

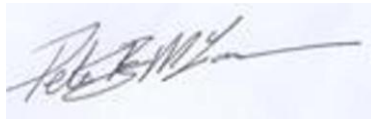
## English Medium in the United Arab Emirates: Serving Local or Global Needs?

Submitted by Peter Bowman McLaren to the University of Exeter  
as a thesis for the degree of  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The United Arab Emirates promotes English as the Medium of Instruction (hereafter referred to as EMI) at tertiary level, which results in many ‘content’ subjects being taught via English. Many institutions employ native English speaking teachers, referred to as either NESTs or NS, for language classes and insist that content teachers operate through this second or other language (L2), to the detriment of ‘non-native’ English speaking teachers in terms of recruitment, and also to the detriment of the students who must study their major subjects via a foreign language. NS teachers are expected to enforce a monolingual classroom environment where English is compulsory and use of the students’ first language is penalised. The U.A.E. is also engaged in spreading this monolingual culture to primary and secondary schools.

This mixed methodology study evaluates faculty and management perceptions of the English medium status quo and current concerns within the TEFL/ TESOL profession. As well as surveying faculty opinions via a quantitative questionnaire and then a qualitative appraisal of written comments, interviews with senior management aided a critical appraisal of so-called ‘common-sense’ (Tollefson, 2002) policies and assumptions. The quantitative stage indicated discrepancies between different groups of faculty and the qualitative analysis of written comments and interview data allowed for some, often contradictory, themes to emerge.

It will be suggested that many faculty were unconvinced that monolingual classroom environments were efficacious. EMI was challenged on the grounds that studying through another language adds to the learner’s cognitive burden (Troudi, 2009) and makes mastery of content subjects more difficult and contingent upon the student’s language skills. The management interviewees conceded these issues but felt that Content and Language

Integrated Learning in English was vital for students who must function in an increasingly globalised market place. Little thought was given to what this might mean for the status of Arabic.

It was recommended that Arabic should be reinstated as the medium of content instruction, that English be taught as a foreign language only, and that the way in which English is taught should be critically overhauled to make best use of the diverse skills of NESTs and NNESTs alike. It was also suggested that countries such as the U.A.E. are more likely to achieve the modernity they seek by following a model where the L1 is the language of instruction, while English fulfils its parallel role as a foreign language and international lingua-franca.

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## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Contemporary Situation

Tertiary education in the United Arab Emirates and in many neighbouring G.C.C. (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries, could well be considered as an example of what Findlow (2006, p.19), writing about the U.A.E. specifically, and the wider Arabian/ Persian Gulf context in general, has described as, “post-colonial educational bilingualism.”

This bilingualism is not always a form of additive, or positive, bilingualism, where the official, and native, language of the country and the post-colonial foreign, or second, language complement one another throughout all walks of life. It is more a form of ‘diglossia’ (Holmes, 1992), in which one way of speaking and writing, is seen as the dominant linguistic code and subsequently valued for serious, business-like activities, while the other code, is restricted to home, family, religious and ritual uses. This has the potential to make the post-colonial language of English the language of inter-, and sometimes intra-governmental and commercial discourse, while running the risk of downgrading the national language to a secondary role. This is not to deny that Arabic remains a vibrant and official language within the G.C.C. and retains various important governmental and official functions, it is just to clarify the current position where English has made significant inroads into areas that in many, but not all, other countries are the exclusive preserve of the national and/or official language. It is a situation that has not gone unremarked and has led to a degree of concern over the future of the Arabic language.



## 1.2 Tertiary Education in the United Arab Emirates

In the U.A.E. the three major state-backed providers of tertiary education: Zayed University, the United Arab Emirates University and the Higher Colleges of Technology all require that students follow their major courses through the medium of English. For obvious reasons these institutions have hitherto been required to provide English language classes to help their students deal with the rigours of tertiary level education in what is ostensibly a foreign language. In 2011 the United Arab Emirates University reversed a decision to do away with such preparatory or bridging courses deciding not to rely upon the state secondary system and other institutions to ‘deliver’ undergraduate students with suitable L2 language and other abilities. At the same time, the providers of these language support courses, and to a lesser extent, many content courses are often Native English Speaking Teachers, who are strongly encouraged to conduct classes exclusively through the medium of the students’ second language in an attempt to create an ‘English Only’ teaching and learning environment. That said, it should be noted at this stage that although an overwhelming majority of English language faculty at major U.A.E. institutions are NESTs, when it comes to content related subject areas the ratio of NESTs to NNESTs is considerably less biased in favour of mother tongue users of English. It is also important to state from the outset that the very terminology NEST/ NNEST is itself highly contentious, with the term NNEST being open to the charge that it discriminates linguistically against these teachers by stating categorically what they are *not* rather than what they are: most likely bilingual in this case. However, as a majority of the literature on this issue uses these terms and does not usually do so in a consciously pejorative sense it is perhaps best to use these easily recognizable and understood terms. This will be done in a manner that implies no concept of deficiency and is simply used to distinguish those who are teaching their own mother tongue from those who are not. Not all NESTs will

be monolingual and not all NNESTs will share the students L1 after all, so it is a very fluid concept.

### 1.3 Challenges to NEST Hegemony

That said, such seemingly NEST-biased practices can, and have been, challenged on a variety of fronts. From Phillipson (1992; 2009), who views the imposition of English only curricula and classroom practices, as nothing more than a self-serving ‘fallacy’, and a variant of what he terms ‘linguicism’; to such as Pennycook (2001, p.56), who remains wary of the supposed “liberal complementarity,” suggested above. The latter concept presupposes a situation where learners can, in theory, select whichever code suits their current linguistic context and switch seamlessly from one to the other. Additionally, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995) would remind us that they view the imposition of a foreign language through a nation-state or ethnic group’s schooling as an issue of basic ‘Linguistic Human Rights.’

Indeed, Findlow (2006, p. 21), very much in line with Foucauldian (1989) views of the reproduction of social ‘discourses’ and Bernstein’s (1971) concept of a heavily regulatory ‘curriculum,’ would also remind us that such educational and language policies are, by their very nature, highly politicised decisions:

Deciding on a linguistic medium for a HE curriculum, therefore, is a decision not only about the availability of materials and staff and demands of the marketplace, but also about which society’s values to transmit; language teachers are in fact ‘teachers of culture’ (Byram and Resiger, 1999, p.6).

A historical line of persistent cultural chauvinism, deriving from colonial and

neo-colonial heritages, has been traced behind the link between English-language teaching and the study of other societies (Pennycook, 1994).

Equally EMI is not necessarily the one and only, or even the most obvious, option for countries coming to grips with rapid modernisation and the challenges of globalisation. Such language policies are often imposed from elsewhere for a myriad of political, cultural and often post-colonial reasons. Karmani (2005) sees an emerging nexus, linking the teaching of English, the spread of English language discourse patterns, and a neo-colonial mind-set, with political questions concerning who controls the flow of Mid-Eastern oil. He further highlights neo-conservative beliefs that ‘more English’ will lead inexorably to ‘less Islam’, thus making the region more compliant with ‘Western’ or, more narrowly, what is perceived to be, ‘U.S.’ demands and interests.

In a similar vein, Tollefson (2004, p.4) suggests that medium of instruction policies are rarely the product of reasoned and democratic debate. He believes that we must:

...understand the social and political implications of particular policies adopted in specific historical contexts. In order to do so, we must distinguish between the discourse of policy debate and the consequences of policies. Too often, policy documents and the rationales offered for them by policymakers and state authorities are taken at face value. A critical perspective towards language policy emphasizes the importance of understanding how public debates about policies have the effect of precluding alternatives, making state policies seem to be the natural condition of social systems (see Fairclough, 1989).

#### 1.4 The Rationale

Therefore, such concerns suggested the initiation of a small scale piece of research; following on and building on a previous study conducted in Saudi Arabia (McLaren, 2008) into English medium language policies and the concomitant practices and policies that support such decisions in the United Arab Emirates. It was also the case that although an increasingly large body of literature is now available on the subjects of English as the medium of instruction (see Tollefson and Tsui, 2004) and the role of the non-native English teacher (Braine, 1999; Davies, 2003 and Llurda, 2006, amongst others), such literature tends to be dominated by research into these topics conducted in East Asian contexts such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, which are all classic examples of post-colonial societies, or in the United States. The recent work of Troudi (2009; 2011) on the detrimental effect of EMI on Arabic language and identity and the difficulties inherent in taking on the ‘additional burden’ of learning through an L2; and Coombe and Al-Hamly (2007) on student perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs in Kuwait, go some way to redressing the balance. However, such issues still remain largely unchallenged by educational managers in a GCC context. As a result the existing status quo, where tertiary EMI and all that follows from that, is presented as nothing more than a common sense approach to delivering high quality education and subsequent employment opportunities. However, whether this educational approach and subsequent employment opportunities serve the needs of local companies, or the more globalised needs of major multinationals and also the economic and political concerns of major world powers, such as the United States, is a question rarely asked let alone answered.

While it was not a prejudice that there would necessarily be discrepancies between policy-makers, management and faculty perceptions, it was clearly an area of considerable

interest. The institution in question, and others like it throughout the U.A.E., teaches content subjects through the medium of English, supported by stand alone English language courses. The faculty range from a majority of native English speaking language and content teachers (NESTs), to a minority of non-native English speaking language and content teachers, some of whose L1 is Arabic. Given this situation it is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that a variety of opinions, concerning the macro-, and more micro-, manifestations of language policy would emerge. As above, it is worth noting that a larger number of content teachers than English language faculty are often non-native English speakers, sometimes also L1 Arabic speakers and this perhaps reflects an unchallenged belief that native speakers are somehow innately 'better' at teaching their own L1. However, even where content, and occasionally language teachers, share the students' L1 it is still very much a blanket policy across all of the U.A.E.'s state-backed tertiary institutions that such individuals should conduct their lessons in English, using English language materials and mediate in English between themselves and their Arabic speaking students.

The aim of this study was to highlight different perceptions of the official policy from faculty, management, and policy makers and then to analyse, in a qualitative manner, why such opinions and discrepancies might exist, and how they could be utilised to shape future language planning and educational policy.

The rationale behind this particular piece of research grew out of increasing personal and professional unease with the underlying assumptions informing much English language and content subject teaching in the United Arab Emirates, and, by extension other Arabian/Persian Gulf countries. This was especially the case within the G.C.C. where a degree of similarity in each respective country's main economic activity, linguistic, cultural, religious,

historical and socio-political heritage could be, at least tentatively, be assumed. All G.C.C. countries, that is Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, operate higher educational policies that envisage their graduates taking up positions largely within their own countries but in an increasingly technological and, perhaps more importantly, internationalised, workplace. Indeed, the very ‘mission statement’ of one such institution in the U.A.E. aims at ‘producing’ graduates who:

...will have the linguistic ability to function effectively in an international environment; the technical skills to operate in an increasingly complex technological world; the intellectual capacity to adapt to constant change, and the leadership potential to make the fullest possible contribution to the development of the community for the good of all its people.

All of which sounds laudable, especially when the preamble includes a desire to accomplish this within a “context of sincere respect for all beliefs and values.” However, for ‘linguistic’ ability, we could quite practicably substitute the word ‘English’ and it would make no real difference to the policy being undertaken. Equally, despite the seemingly worthwhile desire to educate these undergraduates towards serving their local, national and regional communities, the fact that they would do so, in keeping with the criticisms of Karmani (2005), and Findlow (2006) above, by adopting technological and leadership skills most commonly associated with other, outside, *modus operandi* – that is with so-called, ‘Western’ technological, business and even discursive patterns – asks as many questions as it appears to answer.

It is also of note that there have been moves amongst English teaching practitioners and their various professional bodies to challenge not only NEST biased recruitment policies, but even to challenge the very distinction itself. In this case challenging the very fact that a trained educator can be categorised according to their mother tongue first and foremost rather than their other professional abilities. However, it still remains the case in the wider Gulf region that many institutions will advertise, especially for language teaching faculty, with the stipulation that candidates must be native English speakers. Thus, while great steps forward have been taken by such as Braine (2004) in helping to form a caucus of non-native TESOL professionals, the gains made in certain parts of the World are not, as yet, fully appreciated or embraced in the Gulf region in general, or the U.A.E. in particular.

### 1.5 The Study: Constraints and Compromises

It was originally conceptualised that a number of student responses would serve as a comparative measure. Indeed, it would have been most illuminating to see if the student body felt the same way as their teachers and educational managers about English as their medium of instruction; the native/ non-native issue; the use of Arabic in the classroom; and other larger social issues, such as the predominance of English in their future workplaces. However, it proved to be impossible to obtain such potentially worthwhile data. Such is the highly emotive and political nature of research that seeks, even modestly, after Tollefson (1995, p.2), “to explore the relationship between language policy and language education with a particular emphasis on power and inequality,” that access to students and their opinions was not approved by the institution in question, leaving faculty and management as the only available resource.

Though not insurmountable this prohibition highlights the highly sensitive nature of critical language, and language policy, research and flies in the face of Popper's (1995, p.143) noble assertion that, "the secret of intellectual excellence is the spirit of criticism; it is intellectual independence." However, in carrying out such research it is, of course, imperative to maintain high ethical standards and not to lose sight of the fact, neatly summarised by Tsui and Tollefson (2004, p. 2), of:

...the centrality of medium-of-instruction policy in socio-political processes.

The language of a nation, or an ethnic group, is often a symbol of its identity and allegiance, and an embodiment of its values, culture and traditions. Medium of instruction is the most powerful means of maintaining and revitalising a language and a culture; it is the most important form of intergenerational transmission (Fishman & Fishman, 2000)

### 1.6 Challenges to EMI Policies

It is no surprise to find voices (Al Askari, 2001; Troudi, 2009; 2011), once quite muted but growing in stridency, that question the very concept of tertiary education in G.C.C. states being conducted almost exclusively in a foreign language. Medium of instruction policies are a vital tool for (re)invigorating, maintaining and strengthening a language and its attendant cultural aspects. One extremely important aspect of this, in the case of Arabic, is the close tie between the Arabic language and Islamic religious observance. If that is so, then any policy decision to 'impose' a medium of instruction that utilises an unrelated foreign language, in effect the language of 'outsiders' with all of its one time 'colonial' connotations, is bound to cause a degree of unease. In an interview (16<sup>th</sup>, March, 2008) in the United Arab Emirates



published 'Gulf News' entitled 'It is not acceptable to drop Arabic language from our lives', Ahmed Humaid Al-Tayer, Chairman of the U.A.E. National Human Resource Agency condemned the English medium practices of two of the U.A.E.'s largest state sponsored tertiary providers. He believed that the institutions in question were:

...established to fill a gap in graduates for middle-management staff and technicians in the country. It has never been meant to produce graduates taught in English in order to cater to the labour market in their own country. This must be clear.

Al-Tayer's concerns echo those of Karmani (2005), and Findlow (2006), among others, who view the imposition of English medium studies onto a predominantly Arab and Muslim population as being about far more than giving Arab nations, such as the U.A.E., Saudi Arabia, etc. access to an increasingly globalized world market. It is just such concerns that have informed this research throughout.

It is significant that although the U.A.E. has been following an English Medium tertiary programme for quite some time now, with the oldest of the state-backed tertiary providers now well into its third decade of operating such a policy, there remains very little debate as to the efficacy and suitability of this approach. Indeed, in many ways, albeit sometimes piecemeal, the national and provincial educational authorities have often sought, and are seeking still, to expand EMI and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching and learning in both the primary and secondary sectors. All high school students are required to take a common English examination in order to gain entry to university or college and these

institutions themselves often seek external accreditation and validation from overseas, Anglophonic, agencies.

Yet where results and attainment levels in subject areas such as Mathematics fail to live up to expectation, the primacy of EMI, and the considerable challenge that engaging with a body of knowledge in a foreign language must entail, is rarely, if ever challenged and debated by those who have the power to influence or change policies. The assumption appears to be not that the policy itself might be in any way questionable, but that it is simply not being carried out efficiently enough. This conclusion often leads to further resources, financial and human, being spent in an attempt to raise the standards of EMI, EFL and those who are charged with teaching and learning in such an educational milieu. It is an assumption that would be challenged by such as Kirkpatrick (2009), who argues that, especially at younger ages, children must be competent readers and writers in their own language before they can be expected to make any realistic progress with a second language and other subject material delivered via the L2 medium of instruction. And indeed Kirkpatrick's findings in South-East Asia (Hong Kong, Vietnam, etc.) are borne out by movements in Malaysia to reverse the high tide of EMI and bring more content courses into the realm of the native language. This is done in order to raise standards and levels of attainment in subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

### 1.7 The Research Questions

An integral part of any medium of instruction policy decision must obviously concern the actual language of instruction that is chosen. Additionally, a secondary area of interest is those who teach in and through that language, and everything that follows on from that

including NEST/ NNEST recruitment policies, students' perceived preferences for certain language teaching approaches, English only, English 'immersion', etc. The issue of EMI is dealt with in research question one (1), where faculty perceptions concerning the efficacy of the EMI policy are sought and compared across distinct groups within the faculty body.

In the following research questions the term 'content' refers to the students' major field of study, e.g. Business Studies, Information Technology or Engineering, while 'language' classes are by default English language tuition. The management interviewees referred to are from supervisory level and above. This means that they are not currently classroom practitioners, and it also includes the senior management of the institution. The term 'benefit' is used to ascertain whether respondents felt that the students were gaining an advantage from studying through the medium of English as compared to the level of progress they might be expected to make if studying through the medium of their L1. The choice of the term 'perceptions' was deemed to fit more closely within the interpretive framework that runs through the qualitative strand of this mixed methodology research.

Research question one (1) covers the central area of English as the medium of content instruction. The question of English only teaching and learning environments, regardless of who does the teaching, constitutes research question two (2), while the issue of NEST/ NNEST recruitment, retention, and perceived status is dealt with by using similar comparisons across groups in research question three (3). Research question four (4) concerns the perceived professional skills and abilities of both NEST and NNESTs. The final research question (5) seeks to verify the extent to which the perceptions of the management group are similar to the responses offered by faculty and what implications these perceptions might have for EMI, English only, and other related policies.

- 1) Do faculty members at a certain U.A.E. tertiary institution perceive that English medium studies are suitable and of benefit to the students in terms of their content knowledge learning?
- 2) Do faculty members at the same institution perceive that English only teaching and learning environments are suitable and effective in both content and language learning classes?
- 3) Do faculty members at this institution perceive that employing Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) is suitable and effective for either content or language learning classes.
- 4) Do faculty perceptions of NEST and NNEST teachers' respective abilities influence these responses?
- 5) How do the perceptions of senior management at this institution coincide with faculty perceptions and how does this influence the EMI/ English only teaching and learning environment?

In research questions 1-3 (see chapter 4 – Methodology) the questions contain subsections that probe more carefully the differences between sub-groups within the faculty body. In this the potential differences of opinion between English language and content subject teachers; NESTs and NNESTs; more highly qualified members of faculty and less highly qualified members of faculty and also between more and less experienced faculty.

The comparison of distinct groups was based upon an older piece of research (see McLaren, 2008), where it was postulated that, for example, NESTs may well have different views, or perceptions, from NNESTs; newer entrants to the profession might have considerably different views to teachers who have been practitioners for a considerable length of time, and so on. This latter case is a good example of the complexity of the issue as it could be equally well argued that newer, thus less experienced, teachers would come to the task with more ‘modern’, ‘up-to-date’ ideas and have engaged with the latest research on these issues, while, at the same time it would not be unreasonable, if contradictory, to suggest that newer entrants to the profession might well be more orthodox in their views than teachers who have participated in EMI, or other, educational environments for a longer time. Therefore, the statistical comparisons of these distinct pairings was designed in order to mitigate against the researcher simply interpreting the data to fit in with any pre-conceived notions. Although used primarily to indicate areas of interest that could be followed up with a closer, more qualitative, appraisal, the comparisons across differing groups allowed for any significant differences of perception to come from the data itself and not due to any particular preconceptions.

The division of faculty responses by L1 (NEST or NNEST) is self-evident, whereas the division by qualification compared the perceptions of those with a relevant Masters degree or more, with the perceptions of those faculty who did not hold a relevant degree of that level. The distinction concerning years of experience was drawn at 10 years of relevant teaching experience. This was based upon a previous study (McLaren, 2008) where a similar cut off point had proved of use in dividing members of faculty.

## 1.8 Methodological Orientation and Organization of Chapters

This study aims to answer the questions posed above by adopting a mixed method approach that seeks to first highlight areas where the difference of perception between the two groups compared is of statistical significance. Once such areas of differing perception have been identified they will be explored in a more qualitative and thus interpretive manner seeking out the reasoning and justifications cited as being behind these particular responses. Before doing so it is of course important that this study first describes the educational and political context in which it was undertaken, in order to fully understand the unique circumstances encountered in a well-resourced, well-funded, yet still fledgling educational environment, and the social forces such as the Emiratisation drive, which have helped to shape that environment. This constitutes Chapter Two.

Chapter Three reviews the salient literature, from those concerned with EMI policies: Spolsky (2004) and Tollefson (1991; 1995), for example; through research evaluating the efficacy of English only environments (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002 and 2006); to researchers such as Medgyes (1994) and Braine (1999) on the Native/ Non-Native debate in English language teaching. It is debate where the qualities offered by many NNESTs are still often marginalised in comparison with their NEST colleagues and peers.

The following Chapter (Four) describes the methodology employed. This was a mixed method approach designed to benefit from a quantitative stage that focuses and guides a later more detailed, qualitative, analysis of the data gathered from surveys and interviews. This approach was adopted in order not to limit the analysis and interpretation of the data to either a wholly empirical view, nor to an interpretive approach that could be open to criticism on

the grounds that the researchers' own presumptions have coloured that analysis and interpretation to an unacceptable extent. Pring (2000, pp. 56-57) demonstrates his belief in the compatibility of mixing methods and methodologies when he states that, " In some respects people are the 'object of science' – of generalizations and causal explanations. In other respects, however, they escape such explanations through interpreting the world in their personal ways." This study seeks to allow a degree of quantification, leading to tentative generalizations where possible, prior to an interpretive review of the written statements and interview transcripts. However, it is almost, if not, impossible to conduct any piece of research without the assumptions, concerns and background of the researcher having a degree of influence over the topic, methodology and analysis and interpretation of the data. In this case that was never the intention. Following Pennycook's (2001, p. 5) assertion that a critical approach to applied linguistics, "always concerns how the classroom, text, or conversation is related to broader social cultural and political relations," this study set out to problematize the issue of English Medium Instruction in the U.A.E. and similar contexts, and, as such, can be considered to be influenced by a critical stance.

Chapter Five will deal with the analysis of this data. There then follows a discussion of that analysis (Chapter Six), before, finally, a concluding chapter (Seven) that will discuss the implications of these findings for EMI and the native speaker driven, English only environment that currently supports these policies, ending with suggestions and recommendations as to how we might seek to go forward in a more focussed, research driven and equitable way.

## CHAPTER TWO – CONTEXT

An educational system that precludes the study of a variety of major subjects, leading inexorably to employment in that field, by means of the students' 'mother' tongue might find it hard to reconcile such a system and its attendant policies with, 'respect' for all the beliefs and values of their immediate constituency let alone anyone exhibiting a more troublesome demographic. Interestingly, the Syrian Arab Republic, at least prior to its recent internal political troubles, a Mid-Eastern country currently operating outside of any direct U.S., or demonstrably Anglophone, influence, takes a different approach to tertiary education. Syria's major universities such as those in Damascus and Homs offer most undergraduate and graduate degrees via the medium of Arabic language instruction. At the same time English instruction, sometimes leading towards internationally recognised examinations, such as those conducted by the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), often continues parallel to Arabic Medium Instruction in other content subjects. This should really come as no great surprise as indeed the vast majority of countries worldwide conduct, for obvious reasons, the bulk of their primary, secondary and tertiary education through the medium of their mother tongue. It is not Syria and other like minded countries, including countries where English is the L1 or majority language, that are doing anything different or strange, but rather the countries who adopt an educational model based upon study in, and through, a foreign L2 that are experimenting with a non-standard model.

This model, or context, will be described by looking at the current situation in the United Arab Emirates. This description leads into a short section on the policy of Emiratisation one of the main driving forces behind the promotion of EMI in the UAE; before considering how all these influences shape the actual classroom context under discussion. There will also be a



section describing the respondents and interviewees and their immediate teaching environment.

Spolsky (2004, p. 46), although writing mainly about countries where demographic, rather than ‘foreign’ language, pressures come to bear on language policy, reminds us of the centrality of medium of instruction policies, where:

(O)f all the domains of language policy, one of the most important is the school...Language acquisition policy, more commonly known as language education policy will be found to be a crucial issue...When and where schools exist, they take over from the family the task of socialization, a central feature of which is developing the language competence of young people.

Although by school, Spolsky (2004) was referring largely to elementary and high school level, it remains a valid point. ‘English only’ type policies in the GCC region clearly have the, albeit often unintended, effect of marginalising the language of the regional religion. This bucks the usual sociolinguistic trend and results in the language of the home and family losing out in favour of the language, modes of operating and behavioural aspects of the predominant global lingua-franca. In this case English.

### 2.1 Context: The United Arab Emirates

A review of educational policy documents and mission statements prepared and published by the U.A.E.’s three state-sponsored providers of higher, or tertiary, education exhibits an

unchallenged and ‘taken for granted’ assumption that an English medium curriculum is deemed to be very important. Its importance lies not only in the sense of preparing graduates to operate effectively in a globalized international business and leisure environment, but, in line with Findlow’s (2006) comments above, it is part of a ‘deliberate’ attempt to inculcate a ‘Western’ pedagogical and wider *modus operandi*. Interestingly this has not always been the case with the oldest of the state tertiary providers, the United Arab Emirates University gradually moving from fewer to a greater number of courses being taught via EMI than was the case in the past when Arabic featured as the medium of instruction for several majors: agriculture, public relations, etc. The Higher Colleges of Technology, on the other hand, started out as a more vocationally focussed and predominantly English medium institution when it was formed in the late 1980s, perhaps reflecting a paradigmatic shift in the global and educational outlook of the U.A.E. More recently, Zayed University’s (2008) ‘Self-Study Report’, part of a drive from the university to seek overseas (U.S.) accreditation, states quite categorically (2008, vi) that:

The University’s philosophy, pedagogy, faculty, and administration reflect experiences in the United States and the West. A U.S. model of higher education is being adapted to fit and serve the country, and at the same time the style and substance of that model is influencing higher education in the U.A.E. and is contributing to national development.

It is a situation that is partly facilitated by (2008, x), “experienced graduate faculty from quality partner universities in the U.S. and U.K.” Further to this seemingly generally accepted view is the apparent desire, according to the Zayed University ‘Self-study Report,’ of the U.A.E.’s leadership to embrace such supposed benefits of ‘Western’ educational culture.

Page one (2008, p.1) of the same document credits the ‘national leadership’, with, “deliberately embracing the values embodied in the best U.S. higher educational practices...,” and of having, “...encouraged the University to seek accreditation from one of the U.S. regional agencies.” At no point in this document, or in the university’s published mission and vision statements, is any *raison d’être* put forward explaining or justifying the university’s, indeed the country’s, decision to adopt a higher education system purporting to emulate the best practices of U.S., or more generally, ‘Western,’ educational norms. The unstated assumption, no doubt, is that if it comes from what is perceived to be a developed nation and offers the additional benefit of tapping into the lingua-franca of the increasingly globalized business and educational world then it must be for the best. Education itself, of course, constitutes a enormous business market too.

Unsurprisingly, though not at such great length, the other state tertiary institutions make similar claims, and have similar aspirations for their undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. The Higher Colleges of Technology, a multi-centre tertiary institution with both male and female campuses in all but one Emirate, follows an administrative and pedagogical system largely based upon the Canadian Community College model and openly states as part of its mission statement that all of its programmes are delivered through the medium of English. The United Arab Emirates University, as part of its 2008-2012 Strategic Plan, whilst still incorporating Arabic fluency and notions of cultural respect alongside a desire to conduct classes through the medium of English, also seeks validation and accreditation from outside the region. The ‘vision’ statement put forward in this document concludes by stating that U.A.E.U. will, “ensure the quality of all programmes and services through international accreditation and external quality assurance reviews.”

Therefore, the status quo in the GCC, or more narrowly the U.A.E., can be characterised as one where top down decisions such as the decision to have English as the medium of instruction have been accepted in a largely unquestioning manner. Findlow (2006, p. 33), believes that the widespread economic and social gains across the U.A.E. for most ‘national’ citizens in the modern era have prevented, or at least forestalled, any real debate as to the efficacy of English as the medium of instruction. She also does not envisage any debate concerning the wider anthropological impact of studying ‘real world’ subjects through an ostensibly foreign language. She puts it baldly when adding that, “(T)his appears to be because the anthropological perspective of ‘loss’ is quite remote from the socio-economic or pragmatic concerns of the average UAE citizen.”

As far as these U.A.E. citizens are concerned, whether they approve of it or not, a lot of these far reaching decisions with implications for their own education, future career and life in general have already made for them before they enter the educational system. Emirati citizens receive a free compulsory education at both primary and secondary level which was conducted until recently mainly through the medium of Arabic. Although some select schools are beginning to require that Mathematics and Science are taught through the medium of English. This education, until the recent ‘licensed teacher’ initiative in Abu Dhabi Emirate; the largest and wealthiest of the seven Emirates; was, and in many cases still is, conducted mainly by Arabic speaking teachers, whether Emirati or other Arabic speaking expatriates. It should be noted here that teaching remains a mainly low prestige occupation, especially for men, and cannot compete financially with other public sector jobs, for example in government departments. Equally, the expatriate teachers are often criticised by the national media (see the National newspaper, 21/06/2011, for examples) as being poorly skilled, under-qualified and generally lacking in the requisite pedagogical strategies to be effective teachers.

Whether such criticisms are fair or not, it is hardly conducive to encouraging talented individuals to move into a profession that is characterised as poorly remunerated and of low prestige. The end result of this process is the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) examinations that place students according primarily to their English and Mathematics grades as either direct entry candidates for university or college degree courses, or, in the majority of cases, into the aforementioned foundations or bridging programmes so that they can reach a level of L2 literacy and numeracy consistent with studying courses in Information Technology, Applied Business, Interior Design, Electrical Engineering and similar through the medium of English. Obviously, other major courses of study are available to students across the U.A.E. depending on the institution they enter, but those listed above represent the core subjects on offer at the institution where this research was undertaken. It is an institution that has recently been moving away from two year vocational diplomas towards offering four year Bachelor's degrees in these subjects. Thus mapping out a course whereby a student entering into the lowest of the foundations cohorts would require two years of foundational study before embarking upon a further four years of degree level study. It is a considerable length of time which might arguably be shortened if mastering an L2 were not a pre-requisite for further study.

Despite a plethora of initiatives and new models, including the most recent imported from Finland, and a recently aborted plan to close the University General Requirements Unit at the U.A.E.U. after the assumption that it should by now be superfluous was reviewed, the desired success of English language teaching and the select use of EMI in Mathematics and Science classes has not resulted in the language and other proficiencies hoped for. Therefore, it is perhaps fair to say that for many learners it is still the case that they arrive at an English medium tertiary institution ill-prepared for the rigours of an EMI curriculum. As a result they

are assumed to require a lengthy and expensive ‘remedial’ or foundational period. It is a period of study usually only offered to foreign, or minority, students in educational systems where the language of the country is the same as the language of instruction.

## 2.2 Emiratisation

Another major driving force behind the imposition of EMI policies in higher education and the desire to eventually spread this approach to both secondary and elementary schools is the U.A.E. government’s policy of Emiratisation. This policy is similar to other programmes in neighbouring countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait, amongst others. It is intended to redress the imbalance created by comparatively newly wealthy countries calling on a large number of foreign employees to fill gaps in the labour market which initially, at least, nationals of that country are ill prepared to carry out. That is until, it is assumed, the educational attainment and work-related skills of native Emiratis is sufficient to fill these gaps in the labour market. Godwin (2006, p.8) defines this attempt at redressing the imbalance thus:

Emiratization is an affirmative action quota driven employment policy that ensures UAE nationals are given employment opportunities in the private sector. The policy is a UAE government decree which imposes employment quotas on various business sectors with financial penalties for non compliance.

This, no doubt, well-meaning policy implemented by the independent but government backed Tanmia agency is, according to the same author (Godwin, 2006, p. 9), not very popular with the private sector as it, “is treated as a form of taxation.” Additionally, the success of

Emiratisation in the government sector, where national citizens receive lucrative salaries and what is perceived as better working terms and conditions has conspired against making private sector employment particularly attractive to Emirati nationals. Al-Ali et al. (2008), citing a 2005 report, put the percentage of Emiratis employed in the private sector at that time at a mere 1% of the total, while Randeree (2009, p. 3) estimated that out of the total workforce, “only 12% of employees in the UAE are Emirati nationals.” Randeree (2009, p.11) goes on to posit the opinion, based upon his own prior research, that the UAE leadership seeks more than to simply fill existing posts with Emirati nationals and is looking to the future when reliance upon oil revenues cannot be assumed and a more inclusive knowledge based economy will emerge culminating “in the production of a strategy that reflects the real needs for the nation, rather than achieving Emiratisation through the imposition of targets and quotas based on false expectations.”

However, well intentioned and laudable though such a global and inclusive outlook might be, we might still ask if there did not remain several of Randeree’s (2009, p.11) “false expectations.” Al-Ali et al. (2008) are quite categorical in their belief that not only is mastery of the English language paramount for Emiratisation and also the UAE’s globalising project to work, but that to date it is not really succeeding. When discussing the various barriers, cultural, gender, economic, etc. to the success of the Emiratisation drive Al Ali et al. (2008) highlight the fact that too many Emirati nationals lack the skills to fulfil many current job opportunities in the private sector, let alone take on the roles envisaged in Randeree’s (2009) modern, inclusive vision. Chief amongst these lacks, or barriers, is the perceived need to use English fluently to succeed academically and also in the work place. They summarise their findings thus:

English language fluency and clear communication in business parlance is paramount internally and externally...The survey results showed that the English language in (the) private sector organisations prevents UAE nationals from being competitive and getting promotion. Therefore, English fluency has enormous impact on career development...English language training throughout the school should be the main intervention sought from the UAE government. (Al-Ali et al., 2008, p.14)

This is, of course, a stance that presupposes, in an unquestioning manner that in the modern, international, indeed, globalised workplace employees must use English to achieve their professional goals. Little if any thought seems to have been given to the fact that job opportunities, promotions, etc. in a local workplace in a predominantly Arabic speaking country will be dependent upon and mediated through an entirely foreign language.

### 2.3 The Teaching and Learning Context

The UAE finds itself in a situation where the international-looking, oil-based economy flourishes and students entering tertiary education do so cognisant of the need to study in, and through, English in order to take their place in supporting sectors of that economy such as Banking, Medicine, Business, etc. It is a straightforward equation, supported largely by imported teaching staff, English medium instruction and often English only policies in such tertiary institutes. However, the reality of the situation is that many students arrive fresh from high school with an insufficient grasp of the medium of instruction that it is, rather optimistically, hoped an 'orientation' or 'foundation' year will rectify. Students are then taught by many teachers who do not share their own language or cultural background, and are



therefore expected to fit in with the ‘foreign’ teachers’ and administrators’ ways of operating. This is a situation that can lead to teachers being forced to simplify ‘content’ courses or rather (see Bielenberg, 2004) dramatically rethink their L1 teaching strategies to supply a high degree of linguistic, and other, assistance. The end result of which, unless in exceptional circumstances, is rarely the hoped for cohort of graduates with sufficient bilingual and bicultural abilities, a competent grasp of the requisite technical or leadership skills, or the well-honed intellectual capacities desired by, and hopefully resulting from, such policies.

Of course, there are occasions when such graduates are forthcoming, and the above is not to dismiss entire generations of Emirati and other GCC students but rather to pinpoint the extreme challenges of studying and learning complex subject matter through the medium of another language. Findlow (2006, p. 33) implied that many U.A.E. nationals may be content to follow such courses thanks to the prestige associated with learning and using English, and clearly the ability to, “tap into bilingual resources,” is a much coveted ability. However, she also suggested that while the economy continues to deliver an unprecedented standard of living, there is unlikely to be any challenge or ‘resistance’ to such policies, with various stakeholders muting any discontent and going along with a comfortable inevitability. However, should there be any form of major downturn and should Emiratis, or other Gulf citizens, begin to question the efficacy of higher education and medium of instruction policies, then it is possible that such ‘natural’ (Tollefson, 2004, p. 4) assumptions might not stand up to closer scrutiny.

Such policies, according to Phillipson (2009) are more in tune with what he believes to be an increasingly anachronistic Global English Paradigm. This is not too far removed from Tsuda’s (1994) critique of the, ‘Diffusion of English Paradigm’, where monolingual English

use and teaching and learning environments proliferate to the detriment of more local ‘Englishes’ and additive bilingualism. This Global English Paradigm assumes Anglo-American norms of usage and instructional technology. Technology is used here in the pedagogical sense: i.e. how classes are taught and courses delivered, rather than in the ‘Information Technology’ sense of the word. It further presupposes:

...the widespread faith in native-speaker teachers of English, and in expertise, teaching materials, postgraduate degrees, and theories of language learning deriving from the Anglo-American world. (Phillipson, 2009, p. 88)

This is a short list to which Phillipson might also easily have added Anglo-American accreditation bodies.

At a more local, or micro, level this study seeks to explore faculty, management and policy makers’ perceptions and how far they are in tune with the overarching EMI policy/ies exhibited by U.A.E. based tertiary education providers in one particular institution. As will be seen in the methodology section below certain constraints limited the research in terms of scope as, in the end, only one individual institution permitted the questionnaire and interviews to take place. Also the sample population was restricted as access to the opinions, feelings and perceptions of the student body was denied, leaving the still valid, but less exhaustive, responses and comments of teaching faculty, educational management and certain select individuals who sit on various policy and management committees as the only remaining available resources.

#### 2.4 The Immediate Context: The Faculty Respondents

The generic faculty members alluded to above would not be dissimilar to those involved in this study. The faculty involved was constituted of a majority of English language teachers who profess English as their L1, who speak another non-Arabic L2 if at all, and who are usually 'Western' educated, often, but not exclusively to Masters degree level. While a minority of the English language teachers would not be NESTs and a small number of those are also L1 speakers of Arabic. The content teachers demographic would be similar in terms of the native English speakers amongst the faculty. That is, 'Western' educated, often to Masters level, although content knowledge rather than teaching qualifications are often favoured at the recruitment stage for these positions. What mainly distinguishes the content faculty from the English language faculty is that a higher proportion of them are non-native speakers of English, and there is a slightly, but due to institutional recruitment imperatives, only slightly, higher number of content faculty without a recognisably 'Western' educational background. All overseas staff, which is all bar one of the teaching faculty, are on fixed-term, renewable three year contracts, subject to an initial probationary year and yearly professional appraisals.

Before describing the methodology employed and the procedures undertaken in order to conduct this study, the following chapter will review a relevant selection of the salient and extant literature. This literature covers the theoretical background to the study, language policy with especial concern for EMI, the NEST/ NNEST issue and such factors as the imposition of 'English Only' teaching and learning environments and all that follows from that.

## CHAPTER THREE – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review salient literature dealing with the politically driven choice of English as the medium of instruction. It is worth noting at this stage that due to the political nature of the topic a largely critical and interpretive stance has informed this study throughout. The effect of the UAE government's Emiratisation program on overall language policy will be explored, before considering extant literature dealing with the controversial issue of employing teachers based to a large extent on their native speaker ability with the English language. This will then lead on to a discussion of 'English-only' teaching and learning environments, or whether the L1 might, in fact, be of use in consciously learning the target L2?

### 3.1 Philosophical Framework

#### 3.1.1 A Critical Stance – Problematizing

Although this study has been influenced by both an interpretative and constructionist view (see methodology section below) of the creation and dissemination of what is understood by any particular group, society of educational establishment to be knowledge, it seeks not merely to describe the status quo, but, after Pennycook (2001) to challenge, problematize and seek to effect change through adopting a critical view of educational policies and the research process.

Alistair Pennycook (2001) is one voice amongst a gradually increasing number of such educationalists that are constantly calling for teachers, administrators and other practitioners

to critically challenge their everyday activities. He counsels a degree of reflection and reflexivity and would see behind and beyond policies such as those outlined previously in this study (i.e. English as the Medium of Instruction, supported largely by NEST teachers and English only teaching and learning environments), and their respective power relations. He would therefore argue for an approach that:

...needs to incorporate understandings from the problematizing stance I started to outline earlier. And, it needs a view of language that is not merely a reflection of society or a tool of ideological manipulation but rather a means by which social relations are constructed. As does Williams (1992), I believe that to develop such a view of language, we need to take on board lessons from poststructuralist thinking about power and language, and we need to work toward a more contextual understanding of power relations.

(Pennycook, 2001, p. 45)

As such, the critical stance underlying this paper and the methodology thus employed echoes Ernest's (1994) belief that educational research in a critical vein is, and should be, concerned with improving the current situation, not with merely describing the status quo.

### 3.1.2 The Value-Laden Nature of a Critical Stance

There is, of course, the possibility, even danger, of conducting a piece of research that becomes a 'self-fulfilling prophecy', where the researcher finds exactly what they set out to find, irrespective of the data. After all, Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) are quite clear on the

point that critical inquiry can never be entirely value free, and Widdowson (2000) also argues cogently that such research is often subjective, selective and ideologically motivated. However, all research is influenced to a degree by the opinions, philosophical stance and other factors emanating from the researcher him-, or herself. An acknowledgement of this potential drawback should not stop any given researcher from problematizing and questioning the taken for granted assumptions of an area in their field of study and setting out to research, diagnose and, hopefully try to effect some form of change, in that area.

Medium of instruction policies and all that flow from such decisions, including recruitment and classroom practices to support the desired goal, are one such, albeit vast area where a problematizing stance, in a critical vein, can perhaps seek to influence the future direction of such policies. That said, Ernest (1994, p. 32), would remind us of the difficulties that can be encountered when one sets out to question, and even challenge, the assumptions put forward as ‘common sense’ by institutional bodies;

...there are often hidden institutional sources of resistance to change, such as teacher and pupil ideologies, institutional structures, and so on, which may prevent the desired progress. If there is no progress, and there is little of the knowledge that the other two educational research paradigms seek to establish, then the danger is that there may be no worthwhile outcome for the time and energy invested.

Yet equally, a critical stance, or view of educational research cannot simply accept that change will not follow due to just such resistance, but instead seeks to effect that change, no matter how incrementally that may be. Therefore, this study, whilst remaining acutely aware

of the researcher's innate biases and professional (and personal) constructs, and their potential influence upon the outcome of any research procedure, seeks nevertheless, after Pennycook (2001), to problematize the seemingly taken for granted status quo. A situation in which it is largely accepted that tertiary studies in the U.A.E. *must* be undertaken through the medium of English (the lingua-franca of international business) and that, as a result native, or native-like English speakers might well be the best faculty to 'deliver' such a programme. The fact that many of these far-reaching and highly important policy decisions have been arrived at in a seemingly unquestioned manner is in itself a stimulus to adopt a critical stance through which the various claims made in support of EMI and the preponderance of native English speaking teachers can be more evenly evaluated.

### 3.2 Medium-of-Instruction Policy/ies – English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI)

This section first considers the dichotomous nature of much of the English teaching world. That is, Holliday's (1994) distinction between mainstream, multilingual teaching and learning environments as compared to the majority of monolingual, non-immersion settings. It is a discussion which leads inexorably to the role of Content and Language Integrated Learning (in English) in many non-mainstream countries, before considering the ideological and political reasons why many nations would chose to educate their young people in a foreign language via a CLIL type approach. This is followed by a subsection dealing with the social, national and international constraints that help to channel and underwrite EMI policies. Finally there is a brief consideration of the potential effect of such policies on the identity formation of Arabic speaker learners who are educated in an EMI/ CLIL environment.

### 3.2.1 TESEP – Tertiary, Secondary and Primary

The contemporary situation of English as a foreign, second, other or additional language teaching; and the burgeoning area of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): defined by the Department for Education and Science (DfES) in England and Wales as, “studying a curriculum subject through the medium of a foreign language,” (DfES, 2002) in what Holliday (1994, p.12) has termed the TESEP arena; from, “*tertiary, secondary and primary,*” can be usefully summarised below.

Holliday (1994) distinguished two main, albeit vast, areas of English language teaching: not entirely dissimilar in conception to Kachru’s (1982) metaphor of concentric rings, or circles, of English language use. Kachru (1982) was describing the different ways in which English, or rather Englishes, or at least varieties of English, were, and are increasingly, used. These ranged from usage by native speakers in the inner circle, or ‘centre’; via many post-colonial countries, where English is regularly used to conduct every day activities; to the expanding circle of ‘peripheral’ countries, such as the People’s Republic of China, where English is a relatively recent addition, as a foreign language, to school, and other, curricula. Holliday (1994), on the other hand, was concerned more with teaching methodologies and their appropriacy in his two distinct, and well-defined, contexts. For Holliday (1994) there is a central core of English language teaching, sometimes referred to as English as a Second Language, where learners usually, but not always, study English in, well-resourced, relatively small, multi-lingual groups through explicit and exclusive use of the target language. He termed this BANA to stand for British, Australasian and North American in his 1994 taxonomy.



In contrast, he saw much of the rest of the English language teaching world, that is, the world beyond the Anglophone mainstream (i.e. TESEP as compared to BANA) as being characterised by mainly monolingual classes, often (overly) large in size and not always as well resourced as we might hope for. In addition, a variety of TESEP, or English as a Foreign Language contexts, are often typecast as deficient despite the huge differences obvious between comparatively well-resourced regions such as the Arabian/ Persian Gulf and developing South-East Asian countries such as Cambodia.

It is a concept of deficiency: a deficiency that it was once thought that right-minded educators from the core, or mainstream, could put right, that owes much to cultural and technological chauvinism (this includes Holliday's (1994) definition of 'technology' to cover 'teaching technologies', or what other educationalists might term 'methodology' or even 'pedagogy').

Holliday (1994, p. 13) highlights:

...a failure to see the state scenario as anything but sub-standard, and its features more as constraints than factors for design. Indeed, Phillipson (1992: 57) argues that the recipients of the technology are seen as 'periphery' to a technology-producing 'centre.'

As such, it is not a great stretch to describe the situation extant in the U.A.E. and wider Gulf region as a prime example of a classic TESEP context, albeit a comparatively well-resourced, and adequately staffed, example. It is, nevertheless, an educational milieu where local or regional educators are sometimes typecast as deficient; and thus in need of replacing, training, or some form of outside assistance. Such attitudes and related policies, although unlikely to ever be publicly stated, have resulted in strategies such as ADEC's (Abu Dhabi Education

Council) ‘licensed teachers’ initiative – where large numbers of English speaking teachers have been imported from the U.S.A., Canada, and other Anglophone countries in order to either work directly in both state primary and secondary schools, or in partnership with an Arabic speaking teacher. One implication that might be drawn from this, although once again most unlikely to be publicised in written form, is that the ‘foreign’ partner is there to assist and even mentor their local partner: helping to perpetuate the notion that the transfer of teaching technologies and pedagogical approaches is moving very much from ‘West’ to ‘East’ rather than this representing a truly equal and mutually beneficial partnership.

### 3.2.2 CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning in English

By extension such policies run the risk that the national (regional) language can likewise be stereotyped as insufficiently sophisticated, or mature enough, to deal with the ‘real’ business of life, i.e. the economic (and, by extension the educational processes that lead to the production of economically viable citizens). That is not to say that the Arabic speaking rulers, leaders and decision makers would necessarily be categorising their own mother tongue in a negative light but if, as is suggested by Troudi (2009, p.199) writing about the U.A.E. itself, “English has been associated with growth and modernization and even presented as a condition for development and an active role in the global competitive market”, then, by default, Arabic will not be seen as the pre-eminent language, and means of operation, in these self-same spheres of influence. Hence, the quite possibly ill-conceived perception of the need for CLIL style ‘content’ courses taught through the almost exclusive use of the L2 as a medium of instruction.

Of course, medium of instruction policies such as those pursued by the U.A.E.'s main educational stakeholders, whether that is at the pre-tertiary level by organizations such as ADEC, or more exclusively as part of the EMI/ CLIL thrust of state tertiary providers (U.A.E. University, Zayed University and the Higher Colleges of Technology) are not without their critics and dissenters. However, when and where the status quo is challenged it has tended to be in more basic, prosaic, economic and even vaguely Marxist terms. From Phillipson (1992), through Medgyes (1994), to such as Braine (1999), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006) and Llurda (2006) the necessity for a teacher of English language, or indeed an English medium content subject, to be a native user of the language (a NEST) has been rigorously questioned and challenged. However, it is perhaps more coherent to start at the beginning, and look first of all at the reasons behind such English medium policies, as any discussion of whether a teacher needs native or native-like competence (concepts that are themselves increasingly questioned and questionable); whether the L1 has any role to play in the effective acquisition of the L2, and other such concerns, presupposes that the medium of instruction policy is something of a *fait accompli*, one of Phillipson's (1992) many unchallenged 'fallacies,' or that we have, according to Pennycook (2001, p. 7), after Dean (1994, p.4), failed in our duty to be, "unwilling to accept the taken-for-granted components of our reality and the 'official' accounts of how they came to be the way they are."

### 3.2.3 Ideological Concerns

Tollefson and Tsui (2004, p. 284), paraphrase McCarty (2004), in cogently arguing that:

...medium-of-instruction policies are both ideological and discursive

constructs. As ideological constructs, policies often reflect the interests of groups that dominate the state policymaking apparatus, and thus, they reproduce unequal relationships of power within the larger society.

Yet, it would appear in the United Arab Emirates, and wider Arabian/ Persian Gulf region, that the policymakers (government ministers, hereditary rulers, etc.) charged with formulating medium of instruction policies and channelling their nation's future linguistic and cultural direction, are going against their own best interests in promoting English to the, albeit inadvertent, detriment of Arabic. Arabic is, after all, the common language of the GCC, of more than 700 million speakers and of a major world religion, but, despite this regional medium of instruction policies mainly favour English, for, at the very least, the tertiary educational sector.

Normally, we might well expect the powerful majority to look after their own ethnic and linguistics interests, especially where no democratic accountability to minority, or other, groups exists. Bourdieu, whose main concern was with the symbolic power vested in language (1991, p. 45), reminds us that when we:

Speak of *the* language, without further specification, as linguists do, is tacitly to accept the *official* definition of the *official* language of a political unit. This language is the one which, within the territorial limits of that unit, imposes itself on the whole population as the only legitimate language, especially in situations that are characterized in French as more *officielle* (a very exact translation of the word 'formal' used by English-speaking linguists).

In the U.A.E., Emirati nationals, although a minority in total numbers at any given time; are still the majority of the permanent population; given the temporary right of abode extended to the vast majority of the U.A.E.'s largely transient workforce; and are thus the demographic group of most concern to governmental agencies and ministers. However, if in line with Fairclough (1989), Bourdieu (1991), and Tollefson (1991), the latter cited in Tollefson (1995, p.2), these policymakers are wielding, "(I)deological power," and exercising, "the ability to project one's own practices and beliefs as universal and commonsense," while controlling, "both tangible economic resources and intangible resources such as language and discourse," within a system where, "language policies at all levels, from the national authority to the individual classroom, reflect relationships of unequal power," then this 'ideological power is operating in a far from straight forward manner.

Tollefson (1991), in tune with the not dissimilar theorising of Bernstein (1996), who saw working class access to various economic resources as 'restricted' by the linguistic code that lower socio-economic level children in the United Kingdom were expected to use, while those higher up the social scale gained access to a more 'elaborated' and higher prestige code suggested that language planning policy (including, of course, medium of instruction policies) can themselves create inequalities and restrict the future advancement, and economic opportunities, of many learners. Tollefson (1991, p.7), put it that although, "modern social and economic systems require certain kinds of language competence, they simultaneously create conditions which ensure that vast numbers of people will be unable to acquire that competence."

Tollefson (1991) is mainly concerned here with countries and states where there is more than one local language struggling for official recognition at the cost of one, or more, other

languages that are usually directly associated with an ethnic, and possibly even a religious, group. The situation in the U.A.E., and wider Gulf region is different in that there is a clear and relatively vigorous national language (Arabic), yet it is increasingly marginalised in favour of an ‘outside’ and distinctly foreign language by language planners who, by and large, share that local, or regional, language themselves. It would be, no doubt, unfair and decidedly cynical to suggest that powerful policymakers were deliberately colluding in maintaining a system where, due to an insufficient grasp of the language required for the majority of highly remunerative positions, many sections of the population will be restricted in their social mobility. Although, it is perhaps fair to say that many of the children of the wealthy in the Arabian/ Persian Gulf do, at least, have the option, denied to their more ‘restricted’ compatriots, of studying in international schools and universities, both at home and abroad, and thus gaining easier access to Bernstein’s (1971) ‘elaborated’ code. In this case a fluent use of English. It is a sentiment echoed, in part, by the trenchant analysis of Phillipson (1992, p. 52), when he reminds us that:

(I)n present-day neo-colonialism, the élites are to a large extent indigenous, but most of them have strong links with the Centre. Many of them have been educated in Centre countries and/ or through the medium of the Centre language, the old colonial language.

Whilst a reading of U.A.E. language policy at tertiary level based, as is much of Tollefson’s own work, on theories of social constraint weighed against the notion of individual freedom, might be unfairly traducing language planners and policymakers with, at best, unwitting collusion in a system that disenfranchises those who struggle to master L2 English, there are clearly other, perhaps more macro, social constraints at work.

### 3.2.4 Social Constraints

Alidou (2004) drew a direct parallel between the promotion of English as a medium of instruction and lingua-franca for business activities in Africa, with the very obvious influence of the colonial era. This is an influence that has been felt directly in Bahrain, Qatar and the U.A.E., up until, and no doubt beyond, formal independence declarations in 1971. Oman, and to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia, especially after the exploitation of its oil wealth, were less obviously (formally) under any Anglo, or Anglo-American colonial control, but were not immune from the all-pervasive discursive and ideological influence of the era. Yet, as Tollefson and Tsui (2004, p. 291), summarising Alidou (2004), succinctly put it, casting off the colonial yoke politically may have been one thing, but changing language policies would not prove so easy as, “in the post-colonial period, the development of global economic structures, global mass media, and global political institutions has an equally powerful impact on medium-of-instruction policies.”

And, it is perhaps, just such internationalised concerns that lead to language planners across the region choosing English as a medium of instruction in the tertiary arena, as much as any other influences and factors that impinge upon the policy making procedure. There are researchers in the area of medium of instruction policies (and tangible realities) such as Bernardo (2000, p.113), writing about mathematics education, who argues that, “there are clear and consistent advantages to using the students’ first language at the stage of learning where the student is acquiring the basic understanding of the various mathematical concepts.”

Yet, it is these larger social, indeed global and ultimately ideological forces that seem to drive most medium of instruction policies, rather than simpler questions about whether it might not

be easier and more comfortable to study mathematics in your own language? And, that is without considering the enormous psychological impact and influence upon identity formation that studying in and through a foreign language is bound to entail. Norton (2000), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), and their contributors, while mainly concerned with immigrants moving to predominantly English speaking countries and thus being forced to renegotiate their L1 and L2 identities, still manage to highlight the often neglected impact of language learning (whether in an ESL or EFL context) on identity (re)formation. In a Mid-Eastern, EFL context this could well manifest itself in the hugely negative connotations experienced by a competent and fluid user of L1 Arabic, with a competent grasp of various school subjects, suddenly finding themselves at tertiary level and unable to comprehend similar information presented via an L2 medium. The once confident student (especially if they cannot communicate their frustrations to a monolingual English speaking teacher) can find themselves in a situation where due to a lack of expertise in English they are perceived by others in an extremely negative light, with obvious effects upon their confidence, motivation, L1 and L2 identities.

Troudi (2009, p.210-11) writing from a perspective where Arabic speakers studying through the medium of English, and thus inadvertently being forced to take on an additional cognitive burden, are central to his argument, summarises the plight of the low proficiency English user faced with a tertiary EMI policy:

...opting for a policy of EMI will certainly disadvantage students with little or no proficiency in English. Research needs to be conducted on the percentage of students who cannot study their educational areas of choice because of low proficiency in English and the impact of this on their careers. For many students



the burden of having to study content subjects in an alien language can be detrimental.

### 3.2.5 Arabic Identity and the Use of L1

Troudi (2009) is not alone in highlighting the possible inequities of an English medium approach for many young Emirati learners (and the possible negative effects upon the status of Arabic). Writing in *The National Newspaper* (17/11/2010) Mick Randall, the former Dean of Education at the British University in Dubai (BUiD) concluded, in line with research coming from Singapore and very much in tune with Kirkpatrick (2006 – see below), and Phillipson (1992), that increasing the amount of English exposure in primary and high schooling would not necessarily result in greater gains in English proficiency but might well be to the detriment of the development of the learners' proficiency with their L1 (Arabic).

Indeed, such debates over the issue of EMI, the loss of Arabic and other associated identity type issues are often played out in the national Arabic language newspapers with a smaller proportion of such articles making it into the English language press. Yasin Kakande writing in *The National* (22/02/2010) quotes concerns similar to Randall's with regard to the status of Arabic from the ruler of Sharjah, Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed, and Mahmoud Habboush (*The National*, 21/02/2010) makes mention in his article on Emirati national identity that members of the FNC (First National Council – a national consultative body), “have lobbied for measures to rescue endangered components of the nation's identity, especially the Arabic language.”

Thus we can see that EMI policies can also be detrimental in more than just economic or career related ways. Dörnyei (2005) has written extensively on what he terms the L2 Motivational Self System incorporating notions of what it is that makes someone both study a language and persevere with that language, even when it begins to get difficult. A part of this system is the notion of the ‘idealised’, or ‘ideal’, L2 self, where the learner of a foreign, or other, language through a combination of internal (intrinsic and integrative) and external (extrinsic) factors, realigns their identity in line with the language they are studying and the community, or ‘imagined community’ (Norton, 2001) to which the language is perceived as belonging. Dörnyei (2005, p.103) simplifies and summarises the effect of such a self image as, “broadly, in our idealised image of ourselves we may not only want to appear personally agreeable but also professionally successful.” However, if the learner’s lack of ability in the L2 leaves them floundering and not, ‘professionally successful’ in their chosen subject area, through no other reason than an inability to follow key concepts in a language other than their own mother tongue, then it seems inevitable that a degree of de-motivation may well occur.

### 3.3 Globalisation and Emiratisation

No discussion of the UAE’s English language educational policies can be complete without also considering the influence of the UAE government’s Emiratisation program. This program has a major influence upon the policies of such educational authorities as ADEC (Abu Dhabi Education Council). In effect the Emiratisation program seeks to place Emirati nationals into jobs that have, during the rapid emergence and modernising of the country over the last 20-30 years, been the preserve of workers imported from other countries.

Godwin (2006, p.1) characterises Emiratisation as, “an affirmative action program to satisfy the employment and career aspirations of its citizens with a focus that links employment and education.” This program has been very successful in placing Emirati nationals into public sector positions, where devoid of the pressures of competitive market forces, salaries, perks and other terms and conditions have been set at an attractive level. However, in the private sector, where according to Al-Ali et al (2008) only 1% of the workforce is Emirati, employers, despite the threat of financial penalties if they do not meet certain quotas, appear loathe to invest in Emirati staff, “because sooner or later UAE nationals leave the company that has incurred their training costs,” (Al-Ali et al., 2008, p.15)

Godwin (2006) goes on to link those employment opportunities very closely to the processes of globalization. It is this very globalization that dictates, or is perceived to dictate, the centrality of English language, and by unwitting extension, English medium studies as the main means of ensuring that Emirati nationals, schooled in a ‘western’ fashion, through the medium of English will be well placed to take up these job opportunities. Al-Ali et al. (2008, p. 17) share this view linking education directly to the (Emiratised) job market when they add that, “education and training are found crucial...The local graduates need to be educated through an updated university curriculum that matches (the) industry requirements.” Elsewhere in their study they make categorical mention of the fact that they see English, and EMI, as a cornerstone of that updated curriculum. Likewise Randeree (2009, p. 26), although not explicitly mentioning language policy per se, agrees that there is pressing need, “to raise the skill set among nationals.”

Yet, this in turn is the Achilles’ heel of the Emiratisation program. Al-Ali et al. (2008, p.4) unquestioningly accept that, “English is the lingua franca for technology, management and to

a certain extent trade,” before going on to highlight the inherent problems of a policy that champions a language other than the country’s official, native language as a means of education and ultimately employment:

...fluency undoubtedly affects Emirate (sic) citizens’ employability. English fluency levels in (the) UAE are of concern to Abdelkarim (2001), whose findings on employees’ views include their perceived deficiency of English fluency instruction in the Emirates education system. (Al-Ali et al, 2008, pp 4-5)

### 3.4 The Native English Speaking Teacher

The predominance, particularly in high prestige well-remunerated positions, of Native English Speaking Teachers, as compared to Non-Native English Speaking Teachers will be discussed in this section. Many reasons are put forward ranging from economic necessity to the NESTs’ supposed mastery of the language. This section will carefully consider the arguments both for and against the disputed role of NESTs by firstly considering the economic imperative alluded to by Spolsky (2004), and then considering the claims made on behalf of NESTs in terms of linguistic knowhow. These are claims that Phillipson (1992) would class as a form of ‘linguicism.’ After considering the ‘linguicism’ aspect of NEST recruitment and advancement, this paper will consider the contrary position of NNESTs and the reported preferences of learners for NESTs over NNESTs in certain areas of English language teaching.

### 3.4.1 The Economic Imperative to Study (in) English

Spolsky (2004, p. 220) is quite clear as to why English, for better or for worse, has such a dominant position in many non-English speaking countries. He puts it thus:

The third force or condition had to do with changes that have taken place in the world in the last few decades as a result of globalization, and the consequent tidal wave of English that is moving into almost every sociolinguistic repertoire. Associated with it is the instrumental value of gaining access to an economically advantageous network by developing proficiency in the language of widest communication. In the last few decades, this force has multiplied in effect and narrowed in language choice, so that currently most societies feeling the effects of globalization are also moving rapidly to acquire greater proficiency in the global language, English.

If we, as educators, educational planners, and managers accept, perhaps even grudgingly, that to somehow prevent our students and learners from studying English (and through English) in order to, perhaps, artificially, promote ethnic solidarity or to invigorate and maintain ‘national’ and linguistic identities, then we would presumably have to do so at the risk of denying our learners access to Spolsky’s (2004) ‘economically advantageous’ linguistic networks. Actions that might, anyway, prove to be something of a ‘false friend’, when bearing in mind the sophisticated analyses of researchers such as Findlow (2006), who would remind us that simplistic notions stating that one ethnic group naturally (and always) equals one language, are not well rounded enough concepts to cater for the whole myriad of national,

linguistic and political tensions that exist within each and every nation state. Writing of the United Arab Emirates, Findlow (2006, p.34) believes that higher education:

...via a range of communicative tools has contributed to defining new national identities and agendas, and has been a major influence on Emirati youth's apparent ability to assimilate conflicting cultural influences as represented by Arabic and English. This flexibility in turn is seen as a *de facto* tool in the creation and self-definition of the UAE as a new 'nation-state' (Findlow, 2000) – challenging both the old definitional link between 'nationhood' and sole use of one single language, and some of the more established grounds for distinguishing 'nationhood' and 'statehood.'

It is a position not too far removed from Canagarajah's (1999) stance when he outlines certain of the ways in which predominantly, but not exclusively, post-colonial societies can, and do, resist the overt linguistic imperialism potentially associated with learning English, and, at the same time co-opt, or exploit English to meet their own needs and to cater for their own unique aspirations (not the least of which often remains economically based).

That said, accepting the instrumental, economic, and global utility of English, need not mean accepting the whole package of 'Centre' inspired methodology ('technology' in Holliday's (1994) terms), pedagogy and orthodoxy. Leaving aside the vexed question of English as a medium for other studies for the time being (although it is worth remembering that Phillipson (1992, p. 64) is quite categorical that, "where English is the medium of education, serious consequences ensue both for English and for local languages"); it remains highly instructive

to look now at those deemed fit – or unfit – to teach English and the ways in which, it is hoped, that will be achieved.

### 3.4.2 The NEST Bias

Johnston (2003, p. 20), is not alone in highlighting that many teachers of English as a foreign, second, other, or additional language are often employed, and sometimes promoted, based not so much upon their pedagogical skills and state recognised qualifications but are, “often judged not so much on the basis of their specialized knowledge (and much less their teaching ability) but on their own skill in using the language.”

In short, the English (and CLIL) teacher of choice in many state and private educational institutes and systems throughout the world is; especially where financial remuneration and other perks makes it worthwhile for ‘Centre’ based teachers to travel; a native speaker of English: whose employment, promotion and other work related economic opportunities can owe much more to their mother tongue than any other single factor (such as holding a recognised qualification). Indeed, Kirkpatrick (2006) even goes as far as to ask the question that while, “(G)lobal Demand for English language learning is stronger than ever,...why are the least able to teach still held in such high esteem?”

Kirkpatrick (2006) is of course, generalising as many NESTs will also be well-qualified and highly efficacious teachers. His point is that in certain parts of the world, and there is no reason to assume that the U.A.E. and other Gulf countries are immune, well-qualified NNEST teachers of English and other ‘content’ subjects can find themselves passed over for positions in favour of lesser qualified and experienced, but native English speaking,

applicants. Indeed, they may not even get as far as the application stage having decided that advertisements stating that candidates, “only have to be native speakers of English with a bachelor’s degree in *any* field,” (Kirkpatrick, 2006) (author’s own emphasis), are not worth the time and effort of applying for.

Prime examples of just such recruitment biases abound, from similar advertisements discouraging NNEST (sometimes interchangeably referred to as NNS) teachers from applying, to ‘unwritten’ policies that allow NNESTs to apply, yet view such candidates as irretrievably second rate and only to be employed if a suitable NEST cannot be found. Braine (1999, p.22), is far from alone in having personal experience of such unequal practices in action, when he relates the uncomfortable memory of arriving in the United States with 14 years of prior teaching experience and:

(N)eeding to supplement my partial scholarship, I applied for a tutor position at the university’s language center and was turned down almost instantly. Instead, some NS classmates who had no teaching experience were employed. Although not stated explicitly, the message was clear. NNS need not apply.

### 3.4.3 Linguicism

It is a policy, even if sometimes ‘unofficial,’ which has its roots very much in the central tenets, or ‘fallacies’ as Phillipson (1992), would term them, of the ‘Centre’ inspired English language teaching profession (or industry, as it all too often appears to represent). For Phillipson (1992) it is often little more than crude self-interest from those who stand to



benefit, financially, ideologically and otherwise materially, from the spread of English (and English teaching) around the globe. Using the Makerere Conference, and subsequent Report (1961), in Uganda as something of a starting point from which to trace the political development of English Language Teaching, much of it tied at the time of the Makerere Report to foreign aid and other development programmes, Phillipson (1992, p.47), expounds upon what he terms, indeed coined, as a variation of ‘linguicism,’ or ‘linguistic imperialism,’ where:

*...the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Here, structural refers broadly to material properties (for example, institutions, financial allocations) and cultural to immaterial or ideological properties (for example, attitudes, pedagogic principles).*

This dominance is largely supported by what Phillipson (1992) referred to as the main ‘fallacies’ of the self-interested ELT world. These ‘fallacies’ dictated that learners should start English as early as possible: even though there are other educators lobbying for students to be competent in their own mother tongue first, before attempting to acquire, or use, an L2 (Kirkpatrick, 2009); the learners should also use English as much as possible, instead of their L1 which is seen as an impediment to learning an L2. Therefore, the best way to achieve this would be through setting up monolingual, English teaching and learning environments, presided over by a monolingual speaker of the target language. Plus, when we add to this the often stated preference of the learners for a NEST (although that might just be an unwitting reaction to the current state of affairs), it is clear how recruitment policies such as those

outlined above; policies that can, paradoxically, often be at their most virulent in the TESEP, rather than BANA, context; have come to be.

Even where NNS Teachers (NNESTs) are employed there is a demonstrable tendency to view such appointments as a stop-gap, or as inevitable due to the economic realities of the situation. Braine (1999) writing of inequitable practices prevalent throughout the Indian sub-continent, highlights several examples of lesser qualified, even unqualified (in relevant terms), and relatively inexperienced NS teachers receiving better pay and conditions, as well as higher status and prestige, than more highly qualified indigenous practitioners with considerably more experience. Although it is also, perhaps, fair to point out that other even more basic biases and related factors might be at work in Braine's (1999) example (above) than simply the avowed first language of the (potential) teacher or teachers.

#### 3.4.4 'Invisible' NNESTs

Hansen (2004), discussed her reality as an 'invisible' non-native speaker of English. That is, someone who 'appears,' to popular conception at least, to be a NEST, but is in actual fact not. She related the difficulties encountered by a NEST of Jamaican origin in attempting to find a position in Japan, while she, a NNEST from Denmark; who had admittedly been educated in the United States; had far fewer problems. Hansen (2004) concedes, if that is the correct term in this context, to allowing her interviewers to assume that she was, just as they obviously thought she looked, a NEST. Yet, she also struggles with the concept that others considered that she:

...did not 'look' like a nonnative speaker of English, nor did I sound like one with my American-accented English, and therefore I did not fit

into the stereotype of a nonnative speaker of English. In short, because I did not look or sound like a nonnative speaker, I could not possibly be one. (Hansen, 2004, p. 40)

This is, of course, a stereotype that not only disenfranchises ‘visible’ NNS, but also downplays to the point of negligence, the abilities of NNESTs who have clearly not only been through the process of acquiring English as an L2, but have done so, presumably, with a degree of success. Once again, the stereotype appears to hold up monolingualism as advantageous and bi-, multi-, or poly-lingualism as an irrelevance; rather than seeing complete monolingualism as a limitation, let alone the, “monolingual stupidity or monolingual naivete or monolingual reductionism,” mischievously referred to by Skutnabb-Kangas (2001, p. 42).

Of course, highlighting such biases against the recruitment of, largely ‘visible’, NNESTs has become more prevalent, especially since the work of Davies (1991, 2003) and Medgyes (1994) among others, and in certain spheres, though alas not all, this is less of an issue than it once was. Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999, p.138) were able to report that, “most of the participants did not feel particularly disadvantaged in their work as EFL teachers because of their non-nativeness.” However, it is important to note that Samimy and Brutt-Griffler’s research was based in the United States, and that such equitable, and legally enforceable, policies do not always exist elsewhere. And, it will be argued below, despite official rhetoric suggesting the opposite (and often obfuscating the case) that the U.A.E., and wider Arabian/Persian Gulf region, is one area where the majority of NNESTs would be less sanguine about recruitment and the day to day realities of being a non-native English speaking teacher, than were Samimy and Brutt-Griffler’s (1999) U.S. based respondents.

### 3.4.5 Student Preferences

One often cited rationale for the recruitment of NESTs in a Middle-Eastern context is that the students themselves prefer it. This is a finding, which, even if true, still poses many, as yet unanswered, questions. Researching in Europe (more specifically Hungary) Benke and Medgyes (2006, p. 208) felt confident enough to state that:

(A)n overwhelming majority of the respondents argued that in an ideal situation both NS and NNS teachers should be available to teach them, stressing that they would be ill-prepared to dispense with the services of either group.

Similarly, although not quite so emphatically, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002, 2006) found that their predominantly Basque (and Spanish) speaking students, also expressed a desire to draw upon what they saw as the different pedagogical and linguistic skills of both NESTs and NNESTs. Typically, the NEST was seen as a better model of 'correct' pronunciation, while the NNEST, if able to speak the students L1, was viewed as being better at explaining and exemplifying grammatical points. Although if only able to choose between a NEST or a NNEST teacher, Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2006, p. 233) learners still favoured a native speaker in 60.6% of their responses.

Such student preferences, in the realm of English language teaching (as opposed to CLIL) at the very least is not unusual. It is a common perception that the NEST is perceived as being better at modelling pronunciation and the NNEST as having a greater grasp of underlying grammatical rules, as they had previously learned them themselves. Mahboob (2004, p.142),

conducting research with his ESL students in the U.S.A. as to their NEST/ NNEST preferences and having discussed at length his students' perceptions of the relative strengths of NEST and NNESTs alike, as well as drawing on teacher's own perceptions of their respective strengths and weaknesses, summarised his findings thus:

The strongest finding of this study is that NESTs are perceived to be best for teaching oral skills. In addition to oral skills, NESTs are also perceived as being stronger in their ability to teach vocabulary and culture. However, some students perceive them as being weak in their ability to teach grammar. Furthermore, some students also perceive that NESTs are not always able to answer their questions well.

However, Patek (2006, p.259) perhaps inadvertently highlights one of the potential, if unavoidable, flaws with such attitude questionnaires. Conducting similar research at the University of Birmingham with Japanese students she discovered similar opinions and results to Medgyes (1994), Benke and Medgyes (2006) and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006) with one crucial caveat. Dealing with Patek's questionnaire on a wholly abstract and theoretical basis the learners were quite amenable to being taught by a NNEST. Faced with the potential reality of actually being taught by a NNEST many respondents gave higher priority to certain features (such as the teaching methods and strategies employed) than they had previously: suggesting to Patek a theoretical agreement that was not borne out in more practical terms.

The generally positive attitudes to NNESTs displayed by Benke and Medgyes (2006), and Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2006) European students, was not so strongly shared by Patek's Japanese learners and if anything is even less so the case, or so it would appear, in certain of

the GCC countries. Coombe and Al-Hamly's (2007) study of student attitudes to NEST/ NNEST preferences found, despite a few positive comments supportive of NNESTs (mainly about the teacher's ability to use the students L1) that the majority of their respondents in Kuwait and the U.A.E. were still overwhelmingly in favour of NESTs. Interestingly, in Kuwait where the researchers felt that Kuwaiti students had, perhaps, received more exposure to competent NNESTs, the statistics were not so damning as in the U.A.E. McLaren (2009), summarising a similar piece of work conducted with Saudi Arabian students, came to similar conclusions. However, he found generally that his respondents were less concerned with linguistic factors such as pronunciation (and many would have liked to use Arabic as, at least, an occasional aid to learning the L2) than with the teacher's perceived professionalism. The stereotype coming through being that a foreign educated NEST (usually on a good salary, etc.) was seen as a higher status individual, and thus a 'better' teacher, than a NNEST – especially if locally employed. All of which suggests that the NEST/ NNEST debate in a Mid-Eastern contest, at least, is about far more than who makes the best linguistic role model.

### 3.5 Using L1 in the Classroom

It is interesting to note that in the work of Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002, 2006), and the perhaps more contextually relevant studies by Coombe and Al-Hamly (2007), echoed by McLaren (2009), all above, that students often cited the greatest asset of the NNEST as being their ability with, and in, the students' own L1.

There are voices in the profession (Phillipson, 1992; Canagarajah, 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; and Macaro, 2006, amongst others), in favour of using the learners' L1 as an aid to learning the target language (where the learners, and perhaps even the teacher, share an L1).

However, there is still a prevailing orthodoxy that seems to favour an English only approach for classroom discourse and teacher explanation: a practice that is carried over into Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses, where students are expected to master content related subject matter via the medium of a foreign language. This orthodoxy is rarely, if ever, justified via research papers or conference presentations. In fact it is usually quite the opposite. However, it often comes through the conduit of institutional policies and so-called ‘unwritten’ rules. How else might one explain that several years after the first challenges to the EFL/ ESL recruitment status quo (where NESTs might have once expected preferential treatment): despite a growing number of critical papers being presented at regional fora such as the annual TESOL Arabia Conference: despite an equally burgeoning number of regional journal and proceedings publications on this very topic; despite a motion being passed by the TESOL Arabia Executive not to host advertisers and advertising exhibiting such discrimination: despite TESOL International having had its first NNEST president (Shanghai-born Jun Liu), and despite TESOL Arabia having themselves had many presidents and other executive officers who learned to speak English primarily as an L2 (representing a membership containing a majority of NNESTs) that it is still possible to find many regional on-line and other recruitment sites that specify that either native speakers or, as a small concession, teachers with a degree from an Anglophone country are either preferred or that L1 English is an employment prerequisite?

### 3.5.1 The Assumption of English Supremacy

It is a position that Canagarajah (1999, p. 126), after Phillipson (1992), takes exception to. In his own words he puts it thus:

It is claimed that an impressive tradition of empirical research confirms the assumption that English should be the sole medium for instruction for non-native students, and that use of their first languages should be eschewed at all costs. The belief that use of the learner's native language interferes with the learning of English, and hampers the process of second language development, has now passed into the realms of pedagogical common sense and professional orthodoxy.

It is an orthodoxy that although coming under challenge in certain areas of the ELT profession is still widely held to be true in countries such as the U.A.E., where the majority of other subjects are also taught via the medium of English. A recent memorandum (September, 2009) in one regional tertiary institute reflects this generalised belief regarding the monolingual nature of such education and also Phillipson's (1992, p.213) fifth tenet/ fallacy ("if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop.") Faculty and staff were not just asked to use English as the medium of instruction but as the lingua franca of the entire institution:

English is the language of both instruction and communication. This means that all of us must speak English to our students at all times, whether this be in the classrooms, corridors or offices...Could I also suggest that from now on, our Arabic staff only speak English in the office environment, even with their colleagues? This would reinforce the 'English Only' policy we are trying to uphold.



Yet, despite this communication being ostensibly well meaning and in the students supposed best interests (whether it really is or not being a moot point) it is following an orthodoxy that in reality lacks significant empirical background, and cannot stand up to the light of more critical enquiry. Phillipson (1992, p.185) referred to it as “the monolingual fallacy” and considered the pre-eminence of English as a medium of instruction for both English language and other classes to be more about preserving the post-colonial status of English than for any real pedagogical reason.

### 3.5.2 L1 as an Aid to Learning the L2

Indeed, there is a growing field of research into this area that is beginning to suggest that carefully considered use of the learners L1 (or simply allowing, or encouraging, the learner themselves to make use of their L1 – for note-taking, planning, using a bilingual dictionary, explaining a difficult concept to a classmate, etc.), need not be detrimental (in fact, quite the opposite) when it comes to acquiring the L2 in an efficient and successful manner. Kern (1994) identified several advantages that learners would experience if they ‘thought’ in their L1 whilst conducting an L2 reading comprehension. He believed that it was easier to keep track of the narrative as thinking in the L1 reduced the short term memory load and helped to convert concepts more easily into long term memory (without the added complication of trying to ‘think’ in the L2). This in turn reduced L2 anxiety and made it easier to clarify syntactic and lexical items. Macaro (2006, p.75), in his paper on codeswitching, continues this theme and also finds efficacious use for both bilingual dictionaries and other forms of translation, believing that:

(T)eachers deprived of codeswitching from their tool kit are unable to offer learners translation as a learning task. Monolingual teachers, of course, cannot offer this kind of task. Banning translation from the L2 classroom deprives learners of the possibility of developing a valuable language skill that they are very likely to need in the outside world, particularly the world of work.

Equally, there is of course a persistent danger that overuse of the L1 (especially in a situation where the teacher and learners share a common language) will fail to present sufficient opportunities for the students to practice language learning tasks and activities. Every EFL professional of any experience will be able to recount ‘horror’ stories of students who have studied English for a decade or more through old-fashioned and traditional educational systems and who, despite often having a good theoretical grasp of English grammar, cannot after all that classroom time, actually use the language in any meaningfully communicative way. However, that often has more to do with the training and support given to the teachers: the expectations of the state educational system and many other variables, rather than the fact that the teacher shared the students’ L1. And, in a similar vein, many NESTs have had the uncomfortable experience of attempting (as per externally imposed curricula) to explain a grammatical construct, or a difficult piece of vocabulary, to students who do not as of yet possess a level of English to cope with such explanation.

Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002), as above, found that their respondents were largely in favour of a teaching and learning approach that tended in the direction of utilising the perceived strengths of each and every teacher. Thus, they seemed quite content to have grammar explained to them in their L1, before moving into a practice phase where the L2 would

dominate (possibly but not exclusively by changing from one teacher – the speaker of their own L1 – to another, probably a NEST). Interestingly, these same students were more in favour of having NESTs in higher or tertiary education, where it was believed levels of English comprehension would be higher in order to cope with exclusively L2 instruction. And, interesting though this finding certainly is, it is perhaps the respondents own experiences and understandable lack of pedagogic know-how, that would condemn bilingual teachers to the lower prestige and proficiency levels while rewarding the monolingual teacher with a higher status position.

## CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY

This chapter will first of all discuss the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research process undertaken here, before going on to describe the subsequent methodology employed. The sample population will be described as will the stages of the research process and the ethical considerations that influenced this study. Finally, there will be a short exposition of the constraints placed upon the study and how these limitations were taken into account.

### 4.1 Theoretical Framework

The impetus for any piece of research, whether small-scale, more macro-sociological in nature, or of instantly practical utility, and the attendant methodological approach adopted, lies in the researcher's own philosophical stance. The ontological and epistemological framework favoured by any given researcher will in turn influence the type of research. That is it influences the methodological orientation and the methods, or research instruments, employed. To put it simply, this dictates, to an extent, whether to choose a purely quantitative approach to educational research, or to opt for a more qualitative research design and subsequent appraisal of the data, or indeed, amalgamate aspects of these two traditionally paradigmatically opposed research positions in order to synthesise a third, perhaps more flexible, approach.

Crotty (1998) provides a simplified diagram of four interrelated elements that, he claims, represent the most important aspects of the research process. Leaving aside the individual researcher's ontological persuasion (i.e. their personal view of what and how the reality of

our very existence is constituted), Crotty (1998) exemplifies four related tiers in his methodological tree. Crotty (1998) views epistemological concerns (our view of the nature of knowledge) and knowledge construction as the pre-cursor to a consideration of the researcher's paradigmatic, or theoretical perspective. This is the level of abstraction at which the researcher decides upon a perspective, such as positivism or critical inquiry; that influences and informs their approach to both the gathering and interpretation of the data. An approach such as this, rooted as it is in epistemological concerns, is too convenient for Packer and Goicoechea (2000), who would argue that analysing the research process from an epistemological, rather than a broader ontological, basis, allows too much latitude to the researcher.

Packer and Goicoechea (2000, p. 227), echo Crotty (1998) to an extent, in allowing that most social, indeed educational, research draws largely on theories of constructionism, of one form or another, but they remain unconvinced by arguments advanced by such as Cobb (1994) and Hiebert, et al. (1996) that perspectives such as, "sociocultural and constructivist approaches are not irreconcilable but complementary," believing that they represent incommensurate assumptions on an ontological level. That said, while Packer and Goicoechea (2000, p.230), see important differences in what they term the dualism of the constructivist perspective, as compared to the nondualist philosophy embedded in the sociocultural approach they do concede that, "a reconciliation of constructivist and sociocultural perspectives is possible and necessary."

However, Packer and Goicoechea's (2000, p.239) main belief is that the dualism inherent in the constructivist approach is only produced in certain specific circumstances and that these

are circumstances, “whose historical and cultural character and genesis come into view from the sociocultural perspective.”

It is a stance that can, at times, appear more theoretical than practical, but Packer and Goicoechea’s (2000, p.228) attempts to either reconcile sociocultural theory with a constructivist perspective, or indeed, go beyond the constructivist approach and embed it within a wider sociocultural ontological view is of great utility to the researcher. They see six key themes that help to inform educational epistemology, any given researcher’s paradigmatic stance, and the attendant methodology subsequently adopted. These key points are that:

- (a) the person is constructed, (b) in a social context, (c) formed through practical activity, (d) and formed in relationships of desire and recognition, (e) that can split the person, and (f) motivating the search for identity.

It is a way of seeing things that accepts; even while espousing a largely sociocultural view of the teaching and learning process; that aspects of a more constructivist approach have much to tell us. It can help to form valid and useful approaches towards educational research, that would find favour with Howe (1988), Gage (1989) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), who argue cogently for research that escapes the straitjacket of mono-method constraints and too dogmatic an approach to both ontological and epistemological concerns. Pring (2000), whilst retaining doubts over the efficacy of certain modernist, or post-modernist, approaches to the field of educational research, is also generally in favour of a utilitarian approach that seeks to avoid dogmatic constraints and to also challenge the very nature of knowledge itself. Pring (2000, p. 115) summarises more recent developments thus:

The cultural diversity we now experience calls into question many of the certainties which previously were taken for granted. It points to the genesis and organization of knowledge as at least in part contingent upon social factors and exercise of control by those in powerful positions. It raises critical questions about the mode of learning (the transmission of knowledge) encouraged by the certainties of modernism. It points to the absence of the perspectives of those without a power base from which to teach.

As a result of such considerations this study has been heavily influenced by non-traditional views of the educational research process. It seeks to build on the concerns, and key points, of Packer and Goicoechea (2000). That is, that a sociocultural reading of the whole process of teaching and learning, and researching that very context, helps to more fully illuminate aspects of what we learn, how we learn and why we learn. However, it is equally possible to incorporate aspects of a constructivist world view into the research process, albeit under a sociocultural umbrella. This is also in line with the thinking of Ernst (1994, p.34) who found that, “the constructivist, interpretative and naturalistic paradigms, do not regard the world as something which can be known with any certainty.” He preferred to see such approaches as epistemologically humble, yet at the same time seeking to problematise the relationship between what we view as knowledge, and the seeker after that possibly arbitrary and shifting knowledge.

It is the very nature of that knowledge, at one and the same time grounded in everyday reality, whilst open to negotiation, interpretation and reinterpretation, that suggested the particular

methodological approach adopted in this study. Pring (2000, p. 56), in line with Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), argues cogently for a flexible, less paradigmatically pure view of the research process, where, “(T)he qualitative investigation can clear the ground for the quantitative – and the quantitative can be suggestive of differences to be explored in a more interpretive mode.” This, is very much the approach adopted here. That said, within the interpretive framework informing the second stage of the data collection and analysis is an over-riding concern to view the process from a critical perspective. Therefore, it is perhaps best to see the epistemological underpinnings of this particular study as belonging more to the realm of critical theory, or, as Pennycook (2001) would term it, ‘critical applied linguistics.’

For Pennycook (2001, 2004), ‘critical applied linguistics’ is not only about identifying, isolating and understanding the relationship between applied linguistics on the one hand and social and political power on the other, but it must also attempt to problematise many of the taken for granted assumptions of the language education field (e.g. from Phillipson’s, 1992, ‘linguistic imperialism’ to policies dictating English as the medium of instruction for other subject areas). Pennycook (2004, p. 806), sees a need to:

...develop both a critical political stance and a critical, epistemological stance, so that both inform each other, leaving neither the political nor the applied linguistic as static. Power, as Foucault (1991) suggested, should not be assumed as a given entity but rather should be explored as the very concern that needs explanation. Critical applied linguistics is a mixture....questioning what is meant and maintained by many of the everyday categories of applied linguistics – language, learning, communication, difference, context, culture, meaning, translation, writing,



literacy, assessment – as well as categories of social critique – ideology, race, gender, class, and so on.

The misgivings stated in both the introduction and rationale concerning the unquestioned imposition of EMI onto a largely voiceless student body dictated that a critical stance would best inform this research throughout, from the formulation of the research questions to the choice of a mixed-method approach. A purely interpretative design might well have run the risk of allowing the researcher to ‘discover’ only the preconceived notions with which the research might well be supposed to have started, while an entirely quantitative approach could not adequately deal with the contradictions, assumptions and variable interpretations to be expected in educational research. It should also be noted that this methodological stance owes something to a critical perspective with a wholly qualitative/ interpretive stance seen as lacking the potential rigour and validity of the mixed method approach outlined below.

#### 4.2 The Methodological Approach

Influenced by the practical, and non-dogmatic, approaches to educational research, such as that exemplified by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), who champion an approach seeking to avoid the metaphorical straitjacket of mono-method design and paradigmatic limitation; this piece of research sought to gather opinions on a variety of language planning, management and implementation issues from faculty, management and policy makers at a U.A.E. tertiary institution. As stated above, the original intention had been to conduct as wide ranging a questionnaire as possible in order to canvas the opinions of the students studying at, or recently graduated from, the institution in question. However, thanks to the sensitive and potentially highly politicised nature of research into English as the medium of instruction in a

Mid-Eastern context, the necessary permission to include the student body in the study was not forthcoming and a smaller, more qualitative, research project emerged.

Such concerns also restricted the scope of the research to one institution only, thus preventing a much larger sample of questionnaire responses. Likewise an initial attempt to extend the study to other 'sister' institutions (both state-backed and private) met with similar reluctance. Although receiving assurances from two other tertiary institutions that they would do all they could to support educational research in the country and region, these assurances came with the quite natural caveat that this could only be facilitated after management approval. These approvals that have neither been forthcoming, nor categorically rejected. However, after delays running into years rather than weeks or months it is safe to assume that the sensitive and potentially political nature of such research has predetermined that it is best kept 'in-house' and small-scale.

This stance is regrettable in many ways but most especially as there is clear evidence that the 'national leadership', as the Zayed University report (2008) terms them, is not necessarily resistant to critically grounded theory and a degree of positive criticism. In 2003, (Saito), 2004 (Faez) and 2005 (Moussu), the Sheikh Nahayan (current Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research) Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, in conjunction with the U.S. based, The International Research Fellowship, approved sizable grants to educational researchers whose critical research into the NS (NEST)/ NNS (NNEST) debate was most unlikely to simply bolster the status quo. Perhaps those in positions to make recommendations and approve of research projects are self-censoring to a degree that fails to serve the long term needs of U.A.E. educational stakeholders, from the top down, and are attributing to the 'national leadership' attitudes that they do not necessarily hold with or share.

That said, access to all levels at the single institution in question, from management charged with attending and contributing to policy fora, to every member of faculty freely prepared to respond, ensured that there was sufficient, even abundant, data for a predominantly qualitative study. Richards (2003, p. 8) would remind us that qualitative inquiry is often most efficacious in the human sciences – perhaps even more so in something as imprecise and highly mutable as language learning and the making of language policies:

...which is why a different sort of investigative approach is needed in the human sciences, one that will seek to understand the patterns and purposes in our behaviour and provide insights that will enrich our understanding.

However, although the constraints of the situation, and the desire to offer a richer description of faculty and management opinions than would be likely from following a purely quantitative methodological approach, has helped to dictate a largely qualitative analysis of the data gathered, it would be incorrect to assume (see Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, above) that there is no place at all for a degree of quantification. Richards (2003, p.11) Eisner (2001), and Hammersley (1992), all see situations where, “more precise quantification has a contribution to make”, and that:

...it would be foolish to deny ourselves this resource on ideological grounds. But this is a very different position from one that says the only significant claims are those expressible in quantitative terms.

It recognises that decisions about degrees of precision are matters to be determined in the course of our inquiry rather than as a prelude to it.

Although far from the only viable or valid option the mixed method approach described allowed for Richards' (2003, p.11), "degree of quantification", and that quantification itself was used to guide the qualitative stage of the investigation. This plural approach to the research context was deemed particularly important in a study influenced, as it was, by a critical perspective. As the research questions had originally grown out of critical dissatisfaction with the unquestioning dominance of EMI in the UAE and other similar countries, it would have been comparatively easy and even understandable for the researcher to 'interpret' the qualitative data in order to bolster these inevitable presumptions to the detriment of conflicting and confusing voices amongst the data. Thus, a degree of quantification in the initial stage of the study has helped to focus the latter interpretive phase on those areas of discrepancy that were highlighted in the former stage. This is not to say that such an approach does not, by default, also highlight areas of agreement, which in themselves are worthy of further interpretation.

Although now some considerable time ago Merton and Kendall (1946), cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 45) were among the first to see the utility of such a flexible approach when they stated that, "(S)ocial scientists have come to abandon the spurious choice between qualitative and quantitative data, they are concerned rather with that combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each." Therefore, despite the constraints discussed above there remained sufficient scope to incorporate aspects of both quantification and a more interpretive qualification into this study, with the quantitative stage informing the alter qualitative analysis.

### 4.3 Aims and Research Questions

This study sought to highlight any differences in perception of the official EMI, and by extension CLIL, policy operating at the institution in question. The opinions and perceptions of faculty members, institutional management, and other policy makers were gathered by means of a quantitative questionnaire. The second layer to the research then analysed respondents written questions and management interview data in a more qualitative manner in an attempt to discern why any discrepancies might exist. It was hoped that any relevant findings as to why such differences of perception were present could be used to help shape institutional language planning and wider educational policy. The basic research questions informed by this overarching aim are given immediately below:

- 1) Do faculty members at a certain U.A.E. tertiary institution perceive that English medium studies are suitable and of benefit to the students in terms of their content knowledge learning?
  
- 2) Do faculty members at the same institution perceive that English only teaching and learning environments are suitable and effective in both content and language learning classes?
  
- 3) Do faculty members at this institution perceive that employing Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) is suitable and effective for either content or language learning classes.

- 4) Do faculty perceptions of NEST and NNEST teachers' respective abilities influence these responses?
- 5) How do the perceptions of senior management at this institution coincide with faculty perceptions and how does this influence the EMI/ English only teaching and learning environment?

#### 4.4 The Sample

The restrictions placed upon this study (see section 1.5) and the fact that it followed a mixed-model approach meant that the quantitative stage of the study was a starting point, or precursor, to a more involved qualitative stage. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p. 19) defined a mixed-model approach as, “*studies that are products of the pragmatist paradigm and that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process.*” This approach helped to dictate the type of sample available to, and sought by, the researcher. As this study was largely qualitative in execution, statistically rigorous probability sampling approaches and strategies were not deemed as being of the first importance. Therefore, a mixture of partially purposive and convenience sampling was employed. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), convenience sampling allows the researcher to make use of those to whom they have easy access, and given the restrictions placed by institutional management upon the scope of this study (restricted to one institution; no access to the student body, etc.) this version of ‘opportunity sampling’ was the most suitable approach available in the circumstances. That, of course, limits the ability to generalize from the quantitative data alone but, “(A)s it does not represent any group apart from itself, it does not seek to generalize about the wider population; for a convenience sample that is an irrelevance,” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.102-103). That said,

for the purposes of the qualitative phase of this study the 52 respondents (32 English language faculty: 20 Content faculty) could all be reasonably assumed to exhibit a degree of typicality in that they were all solicited to respond based upon their profession (teaching), place of employment (the same institution) and that they took part in the questionnaire stage of the study on a purely voluntary basis. Of course, as the particular variables being explored varied (e.g. level of qualification) so did the proportions of respondents assigned to each category, plus on occasions not every respondent answered every item.

#### 4.5 The Quantitative Stage - Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.245)

Questionnaires can also be flexible, allowing the researcher to mix the question type. In this instance there was a five-point Likert rating scale, more open-ended response opportunities, which fed into the later qualitative analysis of the data, and an adapted dichotomous response section. Questionnaires can also minimise intrusion into the respondents working day. This questionnaire took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Also, thanks to modern technology questionnaires need not be onerous to distribute, collect and analyse. It was also deemed very important in this context that the respondents would be anonymous and effectively untraceable.

In this instance the instrument design allowed for quantitative responses (e.g. a five-point Likert scale) and a more qualitative justification or assessment of these items. Initially, the quantitative stage served to highlight areas of interest and/ or disparity of opinion which could then be followed up via the participants' written responses.

In order to cover the areas of interest highlighted in the research questions the original questionnaire sought to elicit faculty opinions regarding issues of recruitment (e.g. whether native, or native-like, fluency ought to be a prerequisite for faculty employment, etc.); the efficacy of English as a medium of instruction policies; and the use and utility of the students' L1 in the classroom.

The first section of the questionnaire asked for basic demographic information, especially concerning subjects taught, the faculty member's L1, their L2, level of qualification and years of teaching experience. Naturally, respondents were not asked to supply their names and were also assured of complete anonymity. Although, of course, a demographic profile could give some indication of the identity of the respondent, their ultimate anonymity was assured by the researcher, and the survey platform used allowed for any and all tracking functions to be disabled. Such normal ethical precautions and assurances were designed to encourage respondents to answer as honestly as possible in the certain knowledge that any negative comments, or comments seemingly critical of the status quo, could not be attributed to any given individual. Plus, participation was entirely voluntary.

It was, however, necessary to ask for a degree of basic demographic information as this would then allow, in the following quantitative analysis stage, for comparisons to be drawn. It goes without saying that a faculty member's attitude towards policies such as an English



only classroom environment might well be influenced by their own language and language learning experience, and it was such comparisons that the initial stage of the data collection and analysis was designed to probe.

As such, the initial questionnaire (see Appendix A) was divided into five main areas. As above the first area simply asked for basic demographic and professional information: subject/s taught; native language (L1); second or other language (L2); highest educational or professional qualification (Ph.D, M.A, B.Ed., etc.) and years of teaching experience.

The second part of the questionnaire (actual items 1-5) looked at issues regarding the recruitment of either native English speakers (NESTs) or non-native English speakers (NNESTs) as teachers of both English language classes and also content classes (Information Technology, Business, Engineering, etc.) This was done by asking respondents to react to statements on a conventional five-point Likert scale, with a score of one (1) representing strong agreement and, at the opposite end of the scale, a score of five (5) representing strong disagreement with the statement. The same pattern was followed for items 6-11 which sought to probe opinions on whether or not a degree of L1 use might prove a useful tool in the teaching and learning of the L2, or when taking on the formidable challenge of learning content related information through the medium of a foreign, second or other language. This in turn was followed by a short section, items 12-15, dealing with the issues of whether Arabic, and by extension Arabic language materials, might not be best used to teach content classes? Then items 16-21, looked briefly at identity related aspects of learning a foreign language, and of learning in and through that foreign language.

#### 4.6 Origins of the Questionnaire: Piloting and Procedure

The questionnaire just described (see Appendix A) was largely based upon a previous piece of research (McLaren, 2008) in order to make use of an instrument that had been piloted (originally in a Saudi Arabian context), refined and executed more than once. The original questionnaire had been delivered to faculty at a Saudi Arabian tertiary institution, after consultation with both colleagues and senior management, in order to ascertain that in the opinion of fellow practitioners and those in positions of responsibility, none of the items could be considered to be either too biased or leading in design, or likely to cause any embarrassment or discomfort to respondents (albeit anonymous respondents). Suggestions were generally acted upon and after the first administration of the questionnaire further feedback was gathered from respondents. This feedback was requested as part of the researcher's learning process, as this was initially a course paper, but proved very useful when, after further refinements, the amended questionnaire was used once more (McLaren, 2009) with the student body, rather than faculty. Thus sections 1-4 of the questionnaire instrument had previously undergone a rigorous process of piloting, trialing and prior use before being administered to two further faculty members; one an English language teacher, the other a content subject teacher; for a final dry run prior to use. This dry run covered everything from the wording of the items, through ease of use, to technical aspects concerning the online delivery of the questionnaire. After this final consultation one or two small changes of wording were added before the questionnaire was released. The questionnaire also underwent a process of management appraisal in order that any items deemed unsuitable in any way could be altered or even removed. Fortunately this did not prove to be necessary.

The questionnaire was sent as an email link to every member of faculty in the institution with a generous timeframe for responding allocated (up to three months), although in reality colleagues tended to respond in a timely fashion or not at all.

The results of these sections (N.B. there was also a fifth section dealing with the particular skills, strategies and talents attributed by respondents to either native English speaking teachers or non-native English speaking teachers, but as this was not in a Likert scale format it will be described and analysed separately below) were entered numerically into the SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Sciences) package. These responses were cross-referenced to see where statistically significant differences between the respondents arose. In order to do so the respondents were divided by subject; i.e. English teachers' opinions juxtaposed to the those of content teachers; L1, English, Arabic or another language; L2, simply ascertaining whether the teachers in question had ever made any headway with a foreign language themselves; by qualification, comparing those who had engaged with Masters level discourse, or above, with those who had not and finally comparing more experienced practitioners with their less experienced colleagues. In this case the cut-off point was 10 years or more teaching experience. These distinctions between faculty members were designed to mirror the comparison of opinions sought in the first four research questions (see sections 1.7 and 4.3).

#### 4.7 Statistical Analysis

These comparisons and the 5-point Likert scale responses meant that it was possible to run a basic statistical check on whether the differences between the answers given by one group (e.g. English language teachers) and the comparison group (e.g. content teachers) were indeed statistically significant differences. Where statistically significant differences occurred

it was then intended to make a closer, more qualitative, appraisal of the written and recorded responses of the various stakeholders in order to attempt to assess in more depth the reasons why such differences of opinion might occur. The method chosen to arrive at this statistical significance was an independent samples t-test. Items assessed by the independent samples t-test to have a significance value of less than 0.05 (whether equal variances had been assumed or not, according to Levene's test for equality of variance) were therefore regarded as significant results and thus worthy of further research. It should be noted at this juncture that although a one-way ANOVA would yield similar results with respect to verifying the significance of any differences of opinion, the independent samples t-test was judged superior in a case, such as this, where the groups were initially compared on the basis of one variable only, at any given time, and where it was likely that the samples would have an unequal number of cases/ respondents. As the independent samples t-test computes two tests of significance (one assuming homogeneity of variance: the other not), compared to the one-way ANOVA's single test, it was a preferable test when sample size, number of cases, etc. were likely to be fluid and changeable. Plus, although the one-way ANOVA is a better test of significance for more than two groups, as this study sought to compare only two groups at a time the independent samples t-test was chosen.

Of course, one of the ever present dangers of conducting attitude and opinion questionnaires concerns the issues of the instrument's, and the subsequent results,' validity and reliability. In order to address these issues a variety of checks and balances were incorporated into the design and analysis of the questionnaire and following qualitative appraisal stage. In the first place, the very choice of a mixed method approach was designed to offer a degree of triangulation by exploring the same issues via both quantitative and also qualitative methods. Where a statistically significant response was further embellished by a statement or comment

in support of such an assumption, it could be reasonably expected that that is what the respondent intended to convey. Plus, the questionnaire itself incorporated antagonistic pairs of items, which should they have both been answered in the same manner would have invalidated that particular questionnaire on the assumption that certain items had either not been read carefully enough or that there had been a misunderstanding with regard to the meaning of these items. Fortunately such contradictory responses did not occur. By utilising a quantitative stage and only exploring those issues that gave statistically significant results (an approach and a choice of statistical test settled upon after consultation with an expert in the field of statistical analysis) it became less likely that the researcher would be lead by their own prejudices and predilections to make selective use of the data.

Additionally, as will be discussed below when dealing with the ethical element of the research process, the questionnaire was anonymous, voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any point, thus the incentive to please the researcher, or institutional management, or to answer as the respondent thought they ought to, was also diminished. Which is not to say that any piece of research, especially when dealing with the qualitative interpretation of data, is ever likely to be totally without flaws, but that via careful questionnaire construction (at times modelled on the work of others, e.g. the fifth section was based on Lasagabaster and Sierra's questionnaire of 2006), triangulation of methods, appropriate statistical verification and the maintenance of ethical standards, the opportunities for invalid results and unreliable extrapolations were considerably reduced.

#### 4.8 Section 5 – Teaching Competencies

Section 5 of the questionnaire, based upon and adapted from Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), was mainly based upon research question number four. This question asked the respondents to give their opinions regarding the comparative strengths of both native English speaking teachers (NS) and non-native English speaking teachers (NNS). The respondents were asked which of these teachers, if any, they perceived as being better at teaching various aspects of their respective courses. E.g. whether they thought that a native English speaking teacher or a non-native English speaking teacher might be better at teaching grammar in comparison to a colleague with a different L1? The nature of these questions and responses, a straightforward choice of one, the other, both or neither meant that the analysis of these items relied upon basic descriptive statistics only. That said, the quantitative phase of this piece of research was always intended to primarily help in focusing the later qualitative inquiry.

#### 4.9 The Qualitative Stage – Management Interviews

The second, wholly qualitative, strand to this study was a series of short, but focussed, interviews with senior management at the institution in question. This was based on research question number 5 which asked how far the perceptions of senior management coincided with faculty perceptions and how that might influence the EMI/ English only teaching and learning environment? Certain of these individuals also served on various system wide policy councils and other decision making bodies, so their responses can be viewed as representing not only institutional, but perhaps wider, policy making bodies on which they sit and participate in helping to steer system wide language and other policies.

The original choice to conduct interviews with the management group came down to one or two practicalities while at the same time offering a very rich source of both information and, more importantly, the participants' perceptions. In the first place the opportunity to interview management at the institution in question was offered as something of a quid pro quo in order to compensate for the earlier restriction on surveying or interviewing the student body. Additionally, as everyone involved works in the same building the practicalities of conducting interviews were comparatively easy to arrange and administer. This helped to add an extra, richer, and more complex layer to the original quantitative and qualitative study. Additionally, on a theoretical level the opportunity to interview management was gratefully accepted as it allowed the researcher to:

...clear away once and for all the natural assumption that the interview is simply a matter of gathering facts. Of course it can be used for that, but in qualitative enquiry we need to go deeper, to pursue understanding in all its complex, elusive and shifting forms; and to achieve this we need to establish a relationship with people that enables us to share in their perception of the world. (Richards, 2003, p.50)

It is the pursuit of that complexity (often contradictory as will be seen below) and those perceptions, allied to the practicalities above that made conducting interviews such an appealing option in this instance. As this study sought a degree of comparison across different groups within the faculty and also sought to interpret the written response data proffered by the faculty respondents, it proved additive to the study to add the layer of management interviews. In the first place this allowed for a further interpretive comparison, as now faculty opinion and perspective could be viewed in juxtaposition to the perspectives

of management. Once again seeking areas of both agreement and disparity. Additionally in an educational milieu where faculty voices often strain to be heard it is usually the opinions of management, rather than faculty that will hold sway. Having the opportunity to compare these perspectives offered up a rich and interesting field of enquiry.

These interviews were recorded and then carefully transcribed (verbatim) before being 'coded' (see Appendix D for an example) as part of a more concentrated qualitative analysis. Prior to this analysis, and the following discussion of the points, opinions and issues that arose, each participant was sent a copy of their interview transcript for verification. This was done for two main reasons: the first in order to ensure the absolute fidelity of the transcription (as far as the interviewee was concerned) and also to allow the respondents to make sure that what they actually said was a fair reflection of what they intended to say. In a non-unionised environment (and despite assurances of complete confidentiality), where a misconstruction of one's words could result in sanctions leading to, and not excluding, dismissal, it was of paramount importance that each and every interviewee was fully confident that their recorded dialogue represented statements that they were content to be associated with, should, for some reason, it ever be necessary to justify such responses. In cases where respondents felt that their words misrepresented their intended meaning it would have been incumbent upon the researcher to omit those parts of the transcription with which the interviewee felt uncomfortable. Plus, of course, at this and every other stage of the research and writing up process the participants had every right to withdraw their contributions at any time. Fortunately, on re-reading and reflection none of the various interviewees felt the need to withdraw any of their statements.



These interview transcripts were carefully coded by first using software specifically designed for qualitative research purposes before even more carefully (re)coded by hand in order to ensure that the comments highlighted by the software were indeed as frequent and potentially illuminating as was suggested by their presence being identified by the software package. In short, it was deemed important that the researcher would not simply find comments, views and opinions to bolster any preconceived, albeit possibly subconscious, notions. Thus, having first subjected the data to an initial quantitative analytical stage (if only to highlight areas of interest); followed by a more qualitative coding procedure, both computer assisted and manual, it is possible to suggest that the comments and insights drawn upon in the following analysis are far more than just convenient quotations supporting preconceived ideas that the researcher, inevitably if unintentionally, brings to the analysis. This approach also allowed, at the interview stage, for the emergence of themes and perceptions that might not have been predicted or expected when compiling the original questionnaire. In this case, one illuminating emergent theme revolved around the seemingly contradictory perception that although several management interviewees felt that asking students to study in a foreign language was indeed detrimental to their progress with their major subjects, the same interviewees would still often pledge their full support to a system dictating that students would continue to study in that same foreign language. What emerged were justifications for this approach that centred squarely around other, non-academic factors: most usually employability and other economic concerns.

In all eight members of the management group (from supervisory positions and above) agreed to take part and all gave generously of their time. The interviews averaged about 15 minutes, with one or two running beyond 20 minutes. Interviews took place in the participants own offices and at their leisure and discretion. In each case the initial questions/

prompts were made available prior to the interview and each participant was guaranteed anonymity, the right to opt out at any point and the chance to review their recorded transcript. The pre-prepared questions (see Appendix D) covered the same general areas as the initial questionnaire. E.g. NEST/ NNEST recruitment/ English as the Medium of Instruction/ English only teaching and learning environments, etc., All of these issues were covered in each interview. However, the type and number of follow up questions depended very much on previous responses and the loquacity of the respective interviewee.

The candid nature of the responses (one or two off-record responses, offered after the recording have of course been omitted), suggested a degree of confidence in the confidentiality of the process, as did the fact that none of the participants felt that their transcript misrepresented their opinions. Of course, there is always the danger of participants answering as they think they should and not saying how they really feel, but with these interviews being anonymous and voluntary it is perhaps best to assume a degree of honesty in the responses and act upon them accordingly. It should also be noted here that only 8 senior management figures were initially approached, so the responses rate, and willingness to take part, was extremely edifying.

#### 4.10 The Qualitative Stage – Written Questionnaire Responses

This qualitative stage was also replicated (both via the software package and manually) for the variety of written comments appended to the original questionnaire document. As above, the questionnaire instrument left space on the final page for respondents to add their views and/or justifications regarding the answers they had given to the preceding questions: i.e. it was not uncommon for respondents to explain the reasoning behind the answers they had

given (see Appendix). These were, of course, very useful pieces of additional data allowing for a degree of confirmation and triangulation.

#### 4.11 Ethics

As has already been mentioned above, this study was conducted with a genuine concern that it should at all times adhere to high ethical standards. In a context where faculty have little if any recourse should they be unfairly (or otherwise) dismissed and where expatriate employees have limited job security, often linked to housing, children's schooling and medical insurance, etc. it was paramount that every respondent and interviewee felt that taking part in this study represented no threat to their personal and professional standing and well-being. Therefore, each emailed questionnaire had a University of Exeter ethics certificate/ declaration attached and the email itself stressed that a) participation was voluntary, b) participation was anonymous and, c) that participants could opt out at any time whatsoever. All of which are procedures in keeping with the practices of Silverman (2005, p.30) when he, "...undertook to use pseudonyms...throughout the research to preserve anonymity and to safeguard confidentiality," amongst other precautions and ethical considerations.

The same was the case with the management interviews: pseudonyms were used thus ensuring that point b) (above) was covered, as were points a) and c). Additionally, the interviewees were all given a preview of the interview questions and also verified the transcript of their interview after it had been typed up. Of course, as well as putting participants' minds at rest regarding their anonymity and right of withdrawal, such 'blind' procedures, it is to be hoped, allowed for both faculty and management to voice their true and

honest opinions with no concerns that even the most contentious of views could ever be held against them. Yet, it must also be remembered that according to Silverman (2005, p.257), “(A)s the German sociologist Weber (1946) pointed out nearly a century ago, all research is contaminated to some extent by the values of the researcher.” However, “(O)nly through those values do certain problems get identified and studied in particular ways.” (Silverman, 2005, p.257). That said, it is to be hoped that an awareness of the unavoidable opinions and attitudes brought to this study by the researcher, allied to a vigorous attempt to reach the highest possible ethical standards for conducting such research, will minimise any deleterious effects upon the study and allow for certain conclusions to be reached and proposals put forward in a fair and open-minded way.

#### 4.12 Challenges and Limitations

As we have seen above the initial scope of this piece of research and the actual target population itself were, by dint of necessity, scaled down and altered considerably thanks to institutional constraints and the lack of permission to survey (or interview) the student body. While this was initially a hurdle to overcome, the final compromise of access to faculty opinions and management interviewees may have altered the original conception of the study but could also be said in many ways to have helped to focus it more strategically. While researching students’ attitudes to EMI and the NEST/ NNEST question would have been very illuminating in this particular context and cultural milieu; unfettered access to a smaller, more targeted, group of respondents may well have allowed for a far deeper, and richer, exploration of the opinions and beliefs of several groups of very important stakeholders (English language faculty, content faculty and management).

Once the study was underway the main challenges were largely predictable ones: e.g. not everyone invited to respond to the quantitative questionnaire did so, certain respondents took a long time to respond at all and a few failed to complete the survey. However, as these challenges were somewhat predictable in advance the design of the study was able to take these into account. Hence a mixed-model design (to mitigate against the failure of any single approach). Also the choice of statistical test (an independent samples t-test was suitable when not all comparisons will have equal numbers of cases, and the largely qualitative slant to much of the study) especially given the relatively restricted sample size that dictated that generalizations based on the numerical data would not have been entirely valid. Therefore, these statistics were used to guide the later qualitative snapshot of faculty opinion and which particular areas should be appraised in a closer manner, whilst all the time remaining aware that wider extrapolation would be of limited validity.

## CHAPTER FIVE – DATA ANALYSIS

In order to make coherent interpretations of the data gathered via the mixed method instruments described in the methodology section it was deemed practical to divide the data analysis according to the direct relevance of these responses and comments to the research questions already posed (sections 1.7 and 4.3).

The first of these research questions sought out both faculty and management perceptions as to the efficacy of an EMI teaching and learning environment. Research question two, although probing a slightly different area of interest was nonetheless closely enough related to suggest analysing the responses and comments to both of these research questions in one section (5.1) under the umbrella heading of English Medium Instruction. Research question one was concerned with perceptions of the overall efficacy of studying through the medium of English while research question two considered opinions as to whether that should be conducted exclusively through the target language and target language materials. The analysis of the data was conducted in two stages. The first was largely quantitative, looking at statistically verifiable discrepancies in perception, the latter qualitative where written responses and interview data were interpreted in light of the earlier quantitative phase. However, as one of the areas of interest in this study was to compare the differences of perception between different groups within the faculty (e.g. content and English language teachers), the analysis of the data was subdivided across these distinct groups. The groupings were content/ English language teachers: NESTs/ NNESTs: those with L2 ability/ monolingual teachers: more as compared to less highly qualified faculty and a further division by years of experience. For example section 5.1.1 compares the views of content teachers with those of English language teachers in order to ascertain the extent of their

support for EMI (research question one) and English only teaching and learning environments (research question 2).

As this analysis was more thematic than chronological the opinions of management were incorporated into the qualitative stage of the analysis rather than dealt with in isolation. This was deemed suitable as a degree of comparison between management and faculty opinions was an important layer in the data analysis procedure. Hence the comparison of responses and comments from content and English language faculty in section 5.1.1 is followed by 5.1.2 where management views of the EMI/ English only issue are interpreted. Also, as this analysis is largely interpretive in nature it dealt not only with the discrepancies of perception between the various groups but also looked at areas of agreement (see 5.1.9).

Each of these areas of initial interest was, as we have seen, compared across diverse groups however as the data analysis progressed several smaller subthemes emerged. For example, there were several comments put forward suggesting that EMI was only suitable at a higher level of language attainment, not at all levels throughout the institution. Therefore, each larger section has been subdivided to deal not only with the original comparative groups but with emergent themes such as that in section 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 where the discrete and related issue of using either English or Arabic language materials for content subjects is dealt with.

A similar approach was applied to the analysis in section 5.2 dealing with the NEST/ NNEST issue. This section was based upon research question 3 that sought out faculty and management views on the recruitment and retention of either native English speaking teachers for both language and content teaching positions. Section 5.3, based on research question 4, inquired into perceptions of the respective skills brought to the educational setting

by NESTs and NNESTs and how these teachers were perceived by their colleagues and managers respectively.

Research question 5 dealt specifically with the perceptions of management but, as we have seen, these responses were dealt with under the various themes around which the data analysis was organized. These themes: EMI (English only), NEST/ NNEST recruitment and the perceptions of the particular skills, strategies and abilities of both NESTs and NNESTs, were based closely upon the first 4 research questions.

Once again as this is mainly an interpretive piece of research there remained scope for other themes to emerge throughout the process and section 5.4 deals briefly with emergent opinions on the cultural and identity formation role, or even threat, of the current dominance of English. Finally, there was a short consideration of another emergent theme. Faculty and management alike proffered opinions not so much as to whether imposing EMI on an Arabic speaking population was inherently the right thing to do (in a deontological sense), but more in line with theories of instrumental philosophy, that it was an economic essential.

### 5.1 English Medium Instruction (EMI)

The first research question sought faculty perceptions about the efficacy, or otherwise, of English medium studies. This was initially done by comparing the responses of different subdivisions within the faculty (i.e. NESTs and NNESTs), before more closely analysing written responses. The second research question sought the perceptions of faculty on the general efficacy and suitability of employing English as the medium of instruction and enforcing this stance by maintaining English only teaching and learning environments, thus effectively



marginalising the use of the students' L1 in, respectively, English language learning and content subject classrooms, and, by extension, the wider educational context.

It should be noted at this juncture that during the initial quantitative stage of the data analysis the sample population had already been divided, for the purposes of comparison, by the respective subjects they taught. Therefore, initially the opinions of content teachers, an eclectic mix of English, Arabic and other mother tongue speakers, teaching primarily Business, Engineering and Information Technology courses, were compared to the responses proffered by English language teaching faculty, the vast majority of whom were native English speakers (with three exceptions – none of whom were L1 speakers of Arabic). In the latter, qualitative stage, itself a follow up based on the statistical data provided by stage one of the study, faculty comments justifying, supporting and otherwise corroborating earlier statistical findings were carefully coded and where appropriate quoted in the following analysis. Although, the second stage of the analysis has been based upon a closer examination of areas of discrepancy as that is where differences of opinion and perception are to be found, reference will also be made to certain areas where agreement between the various groups of respondents was also indicative of attitudes and perceptions that do not necessarily support the current EMI, English only, NEST based recruitment status quo.

#### 5.1.1 English Medium Instruction – Comparing Content and Language Teachers' Views

Responses to the items dealing with English as the medium of instruction, based on research questions 1 and 2, revealed that there were indeed several important differences of opinion between content and language teaching faculty. The first of these anomalies indicated that content teachers, perhaps initially surprisingly, agreed more readily with the idea that content

classes should be conducted exclusively through the medium of English, sticking to the same language medium policy as that operating in English language instructional classes, in comparison to the opinions of their English language teaching colleagues, who were more in favour of content classes, or at the very least, certain aspects of these classes, being conducted through the students' own language (see figures 1 and 2 below). The English language faculty were apparently more in agreement with the sentiments of such as Cook (2001), who argues strongly for the selective use of the students' L1 in the L2 language learning process, and Cummins (2001, p.320) who is quite adamant that not only is Cook (2001) correct in his assumptions, but that the, "perpetuation of the monolingual principle as "common-sense knowledge" in countries around the world is associated with multiple forms of injustice to both teachers and learners of English."

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EMI All Classes in English	Equal variances assumed	.000	<b>.997</b>	-4.464	49	<b>.000</b>	-1.32072	.29584	-1.91524	-.72621
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.353	35.023	.000	-1.32072	.30344	-1.93672	-.70472
EMI Non-English Classes in Arabic	Equal variances assumed	10.716	<b>.002</b>	3.894	49	.000	1.03125	.26483	.49906	1.56344
	Equal variances not assumed			4.334	48.563	<b>.000</b>	1.03125	.23796	.55294	1.50956

Figure 1: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for items 12 & 13: Where equal variances are assumed for item 12 but are not for item 13.

Subject	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EMI All Classes in English	>= 2	<b>2.2105</b>	1.08418	.24873
	< 2	<b>3.5313</b>	.98323	.17381
EMI Non-English Classes in Arabic	>= 2	<b>4.0000</b>	.66667	.15294
	< 2	<b>2.9688</b>	1.03127	.18230

**Figure 2: Mean Results for Items 12 & 13:** Where there are 19 Content Faculty Responses and 32 English Language Faculty Responses.

The survey design originally placed two antagonistically opposing statements one after the other (as a validity check), allowing for a reasonable degree of certainty, regarding these divergent viewpoints, where both items (12 and 13 respectively) indicated a statistically significant difference of opinion between the two groups described above (English language and content faculty). When it came to the items dealing with L1 use as either a tool for learning the target language, or as an aid to understanding content related concepts, no significant differences of opinion came to light, although differing points of view were in evidence when it came to the question of whether English ought to be the sole medium of instruction (see figures 1 and 2 above).

These antagonistic items (12 and 13), both dealt with the issue of whether classes at the institution in question (English language or content related) should be taught primarily through the medium of English? In justifying or otherwise explaining opinions that were apparently very much in favour of English as the medium of instruction, hence the statistically significant lower mean score in item 12 and higher mean score in item 13, many of the content teachers were initially reticent to explain why they felt this way. However, those that did presented quite complex and often contradictory written explanations. Despite ostensibly agreeing with the institutional policy certain content faculty alluded to the difficulty of understanding content knowledge and skills through the medium of another

language. These are sentiments echoed in the work of Hewson (1998), who alluded not only to the difficulties of learning through the medium of an L2, but also to the especial challenges faced if that L2 were not a language that shared a common orthographic model, language roots and socio-cultural assumptions with the learners' L1. Therefore adding to the considerable additional cognitive burden referred to by Troudi (2009).

Typical responses from both Alan and Brian immediately below, referred to the need to, at least, make some use of the students L1 in the teaching and learning process, although none of the respondents went so far as to suggest any overt opposition to English medium studies per se (as per their statistical responses). Alan, a content teacher, (N.B. all names are pseudonyms for the purposes of anonymity) explained his responses to questions 12 and 13 in the following way; "I think we need to use Arabic to some extent not only in English." While content colleague Brian went into more detail to explain how he felt that the use of the L1 could aid not only language learning but the understanding, assimilation and uptake of content based knowledge and skills:

...students should be allowed to speak Arabic now and then and the teacher should encourage key words to be defined in Arabic in order to aid in comprehension. The working memory is already working overtime, trying to decode the language as well as learn the content, so any time key words can be defined in Arabic and free up some of the working memory, it is advantageous to the students. This will allow the students to use some long term memory, to help them understand.

Such opinions would certainly strike a chord with Macaro (2006, p.82), who believes quite strongly that a dynamic interaction between the carefully considered use of the L1 and the effective teaching of the target language will:

...eventually empower the bilingual teacher rather than make him or her a victim of historical language learning developments, a puppet of the latest methodological fashions, or the scapegoat of uninformed government policies.

The positions put forward above are not dissimilar to that espoused by content teacher Hind who takes a similar view when it comes to using Arabic in the classroom: while admittedly failing to explicitly address the whole notion of studying through the medium of English in the first place:

As a content teacher I am more concerned that my students are able to grasp the concepts I am teaching. If they need to reflect in Arabic it does not matter – the end result is what I would like the students to achieve. If translating terms helps – that is fine as far as I am concerned.

Once again, it should not be assumed that although the two distinct groups (English language and content teachers) have answered the questionnaire in such a manner as to suggest a statistically significant difference of opinion, that there is not a great degree of ambiguity and complexity involved in the formation of these faculty opinions. For although there are certainly English language faculty who feel very strongly the efficacy and suitability of English medium instruction and the maintenance, where possible, of an English only teaching

and learning environment, such as Calum, who is, “strongly against the use of Arabic by Arabic native speaker teachers in any classes. The English only rule should be more strongly enforced otherwise there is a risk of the students slipping in their English language ability,” there are also many more tempered voices coming from the predominantly native English speaking English language faculty. Indeed it is English language faculty who, statistically speaking, champion the cause of Arabic as an aide to learning both the L2 and content subjects. English language faculty respondent David would appear to be more in tune with the content teachers quoted above and equally perhaps more aware of the complexity of the issue and the difficulties of learning in and through a second language and the fact that the, choices regarding, “medium of instruction are shaped by political, social and economic forces.” (Tsui and Tollefson, 2004, p.4). He summarises his feelings thus:

Whilst there is definitely a need here for a workforce that is proficient in both English and Arabic, I do think that education at this level i.e. tertiary, is prejudicial against those who are (sic) may be strong in content subjects and yet weak in English. Their low language level can mean greater difficulties accessing the subject and surely grades may be lower due to this.

#### 5.1.2 English Medium Instruction – Management Views – “it’s pretty much official policy”

Such opinions as those above were also largely echoed by comments from management at the institution, and it should be noted that many comments offered during the interviews held with select members of the management team were at times contradictory. These interviewees would, on occasion, share concerns such as those stated directly above, yet

continue to support the EMI dominated status quo. For example, the first management interviewee George argued, in line with the thinking of Macaro (2006; see above), and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002; 2006), in favour of the judicious (if limited) use of the students' L1 in the classroom. However there was a degree of contradiction in his responses when, despite comments alluding to the efficacy and practicality of a quick Arabic translation, he still maintained that an L1 free zone (as far as that is possible and albeit with some judicious flexibility on occasions) was the ideal, citing student overuse of, and reliance upon, their mother tongue as the reason why the students, "can't speak English after ten years of high (sic) school."

For George there was even less ambiguity apparent when dealing with the question of English as a medium for other studies. When questioned on the basic tenets of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), an approach that this particular institution has recently been following in a largely uncritical manner, George expressed opinions diametrically opposed to the existing status quo, going so far as to describe such L2 mediated processes as having little or no benefit at all for the learners, believing that there was, "a disadvantage of it being in English." This perception of English medium studies is in keeping with Troudi's (2009) identification of an additional, or extra, learning burden that, "slows the process (of learning) down."

The second member of the local management team who participated in the interview stage of the study (Margaret) could be said to wield a greater degree of institutional and system wide influence than George. She also operated within a wider context, as she was responsible not only for English language teaching, but education faculty and other content subject courses as well. Perhaps influenced by these broader responsibilities Margaret was very much in favour

of the application of English as the medium of instruction for all courses of study. Her opinion that could well be borne from a concern to maintain the institutional standard, or remit, which was to deliver an English medium education across all disciplines as well as from her own belief that use of the students' L1 in either language or content classes was at best a short term solution, and at worst a long term disservice to the learners. In responding to a direct question regarding her personal concurrence with the EMI policy she stated that:

...in my experience, when I've been working with students who had a teacher who would give them a word here and everywhere ...it might solve that immediate problem but it doesn't help them develop strategies to overcome it. So, that's why I feel it should be just English in our remit.

This remit is, according to Margaret, directly linked to the workplace, with English being seen very much as the language of the international market place and thus something the students in question need to master if they are going to succeed in an increasingly internationalised and globalised working environment. Indeed, Wright (2004, p.155) appears to accept, albeit sceptically, the economic imperative and inevitable hegemony of the English language in such fields as tertiary education (in non-English speaking countries) when she reminds us that English is, "the second language of millions of people who wish to operate in the transnational networks and systems of globalisation."

The fourth management interviewee (identified as William) started off by talking about how Arabic might be used judiciously in class and then went on to discuss how that type of practice would, or would not, fit in with the institutions' English Medium Instruction policy, and the concomitant official *modus operandi* where classes were supposed to be conducted



exclusively through the medium of English. The result of which was an institutional target aimed at creating as Arabic free a learning environment as possible. William had to concede that using Arabic at all, no matter how judiciously was not an officially approved way of doing things: “We don’t really encourage it, but I know there are times when it just makes life easier.”

Paradoxically, having defended the judicious use of Arabic to a degree, he then went to great lengths to justify the institutions’ English ‘immersion’ approach, believing that studying other subjects through the medium of English was important, not so much because it will necessarily help students to learn efficiently and understand their subject any more thoroughly, but because such an approach would have beneficial effects on the students’ overall English language attainment. This is a clear endorsement of the dual concepts underpinning a CLIL agenda, regardless of concerns (see Bielenberg, 2004) that such an approach makes mastery of the content subject and the teacher’s role in getting that content across, much more problematic than it would be if the students’ L1 were the medium of instruction. It is an endorsement given more strength by his view that teachers using ‘too much’ Arabic and students conducting conversations, planning their work, etc. in Arabic were setting back their ultimate goal of mastering their subject through English, a task considered vital in his opinion because:

...people who...work in scientific fields...need to be able to do that in English because that’s the sort of international language that’s used for these things. So, there’s a huge advantage, I think, to be able to do it in English. You might be the best biologist in the World but if you only speak French your work is not going to be recognised.

You've got to have access to other people's work because it's all in English.

The next interviewee (Carl) had considerable experience of management (in a variety of different working situations: including but not exclusively educational) but very little experience of being a classroom practitioner. As such this interview along with select parts of other interviews, was able to focus on, and probe more deeply into, macro-policy decision making processes and was less concerned with the day to day realities of operating an English medium policy. It should also be noted that although highly experienced as a manager of educational and other organizations this was the first post he had held outside of his native and predominantly English speaking country (and by extension the first time the language of instruction would have been an issue for him in any way, shape or form).

He was quite unequivocal in voicing his approval of the English only teaching and learning environment desired by the policy makers of the institution. In his own words, "...it's pretty much official policy, the language in the classroom and the language of the college is to be English. And I think that, as a pedagogical stance, is the right one."

As such, Carl might reasonably be accused of displaying a degree of what Pennycook (2001, p.29) has referred to as "Liberal Ostrichism," where policies can be, and are, enacted, without apparently any, "particular connection between such politics and applied linguistic knowledge." In this case Carl espouses the view that the institutional pedagogic stance is an inherently correct one without really being able to justify why it should be so in practical terms, and with little, or no reference to the political (however, one cares to interpret the word) ideology behind such vital, far-reaching decisions as those regarding the language of

instruction in a non-English speaking, post-colonial, non-democratic (potentially even a 'rentier') state. It is a stance that is perhaps best described as naive, or at least, unquestioning and reminds us of Tollefson's (1991, p.2) point that:

...most people are unaware of how language has affected their lives. Indeed, language is built into the economic and social structure of society so deeply that its fundamental importance seems only natural. For this reason, language policies are often seen as expressions of natural, common-sense assumptions about language in society.

However, the main justification for Carl's stance was less to do with bona fide pedagogical concerns than with, once again, the market place. Although comparatively lengthy the following quotation from this interview is worth repeating as it encapsulates the unquestioned and largely unchallenged policy that dictates every more micro decision made under its overarching umbrella:

The economy in this country needs to be able to function well in English and that this (sic) is a high priority for graduates to be able to be functional in English, the more they are immersed in it, the better, I would say. If you took the view on the other hand, that it's the technical skills that you want them to...mastery of technical skills: that's the critical point – then you would be more inclined to start trying to teach them in their native language. It's clear they can learn more quickly and probably in more depth any technical subject when they are dealing in their native language. But you know, that decision

has very much been taken for our system that the high order priority is English. As you know, you can't even graduate at the end of the process unless you've passed certain English standards.

As a further example of the points made above Carl reflected on the situation of the institution's weaker students. These students are often deemed to be 'weaker' due to their lower levels of attainment in English language and little, if any, thought is given to the concept that they might be relatively 'strong' students who simply cannot get their message across through the medium of a foreign language, thanks to the 'extra burden' (Troudi, 2009) placed upon them by dint of the fact that they must study through a language other than their own. The institution, it was felt, might, "be serving them better to teach them their content in Arabic," although that was swiftly tempered by the qualification that, "they would have to accept that they go into workplaces that function in Arabic."

This latter point is of considerable interest as, in the U.A.E., not all workplaces are necessarily entirely English dominated, and Zayed University, in response to societal and business pressures, currently runs certain courses in their College of Media Studies through the medium of Arabic. It is, however, instructive that the opinion of a senior management figure at another state institution appears to have been formed with little or no cognisance of such Arabic medium courses being offered elsewhere in the country.

Salman, despite an apparent 'accent', or 'L1' blindness in terms of recruitment policies was also adamant that English must remain as the medium of instruction at all times and that bilingualism for teachers (in English and Arabic) was not any particular advantage. This latter opinion flying very much in the face of research driven conclusions from Kirkpatrick (2007,

p. 197), who argues convincingly that, “multilingual non-native teachers represent ideal teachers in many EFL contexts.” Once again, beliefs such as those reported above seemed to be very much driven by wider market forces. The reasons given were couched in terms of the institution having a mandate from which it should not diverge: “the medium of instruction here is supposed to be English...for convenience they might tend to use Arabic which I am absolutely against...” and, “you know our mandate is not that. The institution is established to be an English speaking institution – we shouldn’t direct (sic) from this.”

As above, the overriding concern, the main *raison d’être*, for supporting English as the medium of instruction was once again more to do with overall English attainment than the subject matter learned through that medium and the utility of English as a communication tool in an increasingly globalised, internationalised and interconnected world economy. Salman was quite certain that as long as English remained as the, “language of business”, then students in the U.A.E. would need to continue with English based instruction, even in their core content subjects.

### 5.1.3 English Medium Instruction – “at lower levels it is not reasonable...”

Another interesting element that emerged during the qualitative phase, and would perhaps have been difficult to establish through quantitative means alone, was the belief exhibited by many of the English language faculty that English medium instruction and an English only environment, whatever the subject one might be studying, was perhaps only suitable once students had attained a certain proficiency with their second language. In short, many of the English language faculty saw clear advantages to judicious L1 use, as an aid to learning the L2, but usually only at lower levels. They are thus, to an extent, eschewing the orthodoxy of

much EFL methodology. Indeed, such opinions are very much in tune with Phillipson (1992, 2009) who has argued cogently against the notion that standards of English will be retarded if the L1 is used too much. However, the same respondents then reverted somewhat to that orthodoxy in expressing the belief that once the students had attained a certain level of proficiency they could then pursue their content subjects through the exclusive medium of English. It is a belief that perhaps highlights the inherent inequalities hidden within an English medium policy where only those who are good students of the L2 would be able to comfortably pursue their other major subjects. Thus, reducing English language ability to a form of ‘gate-keeping’ role or, perhaps even more unfairly, to a role similar to Bernstein’s (1996) elaborated code, whereby only those sharing this high prestige linguistic code are allowed access to the higher reaches of any given society, their share of its economic and other resources and the concomitant advantages such an elaborated linguistic mode confers upon the user. Not forgetting that Bernstein was critiquing how class divisions could be unfairly maintained and strengthened through linguistic ‘gate-keeping’ based on elaborated and restricted codes of ostensibly the same language. When that language is both foreign and imposed from elsewhere the situation becomes even more problematic.

English language teacher, Brendan, qualifies his acceptance of the potential benefits of the L1 as an aid to L2 learning for such beginners (but not for students exhibiting a higher level of English language proficiency), in the following words:

...the English only rule needs to be most strictly enforced at the higher levels, but at the lower levels it is not reasonable for them to be expected to use English all of the time, especially in team work and planning, etc.  
High level learners who use Arabic a lot should be penalized for this.

#### 5.1.4 English Medium Instruction – Whose Materials (L1/L2)?

Content teachers and English language teachers recorded a statistically significant difference of opinion for items 14 and 15 (see below), dealing with the issue of whether to make use of English language materials, or mother tongue textbooks and resources. The mean statistics bolstering the conclusions also drawn from items 12 and 13 (above and repeated below).

Subject	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EMI All Classes in English	>= 2	<b>2.2105</b>	1.08418	.24873
	< 2	<b>3.5313</b>	.98323	.17381
EMI Non-English Classes in Arabic	>= 2	<b>4.0000</b>	.66667	.15294
	< 2	<b>2.9688</b>	1.03127	.18230
EMI Arabic Textbooks for Content	>= 2	<b>3.7895</b>	.85498	.19615
	< 2	<b>3.1250</b>	1.07012	.18917
EMI English Language Textbooks for Content	>= 2	<b>2.1053</b>	1.04853	.24055
	< 2	<b>3.1250</b>	1.09985	.19443

Figure 3: Mean Results for Items 12-15: Where there are 19 Content Faculty Responses and 32 English Language Faculty.

In this case, content teachers, in what initially seemed to be a contradiction, were not as in favour of using L1 (Arabic) textbooks, or any other Arabic language assistance and materials, as their native English speaking colleagues. A contradiction best explained by the opinion expressed by one or two of the content teachers that at present many such courses lacked suitable materials in Arabic, and insufficient numbers of textbooks, have, as yet, been translated and made available to content teachers who might, if they were available, be happy to make use of them. An opinion that might well beg the question as to whether a proportion of the expenditure spent on teaching English, and teaching other subjects through the medium of English, might not be better employed in a concerted programme of translation or the authoring of suitable texts in the learners' L1? And indeed, perhaps looking closely at the reasons why so much of the scientific, economic and academic information sought by

students worldwide is originally published and promulgated through the medium of English.

After all as Troudi (2009, p.204) would remind us:

Science and technology are not the products of one language. Language serves to describe innovations; just as the Japanese and the Russians conduct their scientific inventions through their languages, so did the Arabs in the heydays of their civilizations. Scholars in Syria are making great efforts to translate new scientific terms and publications into Arabic, and the argument that medical terms do not exist in Arabic is very short-sighted. One only needs to read the medical section of *Al-Arabi* magazine to see the use of Arabic in medicine.

All of which, of course, also ignores the fact that the majority of undergraduate students don't as such require the latest scientific and technological insights, but are more often than not being educated in and about established and accepted concepts, many of which might be more readily available and accessible if available in the students' mother tongue.

This anomaly also largely ignores the fact that while Arabic language materials for content courses may not be as ubiquitous as those in English, they do exist. Certain courses (see Troudi (2009) above and the discussion section below) at both Zayed and the United Arab Emirates Universities, respectively, are conducted in Arabic and, of course, countries such as the Arab Republic of Syria have been conducting such courses in Arabic for some time and have produced Arabic language materials to support these courses. Additionally U.A.E. University began life as an Arabic medium institution, and even if outdated, certain materials must still be in existence.



However, it still remains the case that there appeared to be little appetite for such textbooks. Perhaps unfairly and originating through a genuine ignorance of the wider context comments from respondents such as Paula (a NEST English teacher) indicated why Arabic language materials are not seen to be high on the agenda, “(O)ften the only good textbooks ARE in English though and the Arabic alternatives are not up to much.”

#### 5.1.5 English Medium Instruction – Comparing the Views of More or Less Highly Qualified Teachers

Another comparison drawn at the initial questionnaire stage was between the responses offered by more or less qualified faculty. In order to facilitate a statistical division between those members of faculty who might be considered to be more highly qualified than their peers, a distinction had to be made as to where the cut-off point was. It was taken to be whether or not a faculty member possessed a relevant Masters’ degree. This was not to suggest that possession of a Masters’ degree conferred any special status upon the holder, nor was it meant to imply that faculty members thus qualified were necessarily more efficacious teachers or more valued members of the academic community. However, this was deemed a suitable cut-off point for the sake of comparison as the institution in question sets itself certain benchmarks for the number of Masters’ degree, or more highly, qualified members of faculty that it employs, and advertisements for positions within this organisation have often stated that a Masters’ degree for a certain position is either a prerequisite or a preferred qualification. It should also be noted that this distinction in the level of qualification cuts across the previous division of the faculty into English language and content subject teachers. Therefore, the only consideration under analysis in this case was the level of suitable or relevant academic achievement gained by any individual respondent irrespective of other

demographic or professional concerns such as their subject area, nationality, mother tongue or second language.

Statistically significant differences of opinion arose regarding items 6, 7 and 11 – see independent samples t-test below:

		Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means						
		Equality of Variances		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
Never Use Arabic/ Students' L1	Equal variances assumed	8.646	<u>.005</u>	1.272	50	.209	.43237	.33999	-.25053	1.11527
	Equal variances not assumed			2.210	49.921	<u>.032</u>	.43237	.19564	.03940	.82535
Use Arabic (sts's L1) Occasionally	Equal variances assumed	25.345	<u>.000</u>	-1.582	50	.120	-.51885	.32804	-1.17773	.14004
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.728	49.747	<u>.009</u>	-.51885	.19017	-.90086	-.13683
English Only Classrooms	Equal variances assumed	.019	<u>.890</u>	2.221	50	<u>.031</u>	.80266	.36141	.07675	1.52858
	Equal variances not assumed			2.138	15.062	.049	.80266	.37542	.00276	1.60256

Figure 4: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for items 6, 7 & 11: Where equal variances are assumed for items 6 & 7 but are not for item 11.

Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Never Use Arabic/ Students' L1	>= 3	<u>4.0909</u>	.30151	.09091
	< 3	<u>3.6585</u>	1.10927	.17324
Use Arabic (sts's L1) Occasionally	>= 3	<u>2.0909</u>	.30151	.09091
	< 3	<u>2.6098</u>	1.06953	.16703
English Only Classrooms	>= 3	<u>3.3636</u>	1.12006	.33771
	< 3	<u>2.5610</u>	1.04997	.16398

**Figure 5: Mean Results for Items 6, 7 & 11:** Where 11 represents responses from faculty without an appropriate Masters' degree or above; and 41 represents those that have such a level of qualification.

These items (6, 7 & 11) sought faculty opinions over the issue of setting up and creating an English only environment in the classroom: a practice initially criticised by Phillipson (1992, p. 185) as being both a 'monolingual fallacy' and a 'subtractive fallacy' at one and the same time. Phillipson (2009, p. 218), amongst other concerns, argued against the dual notions that, "English is best taught monolingually," and, "(I)f other languages are used much, standards of English will drop." It would appear from the responses to items 6, 7 and 11 that faculty members qualified to Masters' degree level and beyond are, statistically speaking, more inclined to disagree with Phillipson than their peers who have not (as yet) achieved a Masters' level qualification. The more highly qualified faculty members in this case have tended towards responses suggesting that they are less comfortable with the judicious use of Arabic by the teacher than are those faculty members whose qualifications do not reach to Masters' level. Equally, the less well-qualified respondents are more in tune with Phillipson's criticisms of an English only classroom environment (sometimes even an English only institutional environment) than their peers, expressing significantly different levels of dissatisfaction with just such an English only classroom environment.

Similar differences of opinion regarding the issue of L1 use in the classroom (once again highlighted by responses to questions 6, 7 and 11) suggested that more highly qualified members of faculty (whether English language or content teachers) were more in favour of attempting to maintain an English only environment in the classroom.

These are, of course, seemingly incongruous results, possibly partly due to sample size, as there are only 11 respondents without a Masters' level qualification and thus each response takes on disproportionate weighting. Plus there are other external factors such as age, experience, etc. that might influence these responses. Although as we shall see below in section 5.1.8, lesser experienced faculty produced more predictable results than these above. It is also worthy of note that although the statistical disparities are anomalous, in response to item 6, for example, both groups record basic descriptive statistical results (3.6585 and 4.0909 mean scores respectively) that veer well away from the no Arabic in class orthodoxy.

These statistical differences of opinion have proved hard to substantiate from the qualitative data as there were no comments dealing specifically with these issues from faculty identified as not having a relevant Masters' degree. There were, however, many comments supportive of this same view from several members of faculty (all identified as having a relevant Masters' degree or higher qualification) detailing their opposition to what they saw as the narrow concept of attempting to enforce an English only teaching and learning environment. As above, although statistically less in favour of the judicious use of Arabic than the 11 non-Masters' qualified faculty, the more highly qualified members of faculty were far from uniformly being in favour of the strict enforcement of an L1 free environment. Malcolm, a native English speaking language teacher, saw scope for choice with, "some non-English classes conducted in English and other non-English classes conducted in Arabic," while

Paula (another English language teacher) was adamant that many lower level content courses, mathematics was the example given, would be much better taught through the medium of the students' L1. It is a theme continued by the only non-Masters qualified respondent to deal with this issue. Sara (whose teaching qualification was a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education – PGCE), was in keeping with the general tone being advanced by both groups when she put it thus:

It is unrealistic to expect learners especially low level learners to be able to function in L2 all of the time. Their thinking will be done in L1 and they need to be able to discuss those ideas in L1 sometimes before performing in L2. L1 can also be an easier less time consuming way of confirming understanding especially of new vocabulary.

These same groups of teachers maintained their statistical division over the issue of content subject areas making use of Arabic language materials and textbooks. The less highly qualified faculty responded in a manner suggesting that they were less in agreement with the English as medium of instruction status quo (see below).

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EMI Arabic Textbooks for Content	Equal variances assumed	.130	<b>.719</b>	-2.063	49	<b>.044</b>	-.70682	.34257	-1.39524	-.01839
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.101	16.347	.052	-.70682	.33649	-1.41892	.00529

Figure 6: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for item 14: Where equal variances are assumed.

Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EMI Arabic Textbooks for Content >= 3	11	<b>2.8182</b>	.98165	.29598
< 3	40	<b>3.5250</b>	1.01242	.16008

Figure 7: Mean Results for Item 14: Where 11 represents responses from faculty without an appropriate Masters' degree or above; and 40 represents those that have such a level of qualification.

However, it should be remembered at this stage that the very nature of expatriate employment in the U.A.E., characterised by short term contracts, no right of abode beyond that finite contract and the relatively generous remuneration and overall employment package, must be borne in mind when considering responses in favour of the status quo (regardless of level of qualification, range of experience, etc.). Anonymous though these responses are it is possible that job and status insecurity can play a factor in such responses.

On the question (8) of students using some Arabic in class both groups responded in a largely neutral manner, but were both equally convinced in their respective responses to items 9 and

10 that insisting on English-English dictionaries was counter-productive. This was indicated by relatively high means scores for item 9, indicating disagreement and much lower mean scores for item 10, thus showing a degree of approval for the use of Arabic-English dictionaries.

### 5.1.6 English Medium Instruction – A Comparison of NEST & NNEST’ Views

All these items were also cross-referenced depending upon whether the respondents were native speakers of English or not and items 12 and 13 (designed as an antagonistic pair) threw up an initially surprising conundrum.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EMI All Classes in English	Equal variances assumed	.640	<b>.428</b>	-2.128	49	<b>.038</b>	-.81410	.38266	-1.58308	-.04513
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.228	19.733	.038	-.81410	.36546	-1.57711	-.05110
EMI Non-English Classes in Arabic	Equal variances assumed	6.807	<b>.012</b>	1.883	49	.066	.62821	.33355	-.04209	1.29850
	Equal variances not assumed			2.327	27.778	<b>.027</b>	.62821	.26993	.07508	1.18133

Figure 8: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for items 12 & 13: Where equal variances are assumed for item 12 but are not for item 13.

	L1	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EMI All Classes in English	>= 2	12	<b><u>2.4167</u></b>	1.08362	.31282
	< 2	39	<b><u>3.2308</u></b>	1.18013	.18897
EMI Non-English Classes in Arabic	>= 2	12	<b><u>3.8333</u></b>	.71774	.20719
	< 2	39	<b><u>3.2051</u></b>	1.08044	.17301

**Figure 9: Mean Results for Items 12 & 13:** Where 12 represents responses from NNEST faculty and 39 represents responses from NESTs.

Items 12 and 13 displayed a significantly different outcome depending upon whether the respondent was a native speaker of English or not. Where it might have been expected that native speakers of languages other than English (predominantly Arabic of course) would argue for the efficacy of Arabic use in the classroom, particularly as the phrasing of item 12 included all subject areas, not only English language classes, and item 13 focussed exclusively on content subjects, but this was not always the case. While native English speakers were more accepting of the idea of using some Arabic in a variety of classroom situations, no doubt assuming this would make understanding difficult concepts easier for the students (whether that be a content-based or linguistic concept), the members of faculty identified as non-native speakers of English tended more towards the end of the spectrum that argues for the use of English at all times in class. Indeed, the non-native speakers of English responded in a manner suggesting that it was they, the speakers of Arabic and other languages, that proved to be the most supportive of the English only environment encouraged by the institutional authorities. It is of course possible that in responding to such questionnaire items the non-native English speaking teachers surveyed felt it incumbent upon them to endorse the official policy. That said, the questionnaire was entirely anonymous and voluntary, and indeed not everyone who received a questionnaire in their e-mail inbox chose to complete and return it. As such, it is perhaps best assumed, and indeed supported by other responses and findings, that these were indeed wholly honest responses to the questionnaire



items. A more viable explanation is that such responses are not as surprising as they at first seem. After all, those non-native English speaking teachers taking part in the survey have themselves achieved a high level of English language proficiency, and no doubt feel competent in delivering material (linguistic or otherwise) via that medium. Allied to earlier comments, and others that will be addressed later, concerning the availability of suitable textbooks and other materials in the Arabic language, and the fact that many of these faculty members have themselves gained considerable content knowledge via the medium of English. It is, after all, a medium that has allowed them a certain degree of both geographical and professional mobility. It is perhaps not that surprising that such professional educators are not so much simply following institutional orders, bolstering the status quo, etc. but believe firmly in the effectiveness and underlying *raison d'être* of their professional *modus operandi*, which is a way of doing things predicated upon the use of English as a flexible and effective tool for learning.

There are also potentially other wider ranging and more macro concerns underpinning the decision of many non-native English speaking teachers, in this context specifically those who speak Arabic, to come into line with the institutional English only policy. That is, the belief that potential graduates are not only learning content knowledge but transferable skills, and that one of those skills is to be able to function effectively in predominantly English language professional and business environments. Indeed, McLaren (2009) during a small scale piece of research with Saudi Arabian undergraduates found that the students themselves, in tune with the non-native English speaking teachers cited above, were actually far more in favour of a monolingual English only learning environment than were their predominantly native English speaking teachers. This was an attitude not reserved only for English language classes but for the majority of content subjects taught at a large tertiary institution in the

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Probing these attitudes more deeply revealed that although the students considered studying content areas, e.g. scientific and technological subjects such as Geology, extremely difficult via the medium of a second language, the final award of a degree certificate earned painstakingly through English medium studies was something they prized very highly. Especially, as this was seen as a stepping stone to either work or further study abroad as well as the key to well salaried positions within both national and international corporations in the K.S.A., the majority of whom conduct their business through the medium of English.

However, it is still worthy of note that such attitudes, no matter how altruistic, open-minded and unselfish they might be still tend to bolster the status quo (EMI and the 'English only' rule) and are far removed from Kachru's (1992, p.362) call, originally articulated as far back as 1982, for:

...a paradigm shift in research and teaching, and an understanding of the sociolinguistic reality of the uses and users of English. We must also cease to view English within the framework appropriate for monolingual societies. We must recognize the linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic implications of various types of pluralism; that pluralism has now become an integral part of the English language...

It is one statement amongst many with implications for what we teach, how we teach and who does the teaching. However, it is worth noting at this juncture that while the other responses from these two groups to the questions dealing with EMI (14 and 15) and English only teaching environments (6-11), did not show any statistical differences of opinion, they

nevertheless indicated a weakening of the English only stance. These responses, across both groups, tended towards answers that suggested the efficacious and judicious use of the students L1 and other L1 aides such as Arabic-English dictionaries, would not be wholly inappropriate. Marie (a NEST English teacher) put it thus:

In this teaching situation, it would be impossible to maintain an English only rule. Students need to understand, and how better to do that than to use their mother tongue. They often do not have the language to understand the simplest tasks. They feel the need to help each other, and often say that they wished the teacher spoke Arabic.

#### 5.1.7 English Medium Instruction – Comparing Monolingual and Bilingual Teachers’ Views

– “English-only instruction seems to be the 'only' approach.”

A fourth set of quantitative comparisons sought to look at any statistically significant differences of opinion occasioned by, and connected to, the respondents’ professed second language ability. This was distinct from the earlier division of faculty members by their L1, which in effect separated, for the purposes of comparison, the native English speaking teachers from the non-native English speaking teachers (in this case often but not always speakers of Arabic). On this occasion, the faculty respondents were separated by their ability (self-reported) to use a second or other language, regardless of which language that might happen to be, even if it were Arabic. The respondents had four options on the original survey, being able to select English or Arabic as their professed foreign, second or other language, or indeed any other L2 they might have learned. These three options were juxtaposed to the fourth choice: that of not speaking and/ or using a second language at all. As above, and in

keeping with the assumption that all responses were willingly and freely given, this second or other language ability was entirely self-reported and taken at face value. That said, for the purposes of this enquiry the fact that these teachers saw themselves as competent users, or not, of an L2 was perhaps the most salient point: a degree of self-realisation or self-image that may well have had an effect upon the respondent's view of teachers who can, or cannot, use a second language effectively. This presumably implies that the user of any given L2 has gone through the process of actually learning a foreign language.

Interestingly, yet another seeming anomaly emerged in response to item 11:

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
English Only Classrooms	Equal variances assumed	.013	<b>.911</b>	2.212	50	<b>.032</b>	.82857	.37465	.07606	1.58108
	Equal variances not assumed			2.195	13.513	.046	.82857	.37741	.01637	1.64077

Figure 10: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for item 11: Where equal variances are assumed.

	L2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English Only Classrooms	>= 4	10	<b>3.4000</b>	1.07497	.33993
	< 4	42	<b>2.5714</b>	1.06251	.16395

Figure 11: Mean Results for Item 11: Where 10 represents responses from genuinely monolingual (NEST) faculty and 42 represents responses from bilingual faculty (whether bilingual with Arabic or not).

In this case, those teachers reporting and ability to use a second language (sometimes Arabic) were actually significantly more in favour of retaining English only classroom environments than were the monolingual teachers. Perhaps the monolingual teachers felt no need to impose such a rule, as after all they cannot make use of any second language ability in their classes. However, as we shall see later, it was not unusual for monolingual teachers (or indeed native English speaking teachers whose second language was not Arabic) to support student use of their L1 in class, or the use by colleagues with the requisite linguistic ability, to make judicious use of that language ability in order to aid L2, or indeed content related, learning. It was also possible, and alluded to in certain comments, that the teachers who could speak Arabic were more conscious of employing the English only rule in their classes in order that Arabic discussion, and the use of Arabic, did not get the opportunity to dominate and minimise the use of English in the classroom. For although Phillipson (1992; 2009) categorizes the idea that the use of the students L1 is detrimental to their learning of the target language, and the concomitant establishment of English only learning environments, as fallacious, it might still be the case that teachers faced with monolingual classes, feel that an attempt to at least appear to enforce such a rule will maximise English speaking and usage practice in what is, after all, the only environment in which the students are not regularly communicating through the medium of their native Arabic. Of course, Arabic speakers might well feel themselves under pressure and scrutiny when it comes to enforcing such a rule, especially as their Arabic ability appears to have played no part in their employment in the first place (indeed it may even have been seen as an impediment).

As noted above, the quantitative stage of the analysis highlighted a statistical discrepancy over questions 12 and 13 between the native English speakers on faculty and those whose native language was not English (including Arabic speakers). It was initially somewhat

surprising, perhaps, that the reported discrepancy indicated that the non-native English speaking teachers were significantly more in favour of English only classroom environments, whether for the purposes of studying English language or for content related classes. However, a closer inspection of the qualitative data (coding for the frequency of certain utterances, etc.) tends to indicate that it is not so much a case of the non-native English speakers being particularly supportive of the English only teaching and learning environment, as the fact that several native English speaking teachers expressed themselves as being in favour of the judicious use of the students L1 where appropriate. Interestingly, as has already been noted above, the suggestion that the use of Arabic was particularly efficacious at lower levels was a common theme.

This opinion, although not universal as there were certainly native English speaking faculty members who felt that an English only rule, helping to enforce a form of pseudo-immersion environment, was desirable, was nevertheless widespread. We have already seen above the opinion of faculty members regarding the use of L2 Arabic with students whose English proficiency starts off being, or remains, weak, and another native speaker of English (identified as Janet and also teaching English) can be seen to be largely in agreement with the above when she commented that the students ought to be allowed to use Arabic because, “(T)hey do not have a sufficiently good level of English to carry out tasks in English only.” A conclusion, also in keeping with other comments earlier in this study that suggested that a considerable number of English language teachers are not necessarily very comfortable with the imposition of English only teaching and learning environments, English – English dictionaries, and all that follows from that. Another respondent (Gavin: also a NEST teaching English language classes) went to some lengths to describe his reasoning for opposing the

somewhat orthodox opinion (see Phillipson, 1992, for his list of fallacies) that use of the L1 would impede or interfere with acquisition of the target language:

As previously commented, in lower-level classes, Arabic can help enhance understanding, particularly of grammar points. Allowing students to plan, prepare and discuss in Arabic can also help (in my experience), as it allows the students to explore the best ways of answering the question in English. Some of the learners might not have understood the task, and having higher-level students explaining it definitely helps. I think that English teaching seems to have a different approach to most other language teaching, in that English-only instruction seems to be the 'only' approach. All other languages I've learned, I've had English as the medium of instruction, which has made it far easier to understand, particularly the grammar.

Gavin would appear to be referring here to the standard model (amongst other language learning experiences) adopted in countries such as the United Kingdom, where the majority of foreign language teachers (e.g. teachers of French, German, Spanish, etc.) are native English speakers who have studied and learned the L2 that they teach, before entering the foreign language teaching profession. It is a situation that is paradoxically, when compared with the orthodoxy of the EFL context, also 'taken for granted' and apparently viewed as nothing more than common sense and the height of pragmatism.

### 5.1.8 English Medium Instruction – A Comparison of More & Lesser Experienced Teachers’ Views – “all subjects should be taught through English”

The final area where two opposing groups of faculty responses were compared in a quantitative manner, using an independent samples t-test to highlight statistically significant differences of opinion between the two groups, was related to the relative experience of the respondents. In order to make this comparison using the independent samples t-test it is necessary to arrive at a cut off point. In this case, that point was whether or not a member of faculty had 10 years of relevant experience, or less? Obviously, previous teaching experience, by its very nature, is likely to be highly varied and diverse. Also, certain educational practitioners will learn, improve and engage with both practical and theoretical concerns at entirely different, and often highly personal, degrees of intensity and enthusiasm than will others. As such, the 10 year cut-off point can certainly be criticised as being somewhat arbitrary. However, in order to manage the data in what is, after all, an initial quantitative phase: a phase that has been rigourously followed up and explored in more qualitative detail. It is to be hoped that this division of the respondents by experience has at least allowed for a simple comparison of more and lesser experienced members of faculty and their associated opinions. Additionally, this is not to suggest that the opinions of more experienced faculty members are either of more value than those of lesser experienced colleagues, or indeed of less value owing perhaps to not being as up to date with educational and pedagogical theory and practice as more recently trained teachers. As above, the mix of highly valued and eclectic experience, makes choosing such a cut-off point extremely difficult, and is of perhaps limited validity. However, given the multifaceted nature of this piece of research (of which this quantitative comparison across degrees of experience is only one small part), and



the interesting differences of opinion that emerged, it is to be hoped that this comparison makes for a reasonable starting point from which to further probe faculty opinions.

It should also be noted that as this research was conducted at a tertiary institution; one that has generally speaking being able to attract well-qualified and experienced staff and faculty, that the majority of respondents were experienced teachers with more than 10 years of relevant working history behind them. However, although a relatively small group of only nine respondents, those teachers with fewer than 10 years experience were, statistically speaking, often at odds with their more experienced colleagues.

Perhaps more in keeping with responses that might have been expected, given the two groups being compared, there was a major difference of opinion regarding item seven (7) where the more experienced members of faculty reported feeling more comfortable with the idea, in tune with such as Phillipson (1992; 2009) and Macaro (2006), of the teacher using the students L1 in the classroom, while the opposing group, identified as lesser experienced, were significantly more set against such practices (see fig. 12).

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Use Arabic (sts's L1) Occasionally	Equal variances assumed	.069	<b>.794</b>	-3.020	50	<b>.004</b>	-1.00775	.33372	-1.67805	-.33746
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.141	12.084	.008	-1.00775	.32087	-1.70633	-.30917

Figure 12: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for item 7: Where equal variances are assumed.

Experience (Years)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Use Arabic (sts's L1) Occasionally >= 3	43	<b>2.3256</b>	.91862	.14009
< 3	9	<b>3.3333</b>	.86603	.28868

Figure 13: Mean Results for Item 7: Where 9 represents responses from faculty with fewer than 10 years teaching and 43 represents responses from faculty with greater than 10 years relevant experience.

It is of interest that a similar, although anomalous, difference occurred regarding item seven (7), where faculty opinions were compared in light of the respective teacher's level of qualification (where those with a Masters degree and beyond were compared to those who did not hold a degree of that level). In the previous instance more highly qualified members of faculty were actually less comfortable and relaxed with the idea of teachers making use of the students L1 where appropriate (at least statistically speaking), than less highly qualified faculty. Paradoxically, it is the more experienced faculty members who appear to be of the same mind over this issue. This is slightly surprising, but once again highlights the complexity of the EMI situation and the potential insecurities of, relatively speaking,

disempowered and disenfranchised staff. It was not uncommon for faculty members of every sort to give statistical answers supportive of EMI in general and then to temper these responses with contradictory comments suggesting a degree of unease with EMI and its enforcement.

This unease is not surprising amongst well-educated, thoughtful and erudite professionals. And, even professionals brought up on a diet of Holliday's (1994) BANA techniques, technologies and modus operandi, might well share in Phillipson's (1992) reservations over such manifestations of EMI policies as employing only the target language in both English and English-mediated content classes. Phillipson (1992, p.215), sees far deeper issues of power and vested interest at play:

The tenet could be reformulated in terms of dominant and dominated languages: 'if dominated languages are used much, standards in the dominant language will drop'. This is still a subtractive fallacy, but the new wording leads logically to asking questions about whose the standards are and whose interests they serve.

The general pattern that had already begun to emerge from the questionnaire responses, and was highlighted through the comparisons already made across comparative L1 and L2 (although not statistically replicated with regard to subject taught and level of qualification), continued in relation to questions 12, 13 and 15 (see fig. 14).

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EMI All Classes in English	Equal variances assumed	4.035	<u>.050</u>	2.716	49	.009	1.12698	.41487	.29328	1.96069
	Equal variances not assumed			3.150	14.002	<u>.007</u>	1.12698	.35774	.35972	1.89425
EMI Non-English Classes in Arabic	Equal variances assumed	13.329	<u>.001</u>	-	49	.038	-.78571	.36758	-1.52440	-.04703
	Equal variances not assumed			2.138	-	26.487	<u>.002</u>	-.78571	.23476	-1.26784
EMI English Language Textbooks for Content	Equal variances assumed	6.263	<u>.016</u>	2.903	49	.006	1.17460	.40463	.36147	1.98773
	Equal variances not assumed			4.106	20.267	<u>.001</u>	1.17460	.28609	.57833	1.77087

Figure 14: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for items 12, 13 & 15: Where equal variances are not assumed on all three items.

Experience (Years)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
					EMI All Classes in English
	< 3	9	<u>2.1111</u>	.92796	.30932
EMI Non-English Classes in Arabic	>= 3	42	<u>3.2143</u>	1.07149	.16533
	< 3	9	<u>4.0000</u>	.50000	.16667
EMI English Language Textbooks for Content	>= 3	42	<u>2.9524</u>	1.16770	.18018
	< 3	9	<u>1.7778</u>	.66667	.22222

Figure 15: Mean Results for Items 12, 13 & 15: Where 9 represents responses from faculty with fewer than 10 years teaching and 43 represents responses from faculty with greater than 10 years relevant experience.

The respondents identified as lesser experienced chose significantly different options in general terms to their more experienced colleagues. The former group answered the antagonistic items 12 and 13 in a manner suggesting that they were more in tune with the current status quo when it came to issues concerning exclusive use of English in both the language and content classroom. These responses indicated a belief that all classes should be conducted through English medium. Their more experienced peers were significantly less convinced that this ought to be the case. Likewise in item 15 the lesser experienced members of faculty were more strongly opposed to the use of Arabic textbooks, preferring English texts, in non-English language classes.

One faculty member (Susan) identified as having less than 10 years experience (in fact less than five years of teaching background) expressed herself in terms seemingly supportive of this difference in opinion, stating a belief that, “all subjects should be taught through English,” there were also far more experienced colleagues who could be seen to be largely in agreement, while at the same time there are lesser experienced members of faculty who put forward comments indicative of an opinion more in keeping with the survey responses offered by their more experienced peers. Although this probably has more to do with the small number of faculty identified as having fewer than 10 years experience offering very few comments at all on this particular topic.

#### 5.1.9 English Medium Instruction – Areas of Agreement

The primary focus of this study has been to highlight differences of opinion between differing sub-division of the faculty, as a way of statistically verifying perspectives that may be worth a closer investigation. However, areas of agreement between these groups also came to light.

Most obviously although not at loggerheads with other groups in the study the high mean response to item 9 (indicating disagreement with the statement) and lower mean score for the antagonistic partner item (10) is suggestive of faculty in general who have reservations regarding the total imposition of English only classrooms and attendant materials. As we have seen above, several voices were raised calling for a more pragmatic view of the role of the L1 in the classroom. Zeina ( an NNEST content teacher) summarises the prevailing view, “I also see the advantages of translating a few words to enable students to relate and understand the topic, especially in content subjects.”

## 5.2 The Native English Speaking Teacher Question (NEST/ NNEST)

The third research question sought to probe faculty and management opinions about whether, or not, the English medium environment of such institutions should be (or indeed perhaps already is) supported and maintained predominantly by native English speaking teachers. Although (see above) the terminology of native (NEST) and non-native (NNEST) has been utilised in this study that does not necessarily mean that the distinction itself, with non-native inevitably, and perhaps unfairly, conveying a sense of deficiency, is judged in any way as being a fair and acceptable dichotomy within the profession. Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999, p.128) usefully paraphrase the reservations of Kachru and Nelson (1996), who argue that to view teachers, “through the lens of the native versus non-native dichotomy is to accept “a linguistic caste system” and maintain a monocultural and monolingual point of view.” That said, as these terms are widely understood and need not imply any notion of deficiency or linguistic, and/ or pedagogical bias, they have been used in this study for reasons of clarity and ease of understanding.

As with section 5.1 this section will first of all compare the perceptions of content and English language teachers to the NEST/ NNEST issue (5.2.1), before setting those opinions against the reported interview comments of management (5.2.2). Subsection 5.2.3 looks more closely at the perceptions of those who profess an ability with another language (whether Arabic or not) and then finally the discrepancy in opinion between more or less experienced teachers will be analysed.

#### 5.2.1 NEST/ NNEST – A Comparison of Content and Language Teachers’ Views – “I do believe that native or completely fluent English speakers are preferable”

When it came to the items dealing with both recruitment of staff (NEST or NNEST – research question 3) and the judicious use of the students’ mother tongue (in this case L1 Arabic), there were no statistically significant differences evident between the opinions of either English language or content teaching faculty: i.e. both groups of respondents, regardless of the subjects they teach, were equally convinced that ability to, and suitable qualifications for, teaching were far more important than one’s mother tongue. Showing a similarity of opinion no less rigorous when concerned with language teachers and not just content teaching faculty.

Subject	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Employ NS Teachers	>= 2	<u>3.0476</u>	1.20317	.26255
	< 2	<u>3.0294</u>	1.31392	.22534
Employ Bilingual Teachers (English/ Arabic)	>= 2	<u>2.6667</u>	1.15470	.25198
	< 2	<u>3.0588</u>	1.01328	.17378
Employ Bilingual Teachers (Arabic/ English)	>= 2	<u>3.0000</u>	1.22474	.26726
	< 2	<u>2.7941</u>	1.20049	.20588
Employ Teachers with an L2	>= 2	<u>3.1905</u>	1.03049	.22487
	< 2	<u>2.8235</u>	1.19267	.20454
Employ Suitable Professional	>= 2	<u>2.1905</u>	1.07792	.23522
	< 2	<u>2.2353</u>	1.20752	.20709

Figure 16: Mean Results for Items 1-5: Showing no statistically significant differences of opinion between content and English language faculty.

This is despite the fact that it is sometimes suggested (see Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2006) that a native ability in that language, in this case English, confers some advantages upon a teacher of a foreign, second or other language. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006) reported common attitudes amongst many of their students when it came to whom they would like to teach pronunciation and also as to whom would make a better model for that pronunciation. The results of the independent samples t-test (seeking to ascertain if any of the reported differences of opinion offered were significant in a statistical sense) indicated that there was no statistically verifiable difference of opinion between content and English language faculty surveyed, however, the relatively high mean scores for item 1, for example, (3.0476 – content and 3.0294 – English) were indicative of the fact that not all faculty were convinced by the native English speaker argument. It should be noted that Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2006) students would not necessarily be in disagreement with this, as although they highlighted the native English speakers' perceived advantage when it came to pronunciation and the modelling of language, they also attributed other useful qualities to their non-native English



speaking teachers. One particular quality was the feeling of empathy that someone who has studied a foreign language may well have for those currently engaged in that pursuit.

The following qualitative coding process brought to light several instances of respondents stating that they had no problem with the idea of non-native English speakers teaching content courses in this institution, but it was also quite common for these respondents to add the caveat that non-native English speakers should be extremely proficient, even native like, in their own spoken and written English. These responses were similar whether from language or content teachers. An opinion that might best be explained by comments such as the following from the content teaching respondent identified as Lisa (a native English speaker):

If I understand the questions correctly, then my comment/ opinion is that it does not matter the subject teacher's native language, unless the subject matter is English. Then I do believe that native or completely fluent English speakers are preferable.

Although not in principle against the idea of English medium courses being taught by non-native English speaking teachers, there still seems to be an overarching belief that any non-native English speaking teachers employed should have a level of English, and a concomitant teaching methodology, largely indistinguishable from what might have been expected should that teacher have come from a native English speaking country and background. Additionally, comments such as that offered by Lisa would seem to suggest that any respective teacher's 'native-ness' is less of an issue for content faculty but still seemingly preferable when it comes to employing English language teachers.

The former is a point of view reflected in institutional recruitment policies, where would-be employees who have been educated at recognised Anglophone tertiary institutions are more readily acceptable than someone whose education has been completed elsewhere (see management comments below). A policy reflected in the institutional on-line recruitment webpage where the drop down menu supplies a long list of what we might call ‘Western’ tertiary institutions and excludes many well known colleges and universities from other parts of the academic world. These policies that favour teachers educated to a ‘Western’ standard and *modus operandi* and ignore comments from educators such as Holliday (1994), who would remind us that many such imposed teaching techniques, strategies and technologies are often quite alien from the students’ previous experiences and subsequent expectations. Another content teacher (Robert) inadvertently sums up the underlying assumptions behind such recruitment policies when stating that:

I have mixed feelings on (the) bilingual teachers, from what I have seen, teachers who speak Arabic tend to use Arabic more in class and the students speak to the teachers in Arabic and therefore the students do not get to use their English as much as they could.

Such opinions are perhaps not uncommon given the nature of this enquiry. After all, not only is one’s mother tongue a very important part of any individual’s identity and how they view themselves, but in dealing with such a potentially highly emotive, political and sensitive issue respondents might well have been expected to express opinions and offer comments protective of their own vested interest. For example, it would be surprising if a native English speaking teacher, especially one who cannot use the students L1 were to express the belief that a command of the students’ language ought to be a requirement for a teaching post such

as the one they currently hold, or to agree with Hansen (2004, p.54) who came to view her own non-nativeness as an English speaker and teacher as a positive part of her, “actual cultural and linguistic knowledge.”

Unsurprisingly, a statistically significant difference emerged from the respective responses offered by native and non-native English speakers to the very first item with regard to the suitability of employing only native English speaking teachers to teach English language classes. L1 speakers of English were more aligned to this concept than were teachers (albeit predominantly content teachers) who spoke a different mother tongue (by and large this language was Arabic but there were others who could profess Hindi, Urdu, Farsi and Polish as their native language). Clearly, the majority of teachers whose native language was other than English, and who had therefore acquired a level of English deemed suitable to either teach that language, or to teach through the medium of that language, had more difficulty with the concept that those who speak English as their native language are necessarily going to be better at teaching that language, or indeed, by extension any other subject taught via the medium of English.

	L1	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Employ NS Teachers	>= 2	13	<b>3.6923</b>	1.10940	.30769
	< 2	42	<b>2.8333</b>	1.24776	.19253

**Figure 17: Mean Results for Item 1:** Where 13 represents NNESTs and 42 NESTs.

These are responses that are generally in keeping with the originally anomalous findings of a small scale piece of research (McLaren, 2008) conducted in neighbouring Saudi Arabia, where faculty members (albeit admittedly all native English speakers, or speakers of a ‘Western’ L1: e.g. Swedish rather than Arabic) could see great efficacy in the judicious use

of Arabic in the learning of the English language, yet when quizzed on recruitment issues, stated a significant preference for native English speaking teachers who had learned Arabic as an L2, rather than for Arabic speaking teachers of English who were, in effect, teaching their L2. The suggestion in that previous paper was that when it came to issues of recruitment the faculty surveyed clearly put more store by one's perceived professionalism and methodological approaches, than L1, while at the same time making certain assumptions as to the perceived professionalism and methodological approach of teachers from another linguistic and cultural background.

#### 5.2.2 NEST/ NNEST – Management Opinions – “they perceive certain people to be more native than others”

Management, perhaps not too surprisingly, very much echoed the opinions given directly above. The first management interviewee, George, was personally in favour of the recruitment and deployment of suitably qualified and experienced English language teachers regardless of their respective native English speaking credentials. Indeed, going so far as to suggest, in line with the arguments forcefully put forward by such as Kachru (1992), and Canagarajah (1999), that non-native English speaking teachers had a distinct advantage when it came to imparting a model of English usage that students were more likely to come across in a world where the majority of English communication is conducted between two non-native English speakers and/ or writers. However, he also added that in their opinion it was not necessarily the views of relatively enlightened professionals that dictated recruitment policy but often the assumed perceptions of the actual students.

The students prefer...they tend to prefer the English model in my experience from a native...they perceive certain people to be more native than others, so perhaps a person who comes from another country, who has grown up all their life in an English speaking country...

On the question of the recruitment of faculty (both for English language and other subject areas) Margaret, who as we have seen above is closely involved with issues of recruitment and retention including interviewing potential new faculty and making decisions on contractual extensions and renewals, was quite unequivocal in her stance that the recruitment process was entirely unbiased with regard to the potential faculty member's L1. Indeed, the only official 'bias' freely conceded was the preference where possible to employ Emirati nationals with suitable skills and qualifications as part of the ongoing, nationwide Emiratisation drive. This, however, came with the considerable caveat that the new faculty member ought to, "meet our criteria of experience and ability and teach in (sic) the appropriate methodology." This concern with what was termed 'appropriate methodology' being a consideration that in reality often militates against those without a demonstrably 'Western' educational background and/ or an internationally recognised qualification, and is far from the thoughtful 'alchemy' suggested by Holliday (1994) is his search for a more suitable and appropriate methodology for classroom practitioners operating outside of the BANA mainstream.

In addition, although Margaret pointed out the possible advantages enjoyed by non-native English speaking teachers when it came to having a degree of empathy with the learners, having been through the same process themselves, she also stated that such a question, i.e. do you speak/ have you learned another language?; would not be a question that she would use

in an interview situation as it was not one of the institution's central criteria when looking to employ a teacher of a foreign language or to teach through that language. This is a position that looks, at least, slightly incongruous when we consider the high degree of importance that many students: in this study and others, e.g. Medgyes (1994), Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006), and Pacek (2006), appear to place on the degree of empathy the teacher has with the students themselves and their language learning difficulties. Pacek (2006, p.254) directly quotes from a Japanese learner, who, "had an **advantage** of having non-native teacher, as she knows very well about frequent and typical mistakes we make."

However, although this degree of empathy with the process of learning a foreign language was not high on the institutional list of priorities (at least according to this interviewee) there was a definite concern with the native English speakers' ability to be, "correct models of the language." A seemingly widespread desire, echoing that of Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2006) students cited above. In terms of content subject teaching, a similar sentiment was repeated with native English speaking teachers being seen by Margaret as able to, "reinforce the language. Native speakers often work in reinforcing the language more than non-native speakers."

Alexander, despite being in a relatively senior position within the institution was remarkably candid. Discussing at length the institutional recruitment policy he admitted that although the official policy of the wider institution made no mention of any set criteria with regard to the preferential recruitment of either native English speaking or non-native English speaking teachers, yet he still felt there to be an 'unwritten policy' of preference for native English speaking teachers, particularly for English language teaching positions.

Anecdotally, Alexander added that although some English teachers have in the past been screened and interviewed successfully they have ultimately, “been rejected at the highest level, and if we were to scratch the surface and found (sic) out why, I am 99.9% certain it’s because they have a foreign name – a non-English sounding name.” Interestingly, he then went on to explain that although personally not in favour of such a policy, and recognising in it a deep-seated bias against many, “excellent non-native speakers of English”, he remained aware of the many compelling reasons why, albeit unfairly, such policies existed.

...students have more confidence if their teachers are from a native speaking country...and they have a broader depth – again it’s a generalisation – broader depth of different approaches and methodologies used. So, I think it instils confidence in students and for me as a manager I would employ them all else being equal because I think they would have had more exposure to the kind of language learning and teaching that our students would prefer.

It is, of course, just such attitudes and other like them, often attributed to the learners, that can lead to educators such as Hansen (2004, p.40), who sees, or saw, herself as being an ‘invisible’ non-native teacher, being unsure:

to what extent my nonnative status would affect my students’ perceptions of my abilities as an ESL teacher. It wasn’t until I had gained enough confidence in my own abilities to teach effectively that I began revealing that I was a nonnative speaker of English.

Additionally, although less concerned that teachers of content subjects should be native English speaking teachers, Alexander echoed his colleague's belief (Margaret's responses) that such faculty members might be better received by the institution if they had, "Western qualifications", or had, "studied abroad." He went on to detail areas where he felt native English speaking teachers held an advantage ('real-life', functional, communicative competence); compared with areas where non-native English speaking teachers were in the ascendency (empathy with student learning issues, etc.), before finishing by stating that as long as the institution, and therefore by extension those at the very top of the decision making tree, maintained an insistence on an externally verifiable English language benchmark and as long as the institution continued along a Content and Language Integrated Learning policy road (where English language improvement constituted a sub-set, or at the very least, a subsidiary outcome, of content courses) then in his opinion, native English speaking teachers remained preferable. This opinion was further supported by reference to a college department where several members of the content faculty were L1 speakers of Arabic and, "they lapse into Arabic in order to explain things that could be explained in English," which Alexander believes to be tantamount to, "failing our students in that we are not reinforcing the message of international language...(I)t might be easier to revert to Arabic, but then teaching has never been easy."

The fourth management interview was conducted with William, a native English speaker who had certain supervisory responsibilities with regard to the various content subjects taught. Although a long time employee (i.e. more than a decade) and thus resident in the U.A.E. all of that time, he claimed no fluency with Arabic or any other second language. This is a situation not at all uncommon in a society where a great deal of everyday interaction takes



place via the lingua franca of English and, of course, in an educational environment where the use of Arabic was actively discouraged.

That said, William reported being quite open to the notion of employing non-native English speakers (indeed in content subjects this is a far more common and accepted practice) whether they were employed to teach a content subject or English language. Citing the examples of several excellent teachers who were non-native English speakers in his own department and also those English language teachers for whom the institution's language of instruction was not their L1. He made the point that in terms of recruitment, as long as there was a certain level of mutually intelligible proficiency with English, then, "whether or not the person is a native speaker – I honestly don't consider." Such attitudes were further backed by his belief that, "in some ways it helps some of them to be Arabic speakers or to be non-native English speakers who know what it was to learn content in a second language – to learn it in English." The main reasoning behind this being the degree of empathy – cited by several other interviewees already (see above) and the ability of some teachers to speak the students' L1, "because there might be a concept that you can easily say one word in Arabic, suddenly the students know what you are talking about, so I think that there are absolute advantages..."

When questioned as to any native/ non-native preference in the recruitment of either English teaching or content subject faculty the response was once again extremely candid. Although pointing out that as far as he was aware, no official policy existed dealing with this issue, he conceded that unofficially while there was not, "a policy to that effect...it's certainly understood by the screening teams when looking for English teachers that a good starting point is to get somebody who is a native speaker." And, although this concept did not necessarily extend to the recruitment of content teachers, or indeed native English speaking

teachers from non-mainstream/ BANA countries such as Nigeria or Jamaica, there was a concern not only that content teachers should be, “fully competent in the English language because that’s obviously the language of instruction,” but that they:

(h)ave been educated in Western style institutions themselves and the institution that we’re in has been designed to try and deliver a Western style of education, whereas – as you know – other institutions in the area aren’t necessarily focussed that way. So, I suppose there is that further benefit that any teacher necessarily benefits from the experiences they have been taught. If they have been taught in an environment like what we are trying to create here, it’s probably an advantage.

This interviewee went on to extol the virtues, as he saw them, of several non-native English speaking staff and, perhaps more significantly, faculty, referring as most of his colleagues had done to the empathy a second language learner might feel, as a teacher, for their students and to the cultural awareness such faculty might well bring to the teaching and learning environment before adding an overarching caveat. That caveat being that native English speakers (whether for content or language teaching) were always likely to have an advantage in terms of employment because they were still seen, whether fairly or unfairly, as the best people to teach that language in terms of innate knowledge structures, pronunciation and the modelling of the target language. Hence Hansen’s (2004) reservations (above) about revealing her ‘invisible’ NNEST status when, despite Phillipson’s (1992) view that the suppositions above are no more than erroneous misconceptions and often repeated fallacies, and the additional advantages already referred to that a “multilingual and multicultural”

(Kirkpatrick, 2007, p.195) teacher might have, it was still easier for Hansen to find employment as an English teacher if she were mistakenly identified as a NEST.

Salman was a supervisor in the content subject area and had been with the institution for two decades, in fact since it had first opened its doors. And as someone with content subject recruitment responsibilities he was quite categorical that when it came to recruitment whether a potential candidate was, or was not, a native English speaker made no difference whatsoever, although interestingly, although not able to comment on policies affecting other departments, it was his opinion that English language teachers ought to be, where possible, native speakers of the language. Likewise Ahmed, although not charged with recruitment responsibilities at this stage in his career, was quite clear that, as far as he understood the institutional recruitment policy, it was preferable for an English language teacher to be a native English speaker, but that it did not have a bearing on the recruitment of content teachers where knowledge of, and qualifications in, that subject area (e.g. Engineering, Information Technology, etc.) were of far more direct relevance.

However, he saw a slight advantage in terms of having greater empathy with language learners in the cases where non-native English speakers had been employed to teach English. Also, while conceding the efficacy of a word or two, here and there, in Arabic, he viewed such a step as useful only to breach a conceptual gap (adding that if he didn't translate a difficult concept into Arabic that a 'stronger' student almost certainly would do so), and thought that such instances ought to be kept to a minimum with beginners, and eradicated altogether with students who had progressed to a certain level of L2 attainment.

Once gain these opinions, which might be characterised as slightly surprising coming from someone whose own linguistic abilities (a fluent, natural English/ Arabic bilingual who has lived and worked in both English and Arabic speaking countries) would potentially give them a considerable advantage in an environment that valued just such bilingualism, were employment opportunities predicated upon the demands of the workplace (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Even when dealing with the question of learner identity (which will be revisited below), and more specifically, whether the English domination of all aspects of higher education could be characterised as a ‘danger’ to the Arabic language and concomitant identity issues, Ahmed remained unshaken in his belief in the necessity not only for English as a foreign language but for the predominance of EMI. Reflecting perhaps an institutional stance whereby Content and Language Integrated Learning, and the related concept that one aspect, perhaps even the primary goal of the content teachers’ job is to help improve the students’ L2 linguistic abilities:

It is a requirement to equip yourself with English. The English language obviously is used in most countries – many in the world – as I said; if you want to increase your opportunities of finding a job or progress further in your career, then English is one of the requirements. So, no, it’s not a danger –it’s a requirement for our students to learn English.

### 5.2.3 NEST/ NNEST – Comparing Monolingual and Bilingual Teachers’ Views – “can he or she understand the difficulties faced by a second language learner...”

As we have seen above those members of faculty who professed to little or no second language ability were, as might have been expected, significantly less inclined to support the

assertion that teachers, perhaps most especially teachers of a foreign second or other language, should have some ability in a second language. The other side of this opinion was represented by a significantly larger proportion of teachers with an ability in another language putting forward the idea that such an ability is indeed an advantage for either a language teacher, or a teacher working in the area of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Once again after coding the written responses, the idea that a teacher ought to be able to empathise with their learners, and have some personal understanding of the intricacies and challenges faced by someone attempting to learn, or learning through, a foreign language, was a prominent idea. This concept, that of empathy and understanding, was put forward on several occasions as a justification for the original disparity of opinion, with those teachers who reported using a foreign language suggesting that this was indeed a very useful and important skill. The native English speaking language teacher identified as Albert put it thus, “(If a person can only speak English – can he or she understand the difficulties faced by a second language learner...”, while another native English speaking teacher (Michael) was in broad agreement with this view in stating that, “...teachers who have learned a 2nd language can have a better understanding of the lang-learning process.” Both of these respondents laying claim to either a second language ability or indeed, in the case of Sean, genuine bilingualism (although notably Arabic was not one of these languages: in this case the respondent being genuinely bilingual in French and English). Two other respondents, Marie and Tony respectively, amongst others, repeated similar views, making reference to the compassion a teacher might have if they have also studied a foreign language, and to the confidence that a learner might take from the knowledge that the teacher standing in front of them has either been successfully through the process of learning the English language and/ or studied other subjects through that medium despite not being a native speaker of the language – something they would obviously have in common with their students. Lasagabaster and Sierra’s (2006, p.

231) students gave credence to such views when they highlighted the empathetic ability of a NNEST who, in this case, shares the learners L1, to, “help you better understand English by comparing it to your language,” and inadvertently serving, “to make you realise you can get a good level with a language which is not your mother tongue.” (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2006, p.231).

However, as noted above this empathy did not extend, in the case of non-native English speakers to the use of Arabic in the classroom, perhaps reflecting either their support for the institutional policy (possibly believing that it was a good idea to maximise the use of English, and to minimise Arabic language interaction in order to help students gain more English practice); or at the very least a tacit approval or acceptance of that policy. After all, if professionals have been employed to teach the English language, or through the medium of that language, it does not necessarily follow that they should be in any way uncomfortable in following an institutional policy that ostensibly supports them in that aim.

Those teachers who claimed a facility with a second language answered item number four, gauging whether faculty felt that both content and language teachers should have studied another language, in a far more positive, and statistically significant, manner than those members of faculty who admitted to having no ability, or at least no great ability, with another language.

	L2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Employ Teachers with an L2	>= 4	10	<u>3.7000</u>	.82327	.26034
	< 4	45	<u>2.8000</u>	1.14018	.16997

Figure 18: Mean Results for Item 4: Where 10 represents monolingual teachers and 45 represents bilingual teachers.

This is far from surprising, and as we have already seen (e.g. in Hansen, 2004) when dealing with both written and spoken responses, fits in with the idea that having successfully studied a foreign language at some point in one's own education better equips teachers, perhaps most especially language teachers, to empathise with their students and the difficulties faced by the students in mastering an extremely difficult skill (i.e. a foreign language) or indeed attempting to understand content related knowledge and skills through the medium of another language.

However, it is not always such a straightforward equation. While it might be assumed that those who lack an L2, those who have perhaps never studied another language, should perhaps not view the efficacy of having done so with the same regard as those teachers who have struggled with and overcome the challenge of learning in and through a second language themselves, it cannot so easily be assumed that all responses to such questions will represent the echo of self interest. It would be very easy to suggest, for example, that teachers who cannot speak a second language, most especially the students' own language, might not value a second language and/ or an ability with the students' mother tongue as it is against their own best interests to do so. In short, if L2 ability, or the ability to speak the same language as one's students, were a more highly prized asset for a teacher than it seems to be at present (whether the language itself, or teaching through the medium of another language), then many monolingual teachers would find themselves at a disadvantage when compared with Kirkpatrick's (2007, p.191) bilingual or multilingual NNESTs, who, "have had the experience, not only of learning a language as a second language, but learning the language they are now teaching." Indeed, such a potential disadvantage is highlighted in the position put forward in convincing manner by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006, p.234) who surveyed their own students and found that they were very supportive of, and keen to have, non-native

English speaking English teachers, “as a resource of learning strategies throughout the process of learning English.” Harking back, it would appear, to the notion of the teacher having empathy and a deeper personal understanding of the challenges faced when learning, or learning through, another language. That said, and countering this suggestion of self interest implied above, most teachers concern themselves with what is best for their students.

#### 5.2.4 NEST/ NNEST – A Comparison of More & Lesser Experienced Teachers’ Views – “native language should be irrelevant”

When it came to comparisons between faculty with greater, or lesser experience (see above) another interesting anomaly occurred. Over the question of native English speaking, or non-native English speaking teacher recruitment, the lesser experienced group of teachers showed a significantly greater tendency to disagree with the statement suggesting that NEST recruitment was preferable, whereas the more experienced group was relatively neutral in their responses. The group identified as less experienced was quite strongly against condoning any such recruitment policy. Perhaps suggesting a more recent engagement with the debate surrounding such issues as the NEST/ NNEST debate, and potentially an awareness of the many critical issues that the EFL teaching and learning context faces up to? A response echoed in the statistical difference that also occurred with regard to item 5, where those ‘newer’ teachers were also much stronger in their opinions when agreeing that English faculty members should be employed based on important criteria such as their qualifications and suitability for the job, regardless of their L1. Of course, this smaller number of lesser experienced respondents does mean that each individual teacher’s response takes on more weighting than the responses offered by the more experienced group.



		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Employ NS Teachers	Equal variances assumed	11.672	<b>.001</b>	-	53	.102	-.75362	.45240	-1.66103	.15379
	Equal variances not assumed			1.666						
Employ Suitable Professional	Equal variances assumed	5.768	<b>.020</b>	1.263	53	.212	.52657	.41677	-.30936	1.36250
	Equal variances not assumed			2.259						

Figure 19: Statistical Significance Results (Independent Samples T-Test) for items 1 & 5: Where equal variances are not assumed on both items.

Experience (Years)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Employ NS Teachers	>= 3	46	<b>2.9130</b>	1.31362	.19368
	< 3	9	<b>3.6667</b>	.70711	.23570
Employ Suitable Professional	>= 3	46	<b>2.3043</b>	1.22691	.18090
	< 3	9	<b>1.7778</b>	.44096	.14699

Figure 20: Mean Results for Items 1 & 5: Where 9 represents responses from faculty with fewer than 10 years teaching and 46 represents responses from faculty with greater than 10 years relevant experience.

Unfortunately, of those teachers identified as having less than 10 years teaching experience, only two took the option of adding written comments. Azra (a teacher of a content subject and an L2 user of English) saw the recruitment of teachers with a variety of native languages

– albeit employed to teach in and through English – as being about more than just simply native like ability or a particularly high prestige accent.

In an increasingly globalized society, one would most likely encounter individuals from various ethnic and national origins. As such, having teachers with varying native languages would provide students a chance to be exposed to people with diverse experiences and perspectives.

While Louisa (also a content teacher and a non-native English speaker) echoed the opinion already encountered elsewhere, that far from employing only native English speaking teachers, we ought to strongly consider non-native English speaking teachers, especially if they are also speakers of the students' language, at the very least, to teach at lower levels (see discussion below):

I think bilingual content teachers should be employed at an earlier stage - at the primary tier perhaps. It is really at this stage that students are building language skills. Once the base is strong the students would presumably have enough language skills in both their native language and English for content delivery to be independent of language. At this stage the teachers (sic) native language should be irrelevant.

That said, and illuminating and thought-provoking though such comments may be, it is quite possible that such opinions owe more to professed native language backgrounds (i.e. a mother tongue other than English) of these respondents than their comparative lack of experience. Also, we cannot forget that the disappointing number of responses in this area

makes any extrapolation extremely tentative. Yet, it cannot be easily ignored that two relatively inexperienced (for which we might just as easily read recently qualified) members of faculty, teaching content subjects through the medium of English; a language which they have presumably also learned themselves, should feel strongly; caveats over the level of student ability notwithstanding; that a policy favouring native English language users is deemed ineffective, unfair and counter-productive.

### 5.3 The Comparative Skills of Native & Non-Native English Speaking Teachers: Faculty Perceptions

Research question 4, which was represented in the final part of the questionnaire, dealt with the respective faculty members' perceptions of the varied, comparable and diverse skills and abilities brought to the teaching of English, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (i.e. subject teaching conducted through the medium of English), by either native English speaking teachers or their non-native English speaking colleagues. These additional items lent an extra layer of data to the faculty and management perceptions already expounded upon above with regard to the third of the research questions: that is the question dealing with the recruitment and retention of faculty dependent upon the perceived abilities of these teachers based upon perceptions of their linguistic and professional abilities as viewed through the prism of their native language.

On this occasion a simple set of teaching competencies, strategies and abilities (largely based upon and adapted from original pieces of research conducted in the Basque country by Lasagabaster and Sierra: 2002 and 2006) was presented and respondents were asked if they thought that either a native English speaking teacher or a non-native English speaking teacher,

may or may not be better equipped to deal with any particular aspect of teaching English language, or alternatively teaching through the medium of that language.

Lasagabaster and Sierra (2006) presented their respondents (their own students in their case) with a typical 5-point Likert scale and analysed their answers by looking at the basic mean responses. In this adapted version of their original idea the amended Likert style scale has only 3 possible responses: respondents could choose to rate that skill, strategy, or aspect of (language) learning as being better handled by a native English speaking teacher, a non-native English speaking teacher (at the opposing pole of the scale) or as being dealt with equally well, by both NESTs and NNESTs, or neither – the neutral position, for obvious reasons occupied the central position on the short list of available options. Likewise, the responses were initially analysed according to any evident discrepancies in the mean responses, before a more rounded qualitative explanation was sought. The analysis that follows was based on comparing and interpreting the responses of English language faculty (5.3.1) with those of content faculty (5.3.2). At this institution only 3 of the English language faculty were non-native English speakers and only two of those spoke Arabic. The content faculty had a much higher representation of non-native English speaking faculty. However, as this study was mainly concerned with the overall efficacy of EMI, of which the recruitment and utilization of NESTs or NNESTs is only one part, and as the faculty represent a vast array of native languages, it proved far more accessible to compare perceptions across the content – EFL divide than by L1.

### 5.3.1 English Language Faculty Responses & Perceptions – “very close to a native level”

An initial analysis of the English language teaching faculty’s responses to this section of the questionnaire revealed, as might have been largely expected given the demographic make-up

and linguistic background of the group, that where preferences existed (it should be noted that for all but two questions the most favoured response was 'both or neither') they tended to favour the NEST over the NNEST. For example, 22.6% of respondents, representing 7 individuals, rated NESTs better at teaching vocabulary, whereas not even one response saw this as a strength of the NNEST (although, of course, that leaves a majority of 77.4% who expressed an opinion suggesting that both NESTs and NNESTs were equally proficient when it came to this aspect of English language teaching). Of the apparent differences the two responses mentioned above specifically indicated that this particular group of respondents viewed the native English speaking teacher as being preferable when it came to the teaching, inculcating, or perhaps it would be best to term it, the modelling of pronunciation (61.3%) and other speaking skills (51.6%). Equally telling was the fact that in both cases not one respondent (presumably including the 3 NNESTs in the group as well) saw this as a potential strength of a non-native English speaking teacher. However, while this difference of opinion was indicated in the given responses it was rarely explicitly commented on by any of the respondents in their feedback. In fact the overwhelming majority of comments tended to focus on the recruitment issue (NEST versus NNEST) and the use of English as the sole medium of instruction. Perhaps the only comment in support of NESTs as more efficient models of pronunciation, among other aspects, comes from Graham who believes that, "(I)f the NNS's pronunciation is very close to a native level, then they could teach pronunciation. If their writing was nuanced to the same level as a NS, then writing would be fine."

The responses above do not, however, suggest that the majority of English teaching faculty were simply defending their own positions or view their profession through the narrow window of self-interest and overt linguistic chauvinism. When it came to the question of teaching grammar, 5 respondents (16.1%) saw this as an area of strength for the non-native

English speaking teacher as compared to only 2 (6.5%) who thought that NESTs would be better at teaching grammar. That said, the biggest percentage response in favour of NNESTs was over the issue of empathising with the students. James (an English teacher who had studied another L2) suggested that bilingual teachers (although, of course, this could just as well include bilingual teachers whose L1 was English as well), “often have an advantage in being able to empathise more with the situation of the learner of English and may be able to adopt certain strategies into their teaching.” A stated position from which it is not impossible to infer that a teacher who had themselves learned English as their L2 could empathise even more deeply with learners going through that exact same process. Omar (a native speaker of Arabic and thus someone who fits the above description very nicely) is quite categorical in putting it that:

(T)eaches (sic) who speak more than one language have more empathy for language learners as they may have gone through the same process of learning a new language and can relate to that.

This is a very similar comment to that made by Douglas (a NEST professing L2 proficiency in a language other than Arabic), who touched on both the empathetic aspect of teachers who have also learned another language and the idea that such a teacher might also come armed with a set of tried and tested strategies that have worked in the past. He argued that, teachers with second language ability would have a better understanding of how people go about learning a foreign language. A point of view very much endorsed by Phillipson (2009, p.16), who argues cogently against, “a monolingual approach, which is educationally unsound and installs or reinforces an inequitable language hierarchy.”

### 5.3.2 Content Faculty Responses & Perceptions

These patterns were largely replicated in the responses of the content faculty. Once again, the native English speaking teacher was rated as being the ‘better’ or more proficient over most categories (although once again the neutral choice was seen to predominate – suggesting that most respondents gave answers indicative of being comfortable with the employment and performance of teachers regardless of their L1). In this instance such results might well come as more of a surprise than the responses from the English teaching faculty (predominantly, although not exclusively, native speakers of English) as eleven of the 21 respondents considered themselves to be first and foremost native speakers of a language other than English – although it should be noted (as mentioned above) that 8 content teachers did not get to the end of the questionnaire, which might skew this proportion to a degree. However, despite the demographic difference in this sub-population of respondents the responses given were very similar with regard to the NNESTs being favoured in terms of empathising and understanding the students’ language issues (31.3% as compared to the 25.8% result offered by the English teaching faculty) and although ‘speaking’ skills were more of an issue for the language teachers it was also interesting to note that the content faculty were of the opinion that NESTs (37.5%) taught content specific vocabulary more efficiently than their NNEST (0.0%) colleagues.

These responses from mainly highly qualified and experienced teachers of English language, or English medium Content and Language Integrated Learning’ are not dissimilar to the opinions put forward by Lasagabaster and Sierra’s (2006, p.233) undergraduate students. Although only dealing with the teaching of English language (more specifically the English

language tuition they were receiving) and also weighing considerations as to age and educational level that are not dealt with in this study, the results are still strikingly similar:

...speaking in general terms, our respondents went for the NST in the areas of pronunciation, culture and civilization, listening, vocabulary and speaking, whereas they preferred the NNST in the areas of grammar and strategies.

#### 5.4 Language & Culture

On other area of interest that emerged from the data analysis concerned the social, cultural and personal identity aspects of learning in and through another language (and all the associated cultural baggage that might entail in a quite different cultural milieu). Although not a direct responses to the research questions such concerns are intimately tied to the teaching of, and through, a foreign language and could not be ignored as they began to emerge: initially in the quantitative data, where questions 23-28 touched on such issues as a sub-set of the questions dealing with the recruitment, efficacy and suitability of NESTs and/or NNESTs, and latterly as such threads began to emerge from the qualitative data analysis. Therefore, it is possible to compare the perceptions of content faculty with English language faculty (5.4.1) and also the views of NESTs and NNESTs (5.4.2), before considering these responses and comments against a background of the management views. Finally, there is small summary of the thematic responses emerging from this brief consideration of language and culture.



#### 5.4.1 Language & Culture – Comparing Content and Language Teachers’ Views

These concerns also related very closely to the final area where both English language and content faculty were at statistical odds over the question of linguistic globalisation, or in this case more simply seeking faculty opinion as to whether they thought the global spread of English throughout many walks of life, business, education, sports, other leisure pursuits and international media was mainly a benign, or at least, neutral influence? Although couched in a relatively straightforward manner (this item, after all, being one of many on what was hopefully a reasonably user-friendly questionnaire), this is of course yet another highly complex area. Tsuda (1994) made reference to the ‘Diffusion of English Paradigm,’ where English language use gradually takes over more and more areas that might once have been the reserve of a national or other supranational language (e.g. French), and Cameron (2002, p. 69) takes that even further when she warns of the different varieties of linguistic ethnocentrism:

This ethnocentrism does not take the form of linguistic imperialism as that term is ordinarily understood, i.e. promoting one language over others. Instead it involves promoting particular interactional norms, genres and speech-styles across languages, on the grounds that they are maximally ‘effective’ for purposes of ‘communication.’

These norms are taken from a more Anglo-centric linguistic viewpoint. In other words they represent the modus operandi of a largely English speaking (even as a second language) ‘Western’ dominated model. It is a potential ethnocentrism evident in the widespread adoption and emulation of what Holliday (1994) termed BANA (standing for British,

Australasian and North American) pedagogical technologies, and their attendant teaching and learning methods and strategies, and is succinctly encapsulated by Kubota (2002, p.27). She believed that developments in Japanese education (not confined to English language teaching) indicated:

...that the development of international understanding and intercultural communication skills is heavily focused on the white middle class English and essentialized Anglo culture rather than on other languages and cultures that constitute the linguistic and ethnic diversity of Japan as well as the world.

It comes as something of an initial surprise that more English language teachers in this survey expressed negative views about the spread of English language into the global sphere, than did their content teaching colleagues. Of course, content teachers themselves also benefit greatly from being able to teach through the medium of English in a variety of different countries and contexts. That said, with a higher proportion of the content faculty being either native speakers of Arabic or another non-English L1, such as Urdu, it is still surprising to find out that content faculty were significantly (in the statistical sense of the word) more sanguine and relaxed about the spread of English.

Subject	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ID The Spread of Global English is Positive	18	<b>2.3333</b>	.76696	.18078
	32	<b>2.8438</b>	.84660	.14966

**Figure 21: Mean Results for Item 21:** Where 18 represents responses from content faculty and 32 represents responses from English language faculty.

Unfortunately, very few of the content faculty addressed this question in the written comments section. They tended to focus more on the questions dealing with recruitment, English use in the classroom, and English medium studies in general. However, one respondent (Joan) did comment at length, and although identified as a native speaker of English, her summary of the issue is in tune with the majority of survey answers submitted by content faculty.

As English has become the dominant world/ business language so communication between people has become easier bringing with it many advantages and increased opportunities for many people although also having some disadvantages (sic), particularly for those not speaking English. Overall, however, I feel there are many more advantages than disadvantages of the spread of English.

It was left to the English language faculty on this occasion to offer more tempered and cautious views concerning the global spread of English. Although, generally speaking benefactors of this linguistic phenomenon, and not necessarily against such a spread, several of the English teachers who responded to this prompt displayed a degree of either caution or ambiguity. One respondent (Kevin) struck a very balanced tone in stating that, “I don't know about the spread of English around the world – I suppose it's been both good and bad,” while Jane, also a native speaker of English, was more prosaic believing that the, “(S)pread of English is a fact and something that is (like it or not) a fact of life that many people have to come to grips with.”

Another native English speaking English teacher (Lionel) summarised the thoughtful and balanced approach that many respondents from the English faculty put forward:

If the spread of English globally has meant that more people are able to communicate easier for the betterment of their lifes (sic) then it must be a good thing. Where the spread of English has meant the death of local languages and loss of cultural identity then it's not a good thing.

It is interesting that no direct connection is made between the two poles of this continuum. Of course, it is perfectly possible for an individual or even a whole community to better their lives financially and materially, and to become far more upwardly and even physically mobile thanks to those selfsame linguistic opportunities that at the same time result in a downgrading or even loss of a native language, cultural identity and way of life. It is a link that might well have been made by Marjory (a native speaker of English) when she conceded that a degree of linguistic imperialism might be inevitable: “English inevitably threatens other languages and cultures, it cannot be assumed to be benign. English medium studies are as much a political as a pedagogical decision.”

When looking at the fourth section of the original questionnaire only one statement from the six dealing with aspects of national, ethnic and linguistic identity yielded a significant difference across these two groups of practitioners (see figure 21). Although not too far apart on issues of linguistic neutrality, the spread of English speaking culture and the advantages gained by becoming a genuinely bilingual citizen, when asked if the global spread of English is generally a good thing more content teachers, who by definition in this study had a much

higher non-native English speaker representation, were sceptical that the “Diffusion of English Paradigm,” as Tsuda (1994), would term it, was ultimately a good thing.

#### 5.4.2 Language & Culture – A Comparison of NEST & NNEST’ Views

Similar underlying reasons might well be evident in the statistically significant differences encountered in the responses of native English speaking teachers and non-native English speakers to items 18 and 21. For although in item 18 both sets of respondents (NESTs and NNESTs) tended towards disagreeing with the statement that English language was, or could be, in any way a neutral language, it was again slightly surprising to find the native English speaking respondents more negative, statistically speaking, than their non-native English speaking peers. A trend continued in item 21 where native English speaking faculty were significantly less likely to deem the spread of English a positive factor.

	L1	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ID English is Neutral	>= 2	12	<b><u>3.1667</u></b>	1.26730	.36584
	< 2	38	<b><u>4.1316</u></b>	.77707	.12606
ID The Spread of Global English is Positive	>= 2	12	<b><u>2.1667</u></b>	.71774	.20719
	< 2	38	<b><u>2.8158</u></b>	.83359	.13523

Figure 21: Mean Results for Items 18 & 21: Where 12 represents responses from NNEST faculty and 38 represents responses from NESTs.

A similar pattern, perhaps inviting a similar explanation, became evident when the questions concerning the cultural impact of English and its global reach were discussed. Once again the non-native English speaking teachers were seemingly far less concerned with the potentially negative impact of the spread of English, and the English language’s subsequent impact on individual identity, interactional norms, and other paralinguistic factors. A disparity that can perhaps be explained again not so much by the fact that the non-native English speaking

teachers were unaware of these issues (although some faculty might well be unaware), but more due to the native English speaking teachers being highly sensitised to the many issues, conundrums and problems that the unfettered spread of a global language might bring. Plus, it ought to be remembered that the non-native English speaking teachers surveyed in this instance are themselves success stories to an extent. Should English dominate (indeed maybe it already does) international business, communication and academia then those who have learned the language to a high degree of proficiency would presumably have little to fear, at least materially, from this domination, by comparison with others who are disenfranchised by their inability to use the current international lingua franca.

#### 5.4.3 Language & Culture – Management Opinions – “Everyone speaking the same language is a tool of efficiency”

Many of the emerging trends were also echoed in the qualitative data gleaned from the management interviews. George was quite unequivocal in his belief that studying in and through English would inevitably have an influence on the identity formation and world view of relatively young Arab learners. This opinion was expressed using a metaphor from the world of computing:

...if the brain is the hardware, language is the software and I think the more you learn a second language the more you're installing a different software programme on your brain and I think it does change the way you think. I don't think – I think exposure to Western people will, of course, make you more Western in the sense my exposure to Arabic people has made me more Arabic.

However, this was not necessarily viewed, in this case, as a negative aspect of second language learning, with George preferring to see such processes as both additive and in certain respects an inevitable economic imperative. Referring to the loss of a native language as something that could be equated with the erosion of other ‘old-fashioned’ concepts such as a particular national way of dressing or the move from a local to a continental currency, he saw the loss of a less international language (although arguably Arabic is more widespread than many other ‘national’ languages, covering many countries, millions of speakers and as a significant mediating factor in a major world religion) as being comparable to the loss of a ‘quaint’ but archaic custom. In his own words:

...if you want to become a member of the global economy – yes, you are going to lose – you’re going to have to become more – what? Efficient. Everyone speaking the same language is a tool of efficiency, so that’s what I should have said.

Margaret alluded to certain concerns being voiced in the newspapers and other media by the local community regarding the potential threat that English might pose towards the maintenance of the Arabic language, local modus operandi and other associated cultural practices (not the least of which, in a Persian/ Arabian Gulf context, is connected to religious mores). Yet, whilst aware of these concerns she seemed quite confident that the path being followed is indeed one that can only lead to positive outcomes for all concerned. Asked if the social, cultural and linguistic impact of English medium studies at a pre-tertiary level (primary and high school) might be viewed in either a positive, negative or more ambiguous light her response was unequivocal:

Of course the positive – in the college we will have students coming in with a better level of English than we currently do. They will develop better learning strategies before they come in so I think the whole set-up is getting better. By the time they come here they might have a more mature strategy.

It would appear that it is not so much the language itself as the assumed and associated ways of thinking, learning and ultimately teaching that recommend English medium studies to Margaret. Asked about the nature of the education programmes where the next generation of Emirati student teachers and other school staff were receiving tuition via the medium of English, it was conceded that EMI was as much to do with methodology and a perceived ‘better’ way of doing things, than with the actual language being used. It wasn’t just the English, but:

...the teaching strategies that go along with it – absolutely! And, I think schools are benefitting from that right now...It’s not because we’re British and we know better. It’s not. It’s exposure, your background and qualifications that make you teach more appropriately. So, we do have students out in the workforce, who do have appropriate strategies, but that has only happened in the last few years.

These responses indicate a quite clear association or rather assumption that is being made between English language teaching (and also CLIL) and a ‘better’, more modern and dynamic way of doing things.



On the question of whether English was any form of threat to the Arabic language and associated aspects of student/ learner and wider identity, Alexander was very much in line with his management colleagues cited above, believing the role of English and the students' use of an international language to be a predominantly positive development for the U.A.E. and greater Persian/ Arabian Gulf countries and their citizens. It was put forward that Arabic speakers learning and operating in English, would and should see themselves as more educated, more well-rounded individuals and that Arabic language and culture was deeply rooted, and strong enough to withstand such external pressures. Citing economic and globalization imperatives as primary he finished off by stating that, "Arabs shouldn't see themselves as any less Arab because they have command of another language."

On the issue of identity formation and change and the role played by a second language and its attendant cultural baggage in just such (re)formations, William was aware of the possible negative connotations and influences but felt confident that the Arabic language, the religion it underpins and the people who use or follow one, the other or both, were strong enough to withstand any subtle cultural pressure associated with learning in and through English. Using his own children as an example he was confident enough to state that they, "don't think it's bad to be exposed, to know things about cultures. I think ultimately you make your own decisions about whether you want to adopt those behaviours, those attitudes, those, you know – values."

As to the related issue of L1/ L2 identity (re)formation William was just as sanguine and relaxed as were his management team colleagues whose interviews have been reported upon thus far. While expressing the view that Arabic would most likely remain the language of family life etc. (and understandably ignoring the fact that this in itself might be a potentially

negative stepping stone on the road to language loss) and paraphrasing the Minister of Education and Scientific Research it was suggested that other countries (India was held up as an example) were able to co-opt, or make use of English to their advantage without it necessarily impacting detrimentally upon their own language(s), culture and cultural identity. Such a stance, that it is possible to use English to realise one's own ends without succumbing to any integral post-, or neo-colonialist agenda, is partially in tune with Canagarajah's (1999) belief in the ability of many users of English to resist 'linguistic imperialism' and to fashion their own *modus operandi*. However, Canagarajah (1999) goes on to suggest that such resistance is only possible if a high degree of criticality and a desire to challenge the status quo. In this case the situation where English would appear to have virtually replaced Arabic as the language of 'higher' education – is evident, and it is not altogether clear whether first/second language use and policy in the U.A.E. is at present quite the same as Canagarajah (1999, p.197) describes below:

Appropriating English while maintaining their vernaculars makes periphery subjects linguistically competent for the culturally hybrid post-modern world they confront. The maintenance of polyvocality with a clear awareness of their own socio-ideological location empowers them to withstand the totalitarian tendencies – of local nationalist regimes and Western multinational agencies – enforced through uniformity of thought and communication.

Finally, William (in keeping with many other interviewee's opinions) felt that in terms of culture, identity and language loss that English posed little threat to Arabic as long as Arabic

was still used for, “daily routine – communicating with family members or friends outside of school or work.”

#### 5.4.4 Language & Culture – A Brief Summary

The one other area where anomalies in the responses could be identified concerned the question of teaching, or indeed disseminating (even if it were inadvertently) the inevitable cultural content tied to the teaching of English, or indeed, any other language. Faculty comments indicated that several respondents were acutely aware of the sensitive nature of teaching English, and its attendant cultural baggage, in a very different milieu: a context, educational and otherwise, that has often been stereotypically categorised as being hostile to so-called ‘Western’ cultural products. Philip (highly experienced but lacking an L2) illustrates the paradoxical situation in which English (and by extension content) teachers often find themselves in such circumstances. Having started by stating that he/ she does not, “often talk much about Anglo culture because it isn’t relevant to what my students need to learn,” as, “English is not used in their environments beyond the College,” he does go on to note that in many situations he would be, “remiss if I did not teach something about English-speaking culture as my students are trying to survive in one, “ and that, “learning any language improves one’s world view.”

In fact this mixture of sometimes contradictory comments is not as confusing as it might at first seem. Many teachers in such circumstances are often aware that teaching language can, and often does, entail teaching interactional and some social norms associated with that language, while at the same time, it need not, if handled sensitively, necessarily pose a threat to the learners’ own sense of self and cultural identity. It is perhaps suffice to say, at this

point, that when and where disseminating cultural content in the classroom was seen as positive it was certainly the NEST (35.5%) who was seen as being in a stronger position to do so than the NNEST (0.0%).

Over the question of cultural dissemination only one content teacher (Zeina: an English/Arabic bilingual) made any comment; answering the self imposed question of whether languages, “have an impact on culture?” with the opinion that, “the answer is a definite, (sic) yes.” However, while 37.5% of the respondents viewed the NEST as the more likely disseminator of accurate and worthwhile cultural knowledge/ content, 31.3% thought the NNEST a better conduit for such information. A result that suggests that some of the content faculty don’t necessarily accept that English language speaking culture is either easily defined or belongs, as such, to native speakers of the language.

### 5.5 Emergent Themes

It is worth reiterating at this point that although the initial quantitative stage has been used as a means of focussing the qualitative and interpretative stage on areas of difference, that did not preclude, as we have seen above, the emergence of themes upon which the respondents might also agree. The coding process served to highlight common themes concerning the role of English as an international lingua franca, and as the primary language of business, science, the (global) economy, international media, technology and the workplace (see Appendix C for an example). While there might well have been discrepancies concerning the use of L1, and unease over the imposition of EMI, there was equally an overwhelmingly common feeling that as long as English remained economically the globally dominant language of trade and technology, then that would also remain the main reason for the teaching of both EMI and EFL.

Sean (a bilingual English teacher: English/ French not Arabic) believes that, “(M)ost people learn English to have a better access to and job opportunities in technology, business and media,” while Samer (a native Arabic speaking content teacher) state his feeling that English, “seems to be the language of commerce so this is useful.”

This is a theme continued in the management interviews with for example, Margaret emphasising that the institution’s EMI policy, whatever the challenges of studying via a foreign medium, was very much, “a response to the market place. English being the language of business of the market place now. It’s in response to that.”

## CHAPTER SIX – DISCUSSION

The previous chapter (5) has attempted to highlight, statistically speaking, areas of disagreement and disparity of opinion between different groups of teachers (English language faculty/ content faculty: NESTs/ NNESTs; more as compared to lesser qualified and experienced faculty members, etc.) and to use these pointers as the basis of a more grounded and qualitative exposition as to why teachers, and more latterly educational managers, explained or justified these comments and opinions as they did. These opinions were originally solicited through the medium of anonymous surveys and face to face interviews, aimed at probing the level of satisfaction and general agreement with the institution in question's English medium instruction policy and the policies, even if unwritten, concerning L1 use; the suitability of L1 content, or other, materials and any native English speaking teacher recruitment bias.

Several strands emerged from the data indicating that despite a veneer of unquestioning acceptance certain respondents (and managers) were not as naive as Pennycook's (2001, p.57) metaphorical champions of liberal complementarity, being fully aware that many taken for granted assumptions, such as EMI bolstered by English only classrooms (and corridors), possibly best served, if not by NESTs, then by 'Western' educated 'near-NESTs,' are:

...inadequate because they fail to account for the power of English and thus the inequitable relationship between English and local languages. A simplistic view of complimentary language use – English will be used for international and some intranational uses, while local languages will be used for local uses

– does not take into account the far more complex social and political context of language use.

The following sections highlight and discuss the main findings and tendencies that emerged from the data. The first area worthy of discussion is that concerning the imposition of an overarching EMI policy. This will be followed by a consideration of the recruitment policy that seeks to bolster that policy, and the perceptions of both faculty and management towards these policies, before a further section considers the global spread and international nature of the English language and the perceived implications of that for the status of Arabic.

### 6.1 English as Medium of Instruction

The first major thread to emerge from both the quantitative and qualitative stages of the study was the fact that the efficacy of EMI (obviously for the ‘dissemination’ of content ‘knowledge’ in this case) was not only far from unquestioningly accepted, but quite often rejected as not really being in the best interests of the students. Faculty (whether English language or content teachers) and management alike expressed concerns that the institutional insistence upon EMI could be, in fact was, detrimental to the students understanding of their major subjects. A seemingly straight-forward agreement with Troudi’s (2009, p.208) assertion that, “(M)any tertiary-level students who studied in state secondary schools where Arabic is the medium of instruction are intimidated by the idea of studying their special fields in English.” A statement that the same author follows up by drawing attention to Bielenberg’s (2004) reference to the similar difficulties faced by students at the United Arab Emirates University when asked to process Mathematics, Information Literacy, and other content related problems, through an ostensibly foreign language – one they most probably had not

studied exclusively through before, and one where, should the students be deemed as requiring a foundation course, they have, as yet, failed to excel.

Interestingly, also in line with the findings of McLaren (2009, p.428) it was found that:

...more experienced; especially if that experience were specific to the region and the students' L1; more highly qualified and L2 capable faculty, were more likely to find themselves in agreement with Phillipson (1992) and his several 'fallacies.'

Thus, suggesting that it tended to be the lesser experienced and qualified members of the faculty (again regardless of subject taught: content or language) who found themselves agreeing with EMI as an efficacious policy and against the supposedly fallacious tenets of English language teaching identified by Phillipson (1992). These are the notions that English ought to be the sole medium of study; that the more the students' L1 is used the more injurious that is to their eventual English proficiency. His other main fallacies concerning the age at which English tuition ought to begin and the preference for native English speakers to teach the language will be dealt with below.

Of course, this leaves the respondents cited immediately above open to the charge that they are simply defending their own positions. After all if fluent Arabic/ English bilinguals were the preferred option to teach the English language, and if those who could not speak Arabic were unemployable as content teachers in a non-EMI environment, then monolingual (or, at least, non-Arabic speakers) might not be expected to support such a position. However, in reality the responses and opinions put forward by faculty and management were far more



complex. It is also perhaps fair to suggest that it is not so much lesser experienced and qualified members of faculty resolutely holding onto such opinions, as the fact that their more experienced and qualified colleagues had themselves changed their views over time as the realities of their professional lives and their engagement with such issues through, for example, Masters level study and the realities of their respective teaching contexts, had effected a change of opinion. A lot of what Holliday (1994) termed EFL ‘technologies’ (for which it is possible to read pedagogical approaches, teaching strategies and techniques) has emanated, and continues to be imported, from Kachru’s (1992) ‘Centre’ communities (Holliday’s BANA: British, Australasian and North American context), where the majority of EFL training assumes well-resourced, small, multilingual classes. Thus, certain EFL, or indeed CLIL teachers might be forgiven, initially at least, for assuming that the wholesale importation of educational ‘technologies’, including English as the very medium of instruction, right down to micro-strategies such as ‘punishing’ (even in a humorous manner) those who *lapse* into their L1, are the right way to go about things. It takes a degree of experience and reflection to go against an approach that is more often than not characterised as nothing more than common sense.

From the management perspective it would appear that although wholly aware of the difficulties of studying content through another, entirely foreign, language, other issues were foremost when it came to an overall endorsement of the EMI regime. Often stating the needs of an increasingly internationalised, globalised and, by extension, Anglicised (in linguistic terms) workplace. Senior management figures uniformly endorsed the institutional (and also national) policy of teaching tertiary subjects through the medium of English and on occasion expressed a desire to see this extended into the national education system at an earlier age, so that the students might arrive at the tertiary level with the requisite linguistic skills to study

their major subjects through English already in place, or at the very least be able to cope with a (once again largely unquestioned) CLIL type teaching and learning environment. This is an environment that assumes a competent base from which the learners would be expected to engage not only with content ‘knowledge’ and skills, but to also continue to learn in, and through, and *improve* their L2 proficiency. A situation that very much replicates Troudi’s (2009, p. 207), “additional learning burdens,” albeit at an earlier stage. It is an understandable stance to take, echoing Tsui and Tollefson’s (2004, p.6) paraphrase of an earlier critique by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1999), of the perceived role of English in countries seeking the fast track to modernity and development:

The impact of globalization on medium-of-instruction policies is a recurrent concern...The dominant role of English speaking countries, particularly the United States, in international economy and politics, and the use of English as the lingua-franca on the Internet, have aggravated the pull towards English as a much sought-after commodity, at national, subnational and supranational levels.

However, that would be a policy decision, imposed upon the students that takes little or no account of the difficulties the students themselves are likely to encounter when studying in a foreign language and thus dealing with this additional burden. The end result: a qualification earned, no doubt painstakingly, through the medium of English seemingly being valued above the actual content of that degree, or other, course. It is a controversial choice in many ways, not least, as Bielenberg (2004) has pointed out, because it requires a quite different set of skills from the content teacher by which he means an ability to focus more on the students’

linguistic difficulties (once again a CLIL type approach) rather than teaching the subject as one might do to a class of students who share the teacher/ lecturer's first language.

The pull of English mentioned by Tsui and Tollefson (2004) above, is, it would appear, shared by many of the non-native English speaking teachers (mainly, but not exclusively content teachers) in this study. One seemingly anomalous pattern that emerged from the data being the tendency of NNESTs to support the status quo, and to do so, where at all possible, in an English only and Arabic free environment. Arguments were extended (from Arabic speaking members of the management team too) that contrary to Phillipson's (1992) assertion that it was not necessarily the case, that the use of English in the classroom had to be maximised or standards would drop. It was conceded by certain Arabic speaking, and other, respondents that the judicious use of a word or two of Arabic might, at times, help bridge an impasse in understanding, but that overall the institutional policy of EMI, supported by as much use of English as possible, was the best way, not necessarily to teach our students the content knowledge and skills they are thought to be in need of, but to prepare them for a contemporary, more internationalised workplace and to help propel the country and its citizens headlong into modernity: a modernity in which English is the lingua-franca of international business and communication. The fact that such practices have been questioned elsewhere, and the idea that a graduate who may not have mastered their subject quite as well as they might have done, due to taking on an additional cognitive, is preferable to one schooled in their mother tongue, was a concern put secondary to the dictates of the global marketplace and the perceived needs of the local workplace.

Another finding that came to light, even expressed by faculty members who otherwise shared Phillipson's (1992) reservations with regard to the monolingual orthodoxy of much EFL and

CLIL teaching, was the perceived importance of the L1 as an aid to learning the L2 *only at very low levels of proficiency*. While such an approach, using a degree of Arabic in English, and particularly content, classes remains very much against the avowed aims of the institution, a number of respondents (both faculty and management) conceded that using the L1 could indeed aid comprehension and overcome difficulties for students viewed as being weak, and/or beginners, in English. Yet, once these learners had progressed to a level of English deemed more proficient any such use of the L1 ought to cease. The reasoning behind this widespread feeling having more to do with dissatisfaction at the English proficiency entry level of many of the learners, rather than over the issue of whether or not EMI were really the best medium of instruction, whatever the students' perceived language level. Once again, language ability rather than the students' skills and potential knowledge and understanding of the subject area was seen as the key factor in their success. This raises the possibility of perfectly capable students failing to succeed due to the language barrier, while their 'weaker' peers make greater headway thanks not so much to a greater ability in the subject or more appropriate study skills but due to better linguistic abilities in their L2. This is a particularly vexed question in an educational system such as that operated in the U.A.E. where different Emirates possess variable economic strength and this can be manifested in the degree of educational provision supplied and in the degree of 'internationalism' envisaged as part of that educational milieu. Thus, learners who have been to schools where certain subjects (Mathematics and Science are the usual choices) have been taught through the medium of English can find themselves in a comparatively privileged position (whatever their actual level of ability with their content subject itself) on arrival in the tertiary context. Whereas, those who might have struggled to master English, possibly through no fault of their own but as a result of extremely variable language provision and support, have an educational mountain to climb before embarking on the subject of their choice. This is a point further

emphasised by Troudi and Jendli (2011) when they remind us that participants in their study at Zayed University were far happier with English as the medium of instruction than their peers if they had been better prepared for such a role. Thus exacerbating the educational, social and economic advantages available to those who had been privately educated at primary and secondary level, largely through the medium of English, in comparison to those educated in the state sector where Arabic remains the medium of much instruction and English is taught as a foreign language.

The solution put forward by the various educational authorities appears to be that of *fixing* the problem at an earlier stage with more English, with more and earlier English medium studies being promoted. Writing in *The National* newspaper (29/11/2009), a common forum for the ongoing debates over both educational standards and the place of English within the curriculum, Kathryn Lewis paraphrases Paul Dyer, then a researcher at the Dubai School of Government, when she notes that:

...government schools are not preparing students to be competitive when they reach university...(M)easured against their peers around the world, pupils in the state school system are lagging behind in maths and science – and a poor grasp of English delays entry to university for most Emiratis.

It is perhaps instructive to note that there is no mention of the levels of Arabic literacy, or proficiency, for any of these potential college or university entrants, nor is the option of attending an Arabic medium institution of tertiary education available. The belief remains, or at least predominates, that in order to be *educated*, in order to learn the ways of the modern workplace or even to engage with the latest scientific or technological insights and

discoveries that these learners need not only be proficient in English but will also have to learn vital content information through that linguistic medium. In the same volume of The National newspaper (The National produced a dedicated educational supplement on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, 2009) secondary school principal, Mohammed Jumaa al Hosani, in an interview with Kareem Shaheen (The National, 29/11/2011) very much endorsed the view that once English proficiency was at the requisite level then everything else ought to fall into place: “He is also unequivocal on the debate that has arisen over the importance of English in schools in a country eager to hang on to its Arabic traditions. “What we can do now is strengthen the English language.” He says. “It is the language of the age.” Mastering it would help to produce the next generation of Emirati recruits ready to participate in the country’s industries, he believes.”

Yet evidence from elsewhere (e.g. Malaysia, where the reintroduction of English medium instruction has not necessarily brought the related rise in Mathematics and Science results that were to be hoped for) and throughout South-East Asia (see Kirkpatrick, 2007), where English at an earlier age has also been seen as potentially detrimental to the students’ development of their L1 (Kirkpatrick, 2010), does not suggest that a policy of yet more English, and at a yet earlier stage of the learners’ respective cognitive development will necessarily result in the highly educated, bilingual workforce envisaged above.

Dr. Melanie Gobert (13/5/2010), addressing an in-house symposium in a very similar institution to the one described above, while able to provide a similar list of compelling reasons as to why the U.A.E. seeks to persevere with its EMI policy (English is used in neighbouring Arabic speaking countries; it’s the lingua-franca of the vast expatriate workforce of the country and its immediate neighbours; it is seen as the language of

international communication, science, technology, business and medicine, as well as the workplace) also supplied several reasons and statistics that in other circumstances might best be read as the reasons why the EMI policy itself was, and still is, not actually working: “(P)oor standards of English amongst U.A.E. citizens (Al Kitbi, 2006; IELTS Annual Review, 2006; IELTS Analysis of Tests, 2008),” and the worrying financial implications of this perceived failure for tertiary institutions; “\$80 million spent annually on foundation programs at tertiary institutions (1/3 total budget) (Hoath, 2004).”

Therefore, it is perhaps fair to say that despite the large amount of money being spent on programmes aimed at upgrading students’ linguistic, and other, skills until they are at a level where they can deal with the challenges of an English-mediated education, very little criticism, at least from those in a position to influence and effect change, is aimed at the very notion of EMI in the first place. We have seen, in the analysis of the data (above) that many teachers, especially those with greater experience and involvement with the particular challenges of teaching Arabic speaking learners in a Gulf context, are aware of the multi-faceted difficulties facing learners who have to study content subjects through an L2. Yet, although certain respondents (language and content teachers alike) were aware that:

...there is very little research that shows that learning in a foreign language in a monolingual context guarantees higher educational achievement.

Conversely, research shows a strong link between educational achievement, such as in reading and learning in the first language. (Troudi, 2009, p.210)

Troudi (2009, p.210) partially draws these conclusions from the work of Williams (1996, 1998) based in sub-Saharan Africa, but would find corroboration also in Kirkpatrick’s (2010)

research in a South-East Asian context and is not unreasonable, if challenging to the current modus operandi, in calling for and insisting that, “(I)t is effective education in the mother tongue with student-centred pedagogies that Arab countries, such as the UAE, need rather than dependence on a non-indigenous language, or exoglossia.”

## 6.2 The Native English Speaking Teacher Question

One common concomitant of many EMI programmes is the often very high number of native English speakers actively sought to teach the language components. These components are often seen as supportive of L2 content study. This is further supported by the demographic make-up of the content teachers themselves, who may well feature a larger number of non-native English speakers than is usually found on language teaching programmes. The unwritten, unquestioned orthodoxy seemingly suggesting that NESTs are more important in the language than content classroom, despite the fact that content courses continue to be taught through the medium of the L2 and that research (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2006) indicates that certain groups of students, especially if exposed to NNESTs on a regular basis, value the input and empathy of teachers who have learned English themselves and also value teachers who share their L1. The second main area of question sought to establish if both faculty (regardless of subject area: content or language), and management were in tune with such practices and their practical applications.

The majority of those who responded, whether faculty or management, either rejected the notion that NESTs had any form of advantage as teachers of both language and content, or viewed that advantage to exist only in the realms of English language teaching but not content areas. Even then, one emerging theme was the advantage conferred upon a NNEST



by being able to understand and empathise with the learners' difficulties, as a result of having conquered those problems themselves. A subtheme that also occurred was the idea that even if one were a NEST it might still have been very advantageous to have been through the process of learning an L2 oneself at some point, even if it were not the same language as the learners' L1. A point echoed by Kirkpatrick (2007, p.196) when he concludes his argument by stating that:

...while there is always room for the multilingual and culturally aware native speaker teacher, the policy of employing untrained, monolingual native speakers as English language teachers should be systematically opposed by the profession. Well-trained, multilingual and culturally sensitive and sophisticated teachers can best teach today's learners of English, the overwhelming majority of whom are bilingual and who are learning in culturally diverse contexts for an extraordinarily complex range of needs, stretching from local to international.

However, despite the seemingly enlightened stance taken by management and many faculty, it remains extremely common for the majority of English teachers to be NESTs, and where NNESTs were employed to teach content subjects, the main pre-requisite appeared to be a 'Western', and by unwitting association, therefore a 'modern' educational background. The assumption is quite clearly, and possibly unfairly, being made that teachers educated outside of the 'Western' mainstream (Kachru's (1992) 'Centre communities') would not boast the same 'modern', student-centred and pedagogically sophisticated approach to either language or content teaching. It is a problem, if indeed true, that need not be solved entirely, if at all, through the medium of another, foreign, language. Plus there is the question of whether

Holliday's (1994) BANA 'technologies', are, or ought to be, transferable in the first place, regardless of language medium, with Holliday himself (1994, p.215) arguing for, "a reconstituting of elements which are indigenous to the cultures of the host educational environment – to produce something which is changed, but which also has its roots within the traditional."

It seems fair to suggest that it is just this type of culturally, and perhaps more importantly, pedagogically, sensitive synthesis of ideas, approaches and practices that Troudi (2009), is calling for when outlining an approach that would use Arabic as the medium of content instruction and leave English as a separate, but important foreign language subject, while seeking to build a more student-oriented teaching and learning environment. This needs to be implemented regardless of opinions, even if voiced by the learners themselves, that equate modernity with English. Even if that argument were to be accepted, it need not mean that by default Arabic (and thus Arabic medium education) represents a resistance to that modernity. Phillipson (2009, p.217) highlights, the at times unequal, struggle in both Denmark and Sweden to avoid indigenous academia from becoming overwhelmed by the global spread of English. One strand of this approach is not to restrict the teaching of English, which is seen as a vital cog in these countries' research, development and dissemination of scientific information, but to have the native language used as in higher education, "whenever possible." It is a medium of instruction policy that has far reaching consequences for the employment of non-native content teachers (where 'native' would refer to Danish or Swedish in the particular context studied by Philipson), and potentially, depending on the classroom realities of these contexts for (native English speaking) English teachers who were not able to use the students' language at all.

However, this is manifestly not the case in the U.A.E. (or wider Gulf region) and the main reason put forward, especially by the management interviewees (above), for such an approach, despite caveats eschewing any native language bias, was that such ‘modern’ approaches were instinctively right for our learners and, in any case, were exactly what they both wanted and needed. Of course, we must at all times remain aware that in a work-related culture (even in education) where employees have no right to freely challenge top-down decisions, at least not if they want to retain their position, and criticism of top managerial decisions is frowned upon, then it is most unlikely that EMI and all that such an approach entails will be freely debated, challenged and in any way altered: thus leading to the feeling that EMI supported by NESTs is ‘instinctively right.’ Plus, it must be remembered that such policies (EMI, etc.) are not necessarily being implemented, indeed it would be remarkable to think that they were, to deliberately disadvantage the learners/ citizens. It has more to do with the U.A.E. being a relatively new nation state, keen to rapidly develop and take its place amongst the world elite, whose language planners enforce such policies from a, no doubt, genuine belief that English language (and the content knowledge studied through that medium) represents modernity, development and the language (and modus operandi) of the successful and powerful.

Amin (1999, p.95) would see a deeper seated bias, quite possibly coming from the students, but no less a bias for that, in the attitude of her own students who, on a more basic level, “show a decided preference for White teachers over non-White teachers,” and that such highly visible (or indeed invisible: i.e. a ‘white’ teacher who is actually a non-native English speaker) teachers being preferred to someone of a different ethnic background. Although it is worth mentioning in the context under discussion that although ‘white’, European faculty who are not NESTs are often tacitly encouraged not to mention this fact, students in the U.A.E. are quite used to U.K. and U.S. (and by extension other Anglophone countries’

citizens) not all being of the same ethnic background. Although the phenomenon identified by Braine (2006, p.22) whereby:

...from some students' viewpoint, all Caucasians (including Finns, Germans, Russians and Swedes, for instance) are NS of English. Other students, especially Asian-Americans may not consider American-born Asians to be native speakers of English simply because they are not Caucasian.

That said, in this context the crucial factor in employment opportunity was more to do with where one was educated and therefore the assumption that a native-like fluency has either been attained or established as a birthright. It is a policy which will obviously continue to be of advantage to NESTs unless and until large demographic changes take place in their countries of origin.

It is, therefore, perhaps fair to say that although the majority of educated and experienced teachers surveyed in the study were theoretically in favour of equal employment opportunities for NNESTs, in reality this employment was thought to be best extended to NNESTs who had mastered English to a level where their own qualifications had been obtained through that medium. Ideally these teachers would have been educated abroad (preferably in an Anglophone country) and their own teacher training programmes and subsequent practices would have been strongly based upon a so-called 'Western' educational model.

Management interviewees were largely in sympathy with this sentiment, but tended to maintain that as the 'system' seemed to prefer 'Western' educated teachers and as a native

ability in English was largely viewed, if not as an overt advantage, certainly as good starting point for English teacher recruitment. This implies shades of Davies' (2002, p. 215), "assumption of confidence and of identity" which suggests that in terms of recruitment policies little seems set to change.

In terms of the relative merits of both NESTs and NNESTs many respondents were willing to concede that NNESTs might well have more empathy with the learners (having learned English and often studied other subjects through that medium themselves), and Arabic speaking NNESTs were also thought to have a useful, if illicit, back up strategy to hand. NESTs meanwhile were usually seen as holding the upper hand when it comes to imparting a good model of pronunciation and in having a deeper well of available vocabulary (whether general or in terms of content specific jargon) to draw upon. Such responses are not surprising and superficially appear to represent common sense, but closer scrutiny reveals that in reality, "English has become the main vehicle for interaction among its non-native users, with distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds," (Kachru, 1992, p.357), making the ability to sound like a native English speaker (and by extension the ability to impart the more obscure cultural and semantic notes of English speaking culture) of limited value.

Canagarajah (1999, p.91) would also remind us that:

At a time when learner strategy training and self-directed learning are fashionable concepts, it should not be difficult to understand the extreme case of a Periphery teacher with "poor" grammar and "bad" pronunciation functioning as a good teacher....it is through such language teaching practices

that non-native teachers in remote parts of the world succeed in teaching appropriate English to many students today.

Additionally, not only might ‘accent’ be of negligible interest to managers, teachers and learners, but it is also surprising how having highlighted the empathy, and possible, flexibility that NNESTs could bring to the teaching and learning environment, it is then dismissed as not being one of the qualities actively sought at the application and interview stage. This is an especially perplexing oversight when much of the literature emanating from NNEST teachers and researchers, from Hansen’s uncertainties about revealing her non-native English speaking background (2004) to Macaro’s (2006) defence of the value of L1-L2 code-switching by bilingual teachers, makes it quite clear how highly bilingualism and being a non-native English speaker who has learned the language is valued by those in question.

### 6.3 Culture, Globalization and the Erosion of Arabic

Although the research questions (above) sought to probe faculty and management feelings, attitudes and beliefs with regard to the role of EMI and the supporting role of NESTs (as compared to NNESTs) within this overarching policy, it is neither possible, nor desirable, to ignore the subsidiary effects of so-called English speaking culture and also the potential threat posed by English to Arabic language itself.

A proportion of those who were interviewed and who responded to the questionnaire (once again especially the more experienced and more highly qualified faculty) were conscious of the fact that English could hardly be viewed as a value free and neutral language. Voices were raised as to the possible threat to Arabic of English taking over in the more ‘serious’

walks of life: business, economics and the workplace in general. Indeed, as we have seen, English as a tool for survival and success in the modern, internationalized workplace was, if anything, the key, overarching justification for EMI and the concomitant teaching and learning practices discussed above. However, it would appear that while Arabic remains the L1 of several hundred million speakers; the mediating language of a major world religion and the everyday language of Gulf citizens, Arab nationals from elsewhere and vast swathes of North Africa and the Levant, then those involved in English medium education in the region are largely convinced that their role is benign.

Even the Arabic speakers in the survey (and in interviews) viewed English, and by extension, EMI, as being of very little threat to Arabic. Also, the students interviewed by Troudi and Jendli (2011, p.44):

...did not compartmentalise Arabic to certain classical domains such as Islamic studies and English to other more current and contemporary subjects like technology and sciences the way Findlow reported in her 2006 study. For our participants, Arabic was not considered an academically inferior language.

However, the fact remains that although the students mentioned immediately above, and many of the faculty and management respondents in this study, did not view Arabic as a potentially ‘inferior’ partner in the stable bilingual (diglossic) scenario envisaged (Pennycook’s (2001) highly criticised ‘liberal complementarity’), theories of sociolinguistic language shift (Fasold, 1987; Holmes, 1992) would suggest that once a language ceases to be used as the main language of business, education and other economically viable avenues, then it has, at the very least, moved one step closer to being marginalised and treated as less

serious and of lesser importance than languages that are used in these spheres. Of course, it could be that Arabic, with so many contemporary speakers; with a very strong religious and historical anchor, and with it being extant at a time of great change in modes of communication (the latter most unlike the case of Latin, for example) is well placed to resist such pressures in a world of increasing bi-, and multilingualism and of greater international and even inter-faith communication. It could well be that a contemporary language like Arabic might, to an extent, rewrite certain sociolinguistic theories and that a society, or societies, might evolve where ‘liberal complementarity’ and ‘stable diglossia’ are the norm, but that is far from guaranteed and would, in any case, presumably result in certain shifting or reconfiguring of individual and national identity profiles. In short, the relaxed, sanguine attitude of many respondents in this study still suggests that any threat to Arabic language and related ways of doing and being are either not taken very seriously, or in the rush towards modernity, such issues are not as important as they once might have been. Indeed Phillipson (2009, p. 153) neatly encompasses the potential threat to not only Arabic (amongst other languages) and non-standard (for which we may read non-Anglo/ American) ways of doing things, and related cultural products, but the very real danger of a linguistically driven global homogenization process (for which he coins the term ‘McDonaldization’), when he quotes former British Prime Minister Tony Blair:

Globalization begets interdependence, and interdependence begets the necessity of a common value system. History ... the age-old battle between progress and reaction, between those who embrace the modern world and those who reject its existence. Century upon century it has been the destiny of Britain to lead other nations. That should not be a destiny that is part of



our history. It should be a part of our future. We are a leader of nations or nothing.

Although geopolitical and neo-colonial in outlook, rather than solely based on linguistic concerns, it is not a vision that seems to have a lot of scope for mutual respect, bilingualism and tolerance of other languages, modus operandi or differences of opinion.

## CHAPTER SEVEN – IMPLICATIONS/ CONCLUSIONS

The discussion in chapter 6 has established, with a degree of veracity, that not all stakeholders unquestioningly accept that the current EMI policy in the United Arab Emirates is necessarily of benefit to the learners. The learners in this study are largely (indeed almost exclusively) mother tongue speakers of Arabic and full citizens of the country in question (the U.A.E.) The implications of such findings: that L1 education might be more efficacious in content subjects; that starting English language teaching earlier and earlier in the educational process, and that importing teachers and pedagogic technologies from abroad doesn't necessarily work very well, suggests that a rethink of overarching language policy, most especially the imposition of EMI at tertiary level and the way in which English itself is taught, and also when it is taught, is certainly worthy of a critical re-analysis.

One central theme coming out of the study, and extant literature on the subject, is that in terms of gaining a command of content mediated knowledge, the current EMI regime has two major flaws. The first is that it is demonstrably harder to master these subjects through the medium of an L2 (especially a quite alien L2 such as English: arguably studying through a related language full of cognates might not represent quite the same challenge). The second is that such an approach vastly disadvantages those who arrive at the tertiary level with only a rudimentary grasp of the English language regardless of their other abilities and, at the same time helps, in its way, to further entrench social inequalities where students who have been able to afford English medium private education (or to study abroad, hire tutors, etc.) are commensurately advantaged.

The overwhelming reason put forward in this study for persevering with an EMI (and CLIL) centred approach is the dictates of the market. Spolsky (2004, p.52), reminds us that, “(T)here have been many reports of multinational European firms that expect their staff to use English”, and business in the U.A.E. is no exception to this general rule with many, but not all, workplaces requiring, or preferring, graduates with a certain proficiency in English. However, leaving aside the larger political ramifications of much of the U.A.E.’s international and even internal business being conducted in English, this in itself should not exclude Arabic from being used as a medium of instruction in higher education. Troudi (2009) has recently called for an approach that sees Arabic medium as a vital tool (it is also a linguistic tool that the students identify with, and are comfortable using) towards the eventual mastery of the students’ major subjects; while English ought to be taught (as it is currently in Scandinavia) as a separate foreign language. The target of such an approach being to produce graduates who have as full a grasp of their speciality as they can and don’t require the extra linguistic props and other strategies referred to by Bielenberg (2004) in order to cope with the additional cognitive burden of learning through an L2., and who also have a certain proficiency in English. Following such a policy we would expect that no student need be disadvantaged by lower L2 proficiency levels in their major studies and that if adequately taught, motivated, etc. that their English proficiency will not suffer from not being ‘immersed’ in English during content class time. In fact, if such content classes were being delivered at a level too far beyond the student’s current ability to comprehend, it is most unlikely that any real incidental language learning was actually taking place.

In terms of faculty recruitment this would obviously shift the pendulum back in the direction of Arabic speaking content teachers, while Kirkpatrick (2007) has called for culturally sensitive bilingual educators to be the preference of choice when looking to employ English

language teachers. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that pedagogic and other outside assistance need stop. Another, strand that emerged from the study was the strongly held belief from respondents and also attributed to the students themselves that faculty in such institutions should have an educational background that was seen as being ‘modern’ up-to-date, and whether fairly or not, as ‘Western.’

However, part of the supposed student bias towards this model could well be generated by the fact that this is simply what they expect, what they are told they ought to receive. In reality many researchers (Holliday, 1994; Cameron, 2002; among others) have challenged the suitability of a direct technology transfer from Holliday’s (1994) BANA world to other teaching and learning contexts. All of which is not to say that everything will be fine as soon as Arabic medium were introduced and the monolingual English speakers out of the picture. Troudi (2009; 2011), concluded his papers by calling out for content teaching in Arabic that was student centred and, by implication, ‘modern’ and appropriate. A stance that it is very hard to argue against, and which on reflection seems just as obvious and based on common-sense as the arguments in favour of EMI purport to be.

Experienced and highly professional faculty might be better employed in transferring those skills deemed suitable, in teaching on such projects as the nascent teacher training programmes being offered by such as the Emirates College of Advanced Education (ECAE) and working towards what Gray (2002, p.166) has termed “*glocalization*”, where a new synthesis of both local and international pedagogical strengths is forged.

In terms of content teaching this implies a redeployment of human resources and a better utilization of available funds. We saw above how much money was annually put into

foundations programmes, and might well ask if a proportion of that amount (or indeed all of it) might not be better spent on a comprehensive programme of translation and on Arabic language research funding. The idea that English is, and must be, the language of international communication and scholarship is another ‘truism’ that could be challenged simply by producing more research in other languages (it is anyway something of an unquestioned stance as a lot of original research emanates via other languages such as German).

Leaving the English language itself to be taught by Kirkpatrick’s (2007) culturally sensitive, well-qualified, and where possible preferably bilingual teachers. A further implication of this being the consideration that such institutions might well spend a proportion of their budgets on language training (in the students’ L1) for new faculty who lack the requisite language skills – as it is unlikely that a constant supply of suitable bilinguals would be readily available. This might also be a legitimate professional development aim for faculty members and if successful could well have the additional benefit of encouraging faculty to remain for longer in a situation where they also have invested time and energy in studying their students’ L1 and related cultural mores. Plus, of course, if Arabic language were an advantage in the teaching of EFL in the Gulf region then the onus would be on potential English teachers who speak Arabic to ensure that their L2 (English), and more importantly their pedagogic approaches and teaching strategies were appropriate and suitable for such teaching posts: an outcome that might sit more easily with those worried by the corrosive effects of Phillipson’s (2009) ‘McDonaldization.’

Troudi (2009, p.210) puts his vision of the development of EFL teaching in the U.A.E. thus:

What is needed in countries such as the UAE is a solid English-language curriculum, designed with clear and realistic objectives and reflecting a sound knowledge of methodology, language pedagogy and appropriate materials. The Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands all have strong EFL programs while teaching scientific subjects in the mother languages. It is widely known that their EFL models have succeeded and the English-language proficiency of the average school leaver in these countries is relatively high.

As such this study has sought out opinions with regard to EMI and the apparent preference for Anglo-educated, if not actually native English speaking, teachers to facilitate EMI/ CLIL programmes at one particular, and by extension other, U.A.E. institute/s of tertiary education. It has been suggested that sufficient unease with the unquestioned primacy of EMI exists: indeed several respondents and members of the management team freely admitted that EMI was not serving the immediate content related needs of the students, but often felt that the ultimate dictates of the largely English language dominated marketplace superseded any qualms about actual uptake of content related knowledge, or indeed the learners' very own linguistic human rights, which according to Skutnabb-Kangas (1995, p.17), include, "the right to learn the mother tongue fully, and the right to teaching through the medium of the mother tongue."

It has been suggested that there is an inadequate response to the very real educational needs of the students and their country's ultimate developmental and modernising goals. The question in the title: asking if such educational policies really serve the needs of the UAE and its citizens, or perhaps better serve the needs of globalised business and other foreign

concerns, is best answered by stating that at present the educational, developmental and cultural needs of the typical UAE student are secondary to global, economic concerns. Therefore, it has been suggested that policy makers (re)visit the idea of making the L1 (Arabic) the language of tertiary education, textbooks and research, while seeking to improve, in line with recent research on childhood language development (i.e. it is not necessarily the more, the earlier, the better), provision for the teaching of English as a foreign language. Such an Arabic (and by extension any other L1) educational medium would not only be of considerable advantage to Arabic/ L1 speakers who, it is recommended, could now study scientific, artistic and technological subject via their L1, but would free English language teachers to concentrate of teaching language alone, instead of trying to support other content courses. Faced with a choice, between L1 medium education or Content and Language Integrated Learning it has been suggested in this study that the former ought to be more efficacious for the majority of students.

As the lingua-franca of globalized trade, and other forms of internationalism, English language teaching would most certainly retain its place as a vital tool in developmental and modernizing programmes, yet need not be the preserve any more of monolingual NESTs, teaching in English only environments via a globalized, generic, one-size-fits-all course book (Gray, 2002). This is where Kirkpatrick's (2007) sensitive, culturally attuned bilingual teacher would hold the upper hand.

However, we have seen above that research seeking to probe the efficacy of EMI and NEST recruitment is a highly controversial and politicised topic. This study was restricted and limited on many fronts, the majority of those emanating from management unease with the very topic itself. The major limitations (see above) were in terms of sample size: restricted to

only one institution; the population of the sample (if access had been granted to the student body then information would have been available with regard to the students' attitudes and opinions). In many pieces of educational research (and this study is no exception) the input of the learners themselves, the key stakeholders in any teaching and learning context, would, no doubt have furnished a large body of interesting, immediate and insightful data. If able to conduct such a study again, without these limitations, it is clear that either a much larger, wider (and probably more quantitative) piece of research would be likely to yield a considerable amount of empirical data from which informed extrapolations and conclusions with immediate and realistic implications and applications, might emerge.

That said, such ideal research conditions rarely exist and compromises must at times be made. One offshoot of this research process, indeed the whole doctoral process in itself, as well as engaging with many key contemporary issues in English language teaching, has been the lessons to be learnt in balancing ideal research conditions with ethical considerations and respect for the opinions, ways of operating and limits, or parameters, of others (i.e. the subjects of the study, institutional management, etc.). On the other hand, nearly two decades after Robert Phillipson's seminal 'Linguistic Imperialism' (1992) it is still worth noting that research, and other forms of questioning, on the dual, and related, topics of EMI and the comparative status of NESTs and NNESTs: even challenges to that very terminology (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), is unfortunately, and perhaps especially in the Gulf region, still very much seen as a challenge to certain aspects of the status quo. While a growing body of research, much of it discussed above, suggests that EMI may not be the panacea it is supposed to be, and that NESTs are far from certain to be the best teachers to lead and support such policies, or ideally, more enlightened policy changes, it remains the case that even the most cursory of online job searches in the Gulf region will soon throw up a vast number of appointments



available to ‘Native speakers only’, ‘teachers with degrees from Anglophonic universities’, and perhaps even more sinisterly, advertisements specifying which passports suitable teachers will possess (presumably in order to winnow out native English speakers from ‘Periphery’ rather than ‘Centre’ countries). Thus the researcher (after Pennycook, 2001; Popper, 2005) needs, to an extent, to dare to ask the awkward questions, at considerable professional, but fortunately in the U.A.E. no personal risk, if we are to avoid perpetuating a situation, locally, regionally, and with a few more enlightened exceptions internationally, that still very much fits with Phillipson’s (2009, p.2) characterisation of ‘Linguistic Imperialism’:

Linguistic imperialism can be regarded as a subcategory of cultural imperialism, along with media imperialism (e.g. news agencies, the world information order), educational imperialism (the export of Western institutional norms, teacher training, textbooks, etc., and World Bank policies privileging Center languages in education systems; Marzui, 2004) and scientific imperialism (e.g. dissemination of paradigms and methodologies from the Center, which controls knowledge about the Periphery). Linguistic imperialism may dovetail with any of these, as for instance when English as the dominant language of science marginalises other languages,

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRES

The following are the original questionnaire items. Parts one to four (1-4) were originally based, although considerably amended, on those used by McLaren (2008) in a small scale piece of research conducted in Saudi Arabia. Part five (5) is also based on and amended from Lasagabaster & Sierra (2006). These questionnaires were uploaded to an email platform and the link was sent to the various potential respondents.

There are two similar questionnaires one for English language faculty and one for content faculty – in each case the small differences of wording in parts one and two (1&2) allows for the respondent to consider the recruitment and monolingual usage issues in terms of their own context. Parts three and four (3&4) are identical as EMI, in particular, but also the attendant cultural issues were not seen as exclusive to one group or the other. Part five is also worded to be more relevant to the respective respondents.

There was also space at the end to add comments – this greatly facilitated the qualitative stage of the analysis.

Dear Colleague,

The questionnaire (below) forms part of a proposed research programme, making up the thesis component of an Ed.D in TESOL/ Applied Linguistics.

The topic concerns itself with the nature of EFL and English medium studies in the U.A.E./Gulf.

*It is important to state at the outset that this is exploratory research and no pre-conceived notions as to what will emerge have influenced the choice of question/s, although, of course, the researcher has obviously found the area (Native/ Non-native teachers – English medium studies, etc.) of significant interest.*

All responses will be dealt with in order to follow normal ethical research standards:

- a) They will be 100% anonymous and confidential.
- b) Every participant has the right to withdraw at any stage.
- c) Every participant will have the chance to review their responses at any time and make any changes deemed necessary, so as to fairly represent their views.
- d) The institution/s (and individuals) will not be named (e.g. The institution will be referred to as a tertiary institute in the U.A.E. – and individual participants will not be named or otherwise identified).

Thank you for your help and co-operation in making this piece of research possible.

Yours sincerely,

Peter B. McLaren.

**Demographic Information:**

1. Subject Area (English, Business, I.T. etc.): \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Highest Qualification (Bachelor's, Master's etc.): \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Native Language: \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Other Languages Spoken (Excluding English): \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Teaching Experience (Years):        0-5    5-10    10-15    15-20    20 or more

Please answer each statement below with **one** choice only. Please answer all the items, even if they do not directly relate to your subject area. (Remember this questionnaire is 100% confidential and anonymous).

**Part A: 1 – Recruitment (English Language Faculty)**

1. Our institution should employ native English speakers to teach English classes.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

2. Our institution should employ bilingual English and Arabic speakers where possible to teach English classes (where English is the L1).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

3. Our institution should employ bilingual Arabic and English speakers where possible to teach English classes (where Arabic is the L1).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

4. Our institution should employ English teachers who speak at least one other language.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

5. The English teacher's native language does not matter if they have suitable professional (teaching) abilities.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**2 – English Only (English Language Classes)**

6. English teachers should never use Arabic in class (even if they can).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

7. English teachers should occasionally use Arabic in class, if they can.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

8. Students should be allowed to use Arabic in class for planning, preparing and discussing.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

9. Students should use only English – English dictionaries, at all times.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

10. Students ought to use Arabic – English dictionaries at times.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

11. An English only rule in class is a good idea.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

### **3 - English Medium Studies**

12. All classes (e.g. Mathematics, etc.) should be conducted only in English.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

13. Non-English classes (e.g. Mathematics, etc.) should be conducted in Arabic.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

14. Arabic textbooks should be used for all other subjects (e.g. Mathematics, etc.).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

15. English language textbooks should be used for all subjects.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

### **4 - Culture/ Identity**

16. Native Speaker teachers should also teach about English speaking culture.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

17. Native Speaker teachers should teach language only, and not about English speaking culture.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

18. English is a neutral language with little impact on local culture.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

19. Learning English changes our students' worldview for the better.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

20. Learning English changes our students' worldview but not always for the better.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

21. The spread of English round the World is a good thing.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**Part B - Pros & Cons (English Language Faculty)**

*Which aspects of English language teaching and learning are best dealt with by a Native Speaker (NS), a Non-Native Speaker (NNS), or both/ neither?*

*Please add a comment, where appropriate, to explain your choice/ reasoning.*

<b><u>Question No.</u></b>	<b><u>(NS)</u></b>	<b><u>(NNS)</u></b>	<b><u>No Difference</u></b>	<b><u>Comment</u></b>
22. Grammar				
23. Vocabulary				
24. Pronunciation				
25. Listening				
26. Reading				
27. Writing				
28. Speaking				
29. Empathy (with Student Problems)				
30. Teaching & Learning Styles & Strategies				
31. Cultural Content				
32. Assessment Preparation				
33. Testing				





**Part A: 1 – Recruitment (Content Faculty)**

1. Our institution should employ native English speakers to teach content classes.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

2. Our institution should employ bilingual English and Arabic speakers where possible to teach content classes (where English is the L1).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

3. Our institution should employ bilingual Arabic and English speakers where possible to teach content classes (where Arabic is the L1).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

4. Our institution should employ content teachers who speak at least one other language.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

5. The content teacher’s native language does not matter if they have suitable professional (teaching) abilities.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**2 – English Only (Content Classes)**

6. Content teachers should never use Arabic in class (even if they can).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

7. Content teachers should occasionally use Arabic in class, if they can.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

8. Students should be allowed to use Arabic in class for planning, preparing and discussing.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

9. Students should use only English – English dictionaries, at all times.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

10. Students ought to use Arabic – English dictionaries at times.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

11. An English only rule in class is a good idea.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

### **3 - English Medium Studies**

12. All classes (e.g. Mathematics, etc.) should be conducted only in English.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

13. Non-English classes (e.g. Mathematics, etc.) should be conducted in Arabic.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

14. Arabic textbooks should be used for all other subjects (e.g. Mathematics, etc.).

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

15. English language textbooks should be used for all subjects.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

### **4 - Culture/ Identity**

16. Native English Speaking teachers should also teach about English speaking culture.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

17. Native English Speaking teachers should teach their subject only, and not about English speaking culture.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

18. English is a neutral language with little impact on local culture.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

19. Learning through/in English changes our students' worldview for the better.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

20. Learning through/in English changes our students' worldview but not always for the better.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

21. The spread of English round the World is a good thing.

Strongly Agree      Agree      No Opinion      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**Part B – Pros & Cons (English Language Faculty)**

*Which aspects of content/ subject teaching and learning are best dealt with by a Native Speaker (NS), a Non-Native Speaker (NNS), or both/ neither?*

*Please add a comment, where appropriate, to explain your choice/ reasoning.*

<b><u>Question No.</u></b>	<b><u>(NS)</u></b>	<b><u>NNS)</u></b>	<b><u>No Difference</u></b>	<b><u>Comment</u></b>
<b>22. Content Knowledge</b>				
<b>23. Content Specific Vocabulary</b>				
<b>24. Presentational skills</b>				
<b>25. Explanation of Difficult Concepts</b>				
<b>26. Reading for Information</b>				
<b>27. Writing/ Typing Skills</b>				
<b>28. Empathy (with Student Problems)</b>				
<b>29. Teaching &amp; Learning Styles &amp; Strategies</b>				
<b>30. Cultural Content/ Norms</b>				
<b>31. Assessment Preparation</b>				
<b>32. Testing</b>				



## **APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

The following are the original basic descriptive statistics for the dichotomous style questions in Part Five (5) of the original survey – based upon a similar survey by Lasagabaster & Sierra (2006).

Respondents were asked to decide if a certain teaching skill, technique or strategy skill were better handled by a native English speaking teacher, a non-native English speaking teacher, both or neither.

There are two surveys one for English language faculty and one for content faculty (thus allowing for a degree of comparison across the two groups).

The original survey was hosted via an online survey platform – below is a representation of the final analysis page.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FACULTY RESPONSES**

**1. Which aspects of English language teaching and learning (below) are best dealt with by a Native Speaker (NS), a Non-Native Speaker (NNS), or both/ neither?**

	<b>Native Speaker (of English)</b>	<b>Non-Native Speaker</b>	<b>Both/ Neither</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>22. Grammar</b>	6.5% (2)	16.1% (5)	<b>77.4% (24)</b>	2.71	31
<b>23. Vocabulary</b>	22.6% (7)	0.0% (0)	<b>77.4% (24)</b>	2.55	31
<b>24. Pronunciation</b>	<b>61.3% (19)</b>	3.2% (1)	35.5% (11)	1.74	31
<b>25. Listening</b>	19.4% (6)	0.0% (0)	<b>80.6% (25)</b>	2.61	31
<b>26. Reading</b>	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	<b>93.5% (29)</b>	2.90	31
<b>27. Writing</b>	12.9% (4)	6.5% (2)	<b>80.6% (25)</b>	2.68	31
<b>28. Speaking</b>	<b>51.6% (16)</b>	0.0% (0)	48.4% (15)	1.97	31
<b>29. Empathy (with Student Problems)</b>	3.2% (1)	25.8% (8)	<b>71.0% (22)</b>	2.68	31
<b>30. Teaching &amp; Learning Styles &amp; Strategies</b>	12.9% (4)	6.5% (2)	<b>80.6% (25)</b>	2.68	31
<b>31. Cultural Content</b>	35.5% (11)	0.0% (0)	<b>64.5% (20)</b>	2.29	31
<b>32. Assessment Preparation</b>	6.5% (2)	3.2% (1)	<b>90.3% (28)</b>	2.84	31
<b>33. Testing</b>	12.9% (4)	0.0% (0)	<b>87.1% (27)</b>	2.74	31

## CONTENT TEACHING FACULTY RESPONSES

**Which aspects of English language medium teaching and learning (below) are best dealt with by a Native Speaker (NS), a Non-Native Speaker (NNS), or both/ neither?**

	<b>Native Speaker (of English)</b>	<b>Non-Native Speaker</b>	<b>Both/ Neither</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>22. Content Knowledge</b>	18.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	<b>81.3% (13)</b>	2.63	16
<b>23. Content Specific Vocabulary</b>	37.5% (6)	0.0% (0)	<b>62.5% (10)</b>	2.25	16
<b>24. Presentational Skills</b>	18.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	<b>81.3% (13)</b>	2.63	16
<b>25. Explanation of Difficult Concepts</b>	25.0% (4)	6.3% (1)	<b>68.8% (11)</b>	2.44	16
<b>26. Reading for Information</b>	25.0% (4)	6.3% (1)	<b>68.8% (11)</b>	2.44	16
<b>27. Writing/ Typing Skills</b>	31.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	<b>68.8% (11)</b>	2.38	16
<b>28. Empathy (with Student Problems)</b>	12.5% (2)	31.3% (5)	<b>56.3% (9)</b>	2.44	16
<b>29. Teaching &amp; Learning Styles &amp; Strategies</b>	12.5% (2)	6.3% (1)	<b>81.3% (13)</b>	2.69	16
<b>30. Cultural Content</b>	<b>37.5% (6)</b>	31.3% (5)	31.3% (5)	1.94	16
<b>31. Assessment Preparation</b>	18.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	<b>81.3% (13)</b>	2.63	16
<b>32. Testing</b>	18.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	<b>81.3% (13)</b>	2.63	16

## APPENDIX C: WRITTEN RESPONSE/S FROM FACULTY: EXAMPLE

The following is an example of one representative faculty member's written responses showing the key words that were originally highlighted in the coding process (in *italics* and underlined) and were common throughout the faculty responses.

### Joan – Content Faculty, Bachelor's Degree, (NEST), No L2, 16-20 Years Experience

The answers of perceived advantages/disadvantages in this section are based on generalisations from my experience. However, I feel that the questions (in this section and others) are based to some extent on the assumption that a native speaker is actually more proficient at the language than a non-native speaker which very often might not be the case.

As English has become the dominant world/business language so communication between people has become easier bringing with it many advantages and increased opportunities for many people although also having some disadvantages (sic), particularly for those not speaking English. Overall, however, I feel there are many more advantages than disadvantages of the spread of English.

Presumably more exposure to English should result in a higher level of English so using English as the medium for all subjects would be advantageous for language learning. Using English as the medium may cause more difficulties in the learning of other subjects such as mathematics, particularly when the level of English is low. Until a certain level of English is reached it may be useful to have some content areas taught using either Arabic textbooks or with textbooks written with both English and Arabic

There are times when it may be advantageous for Arabic to be used - either by the teacher or student, particularly at the lower levels. However, the amount of Arabic used should be minimal.

Ideally having both a high level of proficiency in English (where English is the L1) and professional teaching abilities together are more important than whether the teacher is a native English speaker or not.



**APPENDIX D: TRANSCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS WITH MANAGEMENT:  
EXAMPLE**

Conducted during academic year 2009-10 in the United Arab Emirates

The following are the proposed interview prompts that were submitted to the interviewees prior to the interviews.

**P.B. McLaren/ Ed.D. Thesis/ University of Exeter**

**Interview Prompts/ August 2009**

To whom it may concern:

The interview questions (below) form part of a proposed research programme, making up the thesis component of an Ed.D in TESOL.

The topic concerns itself with the nature of EFL and English medium studies in the U.A.E./Gulf.

*It is important to state at the outset that this is exploratory research and no pre-conceived notions as to what will emerge have influenced the choice of question/s, although, of course, the researcher has obviously found the area (Native/ Non-native teachers – English medium studies, etc.) of significant interest.*

All interviews will follow normal ethical research standards:

- a) They will be 100% anonymous and confidential.
- b) Every participant has the right to withdraw at any stage.
- c) Every participant will have the chance to review their transcript after the interview and make any changes deemed necessary, so as to fairly represent their views.
- d) The institution will not be named (e.g. It will be referred to as a tertiary institute in the U.A.E.).
- e) Each participant has the right to see and make comments on (even object to and change - or withdraw comments from) the manuscript right up to final submission.

Thanks for your help and co-operation in making this piece of research possible.

Yours sincerely,

Peter B. McLaren.

- 1) In your institution are Native Speakers of English (NS) preferred, where appropriate/ possible, over Non-Native Speakers (NNS) for:
  - a) English teaching positions?
  - b) Non-English teaching positions?
  - c) Other related positions?
- 2) If so, why do you think this is? And:
  - a) Do you agree/ disagree with this policy?
  - b) Have any say in making this policy?
  - c) Would you change this policy at all? (Why/ Why Not)?
- 3) If not, why do you think this is? And:
  - a) Do you agree/ disagree with this policy?
  - b) Have any say in making this policy?
  - c) Would you change this policy at all? (Why/ Why Not)?
- 4) In your professional opinion, can you highlight any specific skills or advantages that NS teachers bring to English Language Teaching (ELT) positions?
- 5) In your professional opinion, can you highlight any specific skills or advantages that NNS teachers bring to ELT positions?
- 6) In your professional opinion, can you highlight any specific skills or advantages that NS teachers bring to Non-ELT positions?
- 7) In your professional opinion, can you highlight any specific skills or advantages that NNS teachers bring to Non-ELT positions?
- 8) In your professional opinion, what are the advantages of English only teaching and learning environments?
- 9) Can you see any disadvantages with such environments? Would you advocate any changes? (Why/ Why Not)?
- 10) In your professional opinion, could student use of their L1 (Arabic) aid their L2 (English) and or, content subject, acquisition and learning, either inside or outside the classroom?
- 11) In your professional opinion, could faculty use of the learners' L1 (Arabic) aid their L2 (English) and or, content subject, acquisition and learning?

- 12) In your professional opinion, should students use only English-English dictionaries?
- 13) In your professional opinion, do your students gain more from studying their content subjects (majors) through the medium of English? (Why/ Why Not)?
- 14) Does studying through an L2 (English) medium have any influence on your students' self-perceptions? E.g. Of themselves as Arabic speakers; of their relationship with and to Arabic/Non-Arabic cultural phenomena?
- 15) Has/ will English replace Arabic as the lingua franca of the UAE and the Greater Middle-East (or even, dominate certain vital sectors of the economy)? Is this, desirable?

**INTERVIEW:** This interview is an example of the interviews conducted and major emergent themes have been highlighted (**bold** and underlined).

INTERVIEWEE: MARGARET\* – Senior Management Responsibilities for College Wide Subject Areas (Recruitment/ Retention, Etc.): Native English Speaker

Each interviewee is referred to by a pseudonym for ethical reasons.

**I:** Represents the Interviewer: **M:** is for Margaret.

**I:** So, basically the first set of questions – just within this institution, would you say that native speakers of English are preferred for English teaching positions or does it not matter?

**M:** *Aagh. Mmm. We've criteria set up – that doesn't matter as long as they would meet our criteria of experience and ability and teach in the appropriate methodology, so I wouldn't say it's preferred.*

**I:** Does accent or pronunciation come into it at all?

**M:** *I guess what we would do when we are interviewing – so on paper – no –but during the interview process – yes – if it distracts that would obviously be taken into consideration. Yes.*

**I:** Okay. What about for the non-English teaching positions – I mean content obviously?

**M:** *Same. Same. If anything actually we would be delighted to have more Emirati nationals taking up positions like this.*

**I:** Do you think that there's a different standard of pronunciation of English teachers and content teachers or not?

**M:** *I think there shouldn't be.*

**I:** There could be an argument that English teachers are models of pronunciation.

**M:** *That's right. I was going to say there shouldn't be – that's exactly what I was going to say but I think that's what I would suggest.*

**I:** And officially, is there any policy regarding recruitment in terms of native/ non-native?

**M:** *No.*

**I:** No?

**M:** *But we do have a policy of Emiratisation which would say that you have got to work to get as many nationals into the workforce as possible so that would be a policy we may have.*

**I:** Okay. Might I ask what are your personal feelings – do you think in some way native speakers or non-natives, Emiratis, whoever bring skills to the teaching of English and other subjects?

**M:** Oh, absolutely. Obviously non-natives will have gone through the process of learning English themselves so they will bring that history with them and therefore that might affect their methodology or their understanding of the issues they've gone through.

**I:** That kind of moves on from the policy making to this area. So, you talked about people going through the process of learning English but what about those who haven't gone through the process. Do you think native speakers bring anything particular to EFL jobs?

**M:** Of course. They're the correct models of the language. Their language is usually the most accurate. Often the native speakers have learned French or Italian themselves so they've still been in...

**I:** So, they should have learned studied another language?

**M:** It most definitely helps. It does not mean to say that you cannot be a good native speaker teacher as well – but most definitely if you've learned a second language you know what frustrations you have. You know how difficult it can be so you can then emphasise more with the students.

**I:** Would you ever use that as an interview question?

**M:** No.

**I:** No?

**M:** No. Not really actually.

**I:** Why not?

**M:** Good point. It's just not one of our criteria.

**I:** Yeah. It was one of the issues that is often brought out in the literature that not everyone is going to speak the same language as the students but the monolingual as compared to the bilingual -

**M:** You might ask questions as to what difficulties these students learning the language would you expect these students to have and they might say 'Even though I haven't worked in this country, I've come across students who have ...' - or 'I have learned a language and this is what I faced'. So, people will take the opportunity of putting in about the experience they have. The questions are general enough for people to bring in their own experience. But you don't specifically ask 'do you speak other languages?'

**I:** Great. So, it's obviously non-native teachers who have learned another language but what about native speakers – do they bring in any skills do you think?

**M:** Just the ones I've mentioned before; emphasise with the students. It depends if they're non-native in Arabic or non-Arabic speakers as well. No, not really – nothing.

**I:** You would see a difference between an Arabic speaker and an Italian for example?

**M:** Yes, yes – absolutely.

**I:** So what do you think is the main advantage/ disadvantage for the Arabic speaker in this situation?

**M:** *Again, they might know the intricacies of the Arab language. They might know or be able to say to students ‘we do that in **Arabic** we don’t do that in English or vice versa’ other speakers might not.*

**I:** Looking at the non-English language teaching positions as well. These questions are quite similar but they vary. Do you think there are any advantages native speakers bring to content subjects?

**M:** *They can often reinforce the language. **Native speakers** often work in reinforcing the language more than a **non-native speaker**.*

**I:** So, do you think part of the job of the content teacher is also language?

**M:** *Absolutely. I think it’s integral.*

**I:** Would you personally agree that this is something we should be doing?

**M:** *Absolutely. Most definitely. The most recent programme we’ve started here is the classroom assistants’ programme. What we’ve found there is because an English teacher has moved into the programme teaching content and a content teacher has always worked in English that there’s a lot of overlap and they’re working very closely together. Definitely a model I would like to see move forward.*

**I:** Can you expand on that a little?

**M:** *Okay. Yeah. Okay. So what we would have is the English teacher would talk very regularly with the content teacher and say; ‘okay we’re doing verbs of frequency’, for example, off the top of my head ‘this week’ to the content teacher when they’re talking about what the classroom assistants would be doing out in the schools, might use the language and make them use that language in maybe writing a paragraph about what they did in the schools. So, it’s the integration and it’s really been quite successful and it has been very very successful with the higher level where 17 out of 25 passed their IELTS. That’s something we could be working on.*

**I:** So, they maybe already have a certain English level?

**M:** *Of course I’m talking about last year. This year I’m not - it’s working quite well between two different teachers. We think it’s making quite a difference.*

**I:** If I can just go off these questions slightly. Do you think if one of those teachers could speak Arabic – maybe use it a little -

**M:** *I think it should be done **exclusively in English** as that’s our remit. I think students start to rely on that.*

**I:** Yeah.

**M:** *And don't develop the strategies they need to cope.*

**I:** And do you personally agree with that remit? Do you think it's a good thing?

**M:** *Yes, I do. If I had to make a decision – yes, I do.*

**I:** Could you expand that?

**M:** *Well, that's the – in my experience when I've been working with students who had a teacher who would give them a word here and everywhere – umm – yes – it might solve that immediate problem but it doesn't help them develop strategies to overcome it. So that's why I feel it should be just English in our remit.*

**I:** So you think the rule for the English only environment for English and content is something we should establish?

**M:** *Yes. I think the evidence is we can graduate students after four years with a B.Ed with a high level of English who can make good academic essays. It shows you it can be done.*

**I:** Let's turn that around. Do you see any disadvantages in an English only teaching content English environment for Arabic speakers? Do you think it gives them any specific problems?

**M:** *It is contextually related. Vocabulary, for example. There might be some vocab that's difficult to explain.*

**I:** What I'm getting at is that in some areas – I've read stuff that says could you imagine as an English speaker being asked to study medicine in German?

**M:** *Exactly. Exactly.*

**I:** It would be really hard but there's another side to it perhaps?

**M:** *The other side of it is this is the remit of the college and it shows it can be done.*

**I:** Why do you think the college system has that remit?

**M:** *Because it is a response to the market place. English being the language of business of the market place now. It's in response to that.*

**I:** Do you think students using Arabic in anyway whatsoever could be useful for their learning – firstly in English, secondly in their content subjects? I've seen arguments that planning in Arabic is fine as long as they use English in the end or do you disagree with that?

**M:** *I disagree with it because as I say I think it becomes a crutch.*

**I:** Mmm.

**M:** For many of them especially for the weaker. They then become reliant on saying 'I don't understand that' more often.

**I:** Would you say at all levels?

**M:** Yes, yes. I mean obviously as they become more proficient more confident they're more likely to have more ability and strategies but definitely at the weaker levels.

**I:** Do you think this kind of rule – English only – I kind of do that because you know it's going to happen anyway – I try to maximise English.

**M:** Yeah.

**I:** So I try to maximise the English rather than the Arabic.

**M:** Say that again.

**I:** The English only rule – it can be used as a crutch – I don't let them either because I know it's going to happen in their homework.

**M:** Yes.

**I:** But, you think there's any place for us allowing Arabic translation for planning?

**M:** Not for planning. Obviously if something has happened in the class and it is going to stop the student moving forward – you've explained it – you've had them do – and it's the last resort but no.

**I:** Obviously I can't anyway but some of our teachers – the faculty using Arabic can help the learners?

**M:** No, I think they become dependent on it.

**I:** In your opinion, do you think the English only environment should extend to things like dictionaries and even on-line dictionaries?

**M:** This is where I'm going to contradict myself because I think they should use Arabic to develop strategies for use in the outside real world.

**I:** Would that vary with level?

**M:** Yes, it would.

**I:** Do you think the students in the content subjects are gaining by using English or rather than Arabic in any part?

**M:** Do you mean in content or in English?

**I:** Well, both.



**M:** Well, they're most definitely gaining in their English. It's the language they will need when they go into the **workplace**. They will be **proficient**. It's desirable so, yes and then the content. I keep coming back to the class assistants as I've had the most to do with them recently. Our students are really quite amazing what they can learn in the content area. For the class assistants, they're learning content in English that a classroom assistant in Scotland would be learning in English.

**I:** Just to play the Devil's Advocate, for example. An example I've had expressed to me before studying in the content subject in English actually means that in some courses the students actually don't get as much content knowledge as they might if they did it in Arabic. But the compensation is that their English is better – more marketable outside?

**M:** That might be the case but my most recent experience is with the class assistants who are still getting levels **appropriate** to content.

**I:** Do you think that would be the case in all colleges and universities or do you think there would be certain subjects that would be too hard to do in a second language?

**M:** No, I think we cover most of them here.

**I:** I was just thinking in my previous place they did a geophysics course – I can't understand it in English either.

**M:** I mean a lot of these courses – the first one that came into my head was medicine – that would be difficult for a lot of **native speakers** anyway, so a lot of these courses have difficult language anyway.

**I:** Great. So, we're on the last couple of bits now which are more general. Do you think studying in English, English around the college; contact with English speakers influences how our students see themselves, their self identity in any way?

**M:** I don't think – no, I don't think they lose their national **identity** as an Emirati how they see themselves.

**I:** Do you think it can be additive – that they see another side to themselves?

**M:** I think it adds to their – okay, what are we talking about here? I'm – it's a bit confused, sorry.

**I:** It's a bit confusing, sorry. It's about self image. There's an argument that people are almost different in different languages. They behave differently. They think differently when they're in their Arabic mode or their English mode.

**M:** Is this right?

**I:** In my case, my Chinese mode. Obviously some people would see it as negative – loss of culture etc. Others see it as additive – you're adding to what you already have.

**M:** I would have thought that it would have been adding to what they already have – perhaps. If we placed them incorrectly and the language is too difficult for them, of course that will

affect their self-image but hopefully, if they're placed correctly it should enhance – again, if they're scaffolding correctly that should enhance their self-image but I'd say people that are confident in English are also in Arabic.

**I:** So, do you think there's any danger for our students in our college or wider in the country, that English challenges – threatens Arabic at all reduces it?

**M:** I can see just now there's been lots written in the papers just now when we're moving English into the schools that that is a threat. I think as long as it is balanced with Arabic for Social Studies or your History still being centred on – you know – your cultural beliefs or backgrounds – as long as that still goes on – it shouldn't. But I think there is a huge concern out in the community just now that the movement into the national schools teaching English there that impact will be ...umm...

**I:** What do you imagine that impact will be culturally, linguistically – positive, negative?

**M:** Umm. Of course the positive – in the college we will have students coming in with better levels of English than we currently do. They will develop better learning strategies before they come in so I think the whole set-up is getting better. By the time they come here they might have a more mature strategy.

**I:** So you think the push to put English in the schools is affecting other things?

**M:** Yes, it is. What they're doing now is much more learner centred – more integrated – beginning with the Maths and Science just now – so there's – they're developing more independent learning skills. What we find in the Foundations programme is that we usually have to start from scratch – this is just a sweeping generalisation – but we find that students need a lot more scaffolding than they would if they were going to tertiary college elsewhere. So now with this push to have it all in English, it's coming with a push on more integrating and teaching.

**I:** It may be a bit of a contentious question to finish -

**M:** All right.

**I:** Do you think then, one of the things English medium brings isn't just language but -

**M:** -the teaching strategies that go along with it – absolutely! And I think schools are benefitting from that just now. That's not to say that our students at the moment we graduate teachers with the same strategies. It's not because we're British and we know better. It's not. It's exposure, your background and qualifications that make you teach more appropriately. So we do have students out in the workforce who do have appropriate strategies but that has only happened in the last few years.

**I:** Okay. Great. Thanks.