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**Identity and Dilemma:
the 'native speaker' English language teacher
in a globalising world**

by

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Canterbury for the Degree of Doctor of
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Abstract

Globalisation (increasing international flows of finance, culture, technological know-how, information, people etc.) has created pressure for a lingua franca. It is widely accepted that English now fulfils this role, with some academics in English language teaching suggesting that the language is no longer owned by ‘native speakers’ and requesting a re-evaluation of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher in terms of his/her traditional importance in the field. These academics have queried, for example, the continued relevance of ‘native speaker’ pronunciation, methodology and the professional status of the ‘native speaker’ teacher compared with the ‘non-native speaker’ English language teacher.

In this study the professional identities of a small group of ‘native speaker’ teachers are explored through data obtained from interviews, field-notes, critical incidents in the researcher-as-teacher’s professional life and by e-mail correspondence. From the collected data it appears that these ‘native speaker’ English language teachers retain a view of themselves as having a superior professional identity, based on their pronunciation, classroom practices, ethnicity, British educational backgrounds and their relational stance to ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. On the other hand, the teachers’ ambivalent relationship with both the new academic understandings of English language teaching and their own professional development appear to contribute to a dilemma in their superior identity constructs. Only one teacher in the group manages to engage with the new understandings and is thus able to conceptualise a professional identity as an English language teacher which seems more in tune with the new global role of English.

Overall, in fact, this study reveals a considerable discrepancy between the lived reality of the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ professional lives and the new understandings of academics about English language teaching in a globalising world. The study also highlights a concerning gap between the teachers’ current self-constructs and the implications for the development of practice of new academic theory.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. 1 Background to this study

The Poem: Immigrant

November: Eight months in London

I pause on the low bridge to watch the pelicans
they float swanlike, arching their white necks,
over only slightly ruffled bundles of wings,
burying awkward beaks in the lake's water.

I clench cold fists in my Marks and Spencer's jacket
and secretly test my accent once again:

St Jame's Park; St Jame's Park; St Jame's Park.

(Fleur Adcock b. 1934) (Research Diary: Critical Incident 1)

This is a work from *Poems on the Underground* (Benson et al. 2001: 48), read on a London tube train as I travelled to my first post as an English language teacher in the UK capital. Adcock was a New Zealand poet who had come to live permanently in London. I, too, was a New Zealander planning to live in the UK. Reading the poem about learning a new British accent coincided with an unsettling experience I had in this first UK language teaching post. I had found myself time-tabled to teach English pronunciation classes in the London school and being asked to teach these pronunciation classes had made me suddenly anxious for no other reason than I had a New Zealand English accent and not a British one. Like Adcock I felt I first needed to practise this new accent and so I immediately told the Director of Studies in the school that I felt I could not teach the English pronunciation classes 'properly'. He unhesitatingly agreed to my relinquishing the lessons which, to my mind at the time, gave credence to my belief that my accent in the UK was not 'quite right'.

However, this feeling about my New Zealand English pronunciation was in direct contrast with my previous year of teaching English in Italy. In Italy my accent had never bothered me or been commented on. I had been spoilt and fussed over as a 'native

speaker' English language teacher despite the fact I had had no training or qualifications in English Language Teaching (ELT). I was popular simply because I was a 'native speaker' of English. That fact alone had secured me a post in Italy and my students had learnt English well, passing whatever examinations they were studying for. In the UK, however, the stressful thought of teaching pronunciation with my New Zealand accent and the Director of Studies' quick acceptance of my reasons for not wanting to teach it created strong, professional memories.

Indeed, it was the juxtaposition of these two EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching experiences, one in Italy and one in London, and other subsequent incidents in my teaching life which have influenced my view with regard to the teaching of English pronunciation. What is more, in Italy, as an untrained but popular 'native speaker' teacher, I had met other English language teachers, Italian, German and Dutch, whose commitment to English language teaching was serious and who had a fluent command of at least one other language as well as English. Despite the differences between us, these qualified, capable teachers afforded me, quite unjustifiably I thought, considerable respect as a 'native speaker' teacher simply because I had grown up speaking English as my mother tongue. There was, I realised when evaluating the two experiences, a 'pecking order' of 'native speaker' accents and a definite hierarchy in English language teaching when it came to the 'native' versus the 'non-native speaker' teacher. In fact, these experiences afforded me an early glimpse of normally silent discourses within the daily world of English language teaching. They have, though, been added to by many other experiences in my teaching career and eventually developed into the attitude I see myself assuming in the writing of this thesis.

In this work, therefore, I am always going to place 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' in inverted commas because I believe they are contested terms, belonging to a particular discourse and ideological construction. This is following Holliday, who states of these terms: 'I prefer to keep them in inverted commas throughout because I consider them the products of a particular native-speakerist ideology which I believe inaccurately considers 'non-native speakers' inferior' (Holliday in process).

Therefore, in setting out these first early experiences as an English language teacher, I accept they gave me a belief that teachers of English pronunciation did not necessarily have to sound British to be successful. These experiences also made me aware that,

despite ‘non-native speaker’ teachers being capable and qualified ‘native speaker’ teachers of English seemed to be viewed as somehow superior practitioners. I must acknowledge, therefore, that such professional experiences as those described above and others which followed have positioned me quite firmly vis-à-vis my ‘native speaker’ English teaching colleagues, our British training and the world of English language teaching in general. Moreover, these experiences came at the beginning of my teaching career. Since then, as I will outline in the next chapter of this work, English, the language with which I and all my ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ colleagues are engaged professionally, has become the most powerful language in the world, used internationally by millions in many walks of life. Thus, this language upon which our professional work is dependent is now spread very widely around the planet as it assumes the role of an international world language. Therefore, the autobiographic-professional stories told in my thesis and the critical incidents of my working life, which I also relate, are situated within this broader context of the new role of English in the world. As well, my understandings of experiences must be seen as understandings situated in this wider reality of the position English has come to occupy in the first decade of the second millennium.

1. 2 Developing the focus of this thesis

Such professional incidents as those recorded above consequently established an early belief that non-British English could be a successful model for English language learners. The incidents also raised my awareness that there were most proficient and able ‘non-native speaker’ teachers of English working in the field. Moreover, these early professional experiences taught me that plaudits were offered to some EFL teachers simply because they were ‘native speakers’. Thus these, and similar incidents in my working life, became the first catalysts for this thesis, while other such critical professional incidents occurring over my career as a ‘native speaker’ English language teacher also came to form part of the collected data in this study.

Furthermore, a professional incident related to these insights occurred quite recently in my teaching life and became the immediate catalyst for this thesis. This incident was my attendance at a talk by a prominent academic. This academic was urging a re-evaluation of the traditionally accepted ‘native speaker’ phonological norms in ELT, in

view of increased international communication in English between ‘non-native speakers’ as well as with ‘native speakers’. This particular incident also prompted the research questions for the work. Therefore, the professional incidents that I have related above were all episodes which contributed to developing a focus for this study that is an exploration of the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher in an increasingly globalised world.

In the next section I clarify this focus and provide a discussion with regard to defining the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher who is pivotal to the study. This discussion is followed by a description of the immediate catalyst for the work and how this incident led to my research questions. Finally, this introductory chapter outlines the structure of the rest of this study.

1. 3 The focus of this thesis

The main focus of this work is a broad conceptualisation of the professional identity constructs of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher in light of new academic understandings about the future of English language teaching. By focussing on a small group of ‘native speaker’ teachers’ reactions to new academic proposals for alterations to traditionally held understandings in ELT, the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ educational ethos and pedagogy, birthright, pronunciation, language ability and ethnicity emerged from this study as factors determining their currently secure professional identity in the field. These teachers’ perspectives of their ‘non-native speaker’ English language teaching colleagues from different educational backgrounds were also shown to further determine the construction of a valued professional identity.

However, while investigating this group of teachers’ reactions to academic proposals for the future of ELT, the ambivalent relationships the teachers have with academics, the theory of academia and the teachers’ own classroom theories were seen as being other important factors in creating their professional identity. This relationship with academia, however, appeared to create some insecurity in these teachers’ self-constructs. Moreover, the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ equally ambivalent relationship with their own teacher development emerged as also creating insecurity in the teachers’ professional image and became a further focus of the thesis.

Finally, this thesis looks at one teacher and focuses on her reconstructive endeavours to forge a new professional identity as an English language teacher and it is an identity which seems more in line with the proposals made by academics regarding the changing scenario of ELT in the new millennium.

1. 4 Defining the ‘native speaker’ of English

I have made much reference to the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher in the first sections of this introductory chapter. It is now crucial to attempt to provide some definition and discussion of the ‘native speaker’ teacher of English in view of the main focus of the thesis.

In terms of being a ‘native speaker’ of English, there have been many interpretations of what defines such an individual and what criteria can be used in any such definition. McKay, summarising these, states:

For some, an essential feature of a native speaker is that English must be the first language learned; for others, to be a native speaker involves the continued use of English in that person’s life; for still others, being a native speaker assumes a high level of competence in English (2002: 28).

However, in all these cases such definitions are not necessarily clear-cut. For example, a child might acquire two, or even three first languages, one from a parent and/or one from a carer and yet later acquire another by changing social group or moving to a different country in early childhood. They could then consider the second or the third language as their native language. These complications might mean that there should also be further criteria, such as the individual acquiring a high level of competence and linguistic intuition as Davies (1991) suggests. Furthermore, Davies (2004), in a later work, suggests that the concept of ‘native speaker’ is entwined with the idea of ‘membership’. He states ‘native speaker/non-native speaker differences are not innate but learnt, but the learning is so well imprinted that the “membership” it bestows is real and fixed’ (ibid.: 433). He continues his definition of a ‘native speaker’ by listing attributes such as fluency, ‘knowing what the score is’, intuition about linguistic, pragmatic and paralinguistic indicators, cultural knowledge, and remaining a learner of new words and registers. Moreover, he suggests that this stress on identity is linked to the social identity theory

expounded by Tajfel (1981) in which any definition of a 'native speaker' must include what they are different from, that is 'not being a 'non-native speaker' (Davies 2004: 434).

Nevertheless, whatever criteria are established, they remain subject to problematisation. For example, the criterion of competence is questionable if we consider that some individuals learn English in their childhood and use it repeatedly in their daily life yet still do not achieve a high level of competency. Indeed many of Davies' (op.cit.) criteria would not apply to all those regarded socially as 'native speakers'. Rampton (1990) contributes further to this debate over defining a 'native speaker' by listing even more features which he believes are most associated with being a 'native speaker', but concludes by acknowledging the considerable difficulty of arriving at any clear definition and finally advocates replacing the term 'native speaker' with a concept of 'expertise'.

There is, therefore, some agreement by authors on this topic about who exactly the 'native speaker' is and also that the terms, 'native' and 'non-native' are probably not relevant or useful at all. However, despite this awareness by writers of the lack of relevance of such a term, both the labels 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' are common and pervasive in the field of English language teaching. Cook (1991) gives what seems to be a commonly held, daily working definition in the field of ELT of a 'native speaker', calling him or her a monolingual person who still speaks the language learned in childhood. Nevertheless, whatever definition or definitions are adopted or criteria applied, or whether one agrees with the replacement of the term due to the difficulty of establishing its linguistic viability, the 'native speaker' English language teacher 'plays a widespread and complex iconic role outside as well as inside the English-speaking West' and the terms 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' 'have a very real currency within the popular discourse of ELT' (Holliday 2006: 385). In fact in terms of conceptualising the 'native speaker' EFL teacher, the label 'native speaker' teacher communicates much more than simple information about linguistic ability in the field of English language teaching. In the opinions of, for example, Canagarajah 1999a; Holliday 2005, 2006; Kubota 2002a; Pennycook 1994 and Phillipson 1992, the label and its associated discourse reflect not just the language proficiency of the 'native speaker' English language teacher but a litany of opinions, practices, and prejudices which have developed into a deep-rooted and extensively referred to ELT ideology.

To sum up, therefore, I have tried to give a brief indication of the complexities of the dispute with regard to establishing any concrete definition of the ‘native speaker’ and by extension the ‘non-native speaker’ English language teacher, and also to query the usefulness of attempting such definitions. However, abandoning the ‘native speaker’ label may also find opposition. Given that the field’s conceptualisation of a ‘native speaker’ teacher considerably exceeds the language proficiency of an individual and is also seen to very much include the image of a ‘white’ practitioner, it has been suggested that without the term ‘native speaker’ to hide behind, institutions might no longer conceal what is effectively racism in their EL teacher hiring practices (Amin 1999; Kamhi-Stein 1999; Kubota 2002a; Holliday in process)

Finally, I have suggested that linguistic considerations play only one part of the field’s conceptualisation of the ‘native speaker’ in ELT and, indeed, it appears that the current conceptualisation extends to the idea of the ‘mythic’ nature of the ‘native speaker’ and is ‘a mainstay of the dominant TESOL ideology’ (Holliday in process).

1.5 The immediate catalyst for this study: a challenge to the 'native speaker' teacher.

Having outlined the focus of this work and how this focus emerged through a number of professional incidents, as well as providing some discussion of the issues regarding both the definition and perceived ideological construct of the ‘native speaker’ teacher in ELT, I move now to describing in detail the immediate catalyst for this study. It is an incident in my life as an English language teacher in the UK. At the time of this incident I was working as an EFL teacher in a small English Language Teaching Centre in a University College English Language Centre in the south-east of England.

Why don't they come?

In the University College where I work daily in a classroom as an EFL teacher, that is I teach English to learners whose mother tongue is not English, there are regular talks organised and given by academics, that is those writing on a variety of issues relating to the field of EFL or Applied Linguistics. In this University College, there are presenters who come from the UK or abroad to give their theories about a variety of existing and future practices, ideologies and teaching approaches. For example, Suresh Canagarajah came from New York to talk on the strategies learners use to

resist ‘linguistic imperialism’ when learning English and Jennifer Jenkins from the University of London came to talk about the phonology of English as an international language. Her book, *The Phonology of English as an International Language*, had just been Highly Commended for the English-Speaking Union Duke of Edinburgh Prize and short-listed for the BAAL Book Prize and the British Council Innovation Awards. Her treatise was considered to be a radical proposal for re-thinking the teaching of the pronunciation of English when it is used as an international language for communication.

What I noticed, as I sat down to listen to her talk was that, once again, I was the only EFL teacher who was not also a student, present in the room. As usual the venue was full of Diploma TESOL students, students engaged in Masters and PhD research and the teaching staff for the academic programmes, that is those involved in teaching about the theory of language teaching and learning, but not those involved everyday in the classroom teaching of English.

I had been aware of this absence of EFL teachers on almost every other previous occasion over the three years I had attended similar presentations by academics and I had always wondered why no teachers came. This time it seemed a crucial area to be concerned about. Jenkins’ proposal was that we identify and concentrate on teaching certain aspects of English phonology which are most useful for international intelligibility and move away from the goal of imitating ‘native speakers’. She suggested that it is this ‘version’ of phonology that should be taught in English language classes if learners are to use English in international transactions. In fact, her ideas about English pronunciation when used as an international language and the implications for classroom teaching were so radical for the audience that, in this instance, it encouraged heated debate after she had spoken and, also engendered an on-going e-mail discussion amongst the attendees for some time after.

However, alongside the stimulation of her ideas and the interest they generated amongst the students and academics, I continued to remain puzzled as to why there were no English language teachers at the talk. After all, the English teachers, my ‘native speaker’ British trained EFL colleagues would be those directly affected by her proposals, especially if the proposals made their way into the course books we used in our daily classroom work. In fact, the EFL teachers, rather than the academics

and MA students would have to implement the changes if her theories of moving away from the ‘norm’ of ‘native speaker’ English became part of their everyday teaching (Research Diary: Critical Incident 2).

The intriguing questions this incident left me with, the ‘What would other British trained ‘native speaker’ English language teachers think of this academic proposal?’ and ‘How would they see their professional identity if their ‘native speaker’ English pronunciation were to assume less importance in the classroom?’ thus became the motivation for the first research questions.

In her presentation Jenkins (2000) had put forward ideas regarding the teaching of the pronunciation of English which were ground-breaking. She had argued that English is in transition from the language of a few native speaking countries such as the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and has become increasingly an international language. It is for these reasons Jenkins believes that a less ‘native speaker’ related English is what should be taught to learners who need to communicate internationally. She theorises that the growth in English as an international tool of communication points to a need for a change in learners’ pronunciation needs and goals, and furthermore she calls for ‘a radical re-think in terms of the role of pronunciation norms and models for classes aiming to prepare learners for interaction in (international) contexts’ (Jenkins 1998: 119).

In fact, the ideas put forward promote a set of pronunciation items for comprehensibility in international settings which Jenkins calls a Core Lingua Franca. Adopting such a set of pronunciation items for teaching purposes would, in turn, according to Jenkins, indicate that ‘non-native speaker’ teachers may be just as well equipped to teach the English used in international settings as ‘native speaker’ teachers. In fact one section of Chapter 8 in her book is called ‘Radical improvement in the status of ‘NNS’ EIL pronunciation teachers’. Indeed, Jenkins further proposes that ‘native speaker’ teachers would need to learn the Core Lingua Franca as well as ‘non-native speaker’ teachers.

This academic’s ideas regarding the new role of English and her proposals for a different focus on the phonology of English when used internationally, as well as the suggestion that ‘non-native speaker’ EFL teachers may well be as suited as ‘native speaker’ teachers to teach such phonological items seemed worthy of consideration.

However, if these proposals were taken up by ‘native speaker’ teachers, managers, institutions and learners of EFL, they would undoubtedly cause an alteration in the ‘native speakers’ views of themselves as valued professionals in the field. If ‘non-native speaker’ teachers of English were considered equally able to teach such phonological items, and ‘native speaker’ English pronunciation was no longer considered the ‘norm’ or that which learners aspired to, ‘native speaker’ teachers’ role and status would, I believed, alter considerably. With these further questions regarding the possible alteration in the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ teacher in mind, I began to investigate whether other academic work was urging related re-evaluations of ELT ‘norms’. In the next section I will therefore describe other proposals for re-evaluations of traditionally held understandings in EFL which, in their turn contributed to the clarification of the research questions in this thesis.

1. 6 More challenges to the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher

Jenkins’ (2000) work is notable in its far-sighted scenario of new possibilities for the pronunciation teaching of the English language. However, she is not alone in urging a re-evaluation of traditional EFL concepts. In fact, even before Jenkins’ revolutionary thesis, derived from her PhD research into international communication, there had been a growing body of other theses which problematised further some traditionally accepted ‘norms’ of ‘native speaker’ teachers’ English language teaching classrooms. As well as the work by Jenkins, there had been a newly realistic analysis of the changing ownership of English. Graddol (1997) ten years ago, in his guide commissioned by the British Council to forecast the future place of English in the world, predicted that ‘native speakers’ would soon form a minority group as users of English in other countries become increasingly dominant. Therefore, he believed that, inexorably, interaction in English between ‘non-native speakers’ would become more normal than interaction between ‘native speakers’. In 2006 Graddol published a further work, *English Next*, which set out an equally revolutionary scenario. One reviewer of this book commented ‘The news is not good for the native speaker: global attitudes are more favourable to China than the USA’ (Eapen 2007).

Moreover, academics such as Llurda 2005; Holliday 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay 2002; Rajagopalan 2004; and Seidlhofer 2001 believe that this changing ownership of English is already upon us and that we are slowly in the process of moving away from a position where learners aspire to the norm of the 'native speaker' in the areas of methodology, authenticity and autonomy. Indeed, even before these academic challenges and Jenkins' radical proposal, there had been growing criticism of the current English language teaching paradigm. There had been and was continuing to be a burgeoning, on-going debate over the appropriacy of the language teaching methodology currently practised by 'native speaker' English language teachers, for example, Bax 2003; Brown 2002; Canagarajah 2002; Holliday 1994 and Prabu 1990.

Thus, Jenkins' work was not alone in its challenge to the 'native speaker' ideal. The works of some other academics had already challenged the 'native speaker' and with these challenges they inevitably queried the 'native speakers' continued valued professional identity as the role of English alters in the world. This growing body of academic work has, in fact, become a sizeable, wide-ranging and important corpus which questions the traditional status of 'native speaker' teachers of English who work world-wide in a variety of private and public institutions with learners of English from primary school to university and beyond. Furthermore, the academic publications seem to have been born from an awareness by its authors, academics in Applied Linguistics and ELT around the world, of a new, rapidly globalising world in which English is needed to fulfil purposes hitherto unknown. However, the challenges have been made in academia and continue to be made without, it seems, consultation of the 'native speaker' practitioner in the classroom. It seems that the challenges have been made, as well, without finding out from the 'native speaker' EFL teachers, the people most destined to find their professional identities altered, how they currently view themselves as professionals and what their perspectives are on these future scenarios predicted by ELT academics. It seemed, thus, that questions needed to be asked of these teachers in terms of their reactions to the new proposals. Questions also needed to be asked about their views of changed professional identities in light of such proposals.

1.7 The research questions

Thus, this further exploration of impending change to English language teaching, voiced in the treatises of not only Jenkins (2000) but other academics, for example: Block and Cameron 2002; Canagarajah 1999a, 1999b; Holliday 1994, 2005, in process; and Rajagopalan op.cit., added urgency to my desire to investigate the conceptualisations of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers’ professional identity. However, although academics have made a number of forecasts regarding different aspects of ELT’s future, I initially decided to base my discussion on three main points. These were: 1. the practitioners’ general reactions to academic proposals for change in English language teaching; 2. the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ conceptualisations of their current classroom methodological approaches; 3. the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ relationship with ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. I chose these three points as a focus for the thesis for the reasons I now outline. In the first place, in terms of practitioner reaction to change, it is widely accepted that English has become an international tool for communication and has a changed role in the world. In view of this some academics, as I have noted previously, are urging a reappraisal of accepted ‘native speaker’ ‘norms’ in ELT. However, change has the power to disrupt identity at both the social and personal level (Woodward 1997) and proposed changes to traditional ‘norms’ seem therefore potentially able to dislocate the identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher.

Next, focussing on ‘native speaker’ classroom practices in this work was important because, in the formation of identity, methodologies act as symbols which represent the teachers to others, mark sameness with others and allow these teachers to take up particular positions in the field of ELT. The practices, therefore, were intrinsic in establishing their identity. Thirdly, the teachers’ relationship with ‘non-native speaker’ colleagues was also key because the marking of ‘difference’ is a major factor in the formation of identity. In fact, ‘identity is not the opposite of, but depends on difference’ (Woodward 1997: 29) with identity formed in relation to ‘the outsider’ and, as such, deciphering the ‘native speakers’ conceptualisations of the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher was also crucial in any understanding of the formers’ professional identity.

Based on the above rationale, the research questions for this study thus became:

1. Given academic proposals for a re-evaluation of previously accepted ‘norms’ in the world of English language teaching, how do ‘native speaker’ English language teachers conceptualise their professional identities?
2. What effect has the globalisation of English had on the attitude of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers towards ‘non-native speaker’ teachers of English?
3. To what extent are experienced British trained ‘native speaker’ English language teachers convinced that it is appropriate to adopt different, less ‘native speaker’ driven classroom methodologies in certain contexts?

However, although I began this thesis with these three research questions, after an initial period of data collection I became aware that these questions needed to be extended and re-focused to more fully comprehend the professional identity constructs of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher. In fact, the first data revealed that the teachers had little or no knowledge of the academic suggestions for change and that the teachers relied very much on their own particular theories in the classroom, rather than on academic understandings and academic theory. The data also revealed that the teachers had an unhappy relationship with their own teacher development. Therefore, as work on this thesis progressed, I added two further questions which needed to be investigated in order to more fully conceptualise the identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher in view of proposed changes to ELT. They were:

4. How far is the work of English language teaching academics relevant to the classroom practices of experienced British trained ‘native speaker’ English language teachers?
5. To what extent and in what manner do experienced British trained ‘native speaker’ teachers wish to undertake their own development as teachers?

1. 8 Why this research is important

So far this chapter has outlined some of my early experiences as a teacher of English as a foreign language which were catalysts in providing the focus for this work. It has also laid out the themes of the work and raised issues with regard to defining the ‘native speaker’ teacher. This introduction has also provided some background to new academic

understandings about change in the field of ELT. I turn now to my justification for choosing what I believe to be a timely topic.

I believe this research into the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher at a time of change to the role of English in the world is important because of the aforementioned iconic international role ‘native speaker’ British trained English language teachers have had for many decades in the field of ELT. This research is important because of the ideology which has been constructed around these ‘native speaker’ teachers and their practices. The ‘native speaker’ teachers have traditionally obtained employment and much influence in many and varied educational institutions around the globe. Moreover, the discourse of their initial training has become not only their own dominant professional paradigm, but also the dominant professional paradigm for many ‘non- native speaker’ English language teachers who have been trained or directed by these ‘native speaker’ teachers, either in Britain or in-country. In fact, the British trained ‘native speaker’ teacher has ‘remained as a central part of the conventional wisdom of the English Language Teaching profession’ (Phillipson 1992: 199).

Thus, over time, the considerable importance and influence which British ‘native speaker’ English language teachers have exerted directly and indirectly on the world of English language teaching is difficult to dispute. The uncovering of British trained teachers’ attitudes to the challenges now laid down by academics to the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ traditional dominant identity in the world of ELT has, therefore, much broader implications in terms of the world-wide training and construction of beliefs of ‘non-native speaker’ English teachers, as well as in the training of new ‘native speaker’ teachers.

It seemed then that if ‘native speaker’ British trained EFL teachers were to become conversant with and take up the proposed academic challenges, work with them and implement what might be far-reaching changes in their methodology and their teaching of phonology, reassess their identity in the ‘hierarchy’ of English language teaching, this in turn would have a ‘knock-on’ effect on the teaching of English globally.

1. 9 Summary and structure of the study

Having introduced the focus of the thesis, provided some definition of a key term, laid out my perspective on certain themes of the work and given a rationale for its importance,

I turn now to a brief summary of the location, timing, subjects and methods of this study. I then give an outline of the structure of the study.

1. 9.1 Summary of the study: location, timing, subjects and methods

The research for the study was carried out in Canterbury (UK) and Paris (France). The time span for the data collection was three years, commencing in 2002 and finishing in 2005, although ethnographic study continued into 2006. Data was collected by three main methods. First of all it was collected by interviewing a total of seven British trained ‘native speaker’ English language teachers who worked either in institutions in the UK or taught English in a variety of institutions in France, Portugal, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Japan, but who returned to Britain from these countries for holidays during the year. There were three men and four women in this group of teachers. All the teachers were interviewed once and in one case, one teacher was interviewed three times. Further data was also collected from these teachers through continued e-mail correspondence over twelve to eighteen months.

Throughout the whole period, as a practising ‘native speaker’ British trained EFL teacher with much international experience myself, I effectively joined the above group of teachers as a respondent. I used my own observations in my working life, my field notes and the ‘critical incidents’ of my career in ELT as another important form of data collection. These were recorded in a Research Diary.

The group of initial respondents were later extended to include eight more British trained ‘native speaker’ teachers (three women and five men) in the English Language Teaching Centre of a University College in UK. Five of these teachers were also interviewed.

Thus, the main data collected came from three sources, interviews, e-mails and the author-as-teacher’s Research Diary. In addition, background data from three small groups of teachers working within the British Primary National Curriculum, in an Independent Primary school in the UK and in a British University English Language Teaching Unit were also collected through interviews. This was in order to provide a further perspective on the main data from a group of teachers located in wider society.

All the interviews were transcribed, coded and sorted thematically. E-mail data, Field Notes and Critical Incidents from the author’s Research Diary were also interpreted

thematically and these latter either extended the themes arising from the interview data or were crucial in developing new themes.

1. 9. 2 Structure of the Study

The study is divided into nine chapters. Chapter One has introduced the thesis, its catalysts and focus, defined a key term and given its rationale. Chapter Two then opens with a discussion from the literature on globalisation. This discussion provides a context for the development of English as a world language and the subsequent specific changes urged by some academics in the world of English language teaching as English assumes this different role. As a logical extension of this argument, the second chapter continues by developing a rationale for the need for ‘native speaker’ English language teachers to re-think the perceptions they have of their roles in ELT to date. Chapter Three then moves to provide a further discussion from the literature of aspects of the professional identities of first, mainstream teachers working within National Curricula and, secondly, of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. This chapter also explores the literature on teacher thinking and the extent to which teacher thoughts and beliefs relate to this work on the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. Chapter Four introduces the conceptual framework and critique of the research methodology used and continues with a detailed, factual account of the research.

Chapters Five to Eight present the themes identified in the analysis of the data. These chapters focus on different factors in the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ teacher. Chapter Five looks at factors which appear to create the ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers’ sense of security and confidence as professionals. Chapters Six and Seven look at factors which undermine this confidence and cause insecurity in their identity constructs. Chapter Eight provides a portrait of one teacher who appears to have re-created a professional identity more in harmony with the new role of ELT in the globalising world. The implications of these findings, both for the field of ELT and how they relate to wider society are discussed in Chapter Nine.

Chapter 2: Globalisation, English as a lingua franca, and proposed changes to ELT

2.1 Introduction

In order to provide a background to the main theme of the thesis, the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher, I turn now to a discussion of how issues related to this theme are presented in the literature. In this chapter I first define globalisation and provide a general background to some current debates surrounding the phenomenon and its capacity to change lives. This is presented at the beginning of this study in order to set the scene for an understanding of how the need for a global lingua franca arose. By the term lingua franca I intend a language which is used by countless people round the world in a myriad of different transactions and for countless different purposes and English has become this lingua franca. Differing views on whether the new role English now occupies is positive or negative are then put forward and the changing ownership of the English language is discussed.

This discussion provides a context for the academic arguments outlining the pedagogical implications of teaching English in its new role. Thus, both the currently predominant and wide-spread ‘native speaker’ classroom methodology, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the suitability of continuing to teach ‘native speaker’ pronunciation norms are problematised. Finally, arguments with regard to the continued appropriacy of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher compared with his or her ‘non-native speaker’ counterpart are outlined.

2.2 Defining globalisation

Globalisation and its consequences are central to this thesis and in terms of a definition of the phenomenon, the decentralising and re-centralising of commerce, trade, education and culture (Held et al. 1999) serves as one explanation. Alternatively, Giddens has termed globalisation as ‘the intensification of world wide social relations which link

distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (1990: 64). Whichever definition we adopt, globalisation in its present form is a relatively new occurrence, yet a potent world-wide concept with authors on the topic (Appadurai 1990; Ohmae 1990, 1995; Giddens 1990, 1991, 2000; Hertz 2001; Hirst & Thompson 1996/99) not all in agreement over the central issues of this complex phenomenon. For example, there are different viewpoints with regard to how far we are living in a globalised world, with some writers more sceptical than others. However, although there are differences of opinion as to the various degrees of globalisation in the first decade of the twenty-first century, there is a consensus that many populations of the world are living in a world of technology, where information can be transferred rapidly around the globe and that this instant transfer of information has allowed huge trans-national companies to spearhead economic globalisation. What is more, within the many different frameworks in which globalisation can be understood, for example, economic, cultural, technological, ideological, and political (Held et al. op.cit.), there are increasing flows of migrants, asylum seekers, work-related travellers and tourists all moving around the world as they have never been able to before, with each influencing and being influenced by the other. As well, this international human flow is supplemented by flows of information and entertainment from satellite television channels, films, human rights ideas, environmentalism concerns and technical know-how (Appadurai op.cit.).

2. 2. 1 Current debates surrounding globalisation

A sensible middle of the road opinion, therefore, would seem to regard globalisation as changing the manner in which we live our lives, but the changes are being experienced by different people in different ways and to different degrees. However, even if there is agreement that globalisation is a current reality in different forms in different places, there are other areas of debate surrounding it. First there is the question of how far globalisation is a standardising 'Westernising' or 'Americanising' force, considering that many of globalisation's driving forces such as information technology, the film industry, and a large number of Trans-national companies have their origins in North America. On the other hand, a counter debate ascertains that rather than 'Americanise' or 'Westernise' the people it touches, globalisation may encourage a more dynamic relationship between the local and the global, that is, 'glocalisation' (Robertson 1995), with the 'Western' not

necessarily always dominant. Indeed the West itself can be subject to the effects of globalisation, especially if seen solely in economic terms when governments and nation states are pressurised and manipulated by huge corporations and end up protecting the interest of global capital rather than those of their citizens (Hertz op.cit.). Thirdly, in a critique related to the first point, that globalisation may be considered a westernising force, Bhahba (1994: xiv) warns against a globalisation which is acceptable only as long as it produces ‘a healthy profit margin’ and is founded on a view of privilege, prosperity and progress. This author suggests that such a view could even extend to defining opinions of what constitutes a proper social life and thus Bhahba favours a globalization which ‘begins at home’ (ibid: xv-xvi) and has a vernacular perspective.

2. 2. 2 Globalisation, new possibilities and a force for change

Some aspects of globalisation may therefore be viewed as pernicious and driven by profit, or they may be seen as cohesive forces which unify and homogenise (Gray 1998; Ritzer 1998). However, if seen as standardising lives, globalisation can then be accused of reducing the world to a single, bland culture (Barber 1995; Latouche 1996). On the contrary though, it can also be argued that globalisation has fostered an extraordinary emergence of a hybridity of ‘cross over genres’ in such internationally popular spheres as TV, music, fashion and film. For example, Benetton, MTV, and Bollywood all celebrate new cross cultural manifestations. In fact Graddol comments ‘Rather than a process which leads to uniformity and homogeneity, globalisation seems to create new hybrid forms of culture, language and political organisation’ (1997.: 33).

Furthermore other intellectuals such as Ohmae 1990, 1995, Giddens 2000, and Buckley 1999-2000 view globalisation as a positive and exciting phenomenon. They believe that while it obviously offers increasing and dangerous risks, such as environmental damage, a rise in fundamentalism and extraordinary corporate power, it also offers increasing challenges to curb these dangers. It also opens up more opportunities to develop new ways of living.

Many of us feel in the grip of forces over which we have no power. Can we reimpose our will upon them? I believe we can. The powerlessness we experience is not a sign of personal failings, but reflects the incapacities of our institutions. We need to reconstruct those we have, or create new ones. For globalisation is not incidental to

our lives today. It is a shift in our very life circumstances. It is the way we now live (Giddens 2000: 19).

Thus, whatever debates surround the phenomenon, Giddens (1990) suggests that it is not unreasonable to believe that the outcomes of globalisation are considerable and far-reaching. This same author states: ‘There are good, objective reasons to believe that we are living through a major period of historical transition. Moreover, the changes affecting us aren’t confined to any one area of the globe, but stretch almost everywhere’ (Giddens *ibid.*: 1). The same academic also importantly notes in terms of this thesis about the dilemmas of the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher and the language they teach, that globalisation is bringing about change, not just in terms of the economy and politics but in terms of influencing ‘everyday life as much as it does events happening on a world scale’ (*ibid.*: 4). In fact in the works of academics in the field of ELT, as will be discussed in later sections of this chapter, these ‘everyday’ effects of globalisation are indeed predicted to alter the current professional understandings of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher.

2. 2. 3 The need for a global language

Thus, having raised some conflicting issues with regard to globalisation, as well as fore-fronting its propensity to incite change, I turn now to a specific consequence of globalisation and one which is pivotal for this thesis. The trans-national companies at the helm of globalisation have usually originated in, for example, North America, Japan and Europe. They have complicated ownership structures, complex joint ventures, and increasingly, production plants located in third world countries (Graddol 1997). The intricate and broad infrastructure of these companies and their workforces has consequently necessitated a demand for the international spectrum of workers engaged in these enterprises to communicate using a shared linguistic code. English has come to currently fulfil this role of shared global language or international lingua franca, which may be defined as ‘a language serving as a medium between different people’ (Fowler & Fowler 1964: 707), and the development and trajectory of the English language to this position are well documented by Crystal (1997).

What is more, alongside the new need for more and more people to learn English as a lingua franca for communication in their workplace and with others in other workplaces,

this interaction is most often in the form of information stored, obtained and disseminated through technologies which overwhelmingly operate in English. International organisations such as the United Nations, UNESCO and WHO all make official use of English, too, and funding aid for world projects is almost always obtained from the global community in English. Finally and importantly, English language films and songs in English are distributed internationally and play a major role in motivating young people to learn English. These various special purposes for which English is used, as well as many others, have led to the fact that the language has become an international language. Crystal concludes English has attained ‘a special role that is recognised in every country’ (op.cit.: 2) and hence it has achieved global status.

Thus, in terms of the focus of this thesis, the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher, the literature offers acknowledgement that the language he/she teaches has assumed a new role in the world. It is also recognised that this role as an international language has come about because of globalisation. It seems, therefore, not unreasonable to assume that both the new space English now occupies and the potential for globalisation to engender change may be reasons for a re-evaluation of the status and role of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher him/herself. However, before moving on to an evaluation of the teachers’ professional positions, I first provide some discussion as to how this new role of English may be viewed.

2. 2. 4 The role of English as a global language

Although there is a consensus that English is a global language, there is also a view that this supremacy of English is nothing more than domination by the West. Phillipson (1992), a leading protagonist of this view, claims that the predominance and hegemony of the English language is colonialism by another name, that is ‘linguistic imperialism’. For example, this author reflects sceptically on how global developments create an even greater demand for English in a vicious circle:

The global language can be seen to open doors, which fuels a ‘demand’ for English. This demand reflects contemporary power balances and the hope that mastery of English will lead to the prosperity and glamorous hedonism that the privileged in this

world have access to and that is projected in Hollywood films, MTV videos, and ads for transnational corporations (ibid.: 2).

However, this view of Phillipson may be challenged in that it demotes and patronises the learner. For example, Bisong points out that Nigerians learn English for pragmatic reasons and that Nigerians are ‘sophisticated enough to know what is in their interest, and that their interest includes the ability to operate with two or more linguistic codes in a multilingual situation. Phillipson’s argument shows a failure to appreciate fully the complexities of this situation’ (1995: 131). This same perspective comes from Chew (1999) who expresses similar sentiments to Bisong in relation to the choices made by Singaporeans about which language to operate in.

On the negative side, though, it could be argued that learning English can lead to social inequalities when those who cannot afford schooling or who have not the time for nor access to formal education are marginalised (Tollefson 1995). Knowledge of English can thus lead to the cultivation of a ‘linguistic class’ and that ‘class’, well versed in the language and able to work and think quickly in it, can consequently manipulate it to its own advantage. As Pennycook argues: ‘English... acts as a gatekeeper to positions of wealth and prestige both within and between nations, and is the language through which much of the unequal distribution of wealth, resources and knowledge operates’ (1995: 54).

The unequal rich/poor global inequality divide is, for example, maintained in Hyderabad, India, where English has apparently caused a ‘serious rural-urban divide’ (ELNews, 2004) with rural dwellers unable to find work without English. Additionally, the global use of English is also seen as possibly contributing to the decline and death of minority languages and reducing the likelihood of people learning languages other than English.

However, despite these arguments, there is no surety that the language itself is entirely responsible for these inequalities. Nor can we turn the clock back. It is a time to recreate new institutions to combat such dangers and inequalities as Giddens (2000) advises or as Wallace suggests: ‘The answer, however, is not to throw in the towel but to do the job better, whether as language teachers or as teacher educators’ (2002: 109).

Thus, while there is recognition of the possibility of English creating more inequality and a ‘linguistic elite’, it seems realistic to assume that people will still continue to learn

English if they can in the knowledge that it will facilitate contribution to the creation of hybrid identities and offer them new, diverse and positive possibilities in their lives and in the lives of their children. Indeed, Bourdieu (1991) believes that the acquisition of English gives a learner the highest, in his term, ‘linguistic capital’, and thus enables the learner to undertake interaction and have agency in powerful public contexts. Importantly, it offers the learner the ability to ‘write back’ or ‘talk back’, in other words to offer a chance to resist the global tyranny suggested by Phillipson (op.cit.) with global means.

Therefore, despite some real concerns that the spread and importance of English as a global language may engender possible linguistic, political and social inequalities, the English language appears, at least in the first decades of the millennium, ‘here to stay’. It also appears to have ever increasing importance for those people who have no knowledge of the language if they are to be empowered in such a scenario. In turn the profiles of any teacher of the English language world-wide are thus raised and an enhanced understanding of the conceptualisations of their professional identities in this changing global context must surely be of increasing importance to the field of ELT and beyond.

2.3 A change of ownership

Whatever arguments are put forward though, either for or against the increasing domination by English and the threat of social inequalities due to the ownership of such ‘linguistic capital’, a further debate arises when one considers more facts and predictions made by the British Council commissioned study into the future of English by Graddol (1997). This report established that the English language is being learnt by more and more people world-wide who are not ‘native speakers’ and who are appropriating English for their own in order to take part in the opportunities offered by globalisation. Crystal too, estimated that there were around 1,800 million users of English who have ‘reasonable competence’ (op.cit.: 61). Numbers are vast and growing. Twenty years ago, Kachru (1985) identified the speakers of English as belonging to one of three groups: the ‘Inner circle’, (native speakers of English in English speaking countries e.g. Canada, Australia, UK), the ‘Outer circle’ (countries where English was widely used as an L2 and also possibly used in the homes of the professional middle-class e.g. India, Singapore) and the ‘Expanding Circle’, that is countries where English was widely studied as a foreign

language. This view, however, is now more than two decades old and also placed ‘native speakers’ and ‘native speaking’ countries at the centre of the global use of English in the centre of the circles, thus implying that they were also the source of correctness and the models of English and English teaching for consumers in the peripheral circles. However, since Kachru and bearing the figures of Crystal (op.cit.) and Graddol (1997) in mind, views of the ‘circles’ have altered to the point that the inner English speaking countries have begun to be seen by some as no longer the ‘ideal’ model. As such facts as those about the numbers of second language learners speaking English emerge, with more and more countries of the ‘Expanding Circle’ using English as an L2 rather than a foreign language, the real ownership of English appears to have transferred to a much broader and more diverse international population. This has led Graddol to further predict that ‘those who speak English alongside other languages will outnumber first language speakers and, increasingly, will decide the global future of the language’ (1997: 11) More emphatically Widdowson opines:

How English develops in the world is no business whatever of native speakers in England, the United States, or anywhere else. They have no say in the matter, no right to intervene or pass judgement. They are irrelevant. The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. To grant such custody of the language is necessarily to arrest its development and so undermine its international status. It is a matter of considerable pride and satisfaction for native speakers of English that their language is an international means of communication. But the point is that it is only international to the extent that it is not their language. It is not a possession which they lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it (1994: 385).

Crystal too, says ‘it is plain that no one can now claim sole ownership [of English]’ (1997: 139). This author continues ‘The loss of ownership is of course uncomfortable to those, especially in Britain, who feel that the language is theirs by historical right; but they have no alternative’ (ibid.: 130).

These academic predictions of increasing and inevitably dominant ‘non-native speaker’ interaction in English and the passing over of the language to international proprietors serves to further highlight the importance of the focus of this thesis. If English is now used internationally and owned internationally, the previous celebrated identity of

the ‘native speaker’, either as users or teachers of English is inevitably called to account, and the iconic nature of the ‘native speaker’ teacher in the world of ELT must now be open to critique at the very least. Therefore, the following sections of this chapter concentrate on outlining such critiques and problematising the issues involved.

2. 3. 1 The impact of changing ownership and globalisation on teaching English as an international language

(i) Intelligibility v. Diversity: dilemmas of the lingua franca

Firstly, as a result of such changing ownership, Graddol (1997: 3) suggests that a new world order of English speakers is emerging. In his view this new world order results in two opposing scenarios that will raise a serious challenge to the teaching of English. Graddol furthermore predicts that while the use of English as a global lingua franca requires intelligibility and the setting and maintenance of standards as it is increasingly adopted as a second language, it will take on local forms which will lead to fragmentation and diversity.

These two opposing possibilities have set the stage for a radical shift in the conditions in which English language teaching and learning will take place. An international lingua franca undoubtedly requires its speakers and writers to understand one another by adopting some standardised forms of both oral and written language. On the other hand the adoption of English by many different speakers of other languages who place their own ‘spin’ on it, that is who implement variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and cultural conventions, naturally creates hybrid versions. A reconciliation between these two polarising positions will, therefore, require some innovative readjustment in view of what elements of the English language need to be taught and by whom and how they might best be taught. Kirkpatrick (2007), in his recent work, has begun to make suggestions as to how this might be best achieved.

(ii) English as an economic commodity: growth in English education

Secondly, as demand for English augments in the world, both employers and employees need better levels and a wider range of English language proficiency. Graddol states that now: ‘English must service a range of corporate roles and identities and must be

usable for both team working and service interactions. Not surprisingly, demands on an employee's competence in English are rising' (1997: 43). Moreover, English becoming an economic commodity has also affected the number of people choosing to learn it and because of this demand, institutions offering language tuition inevitably choose to offer English, rather than other languages. Increasingly, as English is seen as the route to better paid, more attractive jobs and personal and national prosperity, a considerable number of the world's countries have introduced or increased English language education as the most commonly provided foreign language in primary and secondary schools. It is also more frequently used in bilingual education programmes covering the basic curriculum such as the EBPs (English Bilingual Programme) rapidly developing in Thailand (Pennington & Kay 2004).

Moreover, in the belief of its importance as a valuable economic commodity, English is also being taught to younger and younger learners under the maxim 'the earlier the better.' Many countries such as Austria, Bahrain, Qatar, and areas in Spain, are now beginning English language tuition at age 5 and in the Russian Federation at 7. For example, 'English has long ceased to be an extra activity young learners in Poland may, or may not, choose. Even as early as age three, children have their first contact with English' (Wojciech 2004). Additionally, Ministries of Education world-wide are funding an increasing number of teacher education programmes for teachers of English so that they might develop both their language skills, their methodological approaches and their ability to deliver other curriculum subjects in English. There has also been a developing trend to provide tertiary education for overseas students through the medium of English in many countries both inside and outside the 'Inner Circle', for example Denmark, Sweden and Germany. Indeed, the Copenhagen Post reported that 'Denmark plans to offer more university-level programmes in English' (ELNews 2004).

Furthermore, Hooke (1996), in his forecasting model of the future of the language, predicted that there would be a much greater demand in 'off-campus' distance education in English. Finally, mature adults too, who are already in-work and perhaps well-advanced in their careers are often finding they need to become more educated, more flexible and they may also need to up-date their English language skills in this globalised world of service and information. Such learning by adult workers nevertheless serves to indicate as well that English is being learned in various levels of society and is not confined to a

socio-economic elite (Brutt-Griffler 2002), thus mitigating somewhat the argument that knowledge of English is pernicious in creating societal inequalities.

This burgeoning demand for English language education taking place around the world, fuelled by the international status of English, is a further reason to increase our understanding of the role of the English language teacher, and vital in prompting a re-evaluation of the traditional superior professional identity construct of the relatively few 'native speaker' English language teachers compared with 'non-native speaker teachers' world-wide. With such increasing demand in so many international contexts for English language tuition it also seems important to begin to attempt to raise awareness of a possible modification to the current 'status quo' in the English language teaching world. In fact it appears the challenges now facing the 'native speaker' English language teacher may require a similar reconstruction of identity as those institutions Giddens (1990) described in the earlier sections of this chapter. What is more, globalisation and the changing ownership of English importantly affect two further aspects of English language teaching. These are now described.

(iii) The role of culture in English language teaching provision

As English becomes an economic commodity and a passport for entrance to the global world, the language can no longer be viewed as a particular symbol of identity or nationality. Seeing English as an instrumental tool for communication may accordingly affect people's need to be taught any specific 'native speaker' culture which arises from a particular speech community. Consequently, in terms of cultural awareness, that is the knowledge people have learned as members of their social group, McKay indicates 'the users of EIL (English as an International Language) whether in a global or local sense do not need to internalise the cultural norms of Inner Circle countries in order to use the language effectively as a medium of wider communication' (2002: 12).

In fact, English is now embedded in the cultures of the many countries in which it is used and it is also used by speakers to communicate their ideas and cultures to others. One task, therefore, that speakers of English internationally must undertake is an understanding of interaction in cross cultural encounters, rather than an understanding of one particular 'culture' traditionally associated with Inner Circle populations. This uncoupling of 'native speaker' culture from the teaching of English thus provides a further cause for considering

a reconstruction in the traditional understanding of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher’s professional identity.

(iv) Technological advances

Finally, in terms of the impact of globalisation and the changing ownership of English on the teaching of the language, the operation of global markets depends on fast information flow across the new communication technologies. Additionally, education and all types of information and services may be accessed through technology. The popularity of on-line leisure activities, such as ‘chat-rooms’ and ‘blogs’, means that the effects of English in information technology are not just confined to the sphere of education and economics, either. The ever faster and more complex technological advances flooding the world are also impacting on how language is taught and what needs to be taught. Warshauer in discussing on-line communication cites Harnad: ‘A not uncommon and, in my eyes, a justifiable view is that on-line communication represents the most important development in human communication and cognition since the development of the printing press’ (2001: 212).

Electronic communication, therefore, can be seen in the globalised world as a major new medium of literacy and an alternative to print. In fact, Shetzer and Warshauer (2000) identify major areas of ‘electronic literacy’ which need to be learnt in this age information technology. Mastering these electronic literacies in the language in which a huge amount of this information is stored, accessed and disseminated (80% according to Graddol 1997) is, therefore, of vital importance. This need alone, alongside the advent of technological language learning aids, has the potential to change the face of language learning for many and, as well, inevitably calls into question the traditional concepts of ‘native speaker’ classroom methodology.

2. 4 Pedagogical implications: problems and proposals

I have suggested that globalisation, despite differences of opinion with regard to the extent of its influence, is seen as having the capacity to change lives. It is also a phenomenon which appears to have necessitated the development of a lingua franca, English. This means people are now required to communicate in English across borders,

within borders, in discourses that move across and between work-places and between the work-place and the public. People also need to access and provide information in English on the internet and in texts. They need to be educated in order to develop greater English language skills for use in their increasingly sophisticated work situations. Technological advances are making communication more direct and new literacies are being developed.

I have also put forward the idea that learning English can be seen to open doors and allow learners to gain ‘linguistic’ capital in order to adopt plural identities and access a plethora of resources or, alternatively, it can be viewed as depriving learners of developing their own local languages, imposing a ‘global tyranny’ of homogeneity, western concepts of privilege and exacerbating divisions of wealth. On the other hand it may provide learners with a global tool to combat such inequity.

What then are the new alternatives facing English language teachers in their world-wide classrooms? How can they better prepare their learners with language skills to benefit these students’ lives in the world language hierarchy as it has currently developed? How, too, can English language teachers prepare their learners to acquire the skills to critically evaluate what is being taught to them? For example, the skills to decide if the following description of instructional English is indeed what learners need and want: ‘[It] all but terminally consigned English to the level of a technical language stripped of expressive and aesthetic characteristics and denuded of any critical or self-conscious dimension. You learned English to use computers, respond to orders, transmit telexes, decipher manifests and so forth. That was all’ (Said 1994: 369).

In recent and current text and journal publications in ELT and at international and national conferences, these complex and diverse developments and dilemmas in terms of teaching English in a globalising world have received and continue to receive much attention. Academics reviewing and predicting further the impact of the new outcomes of globalisation have begun to put forth analyses, ideas, propose solutions, problematize and critique the way English is currently taught. I use an example from Kachru to illustrate this point:

What is needed is a shift of two types: 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. The traditional presuppositions and ethnocentric approaches need re-

evaluation. In the international contexts, English represents a repertoire of cultures, not a monolithic culture. The changed sociolinguistic profile of English is difficult to recognise, for good reason. The traditional paradigm..... however undesirable, continues to have a grip on the profession. What makes matters more complex is the fact that active interest groups want to maintain the status quo (1992: 362).

McKay echoes the words of Kachru in terms of suggesting pedagogic changes of approach towards English as an international language ‘the teaching and learning of an international language must be based on an entirely different set of assumptions than the teaching and learning of any other second or foreign language’ (op.cit.: 1).

These developments have thus provided a background to the increasing pleas by prominent international ELT scholars for a need to carefully reconsider the pedagogic implications of this changing role of English with its changing ownership. I now outline the arguments relevant to my research questions which link the changes created by globalisation and the role of English as a lingua franca to ELT classroom practices and ELT practitioners. The first issue under discussion is the request by scholars for a localisation of methodological approach, that is the need to review the many various sociological, cultural and educational contexts of ELT and derive appropriate ELT methodologies from these, rather than imposing a methodology upon them (see, for example, Bax 2003; Brown 2002; Canagarajah 2002; Kirkpatrick 2007; Holliday 1994; Prabhu 1990). Such fore-fronting of context in relation to methodology leads to a second issue, that is the inevitable questioning of the on-going relevance of CLT, a highly influential and popular approach to language teaching world-wide but one which is inextricably linked to the iconic ‘native speaker’ ideal. This critique of a long-standing specific ELT approach to classroom teaching is followed by a more detailed discussion of Jenkins’ (2000) attempts to unravel the dichotomy of creating phonological intelligibility for the international understanding of English and how this might be applied to classroom teaching and learning. Finally, deriving from the problematisation of these three areas, arguments regarding the positioning of ‘native’ and ‘non-native speaker’ teachers of the English language in a globalising world are examined.

2. 4. 1 Appropriate methodology

The diagrammatic centring of the ‘native speaker’, (Kachru 1985), which positioned the ‘native speaker’ as the ideal teacher with the preferred model of pronunciation and most efficient, effective pedagogical/methodological approach to English language teaching has given way to a more flexible and fluid view in academia of who ‘native speakers’ are, as more and more people use English as an L1 and a lingua franca. Moreover, an increased awareness has developed with regard to the ‘interested knowledge’ (Pennycook 1989) of what has been to date that more powerful ‘Inner Circle’ or ‘Centre’ of the circles and an increasingly acknowledged understanding that:

Methods are not value-free instruments validated by empirical research for purely practical teaching functions. Methods are cultural and ideological constructs with politico-economic consequences. Methods embody the social relations, forms of thinking and strategies of learning that are preferred by the circles that construct them. (Canagarajah 2002: 135).

From this understanding there has been a burgeoning professional realisation of the need for less Centrist views of methodology by, for example, Canagarajah 2002; Delpit 1995; Holliday 1994; Kumaravadivelu 2001; Muchiri et al. 1995; Pennington 1995; Pennycook 1994; Tollefson op.cit.. These scholars have all challenged the assumption that a western, integrationist, process, task-based, collaborative, inductive methodology is always effective with learners unacquainted with the skills necessary for such traditions of learning, in contexts where these methods are sociologically inappropriate, and also in situations where resources are limited. This body of work by academics contains, as well, a challenge to the assumption that process approaches inevitably ensure effective language acquisition and product approaches fail to do so.

Kumaravadivelu, building on his earlier writing and echoing the work of this growing number of publications, clarifies that methodology needs to ‘facilitate the advancement of context-sensitive language education based on a true understanding of local linguistic, socio-cultural, and political particularities’ (2001: 537). He uses Chick in South Africa to illustrate his point. Chick ponders whether ‘our choice of communicative language teaching as a goal was possibly a sort of naïve ethnocentrism prompted by the thought that what is good for Europe or the USA had to be good for KwaZulu’ (1996:22).

Kumaravadivelu (2001) also cites the work of Shamim (1996) and Tickoo (1996) working in Pakistan and India respectively and who both highlight the pitfalls of introducing methodological frameworks from abroad. Bax (2003) in his writing on a context approach to language teaching, reiterates these sentiments and cautions the ‘native speaker’ teacher against whole-sale import and insensitive promotion of inappropriate methods.

Furthermore, these arguments with regard to the implementation of a methodology developed in the Centre without due regard for the contexts in which they are applied have coincided with another blossoming body of work from applied linguist scholars. They believe that, despite our historical adoption of different, shifting paradigms, these changing ‘methods’ have not resulted in significant progress in language teaching. Brown for example, in an anthology of current practice which aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the field of second and foreign language teaching states:

‘Methods’ as we historically understand the term in the profession, are not a relevant issue []. We have emerged from the dark ages of language teaching when a handful of pre-packaged elixirs filled a small shelf of options. [] our profession has emerged into an era of understanding a vast number of language teaching contexts and purposes, and an even larger number of student needs, learning styles and affective traits (2002: 17).

Here Brown echoes the arguments of others (Kumaravadivelu 1994, 2001; Prabhu 1990; Richards 1990b) in consigning ‘methods’ to the scrap heap of history and implementing a series of ‘research based principles’ upon which to base classroom practice.

2. 4. 2 Problematizing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Deriving from and contributing to this criticism of the inappropriacies of current concepts of methodology for all contexts, a more specific critique of Communicative Language Teaching is arrived at. CLT is an approach to English language teaching and it is the practices of CLT which predominate on EFL training courses such as the Trinity and Cambridge Certificates in Teaching English to Adults, cornerstones of almost all British and other ‘native speaker’ teachers’ ELT careers and it is an approach which has held

powerful sway over the ELT profession for nearly three decades. Thus, the CLT approach and various interpretations of this approach are currently widely practised in the classrooms of ‘native speaker’ teachers world-wide and it is this methodology which, for better or worse, is also practised or aspired to by many ‘non-native speaker’ teachers in classrooms abroad. Canagarajah (2002) outlines the reasons for the rise in popularity of CLT as the dominance of centre applied linguistic circles with their resources for conducting research, ‘high-tech’ facilities and the world-wide publishing networks of the West and their academic institutions. He concludes ‘Therefore it is not surprising that many teachers in periphery communities believe that the methods propagated by centre applied linguistic circles through their text books, research journals, teacher training programmes, and professional organisations are the most effective, efficient, and authoritative for their purposes’ (ibid.: 135)

However, the competencies (Canale & Swain 1980) which underpin CLT are ‘native speaker’ norms of communicative competence. As ‘non-native speakers’ of English are predicted to soon outnumber the ‘native speakers’ of English, and the role of English has also become one of a language used for international communication, attaining or attempting to attain these ‘native speaker’ competencies could now appear an unrealistic ideal. Alptekin (2002) and Wallace (2002) are also concerned with CLT’s aim of ‘communication with native speakers in natural every day environment’ (Wallace op.cit.: 110) and ‘the validity of the pedagogic model based on the native speaker-based notion of communicative competence’ (Alptekin op.cit.: 57). Wallace (op.cit.) questions the role of this version of communicative language teaching in a globalised world. In place of CLT’s current emphasis on oral, relatively informal communication in English she suggests that a discursive and literary form of the language would give learners more sophisticated skills to participate globally in a world community and in public arenas. In her opinion this ability to take part in any critique of English should thus enable the learners to realise the emancipatory goals of globalisation rather than be subjugated to the oppressive ones. Alptekin, too, suggests that:

A new notion of communicative competence is needed, one which recognizes English as a world language. This would encompass local and international contexts as settings of language use, involve native-nonnative and nonnative-nonnative discourse

participants, and take as pedagogic models successful bilinguals with intercultural insights and knowledge (op. cit.: 57).

2. 4. 3 Moving the teaching of pronunciation forward into the new millennium

The third vital area for scrutiny as English takes on the mantle of world lingua franca is pronunciation. Jenkins (2000), in her analysis of data collected from ‘non-native speaker’ interaction in English (that is interaction between two bilingual users of English) has declared that the future of English as an international language is inextricably bound up with its pronunciation. Jenkins’ central argument, as highlighted in the previous chapter, is to try to make the teaching of phonology more relevant to the needs of the majority of people now using English internationally, that is the ‘non-native speakers’. In attempting to solve the problem of intelligibility she has proposed a phonological Core Lingua Franca, that is a body focussing on the areas of pronunciation which appeared in her research to have the greatest influence on intelligibility, such as most consonant sounds, long and short vowels, nuclear stress and a strong focus on articulatory setting. Jenkins states:

My argument is that unless pronunciation teachers (and materials writers) are conversant with these factors [those of the Core Lingua Franca] they are in danger of remaining confined within the narrow pronunciation methodology of the type that has dominated the field for so many years, instead of being able to adapt their approach to the international needs of many of their students (2000: 195).

What is more, it is not just ‘non-native speakers’ she exhorts to understand and imitate the central tenets of the Core Lingua Franca but ‘native speakers’ as well, and for the developers of teacher training courses to begin to train their teachers in these areas. Jenkins does not view the desire to make ‘non-native speakers’ conform to the ‘native speaker’ standard as useful or relevant for the future. In fact, Jenkins declares that it is now internationally sensible for the phonological needs of the majority, that is the ‘non-native speakers’ to be prioritised over those of the minority, the ‘native speakers’.

However Seidlhofer, while recognising the ‘potentially very significant impact that the availability of an alternative model’ (2001: 133) of the English used internationally could have, calls for more research and greater description of this contemporary extensive use of English world-wide. Equally, Timmis (2002) also problematises Jenkins’ treatise in

terms of recognition of the opinions of students regarding ‘native speaker’ pronunciation norms. Moreover, it needs to be recognised that Jenkins’ vision of English as an international language has met with firm opposition from, for example, Kuo (2006), who views the idea as a further imposition by ‘native speakers’ to maintain their superiority in the Periphery. Finally, Holliday (in process) provides a social and political critique of the English as a lingua franca movement in ELT, suggesting it ‘may be in danger of failing to escape the methodological nationalism which underpins much of established applied linguistics, and which marginalises significant cosmopolitan realities of so-called ‘non-native speaker’ educators.’ He also puts forward the notion that the ‘well-meaning Centre constructions of English as a lingua-franca’ are perhaps naïve in their desire to ‘help’ [the ‘non-native speaker’].

2. 4. 4 The role of the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher?

Whatever the critiques, though, the new role of English appears to have contributed to the calling into question of some of the default premises of current, international ELT. First, some academics have queried the appropriacy and continued popularity of CLT methodology in world-wide contexts. Moreover, CLT’s demand for ‘native speaker’ competencies, as well as its collaborative methods have been challenged as possibly ideologically manipulative and self-serving for ‘native speaker’ teachers, policy makers, materials writers, teacher educators, publishers etc. The problems of internationally intelligible pronunciation in a world where ‘native speakers’ are undertaking or will be undertaking fewer interactions in English than ‘non-native speakers’ have also been spotlighted, and the teaching of English phonology within the traditional paradigm of ‘native speaker’ phonological norms has been opposed for this reason. Bearing these points in mind, a logical consequence would appear to be that any ‘native speaker’ dominance in ELT may no longer continue to be the traditional scenario in this changing environment, and an extension of these concerns is to problematise the current role of the ‘native speaker’ teacher.

The origins of the ‘native speaker’ dominance in English language teaching may well be traced to the Makerere Conference (Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, 1961) which bestowed legitimacy on the belief that ‘the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker’ (Phillipson op.cit.: 185) and was undoubtedly

a reflection of the belief that teaching a language is synonymous with teaching a culture. This conceptualisation of the 'native speaker' teacher of English has led to the widespread view that the goal of almost all English language teaching is to achieve 'native speaker' competence. What is more the 'native speaker' has been defined by Chomsky as an 'ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows the language perfectly' (1965: 3).

Two worrying points are raised by such assertions of the legitimacy of the 'native speaker'. Firstly, this ideal speaker of English is a fiction, not a reality, as 'native speakers' are influenced by geography, occupation, age and social status and there is no 'standardised' version of the language they speak (Alptekin op.cit.). Secondly, English now has a trans-national and trans-ethnic profile rather than simply being identified with the 'native speakers' from the 'Inner Circle'. What is more, on the whole, this 'ideal native speaker teacher' has been minimally trained on, for example, the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults, in basic CLT classroom techniques and overwhelmingly still from countries e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Britain where monolingualism rather than bilingualism prevails and the competent speaking of other languages is a rarity rather than the norm. On the other hand, the 'non-native speaker' teacher has experience of learning English and therefore has first hand knowledge of the 'learning route' his/her students must take. On the whole these 'non-native speaker' teachers usually have a degree in English, too. There are, of course, exceptions on both sides with 'native speakers' who speak other languages and who are well qualified and 'non-native speakers' who have poor English and no qualifications.

However, comparison between the excellence of the 'native speaker' teacher model, not just in terms of language but in terms of teaching and the apparently inferior 'non-native speaker' model has had an unfair and long lasting effect on the teaching of English world-wide. For example, Nayar (1994) opines that such a paradigm is the basis on which decades of English language pedagogy and a multi-million dollar English language industry has been built. He also asserts that 'native speakers' have given themselves the rights to control the global norms of English and that they have also asserted dominance in terms of the theory and practice of its teaching and research, with 'native speakers' being seen as the most desirable teachers, trainers and experts.

What is more, despite a statement by Canagarajah (1999a) that 80% of English language teaching professionals in the world are bilingual users of English, the comparison outlined above between ‘native’ and ‘non-native speaker’ teachers remains widespread, insidious and divisive, with anachronistic preferences still made by institutions in the ELT job market world-wide (Amin 1999; Braine 1999; Holliday in process; Kamhi-Stein 1999; Thomas 1999; Unsain, in process.). McKay, when speaking of discrimination against increasingly mobile ‘non-native speaker’ teachers, says:

The degree to which they are discriminated against by employers and students and their sponsors, when in competition with ‘native speakers’ has become more apparent in recent years. [] This becomes more evident where, with the overall ascendancy of ‘non-native speakers’, they compete for jobs and status both at ‘home’ and in transnational domains traditionally dominated by their ‘native speaker’ colleagues (op.cit.: 42).

However, since Medgyes (1994) published his first edition of *The Non-Native Speaker Teacher* which problematised these issues, there has been a growing number of international publications, conference presentations and journal papers addressing the concerns of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers by both ‘non-native speaker’ scholars and less parochial ‘native speaker’ academics as well. These include Braine 1999; Phillipson 1992; Holliday 2002a; Kumarvadivelu 2001; and Graddol 1997.

2. 4. 5 Growing recognition of the ‘non-native speaker’ English teacher

Furthermore, in terms of recognition of these concerns, in the *Nonnative English Speakers in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Caucus, May, 2003 Bibliography*, there are ninety five references to works by or about non-native speaker teachers in English published after 1996 and most from 2000 onwards. In fact, North America with its continuing immigration, has been at the ‘coal-face’ with regard to unfair hiring practices and discrimination towards ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. The USA has also championed a developing recognition of the expertise of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. Thus the recounting in text of the challenges for recognition facing ‘non-native speaker’ English language teachers is now gaining ground, with further academics such as Amin 2001; Kamhi-Stein 2000a, 2002b, 2002; Nayar 1994; Kamhi-Stein et al. 2001; Liu

1999, 2001; Matsuda 2003; Moussu et al. 2003 speaking out. These are, though, predominantly challenges raised in the USA.

However, Unsain (in process), in her timely study of employment practices towards ‘non-native speaker’ EFL teachers in the UK, also highlights the discrimination suffered by these ‘non-native speaker teachers’ in England and Unsain tells, for example, how they are frequently asked not to reveal their nationalities to learners if they manage to gain employment in England. Furthermore, in another ‘Inner Circle’ country, Australia, concern over the number and situation of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers of English resulted in a report commissioned by the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. It declared its rationale:

These issues are particularly relevant to Australia, where one in four of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Courses for EL teachers are increasingly attended by student teachers whose first language is not English but who speak it fluently. Australia’s Adult Migrant English Program (AmeP)-has a significant number of NNS teachers (Kessler, 2003: vi).

After the twelve month study the report concluded:

One of the key points to come out of the research is the contribution that non-native/multilingual teachers make to the profession in the sense that they are cultural role models, have an awareness of grammar and have been through the process of learning English themselves. We really need to discuss in our teacher education programs more about the Graddol and David Crystal books so that we can locate this in a broader world field. There probably isn’t enough discussion in many teacher education programs about this (Kessler *ibid.*).

2.5 Conclusion: ELT in a globalising world

Thus, the upheavals occurring and the new conjunctions forming in an ever changing, globalising world seem to be unravelling the English language teaching constructions built on an old ELT world order of ‘Inner Circle’, Periphery and ‘Outer Circle’ (Kachru 1985) speakers of English. Importantly, in terms of this thesis about the identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher, there appears an unfolding series of questions around the goal of English language teaching which continues to aim at ‘native speaker’

pronunciation when, in fact, intelligibility between speakers of many different ‘varieties’ of English seems to be what is and will continue to be required in a globalising world. There are also questions around the teaching of ‘native speaker’ culture, when mutual accommodation of intercultural diversity appears a necessity for international users of English if they are to communicate successfully with other international users. Furthermore, there are questions with regard to the continued credibility and appropriateness of the pervasive bedrock CLT methodology when it is taught on ‘native speaker’ training programmes, practised internationally by ‘native speaker’ teachers and teacher trainers, incorporated into ELT materials sold in most countries and, thereby, ultimately disseminated world-wide in almost all English teaching contexts. Finally though, and vital in terms of this study, the literature raises questions around the concept of the currently accepted default mode of the ‘excellent native speaker’ English language teacher when, considering the new position of English in the world, ‘non-native speaker’ teachers may prove as appropriate or even more appropriate teachers of the language. This chapter has also highlighted the efforts made by ‘non-native speakers’ to state their case as equal and valued teachers of English when compared with their ‘native speaker’ colleagues.

The questions raised by the literature, therefore, seem to suggest a need for a re-evaluation of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers with regard to their self-constructs and position in the world of ELT. Indeed, the literature of the field presents a growing body of work by international ELT scholars in journals, texts and conference papers which indicate that it may be time to question the iconic role and practices of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. It would appear, thus, that these academic voices are calling for a reappraisal of the traditionally accepted perceptions of English language teachers and English language teaching in order for the teaching of English to keep pace with its new role in the globalising world.

Chapter 3: Teacher identity and teacher cognition (beliefs, thoughts and knowledge)

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I attempted to clarify how, according to ELT academics, the changed role of English has the potential for some considerable impact on the current 'norms' in the world of English language teaching, the 'native speaker' English language teacher, and her/his classroom in particular. I have attempted to show that a re-evaluation of the practices, pronunciation model and current status of the 'native-speaker' teacher is being urged by some academics in the field. In the forthcoming analysis of the data (Chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8) I will seek to show that, in this study, these academic challenges appear to present a dilemma for the 'native speaker' practitioners who have traditionally occupied the role of internationally valued teachers.

However, in order to provide a fuller understanding of the professional identity of the 'native speaker' EFL teacher, it seems appropriate to also discuss concepts of the professional identities of teachers working in mainstream compulsory education. Any insight into the professional constructs of teachers working in wider society will thus be available to provide a point of comparison with the 'native speaker' EFL teacher. Therefore, the mainstream teachers referred to in the first part of this chapter come from the same educational systems and societies (Britain, North America and Australasia) as the considerable majority of 'native speaker' English language teachers. Nevertheless, in selecting these particular geographical locations, I also recognise Holliday's argument with regard to the 'cosmopolitan realities' of various other 'native speaker' EFL teachers, who may well have more complex backgrounds and 'present a cosmopolitan normality in which large numbers of people no longer live in the places where they or their parents were born and where there is a blurring of traditional national and cultural identities' (Holliday, in process). However, my rationale for choosing mainstream teachers from the above locations is that these represent the birthplaces of the 'native speaker' teachers in this study.

Thus I start this chapter with a discussion of the perceived professional identities of these mainstream teachers because this is the group of teachers with the highest profile in society, the group about whom most members of society have opinions, the group with whom most research has been carried out and about whom there is substantial literature. This discussion of the identities of mainstream teachers is then followed by views from the literature regarding teacher cognition, that is the thoughts, beliefs and knowledge of teachers. This discussion focuses especially on language teachers and how these cognitions might impact on their professional identities.

Having given a general background to teacher identity and how and what language teachers appear to think and believe, this chapter concludes with the more specific discussion of the self and societal perceptions of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. However, this latter derives from the more limited amount of literature available about ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers’ professional identities.

3. 2 The paradoxes of mainstream teacher identity

In this first section I look at the paradoxes of mainstream teacher identity which have been highlighted in the literature. There are eight different areas which appear to be problematic when attempting to construct a professional identity for the mainstream teacher working within National Curricula. I start by problematising the issue of whether or not teaching is a profession.

3. 2. 1 Do teachers have a professional identity?

The first dilemma for teachers working in compulsory education seems to be that of whether or not they are, in fact, ‘professionals’. Throughout his work on teachers and teaching in ‘the knowledge society’ (Bell 1976), defined as people and institutions which produce knowledge in expert sectors, Hargreaves suggests that the knowledge society of today infiltrates all aspects of economic life and refers to the need for teachers to be ‘key agents who can bring it into being’ (2003.: 15). He continues by suggesting that teachers must therefore build a special type of professionalism and cites many teachers who speak of themselves as professionals. Yet the opening lines of his own volume already reveal a doubt about whether or not teaching qualifies as a profession. ‘Of all the jobs that are or

aspire to be professions, only teaching..' (Hargreaves *ibid.*: 1) (my emphasis). These words, which query exactly where teaching stands in terms of being a profession or a 'partial' profession is echoed in other literature, for example Hargreaves and Goodson (1996), who suggest that teachers are ambivalent about whether their identity is that of professionals or of cultural workers. Additionally Hargreaves and Goodson (*op.cit.*) open their paper with the line 'The struggle for professional recognition..' (*ibid.*: 1). As well, Talbert and McLaughlin reflect on two studies saying that 'Primary-secondary teaching is portrayed as relatively weak on each criterion for professional status' (1996: 129). They add, too, that 'Academics have debated whether teaching is a profession or a semi-profession, whether is it an art, a craft or a science' (Talbert and McLaughlin *op.cit.*: 129). Moreover, Robertson in her discussion of Australian teachers states:

The capacity of public-sector teachers to create a protected institutional market for their services, in comparison to doctors and lawyers, has only ever been partially successful and teachers remained on the periphery in relation to other professional occupations. The reasons for this are crucial to understanding the border existence for teachers as a 'core' profession in Australia (1996: 34).

3. 2. 2 Codified vs. experiential knowledge: what is valued?

The second paradox, derived from, yet contributing to the first, concerns one criterion of a 'profession'. There is a widespread societal concept that one aspect of a profession is a body of codified knowledge. In fact much 'professionalism' in teaching is seen, on the contrary, as based on experience and 'knowing-in-action' (Szesztay 2004). In other words practicalities, and these, too, are often tied to the specific context of particular classrooms. Teacher knowledge, in fact, rather than something which is codified is normally that which is tacit and hard to articulate and in a dialectical relationship with the teachers' world of practice. Equally, it is often told in stories which are disseminated along primarily oral channels. The following is an example:

The teachers were immersed in knowledge and information of all kinds. Formal knowledge was introduced by the principal and teachers who routinely circulated papers for reading and discussion. Individual, personal and practical knowledge was shared and extended through group discourse. This individual and group knowledge,

and the resulting socially constructed wisdom about teaching, then became public knowledge as the teachers from Lakeview made presentations in other schools. (Wideen et al. 1996: 201)

Cochran-Smith and Lytle refer to a problem with this division between knowledge produced by teachers and the lack of codification of that knowledge. They say:

Although there has been considerable emphasis in current educational research on developing a systematic and rigorous body of knowledge about teaching, little attention has been given to the roles teachers might play in generating a knowledge base. That few teachers participate in codifying what we know about teaching, identifying research agendas and creating new knowledge presents a problem (1990: 2).

They also note that that there are ‘critical issues which divide research on teaching from teacher research and thus make it extremely difficult for the academic community to recognise the contribution that teacher research can make’ (ibid.: 2).

3. 2. 3 Shared technical knowledge?

Thirdly, linked to this idea of a paucity of codified teacher knowledge is the teachers’ own shaky belief in a further criterion in a classic definition of what constitutes a profession, that is a shared technical knowledge. In a seminal study by Lortie, cited in Hargreaves and Goodson, Lortie found there was little evidence of a ‘shared technical culture of teaching’ (op.cit.: 5), especially for primary teachers. Other later studies concur and Soder (1990) suggested that it is unrealistic to propose that pedagogical content knowledge or an understanding of co-operative learning strategies, for example, could be equated to scientific or technological advances in a profession such as medicine. Hargreaves (1984), too, previously noted that scientific theory was less useful for teachers in their work than practical experiences. Furthermore, in terms of this ‘shared technical culture’, Hargreaves and Goodson state that teaching is ‘neither technical nor shared. It did not measure up to this professional mark’ (op.cit.: 5).

Furthermore, Kelchtermans (1993), discussing the professional identities of mainstream teachers, noted that, to a large extent their knowledge lacked the legitimacy of scientific knowledge. As well he highlighted the teachers’ vulnerability in the face of

external investigation when he reported on both the weak basis the teachers' experiential knowledge appeared to have when questioned by others, and the teachers' need to defend their practice and convince others of its value. Hargreaves and Goodson also reflect, when referring to the possibility of lengthening the period of postgraduate teacher preparation to two years, that this would 'stretch public credibility to the limits, given that the existence of a new technology for teaching which might demand more training, is not demonstrable' (1996: 6).

3. 2. 4 Professional integrity?

A fourth paradox concerns the teachers' professional integrity as in today's world it is common for the British, North American and Australasian media, politicians and the public to denigrate teachers and teaching as a profession with continuous attacks. Governments also impose unending standardising educational reforms on them. In fact, Hargreaves argues from his research in USA and Canada that in this way:

Teachers are treated and developed not as high-skill, high-capacity knowledge workers, but as compliant and closely monitored producers of standardized performances. Teachers with over-examined professional lives complain of eroded autonomy, lost creativity, restricted flexibility and constrained capacity to exercise their professional judgement. They keep their heads down, struggle along alone and withdraw from work with their colleagues. Professional community collapses, time to reflect evaporates, and the love of learning disappears. Teachers lose faith in their governments, grasp at opportunities for resignation and retirement, and even urge their own children not to follow in their footsteps (2003: xx).

Hargreaves continues further:

The knowledge society finds it difficult to make teaching a true learning profession. The very profession which is so often said to be of such vital importance for the knowledge economy is the one that too many groups have devalued, more and more people want to leave, fewer and fewer want to join, and very few are interested in leading. This is more than a paradox. It is a crisis of disturbing proportions (ibid.: 2).

Indeed, the fixed phrase in English of ‘Those who can, do, those who can’t, teach’, further reflects a commonly held societal view of teachers and teaching, and when teachers in Australian society went on strike to protest at ‘efficiency’ and ‘managerial’ reforms ‘they received little sympathy from the media who presented their dissent as the expected outpourings of over-paid, over-holidayed and underworked public servants’ (Robertson 1996: 43). Robertson continues: ‘With teachers’ claim to expert knowledge marginalized in the public mind, teachers’ capacity to mobilise the laity - and therefore some support to their cause - was diminished’ (ibid.: 43). What is more the credence attached to the opinions of the public and parents and the regulations of the government with regard to teachers and teaching is a major factor in setting limits on the development of strong professional standards. Again, this prevents a more self-regulated, collegial control of the ‘profession’ and has the capacity to contribute to a subsequent lack of professional integrity.

3. 2. 5 Creative, autonomous and caring?

Commitment also appears to be a problem for teachers. On one hand research into teachers in compulsory education (Hargreaves 2003) reveals that they value themselves as creative, autonomous, and caring individuals who are able to expend emotional labour on their pupils. For example: ‘I love teaching, and I go home everyday feeling good about my relations with my classes, feeling energized by my students, believing that I am helping them to improve and develop their skills and looking forward to what we (my classes and I) will do next’ (Hargreaves op.cit.: 91). What is more when teachers are prevented from using or showing these qualities they become a tired, dispirited and stressed work-force. Hargreaves relates:

Teachers were worn down by the loss of creativity and spontaneity in their work and wounded by the theft of their autonomy. They talked about valuing the ability to ‘call their own shots’ and be imaginative in their classrooms. They felt it was a ‘damn shame’ that ‘that sense of autonomy, that ability to create your own curriculum with high standards, has to be thrown out of place by something that is artificial’. A colleague also bemoaned the ‘taking away of professional judgement and autonomy as a teacher’ (ibid: 70).

However, on the other hand, Talbert and McLaughlin record that this is not always the case and present a more complex scenario:

The service ethic, a second dimension of professional standards, is highly variable among teachers (at least at the high school level). Teachers' commitment to all students' personal and academic growth cannot be taken for granted. Teachers may subscribe generally to the service ethic, but this standard is transformed and interpreted differently when made explicit in the school or classroom (1996: 130).

Talbert and McLaughlin (ibid.) further clarify that shared commitment and occupational commitment vary dramatically from school to school and opine that this may account for the weak levels of professionalism observed amongst teachers.

3. 2. 6 A different discourse of professionalism?

It has been noted that the first paradox for mainstream teachers must be whether or not they are considered as professionals in the wider society. However, the classic definitions of 'professionalism' have been under discussion by academics in what Hargreaves has termed 'a defining moment of educational history when the world in which teachers do their work is changing profoundly' (2003: xvii). Different discourses of professionalism have been put forward, such as the suggestion by Hargreaves and Goodson of a complex professionalism. This argument suggests that 'professions should be judged by the complexity of the work tasks which comprise them and that teaching is characterised by high degrees of complexity' (1996: 17). Despite these suggestions, however, it must be recognised that according to the above writers about new definitions of 'professionalism', such debates are experienced very differently in the real world of the teachers' work and lives compared to how they appear in official discourses.

3. 2. 7 An identity of 'discipline' ?

Furthermore, if mainstream teachers succeed in demonstrating a more solid, less confused and contradictory construction of an 'identity', it is suggested that they do it through alignment to the subjects they teach. Goodson (1988) argues that the cultures of the disciplines in which teachers are primarily involved themselves inculcate points of view and behaviour. Holliday, too, declares 'For practising teachers, the subjects they

teach continue to be central to their identity' (1994: 70). This, he suggests, occurs at both an instrumental level of career pathway or at an intellectual level of knowledge derived from academic departments of the subjects they studied. Borg (2006), in his research into the characteristics of foreign language teachers, also agrees that mainstream teachers can seem distinctive in terms of the nature of the subject they teach. This identity of 'discipline' is, however, generally seen as only applicable to those teachers working in what Bernstein (1971:47) has classified as a collectionist paradigm of education, that is a subject-oriented, didactic approach to teaching and learning.

3. 2. 8 An archetypal image?

Finally, I suggest that a last paradox may exist for mainstream teachers in terms of their image. Despite increasing discourses of reform, such as those put forward by Hargreaves (2003) which urge teachers and teacher preparation programmes to change with the times, the identity that society ascribes to teachers, and the identity teachers ascribe to themselves appear based both on cultural myths and the reality of observing classrooms. Indeed, Marsh (2003) suggests that the consistency of the image of the 'archetypal teacher' is seen in a growing acknowledgement that the identity of teachers is rooted in childhood and from observations of teaching at home and at school. Additionally, Sugrue (1996), in his study of Irish trainee teachers, established that formative encounters with family and friends who reinforced an idea of their 'teacher personalities', had shaped their identification with teaching and caused them often to think they had been 'born to it'. Fullan (1993) notes that such encounters help to perpetuate a misconception that any reasonably intelligent person can teach.

Moreover, Weber and Mitchell (1996), in a North American study, used drawings by pupils and neophyte teachers to demonstrate that there is a shared western visual vocabulary which portrays teachers with almost identical symbols. That is a white woman, usually pleasant, pointing or explaining in front of a blackboard, despite teaching now being more technically complex and wide-ranging than it ever has been. Such a recognisably stereotypical image portrayed in the drawings is further evidenced by another common English comment 'Funny, you don't look like a teacher!' indicating a belief in our shared mental image of a teacher.

Both the study by Weber and Mitchell (op.cit.) in a North American setting and that by Sugrue (op.cit.) concluded that such stereotypical images and encounters have the power to shape our views of what a teacher is and continue to influence the reality of what schools are. In other words, there is a connection between the traditional cultural images and the lived experience of teachers, despite new models of teacher education and new demands on teachers which attempt to alter this. Hargreaves supports such a view in his discussion on the expectations of state education:

The rhetoric of classroom change usually outstripped the reality. [] in which most teachers taught as they had for generations- from the front of the classroom; through lecturing, seat work, and question and answer method; and in separate classes of children of the same age, evaluated by standard paper-and-pencil methods (2003: 4).

In conclusion, it appears that mainstream teachers are ‘trapped within certain images, and come to resemble things or conditions, their identity assuming an essentialist quality and, as such, socially constructed meanings become known as innate and natural’ Britzman (1991) cited in Weber and Mitchell (op. cit.: 112).

3. 3 Conclusion

In terms of professional identity, therefore, it is thus feasible to propose that in the knowledge society, considered by Hargreaves (2003) as product of globalisation, mainstream teachers are viewed by academics in the field of education as beset by some dilemmas of professional identity. There is uncertainty over these teachers’ status as professionals, and indeed what constitutes appropriate criteria for the profession of teaching in a world which demands changed priorities in education; the value of the teachers’ knowledge; the degree of commitment they share; how far they obtain identity from a ‘discipline’; and the conflict between traditional ‘teacher’ images and the new realities of classrooms. There also appears to be an issue regarding the apparently remote rhetoric of educationalists compared to the daily reality of teachers’ professional lives.

3. 4 Teacher cognition: teachers' thoughts, beliefs and knowledge

Having looked at how mainstream teachers seem to be viewed by society, academics and to a certain extent, by themselves, and seen that some paradoxes of identity are suggested by the literature, I move now to a discussion of teacher cognition, that is 'the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching, what teachers know, believe and think' (Borg 2003: 81). I do this in an attempt to investigate whether these mental constructs and their relationship with teachers' classroom practices might contribute to some understanding of the professional identities of the 'native speaker' EFL teacher. Indeed, in mainstream education it has been recognised that prior learning, contextual factors, and professional preparation all play a part in the mental constructs of teachers and that these personal, practical, and contextual understandings also have a consistently powerful impact on the teachers' professional practices. Compared though with mainstream education there has been much less research undertaken with English language teachers, let alone with 'native speaker' English language teachers. However, in this section I attempt to isolate some factors of the language teacher research on cognition which may be of importance in their professional identity constructs.

I start first with some indication of the nature of the studies which have been carried out and the problems inherent in these, both in terms of their design and of their relevance to this study. Then, the role previous language learning experience plays in teacher cognition is highlighted and how personal classroom experiences contribute to developing beliefs is discussed. Finally, some studies which focus on the teachers' relationship with theory and practice are fore-fronted.

3. 4. 1 Empirical studies: diversity of research and focus

With regard to language teacher cognition, there have been a number of empirical studies (for example Bailey 1996; Borg 1999; Breen et al. 2001; Burns 1992,1996; Freeman 1996; Johnson 1996; Richards 1996; Richards et al. 1998) which are analysed in a wide-ranging review by Borg (2003). However, in this analysis Borg notes that one of the most important findings to emerge from his review is that the studies give 'an overriding impression of diversity, with hardly any replication or evidence of systematic programmes of research' (op.cit.: 83). What is more, these studies do not by any means

specifically focus on the experienced ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher, or indeed specifically on ‘native speaker’ language teachers. Moreover, even if a very small number of studies relate to experienced ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher, they rarely address the broader conceptualisations of professional identity focussed on in this thesis. Indeed, the studies reported on in the review by Borg (2003) are, for the most part, concerned with teacher thoughts and beliefs with regard to their impact on, for example, classroom decision making, instruction giving, or specific content areas of teaching such as grammar or literacy. As well, in a recent study by de Sonneville (2007) on teacher thinking, the focus is again placed firmly on teacher beliefs being changed in terms of practical classroom work, rather than a wider understanding of the role of EFL teachers in the changing world and their relationship with academic thought.

3. 4. 2 The role of prior language learning in establishing cognition

However, there are findings from the study by Borg (2003) which may have some bearing on ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher identities. First of all, with regard to teachers’ early language learning experiences, Borg says: ‘The general picture to emerge here then is that teachers’ prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language which form the basis of their initial conceptualisations of L2 teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives’ (ibid.: 88). This, of course, cannot be applied to teachers who have not learnt other languages, as is the case with many ‘native speaker’ English language teachers.

3. 4. 3 Personal, practical classroom experiences and beliefs

Borg (2003) also believes that the studies in his review succeed in collectively highlighting the personal nature of teacher cognition and the role of experience in developing the language teachers’ thoughts, beliefs and knowledge. With reference to this accumulation of experience, which in turn interacts with cognition, Crookes and Arakaki also report:

Many of these teachers spoke about their teaching experience as being a personally unique and self-contained entity. It was a personal history of knowledge and information gained through trial and error, concerning which teaching ideas (and their sources) were effective in which circumstances. As one veteran teacher stated simply.

'As you have more practice, then you know in the classroom what will work and what will not work' (1999: 16).

What is more, in terms of the experience/cognition interface, Golombek suggests that the idea of personal, practical knowledge (PPK) is of relevance to the ESL (English as a Second language) teachers in her study. She shows how PPK 'is personally relevant, situational, oriented towards practice, dialectical, and dynamic, as well as moralistic, emotional, and consequential' (1998: 452). Following a study of experienced ESL teachers, Breen et al. also concur, saying that 'a teacher's beliefs or personal theories... tend to be experientially informed and appear to become deeply held and largely context independent' (2001: 473).

Language teachers having principles which are 'context independent' seems in contrast to the belief that specific situations influence the practices of mainstream teachers. However, Breen et al. continue to explain this more fully in relation to language teachers: 'Over time, a teacher may evolve a framework of principles made up of 'core' principles that are applied across teaching situations and 'peripheral', more malleable principles that are thereby more adaptable to shifting contexts' (ibid.: 474). Borg (2003) additionally summarises that the nature of language teachers' cognitions and practices are idiosyncratic and this notion is again echoed in Breen et al., who speak of a teacher as having 'a personal repertoire, personal constructions, realised in selective ways and through a set of favoured practices' (ibid.: 495). These authors also noted, however, that beneath this 'seemingly idiosyncratic' behaviour there appeared a 'collective pedagogy' (Breen et al: 495).

3. 4. 4 Other thoughts and beliefs

Furthermore, in terms of understanding the professional identities of the 'native speaker' EFL teacher, Borg (2003) notes that the studies revealed the teachers' mental lives as complex, with knowledge, beliefs, conceptions and intuitions confusingly entwined in a 'muddly' manner. Other authors, Bailey et al. (1996), established in a study of MA candidates that teachers' personalities and styles mattered more than methodology and that teachers believed learning was facilitated by a positive classroom environment. These teachers also believed that, in undertaking an exploration of their teaching

experiences they were able to articulate their own theories of teaching. Moreover Borg (2003) reports on a study by Burns (1996) which raises the issue that ‘organisational exigencies’ such as discipline problems, which are rarely described in the literature on language teacher cognition, may have the power to hinder language teachers’ abilities to adopt practices.

3. 4. 5 Language teacher’ beliefs and academic theory

In terms of teacher beliefs and academic theory, Burns (1996) notes that there are networks of beliefs which appear to be foundational to classroom practices and constitute the language teachers’ theories. She also notes that these theories are highly significant and the motivating frameworks for what teachers do when they teach, yet they are ‘frequently unconscious and implicit’ (ibid.: 174) which may somewhat challenge the findings of Bailey et al. (op.cit.) above. Burns seeks, though, to differentiate between these personal teacher theories and the theories of practice, or academic theory, typically taught on teacher education programmes. Burns (op.cit.: 175) also cites Stern (1983) as commenting that: ‘ Language teachers can be said to regard themselves as practical people and not as theorists. Some might even say they are opposed to ‘theory’, expressing their opposition with such remarks as ‘It’s all very well in theory, but it won’t work in practice’. However, both Stern and Burns suggest that ‘theories’, that is academic theory, are in fact embedded in classroom practice and Burns continues to suggest that making a distinction between the theory of academics and ‘practice’ at the ‘chalk-face’ might be misleading. Smith, in another study, noted that the teachers’ use of theory was eclectic, with experienced teachers selecting ‘from a range of theoretical ideas those aspects which correlate with their personal beliefs and [using] the surface features (the techniques) they have found to be effective from experience to meet their practical needs’ (1996: 208).

These authors thus seem to agree that the personal theories of teachers, derived from classroom experience, play a major role in determining practice, yet these scholars also appear not to discount some relationship between teacher beliefs, practice and academic theory. It needs to be stressed, though, that the publications above relate to classroom work such as decision making, developing classroom dynamics, the choice of tasks, and not to more macro understandings of the teachers’ professional identity in international

English language teaching classroom. It is also important to state that not all or even many studies refer exclusively to ‘native speaker’ English language teachers.

3. 5 Conclusion

In terms of how language teacher cognition impacts on the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ professional identity, the literature is concerned with a number of different types of language teachers. Moreover, it almost exclusively highlights the role of cognition in terms of its impact on, and interaction with, everyday classroom practices. There is scant indication of how cognition contributes to a more global understanding of the identity of the ELT teacher, especially in a world where the role of English has changed, which is the main focus of this study. However, what may be seen from the empirical studies with regard to ascertaining professional identity through classroom practice is a view that teachers manifest practices which are personalised, deeply rooted in classroom experience and the teacher theories they work from are often implicit. There also seems some agreement that academic theory may, in some way and to some extent, be implicated in everyday language teacher practice.

3. 6 The dilemmas of ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher identity: a ‘majority’ discourse and a ‘minority’ discourse

Thus, in terms of providing some background to the professional identities of teachers in compulsory education and how they are seen by themselves and society, it has been put forward that certain dilemmas exist for this group and their professional identity is far from sure. It has also been suggested in the literature that their thoughts, beliefs and knowledge, that is their cognition and their practice and experience are deeply entwined. This has also been seen to be valid in the small number of empirical studies of EFL teachers.

I move now from this discussion of mainstream teachers’ identities and language teacher cognition to an exploration of the identity constructs of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers. Here I reiterate that there is considerable literature concerned with mainstream teachers but in terms of attempting to understand perceptions of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers, it is more difficult to find data and comment about their

professional constructs. This is especially so when attempting to investigate their understandings and reactions to the changes proposed by ELT academics and these teachers' relationship with such academic work. Where the British trained 'native speaker' English language teacher is concerned, comment and interrogation are skimpy at best. For example, Samimy and Brutt Griffler, while writing about 'non-native speaker' teachers, state:

There is a scarcity of empirical studies that explore the differences between native and non-native teachers of English. There is a particular need for such studies in the area of self-perception or self-image as English language professionals (1999: 30).

Moreover, although these authors were writing eight years ago, this appears still the case. Additionally, although the volume by Braine (1999), in which the above chapter is found, sketchily outlines the perceived identities of 'native speaker' teachers, the book is essentially a work which aims at addressing the vacuum of literature on the struggles for identity by the 'non-native' speaker teachers. In fact, 'native speaker' teachers are dealt with 'by proxy'. Indeed, the lack of studies looking at the identities of 'native speaker' English language teachers in the world of ELT is in itself revealing. While authors such as Braine (op.cit.) and his contributors, as well as, for example, Medgyes 1994; Shuck 2002; and the Nonnative English Speakers in TESOL Caucus website: <http://nnest.moussu.net/>, have been at the forefront of attempting to problematise the identity constructs of the 'non-native speaker' teacher, there is a scarcity of similar writing looking at the professional self constructs of the 'native speaker' teacher. This seems to indicate that, until recently with the work of Anderson (2003), Baxter (2003), the work of Holliday (2005) and to some extent Borg (2006) and Nayar (2002) there has been very little unravelling of how the experienced 'native speaker' teacher views himself/herself within the ELT profession.

3. 6. 1 Little to investigate: deeply embedded 'native-speakerism'

It appears, then, that there has been an assumption that there is little to investigate with regard to how the 'native speaker' teacher of the English language views his/her professional identity in relation to arguments reflecting the changing scenario of English language teaching. This lack of investigation seems to further contribute to the

legitimation of certain linguistic and cultural norms discussed in the previous chapter and the 'native speaker' English language teacher thus remains reinforced as the default model of ELT. Indeed Nayar (2002), in his analysis of hundreds of English language teacher comments posted on a web-site, reflects that the network reveals a discourse which extends and reinforces the existing roles and ideologies of EFL. He concludes that, in the comments on the web, the 'native speaker', much in contrast to the 'non-native speaker', was identified as a teacher who was in control, with all the answers, an authority both on grammar and universal acceptability, a representative of correct language, of sound thinking and, Nayar opines, even proper social behaviour in English. This same theme is continued by Holliday who sees 'native-speakerism' as being so deeply embedded in TESOL that people are 'standardly unaware of its presence and its impact' (2005: 10).

Nevertheless, in the following section of this chapter, I will attempt to clarify as far as possible, further views in literature of the professional identity of the 'native speaker' English language teacher. This starts with a view of how his/her professional identity seems entwined with language proficiency, enviable employment opportunities, ethnicity and general classroom practices. This is followed by a discussion on how he or she is perceived by society and academia and the chapter finally looks at the relevance of research into teacher cognition (thoughts, beliefs and knowledge) in terms of understanding the perceptions of 'native speaker' teacher identity.

3. 6. 2 'Native speakers': linguistically and pedagogically superior

According to Canagarajah (1999a), the Chomskian view that the 'native speaker' is the authority on the language and that she or he is an ideal informant has provided the 'native speaker' teacher with a superior image in relation to her/his 'non-native' speaking learners and 'non-native' teachers which has endured for a lengthy period. As has been discussed in the previous section, despite this idealization having been interrogated and found wanting, see for example, Kramsch, 1997 and Phillipson, 1992, it still has very widespread currency. Murdoch (1994) called language proficiency the bedrock of the EFL teachers' professional confidence and in doing so further legitimised the 'native speaker'. Equally, Davies (1991: viii) in his work attempting to define the 'native speaker' opined that 'We all want to belong, we all want to be native speakers, we all choose groups which

we aspire to', and in so stating positioned the 'native speaker' as a group with high status and one to be emulated. Moreover, in relating his long period of working in Applied Linguistics, Davies also stated 'I have increasingly found the native speaker to be a kind of icon to which discussions about language teaching and learning return' (op. cit.: viii). Rajagopalan, too, acknowledges the concept of the 'native's authority - nay, his or her God-like infallibility' and the 'omniscient' native speaker- elevated to the status of a totem (2004: 114). He also mentions the 'one-upmanship in relation to non-natives' (ibid.: 115) and Rampton (1990) suggests that such ideas as these support the primacy of those born into a particular language. Graddol, likewise, believes that the term 'native speaker' 'locates the native speaker and native speaking countries at the centre of the global use of English and, by implication, the source of models of correctness, the best teachers and English-language goods and services consumed by those in the periphery' (1997: 10).

Shuck exemplifies this point when she speaks of interviewing fifty two students about their experiences with their first year writing course and found 'how easily they categorize their fellow students along binary 'native - non-native speaker' lines'. Shuck continues

A number of striking patterns emerged, particularly in the talk of white, mostly monolingual interviewees. First, their discussions posited two, mutually exclusive categories- native speaker and nonnative speaker. These categories seemed to entail other binary pairs as well, such as American vs. international students, white vs. nonwhite, and even more overtly hierarchically related pairs such as 'ahead' vs. 'behind', and 'know what's going on' vs. 'don't know what's going on' (2002: 2).

Rajagopalan, too, querying the role of the 'native speaker' when English has become a lingua franca speaks of the 'native speaker's 'privileged status as an EFL professional' (op.cit.: 116). Johnson, a 'native speaker' EFL teacher, showed this clearly when speaking of a classroom incident with Ali, a 'non-native' speaker EFL teacher she is mentoring. Johnson says:

Without bad intentions, I accepted myself, as everyone else had, as the acknowledged language expert in the class. By reflecting critically on my own reaction, I believe I was surprised at the preposition incident because in a way it challenged my unconscious understanding of myself as the English language authority, bestowed upon me as a native English speaker (2003: 6).

3. 6. 3 Privileged by employment, professional organisations and materials

The binary conceptualisation with the ‘native speaker’ as superior to the ‘non-native speaker’ EFL teacher is reinforced by Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) when looking at competition for power and resources between ‘native’ and ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. She likened the relationship to an A team (the ‘native speakers’) and a B team (the ‘non-native speakers’), with the A team having greater access to material resources and power than their relatively small numbers warrant. Holliday gives an example of this when he asks Kerry, a British teacher working in Thailand if she had any Thai colleagues. He noted her reply as ‘Sadly, no. We had different working conditions because we were native speakers and therefore considered more "expert" in our field’ (2005: 29). He surmises then that ‘When English-speaking-Western educators come into contact with colleagues from other places, it is not as professional equals’ (ibid.: 29).

Oda (1999), too, reveals this same inequality when discussing the languages of ELT organisations. Oda explains how ELT national institutions and professional associations invariably use English in professional discussions, management meetings, for conference presentations, and to disseminate information despite the fact that the majority of the members are bilingual. In this way they award power and privilege to ‘native speakers’ who often control the associations. Furthermore, in terms of employment, for example, in the US, in the UK, and in international organisations around the world, it is often only the ‘native speaker’ and not the ‘non-native’ who may apply for teaching positions in what Rajagopalan refers to as ‘unfair and discriminatory hiring practices’ (op.cit.: 114). Braine states frankly: ‘Needing 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 it was not stated explicitly, the message was clear: NNSs need not apply’ (1999b: 22).

3. 6. 4 A beneficial global commodity

This issue of employment is obvious, too, for example, in the world-wide offices of the British Council and its Direct Teaching Operation, which has been at the forefront of the promotion and spread of English overseas since 1934. In 2006 many recruitment advertisements for teachers for the Council still requested that only holders of British

passports should apply for posts or that applicants needed a British educational background, which in reality almost invariably means being a 'native speaker' and having a British passport. This high-profile, internationally located institution's apparent view that 'native speakers' are the sole custodians of English with the teaching of English an equitable selling of a beneficial global commodity, which the rest of the world has a chance to buy into, causes Pennycook (1994) to believe that English language teachers have comfortably positioned themselves within such discourses. They therefore, in his opinion, most often consider English language teaching very much 'a good thing' and interpret their professional role as one of an innocuous, international seller of a useful product.

3. 6. 5 'The West is best'

This maintenance of the 'native' model as the preferred option, however erroneous that homogeneous concept of a 'native speaker' model may be, must inevitably encourage an attitude of superiority within the 'native speaker' teacher. These are teachers who are, according to Pennycook (1994) citing Wu Jing-Yu (1982), dismissive of other possibilities of language as 'not English' and, by extension, ethnocentric in terms of seeing what they do, who they are and where they come from as developmental and modernizing. Pennycook adds to this debate by stating that 'English language teachers go [] overseas [] and we can see ourselves as bringing advanced ideas to backward regions of the world' (op.cit.: 59). He continues to exemplify this point with quotes from work by Murray 1982, Jochnowitz 1986, Casewit 1985, and other authors illustrating their views that the 'native speaker' teacher has a belief in his/her inherent superiority, not only of his or her teaching practices, but of the West and a Western life-style, which ranges from criticism of Chinese 'inscrutability' to toilets, telephones, freedom and veiled women.

It is worth noting that these academics were publishing around twenty years ago, yet Bax (2003) echoes such sentiments when describing examples of zealous 'native speaker' teachers in new international teaching posts viewing anything other than their own methodological options as out-of-date and consequently the other educational systems that different methods derive from as in need of improvement. Holliday (1994), too, in a laudably frank reading of his own work, admits to a western bias in observing some teaching by his Egyptian colleagues when he uses terms such as 'monotonous' and

‘surface’ in his Egyptian observation notes. However, Holliday is a thoughtful academic, writing in the UK, with time and inclination to reflect. The ‘native speaker’ teacher, on the other hand, is daily confronted in a busy life by ‘foreign’ learners and possibly living in ‘foreign’ environments too. They are at the chalk face, experiencing culture shock or ‘different’ classroom behaviours. It seems that these teachers inevitably have less time and inclination to reflect on their quick judgements. It may be, as Holliday suggests, that what the teachers refer to as ‘professional knowledge’ is simply a ‘phatic, therapeutic product of culture shock [and a] prejudiced imagination about Other cultures’ (2005: 26). Such is human behaviour that, in a situation of similar English teaching diasporas, members’ beliefs in their identity will cause them to assert this identity and act it out in their lives. This would suggest, therefore, that ‘native speaker’ teachers may well cling to their sense of ‘West is best’ when confronted with ideas, behaviour and beliefs that do not accord with their own.

3. 6. 6 Ethnically appropriate

A highly visible factor in creating or attributing identity is ‘race’, that is the using of labels such as black or coloured, white or brown, based on people’s skin colour, hair type etc. Although there is no sound evidence that the human species can be divided up into discrete and separate ‘races’ (Bhavani 1993: 31) the concept of ‘race’ has been undeniably influential and continues to inform contemporary views, with racial divisions being eternally represented and reproduced in our societies through racialized discourse and racist expression (Goldberg 1999). This concept, like that of ethnicity, has served to contribute to the assertion of the superiority of some ‘races’ and ‘ethnic’ groups over others, and despite what Goldberg believes is a ‘prevailing view concerning contemporary racism [] that it is something that belongs to the past’ (op.cit.: x).

In terms of constructing a professional identity for the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher, the concept of ‘race’ also appears to play a part in the definition. For example, Amin (1999) relates the findings from her Canadian study with ESL students which indicate that some ESL students make two assumptions. The first is that only White people can be native speakers of English and the second in that only ‘native speakers’ know ‘real’ English and have ‘real’ accents. Amin writes that: ‘In the field of English as a Second Language (ESL), much attention has been and continues to be paid to the race,

ethnicity, culture and gender of the learners, but far less attention has been given to how these variables in the teacher may impact on the classroom' (ibid.: 93). She furthermore believes that the teacher is 'usually positioned as White and an implicit juxtaposition is made between the powerful (White) ESL teacher and the powerless (mainly non-White) minority student' (op.cit.: 93). Kubota (2002a), too, suggests that white teachers expect teachers of colour to serve as helpers or cultural bearers. She also records the 'white bias' in Japanese ELT, which has been around since the 1970's. Brutt-Griffler and Samimy in a different context concur and say: 'We have shown that the nativeness paradigm is often intertwined with ethnicity; our perceptions are founded on the often unconscious, socially constructed notion of what the native speaker should look like and sound like' (2003: 149). Moreover, Shuck (2006) identifies discursive processes in which white, middle-class, native-English-speaking college students construct their whiteness and nativeness as unmarked and normal, naturalising connections between language, national origin and race.

What is more racism in EFL can be used to exclude teachers from employment. In his discussion regarding general employment practices in the United States and in South Africa, Goldberg states: 'Merit and worth are the products of social choice [and] are thus imbued with contingent value paraded as given and natural, objective, universal and above all necessary' (op.cit.: 235-236). Thus, in terms of the employment of 'non-white' EFL teachers, the social choice and understanding, as can be seen in the study by Amin (1999), was for 'white' teachers, and that 'non-white' teachers were 'constantly judged and compared unfavorably with White teachers and that they felt disempowered by their students' stereotype of an authentic ESL teacher' (ibid.: 95). Amin also reported on students' preferences for classes depending on whether they were being taught by a 'white' or a 'non-white' teacher as a 'decision based entirely on the teacher's race' (ibid.: 95). In the same study she noted the racism she experienced in her own faculty 'despite its reputation for being enlightened and progressive' (ibid.: 95 and concludes that merit and worth are silently racialised in the EFL profession. Holliday (in process), as well, in a discussion of three 'native speaker' teachers who do not fit the stereotypical ethnic image of 'native speaker' English language teachers and have difficulty with employment, also suggests that discrimination against these teachers is veiled by the 'native speaker' ideal when, in fact, employers are being racist.

3. 6. 7 ‘Otherising’

Kidd (2002) defines knowing who one is as having a sense of similarity with some people and a sense of difference from others. On the other hand knowing who one is, only contributes to part of understanding our identity. Knowing who one is not, defining the ‘other’ that one is not, helps clarify who one is, too. In current sociological terminology ‘other’ is used to refer to all people the ‘self’ or ‘we’ think of as slightly or radically different. The dilemma is, however, that although difference is relational, it is inevitably oppositional as Kidd suggests:

‘Them’ are not ‘us’, and ‘us’ are not ‘them’; ‘we’ and ‘they’ can be understood only together, in their mutual conflict. I see my in group as ‘us’ only because I think of some other group as ‘them’. The two opposite groups sediment, as it were, in my map of the world on the two poles of an antagonistic relationship, and it is this antagonism which makes the two groups ‘real’ to me and makes credible that inner unity and coherence I imagine they possess (2002: 203).

‘Otherness’ usually involves the superiority of one group over another, especially in relation to ethnicity and language, which appear as two key factors in the creation of the professional identity constructs of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. This lack of acknowledgement of the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher is reflected in ELT texts written by ‘non-native speaker’ teachers when speaking about their ‘native speaker’ colleagues. For example:

I do not know how to interpret the non-acknowledgement that I receive from some colleagues. Are they having a bad day, or are they unfriendly, or do they see me as a non person because of my race and my accent (Thomas 1999: 10).

Braine, too, relating his experiences of finding work in US also refers to other ‘non-native speakers’ in his volume as finding themselves in the same types of situations. He says: ‘The director informed me that most teachers in the program, all NSs, were opposed to my appointment. This opposition from fellow ESL professionals (see Amin, Chap.7, Kamhi-Stein, Chap. 10, and Thomas, Chap.1, this volume for similar experiences) is, in retrospect, highly ironic, considering their strident championing of multiculturalism, diversity..’ (1999: 22). Baxter, too, examining the discourse of pre-service training courses

for ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers speaks of categorising in ways which ‘frequently correspond with nationalities or languages [] this categorisation is extremely problematic in ELT where interaction between nationalities, cultures and language speakers is the basis of the profession’ (2003: 180). She concludes with the suggestion that such categorisations become the ‘norms of behaviour and a concomitant otherisation of those who do not seem to fit in’ (ibid.: 182) .

Thus it seems that in the creation of some oppositional relationship with the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher, the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher helps cement his/her own professional group.

3. 6. 8 General classroom approaches

Moving now to the general classroom approach of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher in terms of establishing professional identity, both a study by Medgyes (1994) and a subsequent study by Samimy and Brutt Griffler (2003), albeit again with ‘non-native speaker’ teachers, revealed similar findings. In both studies there was a perception that, professionally, the ‘native speaker’ teacher was informal, fluent, accurate, flexible, able to use authentic English for communication rather than examination preparation and used different teaching techniques and approaches. Pennycook (1994) noted similar attributes to the previous studies: ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers are informal, enjoy their teaching and are free from much outside pressure; aim for oral interaction, always in English; work in small classes with comfortable environments; expect their students to be self-motivated and literate.

Moreover, in terms of general classroom approaches, the traditional ‘four skills’ approach (reading, writing, listening and speaking) is considered by Holliday to be ‘a long standing cultural icon in English –speaking Western TESOL’ (2005: 42). He believes that Western TESOL practitioners automatically analyse classroom behaviour in terms of these four skills and that this phrase is central both to ‘native speakers’ discourse and their practice.

3. 6. 9 ‘Integrationist’ practices

The professional practices of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers, therefore, seem to reflect a skills based, ‘fun’, discovery, problem solving, collaborative approach to

education which is deemed ‘integrationist’ by Holliday (1994), borrowing from the collectionist/integrationist typography by Bernstein (1971) and which has been referred to previously in the discussion (3.2.7) relating to mainstream teachers. In fact, as has been indicated in that discussion, in terms of establishing status and power, teachers working with ‘collections’ of subjects (collectionism) have traditionally obtained their professional identity through their subject discipline and it is important to note that English language teaching for ‘non-native’ speaker teachers occurs in mainstream collectionist education world-wide. On the other hand, the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher appears to place value on a ‘skills and learning activities’ integrationist approach to the classroom and, in an attempt to gain his/her own power and status, may then assert his/her own superior sense of modernism by looking down on cultural practices which appear not to adopt such integrationist practices (Holliday, 2005). In fact, Holliday refers to the private or commercially-run enterprises which train the vast majority of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers, as comprising an ‘innovative, often predatory culture of integrated skills’ (2005: 3).

3.7 Conclusion

Therefore, in terms of establishing some idea of the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ teacher, the restricted amount of literature, which mainly deals with ‘non-native speaker’ teachers’ professional identity constructs, draws a picture of the ‘native speaker’ (in relation to the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher) as a teacher with superior linguistic skills and by extension superior teaching skills and, indeed, by further extension, as apparently believing he/she comes from a superior culture. It also portrays the ‘native speaker’ as privileged by employment practices and most often by ethnicity. The literature also indicates that, in terms of classroom practices, the ‘native speaker’ teachers approach may cause him or her to attempt to gain power by asserting that ‘native speaker’ practices are superior when confronted with a different educational ethos.

3.8 Turning the tables: EFL teachers: a marginalised ‘minority’ group

Thus, in terms of what can be gleaned from the literature, ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers so far appear to occupy an apparently privileged, powerful and dominant position

in the international arena of English language teaching. However, although it seems that while they hold a superior position in relation to their ‘non-native speaker’ colleagues, a number of scholars, for example, Clarke 1994; Richards 1996; Richards and Nunan 1989; Pennycook 1989; and Prabhu 1990, have raised the issue of the power and privilege of academics in the field of English language teaching compared to the ‘native speaker’ English language practitioner. Thus, while apparently powerful in terms of language, ethnicity, resources, employment possibilities, that is in belonging to the ‘A’ team of ELT practitioners when compared to ‘non-native speaker’ teaching colleagues, the ‘native speaker’ teacher appears less privileged and powerful when compared to academics in ELT. Moreover, when viewed by wider society, the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher’s status vis á vis teachers in mainstream education is another factor in rendering this former group less important and marginalised. In this section these two points are discussed.

3. 8. 1 Low status

Firstly Kubota, in an e-mail interview with Holliday, illustrates the low status of a group of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers in the USA and suggests this is the case in other English-speaking countries as well.

ESOL educators inside of the English-speaking West... are pretty much marginalized in their own context.... Kindergarten through 12th grade ESL teachers in North American public schools [have] poor working conditions (e.g. travelling to different schools each day, teaching in a closet due to space limitation, putting up with cancellation of classes due to regular classroom teachers’ schedule change, etc. (2005: 27)

Other academics, too, for example, Amin 1999; Gaies 2002; Holliday 1994; Zamel 1998, acknowledge ELT teachers have poor pay, are usually and mainly a transient workforce, frequently only employed part-time, suffer from a lack of status in the public’s view, especially as they are often little or under qualified or, indeed, have no qualifications. Moreover Borg (2006) states language teachers often have lower status than teachers of other subjects. Anderson (2002) also reveals that throughout his study the

‘native speaker’ teachers demonstrated a sense of inferiority and unease, criticising the profession as a whole and manifesting substantial evidence of their low status.

3. 8. 2 Excluded from academia.

The other area in which ELT teachers find themselves marginalised is in academia. Scholars raising this issue contend that there is a failure on the part of academia to recognise the experience of teachers in order that academics might maintain their own ‘interested knowledge’ in the political arena of education. Sharkey and Johnson illustrate this clearly when they relate an incident that occurred as they (English language teachers) were working towards their doctorates:

However, the professor told us that if we wanted to make it in higher education, we had to stop talking about teaching. The professor drew a triangle on the board, with theorists at the top and practitioners, including black feminist writer, bell hooks, on the bottom. If we wanted to do theory, according to this model, we had to leave teaching, and our teacher identities behind. Several of us, all women, did not accept either the hierarchy or the theory practice split. Were the two not always present? Were we not theorising our practice through analysis of our classrooms? Further, the discussion on issues of knowledge and power were situated in the traditional rigid academic hierarchy of professor as knower and student as lump of clay (2003: x).

In other writing too, the EFL teacher (and this includes both ‘native speaker’ and ‘non-native speaker’) is seen as marginalised in comparison to the academic or theorist. Clarke, in his critique of ELT with regard to the habit of the profession in demoting teachers to the role of ‘implementers of dicta’, rather than co-constructors of theory, states: ‘Because the individuals involved in developing theory are seldom full-time language teachers themselves, the theory/practice distinction creates a strata of expertise in which teachers are considered less expert than theorists’ (1994: 9-10). Clarke also considers that the theory/practice distinction ‘relegates teachers to the less important role of practitioner’ (ibid.: 11). Furthermore this academic opines ‘the only real solution to the problems I have identified would be to turn the hierarchy on its head, putting teachers on the top and arraying others - pundits, professors, administrators, researchers, and so forth -

below them' (ibid.: 18). These statements give a clear indication of the current positioning of teachers vis-à-vis academics.

Furthermore, Crookes notes 'the fact that those outside SLA are largely absent from the published record should indicate its weakness [] the words of teachers rarely appear in academic journals related to teaching or learning - a conspicuous silence with obvious implications'(1997: 96). In Johnson & Golombek these same views are amplified as they state:

Teachers have been viewed as objects of study rather than as knowing professionals or agents of change. Teachers have been marginalized in that they are told what they should know and how they should use that knowledge (2002: 1).

3.9 Conclusion

Thus, the apparent difference in status between academics or theoreticians and the 'native speaker' teacher in the world of EFL reveals how teacher identity is relational and dynamic, shifting with each new context (McLean 1999). In terms of revealing an identity for the 'native speaker' teacher I believe that current literature has more predominantly attempted to address a search for the professional identity of the 'non-native speaker' teacher rather than the 'native speaker' EFL teacher. However, in reading between the lines, the literature suggests an image, albeit mainly through the eyes of the 'non-native speaker' teacher, of the 'native speaker' EFL teacher as professionally powerful, dominant, privileged and self-confident. This is especially so in comparison with their 'non-native speaker' teacher colleagues in the international world of English language teaching.

However, in terms of academia and his/her relationship with academics in the same field, the 'native speaker' teacher appears far from central to knowledge about teaching, inconspicuous, and less expert. Here it seems that the 'native speaker' teachers can be excluded and without voice. Equally the 'native speaker' EFL teacher is revealed as having a low status in society.

It seems, therefore, from the literature cited with regard to these teachers' professional identities, that there are initial indicators of problematic situations for both mainstream and 'native speaker' English language teachers in the current educational

climate, albeit to different degrees and in different manners. In English-speaking countries, in terms of society's views, both the mainstream and 'native speaker' English language teacher are affected by the status and image of their 'profession'. However, when compared to 'non-native' teachers of English, the 'native' EFL teacher is able to profit from his/her alignment with a group whose social markers, such as language and ethnicity, confer prestige upon the 'native speaker' teacher in international institutions and with international learners.

In terms of beliefs however, the limited literature on how cognition affects the macro understanding of teachers' professional roles indicates, perhaps, that such an agenda is far from the minds of academics and reinforces the apparently 'taken for granted' 'native speaker' ideology present in TEFL. Moreover, there is also an indication that language teachers place greater emphasis on their practical classroom experiences than they do on academic theory.

Finally, before moving on to describe the research methodology and give an account of my research practice in this study, I now provide a brief summary of the literature reviewed in the two previous chapters, where concepts which underpin the themes of this work have been presented. These were, firstly, globalisation and the development of English as a lingua franca. This was followed by the predictions of academics as to how English language teaching will be affected by this changed role for the language. The predictions highlighted included: altered views of the teaching aims of 'native speaker' pronunciation; a re-evaluation of the current 'native speaker' methodological approach to English language classrooms, and academic perceptions of the new professional identity of the 'non-native speaker' teacher in ELT.

This discussion was followed by an account of the current understandings regarding teacher identity and teacher cognition, that is teacher beliefs, thoughts and knowledge. This second section began by problematising mainstream teachers' professional constructs. It continued by investigating perceptions of the identity of 'native speaker' English language teachers in terms of both their current privileged position within EFL and their relationship with academia. As mentioned above, the literature appeared to identify some dilemmas of professional identity for both mainstream and EFL teachers, although a deeper discussion of the English language teacher's professional identity seems hampered by the limited amount of literature available.

Chapter 4: Discussion of methodology: data collection, rationale and research procedures

4.1 Introduction to the methodological ideology

This fourth chapter now moves to a discussion of the methodological ideology upon which the study rests. This is followed by a factual account and rationale for the data collected, the research procedures and the choice and nature of respondents. Then the research tools and their appropriacy to the research project, the problems encountered collecting the data, as well as the measures taken to address these problems are recounted. Now though, I outline the research paradigm within which this study was conducted and my rationale for choosing such a paradigm.

4.2 Choosing a postmodern, qualitative paradigm

The postmodern is characterised both as a cultural form as well as an era in history and a time when methods of research have become increasingly diverse and restricted only by the types of experiences modern life can offer us. Firstly, in choosing a postmodern qualitative research paradigm, I understand that any reality I observed in the study would be a reality constructed both by the teacher respondents ('native speaker' British trained EFL teachers with international experience outlined in 4.3.2 below) and my own understanding of their contributions during the process of the research. It would be a social world formed by the words, actions and expressed intentions of the teachers and my own perspectives on their ideas and reactions, that is a 'linguistic and social construction of a perspectival reality' (Kvale 1996: 42). It is also relevant to the subject matter which is to do with the professional construction of cultural realities. There were advantages that the choice of such a paradigm would give me. It would enable me to observe how each of the teachers in my study made sense of the different circumstances of their varied experiences and 'how this understanding influence [d] their behaviour' (Maxwell 1996:

17). It would also allow me in some way, to interpret the meaning the teachers accorded to their work. I reiterate in some way and interpret alongside this warning from Holliday:

The qualitative belief that the realities of the research setting and the people in it are mysterious and can only be superficially touched by research which tries to make sense is interpretive. It maintains that we can explore, catch glimpses, illuminate then try to interpret bits of reality. Interpretation is as far as we can go (2002b: 5).

Moreover, in deciding to undertake qualitative rather than quantitative research in this work I believed I could more accurately answer the research questions I posed at the outset of this work. I was of the opinion that qualitative research, through its focus on a small-scale, in-depth exploration of information usually generated in words, rather than a large scale quantitative collection of numeric data, would enable me to fully understand and explore the 'native speaker' teachers' reactions to the academic proposals being put forward in the field of English language teaching and thus interrogate their understandings of their professional identities. Additionally, I believed qualitative research would both afford me an understanding of the processes which contributed to the teachers' reactions and the relationships that caused these to come about and, finally, it might provide me with an opportunity to discover some previously unidentified aspects of the area I had chosen to investigate.

Furthermore, in using a postmodern qualitative paradigm, with diverse methods of data collection I hoped to be able to reveal more complex realities. Holliday writes of this: 'The conceptualisations of distilling diverse data within consolidated texts has grown out of a broader desire to find methodologies in qualitative research that will enable researchers to better reveal the complex realities of hidden or counter cultures which are difficult to capture by more established means' (2004: 226). I believe the concept of distilling diverse data falls into the category of an 'alternative', 'postmodern' paradigm (Lincoln & Guba 2000), which asserts that the researcher is fully implicated within the research setting (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995), and that data generated through such tools as observations and field notes (Emerson et al. 2001) encourages the emergence of complex realities in so far as they can be approximated (Guba 1990). This then is my rationale for choosing a postmodern, qualitative paradigm.

4. 2. 1 A postmodern paradigm: ‘ crumbling boundaries’

I now wish to highlight further issues involved in adopting such a postmodern qualitative paradigm and look at the emergence of ‘crumbling boundaries’ (Holliday 2004) within this research methodology. Towards this goal, Holliday makes a plea for ‘dissolving boundaries’, declaring that ‘five years ago, my students and I were concerned with the size and representativeness of interview samples. Now we are in deep discussion about creative moves in data collection and analysis’ (ibid.: 1). This same author then moves on to list a series of new ways of seeing and finding out what we want to know, some of which are borrowed from other disciplines. He suggests ‘allowing critical incidents to drive research categories; designing new forms of theses - generally re-assessing the boundaries of subjectivity and representation, and the interplay of identities of researchers and the people in their research projects’ (ibid.: 1) and he concludes: ‘I think in what is a postmodern quest, researchers must be able to stand outside traditional discourses of research and reinvent their approaches’ (ibid.: 1).

This concept, therefore, of pushing boundaries of how information may be obtained is significant in the research ideology of this work. For example, capitalising on opportunistic encounters and making use of critical incidents and field notes in a Research Diary and narrative enquiry, alongside the now more traditional use of interviews, has played a major role in the methodology of data collection. The research methodology has attempted to reflect different ways of seeing, knowing and collecting data and it has also attempted to permit the world of the teachers to be seen in a less prescriptive way. I also believe that, in extending the methods of data collection in the work, I am able to reflect some of the ideas in this thesis of a more complex modern world, where old certainties are being queried and new ways of understanding are being put forward. Thus, the importance of critical incidents, narrative enquiry and the field notes, pivotal areas which have played an important role in this work, are now discussed as part of this paradigm shift and within the concomitant move towards biographical methods in social science. (Chamberlayne et al. 2000).

4. 2. 2 The personal dimension: critical incidents within a person oriented genre and its contribution to this study

To begin with I recognise the contribution of the personal dimension to this study. Said, citing Gramsci elaborates:

The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and it is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory, therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory (1978: 25).

Thus, in order to provide such an inventory of these infinite traces, which both consciously and subconsciously spurred me to undertake research into the attitudes of teachers towards academic notions of changes in the world of English language teaching, I needed first to delve back into the history of my life as a teacher of the English language and it was not until more than a year after I had begun the process of writing about parts of my research that an unrecognised personal motivation for this work started to become more apparent to me. I began to realise that the areas I had chosen to research were issues which I had been tussling with for a long time, albeit never entertaining the conscious notion of making public or formal my concerns or ideas. Therefore, in tracing important ‘critical incidents’ in my professional work, that is key times and episodes in one’s life around which fundamental decisions are made, I believe I was able to unearth these ‘turning points’ (Strauss 1959: 67) of my conceptions and understanding of the world of English language teaching in which I practised. I was able to track the occurrences that had caused tension, confusion, surprise and questioning in my day-to-day work.

The history of studying such person-oriented genre as these life stories, biographies, autobiographies, narratives and anecdotes is well-recognised as an area of importance. Connelly & Clandinin (1990), in an exploration of such genre, show that it has become widely accepted in the field of educational research and for the professional development of teachers. For this reason, seeing myself as a ‘small voice’ (MacLure 2001) among the other ‘voices’ in the study, I place my own lived experience as an EFL teacher both at the outset and throughout my research. Furthermore, in another rationale for tracking ‘critical incidents’, Sikes et al. have suggested that these pivotal incidents ‘provoke particular kinds of actions which lead in particular directions (2001: 104). However, contrary to such

writing regarding ‘critical incidents’, I wish to clarify that the incidents I highlight from my own work as a teacher did not, certainly initially, cause me to change my actions or take major career change decisions. The critical incidents I recorded were rarely ‘external’ events occurring in society and rarely ‘personal’, that is family events such as birth, marriage, divorce, to which I responded. Neither did I, as noted by Strauss (op.cit.: 67) later seek to ‘try out the new, to explore and validate the new and often exciting or fearful conceptions’ although perhaps in undertaking this doctoral study I am attempting to validate some ‘fearful conceptions’ in the world of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher.

The incidents I recorded were overwhelmingly ‘intrinsic’, that is, they occurred during my daily work as a teacher, a teacher trainer and a Director of Studies within and part of my on-going career. What the incidents did, however, rather than force any job change or instant alteration in my classroom practice, was to crystallise my thinking on certain issues. They were flashbulbs, creating and illuminating my own realisations about the everyday discourses at work within the teaching of English as a foreign language. They contributed to attitudes that I formed or culminated in some decision making process and they have stayed clearly in my mind for many years. They are a personal understanding of experienced situations and I acknowledge there must always be a tension between the facts and my personal interpretation. The ‘incidents’ are, however, not mainly about events and facts but about what meaning the experiences have for the storyteller (Keltchermans 1994), that is, for me. I have now come to a slow understanding, too, that it was this long list of occurrences that left the traces leading eventually to the nature, bias and form of this piece of work.

The inventory of those traces started from a particular, relatively recent incident, which, as I revealed at the beginning of this work, provided the immediate catalyst for this piece of research. The thoughts following the incident, though, were merely sparks from previous experiences, dating in fact to the outset of my career as an English language teacher. In the unfolding work that followed, I was also able to eventually recall, reveal and connect all the incidents and experiences from which the ‘infinity of traces’ (Said citing Gramsci op. cit.) had emerged.

4. 2. 3 Narrative research in education

As I have already stated, another major influence on this work is a dynamic approach in the uncovering and understanding of professional identities in education. It is the use of narratives that teachers tell about their professional lives (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Goodson 1997). Narrative research is based on an understanding of the pervasiveness of narrative discourse in human affairs and a recognition of the distinctiveness of human experience (Nash 1990; Stephenson 2000). In the research I have undertaken some narrative constructions of the teachers and my reconstruction of them plays a crucial role in the building of the thesis in terms of understanding their professional identities. Such teacher stories are often complicated co-constructions between the researcher, who usually has a professional role in the researched context, and the storyteller. The stories also mean the restoryings of both the storyteller's narratives as practitioner and as researcher and the other research narratives in which they are encased (Fay 2005).

In this work, teachers in the group and one teacher in particular, tell professional stories over time. They also tell the stories to another teacher, the researcher, who is involved in the same or similar professional contexts. It is thus important to acknowledge that these narratives are then 'positioned', that is reconstructed 'by a particular person [the researcher], at a particular moment, in a particular location, for a particular audience, and for a particular purpose. The understandings of experience constructed through each storytelling are necessarily situated understandings' (Fay 2005: 4).

4. 2. 4 Writing the study

In terms of positioning, this is not just found in the restorying of the narrative which occurs in ethnographic texts but also in text which reflects both implicit 'evidence', for example, the researcher's field notes, and explicit argument, both of which are interpretations of the researcher. The text presents the reader not only with the complex surface of the writer's ideological commitments but also with those interwoven stretches of 'voices' of respondents, that is small glimpses of the social world the respondents inhabit. In fact Atkinson (1990) believes that the inferences drawn from such a text are as much the work of the reader as of the writer. He also declares that the persuasiveness of the ethnography is due to this continued interplay of commentary and exemplification as

the story moves from voice to voice. In the writing of this study, therefore, I have attempted to put forward a thesis, built not upon layer on layer of hypothesis testing in a cumulative fashion, but a thesis built on a kaleidoscope of differing and complementing dialogues which shift from the abstract to the concrete, from my researcher's voice to the voices of the researched, from the past time of the teacher respondents and the researcher as teacher to the present time of the reader and the researcher as analyst. Nevertheless, this cajoling method of constructing a text may well be criticised for being less than 'scientific'. Although in justification of my chosen paradigm it is imperative to realise that:

Qualitative researchers accept the fact that research is ideologically driven. There is no value free or bias-free design. The qualitative researcher identifies his or her biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study. By identifying one's biases, one can see easily where the questions that guide the study are crafted (Holliday 2002b: 52-53 citing Janesick 1994).

Thus, I have attempted to be explicit in showing how the reality of this piece of work has been constructed through a thorough expose of my own orientation to the issues under discussion and also in terms of my choice of methodological paradigm, the tools chosen and in the writing of this work. In doing so, I believe I have exposed my own bias and its undeniable influence on the investigation, construction, content and conclusions of this study.

4. 3 The data collection

I now move to a factual account of the data collection. This begins with a rationale for the research settings selected and continues with a description and rationale for the choice of teacher respondents and how and why the original research setting was extended. I then describe my rationale for the research methods adopted and the ethical issues involved in qualitative research such as this study. The time, location, and process of collecting the data, as well as the problems encountered during the data collection are next delineated. What I believe to have been threats to the validity of my research design and data collection and how these were countered are then described. This is followed by a commentary on how far this data may be generalized to a wider population and, finally, I

describe the process of the data analysis and give an outline of how the data chapters are structured around the themes that arose from this analysis. An analysis and interwoven commentary of the data are presented in Chapters 4, 5, 6 & 7.

4.3.1 Defining the research setting

In establishing my research within the qualitative paradigm, I needed to first locate my study in a setting which could be defined. I chose to follow the explanation of a ‘definable setting’ by Holliday as one ‘in which phenomena can be placed meaningfully within a specific social environment. Such an environment can be groups of people, institutions, cases and so on’ (2002b: 37). He continues ‘At the loosest interpretation the setting would be a group of teachers with a specific interest’ (ibid.: 39). Thus, following this latter interpretation, I chose to derive my initial data from the research setting of a broad international spectrum of a small group of seven (four women and three men) experienced, British trained ‘native speaker’ English language teachers. I believed that the wide diversity of these teachers’ current and past English language teaching classrooms would provide me with a ‘thick’ description. By ‘thick’ description I intend the terminology as used by Geertz (1973) in his ethnographic research to explain not just human behaviour but the societal context of the behavioural practice and its discourse as well, so that the behaviour becomes meaningful to an outsider.

4.3.2 Selection of respondent teachers

In terms of the selection of respondent teachers for the initial part of my data collection, I included only what I term ‘career English language teachers’ in my study. Therefore, I selected seven ‘native speaker’ teachers who had remained permanently in the profession for at least fifteen years, some of them for more. They were all British and had all undertaken British teacher training programmes. I deliberately decided to exclude the ‘jobbing’ teachers, that is, those teachers who had obtained some initial training in English language teaching but who only worked on a seasonal or part-time basis, and who spent parts of their working life doing other work and/or looking after families, writing, or perhaps studying other things.

In almost all cases the teachers currently held or had held some post of responsibility in their work, for example, they were or had been Directors of Studies, senior teachers or

teacher trainers responsible for training new EFL teachers. In addition, members of this group might also have achieved some other success, for example, publishing a book or giving a paper at a conference related to English language teaching. However, all of them were involved in the daily teaching of EFL to international learners.

I also selected respondent teachers with at least a Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign/Second or Other Language level qualification. Some of the teachers had other teaching qualifications such as a PGCE or specialist qualifications, such as a Teaching English for Business Certificate, and some had Master's degrees in the field of English language teaching. (Their details are listed in Appendix 1.) I believed that these teachers' decisions to acquire such qualifications, as opposed to continuing to teach only in possession of an initial EFL training certificate, indicated a serious commitment to a career in teaching English as a foreign language. These teachers had taught English as a foreign language in a variety of contexts around the world, for example in world-wide chains of English language schools, military institutions, commercial companies, and for UK county councils and, at the time of data collection, these teachers were still teaching in a variety of different classrooms in international institutions.

4. 3. 3 Extending the setting: more EFL teachers and researcher-as-teacher

However, reviewing the first data collected from this core group of internationally located teachers described above, I began to realise that a more 'in-depth' picture of 'native speaker' teachers' identities would be obtained by extending the setting and focussing on new issues which had arisen in the first data. It had also become apparent that the observations of teachers in my own work place and occurrences in which these teachers were involved had begun to make important contributions to the research, as indeed had my own observations and recollections (recorded in my Research Diary) as a practising 'native speaker' British trained English language teacher. These interim conclusions obtained from the first group of teachers had convinced me that I needed not only to continue with my analysis and further scrutiny of the original data, but also to engage with two further issues which had arisen from the answers given by the first group. These two issues were the teachers' apparent disinterest in the work of academia and their reliance on their own classroom practices in determining their identity, and the group's ambivalent attitude to teacher development.

I, therefore, enlarged the setting to include the opinions and my observations of eight other (five men and three women) experienced British trained ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers within my work-place in a second phase of data collection. I also included a ninth teacher, the researcher-as-teacher’s professional observations and recollections of her own teaching life. (This ninth teacher had dual British/New Zealand nationality and British EFL training.) It is important to note that this second group of teachers remained within the defined boundaries of my original group because, as well as being ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers, they all had extensive international experience in a variety of classrooms and they were all teachers with whom I had worked or was working as a colleague, either teaching or teacher training. Because of the social contact amongst us and between the teachers, I believed both groups of teachers could be considered as a small, bounded group with ‘social cohesion, values and artefacts’ (Holliday 2002b: 38). Thus, in collecting data from questionnaires, interviews and observations of this second group I was able to focus on the new issues in more depth.

Additionally, to show the balance of gender of both the first and second groups of teachers I have throughout referred to teachers as either ‘he’ or ‘she’.

4. 3. 4 Providing a broader view: peripheral data from the wider society

As has been indicated, my planned research was to attempt to uncover how a small ‘bounded group’ of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers, working in a variety of teaching institutions, conceptualised their professional identity in light of the changes proposed by EFL academics as English becomes a lingua franca. In order, though, to ascertain whether these ‘native speaker’ teachers’ conceptualisations and attitudes to academic proposals were peculiar to this particular group or symptomatic of other teachers in other institutions working in a globalising world, it seemed appropriate to obtain some information about how other types of teachers viewed their professional identities. In investigating some peripheral groups of teachers working in a wider society and not just teaching English, I believed I could provide a different perspective from which to view the original group and that would thus enable a more rigorous analysis and understanding of the extent of the findings. Therefore, a third group of teacher respondents was chosen in order to provide this broader perspective. These teachers were from different British educational cultures

representing wider society. They were, though, all teachers and all ‘native speakers’ of English. Holliday states when referring to such peripheral settings:

Focusing on a core bounded setting does not however preclude the importance of data which is peripheral to the setting. Such peripheral data serves to connect the core setting with the important contexts of a wider society, community or history, in respect to which it is of course not peripheral (in process).

Data collected by Honarbin-Holliday (2006) from taxi drivers on her way to her core setting of art departments in Teheran universities, for example, show how such a peripheral setting can represent a key link between wider society and the focus of a study. I now look at the composition of these peripheral groups in my own thesis.

(i) The British university EFL teachers

None of my core respondents worked in a British university setting, which could reasonably be thought to be at the ‘cutting edge’ of changes to the field of EFL. Such a setting should logically provide access to academic thought and the latest literature. Moreover, it could be reasonably presumed that EFL teachers in such an environment would be aware of and sympathetic towards reasoned academic argument. Because of this I decided to also pursue the reactions of UK university sector ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers to the research questions I put to the core groups. The university teachers I interviewed included three very experienced British trained ‘native speaker’ English language teachers, working at a university in the south of England. They were teaching English both to learners who wished to continue studying or working in their own countries and to learners who wished to continue on into British tertiary education. As well as teaching English as a Foreign Language and English for Academic Purposes, these teachers also taught on teacher training and development programmes and on BA and BEd. programmes, where there was a component of teaching English as a Foreign, Second or Other Language. In fact the roles of these teachers fell somewhere between those of the EFL ‘classroom teachers’ of the core groups in this study and ‘academics’, that is people who lecture about the teaching of English as a foreign/other language. Two of the teachers had MA qualifications and two had almost completed PhDs in French and German literature.

(ii) The primary teachers

Furthermore, it also seemed useful to establish the relationship with proposals for educational change that other teachers, mainly uninvolved in English language teaching might be encountering. To those ends it appeared appropriate to make some investigations into how, for example, a group of primary teachers (with PGCE qualifications) working both in the state and independent sectors in UK viewed new developments in their fields and whether these were seen as affecting their professional identities in any way. Therefore five experienced primary practitioners were also selected as respondents. These teachers were from an Independent school and a primary school teaching the British National Curriculum. Both were in the south-east of England. The teachers from the Independent school also had some experience of teaching ‘non-native speaker’ learners as the school had a small number of pupils from Hong Kong on its roll.

4. 3. 5 Decisions and discussion about choice of research tools

Having selected the teacher respondents, I then needed to make a decision regarding the types of research tools with which to begin to undertake the research. It was first necessary to establish what information I wished to collect and which tools would best furnish this information. In the following section I outline the choice of these tools and my rationale for choosing them.

(i) Interviews

As my first objective was to explore experienced ‘native speaker’ teachers’ reactions towards new ideas being promoted by academics in the field of English language teaching, interviews seemed more appropriate than questionnaires. This is because I wished to explore ‘in-depth’ opinions which would, I hoped, elicit ‘Data based on emotions, experiences and feelings’ (Denscombe 1998: 111). With interviews, I hoped that I would be able to ‘capture the multitude of subjects’ views of a theme and to picture a manifold and controversial human world’ (Kvale 1996: 7). Interviews are well established as valid instruments and can be placed in the wider framework of the postmodern world. Lyotard (1984) characterises the postmodern age as a disbelief in universal systems of thought and a subsequent special focus on the local context. With scepticism regarding global beliefs

and the post-modern belief in locally constructed theory, Kvale (op.cit.) has described an interview as a postmodernist constructive understanding.

Moreover, within the option of interview, I decided to begin with semi-structured interviews, that is interviews where I had a clear view of the areas I wished to investigate but where I also had the flexibility of being able to ask more questions than a rigidly structured interview would allow. I believed this would give me the opportunity to follow up on ideas which seemed important to the research. All the teachers were interviewed once. (See examples: Appendices 4 & 13) One teacher, who had e-mailed me regarding how much her ideas had changed from one year to another, was re-interviewed twelve months after the original interview and again, four months after that. Therefore one teacher in the group was interviewed three times.

(ii) Research Diary

The second method I decided to use to gather data and which would form part of the ‘thick’ description I wished to provide was a Research Diary. This Research Diary was kept throughout the years of data collection and writing up the study. It took the form of noting down ideas which occurred to me about my work: observations I made about incidents in terms of field notes; the ‘critical incidents’ of my professional life and those which I believed were connected with the research themes; and also recording pieces of verbatim conversation when I believed they illustrated an important point or idea. I believed all of this recording was illuminating in some way. Very often incidents occurred during my working day and triggered memories of experiences I had had in the past. It is useful to record, too, that I kept these field notes as a ‘native speaker’ British trained, internationally experienced practising teacher, dealing with many different learners of English in a classroom on a daily basis over the period of my research. These facts meant that I, too, became part of the ‘bounded group’ of teachers I was investigating. In this way I believe I added a further teacher ‘voice’, that is my own, to my data collection.

Moreover, as I occupied a role as one of the experienced ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers who formed part of this ‘bounded group’ but also provided data for myself as researcher, I refer to the group as ‘they’ rather than ‘we’ throughout.

(iii) E-Mails

Following my first interviews with the core group of seven teachers, I asked them if they had any objections to continuing an e-mail correspondence with me on the topics I had questioned them about. Therefore, for the year following the interviews I continued to correspond with them to varying degrees. Sometimes I would e-mail them with a question and sometimes they would send unsolicited e-mails to me about ideas or teaching incidents. The number of e-mails with each teacher was different. Some corresponded more than others. (See example: Appendix 8.)

(iv) Questionnaires

With the second core group of ‘native speaker’ teachers in the study, the teachers in my place of work, I prepared a short open-ended questionnaire (Appendix 12) to be completed individually after I had presented the new academic understandings to them in a talk at a staff meeting. I used questionnaires at this stage for four purposes. The first was to get immediate feedback on these ‘native speaker’ teachers’ reactions to the academic ideas I had presented. The second was in order to collect some data in view of the fact this second group might not all be available for interview. (In fact three teachers completed questionnaires following the presentation but were not available for a follow-up interview). In asking these teachers to complete the questionnaires individually, my third objective was to avoid any ‘group think’ and to avoid more opinionated members of the group dominating a discussion and ‘drowning out’ other views. The questionnaires were, however, designed as a starting point for the interviews with this second group of EFL teachers and this was my fourth and main objective in administering them.

4. 3. 6 Summary of Data Collection

Thus, in collecting data from a range of individuals in different settings and using interviews, on-going e-mail correspondence, questionnaires and information from my Research Diary, which included ‘critical incidents’ and descriptions of occurrences in my work place, I believe I have attempted to reduce the risk of reflecting any systematic bias and I conclude from this that I have strengthened both the validity and generality of my developing explanations. I will discuss these issues further in Threats to Validity and Generalization.

4.4 Ethical Issues

(i) Causing harm?

Ethical issues are an essential part of qualitative research (Miles & Huberman 1994; Murphy & Dingwall 2001; Punch, 1994) and it is important to be attentive to this aspect in the study. Indeed, a first major ethical issue arising from the choice of a qualitative paradigm is the question of whether the research would harm anyone involved in it in any way. Would the interaction with myself as researcher when gathering data, or the knowledge my research produced pose any threat to the participants? In the case of my data gathering with the core group, I had been in professional contact with all the teachers I interviewed. This had been as an employer, a colleague, or an adviser on teacher training courses. However, as I was not working with any of them at the time of the research and they were people with whom I had built other social relationships, I believed that their giving confidential information to me as a researcher, away from their teaching institutions, could not be harmful to them in terms of threatening their teaching posts.

However I struggled with whether my research would pose a threat to their self-esteem. In the interviews I was concerned not to be seen as judgemental or as critical of the teachers' understanding or professional attitudes towards EFL, especially as I viewed them as good, dedicated teachers. Thus, in showing sensitivity through fear of exposing them as 'out of touch', I initially failed to 'follow up' lines of enquiry. This problem in data collection, stemming from the ethical consideration not to cause harm will be further discussed in Problems and Reservations of the initial data collection.

As to whether the knowledge produced would harm them, I was concerned that the teachers might be upset if they were later to read negative comments about their views. However, my objective in this research was to contribute to knowledge about the profession of English language teaching in general and not to critique individual teachers. Thus, I do not believe that any knowledge produced from the research would be harmful to individuals.

(i) Cover or Overt?

Being ethical in research also means making participants aware of the nature of the study (Adler & Adler 1994) and although this concept is an honest aim, it is not always achievable in the real ‘messy’, ambiguous world of research. Whether one is covert or overt in making clear the objectives of one’s research is a major issue. In this study, when I began the research with the first group of teachers I found no problem in asking these teachers for their views about the changes predicted for EFL. However, before interviewing the second core group of teachers (referred to in 4.3.3), I was in a position to tell them more about the first findings. This, however, proved difficult as I did not wish to fully clarify the nature of my developing critical stance towards their professional attitudes and also I was in daily working contact with them. I therefore gave a broad outline only of my research, eliminating as far as possible my own interpretation of the data. This was to obtain further, what I believed would be less ‘contaminated’ data than if I had given my own early interpretations of what I had found out. This more covert obtaining of data also extended to the taking of field-notes regarding incidents in the lives of this second group of teachers. The dilemma here was that, as a researcher, I saw everything, including social interactions, as possible data, whereas the participants may not have seen such relationships as a site of research (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995).

(iii) Participant or Non-Participant?

One further ethical issue needs to be addressed in terms of whether to be a participant or a non-participant in the research. At the outset I decided to treat myself as a participant in terms of relating incidents of my own EFL teaching experience. However, participating as a researcher making field-notes, I most definitely was a ‘non-participant’. Furthermore, in interviewing fellow teachers I slipped between the roles of participant and non-participant as I acted out the researcher’s role, but sometimes responded as a colleague practitioner. Of this Baxter says ‘I found some ways I am a participant and in other ways not- and that the role fluctuates between sites, between different events in the same site and between relationships with different participants’ (2003: 51). A further issue contained within this dilemma is the problem of ‘over-rapport’ (Delikurt 2005: 143) with participants who are involved in the same field and are enthusiastic or irritated by similar

issues as the researcher in his/her normal daily role. How this problem was tackled is related in a following section (4.6.2)

4. 4. 1 Anonymity: naming

Finally, in terms of ethics, all respondents gave me their informed consent for the use of the data they generated and were assured of privacy because of the naming policy I adopted. When writing up the thesis I assigned each teacher a fictitious name in order to allow the reader a more personalised construction of each teacher's comments. In the case of the third, peripheral group, who were interviewed only briefly, I assigned each group a letter indicating the type of institution they worked in and a number e.g. T1 I indicates the first teacher from the Independent school group. E-mails from the first group were referred to with the person's fictitious name and an E. E.g. Rachel: E. Questionnaires are coded with a name and Q e.g. Dan: Q.

4. 5 Data Collection

In the following section the chronology of the data collection is first described. This is followed by an account of how the interviews were undertaken with the different groups of teachers, how the interviews were transcribed and the data categorised.

4. 5. 1 Time, Location

All the teachers I interviewed were accessible as they either worked in England or returned to England for their summer holidays and I was able to organise the interviews in an unproblematic fashion. The interviews with the teachers who were working abroad were initially arranged by e-mail. They were asked if they would be willing to participate in my research and agreed before returning to England, or in one case, before I travelled abroad. When they arrived I made an appointment to interview them. Interviews with Vera, Rachel, Rob, Basil, Jane, Rosa and Alex were carried out in September and October, 2002. The second and third interviews with Rachel took place in August, 2003 and January, 2004 respectively.

The interviews with teachers in my work place, Mike, Ken, Nuala, Ned, Martin, and Dan took place between October, 2003 and June, 2004 in my institution. These interviews

were also arranged by e-mail and conducted in the office of the particular teacher concerned. Questionnaires had already been given to this second group of teachers (and the two others who could not be interviewed) following my presentation at a staff meeting in July, 2003 and prior to the interviews.

The interviews with the primary, Independent and University teachers took place in their institutions between September, November and December 2003, while my recording of related incidents in the Research Diary was an on-going project with notes taken from the outset of interviewing in 2002 until early 2006.

4. 5. 2 Preparing for the interviews: the core group of respondents

Kvale states that ‘there is no common procedure for interview research. The varieties of research interviews approach the spectrum of human conversations’ (op.cit.: 13). With this lack of constraint regarding interviews in mind, I first drew up a series of questions based on the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. As I was unsure as to whether the teachers would have encountered some, all or any of the proposed developments in ELT, I wrote two or three lines of explanation for myself to give before any question when I thought the teachers might need greater background information. I also stated that the questions on the sheet would be a starting point for other questions. I limited the questions to fill one side of the A4 sheet and noted at the bottom of the page that I expected the interview to take approximately one hour. (Appendix 2). As the questions appeared to me to require some forethought if they were to be answered in any depth, I sent the list of questions to six of the teachers some days before the interview.

The interview began with non-threatening questions about the teacher’s backgrounds, teaching experiences, qualifications, significant achievements in the field and current work situation. The subsequent questions were about their views on English becoming a lingua franca in the world and the ideas EFL academics were putting forward: the notion of ‘native speaker’ pronunciation being less important in a globalising world and the idea of ‘native speaker’ methodology also being less appropriate in a world where the ownership of English was changing. At the end the core group of teachers were asked about the role of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers in English language teaching in this changing scenario and how they viewed their role in view of this. In fact, they were the issues problematised in the current ELT literature and outlined in the first section of Chapter 2.

The seventh teacher in the first core group was unable to view the questions before we began because of the tight schedule of his visit to Britain. However, he took some time before the interview to think about the questions.

4. 5. 3 Preparing for the interviews: the second group of EFL teachers

As the second core group of teachers were interviewed after the first data collection, I was able to acquaint them with the context of the research I had already carried out and before I asked permission to interview some of them. In order to do this I presented the ‘changes’ and ‘challenges’ which I saw as being raised in the current literature, in a talk at a staff meeting where these teachers were present. I explained why I was interested in these views and the proposed impact they might have on EFL teaching. As I outlined the proposals for change, I quoted some of the authors of papers and texts I had been reading so that the teachers would have views directly from the published sources as well. I also gave them a handout of some key texts. Thus, before they were interviewed in a similar manner to the first group, they had been made more aware of the general nature of the research and of some of the findings from the first core group of teachers. In interviewing this second group, I was therefore able to focus on themes from the first data which I wished to explore in greater depth, and as well on two further themes which had arisen from the first data gathering: the teachers’ relationship with academia and attitude to their own teacher development.

4. 5. 4 Interview Process

Before each teacher was interviewed, they were asked where they would like the interview to take place. A tape recorder was set up and tested for quality in terms of both the teacher’s and the interviewer’s voice. I always asked the first question as outlined on the sheet I had given the teachers and stopped the tape after their answer to check it was recording properly and the audio quality was clear. After this initial pause, the teachers seemed to relish the chance to speak at length about their views on their teaching lives and the work they had been doing for many years. It appeared that they found the interview a positive experience and in some cases did not wish to terminate the interview. Three of the teacher respondents asked for the tape recorder to be turned on again after I had turned it

off, as they wanted to add comments to what they had already said or make new comments. I will discuss this further in my analysis of the data.

4. 5. 5 Transcribing the Data

Following the interviews, I transcribed the tapes I had made of the teachers. My first reaction was to realise that transcription was more complicated than I had assumed. I saw that any act I performed in deciding which recorded spoken word I would write down on paper and how I would write it involved me in making some judgement and, with the necessity of moving from one medium to the other, it involved diluting and altering the nature of the original interview. I decided, though, to present the recorded interviews in a clear written form with reasonably punctuated sentences. I made this decision to formulate the respondents' words in more conventional sentences for reasons of readership. I believed both the critical colleagues who wished to check the basis on which my conclusions were made and the teacher respondents themselves, as I wanted to verify their ideas with them, would find it more straightforward and less onerous to comprehend the interview on paper. In terms of beginning to analyse the interviews, as I transcribed, I noted ideas and what could possibly become categories as they occurred. I then loosely labelled parts of the interviews which illustrated these categories and I developed an index for this categorisation. (Appendix 3)

4. 5. 6 Categorising and charting

When the transcriptions of the interviews with the first group of EFL teachers were complete and loosely labelled (example, Appendix 4), the unwieldy pages of interview data needed to be structured in some manner before I would be able to analyse any of it in any more systematic manner. To these ends I found the work of Ritchie and Spencer useful. They state that 'Qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection, and the tasks of defining, categorising, theorising, explaining, exploring and mapping are fundamental to the analyst's role' (2002: 309). These authors also argue for qualitative researchers to make their methods more explicit. Moreover, their work in designing a 'framework' for an applied policy research unit and their belief that the general principles of 'framework' proved 'to be versatile across a wide range of studies' (ibid.: 30) gave me the stimulus for the rigorous analysis which then ensued. Following the loose categories I

had first listed when transcribing the interviews, (Appendix 3), I elected to follow, in a slightly altered manner, Ritchie and Spencer's 'framework' system and further identify, by means of another index and charts, what I believed to be 'the key issues and emergent issues' (ibid.: 313) found within the transcripts.

First, I drew up shorter index (Appendix 5), conflating some of the categories I had identified initially and mapped them onto four charts. These charts were: 1. 'Native speakers' views of factors contributing to their professional identities; 2. 'Native speaker teachers' views of factors contributing to the professional identities of 'non-native speaker' teachers; 3. 'Native speaker' teacher views of English as a lingua franca; 4 'Native speaker' teacher views of new developments in English language teaching put forward by academics. (Appendix 6).

Some of the categories I included in the charts were identical to specified areas I had asked about in the interviews. However, new categories and sub-categories also emerged from the data. For example, there was a sub-category of 'Other educational systems' and a sub-category entitled 'Teacher beliefs regarding academic theory', which were located in charts 2 and 4 respectively.

I then re-read and re-categorised all the interviews, locating 'chunks' of each teacher's text which illustrated my categories. They were then recorded alongside the appropriately coded teacher. Ritchie and Spencer (op.cit.) note that in their charting, the 'chunks' of text are abstracted and synthesised and summaries made. I departed from their procedure in my first 'charting' as I believed that their experience in research enabled them to make more accurate abstractions from unwieldy data than my inexperience allowed me. They also noted that 'the level of detail on [the charts] varies between projects and between researchers' (ibid.: 319), which led me to reason that my own variation on 'charting' was an acceptable departure.

Therefore, I began mapping 'chunks' of text, sometimes verbatim and sometimes slightly summarised or interpreted, onto the charts I had made. As I mapped and categorised areas according to the index, I was aware of the subjective judgements I was making in assigning ideas to one or other category of the index and my own role in deciding on meaning and significance of phrases and lines of text. However, in doing this I acknowledge that it was again just 'catching glimpses' (Holliday 2002b: 5) of the teachers' worlds.

Following the designing of the charts and the mapping of data onto these, I then saw I needed a smaller, more succinct exposition of the ideas. I therefore decided to summarise the verbatim lines into smaller boxes (Appendix 7), which could highlight the polarities and discrepancies of the data and allow me a wider view of the information. I also started to comment on my understanding of the emergent themes: A. ‘How ‘native speaker’ teachers conceptualise their professional roles now and in the future; B. ‘Native speaker’ teachers’ views of ‘other’ education systems; C. ‘Native speaker’ teachers’ views of the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher; D. ‘Native speaker teachers’ views of a Core Lingua Franca; E. ‘Native speaker’ teachers’ understanding of their methodologies and reactions to possible change; G. ‘Native speaker’ teachers’ views of academic ideas in EFL. One box (F) relating to the Lexical approach, was later discarded as outside the scope of the thesis. I believe showing these steps were necessary to fully fulfil my brief to ‘show the workings’ (Holliday 2002b: 8).

4. 6 Problems of Data Gathering

Before presenting the analysis of my data in the next four chapters, I now discuss some of the problematic areas in gathering this data. In this section the difficulties of gathering data for this thesis are explained. These difficulties include the necessity of gathering data opportunistically and occasionally over a short time span, the relationship between the researcher and the respondents and the impact of this relationship on interviews, as well the need to take into account the different understanding between the teachers’ concepts of their everyday classroom ‘theories’ and the codified THEORY of academia (Edelsky 1991). I begin by looking at the need for opportunistic data collection.

4. 6. 1 Opportunistic Data Gathering

The initial problem concerned the teachers’ qualifications and the two criteria I had set for the selection of teachers to be interviewed. The first was that the teachers had sufficient international experience. This criterion was met. The second was that the teachers were well-qualified, indicating their commitment to English language teaching, with at least a Diploma in English Language Teaching. However, I was only able to interview a sufficiently wide range of teachers when they left their international teaching posts and returned to England, which meant that it was necessary to interview teachers

whenever I was able to locate them. Consequently, more respondents resulted in having Diplomas in TEFL/TESOL rather than Master's qualifications. Master's qualifications might have meant that the teachers were more conversant with academic ideas. However, in retrospect the core teachers I succeeded in interviewing, with their varied qualifications and various teaching contexts, reflected well the type of experienced 'native speaker' British trained practitioner who is working in EFL world-wide: there are some teachers with an MA but the majority have Diplomas.

4.6.2 Researcher as acquaintance and fellow teacher

The good relationship I had with the teachers, whilst encouraging frank discussion about the interview topics, also occasionally prompted me to enter into the conversation rather than letting a teacher speak without interruption. In addition, because of our relationship the teachers sometimes asked me questions about what I thought or used 'tag questions' to check what I thought. I noted this 'involvement' when transcribing the first interviews and I subsequently worked hard to remain as non-committal as possible. However, as a practising teacher myself, any conversation which was constructed by myself and another teacher was also data and these incidents also formed part of my Research Diary.

4.6.3 Ignorance of codified knowledge: 'potted' versions

The teachers did not respond at any length and sometimes not at all to my questions about the kinds of classroom 'methodologies' they adopted or about ideas for a more appropriate methodology being put forward in the literature of English language teaching. For example, I discovered that none of the teachers in either of the two groups had read about Jenkins' (2000) ideas regarding the adoption of Core Lingua Franca pronunciation. Each time I asked about this issue or other similar academic understandings I always had to give a 'potted' and, in my view, simplistic explanation of the ideas. Therefore, in terms of the initial group of teachers, their answers were based only on my brief explanation and it was the first time the teachers had encountered such ideas. With the second core group, they had the advantage of more explanation and clarification as they had listened to my presentation at the staff meeting. However, as this was still relatively brief and summarised information, even the second group of teachers did not have much time to

‘digest’ these academic understandings. I acknowledge that, had both groups of teachers known more, their answers may have been somewhat different and also if they had had time to fully explore the academic views, their answers may also have altered. However, the fact that the teachers were unaware of these ideas and needed to be told about them was in itself important data.

4. 6. 4 Not following up on questions enough

In re-reading the transcripts, I noted that there were occasions when I did not follow up on the teachers’ replies enough. I did not re-phrase and put what I had understood back to the speaker. Sometimes I allowed ideas to pass by without pinning the teacher down for a better explanation. Reflecting on this, however, my rationale was that if the teachers had felt the interview was some kind of interrogation, and questions were persistently re-asked, they may have been less frank. In addition, if I had continued to pursue my own agenda, the teachers may not have had a chance to explore and expand on what was important to them.

4. 6. 5 Opportunistic and brief background interviews

In terms of the interviews with the third, peripheral group of teachers (from a British university and from an Independent and state primary school) these interviews were opportunistic and brief. They were opportunistic in that I was acquainted with staff in all three institutions and this led me to approach other staff and be granted interviews with them. They were brief in that they were all recorded in rather rushed parts of the teachers’ days, that is, lunch-hours when the teachers were under some pressure to return to classes and there was no time to explore their ideas in depth. I therefore acknowledge that these interviews were limited in scope. However, these interviews were conducted in order to provide a further perspective from other educational cultures in wider society and contribute to the thick description I required. As such I believe they fulfil their aims. I believe these peripheral data provide a backdrop of the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of the professional identities of a wider spectrum of teachers in different contexts and teaching different subjects and different age groups. Against these I am able to juxtapose the findings of the small, ‘bounded’ group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers.

4. 6. 6 Reliability

‘In the classic meaning of reliability, the criterion of reliability is whether the research instruments are neutral in their effect, and would measure the same result when used on other occasions’ (Denscombe 1998: 213). However, in qualitative research the impact of myself as the interviewer, with my knowledge of the individuals involved, becomes an integral part of the study and means that objectivity might be difficult to achieve. Thus, in order to eliminate as far as possible this adverse effect, I undertook to record clearly and in detail the process and decisions of the research, leaving a precise audit trail (Lincoln & Guba 1985) through elaborating on the concept of working with an index, ‘frameworks’, charts and boxes to show how my understanding of the themes of the work derived from this process.

4. 7 Threats to Validity

Maxwell defines validity as the ‘correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other sort of account’ (1996: 88). In qualitative research the idea that methods can ensure validity is a concept which has mainly been abandoned as a view of positivists who believed that scientific knowledge could be reduced to irrefutable data. Maxwell also states that in qualitative research ‘validity is a goal rather than a product’ (ibid.: 86). Indeed, what needs to be addressed by qualitative researchers is no longer whether validity can be proven but how threats to validity can be ruled out. That is finding a way in which the data and one’s interpretation may be seen as valid. It is not a question of reaching an objective truth but a question of being able to reach credible and valid conclusions.

In my own data and the interpretation of that data I believe there existed threats to certain aspects which might undermine its validity. Therefore, in the following sections I will attempt to outline the strategies I used to mitigate these threats and to provide evidence that makes the threats implausible. In doing this I have followed the typology of different types of validity as defined by Maxwell (2002: 45-52) and described below.

4.7.1 Descriptive validity

In terms of factual accuracy or the ‘descriptive validity’ (Maxwell 2002: 45) of the interviews I made with all the teacher respondents, I attempted to safeguard the accuracy of my research by first recording the interviews. In making the transcription I attempted to faithfully record words or phrases. I then asked the interviewees to read through the transcripts I had made of the recordings. This way they could verify that the ideas they had expressed were, according to their best recollection, accurate. However, it is important to note here that their agreement only concerns the validity of my transcription and unless they also listened to the tapes I had made they could not verify that I had accurately transcribed the interview. I also note that descriptive validity refers to ‘issues of omission’ (Maxwell 2002: 47), for example expletives which I had omitted or ‘chunks’ of verbatim data that were extraneous to the topic.

4.7.2 Interpretive validity

The descriptive accuracy of my data, outlined above, thus provided me with the basis to begin to understand the data, not from my own perspective, but from the point of view of the teacher respondents in the settings studied. Bohman, (1991) and Headland et al. (1990) refer to this as an ‘emic’ perspective. Herein lay a major difficulty, that of ruling out threats to the interpretive validity of my research, that is how far could I understand and interpret accurately the possible distortions, perhaps subconscious or hidden feelings, and inaccuracies of participants? The strategies I used to counteract this threat to my own interpretation of not only their conscious concepts but also of their beliefs and values were to attempt as far as possible to allow respondent teachers to reveal their own perspectives, to try not to ask leading or closed or short-answer questions and to above all, be aware of my own bias and assumptions. I will outline the latter in a following paragraph. Throughout I attempted to ‘seriously and systematically [] learn how the participants in [my] study [made] sense of what was going on’ (Maxwell 1996:90).

4.7.3 ‘Member Checks’

In addition, where possible, I made ‘member checks’ (Guba & Lincoln 1989), that is I checked with the respondents with regard to the data I had obtained from them and the interpretations of that data I had made and I obtained feedback from them. To do this I

summarised what I believed to be the main points the teachers had made in their interviews and e-mailed the summary to them. There was also the problem of whether to take interviewees at their word in the interviews and when they replied with regard to the summaries. However, it may also be argued that the constructions of participants are part of their reality and, in terms of interpreting my own data, I agree with this viewpoint.

4. 7. 4 Researcher Bias

In the analysis of possible threats to the validity of my data it is important to look at my own influence on the research and my strategies for minimising this bias in collecting and interpreting the interview data. I shall now outline these. I have already related the initial incident which stimulated this work, that is, my querying the non-attendance of EFL teachers in my institution at a talk given by an academic about the impact of globalisation on English pronunciation teaching. I have also given an account of my own early teaching experiences, which gave me some empathy for ‘non-native speaker’ teachers of English. The re-telling of both of these incidents indicate my bias and it is with this mind-set, albeit subconsciously at first, that I began this research.

This inherent ‘reflexivity’, that is the values and expectations which I, as the researcher brought to the study, is thought to be impossible to eliminate (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). However, in order to deal with this bias I adopted the following strategies to minimise this effect as far as I could. The first was to carefully avoid any positive comments about new ideas in the field when I conducted the interviews. In fact, on some occasions I made comments which indicated some difficulty I had had with the interpretation of an idea. Secondly, I tried at all times to remain neutral and keep my voice neutral, adopting neither a surprised nor a judgemental tone when asking about and/or following up on teachers’ attitudes to new ideas and academic work in the field.

4. 7. 5 Reactivity

Alongside ‘reflexivity’ Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) state that ‘reactivity’, that is the influence of the researcher on the individuals in the study, is a possible further threat to the validity of qualitative research. They also believe that eliminating this researcher influence is impossible. Below, however, I list what I understood to be the specific threats to this aspect of my research and how I believe I lessened these.

(i) The purposive sampling (Denscombe 1998): the teacher ‘acquaintances’ sample

As I have stated previously, all of the teachers I interviewed for my data were people with whom I had worked in some capacity. The fact I had kept the teachers’ e-mail addresses or phone numbers and was able to approach them in an informal fashion indicated I felt I had developed personal relationships with them. The choice of these ‘acquaintances’, that is, people with whom I felt at ease, may have ‘skewed’ the group in favour of a selection of teachers with values similar to my own.

However, as tabulated in Appendix 1, the teachers I interviewed had varied, lengthy and diverse EFL teaching careers in different countries, on different continents, were balanced in terms of gender and were selected for these reasons and not for the ‘acquaintance’ factor.

(ii) The ‘acquaintance’ teachers’ less serious approach

The previous acquaintance I had with the teachers may also have allowed them to feel that the interviews could be taken less seriously than had I been an unknown interviewer. On the other hand, the relationship we already had inevitably allowed a more frank exposition of the teachers’ opinions and ideas. I believe that the strengths of the latter are of more value to the research than the possibility of the teachers undertaking the interviews in a less serious manner. It should be noted that the teachers had devoted at least fifteen years to the profession of teaching English. This seems to me to evidence a serious approach to their careers which would not be dispelled by a ‘friendly’ one hour interview.

(iii) ‘Having a go’

When I worked with some of the teachers in this study I had been Director of Studies of a medium sized private language school. However, when I interviewed the teachers, I was no longer a Director of Studies, but working as an EFL teacher in a University College where three of the teachers had obtained Diplomas and/ or a Master in TESOL. The teachers may have been influenced by the institution or wished to ‘have a go’ at someone who had moved out of the lower status private sector to a more prestigious institution and/or wished to do the same to an institution where two of them had not had positive experiences in gaining their qualifications. However, as the teachers had

themselves moved out of low paid and low status teaching work in EFL private institutions in Britain and were working in well-paid or more prestigious institutions abroad and those who had had negative experiences had completed their Diplomas and MAs at least eight years prior to the interviews, I feel it is not probable, therefore, that these teachers wished to wreak some type of revenge on the institution or on someone who worked there.

(iv) Autobiographical truthfulness

In using my Research Diary to embed my thought about both the research process and to take field notes about incidents I encountered as a practising teacher, as well as write up the Critical Incidents of my life as an EFL teacher I ran the risk of finding it difficult to maintain objectivity about myself, as I was seeing and recreating myself in the past from a present perspective (Clements 2001). The danger was that, without scrupulous journal keeping, my memory could have faded and, in addition, other information about the event I was recording which was given to me subsequently might have distorted the event in my mind. Conway (1990) and Searlemann and Herrmann (1994) describe self-schematas on how we view ourselves and these self-schematas may have caused me to enhance or exaggerate my role in an incident, or to have placed myself more centrally in the incident than I truly was. In fact, Clements (op.cit.) argues that whatever is recalled is 'fictive', that is because an exact re-creation of the event is impossible, even auto-biographically. In recognising this, I acknowledge that I needed to be vigilant in monitoring my own language and narrative in order to understand my own values and how they had shaped my memory of events.

4.7.6 Generalizability

Finally, in terms of threats to the validity of this thesis there is the issue of generalizability, that is, can the results of this small project be generalised to a wider audience? Although I have reported on a small scale study of a group of experienced 'native speaker' English language teachers and how they view their professional identities, my findings may be generalizable beyond this group. There is no reason to believe that these initial results do not apply more generally, as the group of teachers I interviewed

were as varied in their work and backgrounds and views as professional EFL teachers usually are in my long experience of the field.

Moreover, I have sought to interpret this data according to one of Schofield's (2002) three targets for generalisation. It is the 'what is' (Schofield op.cit.), the seeking to establish the typical, the ordinary, the common. Delving deeper I hoped also to produce both the 'what may be' and the 'what could be', thus completing a trilogy that might provide a new and better alternative for the profession. Thus, the conclusions of this study may well be extrapolated to other 'native speaker' English language teachers and their conceptualisations of their professional identities.

4.8 The thematic structuring of the data chapters

Having now outlined the problems encountered in the gathering of data for this work and described how I sought to minimise these problems, I move to the thematic structuring of the data. In order to conceptualise the themes of the data chapters which follow, I used the final charts and summary boxes derived from the 'frameworks' (4.5.6 above) as a basis for the structuring of the chapters. The themes for the work emerged as:

1. A conceptualisation of a superior professional identity in the world of English language teaching by this group of 'native speaker' English language teachers.
2. The conceptualisation of this superior professional identity constructed on the basis of the 'native speaker' teacher's birthright, educational background, language ability, ethnicity, pronunciation, classroom methodology and experiential theories.
3. The conceptualisation of this superior professional identity based on the 'native speaker' teachers' perceived 'difference' to 'non-native speaker' English language teachers.
4. The conceptualisation of a less secure professional identity in terms of the 'native speaker' English language teacher's ambivalent relationship with recent academic understandings and academic theory.
5. The conceptualisation of a less secure professional identity in terms of the native speaker' teachers' ambivalent relationship with his/her own teacher development.

The first three themes are contained in Chapter 5. This chapter looks at the factors which contribute to the construction of the superior professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teachers in the study. The fourth theme, the practitioners’ relationship with academia and academic understanding, both of which contribute to a less secure professional identity, comprise Chapter 6. Chapter 7 explores the fifth theme, teacher development and its contribution to the teachers’ conceptualisation of a less secure professional identity. A final data chapter (Chapter 8) looks at how one teacher in the group managed to conceptualise a more harmonious professional identity.

It is inevitable, however, that in attempting to isolate separate factors in constructing an identity for the ‘native speaker’ teacher in the following chapters, categories overlap and there is no neat manner in which this information can be collated and presented. There are, therefore, rarely clear-cut divisions between the various elements that contribute to the current conceptualisations of the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ professional identities. Thus, throughout the data chapters these elements may appear in more than one section.

Chapter 5: Traditionally secure identities: educational ‘schema’, practice, ethnicity, language and ‘difference’.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research findings which appeared to contribute to the ‘native speaker’ English language teachers’ confident professional identity. The chapter begins by outlining how the teachers gained confidence from their British educational backgrounds. It then presents data which appear to demonstrate that these teachers also gain a sense of security from their classroom practices, which are a facet of their British teacher training and therefore also part of their educational background. Next, the findings about the contribution that ethnicity and English language proficiency make to identity are discussed. The chapter concludes with a commentary on the data relating to the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ international colleagues, the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers, and how these colleagues are perceived as ‘different’ by the respondents in this study.

5.2 A British ‘schema’

A first important contribution to this group of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers’ identity as professionals was the belief in having been educated in a ‘superior’ educational system in Britain, both at university and in their training to be teachers. The teachers established part of their identity and gained a deal of superiority from the British ‘routes’ they had travelled, both educationally and pedagogically. The ‘routes’ we travel is one concept which traditionally contributes to our identity, that is our understanding of how we align ourselves with a group of people and in the case of the ‘native speaker’ British teachers, these ‘routes’ were of considerable importance in shaping their professional identity.

The teachers’ undertaking of and beliefs in a range of British educational practices and their particular understanding of successful classrooms appeared to confer upon them a position of importance around the world. Strengthening these feelings of superiority was

their irritation towards ‘other’ educational systems and ‘other’ learners. In this study these ‘other’ educational systems were those of France and Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi, as well as Japan. This range of contexts the teachers were working in or had worked in, therefore gave an international perspective to their ‘voices’. I look now at the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ views of British and ‘other’ educational systems.

5. 2. 1 The British system vs. ‘other’ systems

First of all there was a conviction, transmitted both openly and often by implication in statements where the ‘other’ was criticised, that the teachers believed they represented an educational system with superior knowledge. One teacher, (Alex: 27-29), exemplified this by saying ‘We bring a certain amount of cultural imperialism but it created the depth of thought that most people have in terms of their education. If the success stories are in Britain and America then why would they [the host country] want teachers from India or Pakistan?’ And, referring to British practitioners, this same teacher said: ‘So they [the foreign learners and institutions] appreciate people with wider breadth of knowledge and depth of education coming and using the language’ (Alex: 40-41). Another teacher also explained ‘They wanted British teacher trainers. The Brits had always done it the best way’ (Rob: 108-109). Alex (75-76) later too, talking about his ‘non-native speaker’ teacher counterparts said that ‘the bi-lingual advisers are very nice. One of them, two, at least three of them have got their MAs from Britain.’ The approving tone of Alex’s comment ‘The MAs from Britain’ appeared to indicate that this fact increased these ‘non-native speakers’ value as teachers. In other words, they were acceptable because they had studied in the UK system and it is that which gave them value.

Rachel (84) also applauded the British system ‘I believe that in Portugal the British Council carries quite a lot of weight [] the reason they come to the British Council is that it is much better to be studying at the British Council’ (53-54), implying here ‘than studying in the Portuguese system.’ Additionally Rosa, when criticising another educational system said ‘Having all this rubbish of grammar teaching, reading teacher, writing teacher, listening teacher and so on, which means that as a teacher you can never operate fully because you can’t use other skills. The other skills [] as a teacher with British training I couldn’t use my talents in the other aspects of the language’ (358-363). Finally, Vera, commenting on the need to undertake research said ‘I think [they] should be

doing research and passing it on to teachers to use it in the classrooms but I think you need a Western style education to do that, to be able to ask questions, so that rules out all the Japanese, Indonesian, Chinese involvement etc. but that's just too bad' (Vera, E.2). I believe, though, that despite Vera's use of 'Western' in the previous statement she had 'British' in mind. In any case her statement was one of a number which, in making negative reference to 'other' systems, gave a clear indication of a belief that her own British education was much more highly valued.

Moreover, these teachers, myself included as part of the 'bounded' group of my study, made many further criticisms of the educational systems, learners and cultures in which they had taught or were teaching, delineating them all as inadequate and implying their own British system was best. I give the following comments as examples of teachers speaking about educational systems that are not British: 'It's the approach to learning generally that's the problem' (Vera: 241-243); 'They think they know best, it's a culture in general which is hostile to change' (Rob: 225). Alex also said:

It's a fairly old-fashioned [] the entire educational system. They are not trained to think and work things out for themselves in any subject at school. We're talking about a culture that has 30 lessons a week in secondary school, 14 of which are memorisation of the Koran, that's half their school timetable that's based on pure memorisation of the Koran (201-208).

As well, the teachers viewed both the methods and how the English language was taught in a critical manner. It was 'conventional' and 'set and rigid', 'everything's eyes down' (Rachel: 36-37 & 50; Basil: 221), the latter meaning that learners spent their time reading and writing in the classrooms of their own educational systems. What is more, according to one teacher, the learners 'weren't taught to analyse, deal with content.... just expected to remember it' and 'learn a load of facts' (Vera: 32-36; 198-200). As well Vera said:

Anyway, apart from not having the English, they don't have the skills at all, they don't have the academic skills. They don't have those skills in Japanese' (28-30).

These perceived inadequacies of the educational systems and the learners in other countries were viewed as the reasons why people go to 'native speaker' teachers and why

British teachers are seen as ‘good teachers.’ For example, ‘The Portuguese would be paying to have our [teaching and learning] ideas’ (Rachel: 126-127).

There was, additionally, no recognition that any useful learning of English had taken place in these ‘other’ cultures and systems. Moreover, there were two major misconceptions of what actually went on in the educational systems of countries in which two teachers were working. The first was Alex (Alex E4) when talking about education in Abu Dhabi. He stated ‘Remember you’re in the Middle East where philosophy and logic are not taught’. However, in order to verify this statement, I looked at courses offered by two Middle Eastern universities, Zayed University in Abu Dhabi and the Egyptian university of Ain Shams. At Zayed there was a course in Arabic and Islamic Studies offered by the College of Arts and Sciences, entitled ISL 450 Islamic Thought. The course was described as ‘a discussion of the philosophers al-Kindi, al-Farabi, ibn Sina and Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd and their roles in preserving Greek philosophy and their contributions to Western philosophy. At Ain Shams, too, in the Faculty of Arts there was a Department of Philosophy and a BA is offered in this subject. (See www.zu.ac.ae/clg-artssc/arismstud-home/arismstud_courses.html & www.asunet.eun.eg/art/htm).

A second example of how ‘other’ educational systems were viewed was in the interview with Vera who stated:

Amazingly academics in Japan on the whole don’t speak English, whereas in a lot of other countries academics publish in English or have to have their stuff translated into English. And they have to have professional journals translated into English. Medical journals are about the only things that are translated into English in Japan. As a result of this, because people don’t speak English or read English, they are not aware of what’s being published internationally (Vera: 225-231).

However, looking at www.japanesestudies.org.uk/webkinks/literature.htm, I was able to locate a number of journals on this web-site which were published in English and contributed to by Japanese academics. Two of these were the Journal of Japanese and International Economics, published by Elsevier Science (USA) and the Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, published on-line by Nanzan University (www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/publications/jjrs/jjrsMain.htm). Neither of these journals had content which was in any way associated with medical journals.

My impression of these comments from the ‘native speaker’ teachers is that it was more useful for the teachers to accept such ideas as those expressed above, or similar hearsay, at face value and without investigation because it was an easy tool to bolster their arguments and criticisms of teaching and learning in both Abu Dhabi and Japan. Surprisingly, and despite that fact that these were the countries the teachers had chosen to work in, and had worked in for many years, neither of them seemed interested in deepening their knowledge about how things really worked, and neither of them seemed keen on looking for points they might consider as positive. It seemed to reinforce their feelings of superiority and sense of identity in terms of the ‘routes’ they had travelled, that is, going through a British education system, to remain misinformed and to continue to see ‘other’ educational systems as backward and inferior.

5. 2. 2 Teaching and learning: ‘British EFL’ classroom approaches

In addition, despite stating that teachers should work with the needs of the learners foremost in mind and should teach appropriately within the context of the learners, this seems to be revealed in the data as no more than ‘lip-service’. In reality, there appeared no adherence to the belief that the needs of the learner should come first and it also seemed evident that whatever was not done in a ‘British EFL’ way was considered inferior and open to criticism. There were three factors which, in this study, contributed to the teachers’ understanding of a ‘British EFL’ classroom and ‘British EFL’ approaches to teaching and learning and which the teachers appeared to consider as superior to ‘other’ ways of teaching. These factors were important in their professional self- identification.

(i) Creating a pleasant atmosphere

The first factor which united the teachers seemed to be in the type of classroom atmosphere ‘native speaker’ teachers wished to create. Language classrooms were believed to be interactive, happy, supportive places where teachers made learners comfortable and reduced anxiety. Basil noted: ‘I think the more we can make them feel good about themselves, the better’ (227). Vera said: ‘Native speaker teachers tend to have a different kind of methodology where they are more encouraging, not creating anxiety, actually lowering anxiety’ (73-75) and also ‘They [the ‘native speaker’ teachers] don’t walk into the classroom and create more anxiety, which is a Japanese teacher’s way of

dealing with their pupils' (59-61). Finally Vera said: 'Generally, they [the learners] would say ...it's better, native speaker teachers are more friendly. They're not trying to catch [us] out in exams and things' (Vera 95-97). Alex also opined 'that rapport is very important. If they don't like you, forget it' (212-213), indicating that creating a pleasant atmosphere was a basic principle for him. I, too, reveal my own adherence to this concept in the following incident from my Research Diary.

A pleasant atmosphere

I was observing 'O' in teaching practice. 'O' was Russian. I thought she was 'bossy' and had a demanding manner with the students. In another way, though, she was patient in allowing time for students to understand new language, in fact usually more patient than the 'native speakers' who were often unaware of the struggles of the learner with English. However, 'O' was a tyrant in getting students to repeat things 'properly', for example to say the forms of irregular verbs accurately aloud or to make adverbs from adjectives, and she would ask any learner to repeat over and over again in front of the rest of the class until she was satisfied with their accuracy and pronunciation.

Watching her lessons I squirmed, thinking the atmosphere had become so stern, unlike the pleasantness of the 'native speaker' teachers and the manner in which I would want to teach. Yet, seeing her with the same learners outside the classroom, they laughed and joked and continued to turn up to her lessons. Obviously, there were no 'hard feelings', almost as if the learners expected that kind of treatment and believed a teacher like that really cared about them learning (Research Diary: March, 2004).

Watching this incident of 'O', a 'tyrant' in my interpretation, and her different way of behaving made me wonder how learners saw our pleasantness and non-threatening classrooms.

Furthermore, the same theme surfaced when watching an EFL teacher training video with about forty 'native speaker' teacher British colleagues. On the video it was evident that the teacher being videoed had weak language awareness, as she sometimes explained the grammar and vocabulary inaccurately. However, the 'native speaker' teacher trainers in the room made warm, endorsing comments about this teacher's classroom persona and

the manner in which she dealt pleasantly with students. I wrote in my Field Notes: 'People commented very favourably on the teacher's rapport and on her pleasant and non-threatening manner. They also noted how she 'knew each student's name'. Someone behind me said: 'She has all the qualities we can't teach the new teachers.'(Research Diary: Field Notes, October, 2003)

Running through these comments seemed to be the belief by the 'native speaker' EFL teachers in a harmonious, relaxed classroom atmosphere, almost to the exclusion of giving learners accurate new knowledge about the language they were trying to learn. I reflected if this kindly 'native-speaker' approach was always the best method? Was to be easy-going, undemanding and making allowances for learners who did not 'shape up' something which improved our learners' skills? Contrarily, did some learners' previous experience and expectations cause them to become demotivated by such 'laissez-faire' methods? The problem for this group of 'native speaker' teachers though, was that they seemed not able to see outside this concept of 'British EFL' and consider other possibilities. I thus believe that having a pleasant classroom atmosphere was an important aspect in the construction of the EFL 'native speaker' teacher's classroom identity.

(ii) Becoming more 'autonomous'?

A second factor apparent in teaching and learning the 'native speaker' way was seeing the learners as needing to become more autonomous. Vera, for example, says

Well, I try to teach people to become more autonomous, teach people how to manage their own learning, teach people to use that language that is around them, like, even in Japan we are surrounded by English, even without trying. If you're supposed to be a full-time language/English student then one can be expected to make a bit more effort to seek English out in various forms and use it to learn (163-167).

Vera also said: 'I explain to them [the learners] that I want them to understand that learning is about what they do and not about what I do and there is a lot they can do to help themselves' (174-175). Rachel too, when discussing her ideas about her Portuguese classroom expresses her belief that 'autonomy' was something her Portuguese learners needed to acquire:

[I have] a very clear agenda of what I want from the classes and obviously that fits into the current methodology in terms of looking at student agendas, learning agendas and learner training and again that's another area that most of my students don't have any agenda when they come into the classroom (256-260).

On the other hand, when learners did come to the class with a clearly 'autonomous' agenda, that of learning only the vocabulary necessary to pass some examinations, Rob criticised this approach as 'it gets them through the exams, this is the sick thing, but they're not really learning English' (215-216) and continued to say it was impossible to introduce any learner training into Saudi Arabia (222). Rob then said:

Their only objective is to pass the next test and to move on to the next stage. That's all they want to do is simply to move on. And they will reject what they've already learnt. 'Why are you asking that teacher, that's Book 1. We've done that. We're on Book 4. That's a Book 1 question' (226-230).

In this incident the learners are clearly exercising their own 'autonomy' but it is not the 'autonomy' envisaged by the 'native speaker' ELT teacher. Rob in fact, later describes how one 'native speaker' teacher colleague was unable to pursue such a belief of encouraging his view of 'autonomy' through learner training. Rob said: 'He left. He left because he simply couldn't do what he wanted to do' (268-269).

Another incident illustrated my own attitude to 'autonomy'. What is concerning is that this incident took place possibly one year after I had begun this research and after this time I had clearly had a chance to become aware of my own prejudices and reflect on them with the comments of the group of 'native speaker' teachers in mind. It seems, though, despite this, I was still unable to alter my own deep-rooted 'schema' of a 'native speaker' ELT classroom approach. In fact it appeared that this was the only way I could envisage and maintain my identity as a 'native speaker' English teacher. I made the following notes after going to Bahrain to deliver a methodology course for Bahraini secondary school teachers.

In Bahrain: being more autonomous

The first day of teaching here was a struggle. We (the secondary teachers and I) approached the classroom from what seemed like opposite corners of the ring. I felt

frustrated and ill at ease in the role they expected me to play in the teaching room. It seemed like they would never allow me to stop talking. I tried to ask questions, get information from them, involve them, all the things I normally do and feel comfortable doing in a language classroom. I talked so much that my throat was sore after the first two hours. It was a big room and they kept saying 'we can't hear'. I felt like I was shouting. Telling and telling. Giving out information. I have never talked and talked in my classes and 'lecturing' is not how I view interaction in the language classroom. However, the Bahrainis were very much at home as I talked on. They looked and listened, bright and attentive.

I wanted to do what was natural for me, that is get them to do some work and take the spotlight off me. When I thought I had found a time to change things I ripped some paper from the Flip Chart, rushed about and handed them the sheets, saying, 'Now, in your groups..' Then, 'Actually, no, not in your groups, with some new people.' In fact, I didn't want them to keep working with people in the same rows they had been sitting in for about two hours, so I said: 'In some new groups, turn round to your neighbours behind.'

I was just acting out all the years of EFL teaching I had done, going through my classroom 'methods', being myself, working how I normally worked. Being 'me', the professional 'native speaker' English language teacher. However, with these secondary teachers I met two lots of resistance. The first one was that they wanted to stay in their original rows, working with people they were already with and had worked with the week before. This, even if one mature lady was working alone because nobody seemed to want to include her in their group. In fact, I went up to the back and tried to 'join' her to other groups but the way the teachers started was the way they continued. The lady remained isolated. It all seemed strange to me. Why couldn't this one teacher join up with a couple of other people and why couldn't the rest of the teachers just turn round and work with people in the rows behind or in front of them?

The second 'resistance' was to my 'Poster' idea. I'd asked the teachers to write down on the poster some ideas about the topic I'd been talking about. Instead of talking to each other and finding out what other people thought and maybe clarifying meaning amongst themselves, doing it 'on their own', using their English for a task and then

putting something down on the paper, nothing happened. There was some quiet muttering but nothing got written. I went round the rows. A couple of people said ‘What do we have to write?’ I explained again. Still hardly anything appeared on the pages. I felt very uncomfortable. They’d been listening for two hours. Hadn’t they understood? I then suggested some ideas. They asked exactly where to write it on the page. That baffled me. I was thinking: ‘Why can’t they just try and work it out for themselves.’ I had assumed they would write something and we could clarify points when the information on the posters was presented to the rest of the class. Later on in the course I also realised there was quite a lot of resistance to writing for public consumption because the teachers were embarrassed about their hand writing. The day left me immensely frustrated. (Research Diary: Bahrain, June, 2005)

Here, my own view of the superiority of a British language teaching classroom is evidenced. First of all I talk of this encounter as a ‘struggle’ and refer to the teacher and the students in ‘opposite sides of the ring’, demonstrating how I would fight to resist changing my teaching role to suit my students. I saw the class as a ‘battle’ and one that I wanted to win because my way was the ‘correct’ way. What is more, my discomfort at talking and ‘lecturing’ and my view that ‘telling and telling’ and ‘giving out information’ was inappropriate eventually wins out. I attempt to force the learners into my, obviously superior system of having them work together and pool their knowledge and not give out any of my knowledge, even though, as they probably thought, I was the teacher and I was the one who should have the ‘knowledge’ and the one who should give it out.

I also tried to force the learners to work in social groups they obviously did not want to work in and to reinforce my view of a ‘pleasant’ social atmosphere by making sure all the learners were working together and no-one was left out. Perhaps there were many reasons why the mature lady worked on her own, which I did not know about. I remained convinced however that this woman must work with other people. My comment: ‘I went up the back and tried to ‘join’ her to other groups reveals how insistent I was on apparently harmonious group work in the classroom.

Finally, my irritation (I felt ‘uncomfortable’, ‘baffled’ ‘irritated’) at the fact that they would not do it ‘on their own’, autonomously. A most basic teaching belief of mine is evidenced here. I wanted the Bahrainis to ‘try and do it themselves’ and was quite

oblivious to the fact that they did not want to 'lose face' or be 'made fools of' in front of their colleagues or perhaps in front of 'superiors' such as Senior Teachers who were also present in the room, if they held up inaccurate posters. It may also have been that I was creating a considerable amount of insecurity for them and I appeared oblivious to this fact.

What this extract also evidenced is my own ignorance of a culture of teaching and learning that was not my own and, as well, my conviction that my own 'practice' was superior to that of the Bahrainis. In fact it appears that my 'native speaker' ELT training experiences have instilled in me a methodology of social learning, with learners encouraged to work in pairs and groups whenever possible. It has also instilled in me a belief that teachers are facilitators, managers, one kind of resource, rather than authoritarian disseminators of knowledge about language. Above all, it has encouraged in me a methodology which encourages a view that we should encourage our learners to try things out for themselves.

I believe, then, that this Research Diary entry shows my discomfort at being deprived of my classroom practice which was quintessential in defining who I was as a 'native speaker' English language teacher. I was not looking at the students in front of me and understanding their views of teaching and learning but only perpetuating my own concepts of language teaching in order to feel that I was a credible English language teacher. In addition, the extract highlights the way in which I was not prepared to accept alternative views of behaving in a classroom, and neither were Vera, Rob or Rachel. It does not appear that we viewed the Bahraini, Japanese, Portuguese or Saudi ways as useful or acceptable, although, ironically, the learners in front of us were the ones speaking and understanding English and we were the people who managed only to 'just about' succeed in some elementary Arabic or Japanese phrases.

(iii) Oral communication 'on our terms'

A further shared concept of the 'native speaker' EFL classroom was that language learning was seen as primarily developing oral communication skills. Basil, for example, noted that in France students attended classes run by 'native speaker' teachers because 'they come to us to speak. All our students come to us to speak' (219). Vera said that in Japan she wanted her learners to realise that a language classroom is 'where you want people to communicate, to interact with one another' (71-72). Vera also criticised her

learners for not being able to speak in the classroom, saying that: 'They don't have the speaking or listening skills because nobody asked them to speak or spoke to them in their English lessons at school. Basically, because their English teachers couldn't speak English' (41-43). Alex, too, putting forward his idea of what makes a good classroom comments: 'It doesn't matter what lesson you're teaching, you can have a back and forth, you can have a communicative relationship with them where you're talking with them and discussing with them' (233-235). Also, when Rachel talks about what an important classroom idea for her is, she says 'In terms of them being open to doing group and pair work, that they need to speak English' (44-45).

The idea of getting people to communicate orally with one another was also my own agenda. I include the following extract from the Research Diary to make this point.

The silent class

Today I substituted for X. She gave me a unit to do about films from a book the class had requested. My lesson wasn't very good. We started with some reading and questions to be answered. I told the learners they could work with a partner to answer the questions. I thought they would talk together to get the answers but the reading was a long, slow, painful, silent time while they delved endlessly into dictionaries and I got more irritable.

'Just try to answer the questions, don't worry about all the words you don't know', I said a couple of times.

When, eventually, they finished the task, which they did not seem to have understood very well I thought: 'So you can't read, at least now let's hear you say something'. I put the students into pairs to interview each other about films they had seen. I put a grid of titles on the board for them to copy then fill in as they talked to each other. This was as hopeless as the first activity. The interviewing pairs said nothing or worked in whispers and with great long silences interspersed. Dictionaries were out and continually consulted. Ideas got slowly written down.

I knew I was irritated and I kept asking myself why. After all, they were sort of working and asking each other about films and listening to each other and making notes but it was all so quiet. I suppose because I think that language classrooms need

to be noisier than that one was and it annoyed me. I thought the class should be oral and interactive. (Research Diary: Field Notes, October, 2003)

This unease with silence and emphasis on oral communication ‘Now let’s hear you say something’; ‘a long, slow, painful, silent time’; ‘but it was all so quiet’; ‘I think language classrooms need to be noisier’, caused me to realise, yet again, how restricted my own vision of the language classroom was and the extent to which I valued interaction and participation myself, just as the teachers I interviewed did.

However, the belief that real oral communication English is encouraged by us in the classroom is challenged by a further incident when authentic communication became unacceptable because the content of the interaction appeared to threaten the teacher’s position. When learners asked a teacher an authentic question in English about the rationale for a classroom activity, the teacher seemed irritated. This is what Rob said: ‘What we get a lot from our students is “Why, teacher?” Every time you ask them to do something, they ask “Why?” They want to know “why”. Now, it’s not always possible to explain to them’ (264-266). It seemed as long as the learners were communicating in English on topics that were pre-decided by the ‘native speaker’ teacher, oral communication was good. If oral communication in English became ‘real’ and the learners’ own agenda was used to critique the method, it was not. Indeed ‘oral communication’ and ‘autonomy’ here seem acceptable only as long as they fall within the boundaries of the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ interpretation of what these concepts entail.

(iv) ‘Others’ in need of change

The ‘native speaker’ teachers’ beliefs, therefore, seemed to be for an acceptable (on their terms) pleasant, oral, ‘autonomous’, approach to language learning. A further factor which contributed to the teachers’ professional identity seemed to be viewing the learners in their classes as ‘others’ in need of a change. In fact, teachers in this study appeared convinced they should change their learners’ views about what language is and how it is learnt, as I had done with the teachers in Bahrain, and as Alex and Vera wanted to in Saudi Arabia and Japan. It often seemed as if the teachers had a ‘native speaker’ ‘mission’ to convert learners to particular views of a language classroom. For example, the ‘native speaker’ teachers seemed convinced that their role was to make learners realise that

language was ‘a living entity not a subject’ (Rachel: 45) and it was ‘not something they’re going to learn, I’m going to teach’ (Rachel: 46-47). This comment by Rachel finds echo in my description of wanting the Bahrainis to pool their knowledge, rather than me give them any of mine.

The foreign/‘other’ learner was also criticised, thus establishing further an identity through ‘difference’. The learners’ lack of abilities and or/ attitude to language learning was commented on negatively: ‘they only have short term objectives’ (Rob: 226-230; Alex: 194-198). Rachel (259-260) said her learners came to class not knowing why they were in the classroom and what they wanted to achieve. There was also criticism of some learners’ lack of interest in culture, with one teacher stating: ‘On the whole students are interested in language not culture’ (Rachel: 213-14) and ‘Students don’t need culture, culture is actively rejected’ (Rob: 124-126). The ‘native speaker’ teachers, therefore, seemed to feel that teaching ‘culture’ was part of their professional identity and unhappy when their learners rejected this aspect of their teaching. The ‘native speaker’ teachers also felt that they could succeed in changing learners’ habits, and it was the right and proper thing to do, if the learners ‘were only more educated and motivated’ (Alex: 285-286), further highlighting a view of the inadequate ‘other’.

As a group, therefore, these British trained ‘native speaker’ teachers saw themselves as having a superior understanding of teaching and learning and the comments indicated that the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher in this group also felt he or she had been educated within a superior system, compared with that of his or her learners. As a community, the teachers positioned themselves as sharing the same views of a successful classroom. As a group, too, they articulated a vision that a British educational ethos and pedagogy was superior, usually by comparing it to ‘other’ systems and describing those and the learners as inferior. This ‘native speaker’ educational ‘schema’ and the teachers’ negative comparisons with ‘other’ educational systems was, therefore, the first main factor in the construction of the professional identity of these English language teachers.

5.3 Professional confidence

As well as taking up identity through the shared values of having been educated in a British system and gaining a sense of identity from aligning themselves against the different ‘other’ educational systems, the ‘native speaker’ English language teachers in

this group also felt secure and gained a sense of identity through their shared classroom practices. The methodological practices they adopted in their English language classrooms were representational systems which they took up to further stake their claim to a particular identity position. I now explore this group's apparent conviction that their 'native speaker' methods are superior in the world of English language teaching and how this factor also plays an important part in these 'native speaker' teachers' secure identity constructs.

5.3.1 Methods: the 'pair and group ideal'

As I begin by discussing the confidence teachers have in their 'methods', it is first important to clarify 'method'. Although there have been attempts at rethinking Anthony's (1963) definition (Richards and Rogers 1986; Prabhu 1990; Pennycook 1989), Brown cites Anthony's as 'a definition that has quite admirably stood the test of time' (2002:9). Anthony (op.cit.) defined method as the second in a hierarchy of three interlinked concepts: approach, method and techniques. He defined 'method' as an overall plan for the systematic presentation of language based on a selected approach and believed method was derived from an approach, which was a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning, and teaching. Finally, the 'method' translated into a set of classroom techniques.

Although in the data gathering interviews the 'native speaker' teachers referred to one of the most currently widespread approaches in British ELT, Communicative Language Teaching, as a 'method', their interpretation of this 'method' was related by the community of practitioners in this study in a very limited way. In fact this 'method' meant 'getting the students to work in pairs and groups' (Rachel: 33-34), that is providing tasks and activities for students to work on together, usually requiring the use of spoken English, with the teacher often moving round the room working with the small groups, rather than standing at the front directing the lesson towards all the students. Rosa commented that this 'method is best. It involves students' (373-77). Rob, though, seemingly refuted this by explaining his position regarding this use of pairs and groups in Communicative Language Teaching: 'I've had rows with my younger colleagues - they believe communicative methodology is the only way - that is pair work/information gap' and 'my colleagues don't see much beyond pair work and information gap' (149-53).

However, contrarily, Rob continued to complain that in Saudi Arabia his classes were too big to implement pair and group work and thus, by inference, expressed his wish to use pair and group work in these classes. He complained that ‘monitoring pairs in information gap activities in large classes, you can’t hear’ (Rob: 234-39). He thus appeared frustrated, apparently because he could not implement this pair and group methodology. This frustration was also evidenced when he spoke of Arabic speaking colleagues who were able to manage this type of classroom ‘method’:

When we try it as Brits, it doesn’t work, I keep looking at one particular guy and thinking ‘Ibrahim [his ‘non-native’ teacher colleague], how can you get them to do that, because I can’t? ‘They’ve got the advantage, the non-native speakers being able to use Arabic to set up communicative activities (Rob: 225-228).

This comment also evidences Rob’s irritation that the ‘non-native speaker’ colleague is advantaged by being able to speak Arabic, the learners’ first language. A similar frustration at not being able to implement pairs and groups was also expressed by Vera in trying to get Japanese students to work together in peer reviews of written assignments. She commented: ‘It’s very difficult to get Japanese students to co-operate with each other’ (297-98). Rachel also says, when discussing her methodology, ‘and that is my way of presenting the notion of pair work, of group work... and the reason for saying that is just to get them used to the idea of working in pairs and groups and that communication in English to others speakers of Portuguese is not a waste of time’ (33-35).

The teachers’ underlying conviction seemed to be that learners needed to be working in pairs and groups, or if at all possible moved towards working in this way, which Holliday (1994) terms ‘the learning group ideal’. This author, alongside Canagarajah (1999b), also notes that most ELT literature takes this ideal as the norm, despite such a technique sitting uneasily within the macro social factors of different contexts. This desire to practise ELT using ‘the learning group ideal’ was, however, constant in this group of teachers’ different teaching contexts and even despite their espoused theory of adapting ‘method’ to the learners in front of them. In fact, the practice the teachers all spoke about as sharing and all aligned themselves with was this pair/group ideal. There was, therefore, considerable similarity within this small ‘bounded’ group of ‘native speaker’ teachers. In being able to implement the ‘learning group ideal’ in the classroom meant that ‘native

speaker' teachers felt they were doing their job properly, and not being able to implement it caused frustration and a feeling that the teacher was not fulfilling their role of English language teacher effectively. It was the one feature of classroom practice which was consistently mentioned and referred to and which bound the group together quite remarkably. Anderson (2003:221) also reported the teachers in his study as seeing the 'learning group' as something to work towards.

5.3.2 Idiosyncratic 'theories'

Alongside the shared beliefs in the British 'schema' and a belief in the 'learning group ideal', the teachers in this study also had other, individualistic convictions about learning in the classroom. One teacher described his:

I try to get them [the learners] to think: 'Where is your head when you say this?' Once we've worked out where one's head is and then try and make them think what are the important things I'm saying and let's focus on those and forget the frills. We can add frills later. But let's look at the bare bones. 'Imagine there's a fire. What are you going to say?' I think that students enjoy the magical mystery tour and every now and then it's good to give them one (Basil: 146-150; 192-194).

Basil's explanation of his beliefs about teaching, methodology and learning were highly personal and worded in a discourse that was dissimilar to any other teacher's. Mike, on the other hand, was just as convinced of his own ideas but offered a more conventional explanation for his 'theories'.

I think I'm fairly eclectic. I use a lot of authentic materials, even with my low level students. They're living in this country [UK] so they've got to be exposed to it. A lot of my practice is based on the idea that students learn through physical experience and total interaction. So, very active learning, rather than passive. Lots of discussion. I like to use short documentaries and things 'off-air' because I get students to talk about real life issues (5-10).

Here Mike not only speaks of his 'theories' but also reiterates the previously mentioned oral dimension of the 'native speaker' teacher's view of a classroom. Mike later spoke further of his materials and how he taught around those. He seemed more concerned with these materials and their significance for him and their effect on learners,

than with any idea of codified theory of a teaching methodology. This is part of my interview with him as he focuses on his own particular view of classroom practice.

Mike: I've got a big bank of material which I very often use and very often modify. A lot of my own self-generated material is stuff based on song, films and documentaries. I spend a lot of time doing that. I don't particularly like using course books.

Interviewer: That must keep you motivated, just making all these materials?

Mike: Yes, absolutely. And it's got to be something that I'm interested in. I think that's very important. It's very difficult to 'con' students. They know! They're very perceptive. If you're going to tackle a theme and you find it personally boring as a teacher, that is likely to come across to the students. So when I chose my material I make sure I'm interested in it so I've got something to say about it (53-63).

Another different personal and idiosyncratic 'theory' was explained by Rosa:

I mean you just... I see from their expressions where they're sort of.. they got it or not... and if not, I'll have to think of another way of doing it.. but you do know that, if you've taught something and one or two haven't got it, it shows in their faces and to me it shows that either their mechanism is not geared for your methodology or you haven't really done a good job of it, so you go again in a different way until they get it. I always work like that. I look at their faces and I see immediately, even if you ask them, if they've understood it. You can see it in their eyes whether they have, so I always go over it again, in a different way until they get it (459-468).

Rosa then expressed another 'theory' about teachers and teaching.

I really think that, like anything... like show biz, if you like in a way, not everyone can make it. Knowing the subject, in this case, the language, doesn't necessarily make you a good teacher. It's a whole package. More than any other profession so perhaps, part of it is because you're acting, you're on stage, you're observed, you're looked at, they hang on every single word, more than in any other profession. I know I've seen quite capable teachers in the sense that they knew the subject well, but they weren't good teachers in the sense that they didn't make a lasting impression (537-548).

On the contrary, Rachel's personal view was very different. She said:

I mean, I don't like the focus to be on me. I find there are moments when I go into the classroom and really, really cannot bear the focus to be on me so I will be working, sort of getting them to work in pairs or groups so that the emphasis is not on me, the focus is not on me (247-250).

Vera, too, had her own 'theory' about her work in the classroom. She described it in the following way:

I do, for instance, have a student contract. I spend a long time explaining what it is, I am aware they think I am completely mad... I spend a lot of time with examples and activities in class and showing them what they can do with the English around them, like reading a cereal packet while you're eating your breakfast. I suppose over the years I think I've moved more towards teaching learning skills, rather than concentrating on the content of the language that I'm teaching (159-161) (172-179).

The teachers were always sincere, convinced and apparently successful with their 'theories', which all appeared to be personally relevant and meaningful, individualistic and made sense of by extensive professional experiences in the classroom. These practices had been emotionally invested in by the teachers over time. They thus gave a sense of more individual perceptions of particular identities within the group of teachers, although the commonality of what bound them together was that each had her/his own idiosyncratic view of what worked and what did not in the classroom.

Separating these two concepts of 'THEORY', defined by Edelsky (1991) as explicit beliefs which have been formalised in accordance with the conventions of an academic community and 'theories', the 'taken for granted', tacit, unexamined bedrock of teachers' classroom practices, may have been useful and might have elicited more information from the teachers in the interviews. However, in not providing a more detailed explanation of these two different concepts to the teachers when they were interviewed, I was made aware of the degree to which codified knowledge, the 'THEORY' of teaching, appeared to be irrelevant and how important their individualistic and idiosyncratic classroom 'theories' were to them. I shall continue to adopt this definition by Edelsky throughout the rest of this work.

5.3.3 Method: eclecticism?

The group of teachers, however, despite their focus on the pair/group ideal and their own 'theories' also expressed the idea that any 'method' of teaching was useful and professed that the choice of 'method' depended on the context and culture in which they taught. The teachers also listed learners' needs, their own language learning experiences, the institution they worked for and their own judgement as the conglomerate of factors that dictated the 'method' they chose to use in their classrooms. These are examples of what the teachers said. Rosa 'My methods have suited students. You need to go with whatever you feel is best. Use your own judgement' (528-35). Alex said 'I don't have an approach as such. I'll do just about anything' (254-58). When asked about a name for his method he continued:

I don't consider it communicative because I don't think communicative is a method. I think it's wrongly named. I've seen people who use communicative methodology and they're appalling because they become too rigid. I think if people take it as an approach so you actually deal with your students as people and individuals, it doesn't matter what lesson you're teaching, you can have a back and forth (227-233).

Rosa, commenting on her training and its influence on her methodology, as well as other influences on her choice of 'method' said: 'OK, a lot of it comes from training because I was trained at the British Council. I did the RSA Prep Cert. and I learnt the methodology there. You know the usual PPP structure to a lesson'. However, she also commented: 'I think that the teachers' own personality and input comes into it and that doesn't come from a book, it comes from you. I've also picked up good ideas from teachers' books.' She then she said: 'I can't say I take a particular method and use it and the reason for that is because I've worked in several countries' (247-251).

These statements regarding 'methods' often seemed vague and confusing, but like the teachers' 'theories', personally meaningful and idiosyncratic. However, what was never discussed in the interviews, or in the subsequent e-mails, were the other assumptions in the 'set of assumptions' (Anthony op.cit.) associated with Communicative Language Teaching, that is, the kind of tasks that students might be required to undertake, the use of authentic materials, whether errors were corrected or left uncorrected, the appropriacy of

language taught, and in fact whether communication needed to be 'oral'. Indeed, the teachers seemed to have some disdain for 'principles'. For example, when talking about language learning 'methods', Rosa said:

I find it more useful to pick up things from my colleagues, you know, practical things for the classroom, rather than read a whole book. I remember over the years, some of the people I observed, I've picked up little things from them and they've been very useful to me and I've been using them ever since and to me that's more valuable than reading a book on some abstract theories on how to do it (343-250).

Perplexingly as well, despite a declared conviction that all 'methods' work, when confronted with 'other' methods the teachers demonstrated some distrust. As an illustration of apparently believing that 'any method' would work, Alex, quoted the story of individual X whom he thought I would recall:

Do you remember X, do you remember how X learnt English? He was sent to the fields in the cultural revolution and he learnt English because an old Professor had one book with him that the revolutionary guards had not thrown away because it was the sayings of Chairman Mao. He and some other professors had translated it into English and he taught X English using that little book. You don't need a method (240-245).

Alex cited this as an example of 'any' method. However, he could see nothing positive in the teaching of English in Abu Dhabi, where he currently works. He said: 'In countries like Abu Dhabi, the education is not deep. I'm talking about the primary and secondary education. It's not deep, it's not wide' (30-31). Rob, too, again in the apparent belief that other 'methods' would work, recounted his views of his British training as inappropriate in one context:

I don't think you can walk into a foreign culture with your British orthodox communicative methodology. I'm not saying you can't develop a communicative methodology but you've got to start with what they expect and what they've got. But this is the thing, you've got to hit on the methodology that will work with the learners you've got (190-191).

Nevertheless, despite this comment Rob seemed to hold a conviction that if he just had an ‘educated, motivated learner ...without even batting an eye-lid, the first day [he was] in the classroom [he would be] straight back into a small group communicative approach’ (258). In fact, although the teachers talked of their different perceptions of language classrooms and their openness to a variety of methodologies, they consistently appeared to give limited explanations of these language learning ‘methods’. The teachers mentioned ‘communicative language teaching’, however, they did not define their understanding of ‘communicative’ other than to lay emphasis on oral English and the use of pair and group work. These were elements which appeared to derive from the teachers’ initial training, as Rob and Rosa exemplified. Vera also commented: ‘I mean I started off using communicative methodology teaching’ (156-158).

It seemed, therefore, that, in reality, this group of ‘native speaker’ teachers practised some way between a very vaguely defined ‘CLT pair/group oral method’ of their initial teacher training in Britain and the creative, idiosyncratic pedagogic solutions and ideas they had freely derived from individual classroom experiences. It appeared to me that this community of ‘native speaker’ teachers had forged a successful interpretation of their roles for themselves in the classes in which they taught, idiosyncratic and individualistic, but they also still wore the invisible corsets of their ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher training and that these latter were shared values, helping to define the group professionally. The representational systems relied upon for their professional identity were the pair and group work ideal and developing oral communication amongst their students. This fact was illustrated again in an incident which occurred in my work-place and revealed my own ‘corsets’ alongside those of my British trained colleagues.

Not thinking ‘outside the box’

In teaching practice on an initial training course, teacher ‘L’ put up an overhead transparency of a paragraph in English. She asked the class to copy it down. Neither myself, a colleague, nor the External Examiner, who were both observing, saw any rationale for copying in English (photo-copies could easily have been made and all the learners could manage the script quite well). Teacher ‘L’, though, believed it ‘helped the learners get the pen flowing’. We thought it was totally inappropriate. However, when I related this activity to a teacher who teaches outside the UK, she

said: 'But here in state schools that's what everyone does, copies things down (Research Diary: Field Notes, July 2004).

As three experienced 'native speaker' British teachers in this incident we are shown as apparently unable to consider that another point of view or rationale could exist outside the confines of our views of what constituted appropriate pedagogy. Therefore yet again, despite the lip-service paid to different ways of teaching in the classroom, as with, for example Rob, who speaks of 'full-frontal teaching' (201) but who then quickly complains that he has difficulty getting learners to work in pairs and groups, I thus conclude that this group of 'native speaker' English teachers are ultimately revealed as fully subscribing to 'British' ELT training practices which promote pair and group work and oral communication.

In conclusion, it appears that there are some contradiction between the realities of this group of 'native speaker' English language teachers' classroom practices, at least as they described them to me, and the literature of academics writing about EFL, who are exhorting teachers to greater contextual appropriacy in the practice in their work. Indeed, contrary to these teachers' considerable reliance on their representational systems of the identity markers of pair and group work and happy, oral classrooms, academics increasingly suggest greater awareness of the relationship between context and method and have thereby seemingly laid down a first gauntlet to the teachers' current conceptualisation of their professional identity.

5.3.4 Perceptions of 'method' in the peripheral group of teachers.

I turn now to the conceptualisation of 'method' of the university EFL teachers, that is those from the peripheral group of teachers who were studied in order to provide a broader perspective on the professional identities of the core practitioners in this study. This peripheral group were, as the core group had been, rather non-committal about 'method'. There was the same lack of precision regarding the principles of the language teaching methodologies these teachers adopted in class as there had been with the core group. In fact, when asked about the methodology they currently used, TU1 volunteered for the rest: 'Communicative is PC, isn't it? We all do that' (107). TU1's comment that their teaching was 'PC' again indicated that this is where these teachers believed current methodology to

be situated, even though, for example, Littlewood (1981) had published *The Communicative Approach* twenty-three years ago. Moreover, while these teachers did not define ‘communicative’, they also did not dispute my suggestion about CLT operating in an interactive classroom, where people talked a lot. This latter appeared to indicate a similar attitude regarding oral interaction to that of the core group and seemed to reveal the same vague conceptualisation of ‘communicative’ as a methodology where the learners talked to one another in class.

Additionally, another teacher, TU2, raised the issue of motivation being a key issue in language learning and the ideas of ‘translation and literature’ surfaced in his comments about ‘methods’. He said: ‘I think if people have the motivation, you know if you really want to learn and you have a novel and a dictionary to translate. If you really want to do it...it’s the motivation. For most people it’s the motivation. They are going to get there, whatever the method’ (125-128).

In terms of describing their classroom methodologies, this peripheral group seemed similar to the core group. Indeed these university teachers were involved in classroom EFL teaching like the core group and, like this group, too, were vaguely aware of some codified methodology, Communicative Language Teaching. Similar to the core EFL teachers they also appeared unable to articulate aspects of this method in any detail. Furthermore, in terms of beliefs that ‘any’ method would work, the peripheral group preferred the translation of literature as a favoured ‘method’. This echoed the core group’s various, idiosyncratic theories about language learning.

It seems then, that in the case of the peripheral group of university EFL teachers, despite operating in a different educational context, the attitude and understanding of their ‘methods’ of teaching English were very similar to those of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers in the study. This seems to indicate that there is some commonality in the professional constructs of these ‘native speaker’ teachers in a university setting and the core EFL teachers.

5.4 Ethnicity, birthright and language proficiency

Having looked at the manner in which a British educational ‘schema’ and a number of British classroom practices contribute to these ‘native speaker’ teachers’ professional

identities, as well as how their views of ‘different’ educational systems add to this construct, I move now to the role that concepts of ethnicity, birthright and language proficiency appear to play in further constructing the professional identity of this group of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers.

5.4.1 An ‘English’ colour

According to this group of teachers, the stereotypical English language teacher appeared to be a ‘white’ ‘native speaker’ teacher. In fact, both the institutions the teachers worked for and the international learners they taught were reported to have this as an image of a stereotypical English language teacher. It was also the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ view that it is this stereotypical teacher who would meet their learners’ expectations. Moreover, in accepting only ‘native speakers’, and those who were seen as looking typically like ‘white English’ people, that is conforming to a certain ‘ethnic’ idea of an English language teacher, the institutions employing such people supported the learners’ stereotype, or perhaps contributed to providing such an image in the first place. For example, Indians who had grown up and been educated in Britain were unacceptable, as Jane recounted. Here is part of the interview with her:

Jane: At [name of ELT institution] they [the learners] would all complain...for example, we had teachers of the Indian sub-continent backgrounds...obviously... native speakers, born, bred, educated, lived all their lives in England. Students didn’t want to know... said ‘they’re not real English’.

Interviewer: So they really wanted....

Jane: So they really wanted to have someone they could see as ethnically English as well as having an English accent....

Interviewer: So that would mean, could they be a brown person?

Jane: No... no...

Interviewer: No...even if they were more British than I am?

Jane: Yes, they didn’t mind white New Zealanders.

Interviewer: But they wouldn’t want someone who’d been born in London?

Jane: This is what I mean... I think the last one was born in Leicester, the one we had last summer because he had... they said; ‘He’s not English because he...he’s not real

English.’ So, that was that. Explain things like the Race Relations Laws and stuff, it didn’t wash, they said. ‘He’s not a real English teacher.’

Interviewer: Did they complain to the Director of Studies?

Jane: Yes. (158-175)

In this exchange with Jane it appears that the learners reject the teacher in question because he is not ‘white’, although the word is not articulated when explaining why the learners have rejected the teacher. Moreover, Jane and I both refrain from saying ‘coloured’, although I say ‘brown’. However, earlier I have refrained from asking ‘So they really want a white teacher?’ In fact Jane even talks about this teacher as ‘the one’, rather than ‘the teacher’, demarking him as different in her own mind. I also say ‘someone who’d been born in London’, again avoiding having to say ‘a coloured teacher’ but we are both aware that this was the issue and yet continue to avoid the reality.

In the next excerpt from an interview, Rob evidences not only his learners’ apparent prejudices but also his own, too. In the first question I ask he immediately equates a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher with a coloured teacher.

Interviewer: Do you think your students who have you now as a British trained native speaker would be happy to exchange you for a ‘non-native’ speaker?

Rob: No.

Interviewer: Why not?

Rob: Because they’re racist.

Interviewer: What do you mean by that?

Rob: Well, they [the learners] don’t like anyone with a darker skin than them and if it were to be an Indian teacher, they look down on Indians, Filipinos; they look down on basically everyone (89-102).

This coincided with an occurrence in my own institution. My Director of Studies employed an Indian teacher but said very openly: ‘Well, a few years ago I couldn’t even have employed her. The students would have objected. I hope they don’t now’ (Research Diary: Field Notes: Jan 2004).

Interestingly, the value placed upon ‘native speaker’ teachers by both learners and institutions in international contexts, simply because the teachers represented some hypothetical ethnic image failed to excite much protest from the teachers describing the

incidents. From this, I also conclude that there was a tacit acceptance, an unspoken discourse within this community that the ‘white native speaker’ English language teacher was the default model of English language teaching.

To illustrate this point further I recall an incident from the first post I took in London. It clearly highlighted the issue of ethnicity and the importance ‘colour’ played both in institutional and learner conceptualisations of the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. This is the incident.

Alice

Two of us began working in a new school in London on the same day. Alice had been educated at a boarding school in England since she was 12 and completed her first degree in Norwich. She was Indian from Singapore. She was brown-eyed and brown-skinned. I had been educated in New Zealand. I had been in England for a week. I was of Scots/Irish descent. I was blue-eyed and white-skinned.

We taught our own classes but quite often team taught another class. I saw no difference in her teaching to my own. However, a number of students went to the Director of Studies and ask if Alice was English. No-one ever asked if I was. Eventually our initial ‘probationary’ three months ended and I was offered a permanent contract (despite the fact that the management knew I was pregnant and would leave). Alice did not have her contract renewed, although I was very aware she wanted to stay on. She left the school (Research Diary: Critical Incident 3)

This incident has remained a clear and sad memory. Alice had known far more about England than I did, had experienced the educational system and sounded more ‘English’ in terms of pronunciation than I did. Phonological issues in this case, however, were overridden by ethnicity and the apparently appropriate archetypal visual image of an EFL teacher. From this incident I began to conceptualise a hierarchy of qualities needed to be an English language teacher in an EFL institution and the most important one was appearance. The teachers first needed to be ‘white’. In fact, Alice had been the only teacher who was not ‘white’ in the school where we had worked. Moreover, I was concerned to find no defence by the management of this English teacher who, apparently, did not fit the learners’ image of an English language teacher and, it seemed, the staff’s own conceptualisation of an English language teacher. Alice was simply not re-employed

and this again reinforced what appears as a silent, unspoken racist discourse in EFL. As Kubota confirms with regard to race in EFL:

Diaspora from the English-speaking West to the non-West seems to result in a higher social state (particularly when the person is White) but not vice versa. This has a lot to do with the global status of English... as well as English-Only ideology and racial issues, I think. (Holliday 2005:28 citing an e-mail interview with Kubota.)

5. 4. 2 The birthright mentality

Aside from ethnicity, a further indication of the ‘native-speakerness’ needed to be acceptable to certain institutions was given by another respondent, Rachel, when explaining why someone would or would not be employed. She explained ‘(it) would be an area that would be very fluid, including identity, education, language ability, qualifications, need for a teacher’ (306-308). It is worth noting that the first item on her list is ‘identity’, which to my mind is short-hand here for ‘white’ and ‘educated in an English speaking country’ or ‘coming from an English speaking country’. Certainly as another EFL teacher myself I recognised the unspoken discourse. Indeed, the first items on Rachel’s list are not qualifications or teaching expertise and in fact these are the final items on the list. Rachel also added that a Portuguese person might be acceptable to her institution in Portugal, but only if they had emigrated and Portuguese was not their first language (80-81). The sub-text here again is that English should be their first language. Rob also illustrates this same point:

The Dean was adamant that all teachers should be ‘native speakers’. And he had problems when you had people with British EFL qualifications as good as and sometimes higher than the Brits he employed. He had problems accepting this character because he wasn’t a ‘native speaker’ by birth. We had one particular guy who had American citizenship but who was originally Polish and did have a fairly strong Polish accent when he spoke English and the Dean didn’t like him and he didn’t get his two year contract renewed. Basically, because he was considered to be Polish rather than American (136-144).

I also witnessed two incidents of such native speaker support within my own institution.

Qualifications and the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher.

We finished teaching a 120 hour initial teacher training course (Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language or CELTA). At the end the course tutors decided to give Anna, a ‘non-native speaker’, a Pass Grade B, based on her performance in teaching practice and her understanding of the teaching and learning process. Anna was the only person to be awarded a Pass Grade B on the course. All the other teachers (‘native speakers’) were awarded Pass Grades, that is ‘meeting the criteria’.

Just as the course finished, however, there was a request from our language teaching unit for two temporary EFL teachers to work for two months. The Director of Studies and the Head of Department (who was also a tutor on the initial training course) conferred and immediately offered the posts to two ‘native speaker’ teachers with Pass grades but not to Anna, who the tutors had agreed was the best teacher in the group. Anna had also had two years experience teaching English in Argentina before coming on the course. The ‘native speakers’ were, as well, no more than mediocre teachers, yet beneath all of this there was the unspoken discourse that the learners (and probably the other staff) would not accept a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher. I said once I thought it was unfair but then kept quiet because I knew nothing would change (Research Diary: Field Notes, August, 03).

This silent discrimination serves to show the strength of the birthright mentality in the field of English language teaching. Anna was a very competent, well-prepared, more experienced teacher than the others on the course. Her knowledge of grammar, of course books and of learners was superior to that of the initially qualified and completely inexperienced ‘native speaker’ teachers. Anna had consistently given very good lessons throughout the course and even helped some of the ‘native speaker’ teachers with their grammar problems. At the end of the course she had achieved a better grade than the rest of the teachers. However, when it came to offering her possible employment, there was no discussion at all as to whether she should be offered one of the posts. She was completely overlooked and invisible to the two employers, almost as though she had never participated in the course. The ‘native speaker’ teachers, were, it seemed, the only ‘real’, ‘proper’ and valued English language teachers on the training course, however

inexperienced and mediocre they were as teachers. A further incident in my Research Diary contributes similar data.

More silent discourses

We have been asked to mentor Diploma/MA TESOL teachers. (These are usually ‘non-native speaker’ teachers with some or even much classroom experience who wish to gain a further qualification in England, so have become ‘students’ in the UK for fifteen months.) This request for mentoring means that each of us ‘native speaker’ teachers will host a pair of teachers in our classes and these teachers will also do some micro-teaching in two of our lessons. At the meeting to discuss hosting the teachers, one of our staff, Claire, stated that she was just a Certificate qualified teacher (having completed a 120 hour course), not a Diploma qualified teacher, and asked if that was ethical (to be advising more qualified teachers than herself). She was told it was fine. There was then some furore over whether the micro-teaching by the teachers on the Diploma course would be acceptable under British Council regulations and, indeed, the ‘native speaker’ tutor organising the micro-teaching said that we could not have ‘unqualified’ teachers teaching in our rooms because of British Council regulations. The tutor also impressed upon us that, for this reason, we must still be ‘in charge’ and that we were not to give the Diploma teachers pronunciation lessons to teach (Research Diary; Field Notes, October, 03).

The unspoken discourse of this incident was that Claire, the ‘native speaker’ teacher (albeit minimally qualified with minimal experience), was superior to the Diploma teachers because these latter were ‘non-native speakers’. This juxtaposition of superior ‘native speaker’ to inferior ‘non-native speaker’ remained uncommented on and completely taken for granted by all the ‘native speaker’ teachers in the room. It was accepted without remark and I imagine without any reflection at all, rather more probably taken as ‘common-sense’ that Claire, the minimally qualified teacher, was in a position to advise the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers, even if these teachers had had ten years English language teaching experience. Her superiority and mentoring ‘status’ rested only on the fact she was a ‘native speaker’.

Again, in terms of the ‘teachers’ being seen as ‘unqualified’ by the tutor organising the practicum, their invisibility to his ‘native speaker’ tutor eye was again evident. The

teachers were, of course, qualified, as qualifications and English language teaching experience were pre-requisites for enrolment on the Diploma course. However, the other silent discourse was that they were ‘unqualified’ merely because they were not ‘native speakers’. And again, the ‘native speaker’ teachers in the room seemed completely unaware of the discriminatory discourse that was being acted out around them.

Thus, when compared to the teaching expertise of ‘non-native’ speaker teachers of English, birthright appears more significant and important. This seems to further contribute to the belief at both institutional level and in the wider community that the professional identity of a successful English language teacher is intrinsically tied to a sense of place, another key factor contributing to identity constructs. What is more, this valuing of the ‘birthright mentality’ (Walelign 1986: 40) can be further seen in other field notes and a critical incident from the Research Diary. One incident concerned the employment of ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speaker teachers and the other incident was concerned with prejudice operating at classroom level. Both of the incidents demonstrate the perspectives of institutions, other ‘native speaker’ teachers and ‘non-native speakers’ involved in English language teaching and English language learners. This first incident occurred in a private language school and regards conditions of employment for ‘native speaker’ and ‘non-native speaker’ teachers.

Who is worth more: the ‘native’ or the ‘non-native’?

The school welcomed a group of Russian learners who arrived with a Russian Director of an English language school in Moscow. The Director, who was keen to attract ‘native speaker’ teachers to Moscow, put a question to our teaching staff. Should she pay the ‘native speaker’ teachers the same as the Russian teachers she already employed, or should she pay them more? There was an instant outcry from the ‘native speaker’ teachers on the staff of the school that ‘Of course, the English teachers should be paid more as they know more English’ (Research Diary: Critical Incident 4).

The fact that the ‘native speakers’ the Director wished to employ almost certainly did not know any Russian and, therefore, could not translate from one language to another or predict where learner problems would lie, and almost certainly knew nothing of the educational system in Russia and how Russians were used to learning, did not seem

important. What is more, the ‘native speaker’ teachers would almost surely have only completed a 120 hour initial teacher training course, as opposed to the years of training the Russian teachers had, as well as the many years of learning English. It could perhaps be argued that the ‘native speakers’ may have needed help with living expenses that the Russians might not have. However, the Russian Director was asking about remuneration for teaching, not living expenses, and the fact that both she and the ‘native speaker’ teachers she asked did not find it an odd question, again in the same ‘taken for granted manner’ as the previous incidents, placed the ‘native speaker’ as more important and more valuable than a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher.

Exposure to natural, ‘native speaker’ English would be, of course, of great value to learners in Russia, or anywhere in the world if they were going to be mixing with ‘native speakers’ or travelling to the UK, Australasia, USA etc. However, in this instance there had been no stipulation that this was the case and even if there had been, it seems that there was almost a view that the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher should be rewarded, not on grounds of pedagogic or even particular linguistic knowledge, but merely due to the luck of being born in the ‘right’ country. There is also a second incident, recorded in my work-place, which demonstrates the views of an English language learner.

The learner’s prejudices

I was teaching my regular morning class. One of the learners in the class had attended a voluntary class the evening before. The lessons in the voluntary class had been given by two teachers on the Diploma TESOL programme. Each of the teachers had to teach for half an hour. I had also been observing both lessons.

The first teacher was a ‘native speaker’ and had entertained the class with his personality and humour, given some cultural information about Guy Fawkes, setting up a listening activity where students used words on cards and pictures to identify parts of a very dense and complex text which he read aloud to them. The lesson was ‘entertaining’ because of his personality but devoid of any recognisable linguistic aim. In terms of what the supervising tutors were looking for, that is, a teacher knowing what new language he/she was teaching students and allowing them space and opportunity to use it, it was not a successful lesson.

The second teacher was Japanese. Her lesson was clearly structured with an easily recognisable aim for the students: to learn and practise ten phrasal verbs with ‘off’ and ‘on’. The learners were given time to practise the new vocabulary.

That next morning, when I thanked my learner for coming to the voluntary class, she said: ‘I think the first teacher was better’. When I asked why, she said, ‘the pronunciation’ (Research Diary: Field Notes: October, 2002).

Here the value the student in the voluntary English class saw in the lesson appears to be the opportunity to listen to and observe a ‘native speaker’ speak in his/her own language, irrespective of whether the aims of the lesson are clear and whether the learner is helped to practise the new language. It must also be noted that the ‘native speaker’ teacher was probably ethnically acceptable to the student and the second teacher was Asian in appearance, although the student did not mention this fact out loud.

Moreover, the fact of simply being a ‘white native speaker’ of English, especially if one is outside the UK, is unconditionally prized as Sarah, an unqualified ‘native speaker’ ‘teacher’ with minimal educational qualifications and no teacher training qualification outlines (Research Diary: Field Notes; Sarah, 2004). Sarah had been able to work consistently as an English language teacher for more than sixteen years in Italy. She had taught young learners, people involved in business and on courses in English for special purposes. She had worked both in state and private institutions. As the interviewed teachers had done, Sarah, too, identified her accent and her ‘intimate’ knowledge of English as reasons learners chose her above qualified ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. She gave her ability to translate and the ‘snob’ value affluent Italians attached to employing her as other reasons why she continued to be employed. Again, and consonant with the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ group throughout the thesis, she cited weak English teaching by ‘other’ Italian teachers and the lack of any provision of oral practice in the Italian teachers’ classes as other factors in her continued employment.

5. 4. 3 Language proficiency

Language, a further symbol (Mead 1934) in the formation of identity and the representation of ourselves to others, was also a factor contributing to the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher and is entwined with the

‘birthright mentality’ described in the previous section. The ‘native speaker’ teachers in this study believed that they provided ideal models of English for their students. They saw this as an ability to give clear and accurate pronunciation models and accurate language in terms of grammatical structures and functional exponents. For example Rob said: ‘I think there is a role for the native speaker to act as a model in pronunciation. It doesn’t have to be the native speaker in the classroom. It could simply be recorded native speakers in the classroom as models for pronunciation’ (73-76). Rob also said, when discussing a grammar awareness activity in a course book: ‘I can think of non-native speaker teachers who have not spent a long time, months, in a native speaker community who might have problems with the idea of simply, well “group them”. How? They wouldn’t probably see it immediately whereas we’d see, "is plus-ing, plus noun, plus adjective" (338-342). This way he elevates the ‘native speaker’ teacher to someone who has no problems with language and who is quickly and efficiently able to understand language activities in course books. Again Rob speaks about his reservations when he decides not to introduce a new course book to some Turkish teachers of English. He explains:

Because I thought non-native speaker teachers would have problems with it. I felt they would have had difficulty because they didn’t have the books of thing like grammar structures to hold on to. I think a non-native speaker teacher has a big problem with a course based on a functional syllabus rather than one based on a structural syllabus (350-355).

Jane, too, when talking about ‘non-native’ speakers and their ability to follow the changes in a language says that ‘non-natives’ [don’t] change as quickly as a native speaker, that’s for sure’ (17-26). As well, the teachers in the study felt they provided rich and complex language for the students. What is more, they believed they were ‘the guardians of nuance’ (Basil: 35-36).

Therefore one other factor in the construction of the superior professional image of the ‘native speaker’ ELT teacher seems to be their conceptualisation of their English language proficiency.

5. 5 On-going supremacy of the ‘native speaker’ teacher

These images of this group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers’ professional identity based on their British educational ‘schema’, ethnicity, birthright and language ability seem reflected by other people involved in the world of ELT. The images of the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ teacher seem also perpetrated by ‘non-native speaker’ teachers who rate the ‘native speakers’ highly, the English language learners who place birthright and ethnicity above teaching skills and English language teaching institutions, who often appear to see ‘native speakers’ as the only ‘real’ teachers of English. This sense of a superior professional identity for the ‘native speaker’ teacher is further illustrated by the following data. When talking of ‘non-native speaker’ English language teachers in his institution in Saudi Arabia, Rob said ‘there are not supposed to be any’ (59-60). Rob reinforced this comment with these remarks: ‘I think, world-wide, there is a respect for native speakers’ (131-133). He also added: ‘There is a respect for ‘native speakers’ on the part of this institution. Alex added ‘[My institution] wanted only ‘native speakers’ (135). Vera, too, said: ‘In Japan, [in my institution] ‘native speakers’ are seen as people who can come and improve the level of teaching and learning’ (57-58).

Thus, these data appear to indicate that retaining the current ‘status-quo’ of the prestigious ‘native speaker’ English teacher identity, even as academics plead for a more realistic view of English language teaching which encompasses the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher and a changing role for English, is unproblematic in the lived experience of teachers at the outset of the millennium. There seems a sizeable gap between the rhetoric of academics and the reality of the teachers’ experiences. Whether qualified and experienced, unqualified and inexperienced, these ‘native speaker’ English language teachers appear to be classified by others within the profession, as well as by themselves, as language experts, pedagogically enlightened and ethnically appropriate.

However, the understandings of this small ‘bounded’ community with regard to the superior identity constructs of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher sit uneasily with the aforementioned papers and publications by academics and the call for a reassessment of the current situation of world-wide English language teaching in light of the changes being brought about by globalisation. What is more, the ‘native speaker’ teacher has so far appeared to demonstrate little engagement with the points of view of the

academics and effectively established the academic and his/her work as not part of the professional lives of the particular practitioners in this study. This lack of dialogue with the works of academia is something which will be further investigated in Chapter 6.

Moreover, there seemed an unwillingness on the part of this group to want to see further than their current teaching situations. None of the interviewed teachers mentioned that the role of the ‘native speaker’ teacher in ELT might change, or that the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers of English should acquire improved status as English now serves as a world lingua franca. On the contrary, the ‘native speaker’ teachers in the group seemed wedded to the traditional views of ‘native speaker’ supremacy. This is due, in part as I believe the data appear to indicate, to the teachers’ perceptions of the British educational system and their view of their EFL methodology as superior, although the latter has been shown to have been conceptualised in a very limited manner. In further part I believe the data show that these ‘native speaker’ teachers’ beliefs in their superior professional identity is due to the plaudits awarded them by the international learners of English in these teachers’ classrooms.

Furthermore, the self-constructs of the teachers also appear to have been created by the institutions the ‘native speaker’ teachers work in or have worked for. These institutions seem to all value ethnicity, birthright, ‘native speaker’ pronunciation and certain classroom approaches which they associate with ‘native speaker’ teachers. In such a working environment therefore, it seems understandable that ‘native speakers’ EFL teachers continue to hold such views of their own professional identity.

Thus it appears that the professional self-construct of the superior ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher continues to be created and recreated, paradoxically, not only through the teachers’ perceptions of themselves but also through the perceptions of language teaching institutions and by English language learners in classrooms. The teachers’ views of their professional selves become inextricably bound up with the views of their employers and their learners.

5. 6 Defining identity through ‘difference’

It seems evident in the previous sections that much of the ‘native speaker’ teacher’s professional identity is built on a view of their British educational and teacher training

‘schema’. What is more, comparison with other concepts and practices of education also appeared to reinforce the collective identity that the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher finds through this educational ‘schema’. In the next section this concept of ‘difference’ will be more fully explored as the ‘native speaker’ teachers put forward their views with regard to their English teaching colleagues, the ‘non native speaker’ teachers.

5.6.1 Lexical strategies to hide oppositional views

Adding to the teachers’ secure image of themselves as ‘native speakers’ and the security that factors such as language, ethnicity, ELT classroom practice and a British educational ‘schema’ appeared to create in terms of a professional identity, was this group’s view of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. Initially, when talking about their colleagues, the ‘native speaker’ teachers were flattering with regard to their counterparts. In a list of attributes they said that ‘non-native speaker’ teachers provided good role models for learners as people who had learnt a language well (Basil: 61-63); the ‘native speakers’ also felt that ‘non-native speaker’ teachers had a good insight into problems learners faced, having learnt English themselves. Another example was Rachel who said ‘Well, I suppose, just the belief that if they have had to learn the language themselves, that would give them certain insights (59-60). Rosa noted: ‘I think perhaps that non-native speakers are more aware of what it takes to learn a language and they tone it down a bit, whereas native speakers just keep it [keep speaking in English at a natural speed] and assume the others understand’ (91-96). Rob commented, in terms of seeing the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers as having a cultural understanding of their learners that:

The non-native speakers, if they are the same mother-tongue as the class, they are certainly more aware of the learning difficulties of the class. They’re more aware of mother tongue interference. They know exactly where the problems are going to crop up and know how to deal with the problems or avoid them or pre-empt them as it were. Especially when there’s the cultural element of the language classroom...the understanding of that, in terms of behaviour, expectations, of the learners. And for the non-native speaker teachers, they have a very important role there (32-40).

Jane (140) and Alex (69-71; 74-76) made similar flattering comments and, finally, Alex and Rosa noted that ‘non-native speakers’ were good at teaching grammar (Alex: 320:32; Rosa: 23-25).

However, any positive comment was invariably followed by negative statements about the ‘non-native speakers’ methodology and their command of English. One ‘native speaker’ said that ‘non-native speakers’ created anxiety and used this anxiety to maintain their power in the classroom (Vera: 60-61& 97); they were criticised for not being able to speak English or using incorrect English and not being flexible in adapting to change (Vera: 23-25; Alex: 60-66; Jane: 21-22; 145-147); insecure (Basil:63-65; Vera:305-307); and in one instance as having inadequate qualifications when Rob said: ‘Frankly, the degree is not of a particularly high standard’ (243-244).

In one case, there was an acknowledgement that ‘non-native speaker’ teachers could ‘teach grammar points with more clarity and detail by switching from L1 and English’ (Louise: Q). This respondent also realised that the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers would ‘have been in the students’ shoes’ and so ‘know the difficulties their students may encounter better than a native speaker’ (Louise: Q). However, replicating the pattern of the other respondents, Louise then proceeded to say that the ‘native speaker’ teacher's role was ‘to act as a model speaker and promote culture and everyday language’ (Louise: Q).

There were additional negative reactions from the teachers who were working in institutions alongside ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. In all of their statements praise was again hastily followed by equal criticism. Alex stated that ‘non-native speaker’ teachers are ‘fine teachers but it does show and this creates problems for native speaker teachers’ (91-96). He clarified ‘it does show’ as the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers’ inadequate grasp of the English language (94-96). Rachel said, paradoxically, that ‘I wouldn’t have any doubts about their ability to teach English but my students say they are not good teachers’ (67-68). Vera (273-276), when speaking about the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers in her institution and whether there could be any exchange of ideas between the two groups, said: ‘There’s only one Japanese teacher I know well enough to even broach that subject and even with her, I can’t imagine even having a really meaningful conversation.’ The ‘non-native speaker’ teacher here is reduced to a person with whom Vera is almost unable to communicate. At this point, though, I believe it is important to note that, in making such comments as these, the teachers were treating me as a known colleague and, for this

reason, their comments may have been less guarded than had they been talking to an unknown researcher. Nevertheless, in talking in a relaxed atmosphere to ‘another teacher’ these ‘native speaker’ teachers demonstrated little collegiality with the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher.

With statements such as those above, however, we see the security of the ‘native speaker’ teacher reinforced by ‘keeping the ‘non-native speaker’ in his or her place’. This is especially clear when the traditional ‘native speaker’ dominance is threatened. The following incident is an example. Alex sent an e-mail describing an ‘altercation’ he had with a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher in which he, Alex, reacted against what he perceived to be erroneous information given by the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher to his students. Here is part of the e-mail:

I had a big problem with a non-native speaker teacher about a grammar point. The students questioned me and of course I gave a different answer and showed them the point in the grammar book. Next day they told me that I was wrong and that the non-native speaker teacher was right. I went to the non-native speaker teacher to find out what was going on. He admitted that he was wrong but he wasn’t going to tell the students that he was wrong as he felt that it would undermine his authority. I found out that he had told the students they should believe him because he was a Muslim just like them and not believe me, a non-Muslim, or what was written in the book as it must be a mistake. When I found this out I went and got as many grammar books as I could, both American and English, to show them that I was, in fact, correct. I know it was petty and vindictive. But it was also fun. His authority was undermined. It is this fear of losing face that causes many non-native speaker teachers to keep repeating things that they know to be wrong, whether it be grammatical, political or cultural (E2).

The incident, while illustrating that it may be true that the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher did not wish to ‘lose face’ with his students, also clearly illustrates that Alex equally did not want to ‘lose face’ to a ‘non-native speaker’ colleague. As well, Alex obviously took some time and pleasure in undermining the authority of a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher. This appears to reveal a struggle to maintain ‘native speaker’ professional supremacy and, almost certainly, if Alex had been in a similar position with a ‘native speaker’ speaker

colleague he would have acted more professionally and in a more supportive manner. In the e-mail in fact, Alex calls his own actions ‘petty and vindictive’.

5. 6. 2 Further positioning in discourse: the peripheral, inferior ‘non-native’ speaker teachers

With regard to further positioning the ‘non-native’ speaker English language teacher as less valued than the ‘native speaker’ teacher in EFL, Vera stated:

I’d agree that English belongs to everyone, not just to ‘native speakers’ but I don’t agree that means that ‘non-native speakers’ are in a better position to teach English. I think ‘non-native speakers’ have a role to play but I don’t think that means that the ‘native speaker’ teacher’s role is diminished (51-54).

In fact, this was an understatement. In dissecting the data, the teachers in the group were evidenced as seeing the ‘native speakers’ role as undiminished in any way and as important as ever, as indeed Vera herself did. They seemed to see themselves as the only really acceptable face of English language teaching, despite academic arguments that globalisation had moved the ownership of the language to international proprietors. In terms of whether this ownership of English had passed to international speakers, however, one teacher commented that it still belonged to ‘native speakers’ and ‘[it] certainly doesn’t belong to anyone else’ (Ned: Q).

What is more, this view of the ‘native speaker’ teacher also appeared to be supported by the ‘non-native’ speaker teacher, at least according to the ‘native speaker’ teachers in the group. For example, a Japanese teacher was seen as not discussing things with ‘native speaker’ colleagues because ‘I think they’d be freaked out if a native speaker started talking about that [teaching issues]. They’d think you were being critical and they’d be so... they’d think it was incredibly rude. The immediate assumption was that you were trying to say that they weren’t good teachers’ (Vera: 267-270). Vera’s use of ‘freaked out’ when a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher is confronted by a ‘native speaker’ serves to position the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher as inferior and almost ‘scared’ of the ‘native speaker’. It certainly positions the ‘native speaker’ as possessing status that the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher does not have.

In Saudi Arabia, Rob reported ‘non-native speaker’ teachers as ‘Regard [ing] us as the experts’ (241). I add an observation of my own which also seems to illustrate this particular view of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers.

An Arabic surname

I was giving a paper at TESOL Arabia. This conference is attended mainly by Arabic, British, other European, Indian, and American teachers from throughout the Gulf region. I was waiting to give my talk outside the assigned room. There were not many people around. The person (an Arabic Curriculum Advisor) I was talking to suddenly said ‘Oh, perhaps you’d better change your name- there would be more people.’ His message was that my Arabic surname was being disregarded by attendees (who were probably thinking I was an Arabic person) because they would prefer to listen to a ‘native speaker’. In other words if I had reverted to my maiden name, Mackinlay, his view was that more people, both ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ would have come to my talk. In other words I would have been afforded higher status (Research Diary: Field Notes, April, 2006).

Thus, daily discourse amongst language teachers and educators subtly contributes to the continued belief in the superiority of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. The ‘native speakers’ seem to be revealed as thinking that ‘non-native speaker’ teachers ‘have their place’ but also that this place is not central to the teaching of English around the world. ‘Non-native speakers’ are seen as supporting and smoothing the path for the ‘native speaker’ teacher. Their role appears to be as mediators of culture when situations become complicated. It is also to translate when the ‘native speaker’ cannot, and to explain the grammar of two languages when the ‘native speaker’ usually cannot.

Rob, Vera, Rachel and Alex all commented on this. For example Alex says ‘They [the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers] are incredibly helpful for people who’ve never worked with Gulf students’ (74-75). He also commented that because of the ‘non-native speaker’ teachers’ knowledge of English as well as the students’ L1, they were very useful in teaching grammar and writing. Alex added that the students could speak to teachers in Arabic and get a definition in Arabic. It is interesting to note here that, if anything was afforded praise with regard to the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher, it was the shared mother tongue proficiency and cultural knowledge of the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher with his/her

learners and thus again, the ability to aid and support the ‘native speakers’ linguistically and culturally. However, the ‘non-native speakers’ were seen by these ‘native speakers’ as peripheral rather than, as suggested in the recent literature, increasingly central to English language teaching

Further field notes resonated with this image of the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher as inferior. It concerned a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher at work in a private language school.

The ‘non-native speaker’ teacher at work in the UK

Part of my work as a Director of Studies was recruiting new staff. When we decided to offer Cambridge CBS examinations which required candidates to demonstrate a good level of English over a variety of topics, e.g. economics, international trade, marketing etc., a need was created for a teacher with a background in such areas. An experienced Russian teacher came for an interview. Her English was grammatically and lexically flawless and she had a good knowledge of many of the topics. She was also studying part-time for a degree in Economics and had completed a Business English course at London University. She was also prepared to study further and to prepare the materials for the CBS syllabus. She was business-like and far better turned out than many of the ‘scruffy’ ‘native speaker’ staff already employed. I thought, apart from her obvious knowledge of the subjects, her business-like approach would appeal to the serious European learners from business backgrounds who would be studying on the course. I offered her work on the CBS programme. Over the following months, though, her employment became an amusing and vicious topic of discussion in the staff-room. From my office next door, I became aware that her ‘un-English’ intonation patterns, making her sound rather brusque to ‘native speakers’, were often imitated and her business-like manner laughed at by many of the teachers.

As her Director of Studies I was happy with her considerable preparation and the students she taught all gave positive feedback. No student ever came to me to complain that she ‘wasn’t a native speaker’. However, at the same time, I was aware of the difficulties she faced in being accepted by her colleagues. Eventually, despite all the effort she had put into the courses and into her own self-development, she left

teaching in a school and began to teach corporate client learners at home (Research Diary: Critical Incident 5).

With the Russian teacher, the ‘native speaker’ teachers are seen to be using one aspect of identity, that of a ‘difference’ in pronunciation, as a way of helping to create and sustain their professional self-constructs and as a way of continuing to maintain their position in the staff room as language experts and, by implication, also as better teachers. Here, the ‘native speakers’ discourse and actions showed their feelings of dominance. What is also interesting in this extract is the fact that the students did not complain that the Russian woman was not a ‘native speaker’. What the students appeared to value was the fact that she was a good teacher, well-prepared and with a good knowledge of the language and her business topics. It seems possible to surmise then that not all the learners predicted to complain about ‘non-native’ speaker teachers by the ‘native speakers’ would in fact do so.

5. 6. 3 Social discourse perpetuated

Later I recorded two further incidents which I believe demonstrate inequalities in discourse which support the on-going positioning of ‘native speaker’ teachers’ as more worthy than ‘non-native speakers’. One is from a meeting of British teacher trainers I had attended as part of my work and the other from a teacher training course that a colleague and I were conducting.

The experienced EFL teachers’ comments

At a meeting for Cambridge CELTA teacher training centres, participants were required to view a video of a pre-service native speaker teacher (‘M’) teaching a lesson. ‘M’ was about to complete her training and we were asked to comment on her lesson in relation to the kind of feedback an observer should give her following her lesson. In the lesson, apart from not understanding the grammar she was trying to teach, ‘M’ also made mistakes on the white-board such as ‘I met prince Edward’ and ‘Is his Impressions of England good or bad?’ These and other mistakes were also evident in her lesson plan. Two points arose in a general discussion following the video. Firstly, when asked about checks made on candidates’ language ability before they were offered places on a CELTA course, several people said they checked ‘non-

native speakers' language awareness carefully but they did not check 'native speaker' candidates' language proficiency. When I asked some colleagues about this they said that of course 'non-natives' were less able linguistically and much more likely to make mistakes (Research Diary: Field Notes: October 30, 2003).

The second incident occurred one year later.

The pre-service teachers' discourse

There were two interesting comments by the trainee teachers learning to teach English today. I showed the group of trainee teachers a video of a Spanish teacher teaching English. In my opinion, she had an excellent rapport with her class and provided a lot of opportunities for her class to practise new language, as well as being a model for her learners to aspire to. I asked for general comments after the video and the first comment was: 'I thought her accent was very clipped for someone who had a job teaching English.' That same afternoon on the training course, a very competent, professional lesson was given by a French trainee teacher. One of her 'native speaker' peers said 'Well, I just have to say this, you sound your final consonants a lot and it is SO unnatural.' (Research Diary: Field Notes: July 2004)

These 'native speaker' trainee teachers, only one week into their training course and hardly initiated into the field of EFL, had here constructed themselves through everyday discourse as the possessors of the 'acceptable accent and pronunciation', thus using the fact to build a relationship of power and establish the 'birthright mentality' previously highlighted. These trainee teachers who were only at the beginning of their teaching careers were instantly critical of 'non-native speaker' accents, irrespective of the good teaching of the practitioners they observed. Furthermore, the experienced British trained 'native speaker' teacher trainers, long term practitioners in the field of EFL, accepted sub-standard language awareness and proficiency because the teacher in question was a 'native speaker'. The 'native speaker' discourse evident in these episodes at the outset of some teachers' careers and many years into other teachers' careers serves to position the 'native speaker' in enviable high places, despite the fact that the criteria for this positioning seems to be very flimsy. Certainly, the everyday social discourse privileging the 'native speaker' of English over the 'non-native speaker' that trainees appear to enter the field of EFL

with, seems, from the latter incident, not to have been disabused over time in the profession.

The concerning fact is that the profession seemingly does nothing to examine these ‘loaded discourses’ either at the beginning of teachers’ careers or during them, so in this way it is possible for such discourses to be unendingly perpetrated and the superior identity of the ‘native speaker’ teacher endlessly reinforced throughout the teachers’ careers.

5. 6. 4 Protecting identity

It now seems that the small group of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers in this study have continued to retain a pre-eminent position in their institutions and with their students and that they use daily discourse throughout their careers to maintain this position and their current professional identity. Reflecting on the replies to my questions at interview, I was surprised at a lack of curiosity about why it might be suggested that ‘native speaker’ teachers could lose this traditional identity construct, especially considering that the teachers had had time to reflect on issues before I interviewed them, and also in light of their agreement that English had become an international language. On the question of their future role in English language teaching, I found the teachers either unwillingly or unable to explore the idea and wondered whether the discomfort at the idea of having group identity taken away was the reason there was little dialogue regarding who now owns English.

Holding on to a sense of ‘who we are’ is important in order to protect our identities and the certainties of our ‘group’. Even if the ‘native speaker’ teachers were working internationally they all felt connected to a particular location, which was a country where English was the mother tongue and British education was in place. These facts gave a sense of security and the possibility of identifying with the ‘imagined community’ of Anderson (1983) that is, although physically not together, it gave the teachers the possibility of aligning themselves with a nation or nations in order to have a feeling of belonging. The discourse used in ‘othering’ the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher served to cement this sense of belonging to a group and in maintaining its current professional identity.

5.7 Another perspective: teachers in other British educational cultures

In order to establish some form of contrasting perspective to the professional identity demonstrated by this small group of ‘native speaker’ English language teachers, in which concepts of birthright, ethnicity and language seem paramount, it seems useful to now provide some insight into the views of the peripheral group of teachers (the primary, Independent and University sector teachers) in the study and how they conceptualise their professional identities. While acknowledging the brevity of the information gathered from these peripheral groups it is worthwhile noting that they are groups rooted in different educational cultures in wider British society and useful in providing some perspective on the core data.

First of all, the primary teachers from the state and Independent schools appeared to define themselves through their subjects. These teachers quickly identified themselves as, for example, the Arts teacher who co-ordinates Art across the Junior school, or as a teacher of Maths, Science, and French. Or they identified themselves through the organisational, pedagogic or pastoral responsibilities they had within their schools, for example, a Deputy Head. The university EFL teachers, however, despite being teachers of English as a foreign language, also appeared to have created identities for themselves that seemed somewhat different to those of the core EFL teachers. In fact, the identity constructs of the university EFL teachers emerged as teachers who were more concerned with a self-image of ‘translator’ and ‘polyglot’ than with the image of teacher of English as a Foreign Language. The subjects of their PhD research (which two had read for or were undertaking), were modern foreign languages and the literature of these languages, rather than English, and these other languages were fore-fronted in their identity constructs. These fields seemed to be more important in their descriptions of who they were than talking about themselves as ‘native speaker’ English language teachers. Here is an example of how they seemed to view themselves.

For me a language is, I’m a translator, very much a literary language. For me language is the possibility of translation. That’s the main thing and that a language is always changing or growing. It’s interesting. As a translator I often find that I’m looking for something that is instantly recognisable for English speakers (TU1 70-72 &162-163).

In their short interviews these university teachers continually compared their understanding of other languages and the teaching of other languages with their teaching of English. For example, 'I mean, I can tell students rules about Russian and Spanish, about the grammar, the rule' (TU2: 134-135). Indeed, throughout the interview they 'threw' these comparisons into many of their comments and, therefore, seemed to create a professional construct of themselves as teachers who had a strong subject knowledge of a language or languages other than English. This perhaps gave them more academic status within their university institutions. However their short descriptions of themselves appeared to be different from those of the core respondent EFL teachers.

Therefore, in terms of the identity constructs of these peripheral groups of teachers there were discernible differences to those of the EFL teachers. In all the peripheral groups, the teachers' identity appeared to be first and foremost located in the knowledge they had acquired of a subject or their responsibilities within the educational institution they worked for, rather than a rooted in their birthright, language proficiency and pronunciation.

5. 8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show that the identity of this group of 'native speaker' EFL teachers has been forged through similarities of educational background and ELT classroom practices, and by factors associated with birthright, ethnicity and language proficiency, and finally by creating a discourse of difference to 'other' English language teachers and their educational systems. The fact that academic proposals suggesting these 'other' teachers might play an increasingly important role in international English language teaching appeared of little consequence to the 'native speakers' in the group, who did not perceive their current 'roles' and superior professional identities to be changing at all. The 'native speaker' teachers in the group also appeared not to value the 'non-native speaker' teacher in any seriously meaningful way, or agree with, or entertain the idea of any increased future importance of their 'non-native speaker' counterparts. In fact the 'native speaker' teacher is seen to rely on a discursively constructed 'difference' to the 'non- native speaker' teacher in order to support a currently superior professional identity.

Moreover, there appears to be a discrepancy between the day-to-day understanding of teachers on the 'front-line' in their ELT classrooms and the developing theoretical understanding of ELT academics about the changing face of English language teaching. The next chapter will explore further the teachers' relationships with these theoretical understandings.

Chapter 6: Dilemmas, contradictions and multiple identities: the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher and academia

6.1 Introduction

I believe the previous chapter has revealed that ‘native speaker’ teachers of English in this small study have constructed their superior professional identities through a number of factors and these factors have allowed the teachers a current self-image as internationally valued English language teachers. In this chapter I present a number of further factors which contribute to the construction of these teachers’ professional identities. However, these are aspects which appear to threaten this superior identity construct of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher.

The first threatening aspect is the proposal by Jenkins (2000), outlined in Chapter 2, for the teaching of a Core Lingua Franca. This idea of teaching a less ‘native speaker’ like pronunciation is seen to undermine the teachers’ belief that their own pronunciation is the model to be aspired to. The second factor which appears to detract from their strong professional construct is the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ general relationship with academia. This relationship with academia and its work, though, is revealed as not at all clear cut, but ambivalent and confusing for, on one hand the teachers rely on their ‘British’ EFL practices to support their secure identities, however, on the other, they see these practices as comprising less legitimate ELT knowledge than the THEORY of academics. This ambivalence appears to contribute to the creation of some insecurity in the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ professional construct. I start this chapter, though, with a discussion of the threats posed by suggested changes to the teaching of pronunciation.

6.2 Teachers’ views of English as an international language

At the outset of this section, it seems necessary to first provide some context for the teachers’ views of the teaching of phonology of English as a lingua franca. It is clear that the teachers in this group acknowledged that English is now used in international

communication between ‘non-native speakers’, as well as between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers. The teachers gave examples they had encountered of this international use of English in shopping malls in Saudi Arabia, where Saudis interacted with Indians and Filipino shop assistants in English (Rob: 18-20), in restaurants in one of the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, where Pakistani waiters who did not speak Arabic took orders from Arabs in English (Alex: 148-150) and in an Immigration Removal Centre in Britain where Albanians, Somalis and Iraqi Kurds, amongst others, were detained together and had to communicate in English on a daily basis (Jane: 67-95).

There was also an example of French air-traffic controllers who came to Britain specifically to mix with language learners of different nationalities in order to improve their own intelligibility and their understanding of other ‘non-native speakers’ of English. In the situations in which the air-traffic controllers found themselves, intelligible English on all sides could make the difference between life and death (Basil: 40-60). Interestingly, uses of international English such as these are exactly the scenarios Jenkins (2000) is referring to when she suggests the teaching of phonological aspects which allow communication in English to most easily take place. Therefore, this idea of the international use of English did not seem unusual to the teachers in terms of conceptualisation. In fact, Rachel confirms this use of English internationally as an issue with which she dealt at classroom level in Portugal,

Notions, attitudes about language and language learning that I need to present to my students is that in their career of speaking and using English, I try to tell them that only for, probably only for 10% or 20% of the time, they’ll be using English with British English speakers, ‘native’ English speakers and that possibly 80% of the time they’ll be using English with other speakers of English. That, probably, would be one of the most important ideas I present to every group I teach... and the reason .. and even my young learners, twelve, thirteen, learning English (19-26).

6. 2. 1 Threats to ‘native speaker’ pronunciation

However, despite the group’s apparent acceptance that English is used internationally in this way and even with some direct experience of such a reality, the teachers were quickly defensive and dismissive when I introduced the idea of the proposals Jenkins

(2000) was putting forward. As has been indicated in my recounting of the problems involved in collecting data (Chapter 4), the teachers I interviewed were unfamiliar with the work of this academic. Therefore, before the interviews I needed to briefly explain to the teachers that Jenkins has suggested a form of international English in which no one accent is valued more than any other. For example, a British English accent would not be more prestigious than a Chinese English accent. Secondly, I explained that Jenkins' work suggests changes to the teaching of international English, which would encourage both intelligibility amongst speakers and the maintenance of identity for all speakers. In order for this English to be taught and learnt, though, both 'native' and 'non-native' teachers would need to be educated in the aspects of pronunciation which Jenkins (2000) identifies as crucial for intelligibility (the Core Lingua Franca). 'Native speakers' could continue to speak the English they know to other 'native speakers' or to 'non-native speakers' who preferred to speak English rather than lingua franca English.

These proposals, as I related them, elicited strong, almost hostile responses from the teachers and while it was recognised that there 'a lack of understanding because of pronunciation difficulties' (Jane: 96-97) and (Rosa:102-107), the teachers also commented that the idea 'sounds mad to me' (Vera: 129-30); 'it's a crackpot idea' (Basil: 84-85); 'It would be ludicrous' - a "pigeon" English' (Rosa:186-89); an attractive idea for simpletons' (Rob:155-156). There were also other dismissive comments. For example, 'It appears rather unrealistic' (Laura Q); 'It would be difficult to implement. Not based on reality' (Ned. Q); 'I find this idea unrealistic! Unworkable!' (Mark Q).

The teachers unanimously justified continuing to teach the English they already used and not changing to what they perceived to be artificial and unnatural. According to them they spoke simply and clearly in class and already accepted 'near enough native' sounds. (Rachel: 181-184; Vera: 127-128; Rob: 87). Neither did they want to learn what seemed to be to them 'a foreign language' or be 'dictated to' (Basil: 107-109; Rob: 80-85), confirming they saw the ideas of Jenkins (2000) as threatening their identity as current providers of the only acceptable pronunciation of English i.e. a 'native speaker' version. Furthermore, in terms of phonology, one teacher saw the role of the 'non-native speaker' teacher as becoming even closer to that of the 'native speaker' and said 'the new role is for the non-native speakers who may/may not wish to move their phonology towards aspirations of "native speaker" levels' (Ken, Q). Therefore, despite agreeing and having

observed in some instances that English was used as a lingua franca and pronunciation was often an obstacle to mutual intelligibility and even giving examples of when this might happen, there was considerable resistance to considering a way in which understanding might be made more efficient and easier for the learners. In fact there were comments to say that the ‘students still expect NS English’ (Ned Q).

Moreover, in the main, the teachers became quite agitated by the idea and were against even considering it. Only two teachers expressed some openness towards Jenkins’ ideas and indicated the possibility of being able to teach the Core Lingua Franca. Rachel said: ‘I could be open to that idea - a discussion with academics, with peers. That would be interesting. I’m not averse to it’ (170-176). Another teacher seemed willing to consider the idea of teaching the Core Lingua Franca but on condition it was popular with students. ‘I think this idea is reasonable. The language I speak will not change but I’m willing to teach an international English if that’s what students want to learn’ (Dan Q).

However, Rachel’s comment above was then followed by an admission that her ‘Englishness’ would predispose her against it. In reality then, her comment was essentially the same as the other teachers. Mike, too, stated that ‘Students’ exposure to ‘non-native speakers’ is vital and is already part of my teaching.’ However, this same teacher said that he did not see his role as changing. Essentially, therefore his view of the superior ‘native speaker’ model of pronunciation also had not altered.

6. 2. 2 The pronunciation model

It seems that this small group of ‘native speaker’ teachers accepted that intelligible approximations of a ‘native speaker’ model were acceptable. However, in their statements it was clear that the group of teachers still regarded ‘native speaker’ British English as the model, whereas Jenkins’ central tenet is that British English is not the model. In this, the teachers appeared not to have understood my brief explanation, or had chosen to ignore it, or perhaps could not conceive of not having a norm other than that of ‘native speaker’ English. Moreover, when the idea that a simplified version of English pronunciation might enable international users to understand each other more readily was put forward, one teacher expressed his fear:

I'm afraid if we had 'non native speakers' teaching 'non-native speakers' who then became teachers who taught 'non-natives', we'd soon end up with the situation of Romance languages which stem from Latin and they would from English and they might be mutually unintelligible (Alex: 94:97).

This seems to indicate this 'native speaker' had a very low opinion of 'non-native speaker' teachers. Also, this teacher was unable to conceptualise that almost everywhere in the world the situation of 'non-native speaker' teachers of English teaching neophyte 'non- native speaker' teachers and learners of English is quite normal. Again, the 'native speaker' teacher here positions himself as 'superior' and his 'native speaker' pronunciation as the only acceptable alternative in the teaching of English. He also seems to demonstrate an inability to conceptualise that any 'other' teacher with less than 'native speaker' pronunciation could be a proficient teacher of English.

I now, however, refer to one incident in my teaching life which impressed upon me that 'native speaker' pronunciation was not necessarily important.

Different accents

I was in Paris assessing a 'native speaker' designed and awarded EFL pre-service teacher training qualification. There were a variety of trainee teachers on the course: French, British, American, Australian, and Hungarian. They were all involved in teaching practice and their students were French speakers who were learning English. On one particular occasion I spent time watching these pre-service teachers teaching a lesson in sequence. I saw a Hungarian, two British people (one was Irish and one English) and a French person teach one after another for half an hour each. Each person's accent was different from the next or from that preceding but the students, who were operating with quite a low level of English had no problems, and appeared not even to notice that the accents were different. The students all followed and all the teachers gave clear, useful, lessons. I surmised that if a clear, fluent Spanish or Chinese speaker of English had followed those four, the learners would have similarly adapted to their accents and accommodated the differences in some sounds (Research Diary: Critical Incident 6).

This incident clarified my belief that what was important was the clarity of the English, rather than the kind of English accent the learners were exposed to. These low

level French learners had coped very well with four different ways of handling some phonological aspects of English and differences in pronunciation appeared not to be an issue, as long as the teachers were intelligible and the learners were able to understand the messages given by the teachers and follow the lessons. Equally, Alex later e-mailed me about the facility with which international learners seemed to accommodate one another, despite their differing pronunciations, although he had another view with regard to whether or not some international form of pronunciation should be described and taught. He commented that: ‘A language of communication, based on English but resembling a more traditional “pidgin” seems to arise naturally, without any specific pedagogical input of any type.’ He gave an example of this and suggested that ‘the participants (in the conversation he related) would probably resent any suggestion that they need a course in international English’ (Alex: E). The fact that Alex believed the learners would not want a course in ‘international English’ was, of course, his own view. It may well be that the learners themselves, if asked, would welcome lessons which might make intelligibility easier.

The ‘native speaker’ teachers in this group indicated quite strongly that they viewed any idea of altering their ‘native speaker’ phonological norms as unrealistic and, in some cases, they demonstrated noticeable resistance when asked if they would undertake any change in their teaching of pronunciation.

6. 2. 3 Another perspective: the university EFL teachers

In terms of continuing to provide some perspective on these ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers’ views on the issues involved in this study, I turn now to a different spectrum of teachers in wider society and report on their answers to the same questions about Jenkins’ ideas of changes to phonology teaching. This section therefore looks at how the university teachers in a University English Language Centre responded to this idea. It might be assumed from their place of work that these teachers would have been more conversant with academic understandings and, in particular, Jenkins’ ideas. In fact, they were not and the same explanation I had given to the core groups of EFL teachers was also given to this group. In terms of replies, though, this group answered the questions in a slightly different manner to the core groups, first referring to their knowledge of other European languages and differences they already recognised in spoken English, before discussing the proposals

in light of their own teaching of English. This is an example of how they reacted to Jenkins' proposals.

TU1: There is a precedent for it in Germany with the dialects and with the Heute-Deutsch. So ours would just become a dialect (49-50).

TU3: Yes, like speaking Swiss-German and High German (51).

TU1: I love the way they switch. We should be able to switch, I suppose? (52).

TU3: But we do. With our children. They speak a version of English to their friends and a version of English to us. It's really different (53-54).

This conceptualisation of two forms of one language co-existing harmoniously, as well as their ability to extrapolate this idea to existing differences in English gave an impression that these teachers might be somewhat more open to Jenkins' proposals, especially as they were able to envisage how it could work in reality. Additionally, none of the three university teachers was as dismissive or hostile towards the ideas as the core groups of EFL teachers. Nevertheless, the university teachers also expressed their reservations about what they called 'limiting' their own language and they, too, believed that British English was what learners wanted to learn. Here is an example of what one teacher said:

TU2: I personally think I would find it very difficult to teach although I think I could teach a sort of simplified English, no idioms and that sort of thing. I don't think I could teach a different pronunciation. I couldn't not teach 'th' (41-44).

These university teachers also extended the interview discussion to problematising the nature of the literature available in English as an international language and whether its availability or not would impact on learners and how it would influence teaching. In doing this they reinforced their conceptualisations of their teacher identities as those of teachers of the literature of a language and appeared to continue to construct their professional identity round the idea of 'knowers of' and translators of other languages.

It could be argued then that these teachers, although expressing similar sentiments with regard to altering their pronunciation as the core EFL groups, certainly demonstrated a broader outlook and ability to relate the concepts proposed by Jenkins (2000) to other contexts. These teachers however, also used the learners to barricade themselves behind

the boundaries of the secure identity of the ‘native speaker’ English. They explained, for example, that their learners would not want to learn English as an international language or, as in Alex’s previous e-mail, did not need it and would be offended if it was offered. Yet the teachers did this alongside their articulated understanding that there existed requirements for international comprehensibility between English speakers and most often it was pronunciation which stood in the way of clarity. In such circumstances, there appeared, then, little likelihood of these particular classroom practitioners accepting Jenkins’ proposal of a Core Lingua Franca and implementing it into their classrooms.

6.3 The beginning of a ‘practitioner’ vs. ‘academic’ rift

Thus it appears that the first crack in the solid identity constructs of this ‘native speaker’ teacher group was the threat the teachers felt when exposed to one new academic understanding. In this first instance it was the suggestion by an academic that the ‘native speaker’ teacher might adapt his/her teaching of certain aspects of phonology in order to allow greater intelligibility between speakers of English when the language is used internationally. As has been indicated in the responses of the teachers when confronted with Jenkins’ ideas, this core group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers were not only dismissive of the academic ideas but also appeared to express some irritation with the academic as well. For example, the teachers used strong language such as ‘a crackpot idea’; ‘ludicrous’; ‘unworkable’, revealing both that they had little respect for the academic who had made the proposals and also that they did not wish to be ‘dictated to’, positioning themselves, in this context, as inferior to academics whom they saw as doing ‘the dictating’. In other words, not only was the idea of focusing on the phonology of English as an international language uncomfortable for the teachers in teaching terms, but the media through which this idea was disseminated also appeared to have become uncomfortable for this group of ‘native speaker’ teachers. Thus, the teachers indicated an initial ambivalence in their relationship with the world of academia. They apparently had little respect for the academic but at the same time they also demonstrated that they felt the academics were in a position to ‘dictate’ to them and they, as teachers were on the receiving end of ‘dictates’.

This unease with an academic idea and the subsequent apparent irritation with academia was seen to be, though, only the ‘tip of the iceberg’. A more substantial rift between the understandings of these classroom teachers of EFL and academics writing papers and texts about ELT was later revealed, as was a more complex ambivalence in the relationship. These both contributed further to lessen the sure professional identity of this group of ‘native speakers’ revealed in the previous chapter. The next section continues to explore this uneasy relationship.

6. 3. 1 Initial resistance to academia: negotiating relative identity through discourse

First of all, when asked about their relationship with academic ideas, the teachers attempted to position themselves in a classificatory system with themselves, the teachers, as practical people, able to work at the ‘chalk face’ of language classrooms and not in any way connected with those who, to their mind, could not cope with the real world of language teaching or who wrote about it but no longer worked in it. When speaking about academics no longer working in a language classroom, the comments were always made disparagingly. Some examples of the comments the teachers made are: ‘Academia bubble, babble, sounds good but doesn’t actually work’ (Vera: 247); ‘Academics have to justify their salaries’ (Jane: 298); ‘Can’t they say things simply, it’s just meaningless stuff for the sake of it. I’ve read the paper. There are a lot of words and paragraphs but it doesn’t really say much. When would I ever use this? Why can’t we have something that is useful in the classroom’ (Research Diary: Field Notes, October, 2005); ‘You know, I think these people, they lose touch with teaching EFL. They mainly teach Diploma students or native speakers or BA students and they come to tell us how you should do this, this and this. And you think, how many years ago did you do this?’ (Nuala: 93-97). Alex also related the reasons for his lack of respect for academics:

This....this is probably going to get me slaid or slain.. I tend to think a lot of academics have run from the classroom because they can’t cope in the classroom. And they don’t relate their experiences in the classrooms to their theories. People I’ve worked with.. they write well. I don’t necessarily agree with their ideas but then I also find out that a lot of these people are not teaching because they can’t do it. So, if they can’t do it in the classroom, why should I be listening to what they write? It’s very

broad and a generalisation Of course there'll be some people who are absolutely brilliant in the classroom and have the energy and insight to go and write brilliant stuff. But there are an awful lot of second rate people who want to be academics who can't hack it in the classroom, so why should I listen to them outside the classroom? (307-317)

We talk in different ways to different people, altering our speech in accordance with our audience. From the above data, teacher practitioners can be seen to diverge linguistically to maintain difference and to attempt to assert power over the academics. The teachers manifested this by dismissing the academics in their comments and the academics, at least through the teachers' eyes, used publications to assert power in a different way. On one hand, therefore, it seems that this group of 'native speaker' teachers has gained security and prestige from their birthright language, English, but on the other, when they experience the discourse of academic English, they view that diverse genre of English as a way for theoreticians to assert a more dominant identity over them.

The uneasy relationship between the theory of academia and the reality of the classroom practitioner first surfaced, as has been shown, in the teachers' resistance towards proposals regarding the phonology of English as an international language, for this appeared to threaten what the teachers saw as central pillar of their professional identity, their ability to pronounce the English language correctly. However, there emerged further revelations of the teachers' disengagement with and distrust of academia, especially from the findings of the first interviews with the core group of teachers. These teachers demonstrated an almost exclusive focus on their daily classroom practice and this appeared to exclude any need to look outwards at what was being written about their profession. They also demonstrated an attitude which dismissed academics as being unconcerned with reality. In fact, the teachers believed that academics were unaware of the everyday classroom concerns of English language teachers. This was apparent from the words of the teachers as they sought to protect their perceived identity through discourse. In this next section, therefore, I shall look at the findings with regard to this professed relationship between 'native speaker' EFL teachers and academia.

6. 3. 2 Perceptions of academic discourse from literature and daily comment

The first data findings showed quite defiant claims made by the ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers that they knew nothing about the literature of the field or what academics had written and these teachers also claimed that the literature was of no particular interest or relevance to their professional lives and daily practice. Moreover, at the outset of the research, when I first spoke to them, none of the teachers admitted to reading about what was happening in their field. In fact there were comments to indicate that they actively disliked reading about issues to do with their work and that anything they read was not practical enough. Basil exemplifies: ‘I’m not a book reader- not an EFL book reader. I wouldn’t read Applied Linguistics’ and continues ‘We’re pretty bad about tuning in to what’s going on’ (297). Rosa said, ‘I haven’t read anything professionally for ages and I don’t want to’ (334-40). She also stated:

It was useful [reading] at the beginning when I didn’t really know much about the subject, when I was trying to sort of learn, but even then, it wasn’t the theory so much as the actual practical tuition on how to teach, you know the methodology in practical terms, rather than what came out of books. So I don’t know. I’m a bit sceptical when it comes to books (569-573).

Also, and this time acknowledging the discourse of power in the literature, some reading was seen as ‘not accessible to the average reader’ (Ken: 318). An experienced EFL Director also highlighted this same point:

I remember thinking how difficult the reading was, after I came into the field from my original degree, history. It is often difficult to read and I think the academics who are easy to read, like Thornbury, are people who’ve moved out of teaching. (Research Diary: Field Notes: Delaney, 2004)

The teachers, therefore, first determinedly identified themselves as people who ‘practised’, almost deliberately uninfluenced by academia and its literature. At no point was there any indication that the literature of the field served to deepen their understanding of everyday practice or allow them to reflect between their daily work in classrooms and the ideas of others about teaching and learning. The teachers also perceived reading about professional matters as an activity they would do or had done

only to get further qualifications, like a Master's degree, or reading as an activity they had undertaken or begun to undertake when they were inexperienced. But even that initial reading did not appear to be particularly highly valued.

Moreover, the teachers saw the production of academic papers, texts and the giving of conference papers as a way of maintaining status and power for the theoreticians, rather than any genuine attempt to develop and explore ideas for the field of English Language Teaching. Ken and Rosa viewed it in the following way:

But perhaps there is something wrong in academic culture, not with specific academics but the general culture is not pushing forward new theory, pushing forward boundaries, it's more looking after themselves in a community. It's being done to maintain their position and maintain the community as a whole, I mean, everybody going to each other's talks. It doesn't matter if it's a good talk but they've written a book and they came to your talk so you go to theirs. That's what I see (Ken: 326-332).

I don't believe for a moment that academics write for the sake of teachers; they write for themselves, to get published and look good on the CV (Rosa: E: 2).

Mike declared, too: 'If some of the lecturers in the department write an article it's going to be for other people in their positions in other universities round the world' (158-161). Such comments reflected a general feeling of disillusionment with academia and a feeling of marginalisation for the teachers. In my field notes, I recorded a further incident which revealed my own feelings of inadequacy when confronted by an academic.

Academic discourse at work

Jon, a new academic colleague came to see me working with some trainee EFL teachers on a pre-service course. It was perhaps the worst day he could have come. Two trainees were facing failure on the very intensive course and everyone was tired. What's more I had needed to reduce the seminar to about 50 minutes, an impossibly short time for the work I needed to cover.

As a teacher, though, I felt if I refused it would 'look bad' and Jon would either think I had something to hide or believed I wasn't doing my job properly.

Jon came to the session and did not sit quietly at the back, watching, as I would have expected (and hoped for) but sometimes, when the trainees were working together,

walked around and chatted and commented. Once, when a trainee made a comment that Jon disagreed with, Jon started a discussion to 'correct' the trainee. I felt my space and working relationship with the trainees had been rudely invaded and that Jon was attempting to 'position' himself as an expert, although he knew nothing of the course or its requirements or anything about the trainees' successes and failures.

After the 'observation' Jon commented 'that must be so difficult, weaving discourse, teaching methodology and new knowledge into a session'. Jon then paused and added, quite pointedly: 'Of course, I'm working at M level' (Research Diary: Field Notes July, 2004).

Thus, academia and academics are here seen by this group of 'native speaker' teachers as exerting a more powerful identity in the field of EFL through the discourse of academic papers and, in the last incident, in everyday discourse. High social distance was being created according to the teachers and as Ken said, 'to maintain the community' and cement the academics' own dominant identity. In this way the teachers believed they were, or certainly felt they were seen to be a subordinate group and 'inferior' to the academics.

6.3.3 The 'real' world of the EFL teacher

Another theme was the teachers' consistent complaint about the nature of the EFL literature written by academics. This group of teachers appeared to believe that EFL literature and academics failed to address the issues the teachers faced everyday in the classroom. Alex said:

But I do think it [the literature] is all based on the fact that you are going to be walking in and have 14, 15 really dedicated, motivated students. I have never had a class like that. I've always had one or two, three or four, of five or six, or seven or eight who really don't want to be there (274-277).

Rob described the 'reluctant learners' of his particular context in detail, too. It was these learners and the reality of their social context which he felt were 'not considered' by academics in their work.

There are 2 levels of resentment: a) Social Engineering - unemployed youth are coerced into training situations that they do not want to be in - by the government, to

avoid social and civil unrest, by their fathers to help provide for the family, by their peers. Result- reluctant learners. We have trainee aircraft technicians not at all interested in aircraft. Therefore, course materials, specifically designed to meet their needs, do not meet their interests or desires.

b) Anti-foreignness - This second level of resentment refers to the fact that some of them may genuinely be interested in aircraft but, possibly quite legitimately, question the need for this training to be done in English. Result- reluctant learners. (E:1)

I recorded an incident in my Research Diary about ‘real-world’ teaching, too and what I perceived as the impossibility of reading or thinking deeply about my role as an EFL teacher when all I was doing was what I termed ‘fire-fighting.’

Back after the summer break

My first day back after a summer break. Today, the list of students supposed to be in my class did not resemble the students sitting in the class. My Director of Studies said that this class has used every book on the shelf in their previous classes and I’d be hard pressed to find something! As for the afternoon examination class, nobody seems to have a clue about which books they have used or what they can move on to or who will be in the class. The worst thing is the materials and what I can do. I spent the break and my lunch-hour, without a drink or food, literally running all over the college to try to find a working photo-copier to copy pages. Chaotic and exhausting. How can one manage to think about how students learn or wider issues when this is going on? I was shattered and angry when I got home and quite ready to walk out (Research Diary: Field Notes, September, 03).

Another teacher, Nuala, complained about her desire to find application in theoretical work, yet at the same time she is wary of anything being ‘too theoretical’.

Sometimes, especially after writing my MA dissertation I really feel practice and theory, there is a huge gap between those two. But at times, you read certain kinds of journals and you think ‘Ah, this is a bit more down to earth and, maybe, I can apply this to my class.’ But when you start reading those books and you think ‘How is this going to help me?’ I think we should still be doing some reading. I think we all need

theory. But I think at the same time it is something that isn't too theoretical... something that can be applied to the class (82-89).

The following teacher complains of the 'intellectualisation' of the subject matter in a practical profession. Ned:

There was some new information on the Dip [Diploma TESOL course] as well and many of those things were useful for me but I also started to encounter a lot of information which I thought was just people being academic for the sake of that in itself. This is a very practical thing we do and there's only so far you can go with the theory, you know if you are trying to break it down into a science, there's not really that much to it, in my opinion (9-12 & 16-19).

I use an observation to further illustrate this point. One of my colleagues, standing by the photo-copier, was chatting about the field of EFL in general. He said: 'Well, there's not that much really to know, it's not rocket science- I mean there's just so much to uncover and it seems like we've pretty much done as much as we can' (Research Diary: Field Notes, October, 2005).

From my own point of view, when I first heard such comments about reading and academia not dealing with 'reality', I found them 'off-putting'. Although they spoke of specific problems relating to their current classrooms, I still wondered how the teachers could continue to develop and remain interested in their work and their professional roles if they were not interested in what was being written about generally in their profession. It seemed to me that, as a teacher one needed to try to understand the classroom in a more holistic and principled way, just as much as cope with the everyday problems. I continued to feel negative towards the teachers' attitudes when processing the data and even when I began to write up the first part of my research. However, during that period, a brief e-mail correspondence caused me to begin to shift my own perspective towards more sympathy for the teachers. I noted this e-mail exchange.

Writing 'in principle' for a class of 2.

Ten days ago I attended a talk given by an academic about the value of learners being required to repeat tasks as a way of improving their English. The talk reminded me of my own work with some learners, which also encouraged them to repeat tasks.

However, the presenter, an academic, had only related this activity to two learners at a time and I had also worked with just two learners. I decided to e-mail and ask if this person had any suggestions about using his ideas in a class of 15 or more students. The return e-mail explained 'I have only written about this in principle' (Research Diary: Field Notes, December, 2002).

Up until this point and throughout the first set of interviews, I had felt that teachers were missing out by not being open to new ideas, not finding the time to read about them and only wanting to view themselves within the 'practical practitioner' professional construct with no interest in theoretical understandings of their field. However, when I received the e-mail from the academic described above, my perspective altered. My own work with learners was almost identical to the ideas we had been presented with in the talk. However, I had not progressed in my thinking as to how this activity could be used in an average class or certainly not in a big class and the area where I would have expected to find an answer was barren. As a teacher I felt disillusioned and irritated at the unhelpfulness of the academic's work. I realised I had made the same progress in my thinking as he had but I was 'just a teacher' and would still have to search around to provide myself with an answer. I wondered for whom the paper had been written? At this point, however, I understood and empathised with the teachers in their expressions of annoyance and I felt the same relational difference to academics that the teachers had complained of.

6. 3. 4 Conclusion

It seems from these comments that the 'native speaker' EFL teachers, looking for answers to such everyday classroom problems, did not much value and were sceptical about, or disenchanted with 'THEORY', as defined by Edelsky (op.cit.) and referred to in 5.3.2 as bodies of maxims which have explanatory powers and the potential for guiding teachers' practice. Certainly it seems this group did not see 'THEORY' as offering the potential for guiding teacher classroom action. On the contrary, it appeared in the initial findings from the core groups that the teachers very much viewed their identity as 'practical practitioners', capable of, or needing to be capable of dealing with everyday realities and not finding that academic insight aided this in any particularly constructive

manner. The teachers also attempted to position academics as out of touch with the real world of the EFL classroom, both specifically in the case of Jenkins' proposed idea with regard to the phonology of English as an international language, and more generally with regard to academic understanding as a whole. It seemed, therefore, that if this scenario remained constant, any further pronouncements deriving from academia's understanding of the new role of English in the world and how this might affect the teaching of English, would fall on stony ground, certainly as far as this particular group of 'native speaker' EFL teachers was concerned.

6. 4 Contradictions and mismatches: multiple identities

Nevertheless, despite the resistance to one academic perspective on teaching the phonology of English as a lingua franca, as well as the teachers' general rejection of academia, subsequent data began to reveal a more complex scenario than simply a split between the world of the practitioner and the world of the academic. From the teachers' e-mails, as well as the on-going observations and interviews I was making as a practitioner in my work-place, more findings uncovered a complicated ambivalence in this relationship between the ELT practitioner and academia. The later findings revealed a contradictory picture in terms of how the teachers wished to be seen as professionals in relation to academics and the ideas the latter were putting forward. In this following section I now report on these.

6. 4. 1 Repositioning : fitting expectations

At the beginning of the data collection, although I had expected the teachers to have viewpoints about the new ideas being raised in the field, they did not. However, their admitted lack of acquaintance with or openness towards the literature did not appear to bother them in the first interviews. I believe this was because they had originally seen me as a friendly teacher acquaintance, rather than as a researcher with some connection to the academic world. In fact, I first of all formed the impression that the teachers felt they had taught successfully for many years in different institutions world-wide and that their professional ability was not undermined by such admissions. For example, the teachers seemed to take a stance that if they stated that reading about their work was not important,

this was an acceptable viewpoint for a practitioner to take. Also it seemed that, as a teaching colleague, I would not devalue them because of this confessed lack of interest in academic ideas and reading about their profession, because they may have assumed that I, a fellow teacher, had a similar viewpoint.

In the first interviews, therefore, none of the 'native speaker' teachers seemed to feel that not wanting or bothering to keep abreast of ideas or reading the literature of the field diminished them as practitioners. It appeared they were initially content with constructing their views of who they were on the basis of their birthright, their educational background, their language, their practices, and the insights they had gained over their years in English language classrooms. In fact, the teachers were eager at the time of interview, for 'an articulation and discussion among teachers of one another's pedagogic perceptions' (Prahbu 1990:174). These 'pedagogic perceptions' were, though, very much based on the teachers' individual classroom practices and experiences.

However, there was an interesting and important further development in terms of the teachers beginning to align themselves to a certain extent with 'THEORY' (Edelsky op. cit.) as they later began to e-mail me 'admissions' or 'corrections' regarding, for example, their involvement with the literature. From these findings it seemed that after the first interviews there arose a need to re-construct what they saw as a more acceptable version of themselves as English language teachers and a need to create or re-create a different professional identity. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that these contradictory data surfaced after the teachers had had a chance to think over the interviews and what they contained and different things they had said. Perhaps, in receiving transcripts of the interviews, they had begun to view me as a researcher, rather than as a teacher and thus, as they witnessed me moving into a different rôle (Goffman 1959) they, too, had felt they needed to move into a different rôle. It certainly seemed as though the change of self-construct from an adamantly 'practical practitioner' was made to forge acceptability in a more public arena.

The later data began to reveal some deeper contradictions and mismatches in the identity constructs of the 'native speaker' EFL teacher. First of all, the sceptical, dismissive attitude towards academia and the literature of the field that the teachers displayed in the initial interviews contrasted with the statements they later made. I noticed that despite their disregard for the literature and those writing it, at some point afterwards

the teachers admitted they had read certain authors writing in the field of English language teaching. The teachers mentioned Alexander, Thornbury, Munby, Widdowson, Lewis, Lambert and Gardner and Phillipson, all of whom are well-known academics.

6. 4. 2 Contradictory statements and ambivalent attitudes

As the teachers appeared to re-position themselves in later data and begin to refer to authors and publications they had read, it became apparent that there were contradictions in what they had expressed in the first interviews and what they said or wrote later. These contradictions emerged in the form of interview statements or e-mails. Very often, though, these contradictory statements were not responses to direct questions put by the researcher, but comments or answers to other questions which I noticed in my reading and re-reading of the transcriptions and e-mails. I noticed that some of the statements were in conflict with some earlier comment by the same teacher.

The first contradictory statements about academic work being irrelevant to the classroom teaching of the ‘practical practitioner’ were from Rosa, Rachel, Rob, Basil and Alex. Despite originally stating the classroom practitioner had no need of the academic, these teachers later all spoke of attending conferences to listen to academics giving papers. This would appear to indicate, on the contrary, that they found some value in academic understandings. The second contradiction in terms of the teachers’ relationship with academia and academic work is Rob’s first comment about ‘reading as irrelevant to the day-to-day job’. Rob later performs a *völte-face* stating that ‘eclectic’ practice can only be achieved by ‘wide reading’.

With [] regard to reading about TEFL as irrelevant to the day-to-day job [] that is a conclusion most people come to based on previous reading and/or experience. So maybe knowledge of theory is necessary in order to reject it. I certainly believe in ‘cultural appropriacy’ and therefore think that theories exist in order to be adapted, an adaptation that is based on experience. ‘Eclecticism’ is probably the name of the game, which can only be achieved by wide reading and experience (E2).

What is more, it became apparent that the teachers were not simply redefining their rôles for public consumption but that their relationship with academia was truly

contradictory and ambivalent. Vera, for example, although she had been very negative about academics in the first interview, wrote in a later e-mail:

I belong to JALT (Japan Association of Language Teachers) and have presented a paper with my colleagues at a JALT conference, jointly written a paper for the JALT Journal and jointly presented some research at an ACTJ (Association of Canadian Teachers in Japan- which I also belong to) conference at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo. I also get and read the JALT and ACTJ journals (E1).

Yet, when I questioned Vera about the discrepancy between her negative comments and the above statement which revealed she did, in fact, attend conferences and read journals in which academics wrote, she replied that she had only undertaken the above activities because she had been requested to by her line-manager and it was considered part of her work. What is more she explained that she had been asked to teach part-time on an MA course in TEFL in Tokyo and that she had needed to ‘brush up’ in order to deliver the content of part of the course. Her involvement with the conference and journals was therefore not in order to teach her English language classes as an EFL teacher and so not perceived as helpful to her classroom practice. She did not think of the reading as having any relationship with classroom practice but only with teaching a new group of teachers who would obtain a qualification at the end.

Another example of contrary messages is Martin. As he repositioned his role as consumer of ‘THEORY’ as opposed to the ‘practical practitioner’, he spoke positively about the value of the works of academic writing when their ideas were translated for him into course book materials. Indeed, even his acknowledgement of academic writing and its contributions to the improvement of course books over time is confusingly off-set by his reference below to the British Council teachers who were working ‘on the ground’ in the contexts he describes below:

I think what has happened with books, particularly with teaching English in their own ‘native’ countries is the result of what’s happened with academic writing and I must say, quite a lot of British Council people, who have been in these places and seen what’s happening and then worked with the publisher and say look, these books which we are importing from the UK may be all very well in the UK but not here. Mostly the British Council people who were working, the ODA people were teachers

who had been trained in the UK, who had no idea of what they were going to face when they went out. That's the value of doing that kind of academic writing (Martin: 137-147).

It seemed, though, that even when the teachers admitted to reading or having some contact with the work of academia, their statements still conveyed a 'tug-of-war' mind set between the valuing of their own practices, classroom expertise and experiences, their 'theories' and the understandings of academics. There appeared no comfortable integration of both. Nuala, for example, while lamenting the loss of 'THEORY', at the same time recognised the need for it, or at least an awareness that it was something she once felt was important.

That's the thing, sometimes, I feel even though I've done my MA that I don't even have an MA but anyway..... I feel that I go to class and it feels as if the theory is not.... it's more practical, it's more me, because of my character and that's what I give to the class. And at times it feels like I'm losing it, I'm losing the theory behind it (Nuala: 76-80).

In one case, this contradictory repositioning of a practitioner who wished to be portrayed as a professional more in touch with 'THEORY' occurred in the middle of the interview. Mike, when asked 'Do you know what's been written lately? Or are you out of touch?' replied 'I'm out of touch. I think I'm out of touch' (137). Yet, several utterances later, Mike contradicted this statement with a further comment 'I see ELTJ [English Language Teaching Journal] and look at the kind of articles they get in there. I read it fairly frequently.' To check that this was his intention he repeated again, when I commented that, after all, he did read: 'Yes, I do. Fairly frequently' (148-151).

There appeared, then, to be a need to defend the professional identity of the 'native speaker' English teacher as they thought it should be, that is an identity of a classroom practitioner who was also involved with academic understandings and publications. The teachers seemed to want to show me, as a researcher, that they were not as disinterested in 'THEORY' as they had professed to be, nor as lacking in theoretical knowledge as they had admitted to being when I first talked to them. In fact they were apparently presenting a more 'acceptable' professional identity as their awareness of this research project grew. Burr concurs with such positioning by stating: 'typical of much interpretative repertoires

research, in that the respondents can be seen to be concerned to position themselves acceptably with respect to the moral rules and expectations of their culture'(1995: 20). However, despite wishing to construct a more 'THEORY' friendly identity as 'native speaker' EFL teachers, for me there was a strong sense the teachers were also not entirely convinced of what they were saying about the importance of academic understanding to their professional lives. In my opinion the excerpts from the data reveal the complexity of teachers' views with relation to their own 'theories' and 'THEORY'. It also seemed that this group of teachers had their own everyday 'theories' for the classroom but somehow viewed 'THEORY' as something they should need, or be seen to need. There also seemed a paradoxical conviction that unless 'THEORY' was unambiguously translated for classroom settings, they really did not need it.

This dilemma of teachers' 'theories' and academic 'THEORY' already raised in the literature as a problematic issue in the constructs of the identity of other teachers, seems also to be an noteworthy factor in attempting to understand the professional identity of this small group of 'native speaker' EFL teachers. It is useful therefore, to now contrast this small group of 'native speaker' teachers with the opinions of the peripheral groups of mainstream teachers in my study.

6. 4. 3 Mainstream teachers' perspectives on 'THEORY'

The group of primary teachers working in mainstream education and in the Independent sector were not EFL teachers. They were, though, part of an educational culture with a far greater amount of codified knowledge than the core group. Did these mainstream teachers view academics and academic works in their field of education in the same way that the 'native speaker' EFL teachers appeared to? Were the primary teachers' self-constructs similar to the 'native speaker' EFL teachers, that of 'practical practitioners'? In this section I now attempt to describe and interpret the attitudes of this peripheral group of teachers.

From the data it emerged that, when giving opinions about 'THEORY' and the literature of their profession, these mainstream teachers, too, had mixed views of the relevance of the 'THEORY' they had encountered in their own careers. In the past it was seen to be too academic and far removed from the realities of the classroom and the lives of the children they taught. In contrast, current literature was seen as having moved closer

to the world of the classroom and it was recognised as making a positive contribution to the teachers' professional work. The independent school respondents, especially, saw this shift as meaning teachers had a greater role to play in codifying 'theories' for mainstream teaching. One teacher explained:

I was at college in the 60's and I think probably 90% of that was tommy-rot and teachers were stuck with that but nowadays I think it is very much more relevant and very much more positive in the effect it is having on the children. I think it's getting down to teaching children (T: 1 Indep: 126-129).

Another said:

Even when I was at university as well I can remember that we thought that these people who wrote these books have never been close to a child, have never taught a child and it was really irrelevant but what you read now,... it seems that they are more in touch with what is really happening. It might be there are more teachers writing, people who have taught at some stage, maybe. I think there are more teachers now speaking up, wanting their voices heard rather than just the theorists (T: 2 Indep: 133-138 & 40-41).

And finally the latter concluded:

I think it used to be a lot of people who maybe taught for two or three years and then maybe went on to do a PhD or something, then they become a lecturer and then they know everything about teaching and they've been writing texts. I think the whole academic thing's changed as well. Twenty, thirty years ago, people who were academics were up there and they didn't have a clue what was happening, in all fields...not just in teaching.... They really didn't know what was going on at grass roots level. Nowadays, these days, people who are academics are much more interested in what is really happening. I think their research methods maybe have changed as well. They talk to people at our level and they have a much better idea so they can come up with better theories. I think the whole thing has evolved (T: 2 Indep: 157-160 & 186-193).

In mainstream teaching, therefore, some point of contrast emerged with regard to teachers' professional identity in terms of engaging with the literature of the educational

field and 'THEORY'. These primary and Independent teachers, unlike the EFL teachers in the study, apparently saw academics as increasingly better able to understand their concerns regarding the realities of classroom life and it seems they felt that practitioners in their field were more involved in the development of the literature. One might surmise, albeit on this very limited evidence, that mainstream education has a much longer history than ELT and the better integration apparent here between the practitioner and academic work is a natural progression of a more mature field.

6. 4. 4 Private sites of identity

As well as this problematic area of how far EFL teachers really identified with the 'THEORY' of their profession, there seems to exist a further yet related dilemma as the teachers struggled with the validity of their experiential knowledge in relation to 'THEORY'. The 'native speaker' teachers were indeed suspicious as to whether their own practice constituted some kind of 'scientific knowledge'. As an example, Ken spoke of his concern at not spending much time teaching reading skills and how difficult that was to admit to me, as interviewer and also a teaching colleague that he was not teaching reading the way it was prescribed in the literature. In my view, this can only be interpreted as a questioning of whether or not his practitioner knowledge was worthy of making public, even orally and to a friendly colleague. In my turn, as a 'native speaker' teacher within the group I 'confessed' to him my own ideas about teaching reading which were also ones I had felt I could not share with other colleagues for the same reasons. The following is the exchange between Ken and myself, speaking as two 'native speaker' English teacher colleagues, rather than as a researcher and a respondent.

Ken: I even dare to say major aspects of teaching that I don't feel I particularly concentrate on, such as reading skills. I don't think I particularly develop students' reading skills in that I give them things to read and I might suggest that one or two techniques to help their understanding and not looking up every word they come across or skimming. I think another kind of principle of mine is that there aren't many teachable reading skills. (100-105)

Interviewer: Have you ever talked to anyone else about that?

Ken: I've probably mentioned it to one or two others. (115)

Interviewer: What did they say?

Ken: They said they don't do that much reading skills training either. (115)

Interviewer: Well, I have a big problem with all this reading stuff myself. I encourage students to read the text for pleasure and get a message out of it then go and look at the questions after. I really don't subscribe to the way it's handled in books. I think people have lost the plot. I mean I want to tell people that. I tell my students that but would I dare, would I dare tell other people that? (121-125)

Ken: Indeed, I was giving you this example about reading but I was feeling embarrassed to say, well, actually, I don't do that much reading skills work in class in case you'd think that's outrageous. There is also the part- the fear that other people will think you are not doing a good job. And not wanting to take the chance. Or to be seen to be doing exactly what the books say, even if the other person doesn't do it. If they think you're following the 'rules' as it were, then you can't be seen not to be doing a good job. Something like that. (126-128,132-136)

Thus, both of us were subverting 'scientific knowledge' or 'THEORY' in the light of our experiential knowledge and idiosyncratic views, thus creating our own, private English language teacher professional identities behind the closed classroom door. We were subversively validating our experiential 'theories', yet too unsure of our positions to make this knowledge public.

6. 4. 5 Experiential knowledge vs. codified knowledge

There appears, then, to be a degree of insecurity about the acceptability of the teachers' own experiential knowledge when compared to what is publicly thought of as the 'legitimate' codified 'THEORY' of the literature. I believe this creates a dilemma in the construction of the professional identity of the 'native speaker' English language teacher. In my opinion, the late 'scramble' to legitimise the teachers' practice by back-tracking on what they had first said and 'name-dropping' academics they had read is an indication of the insecurity this group of teachers feel in relation to the academia of EFL and Applied Linguistics.

Although the teachers made attempts to later claim understanding and awareness of what they apparently believed to be the legitimate knowledge of literature, this was always

oddly juxtaposed with their claims about their own knowledge. This knowledge was based on their deep, broad experiences of real classroom contexts within which they located their own educational beliefs and personal theories. Moreover, admitting that what they did in class, based on their ‘theories’, might not be what was found in the literature worried them, as we saw in the case of Ken and the researcher-as-teacher. In another example, Basil, discussing why he does not read the literature of the field says:

Perhaps we don’t read because, fundamentally, we are not intellectually interested in more than whatever we need to get through our next class. It destabilizes us. Out of this we feel insecure and that we aren’t ready to be shown that we are ‘second rate’, insensitive and have almost ruined ‘all those students since we started.’ We have opinions and woe betide anyone who tries to substitute reality (Basil: E1).

And even although the teachers ‘back-tracked’ in an attempt to salvage their identity as professionals in touch with literature, they also, from the comments of Ken, myself and Basil seem to see the ideas in the literature as ‘dictates’ they ought to be following, rather than ideas to reflect upon alongside experiential knowledge and be weighed up and fitted in, or not, in the light of the classes they were teaching. Judy, in my workplace, gives another example of how she feels she should be ‘following’ the literature, even if she speaks primarily of it in practical terms, and what happens when she reflects on her own practice and what she is reading and learning about:

Connected to all this, I also felt that I was trying too hard to use ‘new’ ways of teaching- that I had come across during the course or reading. What I felt I had lost sight of was that activities I had used for many years were no less effective than their newer counterparts anyway. My constant search for newer, more interesting things to do or ways to do things seemed at times to override considerations of which activity would best suit a particular group of students (Judy: E 1)

Moreover, a further anomaly arose in terms of the teachers being able to articulate both ‘THEORY’ and classroom ‘theories’. Ken, for example, recognised his lack of awareness and the difficulty he had when asked about his theoretical principles and the ‘THEORY’ from which he taught. He said:

OK it's semi-conscious. I'm in some way aware of them [the principles underlying his work] but I'd struggle to write them down quickly. If I had a piece of paper here for a week and noted down what I was doing then I might come up with some principles but they are not really in the front of my mind (Ken: 77-80).

On the contrary, the teachers' 'theories' developed from practice were omnipresent in their first construction of themselves as successful practitioners and as such are, I believe, a crucial marker in their identity constructs. It was very much the teachers' subjective 'theories' which contributed to their secure self-constructs, as was revealed in Chapter 5. Despite causing them some insecurity, evidenced in the mismatched messages and contradictions revealed in this chapter when they are confronted with academia, I believe the teachers' vast receptacle of 'experiential' knowledge underlies their professional security. What is more, when on occasions they are allowed to articulate this, they see it as not only an important factor in their identities, but as valuable, too. I illustrate this with a statement from one of the teachers.

I'd be a bit big-headed to actually assume that I have any theories. I'm just talking about my experiences and my feeling, it's like acting if you like. It's not a question of theory. It's a question of how, from experience, you know, how I see it twenty years later (Rosa: 564-568).

It is interesting to note that Rosa says she would be 'big-headed' to have any theories. This again indicates that, for her, the concept of 'THEORY' is a concept she associates with academics who are seen to have higher status than the teacher. However, she is aware that teachers have ideas derived from experience, which she seems to consider valuable and worthy of codifying. In fact, she had preceded this statement by saying: 'You know, teachers have a huge contribution to make.... and it's a shame they don't write books' (509-510). However, the subordination such a teacher apparently feels when confronted with what is perceived as constituting 'real' knowledge, that of the dominant academic culture, also appears to cause the teachers to doubt their own views on teaching and learning.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I believe the data has given an indication as to the extent to which this group of 'native speaker' EFL teachers struggle with the concepts of academia and academic work, whether with specific ideas, such as in the case of Jenkins' proposals for a phonology of English as an international language or with the idea of 'THEORY' in general. The teachers' ambivalence about whether they view their professional identity as that of a 'practical practitioner' or as a practitioner who relates to and integrates 'THEORY' into his/her classroom have been problematised. What has also emerged, I believe, is the extent to which these factors contribute to a less secure 'native speaker' teacher professional identity. Additionally, the teachers' contradictory relationship with academic understandings of the new role of English and its impact on English language teaching, as well as the climate of distrust towards academia, indicate that it may be problematic indeed to convince the 'native speaker' practitioner of the necessity of accepting or at the very least, acknowledging the changing world of ELT.

Chapter 7: Further dilemmas of the practical ‘native speaker’ EFL practitioner

7.1 Introduction

So far in this study I believe the findings have indicated that the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher has a confident and secure professional identity in relation to his/her ‘non-native speaker’ teacher colleagues. The ‘native speaker’ teachers’ professional confidence in this study appears to have been constructed from their birthright, their language ability, their British educational background and their ELT classroom practices, as well as the superiority evidenced in their relationship with ‘non-native speaker’ teachers. On the contrary, I believe that the findings also indicate that this group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers has an uneasy professional identity in relation to his/her academic counterpart, especially when the academic predictions of ELT’s future threaten the bases of the teachers’ secure professional identity. This seemed to be most evident when the teachers were confronted with Jenkins’ (2000) ideas for developing a phonology of English as an international tool for communication.

In the previous chapter I also believe the teachers manifested some inconsistencies when positioning themselves not only in relation to the new understandings of academics but also in relation to academia in general. In fact the following issues were problematised: whether or not the ‘native speaker’ teachers are able to integrate academic ‘THEORY’ into their understanding of their professional roles in classroom teaching; the extent to which the teachers value their own experiential knowledge in relation to the codified knowledge of academia; the extent to which the teachers appear to regard codified knowledge as ‘dictates’ they should be following; and the sometimes private sabotaging of codified knowledge. Problematising these aspects has been helpful in attempting to establish a more complete understanding of the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher.

In terms, though, of more fully conceptualising the ‘native speaker’ teacher’s professional identity, two further aspects in its construction are explored in this chapter.

The first is the teachers' attitude towards their own professional development and this factor is seen as perhaps beginning to explain the teachers' complex attitude towards academia. In this exploration as well, the teachers' reliance on their practical experiences in establishing a professional identity and, paradoxically, their frustrations at these 'practical' limitations are fore-fronted. The second aspect of professional identity investigated in this chapter is how the 'native speaker' teachers' react to suggested alterations to their currently influential status in the field of ELT.

7.2 Teacher development: eager for discussion

In this chapter about teacher development, it is relevant to first clarify the enthusiasm with which the teachers embraced this research project. Even though the teachers had spoken negatively about reading the literature of the field and appeared to be uncomfortable with ideas being put forward by academics, apparently viewing academia as maintaining its own interests, all of the teachers were interested in participating in the research and in having their ideas listened to by another teacher (the researcher). No-one refused to be interviewed and many of the teachers asked for more time to talk about their views of the proposals presented to them and their insights into the profession. All of them had stories to tell about their teaching lives and ideas they wanted to communicate. For example, I asked Rosa why she wanted to continue the interview after we had finished it. She e-mailed back:

Re finishing the interview and restarting it: the reason was probably because I kept remembering things which weren't necessarily connected with your questions, but I wanted to 'get them off my chest'. Anyway, you encouraged me, so I kept going. As you well know, the subject is never closed, there's always something more that pops up (E1).

This, oddly, was a statement from the same teacher who had declared she was no longer interested in EFL and wanted to give it up. Additionally, Basil and Alex, when I mailed them my summaries of their interviews, both asked if they could share my questions and thoughts about their interviews with their colleagues. Furthermore, the conclusion of an interview with Mike revealed a similar eagerness to talk about teaching and to be listened to:

Interviewer: Do you have anything more to say because I don't want to take up any more of your time?

Mike: No, I'm enjoying it actually. I never get a chance to talk about things.

Interviewer: No, we don't really talk about teaching.

Mike: No, we don't. One of the problems is that we are always in our little hutches...That's the problem with this place – it's well resourced, lovely conditions, own offices, internet access but we're just all so complacent, aren't we? It's not a spunky place, is it? I thought it was... before I came here I aspired to working here because I thought it was a spunky, happening place but it's not (226-238).

This last interchange demonstrated both Mike's eagerness to exchange ideas in a professional dialogue and the frustration of being deprived of such an opportunity. It also demonstrates his eagerness to be more involved in new ideas and disappointed that he is seemingly not offered these developmental opportunities. This first sentiment was further evidenced by the fact that, as long as I continued to react and ask more questions or comment on the teachers' replies, the teachers continued to correspond with me. There were also unsolicited e-mails which arrived when the teachers wanted to make a point about something that had happened in their professional lives. They thus seemed most willing to engage in some kind of professional dialogue about their work and teaching ideas.

7. 2. 1 Frustrated by development opportunities

However, as can be seen from Mike's comments above, in terms of development opportunities, the teachers appeared to demonstrate a further ambivalent attitude and evidence frustration. In fact, although the teachers had expressed an identity as 'practical practitioners' they also seem to be irritated at being relegated to a plateau of 'practical' knowledge by line-managers and institutions. Confusingly, too, it appears that despite basing much of their identity on their classroom experiences, at the same time they looked up to and were wary of codified 'THEORY'. The teachers also lamented the fact that in their work they were afforded little scope to progress once they were technically competent. In fact, their impression of what was normally offered as development opportunities for EFL teachers by institutions and line managers was that they were

uninspiring for teachers who had reached a certain level of practical competence in the classroom. First though, Ken explains about EFL teachers' initial obsession with 'practical ideas'

That's what people wanted, ideas. That's generally what most people wanted. If they hadn't taught young learners before, that's what they wanted, ideas for teaching young learners. Most of them were ideas focussed. I always used to think if I came out with two or three new ideas, that was alright, it hadn't been a waste of time (161-167).

Yet, once the 'bag of tricks' is full, the book of handy ideas for livening up the classroom replete, these teachers reported a 'cut-off' point when it came to attending workshops and development days. Ken exemplifies this point: 'I went to a conference in Spain shortly before I left, organised by a lot of people I knew and I realised instead of watching I should have been giving the sessions here because people giving the sessions were just reminding me of things I already knew, at best (190-195). Nuala, too, in an interview frustratingly reflects this 'classroom plateau' stage.

Nuala: You know when you've been teaching for a while then it becomes kind of natural and all very spontaneous and sometimes.... it's boredom.

Interviewer: Do you think that's where you are? Are you bored?

Nuala; No, to tell you the truth, no. No, I think it's becoming monotonous because I'm doing the same thing but it could be up to me to become a little bit more creative. I try and the frustration is there's no development and I want to....' (49-56)

A similar kind of incident had occurred during my own teaching career.

Bored with practicalities

In the years I worked in a language school, EFL teachers in the area were offered workshops on various aspects of teaching which were intended to provide professional development. These were set up by other schools or institutions in London. I attended these workshops quite assiduously for about eighteen months but increasingly became frustrated with how little I was learning. The 'final straw' was a seminar by a well-known EFL figure specialising in phonology. I went with two other teachers and we spent our journey home in disbelief that anything could be such a

waste of time. There was nothing new to think about. We all felt so many hours of our day had been wasted and I never went to another workshop after that. The other teachers I went with also stopped going to workshops, making the same complaint.

It was a workshop, like almost every workshop I had attended which presented small ideas, practical ‘titbits’, which might take up part of a lesson, or at best an entire lesson, but one which never looked seriously at important issues which might stimulate the development of the teacher as a whole person and thus lead to making him/her a better classroom practitioner. (Research Diary: Critical Incident 7)

This disappointment at the mechanical nature of talks aimed at ‘developing’ practitioners was further reinforced by Rachel when she spoke of the opportunities on offer in her institution:

We’ve got a special day that’s going to be organised in the early part of the year but it does seem to me at the moment that some of the categories that we are looking at .. the work we are doing.. don’t really involve teacher development but are results based, results driven, YL classes, looking at the common European framework, looking at ICT, involving parents, planning classes, so there are a whole number of categories that don’t immediately appeal to me and are less connected to this development and holistic way of working and looking at teachers’ work (Rachel 3: 73-80).

Another colleague, Mike, complained of his frustration at the lack of professional discussion in weekly Staff Meetings, too.

Afternoons, [expletive] painful, aren’t they? We could be doing much more constructive useful work as a team. [Expletive] the meetings are so boring. They could be so much more stimulating and invigorating. You know we could talk about the classes in five minutes and do something more constructive (111-113; 231-234).

7. 2. 2 ‘Lip service’ to development

Moreover, even when there was a possible development opportunity to explore ‘THEORY’ and the wider concepts underpinning classroom strategies, this was not

viewed as a real chance for teachers to explore their teaching in a meaningful way. I use the following example to illustrate this point.

Perfunctory Staff Development

An author was invited to speak about the genesis of a series of books for teaching English for Academic Purposes in our school. This talk, though, was not seen by the line-manager as a way to develop teachers or involve them in inspecting and articulating their beliefs or forging new ones. The talk was simply 'to get something done that needed to be done' to satisfy an inspecting body. It was an item on a list. The institution was awaiting a British Council inspection and part of that inspection would include looking at the staff development undertaken by teachers. The talk, organised by the Director of Studies, could then be added to the list of Staff Development opportunities which had been offered to the teachers, despite the fact that it had not been requested by the staff, a group of experienced teachers, or exploited in any way to provide real development (Research Diary: Field Notes, May, 2004).

One of the teachers on the staff, Nuala, complained cynically that without the imminent British Council inspection there would not even have been a talk. She also complained about the lack of teacher development opportunities:

I think a lot of people couldn't be bothered anymore. They've been there a long time and they're just not bothered. Now everyone is faffing about because of the British Council but otherwise it would just be the same (32-35).

As well I recorded further Field Notes about this particular talk:

Fulfilling the brief

At our staff meeting today, the author of a new series of books aimed at learners who want to progress into British tertiary education spoke about the text processing theories on which he had based the tasks in his volumes. While this talk might have stimulated a fruitful discussion about our own beliefs regarding how we all approached text work and our rationale for that approach, I received an e-mail from the Director of Studies after the meeting to say that 'at least the talk fulfilled the brief,

that is getting more EAP in for the BC visit and he presented it well (Research Diary: Field Notes, May, 2004).

In this particular incident it appeared that teacher development was no more than 'lip service' to fulfil institutional requirements.

7. 2. 3 Lack of institutional support

Other teachers also complained about this type of 'lip service' by institutions towards professional development. Basil, Jane, Rob, and Rachel all spoke about their institutions and institutional line managers not inspiring them to take time to read and reflect or to discuss with other teachers about their work. Ken, in the incident below confessed to disillusionment with opportunities for development. I first asked him if perhaps his workload contributed to his lack of involvement with development and finding out about what was happening in the field. He replied:

This is an interesting question. The final answer is 'No, I'm not too busy.' I can't be too busy because I'm teaching 18 hours a week and in Spain and Russia I was teaching 25 hours a week but I still had time to go to conferences and work-shops and still found I was learning new things. OK, I wasn't researching anything but I still found I had plenty of time to discuss things with colleagues. ... No, it's not about time, it's about motivation. And I currently have lost a bit compared to what I was like before. I really can't say what it is. Even though I say I am not too busy, I feel I am too busy. I don't know how, bearing in mind that my teaching load is 75% of what it was. I don't know if it's not just the environment. The environment is not conducive to doing other things. [I very rarely discuss] here because there is no stimulation, here.... and also an atmosphere of people not being together (217-222; 226-227; 230-234; 138; 145).

Nuala also suggested later, openly frustrated and bad-tempered in her desire for some teacher development:

It wouldn't take much. Instead of the meeting [regular Staff Meeting] we have, have a short meeting, then have a work-shop of maybe two hours. Isn't that going to be good? I think it should be up to the teachers to push a little bit but it's also up to the

Director of Studies to suggest what might be useful.... could someone here organise something, a lecture, a workshop? (34-36; 21-23).

Even conference attendance was not seen necessarily as a means to develop a more professional identity in relation to development. This is illustrated here by a weary comment by Rob:

As for the company encouraging people to read. On paper, yes. In reality, no. This company is superb at PR, useless at actually doing anything. As for conferences, they are merely excuses to give a Saudi a 'freebie', for example, H. in Edinburgh [referring to someone we had both met at a conference in Edinburgh] or for the teachers here to have a dirty weekend in Dubai with the Russian hookers (E2).

Thus, in terms of teacher development where were teachers to go after the ceiling of classroom techniques had been reached and developmental sessions had become disappointments? This group of 'native speaker' teachers' certainly demonstrated frustration and disillusionment with line managers and institutions in terms of appropriate teacher development. They seemed to define themselves as 'practical practitioners' yet were simultaneously unhappy with this role and also not engaged in any form of development which could motivate them more fully.

7. 2. 4 Teacher inertia: recycling the same arguments

However, on the whole, and even as the teachers complained of 'knowing it all' and of being bored and frustrated with practicalities, there seemed, at the same time, an inertia about the undertaking of any involvement with or scrutiny of ideas and innovation in the field, unless the teachers were provided with institutional direction. Nuala, for example, complaining about the lack of teacher development, also confided that she needed someone to inspire her.

My worry is, is it up to me.... to a certain extent, now should I try, of course I should try to... I know I should try to but at the same time I don't feel.. have the motivation, no-one's pushing me to do more or to develop. It always goes back to that, to development, having someone there who encourages me (130-133).

This group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers therefore seemed both interested and disinterested in development at the same time, irritated at being bored in their classrooms and without any intellectual challenge, willing to talk about their frustrations in terms of teacher development, but unwilling to act to improve the situation unless development was provided for them. I illustrate this with a confusing statement about the ideas put forward by academics where the teacher on one hand says they (the academic ideas) are worth considering, and then rejects them as not being practically relevant. Here is the comment from Ned:

I think [the ideas] are probably things that are worth thinking about... That, though, in particular for example, doesn’t have any relevance for my daily life and I don’t have sufficient interest in it and I don’t consider it of enough importance in my classroom to read that kind of book (17-20).

Ned then, although expressing no wish to engage in discussion or debate regarding this topic and the role of the EFL teacher in the world, continued on to complain of the fate of the EFL teacher. At the same time he also attempted to find a role of greater influence for the teacher and continued to create an oppositional stance to academia. This encapsulates some of the points made in other chapters as Ned acknowledges the importance of the experiential knowledge of the ordinary teacher and its worth to other teachers. Here, again, is a teacher who positions teachers’ ‘theories’ as more useful than those ‘THEORIES’ of academia and also shows his view of academics as ‘people who haven’t been in the classroom for several years.’

But the role teachers have to play? I think language school teachers, maybe...don’t write the books, seemingly they can have some kind of influence. At least they can further knowledge, they can do sessions at conferences, they can do that, ordinary teachers. Whereas, in Higher Education the ordinary teacher, if you want to label him that, has very little role to play. I think it’s all become people who haven’t been in the classroom for several years who are writing the theory books (285-300).

From these comments and the previous data, I believe this group provides an insight into another confusing aspect of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher’s professional identity. While the teachers gained a sense of strength from their birthright and their experiential

‘theories’, the study appears to reveal that, as the teachers gain more experience, their professional identity is undermined by a lack of appropriate opportunities for development which would take them outside the realm of practicalities. However, at the same time, this group of ‘native speaker’ teachers appeared unable to find an appropriate stimulus for their development and, indeed, showed that they rejected engagement with those very ideas and understandings which might have contributed to a more intellectually challenging environment and a less frustrated perspective. Engagement with the developing academic understandings of new challenges to ELT would, in my opinion, help them view their classrooms in a more enlightened and interested manner. In fact, although the teachers had professed not to be interested in ‘ideas’ outside the classroom, the fact of their continued involvement in this research project seems to illustrate that with more encouragement and socially experienced dialogue and some chance to explore and formulate ideas, the teachers might well be induced into more involvement with academic understanding of the future of ELT.

7.3 Other perspectives: mainstream teachers

Having seen how there was a tendency with this group of ‘native speaker’ teachers to find professional development opportunities unrewarding and frustrating, it seems appropriate also to provide some other perspectives from a socially higher profile group of teachers, the primary, Independent and university EFL teachers. This way, it might be seen whether this attitude to teacher development is widespread or simply symptomatic of the small ‘bounded’ group of EFL teachers in this study.

In the first place, the primary teachers both in the state sector and in the Independent institution seemed more positive and enthusiastic about professional development generally. All of the primary teachers interviewed expressed willingness and a need to attend INSET sessions, go on courses and attend conferences. They also saw it as incumbent upon themselves to relay new information to other teaching staff. Reading journals, educational supplements and teaching magazines were seen as useful and all five teachers expressed a desire to have more time to read, although this also appeared more to do with practical issues than with ‘THEORY’. What is more, the primary teachers welcomed the chance to learn and improve in areas where they felt they were lacking

knowledge. In fact, in terms of National Curriculum changes and opportunities to be updated one said: 'We would probably want to go I think. We don't often get asked to go and do things but when we hear about things, we go and ask if we could go on a course' (T: 2 I: 27-28).

Therefore, while it must be recognised that these teachers were under pressure created by an external body to keep up-to-date with developments in their subject areas and to keep abreast of broader educational issues, there also appeared to be an internal motivation to continue to develop as professionals. On one hand there was a sense of obligation to fulfil the statutory requirements and, on the other, a seemingly genuine interest by the teachers, however busy they were, to improve their skills. Moreover, all of their developmental opportunities for acquiring new knowledge appeared to them to enhance their work and positions and made them more confident practitioners. No developmental ideas, at least in terms of the small group of teachers I interviewed, were perceived as threatening or diminishing them in any way and none of the teachers expressed any irritation at the sessions, courses or conferences they had attended. This particular small group of teachers, therefore, did not evidence the same attitudes of frustration or dilemma in terms of professional development and ideas that the 'native speaker' EFL teachers' group did.

On the other hand, however, the university EFL teachers, who were interviewed to provide a broader perspective on the core group, also complained about their sporadic teacher development opportunities and said:

TU1: And what we need is more staff development things going on a regular basis with an actual remit. You know 'try this out', 'try that out'. It's a bit compartmentalised (246-248).

TU2: Yes, if we could do that and try it out with some lessons and materials and feedback on how it went (249-250).

These particular teachers felt their teacher development needed to be better managed and more systematic. Moreover, these university teachers, again demonstrating a professional identity which was firmly rooted in subjects such as modern languages rather than EFL, also complained that they were unable to participate in a research project comparing Modern Foreign Languages and EFL teaching. They indicated that they found

this especially irritating given the academic environment in which they worked. Overall though, there was motivation on the part of this group of teachers to reflect on their work and undertake research and there was disappointment that they were unable to do so on a more structured or substantial basis.

It might be suggested from these comparisons between different educational cultures that the apparently more successful outcomes of professional development opportunities evidenced by the state and Independent primary school teachers is because of external pressure and sheer volume of numbers in the profession, which would seem to exert influence on developing sustained and relevant teacher development programmes. The somewhat reluctant response from the university EFL teachers with regard to teacher development seemed more in line with the core group of EFL teachers in the study and this may indicate that when one individual in an institution, normally the Director of Studies in EFL institutions, is responsible for the professional development of a comparatively small group of teachers, the resulting programmes might well be much less relevant, sustained or successful.

7. 4 Status under threat

While this group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers seemed to struggle with how they could develop professionally, a second dilemma and one which had already surfaced in the initial findings became more evident in the analysis of later data. This was the teachers’ perceptions of their status and their reactions to any possible questioning of this status. The status they perceive they have is high and appears to have been afforded by their own self-constructs, their learners’ perceptions and the perceptions of institutions they work for world-wide and this is especially true when compared with their ‘non-native speaker’ EFL teacher colleagues. This position seems to have given them international authority in the field.

However, the findings have also indicated that, to some degree, this authority is felt to be undermined by new academic understandings of a changing world ELT scenario. This uneasiness with regard to their status being queried was less openly articulated in the initial interviews with the teachers, perhaps because, as I have already indicated, losing such a prestigious status within their field was a difficult reality to imagine. However,

uneasiness in the face of this questioning of the ‘native speakers’ current status was more openly evidenced both in the e-mail exchanges and in the field observations I continued to make.

The following is an example of how Alex reacted when he believed his status as a ‘native speaker’ teacher was threatened by an academic presentation at a conference. The academic was questioning the superior role of the ‘native speaker’ teacher in the future world of ELT. Alex e-mailed:

We have just had a conference here in [] which was entitled []. The opening plenary speaker was an (expletive) called []. Basically, ‘white man native speaker bad’. We are all cultural and linguistic imperialists, probably racist as well. It’s a no win situation for white native speakers of English. We can’t even argue with his premise unless we want to face the distinct possibility of being called imperialist or racist, and who wants to put themselves in that position? Whatever merits his argument might have they will never be debated fully, only repeated ad nauseum by his sycophants who have already elevated his argument to the level of self-evident truth (E2).

Alex later sent a further e-mail to reiterate and expand on his points

I’ve been thinking about cultural imperialism for a while now and I’ve come to a couple of conclusions a) I want to get out of teaching because by and large it has become a thankless profession, and b) everybody only seems to focus on a one way system of cultural imperialism i.e. western (white) over non-western (non-whites). It is utterly OK for non-westerners to rubbish, trash etc. anything done by ‘whites’ but should a ‘white’ argue back, or try to defend a position he is immediately condemned as a ‘cultural imperialist’ or as a ‘racist’, or both.

What most people don’t, or won’t, recognise is that ‘western’ teachers in foreign lands have to put up with criticism of their culture, country, government on a regular basis from their students, yet they don’t openly criticise the culture, country, government of the country they are living in, in the classroom. This can lead to students thinking their criticisms are correct when, in fact, the teachers are just being too polite, or are not prepared to risk their jobs by arguing with students who might go to the administration and complain about the teacher (E3).

In both these e-mails Alex reacts strongly to the suggestion that perhaps it is now time, in the changing circumstances of English in the world, for ‘native speakers’ to re-evaluate their position in the field of English language teaching and that, far from being in a ‘no-win’ situation, they have been and still are highly privileged, influential and afforded considerable respect and employment opportunities around the world. I use the following Field Notes to illustrate this prestigious image afforded by birthright.

The Jordanian experience

On the last day of a teacher development course during which I had taught 26 Jordanian teachers, an official from the Jordanian Ministry of Education came up to the front of the room and asked the teachers to complete the sentence ‘This course has been worthwhile because...’ As each teacher completed the sentence orally around the class I noticed that about three quarters of them included something in their sentence similar to ‘...because I’ve had the opportunity to listen to a native speaker.’ I felt quite dispirited. It was as though all the work I had put into the course, all the hours of preparation and the hours of explaining points about theories of teaching and learning were not that important. Here it seemed at the end of the day I was recognised and valued simply because I happened to have been born in a certain country and to have grown up speaking and being educated in English (Research Diary : Field Notes, Jordan, May 2006).

This valuing of birthright over and above knowledge or pedagogic skills by ‘non-native speaker’ teachers appears to refute Alex’s claim that it is the ‘native speakers’ who are marginalised. I now give a further incident from my own institution which demonstrates a similar reaction to Alex’s by the second core group of ‘native speaker’ teachers. Here I believe that these teachers made a determined effort to assert their superiority in the field of EFL and also demonstrated discomfort when the practices which contribute to their high status were queried.

The Chinese PhD student: threatening status

At the time of this research we were teaching an almost exclusively Chinese body of learners and, as a consequence a Chinese PhD research student, who had been in Britain for a number of years, was invited to come and talk about the learners’ backgrounds at a teachers’ Staff Meeting. The PhD student was also expected to

answer any questions we had regarding problems with the Chinese students in our individual classes. She arrived a couple of minutes before her talk was scheduled to start.

When she came in, however, she was asked to sit at the end of a table where the teachers were sitting. At the time she arrived we were discussing a placement test we were developing. No-one made any effort to conclude the discussion and we continued on, almost ignoring the fact she was there. In any case she politely appeared interested in what we were doing and half an hour later, when we had finished our business, she was asked or, I thought, 'allowed' to speak.

The PhD student spoke fluently and forcefully about expectations of learners in China. Later, when asked about the learners in our institution, usually those in lower level EFL classes who did not attend class on a regular basis, she said we needed to be more disciplinarian. There was a muted uproar from the 'native speaker' EFL teachers at this. The Chinese person suggested that we 'go to their houses and get them up', which would be seen in China as a teacher 'caring' about learners and wanting them to do well. Our view, quite to the contrary, was that the learners were adults and responsible for their learning and this was not our role, especially if the Chinese learners wanted to continue on to under- and post-graduate programmes at university. In fact, making them responsible for their own learning was, in our view, doing them a favour and what we were being paid to do (Research Diary: Field Notes, November, 2003).

Here was a major difference in how two groups of teachers, Chinese and British, perceived their roles. It was also becoming clear now how our Chinese learners might be viewing the 'native speaker' EFL teacher. However, the teachers at the meeting were resistant to this idea which conflicted with their own view of education and they certainly did not seem to want to even consider rethinking their behaviour in order to better bridge the gap between themselves and their learners.

Here, I believe that the group of 'native speakers' felt threatened by this suggested alteration to their role. The teachers remained as united voices, closing ranks in defence and superiority against any shift in perspective about how different teacher behaviours might be explored to encourage one group of learners further. It seemed the teachers were

also determined to maintain power as ‘native speaker’ English language teachers by insisting on their version of the teacher’s role and not being open in any way to the idea of accommodation of a different viewpoint. This superiority was also subtly evident in the way in which the Chinese speaker, far more qualified, experienced and knowledgeable in her bilingualism and cross-cultural expertise than all of us, was kept waiting.

In this incident I saw a core group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers demonstrating an unyielding position in terms of their right to control who spoke and when they spoke in their meetings and almost what they spoke about, and I saw a group of teachers who demonstrated resistance to the considerable expertise of the Chinese scholar because it did not fit in with their educational views. Moreover, there was also a further incident later in her talk which, to me, reinforced my interpretation of the experience.

Dismissing the threat: getting the Chinese scholar to go

The situation disintegrated further after the Chinese speaker had been talking for about an hour. The Director of Studies got up and left the room, without giving any indication of where he was going or why, and actually never returned to thank the speaker. Once he had left, one teacher eagerly and repeatedly tried to interrupt and bring the talk to a close. The ‘native speakers’ all recognised his conversational ‘moves’ in trying to bring the afternoon to an end but the speaker unfortunately did not. The message seemed to be that what the speaker was saying was not what the teachers wanted to hear and they wanted it finished and they were not prepared to go on listening to this ‘non-native speaker’ teacher who was querying their views of how English language education should be managed (Research Diary: Field Notes, November, 2003).

7. 4. 1 Reinforcing ‘native speaker’ status

On the contrary, when the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ status was reinforced, there was no discomfort or efforts made to control the situation. This is evidenced in two incidents. One is related in an e-mail by Alex about a Saudi Arabian learner going to visit Australia and another is seen in a further talk to the second core group of teachers, which contrasted sharply with the talk by the Chinese scholar.

In Alex's e-mail he criticises the 'non-native speaker' teacher explaining the 'culture' of an English speaking country to his/her learners. However, he ignores the fact that a 'non-native speaker' teacher may have a valuable perspective on a 'native speaker' 'culture' for a co-national who is about to visit the country in question. As far as Alex is concerned, however, the only 'knowledge' is his, the western 'native speaker' knowledge. The usefulness of a Saudi teacher's experiences of Australia for a Saudi learner, for example, seems not to be important or in any way valuable. In his e-mail Alex first of all acknowledges that 'non-natives' might have a viewpoint but then immediately dismisses them as having 'no understanding', even if they have lived in the country in question. The only proper view of Australian culture is, apparently, that seen through 'native speaker' eyes. This e-mail though, seems again to illustrate Alex's fear of the worrying scenario that 'native speaker' teacher status is being eroded and he wishes to reinforce 'native speaker' status by sending the e-mail. Previous themes of this study re-surface as the 'non-native speaker' is again positioned in discourse with a positive statement followed by 'but, and it's a big 'but' (Alex: E2). Moreover, the 'non-native speaker' is also again described as inferior in not being able to understand the 'culture' of the country he/she has visited. Here is Alex's e-mail.

There is obviously a place for 'non-native speakers' of English in TEFL, but, and it's a big 'but', are non native speakers the way to go when the people they are teaching are being sent to the UK, USA, Canada and Australia? I am sure that they can prepare the students well, at least our Egyptian teachers advisers can, in terms of pure language. But I have always felt that as an EFL teacher we are also there to provide a window on our countries and way of life, especially for those who are going to study there for any length of time. This, in my view, is not cultural imperialism but a simple matter of practicality. I have found that those students who are going to a Western country are very, very keen to obtain an insight into what they are letting themselves in for. Again, this is pure practicality. Non-native speakers can't do this, unless of course they have lived and studied in the west and made the attempt to socialise and mingle with the host population. I have met many people who have lived and studied in the west and speak reasonable English but have no real understanding of the culture. This is teachers and non-teachers alike (Alex: E2).

Alex clearly positions the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher as the only teacher who has the status to impart useful and appropriate cultural information and, equally, appears to see that there is only one view of a ‘native speaker’ country’s culture. I would suggest though, that a Saudi view of Australia may be just as valuable for a Saudi learner as a Canadian or British view.

Moreover, in terms of threatening professional status, the particular scenario of the Chinese scholar at the staff meeting contrasted sharply with how the speaker the following week was treated when he came to talk to the staff. The second speaker was British, not Chinese, and a previous director of a British Council language teaching operation in the Middle East. He was, at the time of his talk, involved in writing texts for foreign learners of English who wanted to proceed on to undergraduate programmes in English speaking countries. I recorded the following notes after his talk.

The British Council Director: reinforcing status

This talk was quite a contrast to the talk by our Chinese speaker. Although he had been waiting through some of the Staff Meeting, at 2.00 sharp (the scheduled time of his talk) the Director of Studies stopped the meeting and he was invited to start. The speaker was instantly afforded our respect.

He began to talk about learners processing texts and emphasised the fact that the learners needed ‘real world knowledge’. He explained that one of the reasons learners like the Arabs or the Chinese had so many problems with texts was their lack of knowledge of ‘the real world’ and that one of his aims in producing the texts for the books was to ‘improve learners’ real world knowledge’. When he talked about this, there was a lot of nodding and agreement from the teachers.

‘You know how some of them have no idea, even about where their country is on the map’, he said. There was more nodding from the teachers.

I queried whether what he was requiring was ‘Western real world knowledge’. He and the other teachers agreed and said: ‘Yes, that is what they need.’

He continued on to explain that the ten topics chosen for the texts in the books he was writing were the ten areas from *Britannica’s* web-site. However, as his talk continued over the hour he also admitted that he wondered what ‘real world knowledge’ really was because there were so many sources. No-one asked him to stop or interrupted

him. At the end he was courteously thanked by the Director of Studies (Research Diary: Field Notes, May 2004).

In my opinion, the implication and sub-text of this talk and the texts that had been chosen for the book was that foreign learners, especially the Arabs and the Chinese he spoke about, were 'ill-educated' and had no knowledge of anything that the 'native speakers' knew about. While knowledge of the West and what the West considers to be valuable knowledge is important for students who wish to study in a Western university, I was struck by two things. Firstly there appeared to be a lack of inclusion of any text in the volumes which related to the target learners, for example, the exploratory voyages of the Chinese navigator, Zheng He, eighty years before Columbus, or Arabic mathematics, to collective world knowledge. Secondly, I was struck by the empathy the core group of teachers had for his point of view regarding what 'real world knowledge' was. His talk, unlike the talk by the Chinese scholar did not threaten, it supported and upholstered the teachers' views of what should be known by their learners. It also supported their own position in terms of status. Their status was retained because they comfortably held what was regarded in the room as 'the knowledge.'

7.5 Conclusion

It seems, thus, in terms of both professional development and the current status of the 'native speaker' teacher in the world of EFL, this particular group of teachers in the study were experiencing some dilemmas. The nature of teacher development they were encountering in their institutions seemed, for the most part irrelevant, inadequate and frustrating to them and this aspect of professional identity was under threat. They wanted to develop further than the powerful identity marker of 'practical practitioner', yet, paradoxically, the teachers seemed uneasy with ideas which might encourage them to inspect and extend that role.

Additionally, in terms of their currently recognised status in the field of ELT, any threatening of this group's superiority seemed disconcerting to their professional identities. Teachers were seen to resist ideas which threatened their own world view, disregard 'other' expertise and to validate perspectives which contributed to supporting the status they believed they had in the ELT classroom. In other words the 'native

speaker' teachers in this group both desired yet appeared to resist change to different aspects of their current professional identities.

Chapter 8: Reconstructing the past: developing a professional trajectory

8.1 Introduction

I believe I have shown in the analysis of the data in the previous chapters that the group of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers in this study have based much of their secure and celebrated professional identity on their ‘birthright’ as English speakers. This ‘birthright’ appears, in conjunction with their ethnicity, pronunciation and a British educational ‘schema’, as factors in establishing their professional identity. Additionally, this group have reinforced their identity through their oppositional stance to their ‘non-native speaker’ English teaching counterparts. What is more the teachers in this study have been shown to feel uneasy with proposed academic suggestions that their superior status and understandings of ELT may assume a lesser role as English occupies a new position in the world and comes under extended ownership. I believe these teachers have also been shown to have an ambivalent and complex relationship with academia and ‘THEORY’, apparently valuing their own ‘theories’ as practitioners above academic ideas yet, at the same time feeling frustrated and inferior in the role of a ‘practical practitioner’. They also seemingly believe that they need to align themselves with ‘THEORY’ to be more acceptable as professionals.

However, in this study of a small community one teacher in the group emerged as relying on birthright, language and educational ‘schema’ as markers of professional identity less heavily than her other ‘native speaker’ colleagues in the group. As well, over the course of the study, this one teacher, Rachel, slowly began to present a profile of an EFL teacher which was, in many respects, quite different to that of the rest of the group of teachers investigated. In her first interview Rachel had initially reacted in a similar manner to the other teachers, answering questions the same way and making comments about the challenges being thrown up by the literature that were not dissimilar to her colleagues. More specifically, at the outset Rachel, like the other teachers, had been unaware of the work on the phonology of English as an international language by Jenkins and she had

also confessed to knowing little about discussions on appropriate methodology or the problematising of the role of the ‘native speaker’ teacher. Neither was she, at the beginning of my data gathering, conversant with the agenda to raise the status of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers that had been gaining ground in North American TESOL and in the literature of the field. This was despite the fact that she worked with many ‘non-native speaker’ teachers in Portugal. Indeed her comments at that point with regard to her ‘non-native speaker’ colleagues had been along the same lines as the other respondents. However, over the course of my data collection, in fact in tandem with my own development as a researcher, her view of self, her attitude to professional development in terms of undertaking a continuous, job-embedded process, revealed Rachel as a teacher who wanted to listen, to read, to investigate and reflect, and to make changes to how she conceptualised her professional identity.

Therefore, because Rachel’s ‘story’ of beginning to build this new professional identity appeared more fitted to a reshaping of the world EFL map and of pivotal importance to this study, I made a decision to outline her developmental journey and the factors contributing to the reconstruction of her identity in a separate chapter. Her ‘story’, although often at odds with her colleagues in the group, showed itself, I believe, as a possible blue-print for ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers of the future. This is in terms of rethinking their professional identity as the old securities of the superior ‘native speaker’ teacher image are questioned in the globalising world. Therefore, in attempting to show Rachel’s development through the years of this study and isolate the factors which contributed to her professional growth as an EFL teacher, it also seemed possible to understand how greater harmony between the EFL teacher and the academic writing about the world of English language teaching might be achieved. In this chapter I also incorporate other evidence from the group of teachers which indicate that they might, with time and support, move as far as Rachel towards a new, different and more international professional self construct.

8. 2 Renegotiating professional identity: personal conduits to ‘THEORY’

The first factor in what I perceived to be Rachel’s changing professional identity was the arrival of a new line-manager in her institution who acted as a catalyst in her

development and became a conduit to 'THEORY'. In August, 2003, almost a year after my first interview with her and after numerous e-mails and telephone calls, Rachel came back to England and I re-interviewed her. This is how she described what had happened over that first year of my research.

This year we had a new Director, somebody who has more information about pedagogy, more interest in the activity of teaching even though he's a manager. He's not primarily looking at money or finances. He's primarily concerned with what we're doing in the classroom. He has quite a lot of respect for teachers. And so it was suggested right from the beginning of the year that we could work on 'unpacking' (my terminology) any particular issues we wanted to question. There was a concerted effort from the top and in our Teacher Development sessions to open up, unpack, all we're doing. Also the person who came as Assistant Director was also interested, so I suppose there were two people coming in who had similar views, similar desires, impetus to change things. I don't know to what extent I would've come the route I've come this year if it hadn't been for that (Rachel 2:19-27; 89-92; 99-100).

The contrast between the two interviews with Rachel over the two years was marked. In the second interview she spoke eagerly in lengthy stretches of fluent discourse about new insights gleaned from 'THEORY' and practical experiences she could relate to the 'THEORY'. She was interested, aware of what was going on and confident. This was a long way from her initial interview where she had stated, in response to being asked about Jenkins' ideas: 'That is almost like a new idea, that is sorts of academic theories I haven't read a lot about' (Rachel: 162-163). Rachel's engagement with authors and their arguments in the field in her second interview was up-to-date and critically aware. She mentioned issues being written about and discussed in current literature and, although it seemed she intended to show herself in a more professionally acceptable light, she was, at the same time, very genuinely involved with the ideas she spoke about. I noted the following in my Research Diary after one of her phone calls when the new Director of Studies had arrived in her institution.

A new line manager

Rachel said the arrival of the new Director of Studies has been so beneficial for her. She's phoned me each Sunday to tell me about what is going on in her institution. She

told me that if she'd done the interview now, it would have been quite different. She said they hadn't considered theory for a long time and now they are suddenly looking beyond the grammar syllabus with this new Director and his new Assistant. They are having what she calls 'interesting training sessions', talking about these issues and discussing Thornbury's (2003) Dogme article (Research Diary Field Notes, February, 2003).

In fact, over the year she had not only had the stimulus of a new pedagogically involved line-manager but had also asked me to send articles, titles of books and then e-mailed her reactions to what she had read and telephoned to talk about things she was reading from the discussions in her institution. I also noticed that the issues Rachel spoke of related to the questions I had initially posed her the year before: the changing ownership of English; the emerging role of the 'non-native speaker' teacher; Jenkins' work. Were these directly related to the content of a new course she had been asked to teach on and was that also impacting on her development, or had her lack of codified knowledge one year earlier led her to create a more acceptable 'THEORY'-friendly teacher identity? If this latter was the case then this process was similar to that of the other respondents who seemed to recreate their stance on 'THEORY' after their first interviews. However, in Rachel's case her new commitment and interest in her work and in the literature appeared to go further than the other teachers in the group. Whichever way this is interpreted it seemed that the questions I had put to Rachel, as well as the interest of a new line-manager and his assistant, had caused her to begin an investigation into her practice. I would argue, therefore, that the presence of motivating individuals, who themselves had agendas to develop new professional identities, very much acted as a catalyst for Rachel's investment in this new role for herself as an EFL teacher.

This is further borne out by my own professional interest in her development and what she was reading, as well as the time we were able to set aside to talk together as teaching colleagues. One fed into the other in a shared development of professional identities. In fact, Rachel phoned after one of the workshops she had given in Portugal and said: 'Thank you, this all came about from those ideas you threw at me. What I said in the workshop was a big statement about who I am and where I've come from' (Research Diary: Field Notes, Rachel, 2004). She also telephoned again some time after this and

commented: ‘I was thinking about how much I’ve learnt since you started doing your PhD’ (Research Diary: Field Notes, Rachel, 2004).

I now include other comments from my Field Notes about my own reaction to our discussions.

Rachel’s influence

Equally, when I read back over some of this work, my own thinking has been stimulated and enriched by my involvement with Rachel and her growing interest in her own and others’ development as professional EFL teachers and her understanding of the new ideas. Telephone and real-life discussions with her have led me in different directions and it is her story as it developed over the years that I now see as important and hopeful in the development of this thesis if teachers of EFL are going to occupy different spaces as the use of English increases round the world (Research Diary: Field Notes, 2005).

Rachel’s teacher identity was becoming more theoretically integrated and more theoretically interested than her other colleagues in the small community I investigated. These others had neither the stimulus of the line-manager(s) and they had not continued to correspond in any depth with any one person interested in their points of view. Because I saw and/or corresponded with Rachel reasonably frequently, we almost always fell into professional discussions quite quickly. This personal as well as professional interaction appeared to have motivated Rachel. It was not only that she would comment that something was ‘interesting’ and perhaps talk about it for an hour, as her other colleagues had done, or send me a short e-mail as they had, Rachel did more. She acted on the initial interest and began to investigate the literature and her classes, which meant to me that she had begun to try to make an investment in a different professional identity.

The unfolding of Rachel’s new involvement with ‘THEORY’ was, however, far from smooth as her work situation changed yet again. Her teaching hours increased significantly and she found herself without as much free time to read. Another change had been imposed on all the teachers in her institution in terms of being required to use a Task Based syllabus for each lesson, accessed time-consumingly on-line, rather than from course books with which the teachers were all much more familiar. What is more she

seemed to have had no further encouragement from one of the people who had previously acted as a powerful catalyst. She said:

Yes, in the year before there was an encouragement to explore, experiment. And what has happened very quickly the following year, it seems very quickly, we've just had a year of - just a taste of exploring and experimenting. And this past - the first three months of an academic year, it has just been an unholy splash, a diving into a swimming pool without any help at all, without any idea of what we were trying to do. We've lost the objectives. And we are just sort of drowning in paper. So I haven't been able to read. I haven't had any time off to explore connections that I thought were important to me and the institution....it has been quite significant to see how my enthusiasm has taken a blow (Rachel 3: 25-36).

Lack of time, the changes and tiredness were the reasons she gave for her despondency and why she had given up on the experimentation she had undertaken the year before. Yet, surprisingly, very soon after this complaint, she was preparing to give two work-shops at conferences for both Portuguese and British teachers working in Portugal. These were planned to be about her journey through teacher development. She continued to talk about Dogme, (Thornbury 2003), Paolo Freire and ideas of critical pedagogy, as well as Exploratory Practice (Allwright 2003) and how reading around these subjects and these authors had helped her see connections to her personal and professional development. She spoke animatedly about her ideas and what she wanted the teachers to take away from the workshops: 'I want the teachers just to start to reflect on who they are and why they are doing what they do and what their roles are' (Research Diary : Field Notes, Rachel).

It seems then that the arrival of such engaged academic management, in contrast to the prosaic management 'borne' by her colleagues in other institutions and the change in attitude and working conditions imposed by the institutional management both acted as powerful conduits to Rachel's uptake or, alternatively, caused her temporary disillusionment with 'THEORY'.

Moreover, for a further two years, Rachel has continued on exploring issues of critical pedagogy, Exploratory Practice and charting her own journey through development. She was invited to present a paper at a British Council conference in

Glasgow in July 2004, alongside well-known presenters and writers in the field of ELT such as Thornbury, Tomlinson and Maley. Rachel also began writing about her own development and decided to see if she could publish her initial ideas in a paper with the working title 'A Journey to Teacher Development: Identity, Ownership and Reflection', a paper which contains some of the ideas we had begun to discuss in the first interview and other ideas which have grown out of her work with some Portuguese teachers (Research Diary: Field Notes: Rachel). Additionally, she admitted to having greater personal confidence (Rachel: 103-104) and was looking ahead to her next teaching year, planning to observe and study other areas of her teaching. She acknowledged, too, that she was not alone in her staff-room in developing as a teacher:

The option to try new things was open to everyone and I think part of our development work was to feed back to one another about what we'd done and a lot of people had been doing different things. I think it would be true to say it had become more open pedagogically, become more vibrant, more stimulating (Rachel 2:116-121).

I conclude this section on the benefits of renegotiating professionalism with a further Diary entry of my own. It is a Critical Incident, illustrating my own experience of the importance of colleagues as catalysts in moving me towards new professional identity.

The reading week

In my school we were joined by a new senior member of staff who was very keen on teacher development. She managed to convince the Directors of the school of the developmental benefits if teachers could spend a week without teaching their classes and instead read about and discuss issues which were of interest to them. We were allowed the week and it worked extremely well. Apart from having more time to discuss areas in which we had a personal interest, the new person gave us a number of recent articles on teaching and learning and parts of extracts from new publications. We read these in the evenings and discussed them in the daily sessions. It seemed so much more worthwhile and important to me than all the workshops I had been to, full of tiny, gimmicky ideas. Some time after this developmental week and undoubtedly with the interest still in my mind, I decided to do an MA (Research Diary: Critical Incident 8).

8. 2. 1 Renegotiating professional identity: engagement with the literature and other interests

The second factor in Rachel's ability to contemplate different courses of action in establishing a new professional identity was, in fact, linked with the previous point. It was how she viewed reading about her profession and reading other texts. Her involvement with the literature also included reading outside the field into areas which she saw as impacting on her classroom teaching. Here are notes I made about Rachel's reading on other topics.

Other literature

Rachel told me how a course and reading she is doing outside her work, a course on psychotherapy, is contributing to her dealing with 12-15 year olds who are hard to discipline and how the work she is doing on being 'centred', like breathing and positioning is improving her teacher presence and ability to cope in stressful situations. It's also making her work on lessons being more meaningful than just 'Let's do page 3.' We discussed how this would be helpful to a beginner teacher I have, someone who is struggling with standing in front of a class. She also commented on how she was increasingly able to allow her Young Learners to take responsibility for what they produced without worrying about what might happen. She also said, though, that without the light workload she has this year, she would never have been able to set up and oversee some of the lessons she is doing (Research Diary: Field Notes, Rachel, February, 2003).

Two of the other teachers in the core group, Rosa and Martin, also spoke of texts they had read or interests they had outside the language teaching forum which helped them with their work. Rosa was talking about trying to untangle how people learn. She said:

But I think you need to be a psychologist to do this, you really need to study psychology to understand that. Again I've read a bit of psychology and it does make sense and it does explain how the brain works and you can only think in those terms and try to give the students what they need (291-294).

Mike, too, was writing a book about using drama in the ELT classroom, which had been very directly inspired by his own private interest. He explained the manner in which this outside influence impacted on his classroom teaching:

Also, with my drama that I've sort of been developing for a long, long time now but I suppose in the last four or five years my interest in drama and my expertise in drama has grown a lot and even my sort of normal classes, I incorporate a lot of drama based activities and the principles behind using drama in language teaching. I've been interested in acting. I've acted at an amateur level for years and years and so to be able to incorporate this into my profession is very fulfilling (25-29; 68-70).

Although it seemed the teachers had professed rather glibly in the first interviews that they did not read about their field and reading was not useful in their daily work, these three teachers were later able to demonstrate the usefulness of engaging with some form of literature and/or reading which they could relate to their professional practice and teacher development. Moreover, these examples of appropriate yet diverse reading, thinking and integrating ideas from outside the classroom seemed to leave teachers feeling less professionally frustrated.

8. 2. 2 Renegotiating professional identity: further repositioning as a practitioner researcher.

The third factor in Rachel's development seemed to be that she had begun to see her classes as opportunities for research, rather than 'problem' areas. It was interesting to note that many of the difficulties and negativity the teachers had expressed in the first interviews in terms of academic 'THEORY' not relating to the reality of classroom problems or to everyday practice, appeared minimised by Rachel in her second interview. This may have been due to reading and exploration of the literature: she had found a way in which she could research her own work, rather than become submerged and dispirited by the daily problems of the classroom. For example, speaking about Allwright's work on *Exploratory Practice* (2003) she stated:

That's when I found [an article] to be quite useful, particularly from someone in Turkey who was building on *Exploratory Practice* from Dick Allwright. It was just the notion that there may be puzzles, there may be little questions you have so you

could perhaps go into looking at those issues. I had three questions: how can I make the experience of being in the classroom more meaningful for me, how can I become more inspired, how can I do a better job? I went back with renewed zest and because I got the idea that I wanted to observe more instead of being totally overwhelmed by my own anxiety of whether I am teaching properly.

So given this idea that I wanted to explore things a bit more, I just observed. I just sat and watched. This is very often the situation you have in the British Council. Very often, there are these chaotic, uncontrollable classes that may disintegrate towards the end of the year and you're looking to parents and you're looking to someone to help you to find techniques, to help you with this unsolvable situation and it happens to me and to other people. So it just seemed appropriate that one should take that and use it in the notion of this Exploratory puzzle (Rachel 2:45-51; 66-73; 56-59).

It seemed here that the classes Rachel would have seen as stressful challenges in the preceding year were no longer as exhausting and caused her far less anxiety. The involvement with 'THEORY' had, in terms of the classes she was teaching, created a new and calmer perspective. In thinking of herself as a researcher she saw the classroom as a site for exploring other possibilities and was able to see teaching and learning more objectively.

8. 2. 3 Renegotiating professional identity: minimising difference and finding sameness.

A final factor in Rachel's developing new professional identity was a new challenge. She had been asked to research, design and implement a course for Portuguese secondary teachers in the state system. It was a short, twenty-five hour, intensive course entitled 'English today, how many varieties?' which encouraged Rachel to uncover her classroom practice further. When she talked about this experience she said:

I don't think that my general teaching in the classroom would have allowed me so many insights into what is English, the English I teach, the English the non-native speaker teachers teach. And the reason I think it was so, excuse the language, empowering both for them [the teachers she taught] and me is it fits into and feeds back into thoughts about teaching, learning, the classroom, methodology etc.

I don't know if it is easier for me to think about, over the year, what happened with regard to classroom ideas, classroom practice, classroom research, as that really is my main task, and the teachers' course was somehow apart, although as I say it was really important (Rachel 2: 11-19).

She continued:

First of all I have an immediate reaction to the notion of theory in the sense that I have been reading Pennycook and the Sri Lankan author, Canagarajah, and Jennifer Jenkins. These were all connected with producing this course. It's 10 years since I did my MA and I suddenly found that I had to write the course and then I tried to remember what I'd learnt and find what material I could take in. So I devised the course and went in to teach the course and I found the subject, the whole notion of Jennifer Jenkins questioning the third person singular, just the fact she questioned it - reading, listening to Kachru interesting. So from these moments of learning, writing and then discussing, quite a lot came out. I think the whole notion of questioning the ownership, the very fact that I was able to present the three concentric circles from Kachru and say to them that there are more L2 speakers in the world than L1 and then go into the Graddol and ask them what will happen to English. It just gave them food for thought.

The last day we looked at David Hill's stuff from Turkey and the whole notion of native and non-native teachers and should we just be looking at the nature of the professionals? 'Has this person any idea about teaching?' Rather than 'Is this person a non-native speaker?' (Rachel 2: 131-138; 248-253; 255-260).

Alongside Rachel's increasing 'unpicking' of her classroom practice and her interest in the wider perspective of TEFL, another important factor seems to arise from this new challenge she had accepted. Her final comment in this part of an interview: 'Has this person any idea about teaching?' Rather than 'Is this person a non-native speaker?' indicates her openness to detachment from place and language as identity markers of the 'native speaker' English language teacher. She seems willing to acknowledge the new 'ownership' of English and also not to be so concerned about 'native speakerness.' It seemed that Rachel had begun to see English language teachers in terms of teaching skills and understanding classrooms and their contexts, rather than in terms of their birthright,

ethnicity and educational 'schema'. Here, too, instead of classifying the Portuguese teachers as 'others' because they were 'non-native speaker' teachers, Rachel seems to have begun to truly share professional ideas with them in some meaningful way and focus on 'teaching' rather than where the teachers come from.

8.3 A private site of reconstruction

However, despite what I believe was Rachel's progress in changing her professional identity and despite her opinion that others in her staff room were also moving towards new understandings, she expressed a note of caution with regard to exchanging views on her redefined role. Although she had said that she was 'glad there are some people around who can come up with all this theory because it gives me something to think about' (Rachel 2: 416-418), Rachel admitted though, at the end of an interview how careful she would need to be in communicating some of her opinions to colleagues for fear of upsetting them. She gave as an example her ideas about what she was reading, especially in terms of the changing ownership of English. She said:

I think, as a teacher, it would be very difficult to think about sharing them. I can share them here with you because I know you. But in terms of talking about this in a group of teachers, I don't know to what extent I would come out with this...to what extent I'd need to know that the people I'm talking to are firmly in my camp and are interested in what I've got to say and have the same views on theory, so that I could talk about cultural politics, so that I might be able to talk about Paolo Friere, so I might be able to mention the fact that teaching English is not a neutral activity ... but to what extent I would go out and talk to anybody beyond the people I closely work with and closely identify with. I mean I can think of some people who wouldn't be construing their role this way. I cannot really imagine talking through some of this stuff in some of the staff rooms or the staff meetings that we might have. There are some people there who I think would be very conservative and wouldn't want to know any of this (Rachel 2:439-458).

Thus, despite the trajectory of Rachel's professional development, a wariness remained with regard to revealing ideas she was embracing. She seemed to quite firmly

believe that they might not be readily acceptable to some of her 'native speaker' teaching colleagues and that some teachers would find her views radical.

8.4 Conclusion

Thus, there seemed some evidence from the findings above that this 'native speaker' teacher, Rachel, was beginning to forge a different professional identity. The first factor was the influence, over time, of work related professionals who were motivational in their own quests to develop and the learning community in which Rachel found herself for a period. This professional support and/or learning community was what the other respondents in this small group appeared to lack. Dadds (2001) believes that learning usually needs time and does not manifest itself easily. Dadds concludes that comments such as those made by Rachel are symptomatic of stages of deep thinking, which have been incubating for some time.

The second factor was reading about the profession and becoming involved in other areas which could be related to teaching and learning and the teacher's role within ELT. This finding, too, is echoed in the research done by Kelchtermans (1993) with a group of primary teachers which showed that the sources for new beliefs and knowledge were very diverse and that it was not only experiences at school which influenced teachers' work but also those in their private lives. The next factor in Rachel's changing identity was her beginning to view classrooms as areas for research, rather than sites of struggle. Finally, the last factor appeared to be the ability to minimise difference and maximise sameness. Rachel seemed to see that working with 'other' colleagues was only 'other' in terms of their personal identities of language and origin but 'the same' in terms of their professional identities as teachers of English. Rachel tended to be able to appreciate these teachers as English language teaching colleagues tussling with the same ELT issues as she was, rather than as 'non-native speaker' teachers. This appeared to enable Rachel to reconstruct herself as an EFL teacher, based on professional, pedagogic skills and knowledge and not through an identity based on place of origin, language of birth and British educational 'schema'. Woodward states that 'globalisation could lead to the detachment of identity from community and place' (1997:16) which, while seen by Woodward here as a negative phenomenon, in the case of 'native speaker' EFL teachers

may well be a good thing indeed. This point is further exemplified in a more recent comment about Rachel's Young Learners' classes in Portugal.

I very much don't want to come down... to assert that I'm British and that's not how I would do things. I want to understand why things are going wrong and what support there is for the kids who aren't fitting in and what the safety net is. I encounter this kind of problem in all my classes in Portugal. The never-ending fights over a rubber or something, the name calling, the teasing... the bullying. The challenges from students but I try not to let it escalate. I try to defuse it so we don't get into those kinds of situations where everyone is just getting angrier and angrier. But it's probably like that in a lot of British schools, so I'm not using that. ...the fact that maybe British education is different. I don't know if it is, I'm going to try to work with this system first (Research Diary: Rachel: November 28th, 2005).

In these lines Rachel seems to be making a very genuine attempt to understand how the 'other' system works and she also indicates a willingness to work with the system and within it as an insider or as much of an insider as she can be. Rachel seems to be attempting in both her work with the Portuguese secondary school teachers and in her work with the Young Learners to re-negotiate, as far as she can, the border between 'difference' and 'sameness', thus adopting the wisdom of Gilroy, who says: 'We should try to remember that the thresholds between sameness and difference are not fixed, they can be moved' (1997:303).

It seems then, in making such a considerable conscious investment in her professional identity on a number of fronts, Rachel has become engaged in a major 'reconstructive endeavour' (Giddens 1991:75). Thus, she seems to have the potential to rebuild a new and rewarding professional identity. Giddens also reminds us how this is possible by saying: 'What the individual becomes is dependent on the reconstructive endeavours in which she or he engages. These are far more than just "getting to know oneself" better: self-understanding is subordinated to the more inclusive and fundamental aim of building/rebuilding a coherent and rewarding sense of identity' (ibid.: 75).

Thus, in Rachel's case she continued on exploring her views, and appeared no longer to inhabit an overtly articulated oppositional space with academics, but to see 'THEORY' instead as an aid to helping her solve the struggles of the classroom. In the second and third interviews she did not, either, demonstrate the unhappy, frustrated professional

dilemmas of her other 'native speaker' colleagues in the small community investigated. These latter appeared to vexingly both want and not want to engage with ideas in the literature and, in such a fashion, evidenced uncomfortable facets of their professional identity. As time passed Rachel also seemed no longer wedded to place and language as markers of her professional identity and importantly, did not appear to be fighting to retain those as the mainstays of her self-constructs as an EFL teacher, but was healthily divorced from them. She had, it seemed, over the two and more years of my research, broken with the past and begun to abandon the old natural order as far as she could. In other words, Rachel demonstrated how a possible identity for an international English teacher, rather than a 'native speaker' English language teacher, might profitably evolve in the globalising world as the language increasingly becomes a planetary tool. Rachel too, was fitting the model that Giddens describes in his work on the globalising tendencies of modern institutions and the profound transformation these are having on personal activities:

The individual must be prepared to make a more or less complete break with the past, if necessary, and to contemplate novel courses of action that cannot simply be guided by established habits. Security attained through sticking with established patterns is brittle, and at some point will crack. It betokens a fear of the future rather than providing the means of mastering it (1991:73)

Chapter 9: Implications and Discussion

9.1 Introduction

As far as literature on the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher exists, the findings of this study seem to reinforce existing discussions. The literature includes papers and texts which look at ‘native speaker’ teachers’ methodological preferences, attitudes towards ‘non-native speaker’ teachers, educational ‘schema’, personal teaching maxims and their relationship with teacher development and academia, as well as the ‘native speakers’ privileged employment opportunities (for example, Anderson 2003; Amin 1999; Baxter 2002; Braine 1999; Canagarajah 1999a; Clarke 1994; Cook 1999; Davies 1991; Holliday 2005; Kamhi-Stein 2000a, 2000b; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Kubota 2002a, 2002b; Liu 1999; Llurda 2004; McKay 2002; Matsuda 2003; Medgyes 1992; Paikeday 1985; Pennycook 1994; Phillipson 1992; Rajopalan 2004; Rampton 1996; Shuck 2002). It must be noted, though, that very often these perspectives have been gathered from a ‘non-native speaker’ teacher standpoint and I therefore suggest that this thesis further develops the understandings of existing literature because it is able to give a detailed and in-depth portrait of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher from the ‘native speaker’ perspective.

In fact, the view presented in this thesis has not been obtained from the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher, which, in a worst interpretation could be seen as a jaundiced rendering of a certain perspective from a group who appear thwarted by continued international institutional and student demand to be taught English by ‘native speaker’ teachers. On the contrary, the data in this study come directly from the ‘native speaker’ teacher. In my view, they allow us to see in a clearer and franker way how the ‘native speaker’ teacher currently views him/herself, compared with the quite limited and rather one-sided glimpses from a predominantly ‘non-native speaker’ viewpoint that the literature on the subject has previously permitted.

What is more, I believe this study goes some way to extending such previously published work as it more fully uncovers the identity constructs, beliefs and current

professional dilemmas of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher, especially in terms of helping to reveal how these teachers are reacting to suggested changes to the profession caused by the new role of English in the world. In addition, I contend that this study develops some new understanding of a previously little documented issue with regard to the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher, that is the apparent rift between the world of the English language teaching practitioner and academics writing about that same world. I also believe that this study reveals the ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers’ complex relationship with their own classroom ‘theories’ and the ‘THEORY’ of academia.

I thus consider that the findings are important in clarifying the identity constructs of the ‘native’ English language teacher with regard to their ‘birthright’, ethnicity, language proficiency, pronunciation and educational background, all of which appear to continue to contribute to their traditional sense of privilege and power when working internationally as English language teachers in the first decade of this millennium. Moreover, I believe that the findings reveal some creeping new uncertainties and doubts surrounding this previously apparently ‘stable’ concept of superior ‘native speaker’ English language teacher identity. This is particularly true when examining this group of teachers’ unhappy relationship with the works of academia.

The new insecurity regarding the ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers’ professional identity is not, however, an unusual phenomenon in a modern globalising society. Sociologists (Beck 2000; Giddens 1991; Mercer 1990; Woodward 1997) suggest that such uncertainties and doubts are characteristic of contemporary or late modern societies and much is due to the march of globalisation. The encroachment of globalisation is seen as harbouring considerable consequences for the establishment of many traditional identities, both collective and personal. For example, Giddens opines: ‘Modern institutions differ from all preceding forms of social order in respect of their dynamism, the degree to which they undercut traditional habits and customs, and their global impact’ (1991:1). It is also suggested by Giddens and other sociologists that previous notions of national and ethnic identity are being called into question, especially in areas of the world where globalisation is at its most transforming, as is the case in this study of English language teachers when the subject they teach, English, has become accepted as an international language. Indeed Woodward, for example, when referring to identity and globalisation suggests that:

The extent of change might mean that there is a ‘crisis of identity’ where old certainties no longer obtain and social, political and economic changes both globally and locally have led to the breakdown of previously stable group membership (op.cit.: 1).

With this globalising background of possible threats to traditional concepts of identity in mind, I now move to discuss the general and specific findings from this study. This is followed by a discussion of what I believe are the implications both for the field of EFL and more general implications related to the theme of professional identity in the globalising world.

9. 2 Findings: general findings from the study

The findings from this study seem to raise similar issues to those cited above in terms of uncertainty over identity and the blurring of boundaries in the professional arena of the ‘native speaker’ English language teacher. Almost invariably the teachers appear to seek continuity and want to remain secure within their traditional identity concepts, as well as safe in their place in the world ‘hierarchy’ of English language teachers. They appeared to rebuff ideas of change and seemed not prepared to ‘risk’ a change to their identity constructs. In fact, one of the main findings emerging from the data is the superior identity construct of this group of ‘native speaker’ teachers and their desire to retain the ‘status quo’ and remain entrenched in their apparent positions of privilege, supposedly supported by the institutions they work for and the learners they teach.

The second main area emerging from the findings is related in that it indicates a ‘native speaker’ desire to close out any democratisation that globalisation might bring to the profession in terms of viewing a wider range of international teachers of English as potentially effective in teaching English for international use. Indeed, from the data it appears that currently, ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers regard and refer to ‘non-native speaker’ teachers as less professionally proficient than ‘natives’. Thirdly, the data appear to reveal tensions when the ‘native speaker’ teachers are confronted by academic conceptualisations of changes to their professional practice. Indeed it seems that ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers have an ambivalent and complicated relationship with academia, academics, their ‘THEORY’ and the literature, partly because these latter appear as

harbingers of revolution in the field and partly because they threaten the self-perceptions of the teachers as ‘practical practitioners’.

This ambivalence is also seen in relation to ‘native speaker’ teacher development, which, in this study, appears to offer little chance for the teachers to develop beyond the paradoxically frustrating role of ‘practical practitioner’. Finally though, from the data has emerged one indication of a ‘native speaker’ teacher who has been able to attempt some reconstruction of her professional identity. She appears to have abandoned the traditional pillars of ‘birthright’ and a British educational ‘schema’ and engaged with 'THEORY', teacher development and ‘other’ perspectives in order to forge a new professional role which seems more in tune with the changing position of English in the world

9. 2. 1 Findings: specific findings from this study

Having given a general idea of the findings from the study, I move now to a more detailed summary of these, based on the data discussed in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. This is followed by what I believe to be the implications of these findings.

1. (5.3/ 5.3.1) It appears that ‘native speaker’ teachers believe they represent British educational and teacher training systems which are superior to ‘other’ educational systems and training. They believe that both the ‘other’ systems and ‘other’ learners are in need of adopting a more British understanding of education.

2. (5.3.2) English language teaching for ‘native speaker’ teachers seems to mean learners using essentially oral communication in relaxed, non-threatening classrooms.

3. (5.4.1) ‘Native speaker’ teachers in this study see pair and group class work as the ideal method for developing language proficiency. Although they profess an eclectic approach to methodology which would encompass different approaches, this seemed to reveal itself in the data to be ‘lip-service’ only.

4. (5.4.2) ‘Native speaker’ teachers usually have individual idiosyncratic theories about classroom practice but practise these within the pair/group ideal.

5. (5.5.1) There appears to be a stereotypical view of a white ‘native speaker’ teacher, evidenced by institutions, learners and tacitly accepted by ‘native speaker’ teachers themselves.

6. (5.5.2) It appears to be advantageous in employment terms to be a 'native speaker' teacher. 'Native speaker' teachers are valued by learners, institutions and their birthright conveys a concept of these practitioners as 'ideal' teachers of English.

7. (5.7.1/ 5.7.2) 'Native speaker' EFL teachers in this study appeared to use discourse to position 'non-native speaker' teachers of English as inferior and subordinate. This may support and sustain the 'native speakers' self-constructs of dominance.

8. (6.2.1/ 6.2.2) 'Native speaker' teachers are apparently defensive with regard to any suggested alteration to their pronunciation norms. Alterations to norms in order to facilitate the English of international speakers consequently appear threatening concepts.

9. (6.3/ 6.3.1/ 6.3.2/ 6.3.3) 'Native speaker' teachers seem to use discourse to negotiate an identity of 'practical practitioner' vis à vis academics. Equally, academics are perceived by the 'native speaker' teacher to use spoken and written discourse to maintain status vis à vis practitioners.

10. (6.4.1/6.4.2/6.4.3/6.4.5) Almost invariably, 'native speaker' teachers appear disenchanted with the 'THEORY' contained in the literature and do not find it useful in their classrooms. However, paradoxically, they attempt to align themselves with 'THEORY' when questioned in a more thorough manner. Moreover, in some cases, reading the literature of the field and reading in some related field seems to contribute to teacher development in terms of improving teachers' understandings of their classrooms.

11. (6.4.4) 'Native speaker' teachers may subvert 'THEORY' in private classroom actions.

12. (6.4.5) 'Native speaker' EFL teachers appear to recognise they have experiential 'theories' and these form part of their identity constructs. However, the teachers seem confused about the worth of these 'theories' when they are compared with the codified knowledge of academic 'THEORY'.

13. (7.2.1) It seems that once 'native speaker' teachers have reached a level of technical competence in classrooms and have a bank of practical ideas at their disposal, they become frustrated in developmental terms.

14. (7.4.1) 'Native speaker' dominance appears threatened by ideas and suggestions which lie outside the teachers' British training. These seem to be viewed by teachers as threatening their sense of dominance in the field.

15. (8.2) Pedagogically engaged academic managers may inspire staff development. EFL teachers may need sustained professional and personal support to successfully explore their practice.

16. (8.2.1) Engaging in classroom research appeared to improve a teacher's attitude to classroom teaching.

17. (8.2.3) Being involved in teacher development programmes with 'non-native speaker' teachers may cause a re-assessment of 'others' and of a 'native speaker' teacher's professional self-construct.

9.3 General and specific implications

In my view the above findings appear to indicate that there are factors in several interconnected areas related to the professional careers of 'native speaker' EFL teachers which may need re-evaluating. This re-evaluation is necessary if the pedagogical implications of the changes that the global use of English seems to be bringing to ELT are to be addressed. First of all, in terms of training and development, the findings suggest perhaps re-appraising and expanding the content of 'native speaker' EFL teacher training courses to include some form of academic discussion, which the teachers seem currently unaware of. It also seems that better management of teacher development by institutions and those responsible for teacher development in these institutions is required.

Secondly, in terms of the management of EFL institutions, those in 'middle management' roles i.e. individuals such as Directors of Studies, Academic Heads and teacher trainers in institutions employing 'native speaker' EFL teachers, may need themselves to develop greater awareness and understanding of academic proposals for change. They may also need to develop an awareness of the self-constructs of 'native speaker' teachers. It also seems that 'middle management' may need to develop greater awareness of their own beliefs and the beliefs disseminated by their institutions, either tacitly or overtly, with regards to the 'native speaker' teacher.

Finally, but importantly, it seems that there is an issue in terms of there being currently little harmonious and productive co-operation between both theoreticians and practitioners. This means there is limited exploration and unravelling of the teachers' understanding of 'THEORY' as opposed to the teachers' own 'theories' in EFL. This

seems to indicate a need for these two parties, academics and practitioners, to develop improved, genuinely dialogical and, as far as possible, non-hierarchical relationships between classroom teachers of EFL and those writing about English language teaching.

9. 3. 1 Implications for teacher training

In terms of the more specific implications of these findings, I start first with a discussion related to the implications they have for teacher training. I make suggestions derived from the collected data which appear to indicate a need for alternatives and additions in certain areas of the most widespread pre-service training programmes of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers.

(i) Training courses: the introduction of a wider perspective and academic papers.

The introduction of a wider perspective into the short (120 hour) training courses currently undertaken by the majority of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers (for example, Cambridge CELTA and Trinity College certificates) seems to be required if ‘native speaker’ trainee teachers of EFL are to have a broader view of English language teaching around the world. This is also necessary if the issues of current and future ownership of English in the world and the dilemma of the aspects of phonology required for international comprehensibility are to be raised at the outset of their careers. Raising such issues early would ensure that, from the start, new teachers in the profession are aware of how such discussions can, or may impact on their English language classrooms.

Such issues could be raised by the introduction of some accessible academic papers in which these ideas are discussed. These could feasibly be read over any short training course. Trainers might also provide a different perspective on, for example, the communicative language teaching methodology currently adopted on such courses and demanded by trainers in teaching practice if trainees are to be awarded their initial teaching certificates. Moreover, as well as learning basic classroom teaching techniques on such courses, new teachers might profitably reflect on and explore views of their new professional roles as English language teachers, perhaps in terms of written work as an assignment, through a group discussion or in a course log. The requirement for teachers to read, for example, one or two papers from academic journals on training courses would also introduce new teachers to the work of academics writing in the field and thus begin

the process of linking the practical work as EFL teachers with wider thinking on the critical issues in such a changing environment. In doing so, the relevance and apparent aims of certain classroom practices and techniques in all contexts might be fruitfully problematised.

Hall (1990) explains that rôles and identities are negotiable, moving, fluid and dynamic, evolving all the time and it may be useful to address the issues of such changing rôles on the above 'native speaker' pre-service teacher training programmes in order to prepare teachers for the future. It may be necessary, therefore, to focus and expand on, for example, certain sections from a core text on British teacher training courses such as *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Harmer 2007). This staple text is extremely useful for pre-service teachers in terms of practical classroom applications and in its latest, fourth edition Harmer now includes short sections on the global role of English and the future role of the 'native speaker' teacher. This is undoubtedly overdue in a book which is so widely read by new teachers of English. However, such discussions are not included in the syllabus of the Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Adults (CELTA), the first and often only teaching qualification of a considerable proportion of 'native speaker' teachers of English as a Foreign Language. It is, therefore, doubtful that trainee teachers will be directed to these particular sections in Harmer (or given other reading) but rather they will be directed only to the chapters relating to practical classroom teaching. In this way these new teachers may not be given the opportunity of problematising their role, the new role of English, and the important contribution 'non-native speaker' teachers make in world-wide ELT.

It could be, thus, that unless such omission in training is rectified it will make any new scenario for 'native speaker' EFL teachers in which their dominant identity is reduced, difficult to imagine. Such omission also subtly reinforces the celebrated international image of the 'native speaker' teacher.

(ii) Phonological aspects and attitudes to pronunciation

The fact that language is one of the fundamental ways in which we establish our identity and provide information for other people so that they might shape their views of who we are seems an understandable reason for the teachers' attachment to one way of speaking English. Attitude to language is influential in an assessment of the characteristics

of individuals and social groups. As part of these social groups, before they became EFL teachers, this group of 'native speakers' had used English to construct a social identity and establish boundaries. As teachers, though, their pronunciation of English also became intrinsic in their construction of their professional identity. Subsequently it seems that the 'native speaker' English language teacher is in something of a bind as they define themselves both socially and professionally through their pronunciation of the English language. There is no separation of their private and professional identities on this point, and when confronted with the challenges of academics such as Jenkins (2000), a pillar of their professional identity, English pronunciation, appears about to be taken away from them. Crystal explains:

If English is your mother tongue, you may have mixed feelings about the way English is spreading around the world. You may feel pride, that your language is the one which has been so successful; but your pride may be tinged with concern, when you realize that people in other countries may not want to use the language in the same way that you do, and are changing it to suit themselves. We are all sensitive to the way other people use (or, it is more often said, abuse) 'our' language (1997: 1-3)

I believe my study has shown that altering pronunciation was an area with which the experienced 'native speaker' teachers seemed unvaryingly uncomfortable. I suggest then that the possibility of alternative, comprehensible English pronunciation is also raised early in teachers' careers, with perhaps the teachers undertaking the learning of a foreign language. This would be in order to begin to comprehend the emotional attachment we all have to phonological aspects of our language in terms of indicating our identity and how relinquishing these aspects threatens our self-constructs. As more and more people world-wide come to use English as a world language, the need for greater tolerance and accommodation of phonological aspects outside standard English norms seems likely to increase and this area seems a vital one for EFL teachers to begin to face up to early in their careers. Indeed, there might also be less focus on the more obscure points of RP English pronunciation to which teachers and more particularly, teacher trainers on short pre-service courses appear to have remained wedded over the years. As Jenkins points out, there is a need to extend the view of the teaching of phonology. She says:

Only a study of these subjects (sociolinguistics and social psychology) will ensure that teachers are well equipped, phonology-wise, to move on in their careers rather than, as so many do - stay in the same place teaching in exactly the same way for the rest of their working lives (2000: 197).

Practically, training sessions which include an introduction to the phonological aspects of English deemed to be most vital in aiding international comprehensibility and learning how to teach these might be introduced. These might also incorporate discussion as to the importance or not of demanding 'native-like' or near 'native-like' phonological reproduction from English language learners. Or indeed some small observation task may be set up which requires teachers to locate elements of pronunciation which appear to ease or impede communication for learners of English.

Lastly, it may well be that the ability of EFL teacher training schemes to attract more 'non-native speaker' trainers, clearly comprehensible in English but not necessarily 'native speaker' like in pronunciation terms, could raise awareness that being a good English language teacher is not confined to 'native speakers' only. Having 'non-native speaker' trainers on pre-service courses such as Cambridge CELTA and Trinity Certificates, demonstrating expertise and sound pedagogic knowledge may convince new teachers, both 'native and non-native speakers', that expertise in English language teaching does not depend on a teacher's pronunciation of English, as long as the language is clear and comprehensible. Canagarajah comments on the beliefs that underpin these issues with regard to English language teaching: 'If it is one's accent and pronunciation that qualify one to be a teacher, then the sense of professionalism developed in ESL is flimsy. In effect teaching is defined primarily in terms of linguistic considerations' (1999a: 84).

(iii) Providing 'native speaker' teachers with greater exposure to images of 'non-native speaker' teachers at work

The issue of including more 'non-native speaker' teachers and trainers on pre-service 'native speaker' courses is also relevant to the next suggestion. From the data, it appears that there needs to be a better and greater dialogue between 'native' and 'non-native speaker' teachers. In order for this to take place an awareness of the issues faced by all

English language teachers should be raised on courses. Thus, examples of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers teaching and/or putting forward their perspectives on teaching and learning and/or methodology might be made available to teachers on initial training courses. This way, any prejudice and ethnocentric stance could begin to be examined. In her work looking at pre-service training courses Baxter reiterates these concerns over prejudice by revealing that ‘an essentialising of learners may begin in the training process, or is, at least reinforced there’ (2003: 180). It goes without saying that this essentialising undoubtedly extends to the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher. Baxter also notes that on the pre-service CELTA courses she observed ‘amazing stereotypes [which] appeared to pass unnoticed’ and that ‘there were sweeping generalisations and assumptions about groups of learners’ in ‘a training atmosphere with strongly culturist overtones’ (ibid.: 181). What is more Baxter states: ‘it seems this assumed knowledge informs the basis of [the new teachers’] pedagogical knowledge, and this is passed on as information and part of a knowledge base, [and] it may become institutionalised as part of a teacher’s repertoire. This may amount to a kind of institutional racism in ELT’ (ibid.: 182)

Thus, such essentialist, clichéd acceptances and everyday discourse of the ‘other’ could be problematised on initial training courses if DVDs of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers in a variety of contexts and using a variety of methodologies were made available to trainees for viewing. Frank discussion in post-viewing sessions might lead to the uncovering and problematising of possible prejudices, provided trainers themselves are aware of their own discourse. Such discussions may reveal, as Shuck (2002) notes when discussing the construction of the ‘non-native speaker’ in discourse, that there are loaded political and moral interests contained within people’s ideas of linguistic relationships and Shuck exhorts an examination of everyday discourse, as well as official public discourse, for evidence of the ways in which hierarchies of power are constructed.

Providing opportunities to unearth, examine and question ethnocentric views of trainee teachers seems crucial for the international realities of the new millennium. Uncovering such views may help to dispel residual ideas of colonialism or imperialism which Said sees as lingering ‘where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices’ (1994: 8). Some findings in this thesis resonate with a further comment by Said. He states:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial cultures is plentiful with such words and concepts as ‘inferior’ or ‘subject races’, ‘subordinate peoples’, ‘dependency’, ‘expansion’, and ‘authority’ (ibid.: 8).

Moreover, in terms of dispelling these concepts, institutions providing initial training courses in English language teaching and awarding bodies of the initial certificates in TEFL might, too, make an open commitment to attracting more ‘non-native speaker’ trainees onto their courses and demanding increased publication of the aforementioned DVDs of ‘non-native speaker’ teachers teaching in different contexts.

These strategies for the opening up of prejudiced attitudes seems useful where small groups of trainee teachers on 120 hour pre-service courses are concerned. In fact Riggins (1997) proposes that where ‘otherness’ is feared, lexical strategies of hierarchy, subordination and dominance exist but explains that in today’s world of apparently accepted diversity, public pronouncements are more likely to be those which mitigate a speaker’s intention and the opinions expressed to friends will be more severe and demonstrate less tolerance. Raising issues of ‘otherness’ in the seminar room with a small group of twelve new teachers, where participants quickly become friends, may make a start to at least raising awareness of prejudice, if not eradicating it.

(iv) Involvement in research projects

Trainees might carry out ‘mini-research’ projects, for example with regard to understanding other methodological approaches that their learners have experienced in different contexts. The ‘native speaker’ trainees might then begin to understand in more detail and depth, the strengths and drawbacks of different approaches. The trainee teachers may thus reflect on aspects of those approaches which they see as in conflict with their own training, and in so doing, extend their view of other principled possibilities of how English language teaching might be undertaken successfully. Yates and Wigglesworth, in describing such a research project, say: ‘The teachers involved in the first phase of the

project seem to have made enormous gains. Projects of this kind can be, not only of substantive, but also of pedagogical and curricular relevance to the daily practice of teachers' (2005: 276-277). However, these authors also admit to the demands on teachers in terms of time and effort and this would have to be a consideration on already crowded and pressurised initial training courses.

As well, trainees might be encouraged to attempt to unravel the real nature of such concepts as 'autonomy' and 'learner-centredness', which were briefly revealed as problematic for 'native speaker' teachers in this study. They might be urged to consider the important impact of social processes on these concepts with a richer understanding gleaned from reading, for example, the work of Ushioda (2003) or some of the conclusions of Anderson (2003) in his writing about the ELT 'profession'.

9. 4 Employment: institutional policies

In this next section I shall discuss the implications of the findings in terms of what appear to be unfair employment practices in international institutions where English is taught. These practices have seemed, from the data, advantageous to 'native speaker' English language teachers, and especially to those who are white.

9. 4. 1 Fairer employment practices; raising awareness of issues

With regard to offering employment to EFL teachers, this study appears to indicate that international institutions favour 'native speaker' teachers over 'non-native speaker' teachers, due to the fact that these same institutions believe the former are more acceptable to learners of English than the latter. It also seems from the data that birthright and ethnicity are more valued by institutions than teaching skills. Moreover, it appears that the former attributes are prime factors in 'native speakers' obtaining employment in institutions where employers are not obliged to hire nationals of the country but are at liberty to employ either 'native' or 'non-native speakers'. Concerningly, this practice of discriminating in favour of the 'native speaker' seems wide-spread. For example, the Taiwanese government proposed opening their state system to 'native' English speakers who would not be required to undertake the same training course as their Taiwanese colleagues but who would be paid double their salary (EL Gazette 2003). This year, too,

Kirkpatrick has reported on the demand in China, Korea and Japan for EL teachers, where the only pre-requisite appears to be a 'native speaker graduate (in any field) with no teaching or TEFL experience required (2007: 185-186). These seem further examples of status being afforded to the fortunes of 'birthright'. Thus, in terms of the professional identity of the 'native speaker' teacher, their place of birth seems as important in gaining employment and enjoying prestige as any form of teaching expertise.

Moreover, IATEFL, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, whose mission statement is 'to link, develop and support ELT professionals throughout the world' published an article in its bi-monthly publication entitled In praise of the unqualified teacher (Adamson 2003: 9) claiming that the unqualified 'native speaker' teacher was undervalued. With such an article appearing in an international publication for teachers of English, it is not unsurprising that the 'native speaker' teacher remains acclaimed and self-confident, based on a serendipitous amalgam of genes, birth-place and education.

In a world where interaction in English is increasingly between people whose mother tongue is not English, it seems that the skills of the classroom practitioner in teaching English might now profitably be fore-fronted over and above the 'birthright' principle, and/or the colour of skin/ hair/eyes etc. It also seems that any unfair hiring practices deserve to be made public and challenged and the priorities of institutions should increasingly be to focus on the employment of teachers of English with good teaching skills, as well as those with good English language skills. The institutions and those responsible for the recruitment of teachers need to be made aware of the unfairness of such practices by the bodies which provide recognition for their school's operational status as a language teaching institution, for example, the British Council. In codes of practice disseminated by recognition bodies there might be some statement which holds institutions accountable for unfair employment practices with regard to 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' teachers bearing the same qualifications and having similar professional experience, good language skills and classroom expertise. However, in reality this is problematic when the British Council itself, as has been briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, a major player in Recognition schemes and in the recruitment of EFL teachers world wide, prefers its own teachers to have British educational backgrounds. (https://trs.britishcouncil.org/internetSSL/asp_websites/common/Vac)

To address such bias it seems that international EFL teachers' organisations should keep raising the issue of unfair employment practice with regard to 'native' and 'non-native speaker' teachers with similar professional profiles, as, for example, TESOL America importantly does. Although, at the same time it is also important to acknowledge the belief of Kubota (2002), who claims that the continued maintenance of such labels as 'native' and 'non-native' obfuscates the reality of racism in EFL, as white Northern Europeans manage to 'pass' as 'native speakers'. Moreover, more international and national conferences might make efforts to foreground unequal recruitment practices so that teachers, employers, institutions, teacher trainers and teacher educators become increasingly aware of discrimination and the reality of the discrimination.

However, in recognising the apparent current desire of learners to be taught by 'native speaker' teachers, which is an area itself which needs more systematic investigation (see for example, Mahboob 2004), both institutions and learners need to be assured that where 'non-native speaker' teachers are employed, their language skills and understanding of the target culture, if required, is of an appropriate level and depth. It seems obvious that learners want to be taught by teachers whose English is fluent, accurate, clear, idiomatic if necessary, and who are confident in their knowledge of the language. Also, the learners most probably need to know that their teachers are knowledgeable about the sociocultural aspects of Britain or any other English speaking country the learner may aspire to visit, work or study in. Alternatively, the learners may wish to know that their teachers are knowledgeable about English for intercultural communication and can help them learn to interact in English in a variety of international situations.

Equally 'native speaker' teachers might be required to show ability/expertise in their learners' first language and an understanding of the cultural and educational context in which they are working if they are teaching in mono-lingual situations, as well as an understanding of intercultural communication. This would provide a much more level 'playing field' in terms of skills required by the international English language teacher in the globalising world.

Finally, perhaps one reason for the favour shown to 'native speaker' teachers by learners is a lack of understanding of how much English they will use with 'non-native speakers' in the future, as more and more of the world learns English. Learners themselves

need to have their awareness raised with regard to future interactions in English and the new role of English in the world. Again, the greater the awareness that English language teachers, their employers and institutions have of the changing status of English, the more likelihood there is that this issue is raised with learners. Thus, learners' perceptions of the persons able to teach English effectively might also begin to change.

9.5 Teacher Development

A further area which seems implicated in the findings from this research is the need for more aware and wide-ranging teacher development opportunities for English language teachers. In fact, a number of the issues which might briefly be addressed in pre-service teacher training and which have been discussed in previous sections of this chapter also relate to teacher development. For example, topics such as the changing role of English, the perceptions of the professional identity of English language teachers and the importance of acquiring an understanding of a range of practices outside the normally preferred Communicative Language Teaching approach might or might not have been raised on initial training courses. Given the short length of the majority of 'native speaker' English language teachers' training (the previously referred to 120 hour Trinity and Cambridge courses), these issues will almost inevitably require further exploration and investigation on the part of in-service teachers.

For example, on development programmes teacher educators might usefully provide journal articles, publications, talks by academics and also encourage discussion and research into the areas mentioned by teachers themselves. This is necessary if possible pre-service concepts of, for example, the superior role of the 'native speaker', 'birthright', ethnicity and pronunciation are not to remain unchallenged and unchanged over the course of the teachers' careers. The wide-spread use on training courses, 'in-service', and development programmes of the popular volumes of Harmer (1998, 1999, 2001, 2007) already referred to, needs to be evaluated and deficiencies plugged. This might be done in a series of more sustained workshops, seminars, lectures, reading groups or even in sporadic 'one-off' development sessions, where a variety of viewpoints is made available for the more experienced teacher. The further suggestions, already raised in 9.3.1, might

also profitably be revisited in both award bearing teacher development programmes and any other programmes developed at institutional or local level.

The teachers must also be encouraged to take risks in terms of redefining their identity if they are to develop. In a world where work society is now seen as becoming a risk society, and in which there are ‘insecurities, uncertainties and loss of boundaries’ and a ‘foreseeable and conceptually clear principle of blurring or fuzziness which marks the picture of work, society and politics’ of the future (Beck 2001: 70), the previous securities of ‘native speaker’ teachers will almost certainly no longer prevail. These ‘native speaker’ teachers cannot continue to operate an ‘eyes closed’ policy alongside the changed and changing role of English and in a world of work where Beck declares we are ultimately being told: ‘Rejoice that your knowledge is obsolete, and that no one can tell you what you will have to learn so that you are needed in the future! (ibid.: 85). While this is an extreme view there seems little doubt that the days of the prestigious role of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher may be numbered.

9.5.1 Developing ‘middle management’

One further factor contributing to the problems evidenced in this study with regard to limited or inappropriate teacher development opportunities for EFL teachers is the career path of Directors of Studies, teacher trainers or those responsible for such ‘academic’ leadership. These posts are usually occupied by teachers who have been promoted to new roles with responsibility for such management, yet who have had very few developmental opportunities themselves. In terms of career paths, occupiers of ‘middle-management’ roles, are on the whole not often encouraged to complete a Master’s degree, nor are they normally allocated time to spend studying about their profession, reading journals or academic publications. In other words they are deprived of the input necessary to them if they are to develop their staff in turn and avoid what seems to be developmental ‘stalemate’ and professional frustration when teachers are proficient in classroom techniques.

Thus, institutions need to do more to provide those in academic leadership positions with developmental opportunities themselves if these latter are to lead their teachers towards more meaningful and sustainable development opportunities. This could be in the form of funding for conferences, workshops with outside speakers for groups of Directors

of Studies, at least subscriptions to some academic journals both in hard copy and on-line, funding for reading groups and, importantly, a chance to undertake research projects, possibly in partnership with academic staff from tertiary institutions.

The same developmental opportunities need to be made available to mentor teachers. If teachers are lucky enough to have a mentoring system operating within schools, the mentor is, again, usually someone who has more practical classroom experience and from whom the teacher may benefit in terms of techniques and an awareness of materials, for example. However, other than this, the mentor, like the Director of Studies, normally receives few developmental opportunities and little encouragement to extend his/her own role beyond that of supporting teachers in terms of practical, everyday classroom issues. There thus seems a case, if teachers are to engage with professional development more fully and profitably and for long term career satisfaction, that the teachers' line- managers and mentors must first undertake some developmental activities themselves. Once they have done this they may become increasingly enthusiastic about involving their teachers in discussions about the literature of the field. Both the mentors and the Directors of Studies should also develop an understanding that successful, long term development needs to start from where the teacher is and what the teacher wants to develop and that, in the case of experienced teachers, there is a greater need for intellectual challenges rather than an unvaried diet of 'practical classroom tips'.

With enlightened 'middle management', staff could divide into small groups of like-minded teachers who wish to work on similar areas and in so doing construct wider knowledge of their classrooms, their practices and their beliefs. In this manner teaching staff may start to see classroom problems as interesting 'puzzles' to be solved and related to the literature and/or to be related to the experiential knowledge at all teachers' disposal. Perhaps, too, the secret sites of practice might be uncovered, made public, discussed, referenced to the literature and, perhaps, written about. With the right support it could be that the 'theories' teacher hold and practise in reality, behind the closed classroom door, might start to be codified and assume an authority of their own. Richards states: If teachers are guided in their teaching and in learning to teach by personal maxims [...] the nature, status, and use of such maxims clearly deserve recognition in teacher education programs' (1998: 61). Teachers may perhaps develop ideas which provide the stimulus for the publication of papers. More codification of this type of English language teacher

knowledge, especially if undertaken in tandem with academics, could well begin to lessen the gap between practitioners and those mainly concerned with writing about the practice of ELT.

In fact, such a change which might make public the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ ‘theories’ alongside those of academics, and thereby lead to the apparently more harmonious integration of the world of the academic and the practitioner that the teachers of the National Curriculum appeared to evidence in this study. Such a change would also reflect a similar shift in the sources of information experienced in wider society at the outset of the millennium. Here the media has assumed a hugely important role in the transmission of information and the traditionally elite sources of expertise such as medicine and science have been challenged, with many people now able to find out more information from the media, the internet and self-help books. Additionally, there is an increasing recognition that there is no one objective truth and a recognition that there are limitations to the claims that any one discipline, or area of that discipline, has access to truth.

9. 5. 2 Investigating the impact of development courses on classroom practice

However, if there are to be real benefits for the teachers’ understanding of the profession, the impact of development opportunities also needs to be investigated and explored. Explorations such as that carried out by Edwards and Owen, for example, which investigated the effect of, and attitudes towards different aspects of teacher education programmes. Their study revealed the ‘noticeable division between those respondents who tend to see their training instrumentally and those who take a more holistic view’ (2005: 57-58). How such developmental opportunities impact on teachers’ classroom practices and whether they provide a greater understanding of the wider field of ELT need investigating if the following result of one teacher’s course in SLA theory on her Master’s programme are to be avoided.

Little impact of her knowledge of SLA was observed in her EFL practices. After she returned back to teach [she] felt the irrelevancy of her SLA knowledge. It is suggested that further studies are needed in order to examine and understand how SLA theories and researchers can contribute to teachers’ practices’ (Lo 2005: 153).

Gregory too, looking at the work of educators who have taught phonetics to teachers, notes the apparent lack of relevance to the teachers: 'I am reminded of a workshop I once attended entitled I taught it but they didn't learn it. As applied linguists in teacher-training programs, we must take the emphasis off what we teach and put it where it belongs ... on what the teachers-in-training learn' (2005: 219). Moreover, in a study on the impact of an MA course component on language variation, Edwards and Owen (op. cit.: 44), reflecting whether or not such instruction can be of practical value to teachers later, say: 'Could our course writers have taken greater pains to make pedagogical applications and implications more explicit? It is clear that how language variation is taught is as important as whether it is taught.'

Therefore, a study of the lived experiences of the classroom teacher and their experiential 'theories', alongside the 'THEORY' of the academic and a chance to tease out how the two interact seems an appropriate topic for further research. This might begin to resolve the impasse witnessed in the study with regard to practitioners and theoreticians and I will further address this issue in a following section (9. 6). Investigations of how, if at all, 'THEORY' impacts on practice and practice on 'THEORY' seem to me to be vital if the apparent divide between the two is to be bridged in any meaningful way. Such investigations seem also important if the academic world relating to EFL is to understand exactly what its research, publications and conference presentations mean to the EFL teacher working in an EFL classroom every day.

9. 5. 3 Involvement in teacher training and teacher development

One further possibility for deepening the 'native speakers' understanding of 'non-native' speaker teachers' perspectives and of educational systems and pedagogical practices which are not British, is for teachers to thoughtfully and open-mindedly become involved in the training and development of 'other' teachers. The re-visiting of practice and 'THEORY' needed to design and/or undertake teacher training or development courses, or 'one-off' provision can have, as has been demonstrated in the work undertaken by Rachel, although not in the case of Vera, a positive impact. This impact was seen to be increased motivation, respect and understanding, especially when the teachers and their tutor come from different contexts and the tutor is prepared to put aside his/her everyday understandings of ELT. These kinds of courses, which at present very often involve 'non-

native speaker' teachers with a 'native speaker' trainer/educator, can encourage all teachers, including the 'native speaker' trainer to unpack the issues they each bring to the table. 'Native speaker' English teachers who plan and deliver such courses can learn to be open to a greater understanding of how English can be taught successfully in different ways in different contexts. Equally, on such development courses, which include both 'native and non-native speakers', the 'non-native speakers' might be encouraged to examine their concerns and undeclared positions with regard to 'native speaker' teachers and their language and pedagogic skills.

Interaction between 'native' and 'non-native speakers' can be encouraged on such courses so that a dialogue is built up in terms of professionalism. This way an identity for the 'international' English language teacher is developed, irrespective of whether the teacher in question is 'native' or 'non-native'. This view of an 'international' English teacher, would, therefore, need to include both professional skills, methodological awareness, a sociocultural and sociopolitical understanding of learners' worlds, as well as knowledge of the English language. Concentrating on these areas would de-focus the 'native speaker' teacher from issues of ethnicity and 'birthright' and refocus them and the profession in terms of globally valued professional abilities.

9. 6 Improving dialogue: academics vs. practitioners

I move now to explore the implications of the final findings of the thesis with regard to the relationships between practitioners, that is, teachers teaching English as a second or foreign language in classrooms and academics, that is theoreticians writing about the teaching of English as a second or foreign language and the associated issues.

9. 6. 1 Developing an open dialogue with academics

The confusing ambivalence the teachers in this study demonstrated towards academia, literature and their own experiential knowledge may well begin to be resolved if many of the steps outlined in the previous sections are taken. Changes made on training and development courses, as well as raising awareness of issues of ownership, appropriate methodology and English as an international language with employers and academic managers, may fruitfully contribute to initiating a more harmonious relationship between

English language teachers and those writing about English language teaching. This would be especially effective if undertaken from the outset by means of introducing teachers to academic papers. Baxter, investigating initial ‘native speaker’ training courses, illustrates this well as she found: ‘There remain, however, some problems with the positioning of theory and practice on courses’ (op.cit.: 157) and states that there appears a view on a ‘native speaker’ ELT training programme:

That it is acceptable to work without a theoretical basis, without knowing from where practices originate. It suggests that a surface level of practice can be achieved by looking only at that surface, without considering how that surface image is produced. Secondly, it establishes a relationship between theory and practice which separates one from the other and privileges practice within a discourse of classroom procedure (ibid.: 157).

Therefore, it seems crucial that from the outset on their teacher training courses, teachers begin to investigate how practice relates to academic theory and vice-versa, through discussion and reading. As well, some focus on discourse in power struggles may help the teachers to better appreciate their own positioning through discourse with regard to both ‘non-native speaker’ teachers and academia. This may well lead to the overt raising and problematising of the theory vs. practice dichotomy on training and development courses, which seems vital if any proper dialogue is to be instigated.

9. 6. 2 Codifying teacher knowledge: redefining the role

The study revealed the uncomfortable feelings of inadequacy ‘native speaker’ teachers appear to harbour when confronted with the codified knowledge of academics. In the previous sections I have put forward some ideas for addressing this uneasy relationship as teachers move through their careers. On the other hand, as has been noted in Chapter 2, there are already pleas by academics for a reorientation of the ELT profession with regard to how knowledge is gained and what knowledge is validated in the world of EFL and also pleas to locate EFL teachers more centrally in any understanding of teacher knowledge. For example, Richards (1990b) states that what is missing from knowledge about teaching and learning is the ‘voices’ of teachers themselves. Kumaravadivelu also calls for a redefinition of the teachers’ role and a redistribution of knowledge. He argues that it is

necessary to ‘rupture the reified role relationship between theorists and practitioners by enabling teachers to construct their own theory of practice’ (2001: 537). Similar sentiments are expressed by, for example, Kumaravadivelu (1994), Richards (2001), and Widdowson (1990). Clarke (1994) also champions teachers’ experiential knowledge, exhorting teachers to codify their knowledge and take a step on the ladder towards integration, becoming central to the field of creating and recounting knowledge. Cochran-Smith and Lytle, too, complain that:

Limiting the official knowledge base for teaching to what academics have chosen to study and write about has contributed to a number of problems, including discontinuity between what is taught in universities and what is taught in classrooms, teachers’ ambivalence about the claims of academic research, and a general lack of information about classroom life from a truly emic perspective (1990:2).

These authors propose that teacher research has the potential to provide this perspective and suggest a number of reforms, including a re-evaluation of the hierarchical power relationships that are characteristic of educational institutions.

However, despite such pleas, there are very few examples of this happening in real life, with one academic in fact claiming that it is the politically correct stance prevalent throughout ELT that has resulted in ‘academic research as being in a hegemonic relationship with practitioner knowledge’ (Waters 2007: 355).

Fortunately, an illustration of how a more equitable relationship might be achieved comes from Sharkey and Johnson (2003). In the introduction to their rare study which attempts to bridge the gap between what is viewed currently as the ‘legitimate’ knowledge in the field and the knowledge of practitioners, the authors say: ‘[this volume] is a stunning example of just how complicated, dynamic, and dialogic the relationship is between the theory and research that make up our disciplinary knowledge and the lived, experiential knowledge that TESOL professionals accumulate as L2 users, learners, teachers, and researchers’ (op.cit.: 1). Joint participation in such works is however, as Johnson and Sharkey make clear, difficult to come by and such volumes are difficult to publish. Such a venture needs genuine and sustained commitment on the part of both academics and teachers.

Teachers though, in my opinion, cannot continue to bemoan their existence as marginalised in front of academics if they are not willing to ‘step up to the bat’ and start to

work with academics and transcribe their own experiences into codified knowledge through collaborative efforts such as those of Sharkey and Johnson (op.cit.). It seems, as well, that teachers cannot become contributors to EFL in a more substantial manner if they are denied or continue to deny themselves access to the ‘capital’ of the ideas held by the currently dominant community.

Thus, despite the aforementioned academic requests for integration and dialogue between the two parties, it is still uncommon for joint research projects, papers, presentations between academics and practitioners to be undertaken in the field of EFL. However, whilst this deficiency is apparently openly recognised by some more enlightened academics, no real attempt at any meaningful dialogue appears to take place because it apparently does not best serve the interests of the higher status wider EFL academic community. As Clarke (op.cit.) notes there is some considerable gap between the rhetoric and the practice. Further investigation might, therefore, establish whether EFL/Applied Linguistics academics believe that their work indeed serves as relevant to the millions of practitioners teaching English around the world, or whether these two endeavours in English language education world wide should be seen separately.

9.7 The ‘native speaker’ teacher in wider society

I move now from the specific implications of the findings to the relevance of this study of the professional identity of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher in wider society. In the following statement Seidlhofer alludes to one of the queries I began this thesis with. She writes: ‘The question is whether ways of thinking about English have kept pace with the rapid development in the functions of the language, whether concepts in people’s heads have changed as the role of English in the world has changed’ (2002b: 12). This study, however, did not start by attempting to uncover such a concept in lay persons’ heads but more particularly whether ‘native speaker’ English teachers’ attitudes to the new role of English in the world had changed and to discover how these teachers viewed their professional identity in light of such developments. In fact, as stated previously I believe the study has gone some way towards providing an understanding of the teachers’ views, concerns and attitudes towards this ‘rapid development in the functions of the language’ (ibid.: 12) and about their current identity constructs.

First of all, I believe it is evident that the 'native speaker' teacher is able to conceptualise the idea of global communication in English and has some awareness that the role of English in the world is changing. However, on the ground in the English teaching classrooms and institutions, the reality of 'native speaker' EFL teacher professional dominance appears, to date, little changed in the data collected from this group of teachers. I believe it has been indicated, too, that the 'gold standard' of the 'native speaker' EFL teacher's pronunciation, methodological models and educational ethos has not yet been abandoned, or in fact even questioned in the real world of the 'native speaker' ELT practitioner. As Murray states pertinently: 'It can seem paradoxical indeed that although the role of English in global communication is generally acknowledged, teacher and learners alike still have trouble accepting any kind of English other than the native speaker model' (2003: 14).

Thus, while there appears to be some form of acknowledgement of the new role of English, it is difficult to see how teachers' concepts can truly change within such professional reality such as this. Therefore, taking a wider view of the teachers' societal background, what perhaps appears to be more important is, indeed, the answer to Seidlhofer's broader question about how far concepts of thinking about English in 'people's' heads (as opposed to 'teachers' heads') have changed, given the crucial role societal experience plays in the moulding of teachers. Indeed, because teachers are first and foremost part of a wider community their attitudes must inevitably be linked with those of the general populace, especially when the issues in question are so much related to world-wide occurrences. As Halldorsdottir notes: 'Teachers are active professionals whose views of teaching and learning have been shaped largely by their experiences of life and education' (2004: 8-9).

In societal terms, therefore, what needs to be acknowledged is not only this changing role of the functions of the English language but a realisation that new alliances are challenging old certainties and the list of changes the new millennium has brought and is bringing is endless. These changes are occurring in a variety of contexts, very often foregrounding questions of identity, both individual and social. For example, the acceleration of migration of labour has given us many examples of diverse communities and cultures living and working together in big cities, as well modern medical advances have shaken traditional concepts of 'identity' with cloning and IVF treatment, and in

virtual space exchanging information by e-mail or text no longer constrains identities or needs them to be based on the traditional factors of visible signs of gender, age or race. Virtual space also allows multiple, diverse, conflicting, even duplicitous identities to be forged by people as they wish. What is more, in our times it is increasingly possible for many to buy an identity. We are able to create an identity through what we purchase. At the same time, lack of resources may constrain us from having the identity we would like to have and others may acquire. In fact Miller argues that consumption is not merely an act of buying goods, it is now ‘a fundamental process by which we can create identity’ (1997: 19). Moreover, and I believe importantly for this study, there has been a democratisation of knowledge and the sources of knowledge are changing. The ‘expert’ is no longer always the ‘expert’. ‘Expert’ knowledge of medicine, of bomb-making, of law, for example, can be obtained on-line, scrolling down various web-sites.

Thus, the ‘native speaker’ teacher teaches a ‘changing’ English in a wider society, where old traditional identities and their accepted markers such as class, age, gender, and place are seen to be decomposing. Traditional concepts are falling away, brought about not only by the globalisation of economics and migration but by new technologies, medical innovations and communication systems. Affluent learners may buy an English speaker identity. Nothing now seems sure apart from uncertainty and while identity has always been fluid, with current constructions of past identities simply imagined to provide some sense of security, the overwhelming speed, significance and complexity of change on so many fronts in the new millennium has the potential to create a much more complicated maze of conflicting and competing identities. It is therefore not just that ‘the role of English has changed’ (Seidlhofer op.cit.: 12) but that many other concepts of identity are subject to change and the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher within wider society is fully implicated in these, too.

9. 8 Implications of changing identities for wider society

So many widespread, and in many cases revolutionary changes, have the power to transform people’s lives. There is the possibility, however, that such changes create an increasing growth of uncertainty about who we are and consequently the traditional factors which compose identity can no longer be trusted as true. Created scientifically or

technologically, or an identity purchased 'off-the-peg', or acquired by relocating, it could be said that we do not always know where we are, or who we are, or who others are. Kidd views this uncertainty with pessimism:

There are no more absolutes- no more definite standards. This is the case, not just for morality but also for the knowledge we have of the world around us. There are too many choices on offer, all claiming to be the 'real' version of the 'truth'. Religion, politics, the sciences and so on all claim special access to the truth, but how can we tell which is correct? There is now a plurality of sources of identity. There is an individual search for meaning, and life-style has become a matter of choice. Ultimately, uncertainty, confusion and plurality will be all that is left (op cit: 92).

In an equally depressing manner Kellner characterises current identities as: 'accelerated, extended, unstable, disintegrated, fragile, superficial, illusory' (1992: 93). However, throwing a more positive light on this Giddens (1991) has suggested that identities are becoming increasingly freer, ambiguous and plural and that while the questioning of boundaries is both disorientating and liberating and may lead to increased anxiety and conflict, it could lead to increased tolerance. This same author agrees, though, that our times are characterised by the feeling of uncertainty about our sense of self and suggests that our sense of place was much more fixed and localised in previous decades. However, again optimistically, he suggests that although the global affects our intimate day-to-day lives and our self identity, it equally enables us to think about other cultures and to locate ourselves in a much wider locale.

It seems, therefore, that the previous rigid distinctions of what constitutes identity are becoming blurred in the wider world and how we conceive of the communities we belong to is changing and becoming more confused. Our concepts of identity, however, seem still to be based on traditional ideas and it appears that we have not psychologically, as Seidelhofer (op. cit.) put it 'caught up' with the changes globalisation has spawned. There remains a very human desire for certainty and security. This seems to indicate that generally, in wider globalising societies, our times might well be characterised by a greater tension between the reality of fast developing change and our psychological need for continuity.

Thus, if the changes brought about by globalisation are seen to have implications for wider society in terms of creating uncertainty and tension about 'identity', it stands to

reason that this same tension may well be seen in the professional lives of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher as they, in their professional turn, are affected by millennial change. Indeed, when looking at the structuring of identity, Brison states that the self is both dependent and autonomous and ‘formed in relation to others and sustained in a social context’ (2002: 41).

9. 9 Conclusion

Establishing professional identity is a task, therefore, which involves both the personal and the social world of the individual EFL teacher. In this final chapter, against the background of changes occurring in wider society, I have, therefore, attempted to outline the implications of the findings of this thesis with regards to the ‘native speaker’ teachers’ career paths and locate these within this wider world. Furthermore, in terms of their professional identity I have suggested that teacher training, teacher development, teacher trainers and educators, Directors of Studies, mentor teachers, academics, their work and employing institutions are all aligned in maintaining a chronological and wide-spread influence over the ‘native speaker’ teacher’s career and are also key to developing the self-constructs of the teacher. It is my view, thus, that in order to develop more internationally appropriate and realistic English language teachers for the globalising world of the second millennium, the people occupying such roles as I have listed, the institutions involved and the teacher education programmes provided, need to re-evaluate or be re-evaluated in terms of their perspectives of the ‘native speaker’ EFL teacher. Moreover, this needs to be done however difficult it may prove to be psychologically. Indeed it seems evident that if ‘native speaker’ teachers are to develop their views of English language teaching beyond those they appear to evidence in this study, and perhaps begin to approximate more the trajectory of Rachel, the one teacher in the group who seemed willing to embrace the ‘rapid developments’ of English, they must be supported in this change by the people, programmes and institutions surrounding and moulding them.

Unfortunately, at present there appears to be an uneasy and apparently unproductive rapport between ‘native speaker’ teachers and ‘non-native speaker’ teachers, and between ‘native speaker’ teachers and ELT academics. At this point in time, too, it seems that the group of ‘native speaker’ teachers in this study mainly demonstrated an unwillingness to

engage with ideas for change in the field of English language teaching as English occupies a new international role. In this apparent unwillingness of ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers to remain open to other ways of doing things, rather than want to begin to understand the position English now inhabits through a dialogue with academics in their field and see EFL as a proper global profession, in which all English language teachers have a role to play, I am reminded of Leonidas, a village school-teacher in a novel by Louis de Bernieres. When speaking of Leonidas, de Bernieres illustrates how our ‘insignificant’ selves are obsessed with a belief in our own righteous ways of doing and warns of the danger:

‘obsessed by the loss of Kosovo, and the Greeks who will always be obsessed by the fall of Byzantium. Leonidas was one of these, and he was very far from alone. He was possessed by beautiful visions of Constantinople restored to its place as capital of the Greek world, and like all who have such beautiful visions, his were predicated on the absolute belief that his own people and his own religion and his own way of life were superior to others and should therefore have their way. Such people like those as insignificant as Leonidas, are the motor of history, which is finally nothing but a sorry edifice constructed from hacked flesh in the name of great ideas’ (de Bernieres 2005: 131)

Leonidas lived in the small, isolated village of Telemossos, in south-western Anatolia, teaching only boys. There were no girls in class, no internet, multinational companies, Blackberries, MP3 players, cloning laboratories, plasma TVs or even a bus. To a certain extent this teacher had an excuse. I believe the ‘native speaker’ EFL teachers in this study do not. They no longer live in small, isolated villages and it is time to see the changes.

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APPENDICES