNESTs attach with education gained from the Center (Kachru, 1986) is succinctly bought out by Noor's declaration that the acquisition of her Master's and Doctorate degrees from the UK were her "*biggest achievements in life*". Noor's narrative shows that the legitimizing of the Western education norm leads to a dependence on Center (Kachru, 1986) forms of knowledge, one that NNESTs often find difficult to break away from. Discourses about the superiority of education gained from the Center (Kachru, 1986) in Postcolonial Gulf states, not only seem to consolidate the NNSs dependence on Western knowledge structures but also provides the Center (Kachru, 1986) with a new form of international trade: higher education.

Entwined in postcolonial realities of dependency, modernization and development (Pennycook, 1994), it prompts NNESTs to buy (culturally) from the

West “a self-contained version of the West” (Spivak, 1988, p. 291). This dependency is evident in Manal’s decision to pursue a second PhD, this time from a British university. Although taking up another PhD, would have inevitably meant spending considerable time and money on her part, such a duplication of effort was necessitated by the fact that people did not “*believe*” much in her earlier PhD, as it was from Egypt.

Manal and the other participants’ agency in buying (culturally) from the Center (Kachru, 1986) reflects their attempt at resisting and disrupting the exclusionary binary logics upon which the discourses of colonialism depend. Such an attempt towards meeting “the requirements of colonist address” (Wahab, 2010, p.8) appears to be aimed at challenging and unravelling notions of NS superiority and NS ownership over knowledge. That the subaltern is able to operate through these ambivalences and resist the totalizing power of colonial construction is evident in Khaled and Yana’s claim that their Western degrees had helped them get teaching jobs in Qatar and the UAE respectively.

In contrast, NNESTs who are educated in the Periphery (Kachru, 1986) are often unable to catch up with those educated in the Center (Kachru, 1986). The undermining of their professional competencies and the resultant marginalization in employment, can fuel a profound desire for a Western higher degree, one that tends to linger on for a long time. The understanding that her marginalized position would not change unless she succeeded in adding to her symbolic capital, lay behind Haifa’s anguished observation that had she “*graduated from an English university . . . , it would have made a big difference*” in her life.

Like Haifa Daniel too felt “*very bad*” about not having been able to study in the West. He believed that American universities offered better facilities and infrastructure. Haifa also believed that universities in the Middle East lagged behind the Center (Kachru, 1986) in terms of their professionalism and methods of teaching. She even perceived a “*gap*” in her proficiency after graduating from Egypt. The perceptions of dependency, reflected in NNESTs’ desire for a degree from the Center (Kachru, 1986) arise from the highly unequal educational relations between the Center (Kachru, 1986) and the Periphery (Kachru, 1986). These inequalities result from the natural imbalances in wealth

and academic strength on the one hand, and also result from specific practices by the rich countries to maintain their dominance— neo-colonialism (Altbach, 1977).

While NNESTs who do not have Western degrees are often unable to catch up with the Center (Kachru, 1986), it seems that even the agency of those NNESTs who try to resist the colonial discourse by means of acquiring higher degrees from the Center (Kachru, 1986) does not always meet with success. This is because the NS fallacy, which is embedded in ELT in the Gulf states, often stonewalls NNESTs' attempts at gaining more symbolic capital for themselves. While Noor's doctoral degree was not being recognized as a valid one [since it was acquired via distance learning], her statement that this requirement was not applied to teachers who belonged to the English speaking West, seems to suggest that the stereotypes about the perceived superiority of NNSs continue to marginalize many Western educated NNESTs. It also highlights that the notion of the NS is inextricably bound up with questions of race (Shuck, 2006; Kubota and Lin, 2009; Romney, 2010).

Noor's account resonates with Helena's claim that while administrators at her university did not look that much into the fact that her degree was acquired via distance learning, a similar relaxation was not applied in the case of Arab nationals and that the employability level of Arab nationals remained "quite low". This seems to indicate that NNESTs who are non-White can encounter more discrimination than White NNESTs in employment. Helena, who is Polish, blond and resembles a Caucasian, may have been looked upon as a NS and consequently may have benefitted from the same relaxed norms. The inability of Noor and the other Arab nationals, to add to their symbolic capital, despite the fact that their higher degrees were acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986) highlights that while people of colour may be denied access to teaching jobs, "White non-native speakers (especially if blond) may be given honorary access" (Pennycook, 2012, p.95).

Thus, it is fair to say that the deeply embedded NS fallacy can render the effort and time invested by NNESTs in acquiring education from the Center (Kachru, 1986) of little value. This is because the notion of the superiority of education acquired from the Center (Kachru, 1986), essentially intertwined with notions of

modernization and development, is illusory in nature. It conceals the real and dominant interest of the colonizers who successfully convince NNESTs to act against their true interests through a false consciousness of the superiority of Western education. This false consciousness, demonstrated by NNESTs uncritical acceptance and internalization of the ideology of the inferiority of indigenous knowledge vis-à-vis Western knowledge, makes them unconscious agents in their own oppression. Such a scenario lends credence to Spivak's assertion that "to buy a self-contained version of the West is to ignore its production by the imperialist project" and "helps to consolidate its effects" (1998, p.291).

6.7 Challenges that Threaten Teacher Legitimacy

The data revealed that participants encountered direct as well as indirect challenges to their legitimacy. The participants stated that the direct challenges arose from students' negative attitudes, and the restricted opportunities to present at research forums by their NS colleagues. The participants believed that students' negative attitudes towards their NNS identity took the form of "tricky questions" or outward expressions of "resentment". Helena believed that that students' comments such as "*Are you sure it is like that?*" and "*I am sure, you can check it*" indicated that the students considered NNSs as being incapable of teaching a language that does not belong to them.

Another finding was that students with *wasta* might challenge the legitimacy of NNESTs by unjustly blaming them for their own academic shortcomings. *Wasta*, often defined as "influence or clout" (Beatty, Berrell, Martin & Scanlan, 2009, p.11) is a special privilege enjoyed by royalty or wealthy citizens. In the tertiary academic setting, among other privileges, *wasta* might influence "the weighting of opinion" (Beatty, Berrell, Martin & Scanlan, 2009, p.11). Yana's account that an influential student, who had failed the course on account of his own laziness and frequent absence from class, was able to reverse his failing grade by complaining that Yana was a "*bad*" teacher and had an accent that he did not understand, suggests how influential liaisons may be misused to further individual private interests that circumvent formal procedures (Kilani & Sakhija, 2002) and divest NNESTs of their rights. That the supervisor sided with the student, and the student's own laziness and absence from class was not taken into cognisance, illustrates how NNESTs' non-native identity can function as a

veritable Achilles' heel. It can put them in a vulnerable position where they might become easy scapegoats, and be unjustly blamed for their students' poor academic performance. Having no *wasta* of their own, NNESTs can become easier targets to pick-on. Disempowered, and with the weight of opinion firmly against them, negotiating a legitimate teacher identity can indeed become, as described by Yana, a very "*painful*" and "*awful*" experience for many NNESTs.

Yana's attempts at constructing her identity as a legitimate and credible teacher of English was further complicated by her Russian identity, which evoked negative stereotypes amongst her male students. She narrated that due to the fact that a sizeable number of Russian women in the UAE worked as prostitutes, her male, Emirati students resented being taught by a young, female, Russian teacher. Students' resentment, evident in the comment, "*Why is she teaching us?*" illustrates that her teacher identity was not constituted "coherently or consistently" (Butler, 1990, p.3) in the conservative and male-dominated Emirati society.

Yana's teacher identity intersected with "racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" (Butler, 1990, p.3). As a result, her identity construction and negotiation, mired in a complex interplay of multiple factors, evoked images of the inferior Other. Yana's story depicts the reality of the professional lives of young female Russian NNESTs, who may encounter conflicts between claimed and ascribed identity. They may not only have to confront the hegemonic ideologies of native speakerism, as other NNESTs often have to, but also social stereotypes that arise from local and contextual factors.

The data also revealed that Noor narrated feeling challenged when denied the opportunity to present at a research forum by the head of the research committee. The rejection of her application on the grounds that most of the presenters were NSs highlights that *epistemic racism* produces myths about Center (Kachru, 1986) epistemic perspectives as "Truthful universal" knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2007, p.213), and the "persuasive assumption that the world cannot get by without the thinking of the Western subject" (Ndlovu, 2014, p.90). Noor's account that presentation slots were exclusively reserved for NESTs, and NNESTs were denied equal opportunities to present at the conference

seems to demonstrate that Periphery (Kachru, 1986) epistemologies and ontologies are translated into universalised Center (Kachru, 1986) epistemological parameters as “inferior”, “less evolved”, or “erroneous” (Andreotti, 2011, p.5). This exercise of subalternisation and normalisation, generally referred to as the *epistemic violence* of colonialism, can have political, cultural and professional ramifications for NNESTs. The reproduction and consolidation of the belief that “people cannot get by without Europe’s theoretical and cultural achievements” (Maldonado-Torres, 2004, p.32), and that knowledge produced and/or disseminated by Center (Kachru, 1986) academics is universally applicable can have political consequences—it not only affirms the epistemic domination and hegemony of the Center (Kachru, 1986) over the Periphery (Kachru, 1986), but can lead to dependence on Center (Kachru, 1986) forms of knowledge.

Such a dependence on forms of knowledge produced in non-Periphery contexts can impact the self-identity of NNESTs. It may not only construct “a hierarchy of superior and inferior knowledge” but also that of “superior and inferior people” (Grosfoguel, 2007, p.214), namely, the NESTs as against the NNESTs. That Noor was the only NNS presenter in the forum highlights that in such systems, the *cultural self* of the subaltern is at stake (see Mazrui 1995), as its voice could be marginalized, and even silenced.

Restricted opportunities to present at research forums can potentially inhibit NNESTs’ hiring and promotion possibilities. This is because independent of teaching assignments, scholarly dissemination to broad audiences is increasingly becoming an important criterion in hiring and promotion in the tertiary domain. Consequently, the restriction of Noor’s opportunities to present at the forum can limit her opportunities to add to her symbolic capital. It is thus fair to say that a reductionist approach towards the epistemic capacity of NNESTs can strike at the very core of their epistemological and professional aspirations.

The data revealed that NNESTs in the Gulf states also faced a number of indirect challenges to their legitimacy. According to Noor, these indirect challenges were manifest in the differential treatment relating to the manner in which NNESTs were addressed, allowances to attend conferences, as well as

permission to attend conferences vis-à-vis their NS colleagues. Manal's narrative revealed that she perceived the discriminatory hiring practice, she continued to face, an indirect threat to her professional standing; one that was almost impossible to counter.

Other participants also alluded to that the employment prospects of NNESTs were very limited. Attributes such as NS accents, higher education from Center (Kachru, 1986) institutions, Whiteness, race and even citizenship of a Center (Kachru, 1986) country were the means by which native speakerism was enforced. However, Khaled's failed attempts at seeking a teaching position in the UAE seems to suggest that these attributes are weighted differently. The rejection of his job applications, barely 5-10 minutes after submission suggests that a detailed examination of his application or suitability for the advertised position was not conducted. It was probably a cursory glance at his name, one that demarcated him from a naturalized NS, which caused his instant disqualification. That his American passport, and Master's and PhD degrees acquired in the US did not work in his favour demonstrates that these attributes do not weigh heavily on the *nativeness* scale, and that race is probably construed as the most definitive and valuable of all NS attributes.

The instant rejection of Khaled's application highlights the tendency to conceptualize social and linguistic variation as natural, or describable in terms of biology or some universal truth (Gal & Irvine, 1995; Silverstein, 1979). Such a perception results in the reproduction of "a hierarchical social order in which U.S.-born citizens, native English speakers, and Caucasians" (Schuck, 2006, p.273) are seen as sharing the same conceptual category. Members of this category carry an unseen privilege over their "marked counterparts—a privilege that is widely and uncritically" recognized as a natural consequence of certain attributes "thought to be intrinsic to American-ness, nativeness (in English) or Whiteness" (Schuck, 2006, p.273). This privilege results in the instant disqualification of many deserving and qualified NNESTs from hiring. This privilege seems to have created a situation where the greatest difficulty for many NNESTs can be just getting their CVs through.

The desperation of the situation results in self-marginalisation in Manal, who for fear of rejection, no longer sends applications to better paying and more

prestigious institutions. She now believes that her decision to become an English teacher was incorrect and regretful. Her assertion that if given a chance to go back in time, she would not choose to study English, demonstrates that the extrinsic, discriminatory factors in her macro-context have encroached upon her love for the English language and passion for teaching. The extrinsic factors, as a result of which she does not “*enjoy some privileges*” and respect, which her NS counterparts do, and her professional life is mired in issues, which leave her “*struggling to find a job*” and “*struggling to prove herself*”, have undermined and eroded the intrinsic and altruistic nature of her teacher motivation.

In view of the fact that demotivating factors are more influential than motivating factors (see Christophel and Gorham, 1995), it is important that the factors that demotivate NNESTs be eradicated from the teaching environment. Attention to eliminating these demotivating factors is also important in view of the fact that “if a teacher is motivated to teach, there is a good chance that his or her students will be motivated to learn”(Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011, p. 158). Furthermore, in consideration of the disquieting reports from different countries that “a great proportion teachers are *not* motivated to teach and that this tendency is actually getting worse” (Dörnyei & Ushioda 2011, pp. 167-168), it is essential that higher education institutions in the Gulf states pay attention to teachers’ external environment and take concrete steps to sustain and even nurture the intrinsic nature of teacher motivation.

6.8 Overcoming Perceptions that Construct the NS as the Superior Teacher

The data revealed that Yana and Amira had a positive outlook and believed that perceptions about the superiority of the NS teacher could be overcome in the future. Yana attributed the growing presence of NNESTs in ELT for her positive outlook. Her comment that the discourse relating to the NS myth was a “*hot topic*” nowadays, and that it was being discussed in conferences and research forums highlights the growing attention to issues concerning NNESTs and the escalation of research efforts, workshops, policy and advocacy initiatives (establishment of the NNEST caucus, the issuance of TESOL Statement on NNESTs and discriminatory hiring practices by the TESOL organization—the first, in 1992, and the second, in 2006). These efforts are directed towards a

reconceptualization of the TESOL profession in terms of democracy, justice, equity and professionalism (see Selvi, 2014).

On the other hand, Amira believed that times had changed, since hiring preferences were no longer solely dictated by native speakerness, and a competent teacher would get the job. Yana and Amira's positive outlook indicates that the efforts made towards spreading a greater awareness of issues relating to NNESTs may have succeeded in denting the NS fallacy to some extent and has established a more inclusive intellectual space. However, it should also be noted that Amira, being an Emirati, might not have faced the discrimination, which other NNSs usually experience. In fact, the Emiratisation [a policy which seeks to reduce the country's dependence on expatriate labour and increase the participation of nationals in the labour market] of the work force in the UAE might have even ensured her job security. Thus, even though Amira was an NNS, her citizen status provided her with a more privileged and empowered teacher identity, and it is very unlikely that she would have encountered the discrimination and marginalization that the other participants had experienced.

However, the remainder of the participants strongly believed that the NS stereotype would be nearly impossible to overcome in the near future. Their pessimism lay in the fact that diktats issued in preference of NESTs came not just from the administrators but higher authorities as well. Fatima elucidated that policy makers' linking of the language policy of the Gulf states with its economic and political interests had added to the strength of the NS fallacy. This was because the success of the British colonial empire and the subsequent rise of American industrial and technological power had created a situation in which English, uniquely, had come to be viewed as the symbol of a modern technologically advanced society (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2015).

Julia's comment that policy makers' belief that just by getting a NS, their "*native speakerism will flow over from the teachers to the students*" illustrates the urgency with which policy makers view the need for learning English, as a means of enhancing the skills and productivity of the national workforce. This urgency is manifest, on the one hand, in the absence of indigenous models for modern education (Findlow, 2006), and on the other, in the dependence on

imported Western curricula and imported NS teachers. Since the alternatives of “Arabisation, mass translation or bilingual education all somehow seemed to be highly complex and long drawn out affairs” (Karmani, 2009, p. 95) importation of curricula and teachers seemed the most viable option.

That the consequent commodification of English— both as an educational product and an aspect of the commodification of labour, has implications for the ownership of knowledge is evident in the participants’ assertions that policy makers blindly favoured hiring NSs, as they considered it a veritable truth that all NSs were excellent teachers. Julia’s statement that tertiary education managers’ perception of English language education “*as some kind of a product*” and English teachers as the managers of a factory, was another reason why participants believed that the NS stereotype would be difficult to overcome. Julia’s assertion that tertiary education managers had a “very old-fashioned understanding of language teaching”, which was “product” and “assessment” oriented is indicative of an approach towards education that still resembles a standard assembly-line curriculum, controlled by standardised tests (Dryden & Vos 1994).

This product evaluation approach to education looks at the learner as *raw material*, which can be “subjected to certain curricular and instructional treatments in order to produce a ‘finished product’ that meets predetermined objectives” (Zais, 1976, p.370). The finished product in this case is English language competency. That policy makers fail to see the narrowness and inadequacy of such an approach in its “tendency to de-emphasize contextual factors” (Preedy, 2001, p. 94), is illustrated by Julia’s claim that the management had failed to view language education “*as a human experience or a social experience*”. Her comment that policy makers remained incognisant of the underlying “*tension between a NS coming from the West and a local student*”; the feeling of superiority on the side of NS teachers and a lack of understanding or appreciation of the local culture; as well as the relevance of NNESTs to the unique socio-cultural make-up of the Gulf states indicates that as the discourse of economic globalisation gains control of regional and local policy processes, “other interests, notably those concerned with human interests, get subsumed and, indeed marginalised” (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010, p.94).

The pessimism that the opportunities for employment would never change, and that NNESTs would continue to be subjected to unfair criteria in the Gulf states is evident in the assertions by some of the participants that emigration to the Center (Kachru, 1986) or returning to their own home country was the only means by which they could avoid the NS fallacy from impacting their professional lives. This seems to suggest that if these participants chose to work outside their home countries, acquiring a legitimate teacher identity was possible for them in the Center (Kachru, 1986), but not the Gulf states.

6.9 Establishing an Equitable Domain

The data revealed that while the participants believed that the NS stereotype would be nearly impossible to overcome in the near future, they felt that this situation could be remedied by the adoption of various measures at the policy makers' levels as well as at an individual level by NNESTs themselves.

At the policy makers' level, Khaled recommended that attention be focussed towards the training of local and bilingual teachers at the tertiary level so that more NNESTs could assume the responsibility of teaching English. He drew attention to the fact that unless attention was paid towards developing teacher training programs, the dependence on foreign expertise would continue.

Khaled's suggestions underline Syed's (2003) observation that an overwhelming reliance on imported teachers had resulted in the neglect of teacher education in all the Gulf nations except Saudi Arabia. As a result, the training needs of many expatriate NNESTs and other Gulf nationals, who are unable to travel abroad for higher degrees in teacher education, remains unfulfilled. In contrast to national citizens, who are able to avail of the scholarships and grants to study abroad, the inability of some NNESTs in adding to their cultural capital can result in depreciated employment opportunities for them.

Thus, the "processes of educational transfer and the implementation of the foreign higher education model within the local context" (Phan, 2010, para 5.) is problematic. The importation of a "baroque arsenal of out-dated and costly educational programmes" (Donn & Manthri, 2012, p. 13) from the Center (Kachru, 1986) has added little to the teacher education requirements of the Gulf states. Far from creating *knowledge societies*, it serves to maintain the political

and social status quo, and only leads to dependency and neo-colonial control by the Center (Kachru, 1986). Khaled's recommendation that attention be focussed towards the training of local and bilingual teachers implies that remedying such a situation necessitates that the Gulf states adopt a more inward orientation, in place of the current orientation, that looks outwards to the Center (Kachru, 1986) for fulfilling its teacher training needs.

Khaled's suggestions centred not just on the institution of more teacher education programs in the Gulf states, but also the content of these teacher education programmes. He cited the inclusion of components that prepared NNESTs for the challenges of teaching in the Gulf states, and raised their awareness of the different and critical aspects of teaching English as crucial to overcoming the NS fallacy in the Gulf states. This suggestion seems to imply that NNESTs in the Gulf states are not sufficiently cognisant of the nature and extent of the practical difficulties and challenges that the NS fallacy can cause in NNESTs' lives. It also implies that NNESTs in the Gulf states have either not sufficiently considered, or are unaware of the complex, socio-historical, and political aspects of language learning and teaching. Khaled's emphasis on the inclusion of these aspects seems to arise from his first-hand experience of the constant pressures that NNESTs undergo in understanding and defining their role as English teachers in postcolonial Gulf states. Khaled's suggestion underlines the importance of countering the debilitating effects of the NS fallacy by means of confronting them by both at heightened awareness and conceptual levels.

It is therefore stated that a teacher education program that addresses and also creates awareness about the debilitating effects of linguistic imperialism, and the realities of an NNS teacher identity could circumvent these problems by informing teacher-trainees in advance about situations and contexts where they might be positioned wrongly and unfairly. Familiarity with, and/or prior knowledge of the challenges and difficulties NNESTs tend to encounter in the Gulf states could alleviate the sense of low self-esteem and self-blame that NNESTs usually experience when faced with challenges to their credibility.

At the conceptual level, awareness of the critical aspects of TESOL, in its focus on raising awareness of how language intersects with race, gender and power

(see Freire 2002), and reflection upon socio-historical and cultural roots, and hidden biases that define asymmetrical professional spheres, could help NNESTs unfasten the negative identities that are ascribed to them by others. This could also inspire NNESTs to question and change the unequal and unjust NS/NNS relations. That Daniel and Khaled not only succeeded in developing a keener appreciation of the strengths of NNESTs, but also in countering the marginalizing and disempowering discourse of Standard Language, by drawing on the alternative discourses of World Englishes and EIL (see section 5.2.1 & 5.2.2.4), illustrates how awareness of the different and critical aspects of teaching English helps in the establishment of “more egalitarian, equitable, and ethical educational and social environments” (Pennycook, 1999, p.932).

The participants also believed that concrete measures at policy makers’ levels towards the development and implementation of a more comprehensive criteria for hiring, one that included crucial aspects like teachers’ qualifications, experience and competence instead of native speakerism would create a more level playing field. However, the participants seriously doubted that such measures would materialize any time soon. The lack of confidence that fair and transparent criteria would be adopted in the near future is clearly expressed in Yana’s statement, *“sometimes the people who make these decisions have nothing to do with education”*. This implies that the participants believed that at the policy planners’ level, there was a lack of up-to-date understanding of the nature of core competencies associated with the successful practice of TESOL, from both the theoretical and practical perspective.

While the functioning of the TESOL enterprise has historically been under the influence of White, modernist, Center (Kachru, 1986) value-laden, discourses of TESOL, the ushering in of the critical approaches in TESOL and applied linguistics, and the reformatory character of the NNEST movement, the diverse uses and users of Englishes (World Englishes), the renewed understanding of English as an international language (EIL) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) have been widely accepted in TESOL. As a result, the foundational principles of TESOL stand re-appraised, re-defined, and re-conceptualised (Burns, 2005; Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2002; Selvi & Yazan, 2013). Such developments have led to the view that the NS fallacy is “no longer valid in light of the current demographics of the world’s English-using population” (Lowenberg, 2000, p.

67), and also towards the problematization and demystification of the politically and ideologically driven concept of the *native speaker* (Paikeday, 1985; Davies 1991; Rampton, 1990). The reconceptualization of TESOL has also led to the understanding that insight into the linguistic and cultural needs of their learners means that NNESTs may in fact be better qualified than native speakers (Phillipson, 1992).

However, the fact that NSs continue to be privileged in employment in the Gulf states, to the extent that job advertisements state an explicit preference for NSs, seems to suggest that at the policy planners' level, there is a lack of the updated theoretical and practical perspectives that currently inform TESOL. The predominance of different facets of native speakerism, namely, NS accent, educational credentials from the Center (Kachru, 1986), Western citizenship, Whiteness, instead of qualifications, experience and competence as crucial criteria in employment seems to point towards a lack of awareness at the policy planners' level about the current concepts associated with the successful practice of TESOL. It is perhaps because of this perceived *information deficit* that participants believe that NESTs would continue to be privileged over NNESTs.

It could however also be the case that the policy makers are well informed but consciously choose to overlook these matters in view of the prestige the NS label carries. In an educational landscape, where the Gulf political leaders seek not just to bridge the development gap in their nations, but also to establish the "Arab Gulf as a heavyweight academic actor in the region" (Romani, 2009, p.2), it is possible that the NS is looked upon as a value-adding asset. In view of the fact that "the market values the native speaker... and, in our post-industrial, neo-liberal world who will dare challenge what the market dictates?" (Inbar-Lourie, 2005, p. 293).

The narratives also reveal that the participants believed that the onus of securing a more equitable teaching domain also lay on the NNESTs themselves and suggested various measures that NNESTs could take at an individual level to establish equity. It is possible that the participants' lack of confidence that any concrete steps would be taken at the policy makers' and administrators' levels leads them to stress that altering the state of affairs demanded that

NNESTs themselves exercise agency. According to some participants, such an agency entailed attention to re-educating all the major stakeholders and changing the way they thought. This re-education was crucial to the alleviation of the negative stereotypes that stakeholders such as employers and students had come to associate NNESTs with. It was suggested that NNESTs work towards equipping themselves with knowledge and improving their language proficiency and pedagogical skills. The emphasis on strengthening these elements seems to suggest that participants considered them essential for countering the negative perception amongst employers and students that the linguistic and pedagogical skills of NNESTs are deficient in comparison to NESTs.

Khaled stressed addressing students' attitudinal factors by suggesting that NNESTs raise students' awareness of the global trends in language use whereby English has now become an international language and is used by speakers whose "lingua-cultural backgrounds are often diverse and complex" (Marlina, 2014, p.3). He also suggested that NNESTs familiarize their students with the World English varieties. This finding suggests that Khaled believed that students had negative attitudes towards the varieties of English as they lacked the awareness of the different varieties of English and the understanding that " 'deficit linguistics' in one context may actually be a matter of 'difference' which is based on vital sociolinguistic realities of identity, creativity and linguistic and cultural contact" (Kachru, 1991, p. 221).

The participants stressed that re-educating all the major stakeholders and bringing about a paradigm shift in their attitudes towards NNESTs entailed changing a lot in the theory and literature surrounding the NS stereotype. Julia's statement that NNESTs needed to research and present in conferences matters relating to NNESTs, until it became "*a proper TESOL issue*", indicates that she believed that the current theoretical and empirical endeavours undertaken by NNESTs in the local context were inadequate to combat the NS fallacy. Her stress on probing NNESTs' issues "*in more depth*" are consistent with the belief that a better understanding of second language teaching in bi-/multilingual environments may lead to an alternative discourse that is not premised upon notions which are heavily tilted towards the Western episteme of the native speaker (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Interestingly, according to Haifa, successful countering of the NS fallacy entailed the utilisation of formal statistical and mathematical techniques. A similar inclination for scientific and objective techniques is evident in Julia's proposal that standardized tests be used to ascertain the language skills of NESTs and establish that educational qualifications, and not native speakerism determined language proficiency. Haifa's comment that "*people just believe statistics in the end*" indicates that the description of the lived experiences of NNESTs might evoke scepticism and even disbelief. It also implies that NESTs were privileged as the only site of *truthful* thinking. Haifa's perception that, instead of subjective outcomes, "*tangible*" data would be regarded as more academically valuable and scholarly rigorous mirrors the view that racism colours methodologies and conclusions (see Merchant & Willis, 2001). Furthermore, epistemologies tend to be located within political, historical, and economic contexts that can impart power and legitimacy to their knowledge claims (see Hunter, 2002). As a result, NNESTs' epistemology could be looked at with scepticism. Such a problematization of indigenous knowledge implies that changing the theory and literature surrounding the NS stereotype is not going to be an easy task by any means.

6.10 Summary

This chapter discussed and interpreted the main findings in relation to the research questions, the wider literature, and the theoretical framework, which underpinned the fieldwork conducted for the study. The following chapter will consider the key findings, the implications, and the limitations of this study. It will also present some suggestions for future research and a few concluding remarks.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As detailed in Chapter 1, the present study was conceptualized with the aim of providing a better understanding of how NNS teachers in the Gulf states construct their identities as English teachers, as well as how the 'native speaker fallacy' and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers, impact upon the construction of these professional identities. Ultimately, the purpose behind the study was to understand the process(es) through which NNESTs can be empowered to recognize, acknowledge, and contest dominant, ideological discourses that position them as less than ideal, or incapable professionals. Thus, in light of the aims and the ultimate purpose of the study, this brief concluding chapter will first consider the key findings of the study. Following that, the implications of the study are considered. After that, the limitations of the study are described. Then, some suggestions for future research are presented. The chapter ends with a few concluding remarks.

7.1 The Key Findings of the Study

In response to the first research question, how NNESTs employed in the tertiary setting in the Arab Gulf states construct their professional identities, it was found that the participants considered themselves highly proficient users of the English language but did not view themselves as NSs of English. Moreover, the participants did not have any reservations in classifying themselves as NNSs; rather, they often expressed pride in their non-native identity. Thus, the participants' demonstrated positive and confident self-images as English teachers who were competent and highly proficient in the English language. The participants attributed the confident self-images to the investments they had made towards strengthening their knowledge base. However, the issue of a non-native identity was revealed to be more complex than it first seemed: the participants demonstrated confidence as well as concern about their linguistic abilities. They perceived a linguistic gap between themselves and their NS counterparts. However, what is significant is that this self-ascribed linguistic gap did not undermine them completely. Instead, the participants often managed to find ways in which to inhabit their non-native identity confidently and

construct themselves as effective teachers who do not have to be NSs. This finding contrasts with the findings of other studies where the participant NNESTs have described the dichotomy as confidence affecting, and related feelings of self-stigmatization stemming from the perception of their linguistic competence (Tang, 1997; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Rajagopalan, 2005; Bernat, 2008, Choe, 2008; Al Wadi, 2013; Chung, 2014). The Arabic speaking participants believed that the socio-cultural background that they shared with their students, as well as a good understanding of the local teaching context helped them to establish close bonds with their students.

In response to the second research question, how the native speaker fallacy and practices of employing native speakers over non-native speakers, impacted upon the construction of these professional identities, it was found that the participants experienced considerable discrimination. The participants spoke about hiring policies being greatly skewed against NNESTs in favour of NESTs. The participants also narrated being treated inequitably and unfairly in comparison to their NS counterparts in terms of promotions, the salary and perks they received, and the allowances they received to attend conferences. They also spoke about disparity and marginalization in terms of the opportunities and permission granted to attend conferences. The participants also perceived differential treatment in the manner in which NNESTs were addressed, and narrated encountering negative attitudes from their students. According to the participants, this discrimination arose from stereotyped judgements which positioned the NS as the superior, ideal and desirable target teacher, and in turn, the NNESTs as lacking, inferior, ignorant, and traditional. According to the participants, the stereotyped judgements that constructed NNESTs as the inferior Other related to areas such as NNESTs' speech, academic qualifications, and race.

Thus, while the participants had succeeded in transcending negative self-images and were able to rework a more positive teacher identity by rejecting the NS identity as the most advantageous, the stranglehold of negative stereotypes that were embedded in their wider ELT community [students, administrators, policy makers and NS colleagues] had confined them to being positioned as inferior teachers in relation to their NS counterparts. The negative stereotypes

not only reinforced the native speaker fallacy but also served as an instrument of control, coercion as well as repression of NNESTs. The fixity of the negative stereotypes had rendered the participants disempowered and marginalized in their profession, and had made it difficult and problematic for them to construct and negotiate identities as legitimate and credible teachers English. While the participants had come into the teaching profession with idealised images of teaching and teachers, the discourses of colonialism that created images of superior Self and the inferior Other appeared to have had a profound negative impact on the motivation and satisfaction of most of the participants of this study.

It should, however, be noted that the findings of this study are context-specific and relate only to the particular economic and political micro-context of the Gulf states whereby the urgency of transition to knowledge-and information- based economies has come to be tightly interwoven with an overwhelming dependence on curricula, and native English speaking faculty and staff imported from the Center (as outlined in section 2.2 of Chapter 2). As a result, these findings cannot be generalized to other contexts. Furthermore, all the participants of this study are well qualified NNESTs. As pointed out in section 2.2 of Chapter 2, the small number of teaching positions available to NNSs in well-established universities can result in competition among NNESTs. As a result, NNESTs who are employed in such institutions tend to be well-qualified professionals. It is therefore very likely that the participants' positive and confident perceptions of themselves as English teachers who were competent who were highly proficient in the English language would not be demonstrated by the other NNESTs who are not as qualified as the participants of this study. Consequently, it cannot be declared that the results reported here are representative of all the NNESTs in the Arab Gulf states or NNESTs in general.

7.2 Implications

Despite the critique furnished by many TESOL professionals (Paikeday, 1985; Rampton, 1990; Davies, 1991; Kachru, 1992; Swales, 1993; Cook, 1999; Mahboob, 2005) and institutional efforts such as the TESOL position statements in 1992 and 2006, it is worth noting that the native speaker ideology continues to permeate ELT in some parts of the world. The assumption that the ideal teacher is a NS dominates the ELT profession, and as a result some

NNESTs continue to face discriminatory hiring practices and struggle to assert themselves as legitimate teachers. This stranglehold of the NS fallacy suggests that persistent and aggressive measures are needed to make ELT a more just and ethical domain, where negative stereotypes of NNESTs are addressed, and more equal grounds for power are created. In other words, the fixity with which the negative stereotypes of NNESTs remain embedded in ELT indicates that displacing the negative representations requires altering the very “structures, (belief) systems, institutions, cultures, individuals, relationships” (Andreotti, 2007, p.77) that constitute ELT.

Clearing the cultural space of ELT of the imperialist polarities of Self/Other, Center/Periphery, and modern/traditional necessitates adopting a *deconstructive strategy* (Spivak, 1976). A deconstructive strategy is suitable because while it focuses on the “exposure of error”, it also constantly and persistently examines how truths are produced and “interrogates the operations that engender them and hold them in place” (Tibile, 2010, p.67). Such a deconstructive strategy in ELT has implications for both theory and practice. At the level of theory, there is a need to expand the focus on the negative representations of NNESTs that are manifest in everyday practice of ELT in some teaching contexts. It is argued that along with a focus on the origins and implications of such representations of NNESTs, there is also a need to develop a better understanding of the underlying factors that form the basis of such representations, namely, the historical, social, political and economic factors. While such an insight would help in understanding how the dominance of NESTs is reproduced and sustained in some contexts, it would also be useful in interrogating the colonial representations and challenging the discourses that sustain hierarchies and systems of control.

At the level of practice, this study raises the importance of making critical perspectives towards the NS/NNS dichotomy a mandatory component of TESOL curriculum and teacher education. This critical perspective should draw on local sources and discourses, in an attempt to explore and re-write histories. Engagement in critical perspectives that critique and question the dichotomy of the Self and the Other will not only be helpful in making NNSs and NSs aware of how they are represented in ELT, but also reveal the power relations that are embedded in these representations. This strategy of “unsettling the dominant

discourse from within” (Andreotti, 2011, p. 46) can help NNSs and NSs to value and learn from their differences and help them to engage ethically with each other. Thus, both TESOL education and teacher education should function as sites that allow ELT professionals to reflect “critically on the legacies and processes of their cultures and contexts, to imagine different futures and to take responsibility for their decisions and actions” (Andreotti, 2007, p. 77). It is believed that a “persistent critique of hegemonic discourses and representations as they inhabit them” (Andreotti, 2007, p. 74) will enable teachers as well as administrators to engage ethically with difference and create more equal grounds for dialogue.

At the level of policy, it is recommended that policy makers take aggressive measures to establish equity in hiring and professional practice. One of these measures relates to laying down explicit and strong laws that set academic credentials, teacher competence and teaching experience as the criteria for faculty employment. Such laws would need to be supplemented with follow-up measures so that the actual hiring policies followed by universities are examined regularly for the extent to which they adhere to equitable hiring policies. Essentially, this means that policy makers should focus on the skills and competencies that are conducive to enhancing the English language skills of students, as linking teaching practices and competencies with contested and isolated concepts such as NSs or NNSs are “reductionist and simplistic ways to construe teaching competencies with little or no consideration of the situated, historical, glocal, and transformative facets of their identities” (Selvi, 2014, p.587). The English proficiency of teachers should thus be viewed as a “plural system” that is no longer defined by the ambiguous notion of native versus non-native speakers but, instead, relies on distinctions such as “novice and expert” teachers (Canagarajah, 2005, p. xxvii).

Laying guidelines that prioritize and emphasize the skills and expertise of teachers in faculty recruitment has particular relevance for the Gulf states where world-class universities have been set-up with the purpose of establishing the “Arab Gulf as a heavyweight academic actor in the region” (Romani, 2009, p.2). The increased weightage to aspects such as accent, race, and even the passport carried, instead of the academic credentials of teachers, is incongruent with and even undermines the efforts towards establishing the Arab

Gulf states as modern, knowledge societies. In view of the fact that sophisticated professional learning communities seem to work best where teachers are highly skilled and qualified (Hargreaves, 2003), addressing the issue of quality of teachers assumes great significance in faculty recruitment. Furthermore, discrimination in hiring on the basis of race is incongruent with establishing a modern society. As Zafirovski (2011) reminds, equality, justice and inclusivity are constitutive values, or givens, in modern societies. Issuing guidelines that prioritize the expertise and skills of teachers, at practical levels, serve to enhance values such as equality, justice, inclusivity, egalitarianism, and professionalism in institutions and faculty recruitment.

Finally, establishing ELT as a just and inclusive domain also necessitates the issuing of strict guidelines by policy makers, that universities establish bodies where discriminatory behaviour experienced by faculty can be reported, investigated and resolved. In particular, matters such as discriminatory and unfair treatment in the profession, especially those relating to salary, perks, promotions, allowances and permission to attend and participate in conferences on the basis of race, colour, and national origin should be brought within the purview of such bodies. The ultimate goal of these bodies should be to support an inclusive environment, and equal opportunities for all English teachers. The aim, therefore, should be to redefine the fabric of ELT so that “the unique characteristics of the TESOL profession” can be utilized, “that is, the all-encompassing boundaries that welcome and serve individuals from any ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, or linguistic background” (Selvi, 2014, p. 598).

7.3 Limitations

The first limitation of this thesis is that my interviews took place at certain stages of the participants’ identity development, and as such they might not offer a holistic depiction of the participants’ identity development and construction. The lives and consequently the narratives of the participants began long before I arrived; similarly, their narratives will continue long after I have left. Clandinin & Connelly (2000) rightly observe that, in spite of all our efforts, narrative inquirers would always have the sense of having arrived too late and leaving too early a research setting. This is why narrative research will always have the sense of being “in the midst” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.154) of life histories regardless of the number or duration of the interviews conducted. Furthermore,

it is difficult for a single story “to capture the range and richness of people’s experiences” (Bruner, 1986, p. 146). Thus, the interviews offer but a brief glimpse into the overall professional experiences of the teachers participating in this project. However, each participant was given the freedom to add or remove any detail they considered significant or insignificant in their transcript by emailing me those changes throughout the period of the study.

The absence of participants from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain is another limitation. However, the ELT landscape of both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain closely resembles that of the other Gulf states. It can thus be said that the narratives that detail the professional identities of NNESTs in this study might strike a cord with NNESTs in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Another notable limitation of this study, as perhaps is the case with most of life narrative inquiry research, is the degree of truthfulness or falseness with which participants narrated the stories of their lives. There exists a possibility that narrators might ascribe intentions to actions after the event, exaggerate, rehearse stories or lie (Plummer, 1995). I am also aware that it is not possible for me to ascertain whether any important details about their lives, that shaped their professional selves, were deliberately altered or left out by any participant. However, I choose to remember that while it is possible that what I got from those interviews may not be “the whole truth”, I am confident that I got the stories the participants wanted to tell, and “that in itself tells us a good deal about what we really want to know” (Atkinson, 2002, p.136). Furthermore, the issue is not whether stories from narratives are facts, opinions or lies, what remains significant is the fact that what a narrative story can tell us, as well as what it does not tell us can open up avenues for research (Krog, 1999).

Perhaps the most significant limitation of the present study is closely related to the researcher’s subjective involvement in the construction of the life histories. Just as tellers have their own motives for framing their stories, in certain ways, “so do story receivers have their own agendas and priorities” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p. 130). In addition, a researcher's background and position affects “what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most

appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001, p. 483-484).

The participants and I have very similar professional backgrounds, and this surely coloured the lenses through which I was looking at all of them and weighed on the depth with which I explored some issues in the histories of their lives. I am, however, mindful that in their desire to help and change the world, researchers can harm through their own cognitive biases and blind spots. For this reason, I sought to acknowledge and monitor my own participation in the construction of the storied lives of my participants. I have acknowledged (see section 4.3) how my own preconceptions, beliefs, values, assumptions and position may have come into play during the research process. The use of a reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to record my methodological decisions and the reasons for them, the logistics of the study, and reflection upon what was happening in terms of my own values and interests helped me to monitor my own biases and locate blind spots in my work.

7.4 Suggestions for Future Research

In view of the findings and the limitations of this study, the following three suggestions are proposed for further studies.

This study focused on the perceptions of NNESTs employed in universities in the Gulf states. Given that, I believe that studies that explore other contexts such as the perceptions of NNESTs employed in the primary and secondary school in the Gulf states would provide further valuable insights into the identity constructions of NNESTs.

Another suggestion for extending the scope of the study includes examining administrators or recruiters' attitudes, beliefs, and hiring practices towards NNESTs in the Gulf states.



Finally, I believe that a follow-up study which includes the perceptions of a larger number of participants than this study— both citizens of the Gulf states and expatriate NNESTs, would further illuminate the identity constructions of NNESTs at the broader regional level

7.5 Concluding Remarks

This study aimed to fulfil various goals. The findings contribute towards a better understanding of the lived experiences of NNS teachers who come from diverse racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and the complex negotiations and constructions of their professional identities under the influence of the NS fallacy. It is hoped that this study has illustrated how the NS fallacy continues to position NNESTs as inferior teachers and subjugates them to various kinds of discrimination in the profession. It is hoped that this study will highlight the need for the reconfiguration of ELT as a more egalitarian, democratic and ethical profession. To conclude, this study was prompted by a very perceptible silence that surrounds the issue of inequitable and discriminatory practices that NNESTs face in the Gulf states. The stereotype of the NNS teacher as the inferior teacher is predominant in the Gulf states, but very rarely is this matter raised or interrogated in regional publications or conferences. I hope that with this research endeavour I have succeeded in disturbing some of that wilful silence.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL RESEARCH APPROVAL

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.</div>
 Graduate School of Education Certificate of ethical research approval MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <hr/> <p>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</p> <hr/>
<p>Your name: SABINA ASHRAF</p> <p>Your student no: 580041930</p> <p>Return address for this certificate: P.O. 123635, Dubai, UAE</p> <p>Degree/Programme of Study: EdD TESOL (Dubai)</p> <p>Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Philip Durrant and Dr. Alexandra Allan</p> <p>Your email address: sa332@exeter.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 00971503668701</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.</p> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"><div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div style="width: 60%;"><p>Signed: </p></div><div style="width: 35%; text-align: right;"><p>date: <u>27-08-13</u></p></div></div></div>
<hr/> <p><small>Chair of the School's Ethics Committee updated: March 2013</small></p>

Ethical Research Approval Form

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:

IDENTITY MATTERS: STORIES OF NON-NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES
UNDER THE SHADOW OF NATIVE-SPEAKERISM.

1. Brief description of your research project:

In recent years, scholars have highlighted the necessity of placing deliberation of language learning and teaching in its sociocultural, political, and historical contexts and to investigate issues of power, inequality, difference, resistance, class, race, and gender, which are viewed as deeply embedded in English language teaching (ELT) practice. As a response to this call, this thesis focuses on the professional identities of NNEST (non-native English-speaking) teachers whose professional standing in the field of TESOL and applied linguistics has historically been considered inferior or at best second-class in comparison to their native English speaking (NES) counterparts (Phillipson, 1992).

In the GCC countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman) English language institutions can be viewed as the locked office where only 'privileged' teachers can gain access (Ali, 2009). The oil boom of the 1960s generated extensive resources in the oil-producing, tax-free GCC. The shift in focus from sustenance to maintenance led to an emphasis on developing a skilled and educated local population. In recent years, the region has witnessed a proliferation of branch campuses from several major American, British and Canadian universities. When these institutions of higher education were being established in the GCC, their management and supervision was outsourced to American and Canadian professionals. Whether it is a precondition of the local authorities or a desire of the outsourced management, English teachers from the Outer and Expanding Circles have never filled teaching positions in well-established colleges and universities in the GCC (Ali, 2009). This is the case despite TESOL's fervent opposition to discrimination in hiring practices (Braine, 1999:xvi; TESOL Member Resolution Against Discrimination on the Grounds of Nationality, 1999). Institutions of higher education in the GCC are seen as perpetuating 'linguistic elitism' (Nayar, 1994) by continuing to show a marked preference for Western teachers of English, consequently marginalizing an entire group of teachers from non-Western countries even though they constitute the majority of English language teachers in the world (Canagarajah, 1999). My study aims to investigate the lived experiences of NNEST teachers in their workplace, and the complex negotiations and constructions of professional identities against the prevalent NNEST stereotype in the GCC countries. More specifically, the

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
undated: March 2012

following research questions guide my investigation;

- a. *How do NNES teachers, working at the tertiary level in the GCC countries, construct their identity as EFL professionals?*
- b. *How does the 'native speaker' norm impact the professional identity of the NNES teachers in the GCC countries?*
- c. *How do NNES teachers in the GCC countries. negotiate or resist perceptions of the superiority of the NES teachers?*

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

Participants in my study will consist of non-native English-Speaking teachers employed in federal or private tertiary institutions in the GCC countries.

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.**

See below.

4. anonymity and confidentiality

See below.

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:

Life history interviews are the main source of data collection in this study and the constant comparative method will be employed to develop an understanding of the data. Teachers employed in tertiary institutions in the GCC countries will be invited to take part in the study. Invitations for voluntary participation in my study will be posted on the TESOL Arabia members' list that reaches out to all paid members of TESOL Arabia (TESOL Arabia is a non- profit teachers' membership organisation devoted to the professional development of its members, who are mostly based in the UAE and the Gulf region). I will personally email all the voluntary participants and inform them about my research topic, the significance of their role in it, their time input, the research etiquette that will be followed and my contact details for further information. Participants residing in the UAE will be interviewed face-to-face whereas participants from the other GCC countries will be interviewed via Skype

Ethical issues related to the study will be carefully considered and I will comply with the guidelines for educational research as advised by BERA and the University of Exeter. The following ethical issues will be addressed and carefully adhered to throughout the study:

Consent to Participate

I will seek informed consent from each participant before collecting data. In the informed consent form, I will clearly address the purpose of the study, make the participants as aware as possible of what is involved for them in the study and guarantee the participants certain rights. It will include details about what the study is about; how and when the data would be collected; how analysis would be co-constructed with participants; where outcomes of the investigation would be published or presented; and how outcomes would be shared with participants. The researcher will assure all the research participants that data elicited from them would be treated in the strictest confidence and any information gathered would be used for research purposes only. The letters' contents will assure teachers that their identity will be withheld, seek their approval for recording the interviews, explain their right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

Anonymity

To protect participants' privacy from, I will emphasize that the data will be treated anonymously and confidentially. I will make special efforts to ensure that no school or individual is identified by name in any research reports or publications and pseudonyms will be used for all the participants involved in the study.

Lack of Harm, Detriment or Unreasonable Stress

It will be my aim to ensure that the investigation does not cause harm to the participants and that every participant feels that taking part in this study represents no threat to their personal and professional standing and well-being. In view of this, the invitation to participate will also stress on the following: a) voluntary nature of participation, b) anonymity and, c) right to withdrawal at any time whatsoever. Furthermore, the typed transcripts will be shared with the participants for their verification.

other measures

Participants' lives as well as their accounts will be treated with the utmost respect. The relational aspects of narrative research demands that attention should be paid to particular ethical matters as research texts are written. The research texts will thus be negotiated in ways that represent participants' lived and told stories respectfully and honours their narrative authority.

Questions relating to how deep I can 'delve' into the personal life experiences of the participants are going to be a recurring concern throughout the data collection phase. It will be my consistent effort to treat my participants with utmost respect and, questions about the private sphere will not be asked. In order to make the process of data collection comfortable and unobtrusive for participants, interview appointments will be scheduled at participants' convenience with consideration to their personal and professional commitments, comfort and mental status.

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

The interview data will be stored securely in the researcher's laptop at home and will be retained for a period of 10 years and then destroyed. The participants will be informed about the method and the time-period of data storage prior to data collection. Anonymity will be protected, by keeping a list of name and addresses as a Word file, then using pseudonyms to link this to the raw data.

Hard copy data, including signed consent forms and the document which matches names with pseudonyms will be stored in a locked cabinet or drawer; digital data will be stored in my password protected account on the University of Exeter U-drive while I remain a registered student; after this time it will be stored on a secure, password protected hard drive that is NOT portable (e.g. your personal PC, or a password protected account with a storage service such as dropbox).

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

N/A

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):

Such factors are not expected to arise in this project.

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: 1 Jan 2014 **until:** 30 Sept 2015

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
undated: March 2013

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature):

P. L. O. [Signature] date: 4/2/15

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: D/14/15/20

Signed: [Signature] date: 4/2/15
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE

Identity Matters: Stories of Non-native English-speaking Teachers' Experiences under the Shadow of Native-speakerism.

INVITATION

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the lived experiences of non-native English-speaking (NNES) teachers in their workplace, and the negotiations and constructions of professional identities in the Gulf region. This study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of an EdD TESOL degree (University of Exeter, UK) for Sabina Ashraf under the supervision of Dr. Philip Durrant and Dr. Alexandra Allan. The project has been approved by the Graduate School of Education's Ethics Committee.

This Participant Information Sheet will help you decide if you'd like to participate in the study. It sets out why the study is being conducted, what your participation would involve, what the benefits and risks to you might be, and what would happen after the study ends. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep. Please make sure you have read and understood all the pages.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

At present, an insight into NNES teachers' professional lives and identities are under-researched areas in the Gulf region. The study aims to create an understanding and acknowledgement of what it feels like to be an NNES teacher in the Gulf region today.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

In this study, you will be asked to participate in a life history interview. The main purpose of the life history interview will be to elicit a discourse that narrates the story of your life. Life-history interviews are generally more open and 'relaxed' and primarily focus around one question or invitation: 'Tell me about your life'. Questions such as, – 'Tell me about a time.....' 'How did it begin' and 'then

what happened' will also be used to invite you to translate your personal experiences into stories. The interview will last between one and two hours. You will have the freedom to choose the place and time of the interview. For the sake of data accuracy, audio recordings of the interview will be made. The research report will contain anonymised quotes of the participants. However, you will receive copies of the transcribed interview and you will also be given the opportunity to amend or comment on any aspect of the transcript. Thus, you will have the final say and determine what gets told and whether something stays the same or is changed. You will also be invited to review the research findings and interpretations made by me. The final research report will be shared with you by e-mail.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

Participation in this study is voluntary. Furthermore, you may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/destroyed. You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you. You also have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered. Audio recordings of the interviews will be made only upon getting your explicit permission for the same. If you have any queries as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

There are no known risks for you in this study. I cannot promise the study will benefit you but the information acquired from the study will help to develop a better understanding of how NNEST teachers' identities are constructed and how their identity formations are inscribed by sociocultural inequities. The study also gives you voice in the sphere of the English Language Teaching profession in the Middle East.

COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. While you will not incur any costs, no payment will be provided in recognition of your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

Participation in this study represents no threat to your personal and professional standing and

well-being. No school or individual will be identified by name in any research report or publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all the participants involved in the study. The data elicited from you will be treated in the strictest confidence and any information gathered will be used for research purposes only. Questions relating about the private sphere will not be asked. The interview data will be stored securely in the researcher's laptop at home, and will be retained for a period of 10 years and then destroyed. The study findings will be disseminated by means of presentations at conferences and publication. However, participants will not be identifiable in the publication of the results.

WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION OR IN CASE OF ANY CONCERNS?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the study at any stage, you can contact:

Name: Dr. Philip Durrant
Position: Research Supervisor

Email: P.L.Durrant@exeter.ac.uk

Telephone number: + 44(0) 1392 724974.

or

Name: Dr. Alexandra Allan
Position: Research Supervisor

Email: A.J.Allan@exeter.ac.uk

Telephone number: + 44(0) 1392 722881

APPENDIX 3: UNIVERSITY OF EXETER CONSENT FORM



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Title of Research Project: IDENTITY MATTERS: STORIES OF NON-NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES UNDER THE SHADOW OF NATIVE-SPEAKERISM.

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation and may also request that my data be destroyed

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

any information which I 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 I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information I give will be treated as confidential the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....

(Signature of participant)
(Date)

.....

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s): 050 3668701

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

Dr. Philip Durrant at P.L.Durrant@exeter.ac.uk or + 44(0) 1392 724974 or

Dr. Alexandra Allan at A.J.Allan@exeter.ac.uk or + 44(0) 1392 722881

* when research takes place in a school, the right to withdraw from the research does NOT usually mean that pupils or students may withdraw from lessons in which the research takes place

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 anonymised form.

Revised March 2013

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT PROFILE FORM

PARTICIPANT PROFILE FORM

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Nationality:
4. Education & any qualifications:
5. Teaching Experience:

Year	Institution	City	Courses Taught

APPENDIX 5: THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1) BACKGROUND

Tell me about yourself, your background:

- family
- cultural
- linguistic
- educational

For the remainder of the interview, I would like you to recall major events that stand out in relation to the areas that I will probe. I would like to know about critical episodes/ significant incidents set in a particular time and place. For each incident, describe in detail what happened, when and where it occurred, who was involved, how you were feeling. Try to explain the effect the incident had on the story of your life experiences and how it may define you.

- 2) I'd like you to tell me a little bit about how you became an English teacher and what brought you into the profession?
- 3) Looking back at your teaching profession can you think about the important elements that contribute towards effective English teaching? Please identify and describe any particular episode/s in your life-history that gave you the understanding why these elements contribute towards effective English teachers have.
- 4) If you were to tell someone about your self-efficacy as an English teacher what would you say?
- 5) How would you define yourself in light of the terms NEST and NNESTs? Why?
- 6) I would like you to describe how you compare your abilities with NESTs. Looking back over your life I would like you to recall:
 - i. Are there any advantages you have over them? Why?
 - ii. Are there any disadvantages you have over them? Why?
- 7) Do you believe that a degree acquired from the Center affects employability in the Gulf states? Why? / Why Not?
- 8) Do you have a degree/qualification from a Center university? Why/ Why not?
- 9) Looking back at your teaching career have you been confident about your pronunciation? Why/Why Not?
- 10) What role does accent play in ELT in the Gulf states according to you?
- 11) Have you ever changed or worked on your own accent during your teaching career? Why/Why Not?

- 12) Have you ever encountered a situation when you had to struggle to assert your identity as a legitimate teacher of English in view of the fact that you are an NNEST? What happened? When did it happen? How did you deal with the challenge? What were you feeling during this process? What impact did it have on you?
- 13) Would you say that it is possible to overcome perceptions of the superiority of the NS teacher in the Gulf states in the light of your own experiences as an English teacher so far? Can you narrate any incident/s which might explain why you believe so?
- 14) According to you what should be done to make ELT in the Gulf states a more equitable domain?

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