

**The Cultural Perspective of Native teachers of English in  
Multicultural Classrooms:  
An In-depth Study of the Classroom of Private Schools of  
Dubai**

المنظور الثقافي للمدرسين الانجليز ذوي الصفوف متعددة الثقافات: دراسة  
مفصلة على فصول المدارس الخاصة في دبي

by

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## **Abstract**

The following study has been conducted to assess the cultural impact in the pedagogical context. The aimed of the study, therefore, is concerned with conducting an in-depth analysis about the perspective that the native English teachers have as far as the cultural aspects of teaching a multi-cultural classroom within the UAE. The rational for the study has been explained through the identification of problems arising on account of the differences in cultural values and systems as observed among the students and the teachers. Such differences lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings, consequently affecting the quality of education adversely. The aim of the study has been attained through the descriptive analysis of the data which has been collected from the teacher by means of face-to-face in-depth interviews and observations of the classroom sessions. Open ended semi-structured questions have been used for the interview, and for the lesson observation, the researcher had adopted a passive approach. A total of 10 teachers employed within private schools of Dubai have participated in the study, and 20 classes were observed across 4 schools.

The analysis of the data has revealed that unawareness of the various cultures, differences in the knowledge levels of the students, the attitudes of the parents, and the difference in independence levels of the multicultural students presents obstacles for the native teachers. In addition, the culture of the teachers contributes to difficulties in the way that the students respond in class and how receptive they are to the lessons. In an attempt to resolve such issues, the native teacher have adopted practices like modification of their teaching approach to suit the cultural demands, and making efforts to discuss about the global issues. However, such efforts are not enough to ensure that the quality of education meet the global standards, and hence recommendations for its improvement have been made. The most prominent recommendation includes proving appropriate training to the teachers so that their intercultural competence levels can be enhanced. Further, based on the limitations of the study, recommendation for the future direction of study on this topic have been made.

## الملخص

تركز هذه الدراسة على تقييم الأثر الثقافي في السياق التربوي. لذلك ، فهي تهدف الى تحليل تفصيلي لمنظور معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الأصليين فيما يتعلق بالجوانب الثقافية لتدريس فصل دراسي متعدد الثقافات داخل دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. لقد تم تقديم شرح محايد قدر المستطاع للدراسة من خلال تحديد المشكلات الناشئة بسبب الاختلافات في القيم والنظم الثقافية التي تم ملاحظتها بين الطلاب والمعلمين. حيث تؤدي هذه الاختلافات إلى سوء الفهم الذي يؤثر سلبًا على جودة التعليم. وقد تم تحقيق الهدف من الدراسة من خلال التحليل الوصفي للبيانات التي تم جمعها من المعلمين عن طريق المقابلات الشخصية والملاحظات التفصيلية لجلسات الفصل الدراسي. حيث تم رصد الدروس التي شارك فيها، 10 مدرسين من أصحاب اللغة والذين يعملون في المدارس الخاصة بدبي ، كما تم رصد ملاحظات 20 درسًا في 4 مدارسهم.

لقد كشف تحليل البيانات أن عدم معرفة الثقافات المختلفة ، والاختلاف في مستويات استقلالية الطلاب متعددي الثقافات يمثل عقبات أمام المعلمين الأصليين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، فقد كشفت البيانات في كيفية مساهمة ثقافة المعلمين ودورها في استجابة الطلاب في الفصل ومدى تقبلهم للدروس. حيث لوحظ تبني المعلم الأصلي لاجراءات احترازية مثل تعديل نهج التدريس لتناسب المطالب الثقافية ، وبذل جهود لمناقشة القضايا العالمية. ومع ذلك ، فإن هذه الجهود لا تكفي لضمان تلبية جودة التعليم للمعايير العالمية ، وبالتالي فقد تم تقديم توصيات لتحسينه، حيث تتضمن التوصية الأبرز توفير التدريب المناسب للمعلمين بحيث يمكن تحسين مستويات الكفاءة بين الثقافات لديهم.

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### List of Definition and/or Abbreviations

Sl. No.	Term	Meaning
1	Cognitive Dissonance	Cognitive dissonance occurs when a person has to deal with two opposing or contradictory beliefs, values, or ideas.
2	Cultural Adaptation	Cultural adaptation refers to the process wherein people change themselves as per the cultural norms, values, and beliefs of a foreign country.
3	Cultural Adjustment	Cultural adjustment refers to the set of changes that are adopted by an individual in order to adapt to a foreign culture.
4	English as a Lingua Franca	This implies the circumstance where that the English language is used as the common means for communication by people that have different primary languages.
5	English as International Language	This indicates that the English language is used as an official language in countries where people use various different languages for communication
6	Intercultural competence	Intercultural competence refers to the skill, cognitive and behavioural, that enables an individual to act in a manner that is considered to be culturally appropriate.
7	L1	A person's first language, that is, their native language.
8	L2	A person's second language, that is, a language in which the individual is familiar with in addition to the native one.

9	Native English-Speaking Teacher (NEST)	Native English-Speaking Teacher refers to the teachers that speak English as their first and primary language.
10	Non- Native English-Speaking Teacher (NNEST)	Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers refers to the English language teachers who speak English as a foreign or second language.
11	Pedagogy	Pedagogy refer to the study of teaching within the field of education.
12	Super-diversity	Super-diversity refers to the recurring patterns of demographic changes that arise on account of globalisation which influences the social culture of a country.
13	World Englishes	World Englishes includes all the various different types of English that is spoken in different countries across the globe

## **1.0 Introduction**

The past decade has seen a rapid increase in the number of native teachers of English being recruited in nurseries, schools, and universities to teach English, across the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Gillian Duncan 2018). In addition, on account of globalisation, people in the UAE have a wide range of cultural backgrounds (O'Neill 2017). This has widened the gap with respect to the culture between the teachers and the students in the educational institutions of the nation. This is in an unfavourable outcome since it implies that there is a possibility that the teachers may face difficulties in teaching a culturally diverse population. The current study has, therefore, explored the matter of how native teachers of English are perceived by their students from an intercultural outlook within the context of the UAE.

This chapter highlights some current debates produced by researches and educators in the field of pedagogy and its relevance in the current study. It also defines aspects that associate language with culture, humour, and ethnography. Most important of all, this section covers a statement of the problem identified with respect to the native teachers of English within the multicultural classrooms in the UAE, and the means to resolve such issues as it has been addresses in the current study.

### **1.1 The Researcher's Educational Background**

The researcher has been privileged in having life experience of bilingual education since kindergarten. Even though the researcher had non- native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) from different backgrounds (Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs, as well as local Emiratis during all her school years in both private and the government schools, the researcher started to receive private conversational lessons, mainly via Skype, soon after high school (2003-2013). The researcher also had native British tutors during that time from different language institutes, including the British council, Eton Institute, and Berlitz, mostly speaking British English and discussing the British culture, history, and lifestyle. Thus, the researcher developed a strong passion for the language and was curious to meet native British speakers to learn more about their culture from the age of 18. The researcher also had native British teachers at Dubai Women's College for three years 2003-2006.

Thus, over the years of the lush intercultural educational environment that the researcher grew up in, the researcher became an anglophile who never stopped learning and practising the conversational skills with British native speakers (NS) since 2006.

The researcher also used well known social media platforms like the English Club website between the years 2006 to 2010, and has become friends with several British people who helped to practice the conversational skills with ever since. Moreover, the researcher has recently joined Cambly (a professional video chat software to teach and learn English) in 2018 as a student, with over 200 hours of practising the language with British natives. Thus, the researcher believes to have humbly understood some of the similarities and differences of the Arab and British cultures. Therefore, the researcher believes that a rich knowledge of how professional/non-professional/amateur native English teachers, communicate with non-native learners was developed. The researcher trusts that embarking on this exciting educational journey intuitively, enabled the researcher to appreciate the intricate interconnection that connects language and culture, as the impression that native speakers (NSs) give to the learners from other cultures.

One example of the cultural differences is when Westerns/NESTs teachers ask students to drop titles like Mr./Ms./Mrs./Sir/Dr./Prof., to call them by their names instead. In that instance, Asian students can find that request to be surprising, even shocking, if it was their first experience to have Westerns/NESTs, the reason being in that most Asian cultures usually set high standards to people in certain professions like teacher and doctors. They believe that such occupations are nobler than others, where the characters working in these jobs are role models in their countries and dropping titles should not be compromised, particularly amongst the youth.

Another example that provoked this research is when the researcher enrolled in the Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) course and had to observe (NESTs) at Zayed University in 2015, as part for the practical side of learning. The researcher had noticed that one of the females (NESTs) made inappropriate references to the American teenage singer “Justine Bieber” to her female Bedouin students (Bedouin refers to the nomadic Arabs). In that same class, a student left the classroom to come back with an ice-cream cone that the researcher started to eat during the lecture. Interestingly enough, that teacher seemed not to mind that culturally inappropriate attitude, while in another context where the teacher might be an Arab, Chinese or Indian, for example, the same student would more respectful.

On a separated incident, one of the CELTA trainers welcomed us in a typically English way by saying: “it is not going to be the best class that you will ever attend, but I always try my best”. It can be argued that (CELTA) trainees from different backgrounds might not appreciate that teacher’s British display of English modesty, and could have been misinterpreted as ‘lack of confidence’.

Similar incidents contributed to raising the researcher’s awareness of the importance of drawing the attention of English learners to be mindful of these cultural expressions. Whenever, I ask a student to change their place in the classroom, for example, by saying: “Do you want to move to this chair?” and receive the strong response “no”. I seize the chance to explain that question, for example, is a polite and indirect way to request someone to do something, rather than inquiring their preference. I then clarify how the general statement “no” can be powerful and rude in most times, and that NSs sometimes prefer using other indirect expressions to mean ‘no’.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

English is gaining popularity in several spheres and it has been recognised as the official language, or one of them in several countries. Moreover, in the era of globalisation, where the movement of people across national borders has become common, it is essential to have a neutral language for communication purposes. The language of choice under such circumstances have been English for various people (Medgyes 1992, Widdowson 1994, Cook 1999, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 2001, Holliday et al. 2015, Agudo 2017). Therefore, in order to maintain favourable relationships with people of various different cultures, it has become essential to learn the English language.

The nature of teaching English is a complex matter in itself, being a flexible language that embraces new concepts, and also in abandoning and having different shades of meanings of the same word based on the dialect. In British English, for example, the word ‘bonnet’ refers to the front part of the car that covers the engine, whereas Americans refer to it as ‘hood’. This indicates that the meaning and the use of words differ based on which part of the world where you are located. This may increase the difficulty associated with teaching the language, as the student may find it confusing to learn about the different meanings or comprehend the dialect of the native English teachers, especially if they had been familiar with a different accent previously.

Moreover, culture has a big role in impacting education in many respects. One of the significant issues from the researcher's point of view is how native teachers of English (NESTs) perceive the cultural impression of their students. The second issue is (NESTs) ability to handle the cultural aspects of teaching English to students who belong to various cultural backgrounds.

Such issues, along with the multicentricity of the English language, makes the process of teaching, a herculean task. However, such tasks ought to be executed with finesse so that the newer generation of people has the tools to communicate with people from diverse cultures using a neutral language. Since certain hurdles that have a detrimental impact on the learning process have been identified, it is essential that such obstacles are removed. The difference in culture between the students and the teachers are widened, especially because it is common in the UAE to employ white skinned Europeans, particularly from Britain, in order to teach the English language (Gillian Duncan 2018). Since the students in the private schools of Dubai have a wide range of cultural backgrounds, it becomes a challenge for the native English teachers to communicate with them.

Several hurdles are expected to be present that undermine the ability of the teacher to communicate to the entire class. Moreover, the perspective that the native English teachers have, on account of their experience in teaching multicultural students, is like to differ from that of others. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth investigation to assess the cultural perspective of teaching that the native English teachers have so far as a multicultural classroom is concerned. In addition, the UAE, particularly the city Dubai has been chosen since it has a complex and diverse culture (O'Neill 2017). In other words, the cultural context has been investigated from the perspective of the native English teachers as observed within the multicultural classroom of the private schools in Dubai.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is concerned with analysing the perspective that the native English teachers may have in term of the existence of varying cultural aspects within a multicultural classroom. In other words, the researcher has chosen the pedagogical perspective in order to gain insights about the perspective that people may have with respect to the existence of multiple cultures. Precisely, the scope of the study is limited to the point of view of the teachers. The existence of multiple cultures is increasingly becoming a common phenomenon as globalisation has made it convenient for people to move beyond the national borders. The existence of varying cultures has also been

observed in the classrooms, particularly within education institutions that have made efforts to follow the global standards. The researcher has, therefore, emphasised on the schools within the UAE, particularly Dubai, in order to assess the standpoint that the native English teachers may have and its effect on teaching within a multicultural classroom.

The international schools in Dubai have adopted a British Curriculum so that the students can learn the English language that is on par with the global standards, and such educational institutions have been taken into consideration for conducting this study. Moreover, this study has concentrated on the private schools of Dubai, since such organisations have been prompting in catering to the international community and in recognising the growing importance of English as a language. Furthermore, in addition to determining the perspective of the teachers, the researchers have also made efforts to analyse the impact that the current teaching practices as employed within the private schools of Dubai have on the students. In addition, the efforts that the teachers have made for connecting with the students have also been investigated in this study. The loopholes as identified in the study have been highlighted with the intention of provoking a prudent awareness of the cultural practices in multicultural classrooms in Dubai.

#### **1.4 Current Situation in the UAE**

The UAE has a skyrocketing ambition in racing with industrial countries and become amongst the pioneering countries in the world by 2021, where the concept of university foundation year that offers remedial English courses would no longer exist. The vision also aims at offering world-class education, as it is to be the main focus of the UAE National Agenda and implement the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), as well as ensure a high quality of teachers. (UAE Vision 2021.2018).

In a Technology, Entertainment, Design's, (TED) Dubai affiliate, TEDxDubai, a native teacher of English, Abu Wardeh, who has been teaching in the Gulf for 30 years revealed how English is invading the World and compromising the cultures including Arabic (Abbas Al Lawati 2011). The researcher also confessed that the trends towards using English are particularly worrying in the UAE, where locals speak English at home. The researcher warned that the UAE could be one generation away from losing their language. Abu Wardeh had also pointed out the unfortunate outcome of some parents who lack good command of English, and yet insist on speaking English with their children, this results in weak Arabic and no real command of English. The researcher

finally drew the attention to Dubai and its “feeble” efforts towards reinforcing Arabic in homes attributing it to the unique demography the forms the city.

The expansion in recruiting English language teachers from Anglophone countries started in the UAE in 2008 (Van den Hoven, Melanie 2017). The past decade has seen rapid growth in the (UAE) in the number of American, British, and Australian schools and nurseries, and the favouritism of ‘white-skinned English teachers of European origins’ appeared in one of the advertisements of nurseries recently (Gillian Duncan 2018). The reason being in the high awareness of the importance of learning English, throughout the Gulf region and not only limited to the UAE (Malallah 2000). Moreover, some private schools and universities in the UAE have lately added ‘American’, ‘British’, or ‘Australian’ to their names to promote and attract native English teachers for recruiting purposes, but how is the cultural facet being manifested in all of this?

The continuing concern in countries where English is the official language of education, trade, health, and tourism led researchers to investigate how (NESTs) are culturally perceived in multicultural classrooms (Agudo 2017, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 2001, Cook 1999, Holliday et al. 2015, Medgyes 1992, Widdowson 1994). Therefore, the researcher detected the need to conduct a study in the UAE where English has become a second language, as well as the primary language of almost all types of official communication, from a cultural paradigm.

As for the English teaching mode that dominates the educational practices in the UAE, the communicative method seemed to have penetrated the teaching pedagogy across the Gulf countries in language teaching (Fussell 2011). Moreover, due to the super-diversity environment in the UAE, there has been a distinct relationship with English that was created from the multi-ethnic citizens (Van den Hoven, Melanie 2017). Van den Hoven also stated that the English used in the UAE is moulded from the general conversational practices that created a unique standardised pattern. Likewise, in a previous study of her, the researcher described the English used in the UAE as being non-academic, yet it is a clear and meaningful mode of exchanging information (Van den Hoven, M. 2014).

## **1.5 Pedagogy**

The purpose of this study is to highlight the aspect of teaching in a multi-cultural context, thereby shedding some light on the process of teaching and its implications. In this context, it is imperative

to discuss the concept of Pedagogy. It can be defined as the study of teaching. It covers the activities, as well as the theories and frameworks associated with teaching. Thus, it is both the act and the discourse of teaching. It can connect teaching as a self-contained act with various external factors like culture and social constructs. Since pedagogy involves both the theory and practices of teaching, it gives rise to the concept of teacher training (Murphy, Hall & Soler 2008). It has been further highlighted that teaching can be one of the most complex professions, which involves continuous reconciliation and negotiation of opposing worldviews. Teaching can have different forms, each of which responds to different developmental demands. The role of a teacher has been described as multidisciplinary and can have different perceived responsibilities and roles, based on the socio-cultural context. From the context of Pedagogy, the professional knowledge of teaching along with the teaching practices are closely associated with the theoretical framework of socio-political aspects and human development (Anderson 2009). Thus, it can be stated that pedagogy or the study of teaching is largely influenced by the external social aspects of a nation. As mentioned earlier, the roles and responsibilities of a teacher can vary significantly based on these external factors, therefore the experience of teaching and the expectations and the perceived role of a teacher can vary significantly from one country to another, owing to cultural difference.

In context of this study, it can be stated that understanding the effectiveness of teaching process requires a clear idea of the impact of the socio-cultural aspects of the UAE. The native English teaching in the UAE is likely to be exposed to a culture which is significantly different from that of their own home country. This, as a result, reinforces the necessity and importance of teaching training, which is aligned to the cultural context of the nation. In the above paragraph, it has been emphatically mentioned that the process of teaching and the perceived role of a teacher can vary significantly across nations. Therefore, the native English teachers in the UAE are likely to face a cultural shock when it comes to the pedagogical practices. The concept of culturally relevant pedagogy can be discussed in this situation. Culturally, relevant pedagogy highlights the teaching practices and underlying theories that are sustaining in a particular culture (Ladson-Billings 2014). Since the culture of a nation largely determines the values and beliefs of its people, it is only natural that the teaching processes should also follow the same construct. Culturally, relevant pedagogy enables the teachers to teach the students in a manner which is appropriate in the domestic culture.

Thus, it is important for educational institutions to have a clear understanding of the cultural interaction between the teacher and the students. In case of this study, the interaction between the native English teachers with the students of a multi-cultural classroom have been highlighted. The educational institutions in the UAE need to ensure that the teachers are properly trained to teach the students, by adopting culturally relevant teaching methods, which does not contradict with the domestic perceptions and roles of a teacher. In a multi-cultural classroom, the varying cultural presence among the students can bring new challenges for the teachers. Therefore, from the pedagogical perspectives, it can be mentioned that proper training of teachers is required in order to avoid cultural conflict in the classrooms, thereby, facilitating seamless learning process.

Pedagogy allows organisations and institutions to identify the developmental needs in the current economic scenario. The underling process of teaching and the choice of academic context taught to the students, are often closely associated with the economic context of a region. The global economic environment is highly dynamic in nature, which demands educational programs to be flexible as well (Pegg, et al. 2012). The education provided to the students from both academic and socio-cultural aspects should prepare them to effectively develop a suitable professional career. Thus, it can be stated that educational institutions should adopt the right teaching methods and curriculum, which provides academic value, as well as cultural alignment.

The learning experience of the children is also influenced by their social environment, especially the familial interaction at home. Based on constructivist pedagogical theory, an individual develops one's own understanding, based on the interaction between their existing knowledge, beliefs and ideas, and the new information and experience that they are exposed to (Richardson 2003). In the context of a multi-cultural classroom, overseen by a native English teacher, there can be prominent chances of such interactions, where the difference between the existing knowledge of the children about the social culture, and what they are being taught or exposed to, is strikingly different. Almost every child is likely to bear some degree of cultural and social knowledge that determines their behaviour, values and beliefs. However, while studying in a multi-cultural environment, they are likely to be exposed to different other cultures, both from the native English teachers and other children in the classroom. Therefore, it is essential for the educational institutions to ensure that the teaching methods and the curriculum do not create any direct conflict with the existing social knowledge, values and beliefs. Moreover, the teachers should be able to

create a harmonious learning environment in the classrooms, so that there is no culture related conflict or misunderstanding among the students.

Thus, it can be stated from pedagogical perspectives that educational institutions should have a clear understanding of the nuances of teaching and its cultural implications on the students and the teachers alike. Therefore, this study should shed some light on the cultural aspects of teaching and how the behavioural aspects of the teachers and the students are influenced.

### **1.6 Language and Culture**

In an ever more diverse and perplexing world that is continuously changing, English, too, has evolved dramatically in modern times and gave birth to “World Englishes” (Agudo 2017). It seems to be an undeniable fact that English has become the most influential language that does not only belong to its (NSs) but also its users and speakers (Widdowson 1994). Medgyes argued that with the immersing ideas of “paradigms of World Englishes”, “English as an International Language” and “English as a Lingua Franca”, the definition of nativeness paradigm has to be scrutinized. In a news article to the BBC, professor Jennifer Jenkins from the University of Southampton who is specialized in ‘Global Englishes’, stated that NSs get challenged to explain themselves clearly in a ‘lingua franca situation’ as opposed to the non-natives (NNs) of various cultures who are communicating within the same setting with no similar challenges (Lennox Morrison 2016). The author reasoned that the plain and straightforward language that NNSs usually use puts them at the advantage of delivering the point home more efficiently as opposed to NSs with their flowery language and slang words. In the same article, Dale Coulter, who is the head of English language course, stated that monolingual NSs of English seem to be unaware of how to use English internationally. Still, native instructors sweep over the most prominent universities (both public and private) in countries like the UAE where the vision of its government is to offer “an American-type liberal arts education” (Crabtree 2007 p.577).

All spoken languages conceive elements of social values and prestige that are often overlooked by language analysts, due to lack of documentation and the amount of attention they require (Buschfeld et al. 2018a). English learners, the author's state, tend to be motivated by social, cultural, as well as economic drives, yet it is an appropriate language to everyone these days, due to its overlapping nature amongst cultures. The phenomenon of Englishisation has been widely discussed in the literature (Dearden 2014, Earls 2014, Gill & Kirkpatrick 2012). There is a growing

level of fear that the obsession of using English as the formal way to communicate in the English-medium countries would lead to demolishing their local heritage (Van den Hoven, Melanie 2017). One of the English threats on Arabic, the author debates, is obliterating its culture and official religion, which language teachers ought to be aware of. Its dominance is justified as a matter of financial survival and globalisation (Van der Walt 2013). Linguistic imperialism was the focus of the studies conducted in the country (McLaren 2011, Troudi & Jendli 2011), such studies reasoned that English is strongly associated in the Arabic region, including the UAE, with the Western power rather than the users of English (Van den Hoven, Melanie 2017). However, the substantial imbalance of proportion of Emirates to non-Emirates made the high number of private schools in the country inevitable to cater to the international community. Additionally, a study on L2 writing that interviewed Emirati students showed that students felt restricted to write in individual styles and are not allowed to enrich their writings with some aspects of their own culture (Yamchi 2015).

### **1.7 Humour and Language Learning**

Although humour is seen as an interdisciplinary field that covers different specialisms like sociology, psychology and education, it had merely been three decades that Second Language acquisition (SLA) researchers started considering it as a linguistic aspect worth focusing on (Jawhar 2018). Previous studies proved how using humour in classrooms could have a considerable effect on reducing anxiety in language classrooms, maintaining motivation and enhancing understanding, as well as increasing language proficiency through language play (Bell 2017, Reddington 2015, Schmitz 2002, Petraki & Pham Nguyen 2016). Humour and language learning was also approached to examine the learner's sensitivity to make a mistake when expressing opinions, for example (Degoumois et al. 2017). The authors found that encouraging learners to use humour while expressing their opinions lessens the amount of accountability such learners hold after sharing their thoughts with the class.

Although the recent investigation of the relationship between language acquisition and humour witnessed a significant increase in literature, none of the previous works considered using L1 humour as means to test it as a natural practice in the course of learning and teaching interaction (Jawhar 2018). Nevertheless, Jawhar's sociocultural study on Saudi students found a strong

correlation between better classroom interactions, and high and meaningful productions, when L1 humour is being carefully used in language classes. Her paper that focused on using L1 humour as a tool to test interactional classroom competence is claimed to be the first investigation of its kind in the field. The author further points out that L1 humour should be used as a means to facilitate the students' engagement in classroom discussions, rather than being viewed as an end in itself.

Besides, since L2 cultural jokes are less likely to be appreciated by many learners with limited knowledge (Jawhar 2018), the researcher of the current study is curious to observe any attempts by (NESTs) living in the UAE to use them in classrooms. The author believes that the nature of English as a global language that made it inevitable to manifest itself on the cultural level in particular. In other words, a substantial cultural exchange through media platforms from countries native to English is assumed to come as second nature to the millennials. Thus, it would be interesting to observe this element in the current research with UAE citizens. It would also be worth investigating how (NESTs) use humour in classrooms and how much they think their students would understand the L2 humour, and how they also teach L2 culture in classrooms through this tool.

### **1.8 Linguistic Ethnography**

As a concept, ethnography focuses on the understanding of a particular cultural setting within the framework of the social research method through observation and participation in the environment it seeks to describe (Rampton et al. 2004). Rampton and others also believe that social categories like 'female', 'Emirati', 'artist' are not all perceived in the same way and correlate problematically with each other. They stated that languages have the power to reproduce social identities and that studying the interactional discourse can provide many answers that are far from the stereotypical view on them. Correspondingly, they argue that the nature of ethnography is to conduct a thorough investigation thus allowing the researcher to witness the experience of the participants that is usually hard to spot or fathom at its initial stages. Accordingly, the researcher of the current study, being an insider that directly experience how cultural aspects are being created, exchanged, and delivered amongst the next generation of citizens of the UAE, within the context of private schools.

Furthermore, Creese and Copland advised that linguistic ethnographers should use the ethnographic lens to observe the linguistic practices within the contexts they are focusing on (Creese & Copland 2015). This method, they claim, would help in integrating the necessary

elements in the process of discourse analysis, while considering the social world where certain communication features take place. Likewise, Wetherell stressed considering culture, amongst other aspects, to the linguistic ethnography in particular to enrich the discourse analysis of particular contexts (Wetherell 2007). Hence, to reflect on this concept in the current study, the data analysis, would consider different ethnic aspects like the influence of the classroom demography on classroom participation, the relevance of topics and discussions to the UAE, and the intended and unintended cultural impressions that (NESTs) give to their students during the classroom repertoire. The researcher believes that investigating the matter ethnographically would enhance the understanding of the nature of the current generations' attitude towards the Anglophone countries' cultures within the scope of language learning.

## **1.9 Research Aim and Objectives**

### *1.9.1 Research Aim*

In light of the prevalence of multicultural students within a classroom, it has become difficult for the teachers to adopt a teaching approach that can be perceived favourably by all the pupils. The students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and therefore, face difficulties in comprehending the lesson on the English language. In addition, the cultural background of the teacher also affects the way that the lessons are being understood by students. The teachers may also need to make certain changes to the lesson plan or to their approach towards teaching that can be understood by all the students. Therefore, this study has aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis about the perspective that the native teachers have as far as the cultural aspects of teaching a multicultural classroom is concerned.

### *1.9.2 Research Objectives*

In order to attain the aim of the study, as mentioned above, the following specific objectives have been drafted. The objectives have been used a foundation for chapter four.

1. To identify the cultural obstacles that the native English teachers face while teaching in the UAE

The abovementioned objective indicates that this study has attempted to identify the obstacles as faced by the native English teachers in the classroom. The existence of students of multiple cultures presents various hurdles and challenges for the teachers that undermine the quality of teaching.

The identification of obstacles on account of the cultural factors within the classroom setting will help in determining the aspects that have the potential to undermine the quality of teaching in the long-run. Moreover, it would increase the awareness about the current teaching practices and its relevance and effectiveness in the modern era of globalisation.

2. To analyse the way that the culture of the native teachers influences the behaviour of the students.

This objective is intended at providing an insight about the impact that the cultural background of the native teachers have on the behaviour of the students. In other words, the objective is to assess if the teachers have been effective in communicating and connecting with the students. It is essential to determine if the students are able to comprehend the lessons that are being taught so that the effectiveness of classroom sessions can be assessed. Therefore, in order to attain this objective, the cultural impact of the teachers has to be determined.

3. To determine the extent to which the native English teachers adjust certain cultural aspects of their home country to suit the classroom setting within the international schools of Dubai.

This objective is concerned with establishing the changes to various aspects of the culture of the native teachers that have been made. It may be stated that to communicate in an effective manner, the teachers may need to change or modify their practices. Moreover, in order to effectively gauge the circumstances of the current situation, it is essential to gain insights about the efforts that the native teachers have made to suit the multicultural classroom setting. Furthermore, its objective will provide an overview of the current teaching practices and its effectiveness in teaching in a multicultural classroom.

### **1.10 Statement of the Problem**

Cross-cultural interactions in classrooms between the teacher and the students, and also among the students can have a significant role to play in shaping the education system in the UAE. As mentioned earlier, the underlying methods of teaching can have a significant impact on the quality of education. The native English teachers in the UAE belong to the western culture which is significantly different from the Middle Eastern culture. The social customs and communicational practices can have a striking dissimilarity across various cultures. Therefore, the native English

teachers who are likely to be employed in the UAE can face strong cultural shocks, which can lead to cognitive dissonance, thereby, negatively affecting the teaching performance of the teachers (Dongfeng 2012). Therefore, it is essential to find out how the native English teachers working in the UAE are affected by the cultural shock and how they are able to adjust to it. Moreover, the educational institutions that are hiring, native English teachers from other nations should also need to take the necessary measures to ensure that the teachers are well-motivated towards their job roles. Therefore, it is essential to understand how the teachers are being affected by the cultural difference while being employed in their host country.

From the context of cultural difference and culture shock, it can be further stated that in a multi-cultural classroom, the students are also likely to be affected. The communication process involving verbal and non-verbal cues, which are quite different across cultures (Valentine 2004). Therefore, communication between the two individuals from different cultures within a classroom, can prove to be challenging. The native English teachers need to have a clear understanding of all domestic cultural practices and customs, especially in the area of communication. Moreover, in a multi-cultural classroom, there can be students from multiple cultures, which can make it quite difficult for the teachers to communicate with all the students in a seamless manner. Furthermore, the students are also likely to face challenges in the classroom, while interacting with other students, belonging to different cultures. The students belonging to the native cultures may have communicational issues with other students from different culture.

The issue of favouring (NESTs) of English has been a worldwide phenomenon recently, yet (NESTs') abilities to handle multicultural classrooms and appreciate their diversity seem to require further investigation (Holliday 2016), especially with the rise of nationalism (Harari 2018). In other words, feeling the sense of belonging to a particular national community through daily routine and everyday interactions between people and objects is crucial in developing "affective nationalism" for the long-term loyalty for that community (Skey & Antonsich 2017). Sky and Antonsich also stated that thinking habits, language use, and effective practices like playing, partying, and participating in classrooms, emphasize the sense of national identity at different levels, i.e. personal, social and political. The authors also highlight how both trivial and entertaining instances can underpin the collective emotions towards people, objects, places, and countries.

The current study focuses on (NESTs) by assessing their cultural perception that plays a role in moulding the next generation. The study is also intending to pay special attention to the pedagogical practices of classroom interactions between (NESTs) and their students which entails other closely relevant issues like the teachers' adaptations to the "new environment" and their sense of self-awareness as well as its impact on their teaching styles.

#### *1.10.1 Research Questions*

This study has attempted to find the answers to the problems that have been identified in the above section. This indicates that the current study has been based on finding the solution to the problems associated with the cross-cultural communication between the NESTs and the students belonging to varying cultures. More precisely, this study has been focused on analysing and finding the solution to the problem within the context of multicultural classrooms that are present in the private and international schools of Dubai. The problems as identified above, can be countered by findings the answers to the following specific questions.

1. What are the cultural obstacles that the native English teachers face while teaching in the UAE?
2. How does the culture of the native teachers influence the behaviour of the students?
3. To what extent do native English teachers adjust certain cultural aspects of their home country to suit the classroom setting within the international schools of Dubai?

#### **1.11 Significance of the Study**

The study examines (NESTs) from a cultural point of view. It is concerned with the current state of affairs of intercultural classrooms in some private schools in the UAE in terms of how English classes are being painted with the cultural practice of their (NESTs). For example, the use of humour, the suitability of instructions from a cultural perspective, as being an integral part of language teaching and learning.

Henceforth, the researcher believes that measuring the actual teaching practices within the cultural calibre would be necessary to understand how the relationship between language and culture is being manifested in classrooms. The researcher also trusts that the results of this study would provide much-needed insight into the current practices of (NESTs) in this exciting time of the rise

of both globalisation and nationalism. Besides, the researcher hopes that the findings would provoke a prudent awareness of (NESTs) cultural practices in multicultural classrooms.

### **1.12 Structure of the Paper**

This paper has been segregated into six chapters so that the aim of the research can be attained through the development of a logical and structured argument that progresses through the paper. In addition, the segregation of the study in different chapters is also done for the convenience of the readers.

The first chapter, *Introduction*, provides an overview of the topic and explains its importance. The educational background of the researcher has been provided so as to offer a contextual overview of the knowledge and skill-level. Thereafter, the background of the study has been established and scope of the research has been emphasised. The current situation related to pedagogy within the UAE has been covered, and an overview of pedagogy, language and culture, the role of humour in learning a language, and linguistic ethnography has been covered. The brief context about the concepts has helped in establishing the groundwork of this study. In the succeeding section, the research aim and objectives has been summarised so as to provide the readers with an indication about the goal of this study and the means to achieve such a result. This has been followed by the statement of the problem, and the questions have been formed in order to resolve such prevailing issues that are occurring with the multicultural classrooms in the private schools of Dubai.

In the second chapter, *Literature Review*, the framework that has formed the ground work for this study has been established. The concepts that are significant to this study have been elaborated with the intention of developing a conceptual framework. This chapter also covers the theoretical framework which covers the models and approaches that are pertinent to this study. The purpose of establishing a theoretical framework is to represent the way that culture can manifest in language learning and teaching within the sphere of multiculturalism.

The third chapter of this dissertation, which is the *Review of Literature*, can be considered as an expansion of the second chapter. This has been included, since it is necessary to gain the knowledge about the extant literature that exists with respect to the topic. In addition to gaining the knowledge about relevant concepts and theoretical models, it is also crucial to scour through the works of other authors who have previously investigated the topic. This helps in assessing the

scholarly views that already exist and therefore, to determine the similarities and dissimilarities that may have been identified in the current study.

The fourth chapter, *Research Methodology*, is where the various tools, techniques and procedures that were necessary for carrying out the study have been elaborated. The conventions of conducting a research has been explained and based on the specific requirements of the current study, the approach, choice of tools and technique have been made. This section highlights the processes that have been employed to identify, gather, and analyse the data in order to establish the perspectives that the native English teachers may have, in terms of the existence of varying cultural aspects within a multicultural classroom. Furthermore, the ethical considerations and potential limitations of this study have also been elaborated in this chapter of the dissertation.

The penultimate chapter, *Findings and Analysis* has accentuated the unique insights that have been obtained in order to attain the research aim and objective of this study. In other words, the data gathered about the perspectives that the native English teachers have with respect to the multicultural classroom in the private schools of Dubai have been interpreted in this chapter. The unique insights of this study have also been compared to the extant literature so as to similar results can be substantiated and the dissimilar findings can be contradicted. This chapter has, therefore, helped in corroborating certain concepts and claims concerned with the cultural perspectives that other scholars have previously established. This helps in strengthening the exiting concepts. Moreover, the unique perspectives that have been acknowledged in this study provide some indication about how the cultural perspectives within a pedagogical context can be different.

Finally, in the last chapter, *Recommendations and Conclusion*, firstly, suggestions have been offered to the teachers and the educational institutions that can enhance the overall learning process of the multicultural students. This section also addresses ways to ensure that the Vision 2021 that is concerned with developing a diversified and knowledge-based economy as adopted by the UAE can be attained. In addition, recommendations have also been made for conducting further studies on the topic. This section, therefore, addresses the limitations of the study that have been highlighted in chapter four. Lastly, the study has been concluded, indicating that the answers to the research questions developed in the first chapter has been summarised. In addition, the key points of the study have been briefed and the ways for the improvement of prevailing circumstances have been surmised.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

This chapter is dedicated to unfolding the frameworks that have been used to underpin the study. There are concepts that are crucial for the current study, and it is essential to gain an in-depth knowledge of such aspects. The understanding of such knowledge is fundamental in order to progress with this study. In other words, comprehensive understanding of the relevant concepts is essential for the process of interpreting the data that has been collected for the study. This indicates that such knowledge has been used for the conversion of raw data obtained for the study into meaningful information that can be used to answer the research questions. Such concept will then be used in the fifth chapter to substantiate or contradict the findings, derived from the current research.

Both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks have been developed in this chapter. While the conceptual framework has reviewed the concepts that are likely to recur in the study, the theoretical framework has elaborated on the existing theories, models and approaches that are relevant to the current study. There are concepts that are frequently used throughout the study, like the concept of English as an International Language or English as a Lingua Franca Language, and ‘World Englishes’, Superdiversity, Culture, Intercultural competence, NESTs/NNESTs. In addition, the concepts that have been reviewed include Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture Model, Edward Hall's High and Low Context Culture, Cultural Conceptualisations and Language Model, the Sociocultural Approaches to Learning and Development, the 3D framework of language variation, the Intellectual, Cultural and Moral Framework and the Intercultural Communication Framework.

### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

Different concepts would regularly appear in this study. In this subsection, the researcher provides definitions of key concepts that might be problematic if they were spared from being defined due to their diverse meanings. The rationale of this section is to frame the common concepts frequently used in TESOL studies concerning the nature of English and its relevance to its users (learners and teachers). Therefore, the following subsections review English as an ‘International Language’ and as a ‘Lingua Franca’. It also examines ‘super-diversity’, ‘intercultural competence’, the model of ‘World Englishes’, due to their great significance to the current study that takes place in a multicultural country like the U.A.E.

### *2.1.1 EIL and ELF*

The concepts of English, as both an International Language and Lingua Franca has gained importance in the modern era of globalisation. This is because on account of the movement of people across national borders, communication has been disrupted since people are unaware of the linguistic and cultural differences. Therefore, in order to have a neutral language for communication purposes, majority of the countries have taken to adopting English as an International Language (Randall & Samimi 2010). The concepts of English as an International Language (EIL) implies that it is used as an official language in countries where people use various different languages for communication (McKay 2018). In addition, the language is also used by people belonging to any culture that use English as a medium to convey their knowledge about their culture to others. In other words, EIL indicates the use of the language within the context of inter-cultural communication.

The language has been chosen since a neutral choice between the three ethnic groups that are common in the UAE (Randall & Samimi 2010). Even though EIL has a neutral stance, it does play a role in addressing cultural issues. In fact, it is commonly used in order to clarify cultural misconceptions and rectify assumptions that people may have developed with respect to a certain culture. However, the situation has changed over the years, and people in the UAE no longer use English merely as a medium for official purposes. In the current scenario, English is used for a wider range of social interactions and, therefore, English is taught as an English as a Lingua Franca (EFL) at all levels of society living in the UAE (Randall & Samimi 2010). However, the authors emphasised that the use of the traditional Arabic is observed among the brown colour workers, however, it has become the norm in business circles.

EFL refers to the circumstance where the English language is used as the common means for communication by people who have different primary languages (Randall & Samimi 2010). The difference of EFL as compared to EIL is that the latter is used in all aspects of social life, whereas, the former is used only in the official and formal context. For instance, order a meal in English would be an instance of the use of the language as Lingua Franca. On the other hand, the use of the language for filling up an official form is an instance of the use of EIL. Within the UAE, it was highlighted that the EFL became the dominant form of the use of the English language on account of the increase in the number of expatriates within the nation (Dorsey 2018). The author

also emphasised how the process of assessing the proficiency in English became cumbersome on account of the rise of EFL. However, learning English has become an essential skill in the modern era, so that the younger generation can participate in the global society. Therefore, the importance of EFL has increased in the pedagogical scenario.

It has been highlighted that the use of English has transcended across the official sphere and in the UAE, is now commonly used by people for all business communication, whether formal or informal (Boyle 2011). Even though patterns of the coexistence of both EIL and ELF have been observed in the UAE, the latter has been dominant. The author emphasised that more and more people in the UAE have been using English, instead of Arabic for communication in all spheres of social life, especially in the business circle. In this context, it was further stated that apart from the business circle, the use of English has been observed in educational institutions for communication between student and teacher, or teacher and parent (Dorsey 2018). Therefore, communication in English in the UAE is also relevant from a pedagogical perspective.

Studies have revealed that the pedagogical perspective has various implications (McKay 2018). This is because the English that is taught in the UAE may differ from the one that is taught in other parts of the world. This indicates that the students are expected to learn a localised version of the language. In other words, there may be certain phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic variations in the language. Moreover, even if a British curriculum is followed in schools, the teachers would be expected make logical references to the local needs and other environmental and social factors. Therefore, EFL in the pedagogical context implies that the local linguistic and cultural context are to be incorporated. This indicates that EFL within the UAE would differ from that of other parts of the world on account of the pedagogical influence.

There are some instances where EIL and EFL are used interchangeably. (Crowther & De Costa 2017a) Argue that the concepts of EIL and ELF are still not well defined. A key difference between the two terms is in their relevance to the linguistic and cultural background of the user. ELF could be defined as the imperfect repertoire used to communicate in a global as well as an intercultural context (Seidlhofer 2017). Hence, the author believes that the growth of controversy in teaching English stems from its sociolinguistic legitimacy and its educational relevance from its lingua franca standpoint. In this context, it was also pointed out in a study that EIL does not have association with the social or cultural contexts, and therefore, it is neutral (McKay 2018).

There are some people in the UAE who are prejudiced by the increasing use of the English language. This is because, such people are under the impression that it would have a negative impact on the Arabic language (Randall & Samimi 2010). This is to insinuate that the native language of the country would soon be forgotten. In fact, English has even permeated in the law enforcement of Dubai. However, the adoption of the language in the modern context has been perceived to have positive connotation by majority of the people in Dubai, irrespective of their educational qualification. People without a matriculate qualification as well as university graduates consider the adoption of the English language to be the catalyst for modernisation and development. Therefore, ELF is dominant in the UAE, especially in Dubai.

While EIL appreciates the variety of English usages amongst both native and NNS (Matsuda 2017), ELF emphasizes on retaining mutual intelligibility via different communication strategies (Mueller 2018), as it highly regards the attainment of conviviality in communications. Thus, ELF research studies NNS uses English as a medium to communicate (Seidlhofer 2017). The author also argued that the native English converse is not viewed as the ultimate model of successful communication, which is a fair point when considering the number of idioms, irony, and indirect phrases that a native British, for example, would use in a normal conversation. Some British teachers are too confident that they have a ‘birthright’ to be English teachers (Holliday et al. 2015).

### *2.1.2 World Englishes*

Scholars of ‘World Englishes’ contributed in prominent journals like *World Englishes*, *English Today*, and *English Worldwide* and studied how English evolved to be differently used based on the context (Jenkins 2015, Kirkpatrick 2010). The authors have proved that English varies greatly depending on many aspects like the speaker, the listener, and the purpose. A second problematic nature of this language is the common connotation attached to it in being a colonial language. In tandem with these views, a recent book entitled “Post-Native Speakerism mentioned an incident of a leading Japanese scholar who argued in a Japanese language conference that Japanese nationals speaking English in Japan should be referred to as speaking ‘International Japanese’ rather than English (Houghton & Hashimoto 2018). The rational being, as the authors explained, in the ‘self-colonization’ that Japanese nationals are imposing on themselves and by excluding the word English from the concept, the pride of the Japanese language would be restored in these nationals.

The discipline of World Englishes as a coherent field dates back to the early 80s (Buschfeld et al. 2018a). Kachru developed a widely known model of World Englishes that is based on English as a National Language, English as a Second Language, and English as a Foreign Language (Kachru 1985). He classified the World Englishes into the Inner Circle countries where English is the *de facto* language like the US, UK, Ireland, Scotland, New Zealand, and Australia. Likewise, he classified the post-British colony Englishes where English is the second language, like India and Nigeria, as the Outer Circle. He then categorised countries like Japan, China, and Indonesia that experienced neither British nor American colonial rules as Expanding Circle countries, where English is considered as a lingua franca to serve general communication purposes. This model, however, has been criticized for being stereotypical and short in explaining the transition between the circles, the linguistic evolutionary nature of English, or the mixed-race bilingualism, for example (Buschfeld et al. 2018b), such a criticism can be an excellent incentive to recognize the non-native contribution to English and consider their variations in usage.

World Englishes is another concept that exists parallel to EIL and EFL (McKay 2018). Even though the terms are often used interchangeably by people, there are subtle differences. One school of thought has stated that World Englishes includes all the various different types of English that is spoken in different countries across the globe. The authors have defined English to be of segregated into three broad categories commonly referred to as Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle is used to denote the situation, wherein, English is spoken as the primary or first language. Outer Circle refers to the fact where English is one among multiple official languages in a country. Lastly, the Expanding Circle indicates the circumstances where English is not an official language, but has importance and recognition as a foreign language.

Another school of thought defines World Englishes as the other forms of the language that are spoken among people whose primary language is not English. In other words, the language that is nativized, indigenised or institutionalised, that is the term World Englishes is used to refer to the pluricentric nature of the English language (McKay 2018). The varieties of the language occur on account of the existence of two primary factors – the first language of the people and their culture. The author emphasised that as per the convention of the World Englishes, all forms of English are given the same importance and respect.

Owing to the pluricentric nature of the English language that is highlighted under the conventions of the World Englishes, certain unique features are brought to light (McKay 2018). It was observed that such uniqueness of the language is apparent in the spoken form of the language. It is worth noting that such uniqueness is also not as apparent when the spoken form is in a formal context. This is because, while speaking formally, people follow specific guidelines and the uniqueness is not prevalent. However, in the formal written form, in most contexts, a universal standard is followed and the features that are culture and language specific are not prominent. The author has emphasised that within the academic context, following the formal written form of English is crucial. On the other hand, following the convention of given the same importance and respect to all forms of English, the local culture and language ought to be incorporated in the informal spoken form of the language. This indicates that the teachers of the language ought to convey the importance of the local culture and language in the classroom so that the lessons are comprehensive (McKay 2018). In other words, it is the responsibility of the teachers to ensure that both the elements of EFL and World Englishes are incorporated in the lesson.

### *2.1.3 Super-diversity*

The concept of super-diversity was born in the era of globalisation. It has facilitated the free movement of people across national borders, and, as a result, the population diversity has increased significantly (Vertovec 2007). In other words, it refers to the recurring patterns of demographic changes which influence the social culture of a country. The changes occur on account of the interplay of the variables like increase in the number of people of multiple origin and social and economic differences that have occurred within the past decade. Super-diversity note only refers to the differences among the immigrants, ethnic minorities, and the local people, but also the disparity within such groups. These concepts also highlight the new patterns of inequality and prejudices in terms of racism (Vertovec 2017). Other aspects that have been emphasized by the author includes the concepts of creolisation which signifies the process, wherein, different aspects of diverse cultures come together for the formation of a new one.

Countries and nations that are characterised to have super-diversity have complex social and cultural conditions. The interplay of the variables among the people of multiple origin and social and economic differences, leads to the formation of new patterns that present challenges for the people involved (Vertovec 2007). Some of the challenges and common issues that have occurred

on account of super-diversity are associated with immigration, discrimination, modernisation and the development of society. On the other hand, it has also been pointed out that the occurrence of super-diversity has also facilitated the process of formation of several favourable policies (Vertovec 2017). For instance, the integration of health, social services and education is commonly considered to be a positive outcome of super-diversity.

As the demography of the UAE is ever more evolving towards embracing more cultures and nationalities, the phenomena of Super-diversity is evident, particularly in Dubai (which is the context of the current study).

The concept of Super-diversity was first introduced by (Vertovec 2007) to refer to the connotation of diversity in Britain. Although the concept was mainly associated with cultural complexity of West European societies, i.e. Brussels and Amsterdam, it has become a worldwide phenomenon that is relevant to any city that applies to the concept (Crul et al. 2013).

Today, it is a perception that describes the residents of a familiar place that were composed by a broad spectrum of ethnic backgrounds of people from different countries in which perplex cultural populations are created (Meissner & Vertovec 2015).

#### *2.1.4 Culture*

There are many definitions for the term ‘culture’; however, for this research, one of the most relevant definitions would be Hamad’s definition that culture is a form of cognitive, social and common background knowledge that is manifested in people’s behaviour (Hamad 1999). Hence, it can be described as society’s ideology of different aspects of life, like having family, raising children, and death. Also, many intercultural communication researchers view the Arab and the American culture, for instance, as opposites (Al-Issa 2005). Another dimension, however, was added to the definition of culture in which the society’s assumptions and stereotyping of their counterparts were added to the equation (Cortezzi & Jin 1999). Therefore, high cultural competence indicates positive attitudes during intercultural interactions (Leung et al. 2014).

One of the main cultural variations is the notion of individualism and collectivism, where individualism refers to the loose ties amongst oneself and others, and collectivist, on the other hand, to the sense of being part of a group of people, i.e. family, society (Triandis 2018). Hence, educational institutions that adopt individualism encourage their teachers to advocate for risk-

taking and speak their minds in classrooms discussions and take the liberty at asking any question in class or express their feelings (Al-Issa 2005). Al-Issa pointed out that she remembers her western teachers talking about themselves during the first day of the semester, mentioning their parental status, age, and hobbies. The author, however, had hardly noticed any of the Arabic and Asian teachers share such personal information with their students.

Another observation on western teachers' attitudes is their interest in sharing personal social media accounts with students, which is something that many western teachers are comfortable with, despite it being unprofessional (Roblyer et al. 2010). An Arab teacher, nonetheless, may view it as culturally inappropriate in the first place, rather than professionally. The reason of teachers' attitude in both examples is believed to be attributed to cultural perceptions of the 'right' boundaries that must be drawn by teachers in both Eastern and Western cultures, as well as the concept of individualism and collectivism (Al-Issa 2005).

Moreover, another relevant notion about culture is the 'high and low context' facet that was proposed by (Hall & E. 1976). According to him, meaning interpretation depends on the reliance on either context or code.

The American culture is an excellent example of the cultures that depend on code rather than the context, thus is 'low context' nation (Al-Issa 2005, Würtz 2005). Americans, for example, pay a great deal of attending to language and word choice, rather than deriving the meaning from the context as the primary source. Arabs, English, and Japanese cultures being 'high context' nations tend to care for the context as the ultimate basis to interpret the meaning, before reviewing the language. Therefore, they understand each other very well that they have developed an implied style of communication like using silence or a body gesture to respond.

### *2.1.5 Intercultural Competence*

Intercultural competence (IC) is defined as a skill to use common sense decisions to act in a way that is interculturally appropriate (Hammer et al. 2003). The term intercultural competence refers to the individual's perception and reactions to the different cultures around them (DeJaeghere & Cao 2009), whereas working with different ethnicities can be inherently challenging (Molinsky 2013).

Researchers have provided a plethora of various models, over the decades, of IC in different disciplines like intercultural communication (Redmond 2000, Koester & Lustig 2015), intercultural counselling (Sue & Sundberg 1996), international education (Crossley 2000), as well as intercultural psychology and education (Zhou, Y. et al. 2008). The recent IC discussions, however, have focused on what we need to know and do when dealing with an unfamiliar cultural domain (Holliday 2016). Holliday rightly argues that prominent cultures continue to hold the prejudice of “us and them”, which is a heated debate even with the confines of academia. Holliday also claimed that IC is a skill that cannot be learnt as a new concept, but slightly improved by day-to-day experience. Therefore, the characteristics of cultural competence that were mentioned in previous research can be refined into three domains (Leung et al. 2014):

- a) Intercultural traits: refers to how personal characteristics are endured to determine typical behaviours in multicultural situations, like being open-minded, patient, tolerant, or emotionally resilient towards ambiguous behaviours.
- b) Intercultural attitudes and worldviews: refers to the individual’s perception of other cultures and how they deal with information that seems foreign to their cultural world. (Leung et al. 2014) state that enjoying high IC indicates sophistication as it evades ethnocentrism.
- c) Intercultural capabilities: emphasizes the means to effective intercultural interactions, like being aware of other’s cultures and using cultural intelligence to communication with different cultures in a collaborative manner.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The theories that have helped in building the structure of this study include the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s Seven Dimensions of Culture Model, Edward Hall’s High and Low Context Culture, Cultural Conceptualisations and Language Model, the Sociocultural Approaches to Learning and Development, the 3D framework of language variation, the Intellectual, Cultural and Moral Framework and the Intercultural Communication Framework (ICF). The Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s Seven Dimensions of Culture Model, and Edward Hall’s High and Low Context Culture Model are frameworks that are aimed providing a deeper insight about the elements that are to be taken into consideration for inter-cultural communication. Even though the implementation of

such models is most prominent in the business and management field. However, it can also be relevant in the pedagogical perspective (Kaur and Noman 2015, Bālan and Vreja 2013). This is because the educational institutions that have been taken into consideration have multicultural students and the teachers are mostly European. This implies that the communication within the classroom is inter-cultural which justifies the relevance of the frameworks developed by Hofstede, Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner, and Hall. In addition, the researcher believes that the remainder of the above-mentioned frameworks provides a robust representation of how culture is manifested in language learning and teaching within the sphere of multiculturalism.

### *2.2.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model*

Geert Hofstede developed a framework to facilitate inter-cultural communication, especially in the business scenario. At the outset, Hofstede identified and posited four dimensions which could be used as factor for the analysis of cultural values (Chudzikowski et al. 2011). The four dimensions include individualism or collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and masculinity or femininity. Further studies conducted about the cultural differences across countries provided Hofstede with more in-depth insight about the cultural dimensions. Consequently, the understanding of cross-cultural psychology was strengthened and two more dimensions were added to the framework (Hofstede 2011). The dimensions that were added to the model later include – long-term or short-term orientation and indulgent or restraint.

#### 1. Individualism or Collectivism

The cultural dimension associated with individualism or collectivism is used to analyse the degree to which the people within a society are connected with each other (Hofstede 2011). In other words, it refers to the strength of the relationships that the people have with the other members of the society. In an individualistic society, people are less likely to take on the responsibility for other people who are not a part of their core family. This implies that people of individualistic societies only share a strong bond with individuals who are a part of their immediate family, and are not concerned with the members outside of such circle. According to the words of the authors, such families emphasise on 'I' and neglect to consider 'we' while taking decisions. On the contrary, collectivist societies have a highly integrated relationships with the immediate families as well as extended families alike (Chudzikowski et al. 2011). People in collectivist societies are loyal with their groups and are responsible for one another. Such groups of people within collectivist societies

are typically large and are supportive of one another. People within the UAE are collectivist, implying that they assume the responsibility of others within their social group and are motivated to maintain the well-being of the group as a whole and not by their individual gains (Al-Issa 2005). Therefore, in order to effectively communicate with the Arabian population, it may be beneficial to suppress emotions that disrupt the harmony within the society and focus on intrinsic rewards. Expressing a negative opinion or a feedback is not desirable in a collectivist society like that of the UAE. On the other hand, in communicating with people who belong from individualistic societies, it may be beneficial to respect their privacy and encourage them to express themselves. Recognising individual accomplishments is likely to have favourable outcomes.

## 2. Uncertainty Avoidance

The uncertainty avoidance index is concerned with the tolerance level that people within a society have towards ambiguity and with making decisions that involve anxiety (Hofstede 2011). The degree to which people tend to embrace or be aversive towards uncertainty helps in defining one of the cultural dimensions. Societies that rank higher on the uncertainty avoidance scale tend to have a fairly predictable lifestyle with variables as less as possible. However, Hofstede emphasized that uncertainty avoidance is not necessarily the same as risk aversion. In other words, people in societies that are aversive towards uncertainty can be motivated to take risks. However, societies that have a lower score on the uncertainty avoidance index, tend to be more relaxed and open minded. Such people are more accepting towards change within the society (Chudzikowski et al. 2011). Therefore, it may be easier for the teachers to teach new concepts and notions to students who come from a cultural background that has a low uncertainty avoidance index. On the hand, students who belong to societies with a high uncertainty avoidance index, tend to be conservative. Such students are unlikely to adhere to strict social conventions and it may be difficult for the teacher to convey new and innovative concepts to them.

## 3. Power Distance

Power distance implies the strength of the social hierarchy and the implementation of power by the people higher up the pyramid and the degree of acceptance with the individuals at lower levels (Chudzikowski, et al. 2011). A higher power distance implies that people at the lower levels accept the power that is possessed by the ones at the higher strata. This implies that the distribution of people is unequal and that the hierarchy established in society is not questioned. On the other hand, a low power distance signifies that people at the lower strata question the authority and that the distribution of power is relatively equal. In the event that power is not shared equally, a society that has a low power distance is likely to protest. Such societies encourage the involvement of all affected members in the decision making process. On the contrary, the status of a leader is acknowledged in a society where the power distance is high. Therefore, people are likely to respect a teacher in societies where the power distance is high (Tan 2015).

## 4. Masculinity or Femininity

The dimension of a nation's culture is also associated with the distribution of roles between the male and female members of the society. In societies that project masculinity, the male members

of the society are assertive in nature. Moreover, there is negligible overlap between the roles that are fulfilled by both the genders. In such societies, material rewards, heroism and assertiveness are synonymous with success. Even though there is a difference in the values that are practiced by the male and female members of the society, the females also exhibit assertiveness and competitiveness but with lesser intensity (Chudzikowski, et al. 2011). People in such societies have a strong ego and a prominent sense of pride. Aspects like money as a status symbol is prominent in masculine societies. Therefore, people who belong to such societies are typically motivated by the possibility of the achievement of specific targets. Feminine societies, on the other hand, represent qualities like modesty, compassion, and cooperation. In such societies, there is a significant overlap between the male and female roles. People in feminine societies are motivated to form favourable relationships with the senior members and ensure that they are cooperative as well. As opposed to status and money, people in feminine societies are focused on the improvement of the quality of life (Chudzikowski, et al. 2011). In addition, people in such societies are motivated to form favourable relationships and believe that success can be achieved through collaboration. Ideally, in order to communicate in a multicultural classroom, the teacher ought to take such factors into consideration.

#### 5. Long-Term or Short-Term Orientation

Hofstede explained that all societies refer to a time horizon while making decisions. People in societies that have a long-term orientation tend to be modest and pragmatic (Chudzikowski, et al. 2011). Education is highly valued in such societies and societal obligations are emphasised. Therefore, for a teacher in a multicultural classroom, it would be easier to teach students who belong from societies that share a long-term orientation. Such students are likely to be sincere and motivated to learn. On the other hand, people who belong from short-term oriented societies are motivated by the immediate returns as opposed to the long-term repercussions. Students belonging from societies with the short term orientation is dominant may not value education as much as its impact is mostly observed in the long run. Therefore, it is likely to be challenging for the teachers to teach students who are focused on the short term.

#### 6. Indulgent or Restraint

The final dimension as proposed by Geert Hofstede is involved with the degree of freedom as per the conventions of the social laws (Hofstede 2011). This dimension seeks to evaluate the freedom

that people have when it comes to fulfilling their desires. This signifies the additional cravings that a person may have apart from the basic necessities. A society that can be defined as indulgent allows people the freedom to fulfil their human desires which enable the people to enjoy life. A society that promotes indulgence empowers people to seek gratification, and therefore personal happiness. Such people tend to have an optimistic view of life and prioritise mentoring. This implies that the students from high indulgent societies are likely to be more acceptable of the classroom lessons. On the contrary, a society that promotes restraints enforces strict social norms that discourage personal gratification (Chudzikowski et al. 2011). As a result, such people mostly have a pessimistic outlook on life and their education is mostly governed with the social conventions.

### *2.2.2 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture*

Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner in 1993 developed a cultural model that has seven dimensions which, similar to Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model, facilitates effective cross-cultural communication (Reis et al. 2013). The model provides an indication about the aspects that are to be taken into consideration in order to ensure that the communication among people of diverse cultures is effective. The model provides insights about the aspects of culture that differences that exist. Awareness of such differences enables the people to be effective in communicating within a multi-cultural context. The model was developed by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner with the intention of employing in the business and management context. However, in the event that the educational institutions have a multicultural student base, it can also be applied within the pedagogical context (Bălan and Vreja 2013). This is because communication within the classroom is inter-cultural which justifies the relevance of the Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture Model. The seven dimensions as identified by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner have been elaborated in the following sections. The dimensions as proposed under the models are in the form of a continuum.

#### 1. Universalism vs. Particularism

Universalism implies that principles and practices do not have to be modified for application in varying instances (Reis et al. 2013). Cultures that rank high on universalism have formal rules and only one reality. Communication is formal and rational and there is little regard for subjectivity. Laws, rules and obligations are perceived to be highly important and are valued more than

relationships. It is essential to be objective and consistent while communicating with people who share a universalism culture. On the other hand, particularism is associated with the notion that the application of practices is dictated by the circumstances. In other words, such cultures perceive reality in a subjective light. This implies that people's response to a situation may change based on the conditions of the prevailing circumstance. Such cultures also emphasise relationships over rules and individuals have the freedom to make their own decisions (Bălan and Vreja 2013). Particularism culture encourages people to build relationships with time. Therefore, in the pedagogical context, the teachers ought to determine where on the Universalism vs. Particularism continuum the student lies, and thereafter communicate.

## 2. Individualism vs. Communitarianism

Individualism refers to the society that is motivated by personal freedom and achievement (Friedman et al. 2013). People in such societies are expected to make their own decisions and also not rely on others to be taken care of in difficult times. Such people are likely to be influenced by praise and reward for their individual efforts and group praises are not effective in motivating people from individualistic societies. Since people who practice individualism are likely to be creative and capable of being self-motivated, maintain a hands-on approach may not be the most appropriate method of teaching. Communitarianism, on the other hand, refers to societies wherein people make decisions based on what is good for the group as opposed to individual gain (Bălan and Vreja 2013). Loyalty within the group is expected and considered to be a desirable quality. All individuals within such groups put the collective benefit above individual in terms of priority. People who are a part of societies that have a high communitarianism score are not comfortable with individual praise and prefer to share the credit as a group. Such aspects are to be taken into consideration by the teacher in order to gain insights about the comfort zones of the students and the factors that are to be used for motivating them.

### 3. Affective vs. Neutral Cultures

In neutral cultures, people make sure to control their emotions and make decision solely based on facts and rational aspects. People of such cultures seldom reveal what they are thinking and/or feeling (Bălan and Vreja 2013). A neutral culture ensures to control their body language as well so as to portray a negative emotion. Teachers ought to be highly observant while communicating with students of neutral cultures since they are hesitant towards showing emotion. Affective or emotional cultures encourage people to be trusting and expressive. Showing emotion is expected by people within such societies and it forms a crucial aspect of communication. People tend to rely on the use of emotions in order to build a rapport and manage conflict. The use of positive body language and attitude is essential for building relationships with people (Reis et al. 2013). Therefore, teachers should make attempts to read such body language and mirror them for effective communication with the students.

### 4. Specific vs. Diffuse Cultures

People belonging to a specific culture dimension prefer to keep their personal and professional lives separate (Bălan and Vreja 2013). Such people are direct in communicating and are not concerned with forming relationships. People from a specific culture are of the opinion that it is possible to have a favourable work relationship without it affect their personal life. Diffuse Cultures, on the contrary, encourage people to have favourable relationships. Such relationships are also considered to be essential for meeting the work objectives. In a pedagogical context, it may be stated that the teacher ought to be direct with the students that belong to a specific culture. On the other hand, with people from the diffuse cultures, the teacher may need to make an effort to develop interpersonal relationships in order to ensure that the communication is effective.

### 5. Achievement vs. Ascription

This dimension is focused on the how people view the status of the member within a society. Achievement implies people's worth are determined by their performance irrespective of their position of power (Reis et al. 2013). On the other hand, ascription implies that power, title, and position are considered to be indication of a person's worth. In such societies people are respected because of their title and the position of authority that they occupy. In a pedagogical context however, it may not be possible to take the students' power, title, and position into consideration prior to communication. Moreover, it could be perceived as partiality and unfairness in conduct

within the classroom. Therefore, even when the student belongs to an Ascription culture, the teacher ought to ignore such titles and not provide such candidates with special treatment in order to remain impartial.

#### 6. Time Perception

Time perception implies the manner in which people manage their time, and this dimension is measured along a continuum that ranges from Sequential Time to Synchronous Time (Bălan and Vreja 2013). Sequential time implies that people prefer to arrange their activities in an order. People who value sequential time are highly punctual, and prefer to schedule their activities. On the other hand, people who value synchronous time have a more flexible approach and prefer to multitask as opposed to taking one job at a time. Therefore, the teacher ought to understand that the lack of punctuality by a student is not necessarily an indication of indiscipline, but of the existence of a different value system.

#### 7. Relation to Nature

This dimension is measured along a continuum ranging from Internal Direction to Outer Direction (Bălan and Vreja 2013). People from cultural background who value internal direction consider themselves to be in control of their surroundings. Teachers may perceive students who are eager to change things to be rebellious. On the contrary, outer direction implies that people believe that the elements of the external environment is in control and that they must adjust to such aspect (Reis et al. 2013). Such characteristics may be perceived by the teacher to be indicative of a passive nature. However, the teacher should ensure to be culturally aware so that they can understand the students and thereafter effectively communicate with them and not lead to conflicts.

#### *2.2.3 Edward Hall's High and Low Context Culture Framework*

The High and Low Context Culture Framework proposed by Edward Hall posits that the process by which the messages as conveyed by people differ from one culture to another (Croucher et al. 2012). Since communication involves various aspects like verbal message, gestures, body languages, as well as other non-verbal cues like voice modulation. Hall observed that the use of the non-verbal aspects of communication is common in certain cultures, which is defined as high context culture. Communication in such high context cultures are implicit and common in societies which are collectivist. This is so because people in a high context culture value interpersonal

relationship over individual achievement. As a result, communication is not direct and the background of the people is taken into consideration. Communication in high context cultures are, therefore, subtle and the intention is conveyed through subtle cues. Long term relationships have a preference in a high context culture, while in a low context culture, its relevance is negligible.

In a low context culture, communication is explicit and elaborate (Reis et al. 2013). Since individuals communicate with people who they do not share a long-term relationship with, the message conveyed has to be elaborate and explicit. The true intention of the message under such circumstances is conveyed through the verbal message itself and the parties involved do not rely on the observation of non-verbal cues and body languages. Communication is direct and there is no ambiguity as people say what they intend to convey. Factors of the cultural surroundings are not considered while interpreting the intended message. Therefore, communication within low context cultures is time consuming since the message conveyed is typically elaborate but the interpretation of it does not take time (Reis et al. 2013). Conversely, in the case of high context cultures, the process of conveying the message is short but interpreting the same takes longer. This is because the receiver must take the factors of the cultural surroundings and the non-verbal cues into consideration.

The focus of the current study is multicultural classrooms. This implies that students from both high, as well as low context cultures, will be present in the classrooms. In order to ensure that communication is effective, the teacher ought to possess the skill needed to interpret both verbal as well as non-verbal messages. Therefore, in order to communicate with the students in a multicultural classroom, the teachers need to ensure to interpret the subtle non-verbal cues while communicating with candidates from high context cultures. On the other hand, while communicating with students from low context cultures, the teacher ought to be direct and explicit.

#### *2.2.4 Cultural Conceptualisations and Language Model*

The first framework that underpins this study is the Cultural Conceptualisations and Language Model that has been developing since 2001 (Sharifian 2011). In his proposed model, Sharifian explains that the word ‘conceptualisations’ refers to two well-known cognitive processes: *schematisation* and *categorisation*, in which the first term refers to the systematic selection of particular aspects of a specific scene while excluding the other relevant aspects of it (Talmy 1983).

The latter term, however, refers to categorisation to the equivalence of distinctive entities (Rosch & Lloyd 1978).

According to this model, conceptualisations can emerge as cultural cognitions, and not only as cognition of individuals. In other words, there are cultural networks amongst the minds of individuals whenever they interact with each other. It also highlights that such cultural conceptualisations are enhanced with interactions of the cultural group to think as ‘one mind’ where the discourse is changing with time and setting. Sharifian also states that the size of these groups is irrelevant, and that cultural conceptualisations can be less cohesive in some cultural groups in terms of beliefs and values, for example than their counterparts.

The Model designer gives five clear examples of cultural conceptualisations. The first is the *event schemas* where our experience is tethered to specific events (Mandler 1984). He explains that people often have particular schemas for life events such as ‘weddings’ and ‘funerals’; thus, different schemas are categorised in different ways in our minds; weddings can be associated with ‘gifts’ and ‘banquets’ in many schemas, yet they can also be associated with ‘church ceremony’ and ‘vows’ in the Western-Christian schema, for example. He also points out the complexity of how we define and categorise particular schemas like the appropriate gift for a newlywed couple and the suitable food for a wedding party.

On this account, implementing this notion to the current study will be evident in the data analysis of the classroom observations. The researcher will focus on the discussions that take place during the lessons and observe how teachers approach explaining certain events.

The second example that Sharifian gives is the *role schemas* that refers to the common background of a particular behaviour associated with a social role (Nishida 1999). Hence, such schemas are categorised with instances like ‘doctor’, ‘teacher’, ‘engineer’, and so forth, in which each of these schemas is associated with a particular way of speaking, clothing, and behaving. Similarly, different cultures have different understandings of this kind of schema-based on many aspects like their lifestyle, belief, values, and experiences. Thus, the data analysis of the current study will emphasize on how teachers exemplify different careers when giving examples to students.

The third type of schemas that Sharifian discusses is the *image schemas*, and it refers to the mental images and the abstract prepositions that are imaginable or associated with specific mental images

as they are either a physical or social experience. Examples of this kind of schemas include an image of an athlete that represents a nation, an image of an architect that is relevant to a particular civilisation, a song that is associated with a particular event. An example of this schema is the word ‘full moon’ as the symbol of beauty in the Arabic literature, whereas the concept of beauty is usually associated with types of flowers in Western culture. Therefore, this type of schema would help the researcher to understand how bilingual teachers make use of their background knowledge to draw relevant comparisons and contrasts between certain concepts in different cultures. Examining this schema would correspondingly be crucial to show the teachers’ skills to appreciate their students’ ethnic diversities.

The fourth schema is known as *proposition-schemas* in which the linguistic proposition provides different patterns of justifications across cultural groups, like how cultures that believe in spirits and black magic are being perceived by those who do not. This schema is strongly applicable to the current study as the UAE is considered a cosmopolitan country. Students might be Muslims who believe in the afterlife or Hindus who believe in the reincarnation, yet their teacher may be an atheist who pay very little attention to spirituality when talking about specific topics.

The final type of schema that Sharifian gives is the *emotion schema* that refers to the perception of feelings as accurate reflections of both social and cognitive interactions within certain situations in which they occur (Lutz 1987). Sharifian gives an example of the feelings associated with ‘shame’ as it is not necessarily associated with guilt in some cultures. He reasons that ‘shame’ can be experienced when meeting someone for the first time in some cultures. Likewise, this schema is a significant element that should be considered when interviewing teachers and observing classrooms.

The selected framework is believed to be a comprehensive model that perceives language as an integral part of the culture and correlates it with cognition through analysing language systematically. It explores language and cognition under the umbrella of culture by adopting this multidisciplinary approach to the cross-sectional areas that lay within the applied linguistics calibre in an attempt to understand the relevance of culture and cognition to it. Sharifian stated that his model has benefited from various fields like English as an International Language, cross-cultural pragmatics, intercultural communication, as well as World Englishes.

### *2.2.5 Sociocultural Approaches to Learning and Development framework*

The renowned psychologist, Vygotsky, developed a general theory in which he investigated the relationship between language, art, ideologies, and psychology (Vygotsky 1997). His framework was built to highlight the perplex nature of individual and social dependencies within the context of the collaborative construction of knowledge (John-Steiner & Mahn 1996). John-Steiner and Mahn pointed out that this framework received considerable interest in the literature of classroom learning and teaching, as it offered accurate interpretations and applications of sociocultural approaches. Moreover, several scholars provide overviews of the applicable approaches of this framework and suggest various interpretations of Vygotsky's theory (Daniels 2016, Mahn 2018, Minick 2017, Ratner & Silva 2017).

(Vygotsky 1997) states that teachers play a crucial role in their students' accessibility to the world. He also indicates that teachers are expected to introduce the appropriate cultural tools to their students to assess them with problem-solving techniques and contribute to their mental development. He considers, likewise, that playing is a powerful educational tool that conveys cultural elements to students and affects their mental development.

The theory of sociocultural approaches emphasizes on the humans' behaviours within cultural contexts where language and relevant signals are the medium of communication. It stresses the concept that different cultural contexts determine humans' activities, as language and other symbol systems arbitrate them. It is a widely used theory within educational researches, particularly the perception of the role of tools and signs for mediated development (Marginson & Dang 2017).

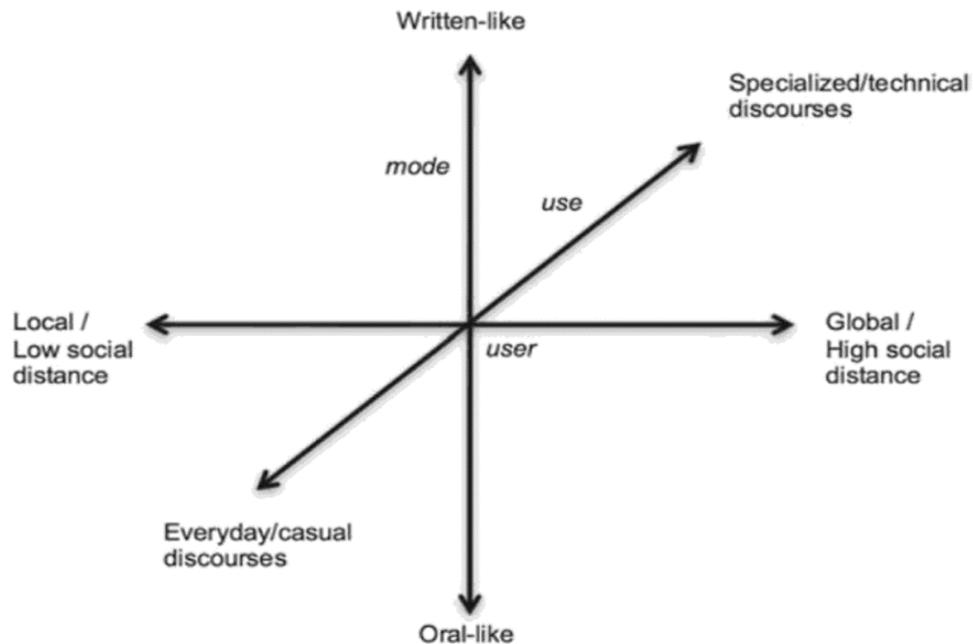
It is noteworthy to say that the cultural aspect of language and its role in human development had been given great attention in the Vygotskian framework. For example, Vygotsky believed that the cultural incorporation that takes place through language, led to behavioural transformation and built bridges between the individuals' early and later forms of mannerisms (Demirbaga 2018). He also provided a general law for cultural development in which he states that the early years of human's cultural development exists in two stages namely social and psychological (Vygotsky 1997). The social stage, he explains, occurs between people "inter-mentally", then happens within the child "intra-mentally" which is relevant to the amount of attention, memory choices, concept formation and the development of the drive (Kirch 2014).

Kirch interpreted Vygotsky's law and stated reasoned that advanced cognitive functions like attention, memory, and logic fall into the social dichotomy for two reasons. First, advanced cognitive functions can be taught by one generation to the next. Second, the author claimed that dynamic social interactions could be further developed through advanced cognitive functions. Moreover, Vygotsky advocated that cognitive functions can be observed and examined within the educational context through the teaching and learning experience that can eliminate mental impairment (Demirbaga 2018).

The various interpretations and re-interpretations of Vygotsky's 60 years of existence offered a plethora of perspectives on sociocultural theory and created new dimensions to the application of his work in different context settings (John-Steiner & Mahn 1996). The researcher believes that Vygotsky's framework would be essential to 'decode' aspects like ideologies, the collective perspective of the interviewed teachers and match them with the class observations and the survey outcomes. It would be interesting to apply this framework in multicultural classroom settings, where students are immersed in abundant social environments that engage them in diverse social, cultural and interpersonal experiences. The researcher also hopes to explore new patterns and colourations in this framework that are relevant to the study, especially that Vygotsky's theory continues to be influential in social context researches that investigate educational development and transformation (Marginson & Dang 2017).

#### *2.2.6 The 3D Framework of Language Variation*

Another framework that focused on language variations was developed on mapping three angles, namely, users, uses, and mode (Agudo 2017). The 3D framework of language variation is believed to be fundamental for the current study. The study would provide an opportunity to advance the understanding of how English is learnt and used within the scope of the sociolinguistic and sociocultural intricacies embedded in learning/practising a language. Thus, this section would be reviewed in the data analysis to consider the different variations and settings. The main points of this framework are illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: The 3D Framework of Language**

The figure demonstrates the framework of how language is used, as the first dimension. It suggests that the language variations could be viewed from a *high vs low* social distance. The local or low social distance refers to the similarities between users of the language (gender, class, religion, location, origin, family, school) who may have a unique way of using the language that might not be transparent of other users of that language.

The *low social distance* can justify the reason behind the preference of some people to use *local* forms of language, including connotations and innuendoes, for example (Agudo 2017). On the other hand, people who are communicating in a high social distance tend to use the *international* or *standard* version of the language. Hence, they might avoid cultural idioms and the regional forms of the language in an attempt to facilitate communication.

The second dimension of this model is related to the purpose of the language ‘use’. Agudo asserts that it is essential that we consider the nature of the discourse taking place, whether it is a *casual/ everyday* setting or of a distinct/technical kind. Although in both types of discourse the topic might be the same, the linguistic choices would vary to serve the purpose of the interaction, for example, one could talk about cooking as a hobby using everyday vocabulary, whereas another might be discussing the same topic from a technical point of view using specialized terminologies.

The third dimension of this language variation model is the *mode*, which includes mixed means of communications, including the visual and aural methods. Agudo argues that having the *written-like* and *oral-like* in his framework as the two-end points to consider the transcribed variation of language in the writing system could be similar to the oral version of the language (i.e. blogs, tweets, and online chats). Likewise, the language may seem closer towards the written form regardless of the aural usage (i.e. seminar, conferences, and symposiums). Thus, the three dimensions correlate together to offer a platform on which language variations stands on.

### *2.2.7 Intellectual, Cultural and Moral (ICM) Framework*

One of the frameworks that are believed to help understand how teachers work in early teaching experiences is called the intellectual, cultural and moral framework (ICM framework). The framework encompasses content and pedagogy, the values that drive one's moral reasoning, and the cultural identity of both teachers and students (Schussler et al. 2010). This framework was initially used by the researchers to analyse how novice teachers are motivated to think intellectually, morally, and culturally about their teaching experiences based on the three domains of the framework.

#### *The Intellectual Domain*

1. The teachers' inclinations to pass the knowledge of content and pedagogy.
2. The teachers' awareness of the educational context requirements.
3. The teachers' likeliness to utilize their knowledge and awareness in their classrooms.

#### *The Cultural Domain*

Cultural disposition is a term used to refer to the teacher's attempts and aspirations to meet the needs of all students (Schussler et al. 2010). The concept has three main components (Banks et al. 2005):

1. The teachers' awareness of their own culture and its effect on students.
2. The teachers' awareness of their students' cultures and its effect on learning.
3. How teachers utilize that knowledge of the two types of cultures (of self and students) to alter the classroom instructions and meet the needs of the multicultural students.

Unfortunately, many teachers seem to be unaware of their cultural identity (Banks et al. 2005, Jensen et al. 2018). Cultural identity includes gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, race, as sexual orientation (Schussler et al. 2010). Hence, the authors argue that this dimension of identity compromises the cultural disposition of a teacher and how they perceive cultural-laden experiences and the kind of choices they make in classrooms. The importance of teachers' awareness of their cultural identity has been featured in the literature and proven to have a strong association with low academic achievements amongst students (DeCapua 2016a, Ebersole et al. 2015, Jackson & Boutte 2018).

### *The Moral Domain*

Many argue that teaching has a moral dimension that includes the teacher's moral values and its ramifications (Chowdhury 2018, Colnerud 2015, Thornberg & Oğuz 2016). Hence, they assume that teachers base their daily decisions on their own assumptions in relation to the purpose of education and its importance, the methods that work best with students, as well as their schools of thoughts that monitor their actions in classrooms through the moral lens (Carroll & Carney 2005).

(Fenstermacher & Richardson 2005) argue that good teaching is not restricted to the successful production of learning but also teaching moral values. Hence, the explanation of an effective teacher can be drawn from that argument (Schussler et al. 2010). Schussler and others suggest that the term 'disposition' entails the construct of attitudes in both skills and knowledge, and focuses on the inclination to make use of them to consider each situation one faces and act accordingly. Moreover, a number of compelling studies found that lack of awareness and sensitivity to exploit one's abilities and skills was a common practice amongst people, despite the possession of the appropriate intellectual skills (Perkins, David et al. 2000, Perkins, David N. & Tishman 2001, Perkins, David N. & Ritchhart 2004, Ritchhart et al. 2006). These studies also found that people could succeed in implementing problem-solving skills in some situations, yet lack the sensitivity of when to use that skill with ill-structured conditions (Perkins, David et al. 2000). The studies also acknowledged that classrooms are considered as ill-structured settings where teachers may neglect using their skills and abilities because of the lack of prompts (Schussler et al. 2010). Thus, the authors state that effective teachers ought to be sensitive to the context of the teaching situation and know how to implement their knowledge and skills at any given time.

### *2.2.8 Intercultural Communication Framework (ICF)*

This framework is developed by (Marshall & DeCapua 2013) and consists of three principles that enhance the understanding of teachers in their multicultural classrooms and promote effective communication. The three principles are:

#### 1. Establish and Maintain a Relationship

Different values, beliefs, and norms that teachers and students carry to determine the roles of both parties and how they perceive each other (DeCapua & Wintergerst 2016). This principle states that teachers and students need to develop a two-way communicative relationship that encourages the understanding as well as their expectations of each other in order to create a productive learning environment. It also emphasizes on discarding the “obvious” assumptions that are usually associated with the role of teachers and students, while connecting with students and their family and community members and learn about their cultures, when appropriate. Students from various subcultures may manifest their own culturally influenced patterns to their communicative practices in classrooms that might be prohibited (DeCapua & Wintergerst 2016). They might also face language barriers in case of learning a foreign language.

#### 2. Identify and Accommodate Priorities

This percept states that teachers with multicultural classrooms should expect their students to hold dissimilar values and beliefs as their own. Teachers, however, should consider the prior learning and teaching experiences that their students had. Hence, teachers are required to observe and interpret their students’ behaviours in order to deliver culturally scaffolding instructions and respond appropriately (DeCapua 2016b). The author gives an example the usual classroom routines may be ineffective in some classrooms that teachers may experience different interaction styles to what they expect, due to a cultural clash rather than a linguistic issue. Accordingly, the author highlights that teachers’ awareness of their students’ cultures is necessary to help them become more accepting to innovative teaching styles.

#### 3. Make Associations Between the Familiar and the Unfamiliar

This final percept focuses on activating the prior knowledge to ensure culturally scaffolded instructions that are effective. This principle requires building teaching materials that are based on cultural knowledge (DeCapua 2016b). In other words, this principle focuses on the assets that

students hold, which are usually overlooked in the institutionalized educational practices that conceive them intellectually inferior.

### **2.3 Summary**

In this chapter of the thesis, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that have been used to underpin the study have been reviewed and analysed. The framework evaluated in the above sections has helped in developing a comprehensive understanding of the underlying concepts and theories of this study. The concepts that have been reviewed in the above section include English as an International Language or English as a Lingua Franca Language, 'World Englishes', Super-diversity, Culture, and Intercultural competence. Relevant literature has been consulted in order to gain insights about such concepts as these have recurred throughout the study. This section has enabled the researcher to understand the subtle differences between the concepts of EIL, ELF and 'World Englishes'. It is now apparent that while these terms are used interchangeably there are differences in its meanings. The concept of super-diversity has also been reviewed and its relevance in the context of the UAE has also been established. Thereafter, the concept of culture has been studied to gain an understanding of the importance and relevance of intercultural competence for communication.

The theories that have been reviewed in the chapter include Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture Model, and Edward Hall's High and Low Context Culture. These frameworks have helped in gaining insights about the differences that exist between various cultures and the factors that are to be taken into consideration. The examination of three models has helped in developing a comprehensive idea about inter-cultural communication and in identifying the aspects that are crucial for ensuring that there is no discrepancy between the message intended and the one interpreted. Other frameworks that have been reviewed include Cultural Conceptualisations and Language Model, the Sociocultural Approaches to Learning and Development, the 3D Framework of Language Variation, the Intellectual, Cultural and Moral Framework and the Intercultural Communication Framework. Such frameworks have provided an insight about the way that multiple cultures are manifested in the pedagogical perspective.

### **3.0 Review of the Literature**

This chapter is dedicated to reviewing relevant studies that have explored the topic of diversity and the impact that it has on the pedagogical field. The concept of culture has been evaluated in-depth by reviewing extant literature and the predominant issues have been identified. This is essential in order to establish how the current study will contribute to the research concerned with the multicultural impact on pedagogy. This section highlights issues relevant to the study of various topics like super-diversity features and risks, the challenges of intercultural classrooms, the types of English teachers (native and non-native teachers of English), teachers' identity and professionalism, cultural identity and self-awareness, cultural adaptation, cultural adjustment, the impact of intercultural competence, perception of the teachers and students, culture and delivery, as well as relevant studies both conducted within the UAE as well as in other parts of the globe. This helps in establishing the most prominent findings as it has been observed with respect to the current body of literature. This chapter ends with the contribution that the current study aims to make by the end and what gap it could fill. Lastly, the key aspects of this chapter have been summarised.

#### **3.1 Super-diversity Features and Risks**

Studies of diversity are concerned with the inquiry of the mechanisms, modes, and effects of the social differences in multi-ethnic environments (Siebers 2018). As a consequence, they explored the social and cultural dissimilarities between people who live together yet are from different ethnic backgrounds. Siebers rightly argues that when studying diversity, we should not regard fixed aspects of age, gender, class, as a de facto, for these aspects are believed to play a critical role in how people think and act, depending on their age, gender, and class.

The characteristics of super-diverse societies have become the ultimate feature of our times (Maly 2016, Phillimore 2015). Despite the super-diverse milieu developed in a national, racial, or religious base to behave in a homogeneously together, ethnicizing/nationalizing of, i.e. sport, music, accents, and lifestyle still strongly exist to entwine with the idealistic code of conviviality (Wessendorf 2014).

With that being said, (Siebers 2018) stated that there is a need for more literature on the personal point of view of the phenomenon of super-diversity. The author argues that it would be essential to correspond to the current absent voice in the existing body of literature of the positive side of

super-diversity. In other words, the authors of the concept of super-diversity focused on the objective end of the concept and did not share their experiences from a personal approach.

The concept of super-diversity has also been defined in the light of the socio-political contexts. It has been found that superdiverse societies can be formed owing to various macro-environmental factors, such as immigration policies, political relationships between nations and perception and behaviour of the local population (Vertovec 2007). In a superdiverse environment, there is a strong influx of people within a country from various host countries, thereby creating a super-diverse nation. Super-diversity should not only be seen in terms of just ethnicity, but it should also be viewed in terms of labour market experience, responses of local population, culture diffusion and gender and age profiles. The interplay of all these factors can lead to the development of a super-diverse nation. Thus, it can be stated that the diversity in a nation can have wide spectrum implications, and not just in terms of ethnic interactions. The influx of immigrants can reshape the labour market of the country and can also help in influencing the national talent pool, which is essential for the domestic firms to achieve competitive advantages. Moreover, the entry of people from other nations can also change the overall age and gender distribution of the country. Thus, super-diversity can have a significant impact on a nation.

From the perspective of the UAE, it can be stated that the government and the national leaders have taken the initiatives to transform the country to a diverse economy, thereby reducing its over-dependence on oil trading. In order to build knowledge-based diverse economies, it is essential for a nation to be able to create a strong human capital, which is able to generate value in a globalised environment (Al-Hammadi et al. 2010). The USE Vision 2021, is committed to reshape the national economy that focuses knowledge and innovation, thereby encouraging value-adding industries. This, as a result, can attract the foreign investments and global talents (UAE Vision 2018). In this context, it can be stated that national agenda of the UAE is to create an economy with multi-faceted developments and sustainable growth. From the perspective of super-diversity, it can be stated that the vision of the country is likely to attract more expatriates from host nations, which can lead to a diverse society. The presence of diversity can help in creating a stronger talent pool and better ease of doing business for foreign investors. Thus, the creation of super-diversity can help in fulfilling the national agenda of Vision 2021. In this context, it can be further stated that the cultural diversity within the UAE population is likely to increase further, owing to its

economic attractiveness. Therefore, it is essential for educational institutions to develop a practices and policies that can help in better cross-cultural management.

The presence of diversity in a culture can be attributed to the globalisation of national economies. It has been mentioned that globalisation is a process of multidimensional nature that involves the political, economic, environmental, technological and cultural spheres (Tomlinson 2012). The author has mentioned that culture can be a very complex concept, as it involves various factors to be considered before defining it. In all simplicity, culture can be defined as way of life for a group of people, which can be significantly different from that of other people. In this case, it can be stated that the “way of life” adopted by a group of people can be highly dynamic in nature and is subject to changes, based on the exposure to foreign culture and practices. The globalisation of culture involves standardisation of certain practices, which becomes common across different national cultures. However, the complete standardisation of national cultures across the national borders, may lead to significant ease of doing business and propagate careers of expatriates much seamlessly, but in reality, it is not practically possible. In this context, a study conducted by another author, Robertson, has highlighted that complete globalisation of economies may not be possible, but a combination of globalisation or localisation is often found in many instances (Robertson 2012). The author has highlighted that international organisations often adopt standardised practices along with the localised ones, which has been termed as” glocalisation”. Glocalisation allows organisations to adopt local cultures of a host nation, while ensuring that the globalised approach is maintained. Glocalisation can reduce cultural shock for the people, who have been introduced to a new value offering, which is unique for their culture. Following certain aspects of the local culture can make it easier for people to accept the new values offered to them.

The UAE is one of the prime examples of this phenomenon, especially the city of Dubai (O’Neill 2017). The UAE’s complex super-diversity stems from the influx of millions of Arab and non-Arab expatriates, as well as Africans and South Asians who moved to the country looking for better job deals in place of their qualifications and experiences (Calafato & Tang 2018).

On that account, the researcher intends to share her insights as an Emirati of the classroom observations. The author is particularly interested in how teachers relate their lessons to the Emirati culture and promote the sense of loyalty, belonging, respect to the country amongst their multi-

ethnic students. The overall objective side of the study, however, would focus on the cultural perspective that (NESTs) provides to their students from other cultures.

### **3.2 The Challenges of Intercultural Classrooms**

The challenges in an intercultural classroom can be discussed in the light of the cultural dimension theory of Geert Hofstede. Hofstede has emphatically stated that national cultures vary from each other in different parameters, which has been termed as dimension such as power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation and indulgence (Hofstede 2011). It has been mentioned by the author that the psychological, behavioural and attitudinal profiles can vary significantly across different cultures, which can be measured based on these six dimensions. The way people perceive and react to the different external stimuli can be defined from their cultural backgrounds. Thus, in a multi-cultural environment, it is only natural that different people will have different perceptions, which can lead to conflict, which demands the need for effective cross-cultural management. Based on the cultural dimension models it can be stated that the native population in the UAE and people from western cultures can have strikingly different cultural backgrounds, leading to difference in behaviour and attitude.

Based on the comparative assessment of between the cultural dimension scores between the UAE and a western nation, such as the UK, it can be stated that people from these cultures are quite different from each other, with varying views and perception towards society and life as a whole. It has been found that the power distance scores in the UK and the UAE is 35 and 90 respectively (Hofstede Insights 2020). This indicates that the inequality of power distribution and its acceptance is quite high in the UAE as compared to the UK. Therefore, any expatriate coming from the UK to work in the UAE is likely to find it quite challenging in an environment of biased power distribution. Moreover, the individualism score between the UK and the UAE is 89 and 25, respectively, which indicates that people coming from the western nations like US are more individualistic in nature as compared to those from UAE (Hofstede Insights 2020). Expatriates from the UK may prefer to work alone and be addressed individually, rather than being a part of a team. This cultural difference can make it quite difficult for a British expatriate to work effectively in the team-based work environment of the UAE. The low individualism score of the UAE also indicates that the people are more inclined to form strong social relationships, which may not always be preferred in a culture with high individualism score. It has been also found that the

uncertainty avoidance score for the UAE and the UK are 80 and 35 respectively (Hofstede Insights 2020). In this case, it has been stated that the UAE imposes stricter regulations and policies in the society as compared to the UK. Therefore, an individual from the UK may find the strictness of the UAE community quite overwhelming, especially in a working environment.

As highlighted in the above paragraph, the behaviour and attitude of the people belonging to the UAE and the UK are quite different. From the perspective of the native English teachers working in the UAE, it can be stated that they are likely to have a challenging work environment, owing to the striking difference culture of the host nation. The nature of perception and individual behaviour can be easily misinterpreted, which in turn can lead to conflict within the classroom, or even with the educational institutions. Therefore, it is imperative for the educational institutions to make sure that the effective cross-cultural management is being carried out so that the inter-cultural conflict can be reduced as much as possible.

The challenges faced by the teachers while teaching in a multi-cultural classroom can be discussed in the light of the classroom environment. It has been found that creating a positive environment in a classroom can improve the quality of learning. However, in a multicultural setting, this can prove to be quite challenging (van Tartwijk 2009). The authors have conducted an observation-based study, where it has been revealed that students from different cultures, studying together in a classroom, may often engage in culturally inappropriate behaviour. Such behaviour can be attributed to the lack of cultural awareness and social stigmas. It has been mentioned that in order to create a positive learning environment, the teachers often adopt corrective measures to improve the behaviour of the students that involves punishment and reward. However, it has been highlighted that focusing too much on corrective measures can lead to negative impact on the classroom environment. It has been found that instead of choosing harsh corrective measures, relationship building between teachers and the students have been found to be useful in maintaining harmony in the classroom and in improving the overall quality of teaching. The authors have highlighted three key strategies that can help to address these challenges. Firstly, building good relationships between the student and the teachers should be emphasised, where mutual trust can be developed. Secondly, it has been stated that the implementation of social and moral curriculum in classrooms can help in fostering environment of mutual respect. Finally, the

authors have highlighted that the cultural or ethnic background of the students should be taken into consideration while managing the classrooms.

Further studies have been conducted, where pedagogical challenges have been highlighted during the training teachers to teach in multi-cultural classrooms. Teaching in a multi-cultural classroom can be quite challenging for a teacher, especially if the faculty is unaware of the nuances the cultural customs of the various ethnic groups present in the class. Providing cultural training to teachers is essential so that they are prepared to teach in multicultural classrooms. The teachers should be made aware of the existing racism in the society and how they can create a seamless bridge of communication between students of different ethnic backgrounds (Bell 2002). The author has stated that teachers need to ensure that the students from different cultural backgrounds learn to work together and participate in different activities. Moreover, honest communication about race and racism among the students from diverse cultural groups can help in reducing cultural conflict and social stigmas. The teachers should also be made aware of the unwritten and unspoken rules of the cultures so that these can be kept into consideration while building a relationship with them.

Private schools in the UAE constitute 60% of the schools in the country, with approximately 500,000 students from different cultural backgrounds (U.S. Embassies 2018). Additionally, according to the US Embassies report, the number of private schools in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi is expected to grow dramatically by 2021. Accordingly, cultural competence has become a crucial part of the teaching and learning cycle in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Vonderlind 2015). In the context of language teaching, culture represents the history, arts, geography, education, festivals, trends, and customs of the targeted society of the learnt language (Bousslama & Benaissi 2018).

Although teaching culture is allocated to professors of literature, it is a necessary element of teaching a language when the teachers are NSs (Kramersch 2013). Kramersch, nonetheless, debated that no matter NSs are well-versed in their language and culture, they could be ignorant of their students' cultures. It is also essential to mention here that the millennial generations might have acquired a plethora of cultural awareness due to their 21<sup>st</sup> century lifestyle which includes gaining exposure to a wide range of cultures, i.e. using social media platforms, watching international films, immigrating. However, such acquired awareness ought to be guided and clearly explained rather than being left to student's interpretations and unequal comparisons between their cultures

to L2 culture. Learning about L2 culture is necessary to equip learners with the right skills needed when meeting NS, working with them, or even living in their countries. A good analogy of learning a language without its culture could be like a skilled fisher, who lacks the knowledge of the types of fishes.

Additionally, cultural misunderstanding may occur in multicultural classrooms and can affect the process of learning (Kramsch 2013). It has become an unavoidable reality that global citizens are in a constant battle with an array of linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Zhu 2011). The notion of an intelligible, coherent world Englishes is dated back to the early 1980s (Buschfeld et al. 2018b). Burchfield, Kautzsch, and Schneider stated that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is undergoing a revolutionary dynamism to diffuse English into new contexts and perspectives such as transnational cyberspace and creative trans-linguaging.

Currently, linguistic and cultural distinctions are perceived of as infinite reservoirs in which speakers exchange their thoughts with one another by mobilizing semiotic, linguistic, as well as intercultural knowledge that they acquired, as global English users (Crowther & De Costa 2017b).

In ESL countries (e.g. the UAE, India, and Singapore) English functions as an interethnic medium that coexists with the aboriginals of the local population (Buschfeld et al. 2018b). (Baker 2015), nonetheless, expressed her concern that intercultural skills are not being emphasised on amongst learners to equip them for a notional global interaction. In other words, the awareness of intercultural skills has become an essential component when teaching English as a lingua franca to L2 learners, for it can offer effective conviviality and higher intellectuality beyond language learning (Crowther & De Costa 2017b). Hence, the literature of this field recommended enhancing teachers' skills in ICC to evade cultural perplexity in intercultural classrooms (Palmer 2013).

Researches claim that engaging students in cultural conversations is not enough to overcome cross-cultural issues and that reflective exercises have to be carried out to manifest it (Johnson et al. 2008). One of the recommended techniques to implement this is assigning self-reflection exercises based on the students' lived experiences, which could help in increasing the sense of awareness (Brooks, C. F. & Pitts 2016). Brooks and Pitts conducted their study on student's perceptions of themselves and their identities and notion of 'others' through an online global-classroom experience. The study that focused on U.S. college-students who took part in the online self-

reflection exercise found that the students were inconsistent in expressing their personal and communal identity, for example, they did not like being associated with the negative communal identity, i.e. national identity, ethnicity, and religion. Still, they were reluctant to acknowledge the existing gap between their individual and collective identity and viewed it as a homogenous entity. In that study, the students had also identified their peers from different backgrounds as the “others”, yet they desired to maintain their relationships with their international peers despite the negative stereotypes they have about them. It can be interpreted that the gap found in that study is attributed to the high awareness of the students of the need to appreciate the other yet distance oneself from certain cultural aspects that their peers might have.

The researcher believes that the gap founded in this study is the result of mature ideologies that reject unsociable behaviours that a collective identity might hold and stand out as unique individuals, as well as, not fail to recognise the importance of conviviality and the sense of collective identity.

The importance of teaching culture should be woven in the four teaching skills of language, rather than teaching it as a fifth skill (Kramsch 1993). A recent study by (Bousslama & Benaissi 2018) investigated the IC of Algerian English teachers within the context of teaching English. The semi-structured interviews with eight teachers revealed the lack of the theoretical knowledge of the concept of IC teaching approaching amongst the English teachers and called for IC training sessions to be offered for language teachers. Moreover, a study to evaluate cultural coexistence in multicultural Spanish schools was conducted to understand the nature of conflict from the students’ point of view (Moreno et al. 2014). The broad-scale study included 20 schools and surveyed 767 participants, with about 15% of immigrant students. It revealed a high correlation between the following main factors:

1. Psychological, physical and structural violence
2. Behavioural problems towards classmates and teachers
3. Absenteeism and dropout
4. Coexistence issues

The study concluded its remarks by emphasizing on addressing these factors in multicultural classrooms and attempt to optimize their educational environments by raising the teachers' intercultural competence awareness.

The researcher assumes that the factors found in this Spanish study might only partly exist in the current study with limited incidents. One of the reasons for this thinking is the high level of security and the healthy communal sense that the UAE enjoys. A second reason could be the high cost of international schools that assumingly well-mannered middle-class students mainly join, yet multicultural classrooms continue to present different challenges and dynamics.

### **3.3 NESTs and NNESTs**

English teachers have a vital role in the experience that their language students go through to acquire the language. They are expected to be role models and provide their students with ample opportunities to use the language as often as possible (Nakata et al. 2018).

English, however, changed its nature in recent years to go through an unprecedented transformation on the level of its role as an international language to meet the needs of its users. Equally, the boundaries between English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is getting increasingly blurry (Buschfeld et al. 2018b).

A Japanese study on the acceptable accents of (NNESTs) revealed that sounding like a native is highly associated with learner's acceptability to English teachers (Sugimoto & Uchida 2018). The study that surveyed non-native Japanese teachers teaching English found that 80% of teachers desired to acquire a native-like accent.

On the other side of the coin, it can also be interpreted that the privileges of being a native to English are still extremely valued in the academic world (Braine 2012, Braine 2013, Cook 1999, Davies 2013). One can argue, however, that there could be many cases in which crucial elements might be overlooked when hiring, assessing, or viewing native teachers, such as their teaching qualifications, their monolingual shortcoming, as well as their poor intercultural skills.

The belief in the 'ideal monolingual native speaker' continues to be a compelling notion within many societies, denying the nature of teaching complexities and limitations of both (NESTs) and (NNESTs) (Canagarajah 2012). Developing a sound judgment based on qualifications and

expertise, nonetheless, is reflected in rich multilingualism and multiculturalism repertoire is needed to re-conceptualise language teaching and cast aside the native/non-native dichotomy (Derivry-Plard 2013, Derivry-Plard & Griffin 2017). This recommendation could imply developing teaching training courses where language teachers learn common languages and cultural practices within the context of language teaching and learning (Agudo 2017).

Furthermore, across all languages, grapho-phonology, lexico-grammar, and discourse – semantics exist (Kirkpatrick 2010, Jenkins 2015). On the grapho-phonology sphere, for example, one can notice the difference between spellings in British and American English, as in programme (British) and program (American). One can also observe the phonological variation between the two Englishes with letters like /r/,/t/,/a/. In terms of lexical differences, for example, both Englishes have different words for the storage part of the car (boot and trunk). In terms of grammar, both Englishes structure their sentences, clauses, and questions differently; examples can include did you see my key? (American) Have you seen my keys (British)? Moreover, British English, for example, can widely vary within the confined sphere of the United Kingdom where Londoners may not understand Glaswegians, despite that fact that they are both NS of English (Davies 2013).

### **3.4 Teachers' Identity and Professionalism**

It is claimed that some white teachers approach their intercultural classrooms with the conventional notion that goodwill and positive energy are the ultimate approaches to create a healthy learning environment for their students, which seems to be far from the truth (Ladson-Billings 2014).

Identity is defined as the individual's general view of themselves, as well as of others (Weinreich 1986). For this reason, it is important to understand teachers' identities since they influence their assumptions of their students' behaviour and expectations. In other words, a teacher's identity regulates their relationships with their students. A teacher's identity as professionals tends to evolve during the journey of stepping into new contexts (Odum 2017). Thus, Odum points out: they are in a constant debate between their values and standards, and those of the new environment they happen to work in. Accordingly, he rightly argues, teachers' identity is the product of their mutual interactions with their peers within the same environment.

The quality of teachers is one of the main priorities in education right now in the UAE (Buckner et al. 2016). Thus, Ministry of Education (MOE) and Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) offer

workshops and seminars for teachers throughout the year with a federal budget of 15,000 AED in 2015 (Salem 2014). Therefore, teachers are required to participate in these programmes for 30 hours every year (Buckner et al. 2016). The author highlighted that the standards of teachers' standards and required professionalism varies across the country since ADEC governs it in schools in Abu Dhabi; (KHDA) Dubai Knowledge and Human Development Authority that regulates the private schools in Dubai. MOE that manages the public and private schools in the rest of the Emirates, as well as the public schools in Dubai. The authors also stated that in the recent academic year of 2016-2017, the three bodies worked in collaboration to uniform a pilot initiative to optimize the new regulations pertaining to teacher licensing.

A study by the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) on 987 teachers in the UAE, revealed that 40% participated in the 'Teaching in a Multicultural or Multilingual Setting' (OECD 2015). This percentage means that there is a relatively decent level of awareness amongst teachers in the UAE when it comes to IC. Besides, the same study showed that 41% of only 930 teachers think that there is a need for developing the teaching skills of teaching in a multicultural setting. Similarly, this could be interpreted that teachers in the UAE are relatively confident of their competence in teaching in a multicultural environment.

Henceforth, the research will be observing how teachers engage with and gain their cultural knowledge by attending classrooms and taking notes. The researcher is also going to interview teachers to learn about their individual experiences based on their frequent interaction with multi-ethnic students.

### **3.5 Cultural Identity and Awareness of Self**

The term 'identity' is referred to as the individual's unique set of characteristics in association with the views and characteristics of others (Pennington 2014). Pennington states that the various dimensions of identity which shape the perceptions are being stimulated from the individuality of each human, such dimensions include culture, abilities, talents, physical appearances, and social values (Pennington & Richards 2016). The authors also emphasized that identity is too complex to be listed in the form of the characteristics of social and physical aspects of an individual, as it also includes the context and the type of activity in which the person is engaged. The authors give the example of the teacher's personality in the classroom and how it changes when being amongst their colleagues in their common room.

Hence, the authors argue that self-image and self-awareness in the sense of identity stem from the beliefs and values of how one should behave and conduct one's life in front of others. In other words, the concept of 'good', 'proper' or 'inappropriate' construct the identity of a person and set them apart from each other. The authors also argue that a mental image that is constructed based on values functions as a monitor to one's performance.

The interest in studying language learning and its relationship with identity has manifested itself in the past two decades in the literature (Norton & Toohey 2011). Thus, identity in teaching is perceived as a dynamic construct that is moulded within the context of which teachers' work (i.e. teaching young learners or teaching adults) and may have different features at different times (Pennington & Richards 2016). Both Pennington and Richards argue that identity is the core of teacher learning, from how novice teachers approach the language teaching, to their classroom management styles, and how they perceive themselves as language teachers. Subsequently, identity plays a significant role in language teaching in comparison with other professions (Singh & Richards 2006).

Teacher's identity, nonetheless, is subject to change based on every teacher's own experience (Sachs 2005). Hence, the teacher's identity develops through their interpretation of meanings of social roles and positions in different contexts, during the daily interaction with their students in the classroom (Pennington & Richards 2016). The authors also stress that the teacher's identity is the core of their teaching method, which suggests that it is a personal representative of oneself in front of an audience. This aspect of teaching has been referred to as the 'art of teaching' that contradicts with the concept of 'profession of teaching' (Freeman & Richards 1993).

Language-related identity is another concept that has been discussed in the literature (Auer 2013, Kinginger 2015, Reiche et al. 2017). In that context (Norton 2016) has defined identity as how we interpret the world in relation to time and space, as well as the future.

Cultural identity has been defined by how an individual perceives one's position within a cultural community. The central idea of cultural or ethnic identity is not only just the way a cultural group defines their presence in the community, but it also involves their interaction with other cultural groups (Jensen, et al. 2011). The cultural customs and practices of an ethnic group and their interaction with other groups forms their cultural identity. However, it has been also stated by the

authors that the cultural identity can be highly fluid in nature and is subject to change, based on various external factors, most importantly globalisation. Globalisation has brought different national cultures close together, thereby diffusing cultural practices involving language, food habits and media. Each of these factors can have a significant role to play in defining one's cultural identity. The advent of globalisation has had significant impact on reshaping these factors. It has been mentioned that globalisation led to the wide spread exposure and learning of the English language and also the diffusion of the western culture. Currently, English is on its way to become the global language, especially in the international business environment. International cuisines are becoming more popular in domestic markets and media content from almost all across the world is now accessible by anyone, anywhere.

Thus, it can be stated that globalisation has allowed organisations and institutions to follow a standardised approach in their business operation. However, following a standardised approach can often be challenging and can lead to various issues of cultural conflict. As mentioned previously, the cultural identity of a group is defined by their cultural practices and beliefs. Bringing changes in one's culture and identity through external stimuli of globalisation can often be perceived as a cultural invasion. In many instances, the new changes in the culture can be opposed by the people of certain ethnic groups. In such situations, the concept of 'glocalisation' can be discussed. Glocalisation, as the term suggests, is a combination of localisation and globalisation (Wang 2015). This approach allows the organisations and institutions to maintain some aspects of local culture while embracing the globalised approach economic progress. As mentioned earlier, in case of the UAE, the educational institutions have adopted the globalised practice of language, technology and education, but has retained the social customs associated with the Middle Eastern cultures, especially the ones involving policies and regulations.

Thus, in this context, it can be stated that the cultural identity is greatly influenced by the diffusion of other cultures. A cultural group can choose to adopt certain aspects of a foreign culture, while retaining the rest, thereby creating a unique blend of cultural practices, that makes it social and economic progress a seamless process. Keeping this in mind, it can be stated that no matter how much globalisation may standardise the certain practices in a nation, there can always be some elements of local culture that may play a crucial role in providing unique identity to a nation. This, as a result, makes cross-cultural management imperative to creating a diverse economy. Cross-

cultural management can be defined by a set of practices and policies that allows the organisations to create a work environment which is suitable for expatriates to work (Thomas and Peterson 2016). In order to ensure, seamless influx of foreign investments and talents from other nations, the government also needs to adopt certain policies that can help expatriates to live harmoniously within a foreign culture. The educational institutions in the UAE need to take the necessary initiatives of cross-cultural management, where proper training needs to be provided to the teachers that can provide better cultural awareness.

Another study has been conducted which links globalisation with cultural identity. It has been mentioned that the cultural identity of an individual is endogenous in nature and can have prominent impact on the cross-border trade equilibrium (Olivier, et al. 2008). It has been found from the conceptual framework of the study that cultural identity can lead to positive group externality among entities sharing the same cultural background and pattern of consumption. The cultural practices in a region are largely responsible for the transmission of preferences to the younger consumers, which in turn, leads to “home biasness”. This suggests that the cultural practices are passed on from one generation to another. However, the local cultures are often impacted by the globalisation, owing to the integration of new cultural practices and consumption behaviour. In this case, it can be stated that the diffusion of culture owing to globalisation has had strong influences on the national culture and the cultural identities of the people. Cross-border trade and consumption of foreign products and services can have a significant impact on the national culture.

### **3.6 Cultural Adaptation**

The process of cultural adaptation is believed to be a deeply rooted nature in human beings that is driven by their aspiration to achieve inner stability in the face of the environmental circumstances (Kim 2017). Kim defined it as the ability to communicate in accordance with the conventions of the host cultures and involve in the interpersonal as well as the social activities of that culture. In his book, Kim discussed how adaptation starts with psychological and physiological experiences of ‘cultural shock’ symptoms and how most people develop their functional as well as psychological competence by the host environment. He stated that the two pillars on which cross-cultural adaptation process stands are the abandoning of some of the cultural characteristics while accepting to acculturate to new ones (aka enculturation and acculturation). He also argues

that long-term residents experience unconscious identity transformation, which shifts individuals from their monocultural orbit towards an intercultural one. In that case, Kim claimed that the cultural conventions and traditions of one's culture shrink as the aspects of common humanity as well as individuality dominate one's daily lifestyle.

With that being said, the author also argued that even sojourners and short-term residents get involved in the cultural adaptation process at a minimal level in order to handle their daily routine in the host culture.

### **3.7 Cultural Adjustment**

Cultural adjustment can be defined as a set of changes that are adopted by an individual in order to adapt to a foreign culture. The importance of cultural adjustment is immense in the modern era of globalisation, where internationalisation of business is quite common. Organisations expand to different host nations and hire employees from the global talent pool, who belong to different cultural backgrounds depending on their country of origin. In such situations, the employees and managers have to face strong cultural differences, which are reflected in the differences in language, business practices, social customs and interaction. The difference in culture between certain nations can be strikingly different, whereas in other case, it can be very subtle. In situations, where an employee faces significant difference in culture, may find it challenging to sustain in the foreign region and maintain one's productivity. It has been found a significant number of projects carried out in foreign lands have failed as the employees and managers could not deal with the cultural differences. Cultural adjustment involves making a range of changes in one's action or behaviour which aligns with the domestic culture of the host nations, so as to avoid any kind of cultural conflict (Al Mazrouei & Pech 2014). The authors have mentioned that the cultural background can also determine the nature of the perception of an individual. A gesture or communicational message, which is appropriate in one culture may not be the same for another culture.

Effective cultural adjustment can be achieved through appropriate cross-cultural training. It has been found that the employees or candidates who have been trained for cross-cultural management, are more likely to succeed in their job roles in a foreign nation, with a different culture. The cross-cultural training prepares an individual by providing strong cultural awareness, language training and social customs. Moreover, the training also provides a clear idea of what the expatriate can

expect in terms of behavioural difference in the host nation (Chang, 2009). Cross-cultural training not only prepares the employees by educating them about a new culture and the associated practices, but it also psychologically prepares to deal with the cultural changes. The sole purpose of the training programs is to lessen the impact of the cultural shock as much as possible, so that the cultural difference does not affect the work performance and mental health of the employees. It has also been stated by the author that cross-cultural training should be carried out before the departure of the expatriate to the host country.

According to the report of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), the core culture in the UAE is a combination of Arabic, Islamic and modern western cultures. The influence of western culture can be attributed to the British colonisation till 1970. At present, the UAE has a multi-cultural population, with the majority of the population being expatriates (CIA, 2020). However, the Islamic religion and the associated culture is quite predominant in the country. The expatriates who are recruited from the western regions to work in the UAE should be aware of the fact that different employee bases in different cultures are likely to respond differently for the same situation. Citing the cultural dimension model, it can be stated that the UAE culture is quite collectivist in nature, whereas as a western country like the UK is highly individualistic in nature. Thus, working solo may be preferred in a western culture, but team formation and team working is more preferred in a collectivist society like the UAE (Hofstede 2011). Therefore, it can be stated that the difference in culture should be brought into consideration while devising organisational policies and regulations. In case of the UAE, it is important for the expatriates to have a clear understanding of the native culture of the nation, so that they can easily adjust their response and behaviour, which aligns with that of the local population.

Moreover, it has also been found that the Islamic religion and the Quran plays a significant role in defining the culture in the UAE. The business practices and the social norms are largely regulated by the dominant religion, thereby presenting a definitive lifestyle that each individual should adopt (Al Mazrouei & Pech 2015). The author has further mentioned that apart from understanding the UAE culture, the expatriates should also be fully aware of the Islamic principles which determine almost every aspect of social and business practices. It can be also stated that since the UAE is a collectivist society, it is essential for the expatriates to learn how to build good working relationships with the local residents and fellow colleagues. The interaction and the

communication methods are also largely governed by native culture of the nation. Thus, it can be stated that cultural adjustment by the expatriates working in the UAE is crucial for their sustenance and their work performance. The statement holds true in case of the native English teachers in the UAE. These teaching faculties need to adjust to the social customs of the UAE, while interacting with the students and locals in particular.

In the light of cultural adjustment, a study has highlighted that the cultural intelligence of an individual is responsible for the variance in cross-cultural adjustment (Huff, et al. 2014). It has been mentioned by the author that cultural intelligence is quite distinct from the traditional personality framework such as the Big Five model. It has been also found that the cultural intelligence can have a direct influence on the ability of an individual to adjust in the foreign culture, whereas time plays the role of a mediating factor. This indicates that the degree of cultural adjustment is influenced by the amount of time an individual is exposed to a foreign cultural setting. However, the primary factor for determining the cultural adjustment is directly related to one's cultural intelligence. The authors have also mentioned that organisations should train the expatriate employees to improve their cultural intelligence, thereby making it easier for them to operate in a culturally diverse work environment.

In the field of cultural adjustment, it has been mentioned in another study that various factors can act simultaneously to determine the effectiveness of cultural adjustment and its implications. This cultural intelligence has been considered as a variable which can have a mediating effect on factors like previous international exposure or experience and pre-departure cross-cultural training, on the dependent variable, cross-cultural adjustment (Koo Moon et al. 2012). This study also supports the moderating effect of goal orientation on cultural adjustment. Thus, based on this study, it can be stated that there are various factors that can influence the ability of an individual to operate in a foreign cultural setting.

A study has been conducted that connects the cultural adjustment and job satisfaction among employees. This research has been conducted on employees who were sent by their employer to international locations to fulfil their job roles and the employees who have migrated to a different country by their own volition to work there. It has been found that in the case of self-initiated expatriates, the ones who relocated on their own have higher cultural adjustment, as compared to the organisational expatriates and the ones who were sent by their employer (Froese & Peltokorpi

2013). It has been also mentioned by the author that the primary reason behind their difference in cross-cultural adjustment is mostly the fact that self-initiated expatriates spend more time in the host country and often hold higher proficiency in the host language. Thus, they have lesser communicational barriers and are also self-motivated to work and reside within a foreign culture. However, it has been also mentioned that the degree of job satisfaction is relatively lower for the self-initiated expatriates because they mostly work for superiors belonging to the host country. In this case, it can be stated that the experience of an employee working in a host country, can depend on their own experiences and the nature of organisational leader and interaction with them. Work satisfaction is more profound when an employee works under a supervisor who belongs to the same cultural background.

### **3.8 Intercultural Competence Impact on Teaching Ability**

Intercultural competence can be defined as the ability of an individual to function effectively in different cultural environments. An interculturally competent individual can think and act appropriately in different cultural settings (Leung, et al., 2014). It has been mentioned by the authors that just like personality traits that determine cross-situational behaviour of an individual, the intercultural traits also determine the behaviour of an individual in a multi-cultural setting. Thus, it can be stated how an individual is likely to respond in a multi-cultural setting is determined by one's intercultural trait, and can vary from one individual to another.

In this context, it has been also found that intercultural competence is a combination of cultural awareness and attitude, skills and knowledge. Three interconnected areas have been identified that can lead to better intercultural competencies, such as the ability to develop and maintain relationships, the ability to communicate with individuals from different cultures with minimal loss of information or distortion, and the ability of cooperation with the motive of achieving a common goal (Fantini, 2009). Intercultural competency allows an individual to work seamlessly with other people from different cultures. The high awareness of cultural differences and a tolerant attitude towards the said difference allows them to avoid any conflict or misunderstanding in the workplace. In the UAE, the influx of expatriates within the nation has led to super-diversity in the national community. In such a scenario, it is essential that these expatriates develop higher intercultural competency, so that they can overcome the cultural differences and focus on the shared goal.

Based on the above works of literature, it can be stated that the effect of intercultural competency on the teaching ability of the faculties is quite significant. The native English teachers working in the UAE are likely to face a strong culture shock while working in a multi-cultural setting. This, as a result, highlights the strong need for cultural competency. With a higher degree of intercultural competency, the teachers should be able to communicate with the students and other faculty members, with ease. Cultural competency can help the native teachers to have a much better understanding of the foreign culture and to have a clear idea of the culturally appropriate behaviour and interaction. Moreover, the teachers should be able to identify cultural differences and manage them effectively to teach the students efficiently. Through intercultural competency, the native English teachers should be able to improve their quality of teaching.

From the perspective of the educational institutions, the concept of intercultural competency is equally important. Organisational leaders and supervisors should have the ability to manage a culturally diverse workforce. In the case of the educational institutions in the UAE, a large number of expatriates from the western countries are recruited as teaching faculties. In such cases, supervisors need to follow the right leadership practices that facilitate better cross-cultural management. The Intercultural competency for the institutional leaders can be developed in an individual through global leadership. The global leadership competency model is based on the theories of expatriation and global leadership and is based on three key factors namely relationship, perception and self-management (Bird, et al. 2010). A global leader can supervise the employees belonging from different cultural backgrounds, working in a cultural setting that is different from their native region.

From the perspective of the educational institutions in the UAE, it can be stated that to ensure intercultural harmony in a classroom, the organisational leaders need to have global leadership competencies. It is imperative to ensure that the native English teachers can communicate and interact seamlessly with the students while effectively teaching them. This leadership approach should enable the leaders to develop policies and regulations that can help the expatriates to work seamlessly within the native culture of the UAE. Moreover, organisational leaders should also be able to create a good relationship with the recruited faculties from different cultural backgrounds.

A study on intercultural intelligence has been conducted in the UAE and the findings have suggested that there is a need for intercultural intelligence among the students (James &Shammas

2013). In a culturally diverse classroom environment, there are likely to be students from multiple cultural backgrounds, with different values and beliefs. Having higher intercultural intelligence, allows them to behave with each other in a culturally appropriate manner, which leads to better collaborative learning. It has been mentioned by the authors that culture consists of various unwritten rules and regulations and codes of conduct, which can only be gathered through first-hand training. The study has also shown that having a better understanding of a foreign culture and its perspectives, can help in creating a positive outlook among the students. Although the intercultural education and training programs in the Middle-Eastern nations were in their nascent stage during the time of conducting the research, it can prove to be a strong foundation for creating cross-cultural tolerance and mutual respect among the students studying in a diverse environment.

Identical studies have also been conducted in Dubai, where the importance of intercultural intelligence has been highlighted. It has been mentioned that many students lack intercultural intelligence and are completely unaware of different norms and customs of cross-cultural interaction or communication. This as a result, often leads to misunderstanding between the students belonging to a different culture. Their actions or gestures are often misinterpreted by their peers from a different culture. Cultural conflict can also prove to be a prominent reason behind the formation of isolated culture-oriented groups, where students from one group barely communicate with their peers from other cultural groups, leading to a lack of collaborative learning or teamwork. The study has also highlighted that some of the students are also unaware of their cultural boundaries (Hiasat 2019). It has been mentioned that academic assignments that teach the students about intercultural competencies can help in various ways. These assignments can facilitate in building confidence about one's own cultural identity and help them to acquire the skill set required to progress their career in the global business environment. The advent of globalisation has provided significant opportunities for students to develop a career in the international labour market. However, to leverage the opportunity, the students need to have the necessary communication skills to interact with people belonging to other national cultures. The cultural training integrated within the academic curriculum can prove to be quite effective in preparing the students to operate in a global environment, characterised by the presence of various cultural backgrounds.

The factors influencing the intercultural competence of the students have been studied. Using the CQS (Cultural Intelligence Scale) framework, it has been found that three key factors are responsible for shaping the intercultural competence of the students studying in a culturally diverse environment. These factors are the perceived competence in the foreign culture and its language, the degree of interaction with the people belonging to that culture, and the perceived teaching experience. It is important that the students have an unaltered understanding of the foreign culture, to understand the appropriateness of their behaviour. Moreover, their interaction with peers belonging to that culture can provide experiential knowledge about the said culture. Finally, the teaching methods employed in the classrooms can also help in better interaction and socialisation between students from different cultures, thereby, improving their intercultural competence (Cui 2016).

Many scholars stress the importance of being aware of the cultural role in mediating in the local community, its adaptation and domestication of 'foreign' knowledge (Lingard 2010, Sellar & Lingard 2013, Tan 2015, Tan & Chua 2015). In other words, educators and policymakers must understand how cultures define 'knowledge' and associate it with critical thinking, evidence, teaching, learning and truth, since these concepts determine the cultural attitudes and behaviour of these cultures towards education (Tan 2015).

(Tan 2015)states that comprehending the epistemological backbone of a belief system enhances the understanding of why could some indigenous beliefs never be compromised in some cultures and play an influential role in interpreting societies as to how they modify foreign practices. In other words, understanding the 'cultural scripts' can help in decoding the socio-cultural factors entrenched in any society. The term 'cultural scripts' is a comprehensive definition that includes all the cultural norms, practices and values that any society manifests to both, cultural insiders and outsiders alike (Goddard & Wierzbicka 2004).

In his articles, Tan argued that students' respect for teachers and their attention and discipline in class are considered as prevailing factors in the Chinese culture (Tan 2015). He reasoned that ancient Chinese views played an indispensable role in that how teacher-dominant pedagogy has always been associated with 'good' teaching. Given that, it can be said that people live by the cultural beliefs that they were brought up to and it determines how we perceive the world.

Moreover, Tan reasoned that the decision of accepting the new aspects of belief pertains to ourselves, others, as well as the world (aka control beliefs), are determined by two factors:

1- Conditioning function which filters what should be accepted based on a pre-existing belief.

Example: The teachers' participation in school travel based on their prior belief in the merits of the exposure to new cultures.

2- Arbitration function determines what should be accepted based on the appropriateness of other beliefs.

Example: Teachers' decision to celebrate Halloween with their students of other ethnicities.

Hence, the scripts of teaching in any country are believed to rely on the intricacies of the core beliefs about the role of teachers, the appropriate teaching styles, and how learning is processed (Stigler & Hiebert 2009). Stigler and Hiebert also affirm that beliefs are predominantly implicit and exist to sustain the stability of cultural systems over time.

The degree of cultural adaptation is dependent on the number of situations in which individuals are exposed (Kim 2017). In other words, the different reasons for moving to new countries shape our cultural adaptation experience in different ways.

### **3.9 Perception of Both Teacher and Student, in Both Directions**

There seems to be a tendency towards overgeneralizing unfamiliar cultural elements based on stereotypes that result in a particular story of a culture (DeCapua & Wintergerst 2016). DeCapua and Wintergerst define cultural norms as fixed behavioural patterns of a group of people who agree on certain practices to be appropriate. For example, the Chinese tradition reinforces on the duties of children towards their parents, whereas, it is the opposite in other cultures like the American and the Canadian cultures (Wu & Tseng 1985). Another example could be eating with the left hand or using it to pass something to another person in the Muslim society. Also, in the Japanese tradition, a businessman's personal and professional lives are inseparable (DeCapua & Wintergerst 2016). In their book entitled 'Crossing Cultures in the Language Classroom', DeCapua and Wintergerst state that the culture of gift-giving is essential in the Japanese business protocol, unlike the American and Canadian business etiquette, where gift-giving is equated as bribery. Thus, as we become better observers of others' cultures, we are highly likely to predict potential misunderstandings.

Classroom cultural expectations have been widely discussed (Arvizu & Saravia-Shore 2017, Cramer & Bennett 2015, Pitts & Brooks 2017, Stanton-Chapman 2015, Zhou, W. & Li 2015). One example could be when students get used to authoritarian teachers and find it difficult to adjust to friendly and interactive teacher roles that are more common in countries like American and Canada (DeCapua & Wintergerst 2016). The authors also give another example of how group work can be seen as helping each student achieving the task, whereas, in other cultures, it is conceived as the hard work of each member of the group as a whole. Accordingly, the authors state that today's mass media is equated as an essential cog in the enculturation wheel.

A recent American study showed that young people spend about only 5 minutes with adults, which is insufficient to transfer beliefs, values and life experiences from the older generation to the younger (Balagova & Halakova 2018). Hence, teachers are the adults that the youth tend to spend most of their time with. Accordingly, the relationship between teachers and students should remain healthy and quality. The studies on teacher attitudes and orientations are rare, as well as the studies of the teachers' attitudes in comparison to the broader community (Forrest et al. 2016).

In the contemporary globalised economy, multicultural education plays a crucial role. As a result, it demands extensive studies in the field of education and teaching processes in a multicultural environment. From a pedagogical standpoint, three key approaches to multicultural teaching have been identified, which are conservative, critical and liberal (Alismail 2016). It has been stated by the author that the conservative approach of education perceives multicultural education as a way of bringing students into a much broader global society. The critical approach assumes multicultural education as a way of addressing some of the social issues such as racial inequalities. Finally, the liberal approach chooses to celebrate and support the idea of multicultural education without bringing any major change in the existing social order. However, it is essential to understand for the teachers that multicultural classrooms are a way of providing education to all ethnic groups while avoiding any cultural biases. The training programs for the teachers should be developed in such a manner that it can prepare them to foster cultural harmony in the classroom. In this case, it has been also stated that in a multi-cultural classroom, good working relationships should be developed between the students and the teachers and also among the students belonging to different cultural backgrounds.

A study conducted on students regarding multi-cultural education has helped in understanding their viewpoint towards its importance. It has been found that the students studying in a multi-cultural environment seek equality and justice for all, in terms of treatment and opportunity (Aydın and Tonbuloğlu 2014). The authors have mentioned that students believe that multi-cultural education can help to reinforce cross-cultural relationships and can also help to foster a better learning environment. It has been also mentioned that the students believe that the teachers and the educational institutions should consider the individual cultural background of the students while teaching and interacting with them. Addressing and respecting the cultural differences in the classroom has been discussed as cultural richness, which can help in achieving peace, tolerance and respect among the cultural groups.

The study has been conducted to highlight the importance of culturally responsive teaching, management of classrooms and assessment literacy. The findings suggest that the teachers perceive culturally responsive teaching as a cultural celebration, and is disconnected or independent from the academic curriculum (Lew & Nelson, 2016). The authors have also highlighted that there is a significant gap between the training programs and curriculums of teachers and the actual situations of the multi-cultural classrooms. In most cases, the teachers are not adequately trained to manage a multicultural classroom efficiently, which, in turn, makes it quite challenging for the teachers to teach the students. This, as a result, demands further studies in identifying the importance of training programs, which can help in creating a strong impact on the teaching processes.

Another study has been conducted highlighting the perspective of the students studying in the UAE. It has been found that apart from the cultural aspects prevalent in the institution and the classroom environment, several other factors determine the satisfaction of the students (Wilkins & Balakrishnan 2013). It has been mentioned by the authors that although the cultural difference and adjustment can influence the satisfaction level of the students studying in a transnational environment, three other factors have also been identified which can have a prominent impact on their satisfaction level. These factors are quality and availability of educational resources or study materials, the quality of lectures delivered by the faculties and the effective integration and use of technology in the teaching process. Thus, it can be stated that to improve and maintain the satisfaction level of the students, an educational institution also needs to ensure that the overall quality of education meets their expectations, along with maintaining cultural harmony.

### **3.10 Culture and Delivery (the extent to which a teacher uses culture as a device and how this is perceived)**

Individuals and cultures cross paths with each other (Rogoff 2007). However, one can conceive generative features that shape their values and attitudes towards others (Brown & Campione 1994). Thus, the teacher's social awareness of their students' cultural differences is crucial for a successful delivery. However, teachers ought to be mindful of their self-awareness, first and have the competence to detach themselves of it to think critically (Garmon 2004).

There is a strong bond between language and culture where different ideas stem from using different languages in which they all intertwines at birth (Mebuke 2016). In other words, an individual's exposure to the cultural surroundings since childhood shapes the cultural group they end up belonging to (Brooks, N. 1986) Argue that the basis of different cultures and acceptable behaviour vary from place to place, where one's views of the world are being formed. Hence, we seem to be all governed by different cultures that we were brought up in.

No doubt understanding the culture of a group of people enhances our understanding of their language (Mebuke 2016). A compelling argument was presented by (Emmitt et al. 2003) stating that people who speak different languages may have different views of the world, despite belonging to the same cultural and behavioural backgrounds. Therefore, language teachers ought to explain the cultural context in which a phrase is taking place and explain its lexical meaning and uses. (Porter 1987) Attributes the misunderstanding amongst language educators to the dissimilar cultural boundaries, as well as ideologies. As people broaden their social networks at the levels of their personal, as well as the professional lives, their views and identities continue to be constructed and modified due to the new roles and contexts they find themselves in (Lave & Wenger 1991).

It could be said that there are three components that bond language and culture (Mazari & Derraz 2016):

1. The experience of language learning is a gateway to be aware of other cultures.
2. Language learning enables learners to draw similarities and contrasts between their mother tongue and foreign language.

3. Learning about a foreign culture cannot be achieved unless being aware of one's own culture.

Mazari and Derraz state that learning a foreign culture is emotional, as well as an intellectual journey that is too complex to be summarized in reading the foreign literature and understanding its semantics and grammar. Thus, the authors stress that language learning has to embrace teaching materials and explain certain linguistic situations that are culturally explained.

Mazari and Derraz suggest that teaching materials should contain cultural elements to provoke a comparative study that is structured by the mother and foreign cultures. This would encourage in reducing prejudice and increasing tolerance amongst cultures.

Accordingly, language teachers are accountable for different disciplines that meet the interdependence between language and culture. In other words, modern language teaching should analyse the common meanings as well as the artefacts of the foreign culture while teaching the language (Mazari & Derraz 2016).

Interestingly, the authors point out that learning a foreign culture through its language may offend the sense of belonging of an ethnic group or a particular country. In other words, if the target culture shared strong historical backgrounds with a specific geographic area, then the learners of that culture ought to analyse their own culture to avoid stereotypes and prejudgments of the target culture. Hence, language and culture should be taught together.

(Mazari & Derraz 2016) also warn that learning about the target culture in one's language is not advisable since it could shrink the educational value of the learning experience.

Moreover, the authors state that the choice that some countries make to learn particular cultures highlights the amount of significance that that country holds to that culture. Thus, they continue creating a cultural sensitivity in which literary texts of the relationship of both cultures are reviewed and language learners must recognize the features of the target culture. It can be argued that revisiting the literary texts to convey the target culture can be inappropriate in certain contexts of which historical conflicts existed between the mother and target culture. This can be especially true in the UAE-British and the Indian-British contexts. Therefore, culture should seem like a

dynamic tool that is changing constantly based on the different needs and circumstances of the evolving nations.

### **3.11 Relevant Studies in the UAE**

An empirical study conducted has provided evidence that there has been a convergence of the Western culture with that of the UAE (Hills and Atkins 2013). The national Gulf Arabs have claimed that it is common for the people of the country to differentiate from their cultural values and adopt Western culture. The convergence of Western attitudes and behaviour in the UAE have been observed in the business and management field. The authors opined that the culture in the UAE has developed and converged with the Western values so much that expatriates from the Western countries do not feel the need to adjust their values. In other words, there is no need to prepare for a cultural shock when people from Western countries migrate to the UAE. Besides, the use of English in the workplace has become a common phenomenon. The popularity of the language has encouraged the government of the UAE to implement educational reforms in the country (O'Sullivan 2015). The focus on such reforms is to hire skilled teachers and improve the quality of English education. As a result, educational institutions have been observed to hire a multicultural faculty. This is expected to empower the students to become better global citizens by gaining intercultural competence. Such skills are also expected to improve the employability of the students in the UAE so that they can seek employment internationally (Moore-Jones 2015).

It is often the case that language instructors experience anxiety while teaching students from other cultural backgrounds and learning practices to their own (Palmer 2015). A study on understanding cultural conflicts in EFL classrooms in two of the UAE universities focused purely on Arab students and were based on questionnaires and interviews which investigate the vital cultural differences between the two universities (Palmer 2015). Palmer stated that some native English teachers might be oblivious to the enormous cultural difference, and do not realise that much of the classroom management that they struggle to handle stem from such cultural differences. The author pointed out that Arab students and their western instructors encounter issues raised by cultural differences daily. It transpired that the three primary classroom cultural conflicts were; being disrespectful to religious customs, as both cultures have different perspectives on the role of religion in one's life. The second conflict was attributed to the inappropriate discussion/materials, whereas, the third was sensitivity towards mix-gender issues. Other cultural clashes revealed from

the study that identified other categories related to being too casual with students, teacher's dressing and appearance, family privacy intrusion, as well as Arab students' perception of western teachers being referred to as 'other'.

Interestingly, Palmer did a previous study on the same topic that focused on university students from different Arabic backgrounds, including the Emiratis (Palmer 2013). She found that (NESTs) have different personal beliefs than their students like confrontation to solve problems (55% and 44%, respectively). It came as no surprise that the students had a more positive approach to the Western tradition of education than their native instructors that is due to the native fallacy that most NNS happen to conceive (Miah 2017). Palmer's study also revealed that western instructors did not report any significant challenges in adjusting to teaching the Arabs, despite the big cultural differences (72% of instructors agreed/strongly agreed to the significant cultural difference).

The researcher of that study believes that observing classrooms is crucial when investigating a sensitive topic like culture. She further believes that being the "other" would help better in analysing the data while observing (NESTs). In other words, investigating the matter while being a researcher who is native to English, who "assess" a native teacher in an Arab culture classroom that is foreign to both sides, could be challenging. The reason being that the knowledge gap that the native researcher who did not grow up blending with the Arab society, faced difficulty in understanding the cultural holes that (NESTs) need to fill from an Arabic point of view. The researcher of the current study, however, claims to have rich cultural experience, being woven in the fabric of one of the most pluralistic countries in the world. One of the most critical findings of Palmer's study was the unanimity of western instructors on the importance of introducing cultural training sessions to EFL teachers working overseas.

In a study conducted on the public schools in the UAE it has been observed that while the faculty members are multi-cultural, the students are mono-cultural (Moore-Jones 2015). It has been stated that the faculty members tend to have assumptions based on their own culture which is substantially different from the one that the Emirati students possess. Aspects like the use of the English language by such a multi-cultural faculty is significantly different from that of the students. This implies that the students face difficulty in comprehending the lessons as it is taught by the teachers who come from a different cultural background. However, the authors have established that to enhance the career prospects of the students, it is essential to develop intercultural

competence. Besides, on account of globalisation, it has become crucial to have communication skills that can facilitate the transfer of messages and ideas between different cultures in an effective manner. Therefore, while multiculturalism in educational institutions leads to an enhanced risk of conflict between the students and teachers, it is essential to ensure that the candidates can become global citizens (Moore-Jones 2015). Moreover, on account of the focus on the improvement of the quality of education in the UAE, educational institutions are increasingly adopting a curriculum that follows international standards. Such a curriculum result in an increase in English as a Second Language program. To ensure that the students receive the best quality education that meets the global standards, teachers are recruited from different parts of the globe.

Another study conducted within the UAE has pointed out that while the public schools have been prompt in adapting to the educational reform, the private schools are lagging (O'Sullivan 2015). The governmental schools in the UAE have ensured to employ measures for the education of the teacher so that the educational reform can be implemented effectively. However, the private schools in Dubai have been ineffective in adopting the reforms and in making the necessary changes to their curriculum. This implies that there is a discrepancy between the policies that have been developed and the practice that is followed in the private schools of Dubai. It has been established in the study that the faculty members, as well as the students, are eager for the implementation of the new reforms. However, the administration is reluctant and the planning stages before the implementation have not been executed effectively. The author has opined that it is essential for the private schools of Dubai to make the changes so that they can keep up with the changes that are being implemented across the country (O'Sullivan 2015). The results have revealed that the reforms that have been implemented so far in the private schools have been reactive and not proactive. The author has recommended making arrangements for procuring the required resources so that the implementation can be proactive. Attracting skilled teachers has been recognised to be the most crucial step for ensuring that private schools can keep up with the new reforms.

Another relevant study was conducted on the integration of Western teachers into Emirati culture by interviewing six teachers and two leaders (Vonderlind 2015). According to Vonderlind, Western teachers were recruited in the UAE to collaborate with local teachers to ensure standard education in the region. Interestingly, Vonderlind revealed that the incentive to her study was the

tension that arose between both types of teachers. Her study concluded with highly positive statements that both Western and Emirati teachers managed their cultural differences successfully and that they both worked hard towards the philosophy of mutual respect without highlighting any negative or cultural issues about the initiative. It can be argued that revealing the motives of her study to the leaders she interviewed might have been the main reason for her idealistic findings.

One major drawback of Vonderlind's work is that the study is not being an insider of the targeted society. Hence the challenge to understand and analyse such a delicate matter that might create a conflict of interests would hardly be detected by an outsider. A second serious weakness of that study is the small number of teachers who participated in the interview, which can hardly represent the situation in the 580 schools across the country (U.S. Embassies 2018). The study, still, would have benefited from observing classrooms and interviewing students and parents to take a holistic view of the examined circumstances.

Furthermore, an Australian study focused on studying Emirati students and their Western teachers from a cross-cultural point of view (Diallo 2014). It investigated the conflict that a conservative Islamic society like the UAE is constantly influenced by the secular ideologies surrounding it. He argued that such ideologies are very different if not opposite to the Emirati culture. Thus, he focused on the complex educational context that both western-trained teachers and their students have to deal with, where both sides tend to manifest different social, cultural, and educational patterns, while dealing with each other. Diallo argues that teachers who are educated in the West are the inevitable product of liberal and secular epistemology and education.

The research, still, must stress on the fact that private schools in the UAE have always had liberal and sectoral orientations since the foundation of the country (Kieser 2010, Makdisi 2007). It would be noteworthy here to mention that the researcher of this study went to a private school in the '90s that was and still is run by nuns (Sharjah Private School). Thus, she believes that implying that the local society did not accept secular ideas in 2014 should be reconsidered when describing the nature of the complex societies, like that of the UAE's. Moreover, she believes that in 2018, Western teachers and their students are more aware now of each other's cultures, yet they both lack the skill of dealing with handling the different state of affairs (the art of know-how).

Today, it can be observed that many Arabs especially in the Gulf region countries, tend to use English to communicate with other Arabs, insert English words to their Arabic conversations, or even use western gestures (Albirini 2016). The study also capsulated the identity of Emirati students in being products of Islamic education and leading conservative lifestyles. Correspondingly, the researcher, does not totally agree with this sweep generalization of Emiratis for the very fact that they happen to be the minority in their own country and have always been shaped by the predominant cultures around them such as the Indians in the past, and the Anglophone cultures in the last decade (Heard-Bey 2004). Diallo concluded that there is an urge to create a 'meeting place' or a free zone that is remote from any cultural and identity threats to offer a healthy environment in which cross-cultural educational context could take place. His conclusion corresponds to the vision of the UAE government in becoming a liberal country (Crabtree 2007).

Another study that investigated how Western values influence Emiratis' moral believes through an educational context (Ali 2016). It examined the perspectives of Western teachers, their Emirati students, as well as the students' parents on the characteristics of 'good education'. The result of the mixed method that involved 49 Western teachers, 49 Emirati students, as well as 49 parents, found that Emirati's values were being underestimated by their western teachers. This study could suggest the western teachers tend to impose their cultural values in their classrooms while discarding their students' molarities. The current study, yet, would investigate this aspect in a broader scale by examining (NESTs) in multi-ethnic classrooms to better understand the causes behind it.

A study on L2 motivation that targeted 114 multi-ethnic students in British curriculum schools in the UAE found that students were instigated to be multilingual and not limit themselves to learning English (Calafato & Tang 2018). The study, however, pointed out that the same student was not keen on learning Arabic culture. Although it is clear that one of the advantages of attending intercultural school is to be curious to learn others' languages, further investigation is needed to learn about Arabic and the local cultures being referred to in these schools. In view of that, the local culture element would be carefully examined while observing English classes in an attempt to fathom the degree of the local culture's relevance in classroom discussions and activities.

Another study has been conducted in the UAE, where the influence of cultural sensitivity has been highlighted. It has been found that the native English teachers are unaware of the Islamic culture prevalent in the Gulf countries, which can often create communicational issues and cultural conflict in the classrooms (Gobert 2015). The author has highlighted the fact that a large number of expatriates from the western nations work as teaching faculties in the Middle Eastern nations. Most of these teachers lack the cultural awareness, which is related to the Islamic religion. It has been discussed that the academic curriculum or the learning content should be deeply integrated with the macroenvironmental factors, involving the societal aspects. Discussions involving certain topics are considered taboo in the Middle Eastern culture, such as consumption of pork or alcohol, AIDS, Arab Springs, etc. Therefore, it is important for the expatriate teachers to have a clear understanding of all cultural stigmas and prohibitions, so that the associated topics or controversial statements are avoided in the classrooms. It is important to ensure that the cultural conflict and cognitive dissonance between the values and beliefs of the students, and what is being taught to them is avoided. This study has helped in understanding how cultural background can influence the perception of the students in a classroom, which demands cultural training for the teachers, especially the ones belonging to the western culture.

A study has highlighted in the field of teaching English as foreign language (EFL) in the UAE, the instructors and the students come from different ethnic backgrounds. Most of the EFL teachers are outsourced from the western countries, in order to maintain a good quality of teaching in the classrooms. However, from the perspective of the teachers, it has been mentioned that they often find it quite challenging to adjust to the culture of the host country. These expatriates have to leave their home country to come and work in a nation where the cultural practices and customs are strikingly different (Palmer 2015). The study has identified 9 different types of cultural conflicts, involving the following aspects: lack of respect for the domestic religion and religious practices, unfairness of treatment by the instructors, interaction between genders, alienation of western teachers by the students, affecting personal image in the classroom, inappropriate content or study materials, and dressing and appearance. In this context, it has been mentioned that proper cultural and social training is needed for the teachers, in order to make them aware of the cultural appropriateness of the teaching methods and interactions. In most cases, the teachers unknowingly interact with the students, in such a manner that can be considered culturally inappropriate and can cause outrage or conflict in the class.

Another study in the UAE showcases the presence of unity amidst diversity in the UAE classrooms. This study seeks to find out how educational practitioners can develop their teaching processes and training materials based on empirical evidences of their effectiveness in a culturally diverse classroom. It has also focused on highlighting the challenges posed by globalisation and how to address them effectively, and how to spread more awareness for the same among teaching faculties. Thirdly, this study has highlighted the importance of English as a common language for businessmen, alongside the local languages. Finally, this study has also highlighted the importance of developing teaching projects for senior students that can make them more proficient in communication and interaction in the global business environment (Nickerson 2015).

The UAE has been characterised to have a highly complex history and amidst the significant economic changes in the nation, the issue of cultural identity has become quite relevant. The advent of globalisation has brought the English language in the country in an all-pervasive manner, so much so that it has been integrated deeply within the modern culture of the UAE (Hopkyns 2014). The study has shown that native people from the UAE agree that global English has affected Emirati culture and its identity. It has been mentioned that adopting global English may allow the Emirati people to become more relevant in the international job market, and attract foreign employers. Moreover, it also makes conducting cross-border trade easier with western nations. However, the implementation of English has been termed as a “double-edged sword” in the UAE. While global English can lead to better internationalisation of businesses, it can also lead to identity crisis from a cultural perspective. In many cases, integrating global English can put the existence and relevance of the national culture at risk and can lead to resentment and alienation among people, especially among students. Thus, it has been recommended in situations where possible, integration of local content can prove to be helpful. Global English can be adopted effectively, as long as the local cultural customs are maintained along with it.

### **3.12 Relevant Studies outside the UAE**

A research carried out on the students of the USA and Bulgaria has revealed cultural background can have some impact on the learning styles of the candidates. The objective of the study was to determine how the difference in culture translates into different learning styles. It has been found that based on Kolb’s learning styles framework, the students from both the cultures were quite similar, as majority of them preferred assimilation and convergence style of learning (Budeva, et

al. 2015). Thus, it can be stated that cultural difference, may have differential effect on the learning styles, and may not always differ from one culture to another. However, it is essential for the faculties to have a clear idea of the cultural background and the type of learning styles that aligns with it. Adopting the teaching methods based on the right learning style of the students can prove to be more effective in improving the quality of teaching.

A study conducted in India, has highlighted the context of teaching English in a multicultural classroom. It has been discussed that in a multicultural classroom, depending on the ethnic background of the students, they have varying degree of competence when it comes to grasping the English language. The native students find it quite challenging to learn, whereas the expatriates find it much easier (Choudhary 2016). Thus, it can be stated that the cultural background of the students can play a crucial role in language learning. In this context, the author has highlighted the importance of the teaching methods. The teacher should not just play a role of dispenser of knowledge, but should also act as a facilitator and guide. In a multi-cultural environment, the teachers should be able to recognise the cultural differences among the students and should ensure that sufficient guidance is provided to each one them as required. While it is true that different students require a varying degree of guidance and support, the teachers should also ensure that any form of cultural biasness is avoided. From the perspective of cultural equality, every student should be given equal opportunity and treatment, especially in a multicultural classroom.

A research carried out in the UK has highlighted how the behaviour of the students from a different ethnic community can be interpreted. It has been found that Malaysian students studying in the UK maintains silence, as compared to other native students. The underlying reason has been attributed to the fact that silence can be attributed to their native cultural practice and also as a way on portraying their personality (Yamat et al. 2013). The authors have further stated that the Malaysian students maintain silence as a coping mechanism in the learning process also as a way of expressing their identity in the multicultural classroom. From the perspective of the teachers, it has been mentioned that each faculty teaching in a multicultural environment, should be able to interpret behaviour of the students before taking major decisions. Students from different cultural backgrounds are likely to have different responses in a multicultural setting. Therefore, it is essential for the teachers to recognise them appropriately.

An international study has been conducted, by interviewing students from various countries. Based on the study, it has been found that the communicating language in the classroom should be carefully chosen, in terms of its form and content. It has been mentioned that the choice of the classroom language should improve interactivity among students and also their tolerance towards other cultures. In this situation, it is important that the teachers are able to identify the cultural background of the students and co-operate with them in order to achieve communicative aims. It is only natural that some students may find the classroom language to be difficult to follow, however it is necessary for the teachers to be patient and supportive with them, and help them to grasp the language (Mukhametzyanova and Svirina 2016). In this context, it can be stated that the teachers are required to be extra considerate towards the students, who do not belong to the native ethnic groups and may find it difficult to blend or cope with the classroom.

A descriptive study conducted in the Netherlands showcases the connection between two aspects of cultural diversity in education, which are culturally diverse learning environment and collaborative learning (Tielman, et al. 2012). It has been mentioned by the authors that the behaviour of the students in a multi-cultural classrooms are prominently different, as compared to a culturally dominant classroom. The cultural diversity of the classrooms compel the students to become more focused in their own academic performance. Most students studying in a multicultural environment are highly conscious about their own persona or image, in the classroom, in front of other peers from different cultural backgrounds. This, as a result, has also led to poor collaboration among the students. It has been also found that the teachers are mostly unaware of their role in the management process of the multicultural classrooms, and their influence on the behaviour of the students. This study highlights the importance of the involvement of the teachers with the students and proper identification of the issues prevalent within a multicultural environment.

A research has been conducted in Romania, to recognise the factors of cultural intelligence. It has been mentioned in the study that cultural intelligence is a relatively new concept. It has been popularised mostly in the wake of globalisation, where people from different cultural backgrounds come together to achieve a common goal. Based on this concept, it has been highlighted that some people are better equipped to adapt to a different ethnic environment, compared to others (Brancu, et al. 2016). The idea of cultural intelligence, defined in terms of cross-cultural interaction, has

been segregated into four different aspects, which are metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural. Each of these aspects of cultural intelligence have been found to govern certain aspects of the behaviour of the students. It has been found that students who possess higher cultural intelligence are more likely to become successful as an organisational asset for a global firm. These global professionals are motivated to learn about new cultures, their practices and customs and the underlying nuances, which makes them more adaptive towards them, when they are in direct exposure. Moreover, it has been also found that experiences of intercultural interaction should be leveraged to learn about foreign cultures, which can shape one's ability to harmoniously work with their peers.

### **3.13 Contribution**

The literature overviewed that debates on language and culture. It did that by discussing significant points like cultural competence, and the debate of teaching culture considering the social and national identity. Besides, it discussed the relevant studies conducted in the UAE, pertain to (NESTs) and their cultural competence. This chapter also proposed the frameworks that are believed to be suitable for the study, as well as identify the main concepts that frequently appear throughout the sections.

Most studies in the field that were conducted in the UAE have focused on native teacher's struggle to cope with other cultures. The evidence that native English teachers working in the UAE are still not widely investigated pertain to their influence on their students. Also, there is insufficient description in the regional studies of how teachers and students use English in classrooms (Van den Hoven, Melanie 2017).

The current study's emphases revolves around the subject-matter knowledge of the various ethnicities living in the UAE and not focusing on Arabs only to provide a broader perspective. The researcher believes that studying the impressions that (NESTs) give through their classroom attitudes, would help to offer a comprehensive overview of the collective cosmopolitan lifestyle that is woven into the fabric of if its local society in the UAE since its foundation in 1972 (Aswad, et al. 2011). Therefore, the current study is believed to be unique in two aspects:

- 1- The focus on studying the cultural competence of (NESTs) and the perception they promote to their students.

- 2- The focus of the cultural interactions between (NESTs) and their students in language learning classrooms.

The ethnographic analysis orientation of the data from the perspective of the researcher as a local Emirati would benefit the study by looking through the lens of being a local minority of a country of an interesting ethnic mixture of different cultures. This lens is believed to help provide an insightful overview that might provoke the awareness of how educators in the UAE, best conceive the rich cultural diversity in the country, as nationalism is back in the age of globalisation.

### **3.12 Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher has reviewed literature with the intention of gaining insights about the multicultural impact on pedagogy. Firstly, the risks associated with super-diversity, as it exists in the UAE, and the challenges that arise on account of intercultural classrooms have been identified to be predominantly associated with ineffective communication and lack of awareness. Thereafter, the roles as performed by both the NESTs and NNESTs have been established so that discrepancies in the current study can be identified. Literature on cultural identity revealed its importance in language learning, and in adaptation and adjustment. It has been observed that intercultural competence is an essential skill for a teacher in order to communicate effectively in a multicultural setting. The importance of equality and justice in terms of treatment and opportunity have also been observed both from the perspectives of the teachers and the students.

Studies conducted both with the UAE as well as in other countries have revealed that the English language has gained importance in the field of business and management. Therefore, in order to enhance the employability of the students, it is essential that English is taught effectively. The UAE recently has adopted educational reforms that are aimed at improving the quality of the educational institutions so as to meet the global standards. While cultural differences from the perspective of Western expatriates in the UAE are negligible, and therefore, clashes on account of the difference in value systems are a rare occurrence. However, the studies have revealed that cultural clashes exist within the classrooms of the UAE. The studies conducted outside the UAE have similarly revealed that cultural background can have some impact on the learning styles of the candidates. Therefore, in order to ensure that the learning process is effective, adopting the appropriate teaching methods based on the right learning style of the students is crucial.

Based on the review of relevant literature, it is evident that perspective of native English teachers working in the UAE are still not widely investigated in terms of their influence on their multicultural students. Therefore, the current study has attempted to bridge such gaps by conducting an in-depth analysis about the perspective that the native teachers have as far as the cultural aspects of teaching a multi-cultural classroom is concerned. The unique aspect or the originality of the current study can be evidenced from the fact that the focus is on studying the cultural competence of the NESTs and their perception of culture in a language learning classroom that consist of students from various cultural backgrounds.

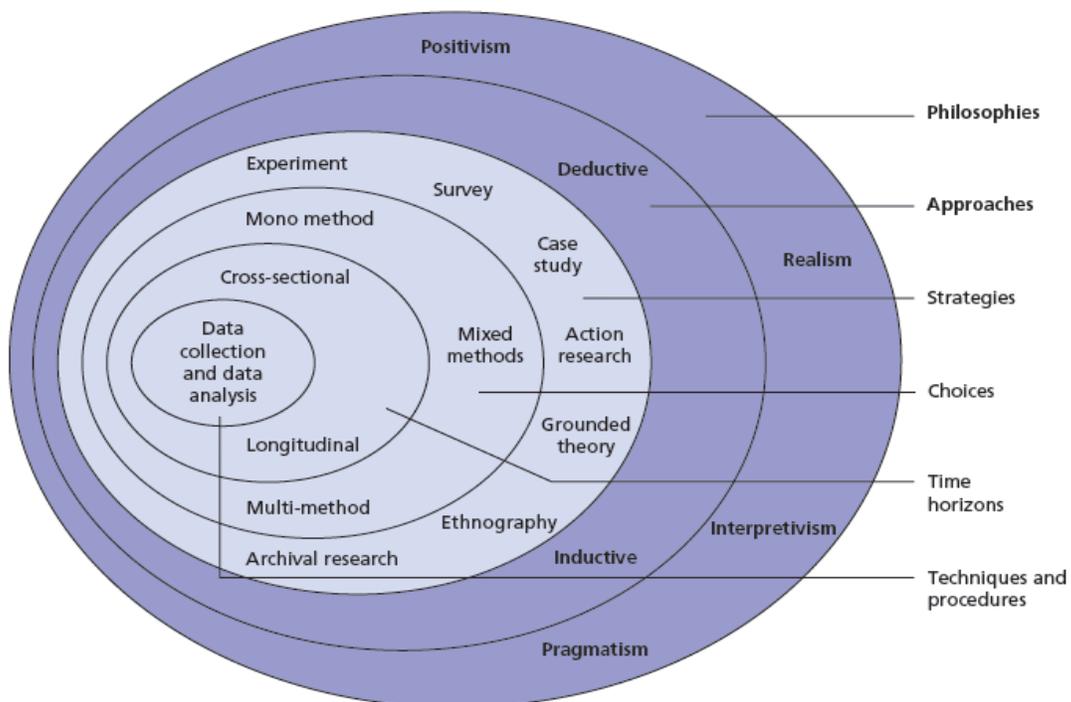
## 4.0 Research Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter underpins the set of tools, techniques, and procedures necessary for carrying out the study. In other words, the section explains the process of conducting the investigation of the current state of affairs of cultural perspective of native teachers of English with intercultural classrooms in some private schools in the UAE.

The research onion has been referred to for elaborating the various choices of tools and techniques that are available and thereafter, justifying the one that is suitable for the particular requirements of the current study (refer to Figure 2). The term has been defined as a tool that illustrates the various stages of the research process, and therefore, enabling the researcher to comprehend the progression of the study in a methodical and rational manner (Saunders 2011). The tool is referred to as an onion on account of the layers that tools and techniques that must be considered for conducting the study. Based on the conventions stated under the research onion, a systematic application of logic is necessary to determine the most suitable technique for establishing the cultural perception of native teachers of English from the perspective of educational institutions in the UAE.

**Figure 2: The Research Onion**



(Source: Saunders 2011)

In the following sections of this chapter, the various layers of the research onion have been used as a framework for describing the various methods that exist and justifying the one that is appropriate, based on the requirements of the current study. In other words, the term has been referred to in order to determine the suitable methods for establishing the cultural perception of native teachers of English from the perspective of private educational institutions in the UAE.

The layers of the research onion include philosophy (or paradigm), approach, strategy, choice, time horizon and lastly, the techniques and procedures (refer to Figure 2). At the innermost layer of the research onion, the techniques and procedures that are employed for the collection and analysis of the data are elaborated. On account of the complexity of these layers, it has been broken down into two sub-sections for the ease of organising and reading. The sections include data collection and data analysis. The process employed for the collection of data also includes the selection of the site and research participants, the instruments used for gathering the required data, and designing the questionnaires. The data analysis sections discuss the tools that would be used for the conversion of the raw data to meaningful information. In addition to the factions of the research onion, certain other aspects that have not been covered in the framework have also been elaborated in this chapter. These include the elaboration of the ethical considerations and highlighting the potential limitations of this study. Lastly, the choices of research methodologies have been summarised for the convenience of the readers.

## **4.2 Research Paradigm**

The research paradigm helps in defining scientific research philosophy. In order to conduct effective research, a researcher needs to have a clear understanding of the paradigms which provides the theoretical, philosophical, methodological and instrumental foundations. The research paradigm can be defined as a wide structure involving the beliefs, perceptions and awareness of various theories and practices which are used to conduct the chosen study. As mentioned by the authors, the research paradigm can be segregated into positivist/post-positivist, interpretivist/constructivist, transforming and pragmatist (Žukauskas, et al., 2018).

Positivism oriented studies are based on factual knowledge that has been collected by observation and trustworthy measurements. In this case, the researcher performs data collection and its

interpretation in an objective way, which ensures that the researcher is independent of the study and its outcome. Thus, in the case of the positivist research paradigm, there is no room for human biases in the research output (Mkansi & Acheampong 2012). Moreover, positivism-based research works depend on observable data which are quantifiable in nature. The gathered data can undergo statistical analysis, which indicates that positivist studies are mostly based on quantitative data, which can be used for empirical hypotheses testing. More emphasis has been given on the fact that positivist studies are based on existing theories and facts and do not take human experience or intervention into consideration (Holden & Lynch 2004).

Interpretivist research works are mostly based on a naturalistic approach of gathering data through collection procedures such as observation and interviews. However, this type of study is also conducted based on secondary data. Interpretivism based studies are associated with relativist ontology, which perceives knowledge to be subjective and is mostly dependent on social understanding and experiential levels. In this case, it has been further mentioned that people cannot be separated from the research, as it focuses on the perceived knowledge of the researcher, rather than highlighting absolute truth, which is independent of human understanding (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012). The gathered knowledge is relative and is time and context-bound. This type of study is conducted by gathering data from primary and secondary sources and interpreting them based on individual understanding and logic (Collins 2018). Thus, it should be noted that interpretivist studies can have different outcomes, based on the nature of understanding of the researcher.

Transformation or transformative studies are aimed to challenge and change the existing paradigms. These shifts in paradigm segregated transformative studies from traditional research works, which are mostly focussed on the traditional knowledge base. This type of study is able to bring striking changes in society and can transform the general belief of the people (Trevors, et al. 2012). Both qualitative and quantitative data can be used in transformative research. Specific historical data are gathered to highlight how existing customs are misaligned with the current social construct, thereby, challenging the pervasive social stigmas. A wide spectrum form of measurement and observations are required to develop a strong argument that opposes existing social practices (Žukauskas, et al. 2018).

Finally, the pragmatism research paradigm is based on the concepts and knowledge that can support action. This philosophy is based on the idea that there can be multiple ways of interpreting the perceived reality (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Pragmatic researches focus on the practical implementation of the research output, which can provide actionable knowledge. This type of study is closely associated with the real-world environment and social construct. The researchers often adopt various available methods and resources to meet the research objectives. It should be noted that the pragmatist studies, just like interpretivist studies, consider the interaction of the researcher or the observer as a significant factor that determines the research output. The human factor is closely associated with the research process. This research paradigm encourages researchers to engage in ethical practices involved in a study in order to reduce personal biasness. It has been also mentioned that the use of both qualitative and quantitative studies contribute equally to the research outcome and each research method is given equal importance (Gammage, et al., 2005).

This particular study is based on the pragmatic approach of the research paradigm. This paradigm has been chosen because it fits appropriately with the research objectives. The objective of the study is to find out how different cultural elements influence the native English teachers in the UAE, and how the behaviour and interaction of the native English teachers can impact the behaviour of the students. The sole purpose of the study is to shed some light on the cultural interaction in a multi-cultural classroom and to present a clear understanding of how the cultural interaction between the native English teachers and the students can influence the behaviour of both parties. In order to conduct this research, different types of data measurement systems needs to be adopted. Moreover, the concept of cross-cultural management and interaction is one of the most pervasive aspects amidst the growing trend of globalisation. Educational institutions, along with workplaces are now characterised by the presence of people coming from different cultural backgrounds. In this context, it can be stated that this study is based on a more practical scenario, rather than a theoretical aspect. The study on the cultural impact on the stakeholders of an educational institution can help to devise more effective learning plans. Thus, this research work is based on potential actions, which makes it the right fit for the pragmatic paradigm. The research output can provide actionable information, which can be followed by educational institutions.

Moreover, in this study, since the researcher is planning to implement the qualitative method to assess to what extent the culture of the language teacher impacts multi-cultural students. Hence, the study is interested in implementing a pragmatic approach that allows the researcher to investigate all possible outcomes. The integration of the proposed frameworks is expected to offer a unique insight into the data analysis. In essence, pragmatism is a thorough philosophical school of thought that is relevant to social structures and phenomena (Yvonne Feilzer 2010). This approach allows an articulate and inclusive analysis of studies based on the theories they establish, as well as contains researchers' intellectual creativity and imagination of social phenomena (Coleman & Salamon 1988). Moreover, pragmatism is referred to as the paradigm that is capable of conceiving truth and reality from a philosophical perspective, as the existence of singular and complicated matters are subject to the empirical inquiry as well as problem-solving techniques (Dewey 2008, Haas & Haas 2002, Reason 2003).

It should also be highlighted that the positivism paradigm has been avoided as this study is based on the perceived reality of a cross-cultural environment, which needs to incorporate the element of human interaction. Therefore, the subjective perception of the impact of culture has to be studied. Moreover, other forms of research paradigm, such as interpretivism and transformative approach has been avoided because, this study is based on the use of a combination of different forms of data assessment, which can help in meeting the research objectives. Thus, it can be stated that the paradigm of pragmatism is suitable for this particular study.

### **4.3 Research Approach**

The research approach determines the underlying method of logical reasoning that has been adopted by a researcher. It is associated with how the data of research work is gathered, inferred and used to meet the research objectives. In the premise of social sciences, the approach of research can be broken down into three different types such as inductive, deductive and abductive (Bell, et al. 2018).

The deductive reasoning progresses from a general to a more specific perspective, which structures the study in a top-down framework. The study begins with studying the existing theories on the chosen file proposed by the various scholars. Based on these theories, a hypothesis is formed, which is then tested by using observational data. In a deductive study, the observation is confirmed in relation to the existing theories. A researcher seeks to find out whether or not the gathered data

aligns with the existing theories (Quinlan, et al. 2019). Moreover, in a deductive inference, it is assumed that when premises are correct, the conclusion must also be correct. The research output from a deductive study can be applied in specific situations. Thus, this type of study is more streamlined and may not be generalised into a broader context. Furthermore, no new theories are developed from a deductive study, as it is only focused on ensuring whether or not the hypothesis is related to the existing studies.

Contrastingly, the inductive approach of logical reasoning progresses from a specific to a generalist perspective. From a structural point of view, this type of research work follows a “bottom-up” framework of the study. This type of research work begins with observation in the area of interest or chosen topic. Based on this observation, a pattern is generated, which is used to form a tentative hypothesis. This hypothesis is then tested to form a new theory (Thomas 2006). The purpose of an inductive study is to develop a new theory from the observational or experimental data, which can be used in a much broader perspective. From this type of study, the researcher is able to derive untested conclusions from known premises. A specific phenomenon is explored by using the collected data, where themes are identified, patterns are recognised and a conceptual framework is developed. An inductive study is more appropriate in case of researches where new theoretical frameworks are required for problem-solving, rather than verification of existing theoretical frameworks.

Finally, in the case of the abductive approach, the known premises are used to develop testable conclusions. This form of logical reasoning is used to test and provide explanations about incomplete observations. It can be used to identify and address the shortcomings of the deductive and inductive studies. Abductive logical reasoning provides the best prediction for an unexplained statement or fact (Tavory & Timmermans 2014). Few of the stated facts often cannot be explained with existing theories or theoretical constructs. Moreover, there is also a significant lack of existing data that can help in finding a pattern in the chosen context. In such situations, the abductive reasoning can be useful, where a researcher aims at finding the explanation. It is mostly used for generalisation and modification of the theory.

In the case of this research work, the inductive approach has been chosen. This approach can be justified by the close association with the research objectives. Since the inductive approach progresses from specific to the generalist perspective, the research outcome of this study can be

used in various cross-cultural settings. In this study, the research has been conducted in a setting of native English teachers in the UAE, which can help to identify how cross-cultural interaction plays a major part in the learning process. This, as a result, can help to formulate a generalised theory that can be applied to identical situations in various other cultural environments.

Moreover, the purpose of the study is to find develop a conceptual framework, which can relate the cultural background of the teacher, with the behaviour of the students and the adaptability of the teachers teaching in the UAE. Thus, new theories can be developed from this study, which is the fundamental premise of an inductive study. The deductive approach has been avoided because no verification or confirmation of theories is being carried out. Likewise, the abductive approach has been avoided, as there are no surprising facts that need explanation. This study aims at highlighting the impact of cultural background and human behaviour, which is a well-established area of interest. Therefore, the choice of the inductive approach is suitable for this particular research work.

#### **4.4 Research Strategy**

The research strategies determine the choice of sources from which the required data has been gathered to conduct the study. Based on the nature of the objective, the data can be collected from various different sources, such as from an interview, survey, observation, case studies, books, journals and experimentation. These sources can be segregated into primary and secondary in nature (Quinlan, et al. 2019). The primary data are the ones which are collected directly from the respondents or participants by adopting a series of methods such as survey, interview, observation, etc. It allows the researcher to specifically gather the information which is necessary to meet the research objectives. The key advantage of using primary data is that the collected data are specifically tailored to the concerned study. Moreover, the primary data offers the most recent data for a study, thereby, making the study more reliable. However, it should be also noted that using primary data to conduct a study may require more time and effort, which can pose as a hurdle for some researchers, especially in the sample size is bigger (Walliman 2017).

On the other hand, secondary researches rely on data that have been previously published by various authors. Thus, in the case of secondary research, the researcher does not collect data directly from the respondents, but rather collect them from journal articles, case studies, annual or financial report, etc. Using secondary data for a research work requires much less time and effort

compared to primary data since the researcher does not have to carry out data collection processes like interview or survey (Wilson 2014). Therefore, secondary data-based studies can be completed much faster. However, it should be noted that secondary researches are less reliable in comparison to primary researches, as the data is collected from the findings of other research works, or from various published sources. The accuracy of the research outcome relies on the accuracy of the data presented by the authors of the said publications. Therefore, a researcher does not have much control over the quality of the research output. Moreover, secondary data may not offer recent data, which may be required for a more effective acknowledgement of the problem statement.

In the case of this research work, the data has been gathered from the primary sources. The choice of primary data can be justified by the objective of the research work. Since this study seeks to find out about the cross-cultural interaction and adaptation of the native English teachers in the UAE, it is more effective in gathering the data directly from them. The research output should be more accurate if the data is gathered directly from the native English teachers who have been teaching in the UAE and are exposed to the cross-cultural interaction. This approach should provide more accurate information about the cultural obstacles faced by the native English teachers and the degree of adjustment they need to perform to teach in the current classroom setting. Moreover, the choice of the primary data has also helped in gathering the data about the behavioural aspects of the students, associated with the interaction with the native English teachers. The use of secondary data has been avoided mostly because the objective of the study is highly streamlined, as it focuses solely on native English teachers in the UAE. Gathering the required data about cross-cultural interaction from existing studies for the said scenario can be relatively challenging. Owing to the highly specific nature of the research work. Moreover, secondary data could have led to less reliable research output. Therefore, primary data has been appropriately chosen for this research work.

#### **4.5 Research Choice**

The choice of research, determines the nature of data that has been used to conduct the study. Typically, a research work can be conducted by using the qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method. Qualitative data is descriptive in nature and does not contain any numerical data which can undergo calculation. This type of data does not require any form of statistical analysis and is often self-explanatory in nature. Qualitative data is used to perform exploratory research work,

which is mostly focused on understanding the personal experiences, which cannot be easily quantified. It also helps to represent the opinions and behavioural trends in a more seamless manner (Quinlan, et al. 2019).

On the other hand, quantitative data is numerical in nature and can undergo mathematical calculations. In order to conduct a quantitative study, the gathered numerical data needs to be statistically analysed, using proper tools and methods. The quantitative data is not self-explanatory in nature and can only be used to meet the research objectives after it has been properly analysed. Using quantitative data is most useful for establishing a correlation between different variables or establish future trends based on existing behaviour of the research participants (Bell, et al. 2018). Moreover, quantitative data can also be represented in the form of graphs and charts for easy visual presentation of the collected data.

Finally, the mixed method involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative data. Based on the objective of research work, the researcher may need to use both qualitative, as well as quantitative data. This approach can help in reinforcing the findings of the study, thereby, making it more reliable (Walliman 2017). In such situations, the researcher often conducts a survey, as well as an interview of the participants, which yields both quantitative and qualitative data.

In the case of this research work, this study has been conducted by using qualitative data. The choice of qualitative data can be justified by the fact it that it aligns properly with the chosen research objectives. This study seeks to find out about the details of the behaviour and cross-cultural interaction between the students and the native English teachers. Therefore, gathering quality is more suitable than quantitative data. In this case, it should also be mentioned that there is no requirement in establishing any correlation between variables in the research objectives, therefore, the use of quantitative data has been avoided.

#### **4.6 Site and Participant Selection**

The site and participant selection involve choosing the required sample size and research population. The research population is the group of people about whom the conclusion is being drawn as a part of the research objective (Taherdoost 2016). In this case, the research population is the native English teachers in the UAE and the students enrolled in their classes. The sample group is a small section of the research population on whom the research is being conducted and

it represents the entire research population. Since a study cannot be practically conducted on the entire research population, selecting the sample group is essential (Quinlan, et al. 2019). A sample group can be selected based on various processes depending on the nature of the study and its objectives. In this case, the convenience sampling process has been adopted. Convenience sampling allows a researcher to choose the participants of the study, based on the convenience of the researcher. In order to meet the objectives of this study, the researcher has conducted a study on 4 different schools in the UAE and their teachers and students. This has helped to present a clear understanding of the present situation of all the schools in the UAE.

One of the unique aspects of conducting this study is the focus on Dubai which is a cosmopolitan city with the most population in the UAE (3.3 million out of 9.6 million living in the country). Besides, there are 194 private schools in Dubai, with a total of 187 different nationalities with more than 20 types of school curricula (Edarabia 2019). Below is a table of some of the curricula taught in the UAE taken from the (UAE Curricula Guides).

**Table 1. Example of Types of School Curricula Taught in the UAE**

There are two distinct educational systems in Dubai; the public sector that is mainly for local

Example of types of school curricula taught in the UAE			
Serial	Curriculum	Country of Origin	No. of schools
1	EYFS	UK	200
2	UK National Curriculum	UK	142
3	US HS Diploma	US	80
4	CBSE	India	78
5	A Level	UK	78
6	IGCSE	UK	73
7	AS Level	UK	62
8	GCSE	UK	59
9	IB DP	Switzerland	51
10	UAE MoE	UAE	50

Emiratis, and the private sector that is dominated by expatriates living in the city. It is noteworthy

to mention; however, that private school entry in Dubai that has been substantial was the number of schools that doubled in number and size, whereas, public schools suffered from the shrinking number of enrolment recently, due to the poor quality of education in these schools (Soto 2016). Thus, the phenomenon of recruiting Western teachers is increasing as part of the Educational reform in the country (Vonderlind 2015).

Private schools in Dubai are known to be expensive with an annual fee, ranging between 1,400\$ (about 5000 AED) in crowded classrooms and 25,000\$ (about 91,800 AED) in more reputable institutes (Soto 2016). The low fee schools mostly target Indians, Pakistanis, and Filipino students, whereas, the high fee schools predominantly target Western students with very few Emirati teachers (Vonderlind 2015).

With a hierarchical society like the UAE where most educational reforms are assumingly decided by the Ministry of Education in the country, establishing culturally homogenous schools can take years. This is especially challenging with the high rate of short-term contract Western teachers in cities like Dubai and Abu Dhabi (Vonderlind 2015).

Below are the tentatively selected schools that the research is planning to contact, based on top schools in Dubai (Edarabia 2018) – the researcher may need to contact other private schools in case of lack of cooperation:

#	School Name	Curriculum	Founded	KHDA Rating
1	Pristine Private School	British	1992	Good
2	Kings' School Al Barsha	British	2014	Very Good
3	Horizon International School	British, IGCSE	2008	Good
4	King's School in Dubai	British	2004	Outstanding
6	GEMS Wellington Academy, Alkhail	British	2013	Good
7	Regent International School, Dubai	British	1993	Good

8	Nord Anglia International School Dubai	British, IB	2013	Very Good
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For this study, the researcher discarded the Asian curricula, i.e. Iranian and Indian in order to avoid the dominance of students who belong to these ethnicities in such schools. Instead, the researcher believes that western curricula appeals to more diverse citizens living in Dubai, including local Emiratis (see Appendix A)

*4.1.1 Teachers:* The study would select a total of 10 (NESTs) teaching in Dubai. The researcher will try to focus on choosing the typical white native teacher to interview to capture the accurate perception of students/parents of native speakers of English.

Also, due to the current short-term teaching contracts in the country, it would be challenging to require five years of teaching experience from the teachers taking part in this study. Thus, the researcher thinks of waiving this condition and act pragmatically. In case of data insufficiency, the researcher might opt to include schools of other Emirates as well.

*4.1.2 Students:* The study is planning to survey Dubai students who go to private schools only. Private school parents are expected to be targeted classroom observation to add another dimension to the data analysis. It aims at targeting the students' point of view through classroom observation. The researcher believes that observing the students would be necessary to get the overall idea of how cultural competence is being manifested in multicultural classrooms. Also, it would help in gathering the collective experience of Dubai citizens on (NESTs) in the long-run.

#### **4.8 Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection is one of the essential steps in a research methodology, as it allows a researcher to gather all the necessary data which is essential to meet the research objectives. The method of data collection largely depends on the objective of the research work. It also determines the reliability of the research output; therefore, it is imperative for a researcher to carry out the data collection process meticulously (Saunders et al. 2012).

As mentioned earlier, the study is based on qualitative data from primary sources. A semi-structured interview has been performed, where the native English teachers have been asked a

series of questions, which has revealed their interaction with the students, thereby, highlighting the cross-cultural exposure and its impact. Moreover, it has also helped in understanding the teachers working in the UAE who have adapted to foreign culture and how it has impacted their daily work performance. The data has also been collected by using the observation method. The observation has been conducted to record the interaction between the native English teachers and the students in the classroom. It has been helped to gain a better understanding of how their behaviour is influenced during their interaction with the English teachers.

The semi-structured interviews have been recorded while communicating with the teachers in a voice recorder. These recordings have then been sorted and converted to written transcripts, which are more precise in nature. This, as a result, has made it easier for the researcher to have a better understanding of the gathered data. The data from the observation has been recorded in written format, where the behavioural aspects of the students and the teacher have been noted for every class. It has been ensured that all the data that has been gathered from the sample group has been recorded accurately and are present in written format, in order to make it easier for the researcher to perform the analysis. It should be noted that interviewing the students have been discarded so that any kind of biased responses from the immature young learners are avoided. The gathered data have been stored securely in the cloud, to avoid any form of misuse or theft.

#### 4.8.1 Qualitative instruments

The qualitative part of the study would be divided as follows:

<b>Target</b>	<b>Number of participants/classes</b>	<b>Type of instrument</b>
(NESTs)	10	Observed and interviewed
Students	20 classes	Observed only

##### 4.8.1.1 Semi-Structured interviews

The researcher has observed that the teachers in classrooms then interview them on a following stage, to comprehend the cultural incidents from the teachers' point of view. It is noteworthy to mention that the researcher is aware that interviewing (NESTs) could result in gathering some

false information that is cautiously altered to soothe the “local investigator with a hidden agenda”. Thus, the interview questions were carefully ordered to evade any impression of prejudice. Additionally, the researcher has attempted to strike an equal balance in the interviews with the participants to give them the liberty to express their perspective without feeling dominated by the interviewer (Creswell & Poth 2017).

#### **4.8.1.2 Lesson Observation**

Lesson observation is used by educators and researchers worldwide to measure teaching quality and enhance it through insightful analysis (Edgington 2016). With that being said, the research suggests the inefficiency of some observations due to emotionally-related challenges that can affect the authenticity of teaching and the fear of being judged by others (Price 2001).

#### **4.9 Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire has been designed by following a semi-structured approach, where some of the questions asked to the teachers have a determined sequence, whereas, the rest have been asked based on the progress of the interview. The structured questions are focused on finding out the obstacles and hurdles faced by native English teachers while teaching in the UAE (refer to Appendix B). A series of questions involving their personal experience of the issues faced in a cultural context have been asked. The unstructured questions have been asked on the premise of how the teachers are able to adjust to the cultural difference in the multi-cultural environment and their personal experiences involved in the process. It has been ensured that the interview questionnaire is not too long so that the valuable time of the teachers is not wasted.

The questionnaire also includes a section for collecting the personal information of the teachers, including their name, work experience, current tenure of work, country of origin etc. At the beginning of the interview process, participants have been made aware of the type of questions that will be asked to them.

#### **4.10 Data Analysis Method**

The gathered data will be discussed in a descriptive manner, since this study is exploratory in nature. After the data has been collected by using the respective methods, it has been segregated into two sections; the interview and observation data. The data gathered from the sample group have been assessed individually to assess the behavioural pattern of the teachers and students.

Different teachers have provided different methods of adaptation to cultural difference. Each of them has been highlighted while emphasising on the ones that have been most commonly used. Likewise, the responses regarding their personal experience of the hurdles and challenges faced have also been covered in details for insidious teachers, while emphasising on the ones that are most common across all the sample group members. This has helped in presenting a clear understanding of how different teachers showcase different behaviour and attitude in a multi-cultural setting, and to also highlight the most common aspects in the given scenario.

#### **4.11 Ethical Considerations**

The entire research work has been conducted in an ethical manner, to ensure its validity and reliability. It has been made sure that all the regulations and policies of the institution have been followed, including the methods of citation and formatting. Moreover, it has been ensured that the work has not been plagiarised in any manner. All the secondary sources of data have been properly cited using the university-approved referencing method. While gathering the data, the participants have been clearly informed about the purpose of the study and how the data gathered from them will be used.

The participants were also provided with an informed consent form (refer to Appendix A) that mentioned the purpose of participating in the study, and the aim that would be achieved through the research. The purpose of such a form is to enable the research participants to make an informed decision about participating in the study. In other words, the consent form ensures that the respondents are aware of the possible benefits and risks associated with participating in the study. In addition, in the event that the research participants expressed interest in seeking further clarification of the purpose and authenticity of the study, contact details of the researcher's supervisor was provided in the form. Moreover, the consent form also assured the respondents that their identities would not be disclosed and all information collected would be treated confidentially. Each of the participants was presented with a written clause of the data usage policy and non-disclosure agreement, thereby, protecting their interest in privacy. However, during the interview process, all the research participants stated that they did not object to being identifiable in the transcripts, so long as such information is not shared with third parties, that is, individuals other than the researcher and their supervisor. In addition, the respondents had provided their consent to the use of their names in the interview transcripts, but not for the purpose of publication

should the situation arise. It has been made sure that prior to gathering the data through observation and interviews, permissions have been taken from the school authorities.

While gathering the data, the participants, especially the native English teachers, have not been coerced or forced to provide the required information. The fact that their participation in this study was voluntary was clearly explained in the informed consent form (refer to Appendix D). This made it evident for the research participants that they were under no obligation to participate in the study. This implies that they were given the full freedom to quit the interview at any point in time. It has also been ensured that the anonymity of the participants has not been disclosed to any third party. All the information that has been gathered is stored safely and such records would only be kept for a period of one year from the time that the interview has been conducted. Thereafter, the data would be purged so as to ensure that the chance of misuse of such confidential information is minimised. This, as a result, has helped to ensure that the gathered information has not been misused or stolen under any circumstances.

#### **4.12 Potential Study Limitations**

There are certain limitations that have come to surface while conducting the study on the native English teachers in the UAE. Firstly, the sample group chosen for this study is quite small. This is mostly because of the fact that a significant number of native English teachers were uncomfortable talking about the cultural differences and their impact on their personal and work life. Secondly, the study only contains an interview of the teachers, while leaving aside the students, due to their immature age. The research output could have been more comprehensive if the study had been conducted in high schools and colleges, where the voluntary input of the students could be recorded. Thirdly, this study aims to highlight the cultural challenges and adaptation processes of the native English teachers in the UAE. A wider spectrum study could have been conducted by highlighting the challenges of cross-cultural interaction in a different work environment and not just on educational institutions.

Fourth, one of the informed consent forms was not signed by one of the research participants, which could be considered as an ethical conundrum. This is because, the proof that the interviewee was not coerced into participation could not be obtained. Additionally, the lack of an acknowledgement is also indicative of the possibility that the participant was not aware of the purpose of the study or the benefits, risks, and consequences of participating in the same. However,

the proof of their participation has been provided in the form of a screenshot of their correspondence with the researcher (refer to Appendix A). The correspondence indicates their willingness to take part in the study but not of their awareness of the various implications of participation. Finally, it should be highlighted that the study is limited to only the cultural aspects of one nation. In order to provide a more holistic understanding of cross-cultural interaction, the study should have been conducted on people in different countries, along with the UAE.

#### **4.13 Summary**

The methodology provides a clear understanding of how the entire research work has been conducted including the choice of data, its sources, the data collection procedures and their analyses. This study follows a pragmatic research paradigm to present a more practical standpoint of the research. The inductive logical reasoning has helped to develop new theories on cross-cultural interaction, based on the gathered data, which can be used in a more generalist and broader perspective. The study has been conducted by using qualitative data gathered from primary sources, by conducting semi-structured interviews and observations. The collected data have then been analysed using descriptive analysis, since this is an exploratory study. All the ethical considerations have been followed to maintain the validity of the research work.

## **5.0 Findings and Analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The collection of data through the use of in-depth interviews and observation techniques was a time-consuming process. However, this procedure was essential, since it helps in gaining a detailed data that has helped in answering the research questions as stated in the introduction chapter of this study. Following the choices of data collection, several native English teachers in the UAE have been interviewed to determine their cultural perception. In addition, the classroom teaching patterns and mannerism, as well as the behaviour of the students towards the teacher, has been observed by the researcher passively. This was done to establish any behavioural traits of the teachers that may provide an indication of the cultural perception of the native teachers within the educational institutions in the UAE. A total of 10 native English-speaking teachers from 4 schools in Dubai have been interviewed (Miss Noonan stated during her interview: “Is, yeah, English” and “We don't have anybody in the English department here that is not a native English speaker”) and their respective classrooms have been observed to gain insights about the behaviour of the students towards such teachers (the behaviour of teachers and students in the classroom “The teacher seems to be friendly and the students seem to welcome her despite being give some hard talk about their behaviourism”). Only native English-speaking teachers who are currently employed across various schools in Dubai have been invited to participate in the study, so that further insights about the cultural perceptions can be gained. In this study, the researcher has limited the scope of the research to private schools only.

In this chapter, firstly the interview responses have been analysed so that the answers to all the three research questions can be obtained. Here, the data collected through the interview process has been examined by following a systematic manner. The researcher has followed an unstructured set of questions for the interview process. This has made the analysis process cumbersome and hence, descriptive analysis techniques have been used to interpret the responses. Descriptive techniques have also been used for the analysis of the lesson observations. However, statistical tools have been used for the analysis of demographic factors of the interviewers and for the graphical representation of certain characteristics of the lessons that were observed. The interpretation of the gathered data has been compared to previous studies conducted on the same topic and similarities or dissimilarities that may exist have been identified and emphasised. This helps in substantiating previous claims that have been made by other researchers or in putting

forward new evidence, related to cultural perception in the teaching profession. Similarly, recurring patterns, with respect to the lesson observations, have been highlighted so as to provide insights about the behavioural patterns of the students towards the native English teachers.

## **5.2 Analysis of the Interviews**

The interviews have been conducted one-on-one with 10 native English teachers and basic demographic related to gender, age, languages spoken and work experience have been included in the questions (refer to Appendix B). This is because such questions help in establishing the point of view that has been portrayed and, thereafter, analysed for the purpose of this study. Such factors have also been included since it provides insights about the cultural identity of the research participants (Schussler, et al. 2010). Determining the cultural identity of the research participants is crucial for the analysis of the cultural differences and how such differences contribute to being a barrier to the classroom lessons. Linguistic ethnographic approach has been adopted, since studying the interactional discourse can provide many answers that are far from the stereotypical view on them (Rampton, et al. 2004).

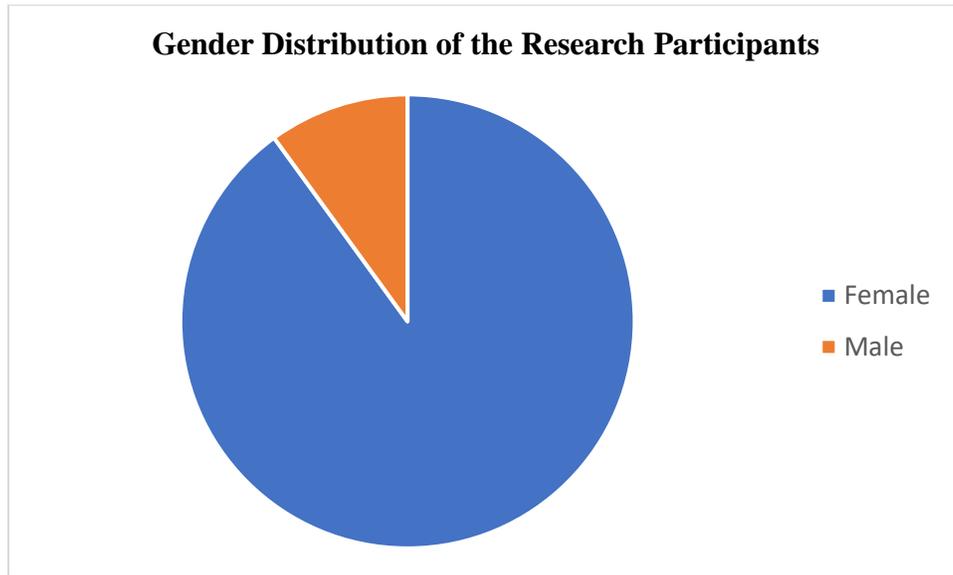
### *5.2.1 Demographic Factors of the Interviewees*

The responses have been evaluated and accordingly, diagrammatic representations have been made through the use of charts. The graphical presentation of the data makes it easier to provide an overview of the demographic factors of the research participants. The pictorial representation of the data helps in visualisation, making it easier to comprehend. The patterns within the data are also revealed in a way that is easily visible and the pattern within the dataset can be easily identified. The demographic factors that have been evaluated in this study includes the gender, age, languages spoken and their work experience in the teaching profession. Such factors help in establishing the cultural identity of the research participants. Since the aim of this study is to investigate the cultural perception, it is crucial that the cultural identity of the respondents are appropriately identified. This is also essential for answering the second research question which is concerned with establishing the influence that the culture of the native English teachers have on the behaviour of the students. Lastly, the cultural identity will also help in the process of the identification of the adjustments that have been made by the NESTs in the private schools of Dubai.

- *Gender Distribution of the Research Participants*

The interviewer had not designed a specific question to ask the research participants about their gender, but had taken the opportunity to record such information during the interview process (demographic question asked by the interviewer “Thank you very much for your time to take this interview with me. Can I ask some demographic questions if you don't mind? Age?”). The interviewees were all female individuals except for one. All the interviewees occupy the position related to teaching English in various private schools in Dubai. In other words, the cultural perception of the teachers that have been evaluated in this study are mainly from a female point of view. Most of the research participants have the same gender, which implies there is very little variations within the research participants in the current dataset. The graphical tools and pie chart have been used for the representation of the data (refer to Figure 3). Since majority of the respondents are female which means that the results might be skewed. In other words, the consideration of more male teachers could have uncovered different perspectives, with respect to the current state of affairs of intercultural classrooms in some private schools in the UAE, in terms of how English classes are conducted. Inclusion of similar number of both female and male participants could help in separating the cultural barriers and other issues that are not influenced by the gender of the teachers. In addition, the influence that the culture of the native English teachers has on the behaviour of the students, could be identified more accurately and not be biased on account of the consideration of only female respondents. Furthermore, it would be interesting to find out if the male teachers are taking more efforts or less, to adjust certain cultural aspects of their home country to suit the classroom setting.

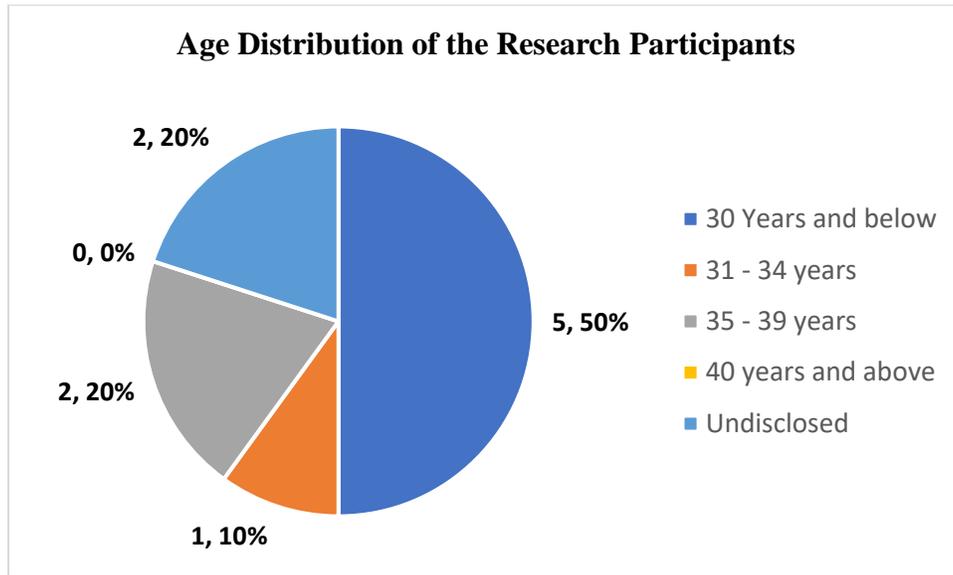
**Figure 3: Gender Distribution of the Research Participants**



▪ ***Age Distribution of the Research Participants***

The demographic factors the interviewees were interrogated on include gender, age, languages spoken, nationality and occupation (the response of Mr Chris when asked about his nationality “British, from the UK, so I’d be classed at British.”). While 5 research participants claimed to be of the age of 30 years and below, 1 participant stated that the age is within the cohort of 31 and 34 years (refer to Figure 4). 2 more claimed to be between 35 and 39 years of age, indicating they are the senior-most among the research participants and, therefore, have the most experience in the teaching line. The remaining 2 of the 10 interviewee’s chose not to disclose their age. Therefore, half of the interviewees that were interviewed were 30 years of age or younger. A pie chart has been used to provide a graphical representation of the data with respect to the age of the research participants that has been collected (refer to Figure 4). The reason that a pie-chart has been used for the presentation of the data is that, it helps in summarising the data with little to no need for explanation. Moreover, the data labels in the pie chart, along with the pictorial representation, provides an indication of each of the age cohorts as part of the entire data sample.

**Figure 4: Age Distribution of the Research Participants**



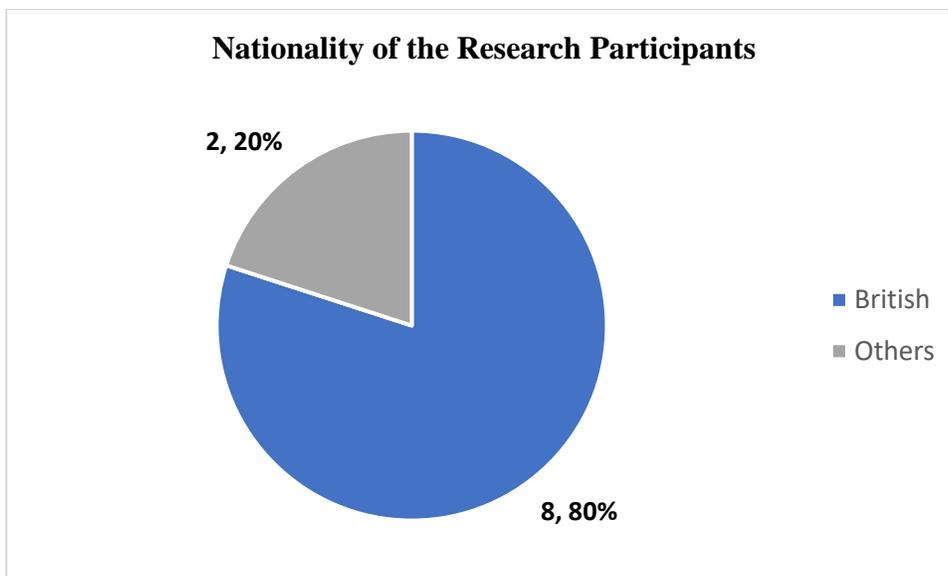
▪ *Nationality of the Research Participants*

The vast majority of the interviewees are British nationals, one belonged to South Africa and the other from Ireland (Nadine responded to the question of Nationality “South Africa”). This implies that the majority of the cultural perspectives that have been analysed in this chapter are from the standpoint of the British nationals. In order to represent the data related to the nationality of the research participants, a pie chart has similarly been used. The convenience of the use of such diagrammatic representation is undoubtable, on account of its characteristic feature of providing a pictorial representation that indicates the relative proportion of the nationality of the research participants, as part of the entire data sample (refer to Figure 5). The fact that the majority of the teachers in the educational institution in the UAE are British, conforms to the notion that such organisations have been effective in developing a model that facilitates successful education (Seidlhofer, 2017).

This also conforms to the previous research, wherein, favouritism towards ‘white-skinned English teachers of European origins’ have been recorded (Gillian Duncan 2018). The research participant who was of Irish descent, claimed to have prior work experience in the UK, and hence, she can be considered to have similar cultural affiliations as the British teacher. The respondents claimed that it was fairly easy for them to find a job in Dubai, since there is a high demand for native English teachers in the city. On the other hand, the research participant who was South African, claimed

that she was hired because there is a significant number of students from the same ethnicity in Dubai. This implies that there are rare instances when the hiring a manager in the educational institutions, that sometimes hire teachers who are from the same ethnic background as the students and do not always resort to favouritism of ‘white-skinned English teachers of European origins’ which have been recorded (Gillian Duncan 2018).

**Figure 5: Nationality of the Research Participants**

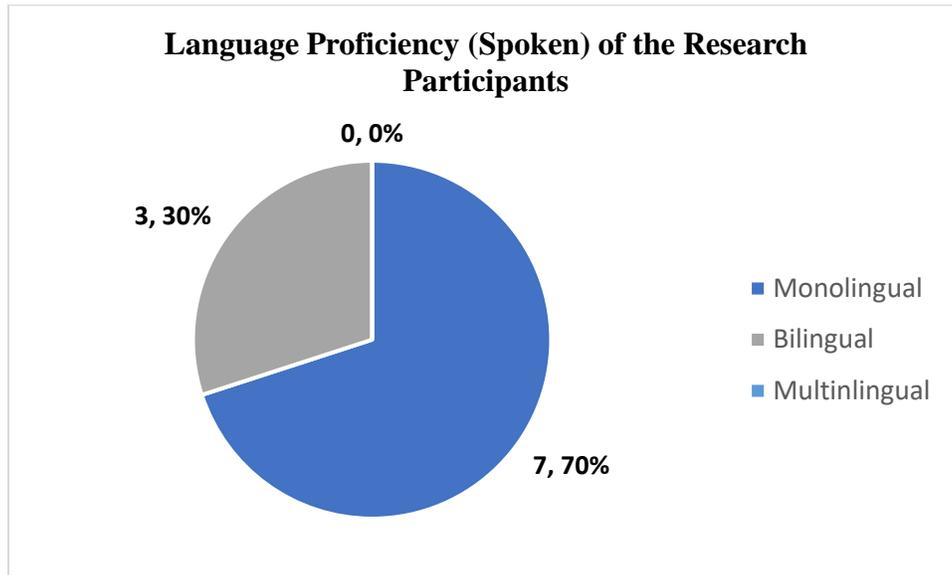


▪ ***Language Proficiency of the Research Participants***

Most of the research participants have claimed that English is the only language in which they are fluent. The research participants have answers to the questions related to language proficiency in the context of spoken form (Mr Chris responded during the Interview “even though I am proficient in it,” and Amy another interviewee stated that “No, not fluently. I try and get by in French and Spanish, but no. Not fluently”). The written and reading form have not been evaluated in this study. Since the research participants have mostly claimed to be monolingual, it indicates that the English teachers that have been interviewed for this study have the potential to face difficulties in communicating with the diverse student groups (refer to Figure 6). However, there were 3 research participants who claimed to be well versed in another language, in addition to English. Therefore, 3 of the research participants were bilingual, since they have claimed to be fluent in German, Italian and Afrikaans. Such teachers can, therefore, communicate with students who are comfortable in the respective languages. This conforms to previous studies that have been

conducted on this topic, wherein, it has been established that bilingual teachers are effective in making use of their background knowledge to draw relevant comparisons and contrasts between certain concepts in different cultures (Sharifian 2011). None of the research participants have declared that they are proficient in more than two languages. This implies that none of the 10 teachers who have participated in this study have the proficiency to communicate effectively with the diverse students in their respective classes. The research participants have expressed that they sometimes lack the ability to express themselves which often undermines the effectiveness of the classroom teaching sessions. The same conclusions have been obtained in previous studies, wherein, it was emphasized that multilingualism has been considered to be an essential characteristic for teachers in the modern era (Derivry-Plard 2013, Derivry-Plard & Griffin 2017). Some of the research participants have even opined that it has been known to improve brain functions. The research participants have also claimed to be familiar with other languages, however, they emphasized that they do not have any proficiency either in written, reading, or in spoken form. This implies that while they may have a basic understanding of certain languages, their proficiency levels are not at a level that would empower them to be effective in communicating with diverse students.

**Figure 6: Language Proficiency of the Research Participants**



▪ ***Teaching Experience of the Research Participants***

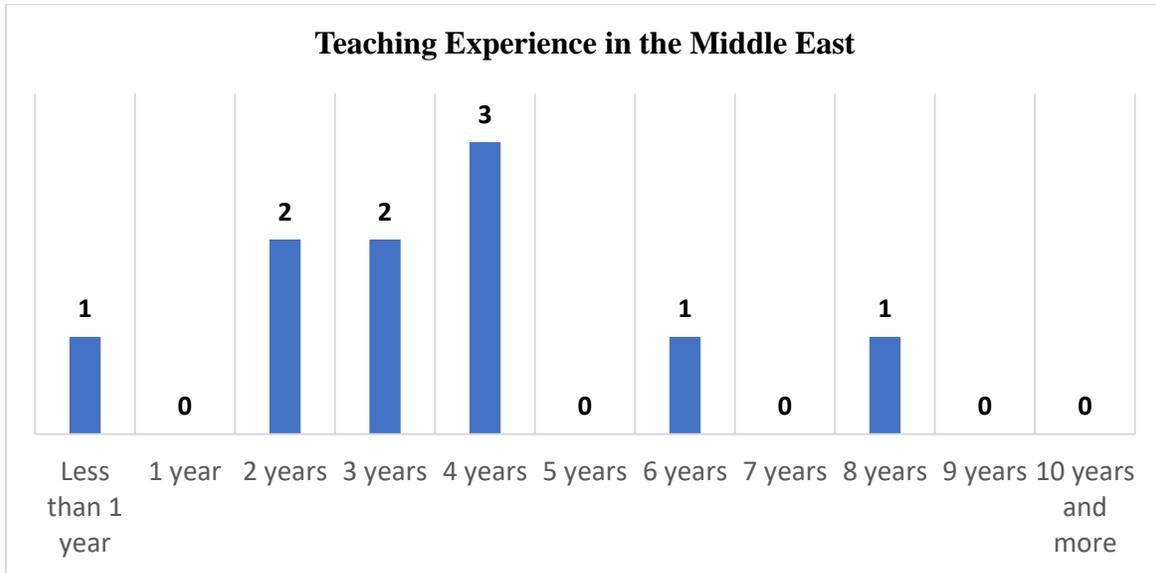
The research participants were asked to specify the time span of the experience that they have as teachers. The interviewer requested the research participants to specify their work experience in the teaching profession with respect to their time in the Middle East, in the UAE specifically, and in other countries (Miss Noonan indicated regarding her teaching experience outside of UAE as “I taught for 12 years before I came here, all in the UK.”). This factor is used to gauge the level of expertise that the teachers have with respect to teaching English in foreign, as well as domestic lands. However, the interviewer has not been consistent in collecting the responses about the work experience that the research participants have had before teaching in the Middle East. As a result, such responses have not been tabulated and represented using a chart since it would not portray an accurate description. The responses about the time span of the teaching experience within the Middle-East and the UAE specifically have been tabulated and diagrammatically represented in the following sections.

- ***Teaching Experience in the Middle East***

When asked about the experience that the research participants have had in the teaching profession in the Middle East, the vast majority claimed, that it is 4 years (Amy responded to the question about her teaching experience “This is my fourth year, and it's only in the UAE, yeah.”). Other common responses included 2 and 3 years. The minimum work experience that the interviewees

had was less than a year, 3 months to be precise. On the other hand, the maximum work experience among the interviewees in terms of teaching in the Middle-East was 8 years. In order to represent the data related to the duration of the teaching experience in the Middle-East, bar chart has been used (refer to Figure 7). This is because this type of pictorial presentation helps in showing the frequency of occurrence of a particular result.

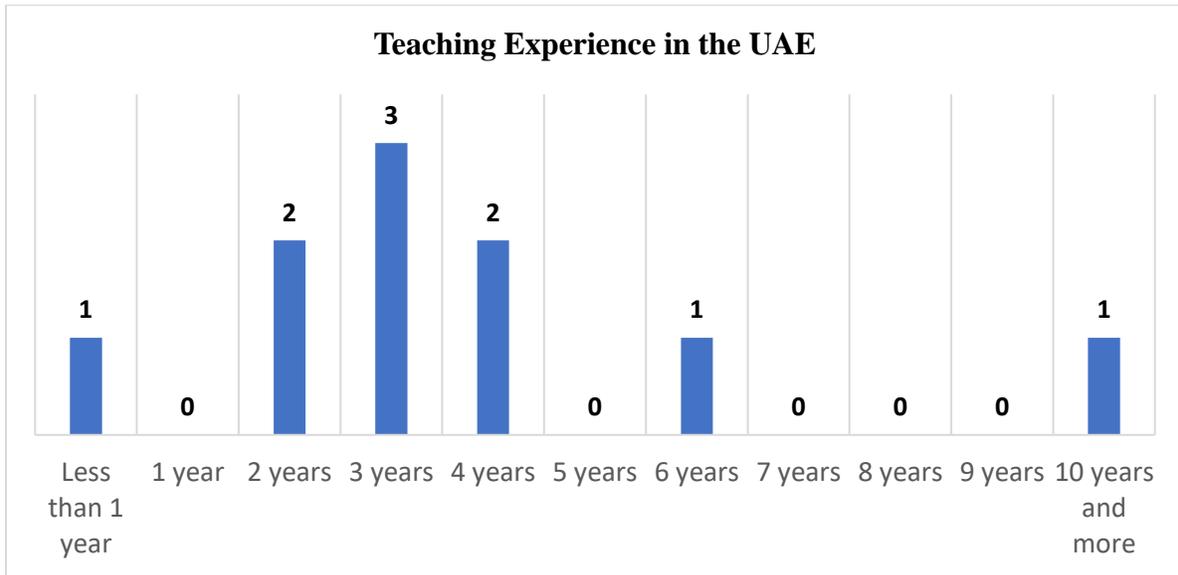
**Figure 7: Teaching Experience in the Middle East**



**- *Teaching Experience in the UAE***

In terms of the work experience as a teacher in the UAE, which is situated in the Middle East, the research participants have been engaged for a maximum of was over 10 years, 18 years to be precise (Interviewee 3 stated that she had 4 years of teaching experience in UAE). In contrast, the minimum work experience that has been observed among the research participants is less than a year. The majority have asserted that their work experience spans across a period of 3 years. An experience of 2 and 4 years was also commonly observed among the teachers employed in schools within the UAE. The bar chart has been chosen for the analysis since in addition to being the one of the most commonly used statistical tool, it summarised the data in a visual form that is easily understandable (refer to Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Teaching Experience in the UAE**



### *5.2.2 Cultural Obstacles Faced by Native English Teachers in the UAE*

The understanding of cognitive, social and common context reflected in the behaviour of people is referred to as culture (Hamad 1999). The cultural ideologies familiar to the teacher may vary dramatically with the ideologies of the students. Therefore, culture influences the viewpoint of different aspects of life in society, and such views differ across geographic boundaries. The presence of a wide range of cultures in Dubai is common and contributes to various risks (Wessendorf 2014). The phenomenon has been referred in precious studies as super-diversity risks (Vertovec 2007, Vertovec 2017, Siebers 2018, Maly 2016, Phillimore 2015). In trade, educational institutions, and society as a whole, these risks are present. In the teaching process, the cultural backgrounds of the teachers as opposed to the students, set the context for various obstacles. From the viewpoint of the Native English teachers who are engaged in the teaching profession at various private schools in Dubai, the challenges resulting through cultural differences were explained in this segment of the study. The students in such schools belong to a wide range of ethnicities including Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Russian, and others who come from various parts of Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States of America. The existence of such diverse cultures within the classrooms is likely to lead to clashes and other forms of conflicts, thereby, affecting the peace that exists within the classroom. The inability of the teacher to resolve such conflicts would be considered to be on account of cultural barriers.

Native English teachers in the UAE who have been interviewed for this study are mostly British nationals, one is South African, and the other, Irish. The respondents claimed that it was fairly easy for them to find a job in Dubai since there is a high demand for native English teachers in the city (Nadine responded to the job question regarding the Teaching job opportunities as “I think there's a big demand for English-speaking teachers here, based on the curriculum that gets taught, seeing as it is either British or American curriculum. So I think there is a big demand for native speakers here.”). On the other hand, the research participant who was South African claimed that she was hired because there is a significant number of students from the same ethnicity in Dubai. As such, the culture of these countries varies significantly from that of the UAE. While the South African teacher may be effective in developing a rapport with the students who share the same ethnic background, she may not be able to communicate with the Asian or European students. Owing to such differences in cultures, the teachers do not always have a good grasp on the traits and functions that are considered to be desirable and favourable by the students of other cultures. This is similar to the findings observed in the study wherein the faculty members are multi-cultural, the students are mono-cultural (Moore-Jones 2015). On account of such unawareness, the teacher or students may engage in some behaviour that could be perceived as offensive by others. Moreover, the teaching approach that they have been habituated to in the UK cannot be followed in the UAE, since the countries have a drastically different cultural background. In addition, communicating with the students would not be as simple, since Dubai has a super-diverse environment.

Firstly, it has been found that students in the English classes in the UAE, also belong from to other ethnicities, in addition to Arab. Some of common cultural backgrounds that have been observed among the students include Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Russian, and others who come from various parts of Europe, Canada, Australia, and the United States of America. This implies that the classrooms across various schools in the UAE are a melting pot of people from various cultural backgrounds. People move to Dubai for various reasons including the opportunity for a better life. Thereafter, their children have to enrol in schools in Dubai so that they receive their education. Since English is considered as the most influential language across the globe, the students are enrolled in classes, wherein, the language is taught (Widdowson 1994). To ensure that experts in the field are teaching the subject, private schools typically look for native teachers. The preference for native English teachers has become a global phenomenon and the schools in Dubai are no

different (Holliday 2016). This implies that the Asian, African, Russian, and Arab students may not be able to form a favourable rapport with their British teachers. Since the accents and culture across Europe varies widely, the students who come from countries other than the UK may not be much in common with the teachers.

The preference of native teachers has advantages as well as disadvantages. The advantage of employing NESTs in the educational institutions implies that the students will be able to learn the language from someone whose primary language is English. Since English is the official language of education, trade, health and tourism, obtaining proficiency in English has become a necessary skill (Agudo 2017, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy 2001, Cook 1999, Holliday et al. 2015, Medgyes 1992, Widdowson 1994). Therefore, it is crucial that the students are educated in the language appropriately and therefore, employing native English speakers to be teachers has gained importance. On the other hand, employing people from a different culture is bound to give rise to conflicts with the Arab students and their parents. The lack of understanding of the differences between such varying cultures presents obstacles in the process of acquisition of knowledge-related to learning a new language. The interviewees in this study have shared similar opinions, while also highlighting that several students in the schools are a mixed race and hence, multilingual. Therefore, teaching them another language becomes challenging for the teachers. Not all teachers have the mental acuity to make comparisons and connections with multiple languages so that it is easier for the students to grasp a new language.

Based on the responses of the interviewees, the lack of cultural awareness has been considered to be the most crucial challenge that the native teacher faces in teaching the students (Miss Noonan answered during the interview “You could say things like, "Don't be daft [inaudible 00:28:00]. You know what I'm talking about." You could use the word daft and they'd know what you meant. Whereas over here, I would never say that. Because they think, "What does daft mean?" Then it might be insulting to somebody and I wouldn't want to insult them.”). For instance, certain idioms that are commonly used by the British population may be perceived in a different light by the students that belong to other cultures. This leads to misunderstanding among the students and often instigates the students and their families to have an unfavourable opinion of the teacher and his/her abilities. Sarcasm and metaphors often fall on deaf ears as not all the students are familiar with the British idioms and catch phrases. Therefore, the lesson is ineffective as the flow of communication

is not completed. This is mainly because the students as some cannot comprehend the lessons being taught by the teachers who follow British conventions of teaching.

Another challenge is faced by the teacher when the students are unable to comprehend the accent of the teacher. There are several students who are unfamiliar with the British accent, and hence, they face difficulty in understanding the teacher. In other words, the teacher is unable to communicate with her students as they are unable to understand her accent. Moreover, the accents vary across various regions of Britain, which makes it cumbersome for the students to comprehend the language. Under such circumstances, the teacher may have to over-pronounce certain words for the ease of students (Mr Chris replied to the question about accents “I still find myself having to slow when I speak because from where I come from, we talk quite quick. I do speak quite quickly and find myself having to slow down.”). This makes the teaching process time-consuming and often overwhelming in the case of weaker students. Moreover, the access to a limited vocabulary and comprehension skills undermines the ability of the students to understand the lessons. This makes the class lessons ineffective, as the student cannot comprehend the session, in spite of the fact the teacher may be qualified to teach the class.

The barrier in the teaching process arises, since such students come to the classroom equipped with a unique knowledge of language, based on the ones that they have been familiar with in the past. Therefore, in order to ensure that the teaching session can be effective, the teacher must first develop an understanding that the students have of the language and therefore, make efforts to bridge the gaps. This process is time-consuming and in certain situations owing to the cultural differences, the teacher is unable to bridge the gap. Moreover, if the class size is large, that is the teacher to student ratio is unfavourable, then it may not be possible for the teachers to provide so much time for each individual student. Therefore, in these cases, the existing linguistic knowledge of students presents hurdles for the teachers and compromises their ability to teach English in an effective manner.

Owing to the diverse cultures, the parents have different expectations when it comes to homework and examinations. Some may feel that the lessons are not challenging enough, while others may feel as though it is difficult and beyond their level of comprehension. For instance, it was pointed out by the research participants that Asian and Arab students are more sincere as compared to the Europeans. Therefore, Asian and Arab students expect the teacher to be a mere guide to them,

while they hope to figure out the answers by themselves. On the other hand, the Europeans prefers a spoon-feeding approach (Amy stated during the Interview “Whereas I do feel, especially here, teachers, that is not the role or go at all. It's to generate learning from within and more student-led and exactly with the IB curriculum, more student-led and student-focused”). Here, the teacher is under the pressure to device a process that is suitable for all and does not favour the students of a particular culture. This may not be realistically possible since the expectations vary significantly across cultures. Coming up with a uniform system of evaluation is a monumental task. This undermines the ability to teach everyone in the way that they expect to learn.

The educators that have participated in the study have stated that the students in the UK are more respectful toward the teacher. However, that is not the case in the UAE, especially among the Arab students. They are rowdy and disrespectful towards the teachers, and hence, it presents major challenges. Based on the perception of the teachers, the Arab students are not well-versed in expression of gratitude and hence, their mannerism seems to be rude. Phrases such as ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ are common among the students of the UK, which is not the case in the UAE. Moreover, the teachers have highlighted that when speaking in the English language, ‘flowering up’ is a common practice. However, in Arabic, people are more direct, and therefore to the teachers it often feels as if the students are giving orders. Such factors comes as a cultural shock to the native teachers. Such a situation contributes to the numerous challenges and obstacles that are faced by the teachers in the UAE. The obstacles can be evidenced in the form of lack of morale on account of the rude behaviour of the students. Moreover, owing to the lack of cultural awareness, the teachers are not aware about the implications of such differences. In other words, the teacher fails to interpret the actual intent of the message and it leads to misunderstandings. This implies that the teacher may feel as though the student is being rude and ill-mannered, whereas, in reality, they are making a literal translation to English from their vernacular. The research participants opined that with experience they are able to teach the students that a literal translation is not effective in conveying their intent and that, it is essential to learn the British way of speaking which is globally considered to be polite. However, conveying such notions is a time consuming and difficult process on account of the cultural difference.

Behavioural issues like bullying are more common in the UAE than in the UK or other countries from where the English teacher belongs. Emiratis consider themselves to be superior and often

resort to bullying in order to establish their dominance over the students of other cultures. The teachers are mostly unaware and apprehensive about dealing with such situations. The research participants have even reported instances where such behaviours were observed when the teacher was present in the classroom. The language and cultural barriers make the teachers apprehensive about how to deal with such situations. Such situations present another obstacle for the teachers as they are unaware about how to deal with such instances of bullying. This becomes more problematic since the boys have been observed to have a lack of respect towards the teachers. Such perception, contrary to existing studies, have also been observed among the Asian students. The existing research has emphasized that Asian culture is considered to be synonymous with 'good teaching practices' (Tan 2015). Additionally, the author also opined that respect towards the teacher and having a disciplined approach is common among the Asian students. Therefore, such practices contradict the existing findings.

Another barrier that the teachers face is that there is contradiction in the lessons being taught in school and the ones that they learn at home. In other words, in order to facilitate learning even though the teacher makes efforts to ensure that the students learn how to respect other cultures, at home, they may be taught to not do the same. This confuses the students, which in turn, makes the learning process ineffective. This is because the interview responses have revealed that the lessons that they are being taught in the school are, at times, deemed as irrelevant and unimportant by their family members, and hence, are urged to forget such training sessions (Miss Noonan indicated during the interview that "They were saying, in their Indian culture, it's very much just you are going to get married. You will have a husband by the time you are such an age. You will have children. They just said it's just a given that that is their natural path that they will take."). This is especially true among the Arab parents as they are of the opinion that the British teachers will encourage the students to forget their cultural values and adopt western practices. Such perception instigates the parents to contradict the teachers, thereby, undermining her efforts in teaching the students.

In addition, it has been pointed out since the teachers are female, there have been instances where the fathers of the students have been disrespectful to them (Interviewee 3 indicated the issues she faced from the father of a student "Not from students, but sometimes from some fathers who don't always have the same respect for women as they have for men."). The research participants

attribute such circumstances to the culture of the UAE, where women do not always receive the same level of respect as their male counterparts. In other words, the British teachers have to experience gender stereotypes, as it is common for the male Emiratis parents to undermine the teacher.

There are other factors that similarly present obstacles in the learning process like certain actions and behavioural traits that may be normal in the case of the teacher which is considered as offensive by the students. Sensitive topics related to politics, racism, or sexuality make the students uncomfortable, and hence, such factors cannot be used by teachers to enhance the knowledge of the students with respect to differences in culture (Schussler, et al. 2010, Palmer 2015, O’Sullivan 2015, Moore-Jones 2015). Therefore, the teachers are compelled to spend more time in developing unique teaching materials so as to ensure that the sentiments of the students or their guardians are not affected in an adverse manner.

Owing to the diverse nature of the classrooms, there are students who enter middle school with no knowledge of English. They are also compelled to sit in the same class as other students who have taken advance literature lessons. This makes the students feel isolated, and under such circumstances, it becomes difficult for the teachers to reach out to such students and encourage them to participate in class. In addition, teaching literature has been stated by the research participants to be a difficult task, since many of the students lack the conceptual understanding of London as it was during the 1600s or the 1900s (Claudia responded to the question relating to Context “If a student hasn't been to London today, it's difficult to understand, but then you have to try to get them to understand what it was like during the 1600s or the 1900s. So that can become quite difficult, in terms of getting to understand the context of the text, and why these texts are written.”).

Lastly, one challenge that was emphasised by a significant number of research participants is the fact that the students in the UAE are independent as compared to the ones in western countries. Students in the UAE are used to completing their own lessons and are capable of critical thinking. Therefore, the teachers have to adopt a different teaching style as compared to their native country, wherein, ‘spoon feeding’ techniques were commonly followed (Miss Noonan stated during the interview “Whereas when I've come over to the UAE, I've noticed that students really do value their education. Particularly in Indian students and Pakistani students, they are very academic. Our

Chinese students as well; very, very driven.”). The research participants revealed that they faced problem in figuring out which tasks the students would be able to complete on their own and the ones where they would need assistance. This is more prominent in the Asian students. However, there has been another respondent who has contradicted this statement, stating that the students in the UAE are less independent (Amy responded during the interview “I think a lot of the students that I've taught, Emirati students for example, that at times they can be a bit dumbfounded how I want them to direct their own learning and that independence”). She emphasised that this was restricted to activities like being responsible for homework. Therefore, she shared the opinion that the teachers have to resort to a more active approach in ensuring that the students complete their homework.

Lastly, since majority of the teachers are British, they are familiar with the conventions of an individualistic society and is a low context culture. On the other hand, the Arab and the Asian countries which account for majority of the students, have a collectivist society and a high context culture (Al-Issa 2005, Würtz 2005). Low context cultures are direct in communication, while the people from a high context culture rely on non-verbal cues (Croucher et al. 2012). In other words, British teachers are unable to perceive the actual intended message as conveyed by the Arab and Asian students. The lack of appropriate skills to perceive the non-verbal cues like voice modulation, body language, silence and facial expression makes the teachers ineffective in communicating with certain student groups (Al-Issa 2005, Würtz 2005, Croucher et al. 2012, Reis, et al. 2013). On the other hand, the Arab and Asian students consider the direct approach and the lack of non-verbal cues to be confusing, as they are unsure about how the message is to be interpreted. This increases the gap between the students and the teachers within the private schools of Dubai. It may be stated that conducting workshop, wherein, the context culture and other metrics of culture are explained would be beneficial for the teachers. This would help in enhancing the awareness and therefore, improve the quality of communication and rapport between the multicultural students and the teachers.

### *5.2.3 Influence of Native Teacher's Culture on the Students' Behaviour*

The culture of the native teacher has been observed to affect the behaviour of the students since they are likely to mimic what they have learnt. The manner in which the teachers conduct themselves and the class is likely to affect their process of learning and their behaviour of the

students in and outside the classroom. In addition, their behaviour might also inspire the students or demotivate them.

In the UAE, the parents are actively involved in the teaching process and hence, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to communicate with the parents. Since this is not the norm for the teacher in their home countries, the inability to effectively interact with the parents is reflected on the behaviour of the students. Inability to effectively interact with the parents implies that they are not able to guide the students about how to conduct themselves outside the classroom. In other words, the teacher fails to convey the homework to the students, as well as their parents. Failure to do the homework implies that the student will fall behind in class. Therefore, the culture of the teachers impacts the behaviour of the students in terms of their performance in class.

Moreover, in the UAE, favouritism towards ‘white-skinned English teachers of European origins’ have been observed (Gillian Duncan 2018). Based on the interview responses, similar pattern have reflected in the current study from the perspective of private schools in Dubai (Beth indicated during the interview “I think there is a bias, and I think there's a sort of world view that British teachers are the best teachers. I don't know if that comes from the way that it's advertised with Cambridge and Oxford and Eaton, which are very different schools to the rest of the country”). Such teachers are considered to be synonymous with world class education, and therefore, there is a possibility that the students of such British teachers to be proud of the fact they are receiving education that meets the global standards. In addition, employing a British person to enforce the British curriculum is likely to have higher accuracy rates with respect to lesson completion. This is expected to enhance the employability and workability of the students in the long-run. Such future prospects gives a confidence boost to the students.

On the contrary, the parents of the Arab students are apprehensive about the British teachers. Even though the teachers in the interviews have claimed to make additional efforts to ensure that the students learn how to respect other cultures, at home, they may be taught to not do the same (Claudia indicated in her interview the importance of cultural awareness “I think cultural awareness is really, really important. There are cultural attitudes and assumptions that we make every day and I think that's one of the biggest challenges, your gesture, the way in which you handle the classroom, the different cultures... as we've just spoke about, red pen, there's very different interpretations of things.”). This creates a contradiction in the lessons being taught in

school and the ones that they learn at home. This is confusing for the student, and they may be overwhelmed which, in turn, makes the learning process ineffective. This is because the lessons that the teacher teaches in school are, at times, deemed as irrelevant and unimportant by the family members of the students, and hence, are urged to forget such education. It has been revealed through the interview responses that the Arab parents are of the opinion that the British teachers will encourage the students to forget their cultural values and adopt western practices, and on account of such perception, the parents are instigated to contradict the teachers, thereby, undermining their efforts in teaching the students (Mr Chris highlighted in the interview the reaction of parents to certain cultural sensitivities “Then, it's mainly the parents who go, "What's going on there?" That's when it comes in, say, "Oh, no. It's just a kid."”).

The rise of nationalism within the country could lead to the development of an unfavourable opinion of British teachers. Nationalism refers to the feeling of a sense of belonging to a particular national community through daily routine and everyday interactions between people and objects (Skey & Antonsich 2017). Such daily interactions are crucial for the development of an “affective nationalism” for the long-term loyalty of that community. Both trivial and entertaining instances can underpin the collective emotions towards people, objects, places and countries. In other words, spending a significant amount of time with British teachers may lead to the feeling of being pulled away from nationalism. This could be perceived to be a threat, as they may perceive the English classes to be a way of discouraging nationalism. In addition, the family members of the students may feel that the teacher may encourage the student to renounce his/her Arabic culture and please their allegiance to the convention of the western culture. In other words, they fear that instead of English being a tool for the Emirati culture and promoting the sense of loyalty, belonging, respect to the country amongst their multi ethnic students, it would be the device that encourages the promotion of the western culture (Calafato & Tang 2018).

#### *5.2.4 Extent of Adjustment to Suit the Classroom Setting*

Based on the examination of the interview responses (Miss Noonan indicated the adjustment she had to make in her teaching style “We need to make sure that we slow the pace of our talk down, over pronounce certain words and phrases, use standard English as far as we possibly can, try not to be too overly familiar in the things that we say”), it is evident that the English teachers made various changes to adjust certain cultural aspects of their home country to suit the classroom

setting. Firstly, owing to the presence of diverse cultures of students, there is a chance that the accent of the teachers would not be comprehensible. Therefore, the teacher makes the conscious choice to over-pronounce so that the majority of the students can comprehend it. In addition, the teachers ensure that they are not overusing the common British idioms and phrases. This is done in order to minimise the chances of misunderstandings. The use of humour is one aspect, wherein, majority of the research participants have claimed to compromise (The response of Alice regarding the use of Humor in classroom “But yeah, I have to say, a lot of the times I make a joke and it kind of goes over their heads. Whether that's just because I'm not funny or it's actually because of the language barrier, I don't know. I think sarcasm is less quickly understood here”). This is because there is a high chance for such messages to be perceived in a derogatory manner. There is also the possibility of a section of the class finding it funny while some others may find it to be offensive. This is in congruence with the conclusion of a previous study, wherein it was established that that laughter within classroom should be used with extreme caution, especially in a multicultural classroom (Jawhar 2018). This should be done to ensure that people in the class are not laughing at the cost of someone’s woeful sentiments. Moreover, it was pointed out in an earlier study that cultural intelligence of an individual is responsible for the variance in cross-cultural adjustment and for its effective implementation (Huff, et al. 2014).

Being cautious of the way in which they communicate is a common practice of the native teachers in the UAE. It has been observed that the teachers are expected to make additional efforts in order to ensure that communication between the students of diverse cultures can be encouraged. The teachers exercise such communication through the use of discussions techniques that are aimed at encouraging the students to participate. The teachers have also been known to adjust their teaching style so that a uniform approach can be adopted in teaching the students that are diverse, in terms of knowledge, culture, and experience (Budeva, et al. 2015). The teacher makes efforts to ensure that the all the students, irrespective of the cultural background, feel welcome in the classroom, and are comfortable enough to participate in classroom discussions.

The use of electronic devices in the classrooms is common in the UAE, and in spite of reluctance of some teachers, they have adjusted to such norms. The students here are free to use their iPad or laptops in order to facilitate the learning process, and the native teacher is required to change their teaching style to incorporate the use of such devices. Even though they may not share the same

teaching philosophies, the teacher makes effort to follow the conventions of the school, while ensuring that the lesson plans are aligned with the British curriculum.

In addition, the teachers had to show an increasing level of patience in managing the class. This is because, all the students acted as per their own cultural norms, and even when certain aspects were not acceptable by the teacher, they demonstrated patience and persistence in dealing with such situations. The teacher experienced discomfort in dealing with the Arab students, since they seem rude. This is because, the Arab students are not well-versed in expression of gratitude and hence, their mannerism seem to be rude. Phrases such as ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ are common among the students of the UK, which is not the case in the UAE (Beth responded that there are behavioural differences between UK and UAE students “It's very prim and proper. Whereas sometimes a student might say, give me rather than please can I have, and initially, I was like, wow, you're rude. But it probably took me about a month or so to go, actually it's not deliberate rudeness, it's just it's different to my culture.”). This came as a cultural shock for the British teachers, and they wonder how they Arab students can be so rude. However, through experience, they observed that in Arabic, people are more direct, and therefore to the teachers, it often feels as if the students are giving orders. Such a situation contributes to numerous challenges and obstacles that are faced by the teachers in the UAE. Moreover, owing to the lack of cultural awareness, the teachers are not aware about the implications of such differences. In other words, the teacher fails to interpret the actual intent of the message and it leads to misunderstandings. This implies that the teacher may feel as though the student is being rude and ill-mannered, whereas, in reality they are making a literal translation to English from their vernacular. Therefore, they gained the understanding about how the Arab language works and modified the lesson plan to convey that when speaking in the English language, ‘flowering up’ is a common practice (Mr Chris reflected during the interview about the struggles of being monolingual “Obviously, you hear it and you want to say, what are you saying? Whatever else, just trying to identify what's being said, or how something's being said. I find that can be quite difficult to try and get around because I don't want to be saying to them, "What did you say? Can you say it in English?" I don't want to be that type of teacher who's wanting to know everything and anything. It would be lovely to have the opportunity to have a different language so that you can pick it up and whatever. Pick it up, understand it, and be able to say a little something back as well.”). Such practice should be followed in order to ‘sound British’ and not be perceived as being rude and ill-mannered.

Another aspect of change is visible in the area of teaching approach. Based on the responses of the teachers, it has been observed that the students in Britain are reluctant to learn and hence, a more active approach has to be taken by the teachers in order to ensure that the learning session has been effective (Miss Noonan indicated during the interview “That's the difference that I see. Because the students over here, they are competitive with themselves. They want to push themselves.”). However, for the most part, that is not the case for the students in the UAE. The students here are eager to learn and complete their homework on their own. In the UAE, the teachers are expected to encourage the students to think critically and to find the answers by themselves. Therefore, the teachers have to amend the way in which they teach so that the students can be empowered to think critically in order to find the answers on their own. They have to adopt ways in which the curiosity of the students can be captured and, thereafter, instigate them to conduct their own research to arrive at a conclusion.

The students in the UK are more respectful towards their teacher; however, that is not the case in the UAE, especially among the Arab students (Beth highlighted the differences in the mannerism of UK and UAE students “I definitely noticed that this is my second in here, and I've definitely noticed, there are times where students from certain areas perhaps will speak more directly, but again it's part of culture, whereas in England, everything's very much-”). They are disrespectful towards their teachers, and are not well-versed in the expression of gratitude and request. The teachers that have come from Britain are not habituated to dealing with such students and it comes as a cultural shock. Such a situation contributes to the numerous challenges and obstacles that are faced by the teachers in the UAE. Therefore, the teachers have had to gain knowledge about the mannerisms that are common in the UAE, and thereafter, manage their expectations. This has been achieved by gaining the understanding that the direct approach of the students is not to be perceived as rude, but as a mere difference between the cultures. Therefore, the teacher puts additional effort to ensure that the differences can be bridged when the students are speaking in English (Palmer 2015). This is crucial to ensure that they are not misunderstood. The teacher makes additional effort to convey that a direct translation from Arabic to English would not be effective, since it is the norm to speak in a prim manner. In other words, in addition to teaching the language, the teacher also makes adjustments in the mannerism so that the students are aware of the proper way of conveying a message. This is done so that misunderstandings can be minimised among the students in the classroom, as well as in other spheres of life.

Lastly, in addition to the language and literature lesson, the English teachers in the UAE are also expected to provide moral and cultural lessons to the students. This is because language and culture are interlinked and to learn the former, one has to gain adequate knowledge about the latter. Therefore, based on the responses gathered, it is clear that the teacher had to gain cultural awareness themselves, since they are required to convey such knowledge to the students (The reply of Alice regarding cultural awareness “I think probably I am more culturally aware because I have to teach the kids about cultural awareness, so I have to know it myself. Because if I don't know it, I can't teach them.”). In other words, the native English teachers had to educate themselves about the differences in various languages, prior to teaching the students in the UAE. Therefore, the educational institutions may benefit from implementing a cultural intelligence workshop for the benefit of the teachers and therefore, the organisation as a whole.

### **5.3 Analysis of Observation Lessons**

In order to determine the behaviour of students towards the native teacher, the researcher has observed a total of 20 lesson across 4 schools (refer to Appendix D). The observation consists of 2 classroom sessions classes of each of the 10 interviewees. Such observations have been carried out by the researcher to determine the point of view of the students and their mannerisms towards the NESTs within the classroom. The observation has been crucial to develop an understanding of the overall idea of the way that cultural competence is being manifested in multicultural classrooms. Linguistic ethnographic approach has been adopted since studying the interactional discourse can provide many answers that are far from the stereotypical view on them (Rampton et al. 2004).

The researcher had observed classroom sessions of the interviewees as they taught two different grades. Therefore, a total of 20 classroom sessions were observed by the interviewee to establish the cultural perception of NEST in Dubai. The researcher observed various different classes for this study. While some pertained to reading, others spelling and grammar, some about literature, while others discussed historic events or current affairs. The researcher was mindful about observing the way that the teacher conducts the class and responds to the queries and opinion of the students (the response of a teacher to a query by the student “A student said, she is rich. The teacher corrected (wealthy) but again didn't clarify the difference between the two.”). The ethnicities of the students and the subtle differences in the mannerisms of the teachers with respect

to the diverse group of students were keenly observed. The attitude of the teacher towards the diverse nationalities has been observed so that any prejudice can be identified and therefore, highlighted. All the observations that have been made by the researcher were done passively. In other words, the researcher has not taken any active role by participating in the classrooms and therefore, the conduct of the teacher and students are likely to be influenced.

The researcher has pointed out that some of the research participants have expressed reluctance or some degree of discomfort with respect to the presence of an outsider in their classroom. This may have caused them to behave or act in way that is not within their usual patterns, and therefore, it could imply that the results of this study are not objective. In other words, there is a possibility that the research participants may have altered their behaviour on account of the presence of the researcher. This indicates the possibility of the biasness in the gathered data. This is referred to as a response bias that has occurred on account of the presence of the interviewer (Dowdy et al. 2011).

### *5.3.1 Overview of the Observation Sessions*

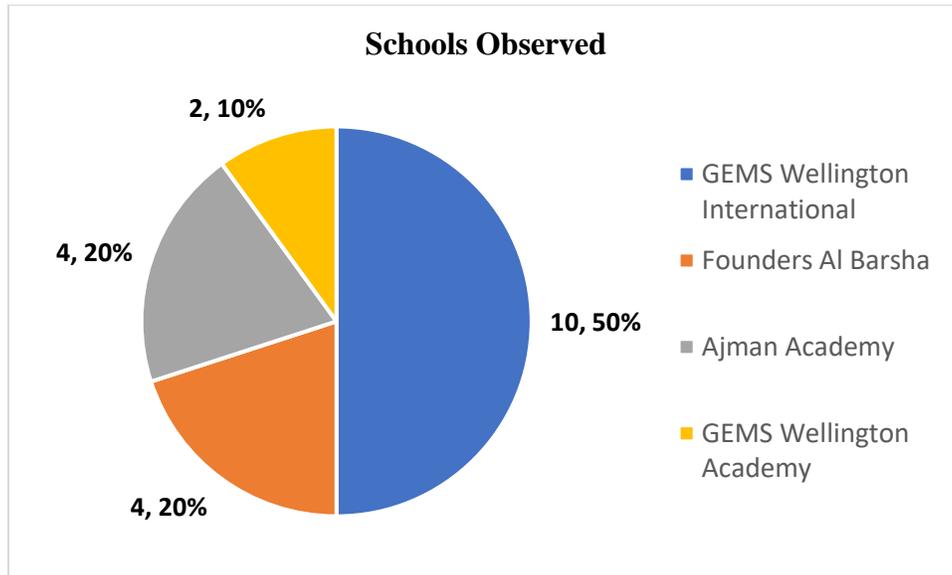
Prior to observing the behaviour of the student within the classrooms, the researcher has recorded certain basic information (refer to Appendix D). Such data pertains to the schools that were visited by the researcher, the grades that were observed, the size of the class including the major ethnicity of the students, and the duration of the teaching sessions. Charts and diagrams have been used to represent such information in a pictorial form for easier understanding. The diagrammatic representations have been known to make it easier to provide an overview of the various factors of the classroom observations like the school that was visited, the grades that the researcher sat in, the duration of each of the lessons, and the size of the class. The pictorial representation of the data helps in visualisation, making it easier to comprehend the patterns within the data. In other words, recurring patterns are easily revealed in a way that is graphic make it easy to understand while being visually appealing. Moreover, such tools help in aggregating the data and exposing patterns within the dataset. Such data has been surmised in the following sections.

- ***Schools Considered for the Study***

Based on the data collected from the primary sources, it has been observed that the researcher has spent a significant amount of time at GEMS Wellington International School in Dubai. A total of 10 classes within the school were observed for the purpose of this study (refer to Appendix D). As

per the pie chart diagram, this accounts for 50% of the total classroom sessions that were observed (refer to Figure 9). This implies that majority of the perception towards culture that has been observed are reflective of the point of view of the students and teachers at the GEMS Wellington International School. Thereafter, 4 classes each from Founders Al Barsha and Ajman Academy, both within Dubai have been observed in this study. Lastly, the researcher has observed 2 classes at the GEMS Wellington Academy in Dubai. The pie chart provides a pictorial representation of the data, making it easier to summarise the data set and for easily comprehending how each factor form part of the entire data set (refer to Figure 9).

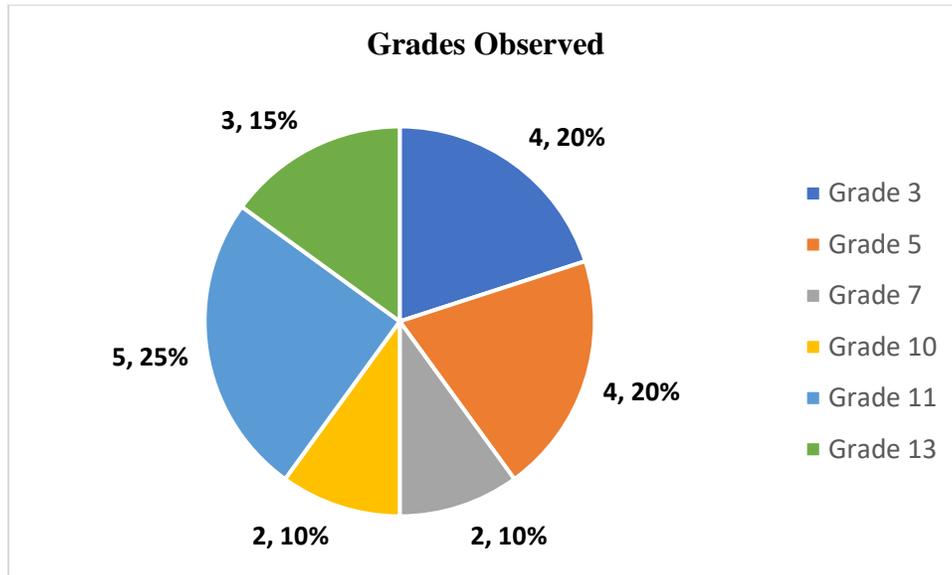
**Figure 9: Schools Observed**



▪ ***Teaching Grade***

The teaching grades that have been observed for the purpose of this study have been summarised in the form of a pie chart. The pie chart succinctly summarised the data observed in the form of an illustration which makes it easier to comprehend the relative proportions of the multiple classes of data that has been covered within the study (refer to Figure 10). The data labels in the chart also provide information about the number of occurrences of each observation, along with the percentage with respect to the entire sample. Accordingly, it has been observed that the researcher has observed 5 sessions of Grade 11 all of the GEMS Wellington International school in Dubai (refer to Appendix D). In other words, among all the classroom teaching that has been observed, the maximum number of sessions, accounting for 25% of the total dataset, that have been observed are from the Grade 11 (refer to Figure 10). This is followed by 4 observations each of Grade 3 and Grade 5. As evidenced from the pie chart, this accounted for 20% of the total dataset. Thereafter, the researcher has observed one class of Grade 13, followed by 2 classes each of Grade 7 and Grade 10.

**Figure 10: Teaching Grades Observed**



- *Class Size*

The size of classes of the private schools that have been observed ranges from 12 to a maximum of 32 (refer to Appendix D). It is worth noting that on one instance, the researcher has failed to record the size of the class. Classes that consisted of 16 students were commonly observed within the dataset, and 7 such instances have been recorded by the researcher. The researcher has reported that the classes comprised students of a wide range of ethnicities including Arabs, Asians, Europeans etc. It has also been observed in classes which had 16 students or less, the teacher had a greater control of the lesson. The teacher, in such circumstances, was able to interact with all the students and did not stick to a particular section of the class. Therefore, it can be stated that a maximum of 16 students in a class is indicative of a favourable teacher to student ratio within the context of the private schools in Dubai. Classes wherein mostly Asian students existed were observed in as many as 9 of the 20 instances covered in this study. Classes which were mostly dominated by European students were observed in 6 instances (refer to Appendix D). Classroom, wherein, Arab students accounted for the majority was a rare occurrence as only one such instance was reported.

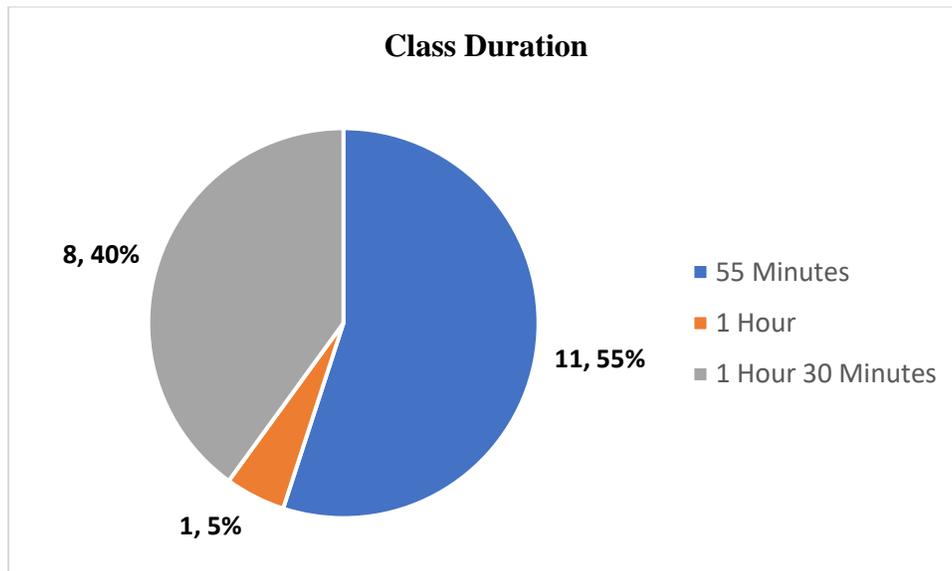
It has been noted that on one instance, the researcher failed to record the size of the class. Therefore, the use of graphical tools was not considered, since it would not portray the sizes of the classes in an accurate manner. In other words, the indication of the relative proportion of each class

size as part of the entire data sample would not be accurate, since the data set is incomplete in this instance.

▪ ***Duration of Class***

The duration of the class ranged from 55 minutes to an hour and 30 minutes. Out of all the 20 classes that were observed for the purpose of this study, a total of 11 classes lasted for 55 minutes (refer to Appendix D). The pie chart below provides an indication of the relative proportion of the number of classes that lasted to 55 minutes as part of the entire data sample (refer to Figure 11). Such classes consisted of Grade 3, Grade 5 and Grade 7. Such classes accounted for a vast majority of the observations at 55% (refer to Figure 11). The classes above Grade 10 was conducted over a duration of 1 hour and 30 minutes. This consisted of 40% of the total data observations, and included Grade 10, Grade 11 and 2 instances of Grade 13. One instance of a Grade 13 class conducted at the GEMS Wellington International School in Dubai lasted for an hour as opposed to 1 hour and 30 minutes. This implies that as the grade of the students' progress, the duration of classes increases. The pie chart diagram has been used to summarise such information inform that is informative, as well as visually engaging (refer to Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Duration of the Class**



### *5.3.2 Cultural Obstacles Faced by Native English Teachers in the UAE*

The cognitive, social and common background knowledge that is manifested in people's behaviour is referred to as culture (Hamad 1999). Culture affects the society's ideology of different aspects of life, and such perceptions vary across geographical borders. Therefore, the cultural ideologies that the teacher is familiar with may vary drastically with that of the students. The existence of a wide range of cultures in Dubai is common, and it gives rise to various risks and issues (Siebers 2018). Such risks are present in business, educational institutions, as well as the society at large. The cultural perspectives of the teachers in comparison to the students presents various obstacles in the teaching process. In this section of this study, the obstacles arising on account of cultural differences have been highlighted from the perspective of the Native English Teachers who are engaged in the teaching profession in different private schools in Dubai.

Various aspects of the classroom has been observed by the researcher through their passive presence in the classrooms of some of the private school in Dubai (refer to Appendix D). Such aspects of the classrooms have been evaluated to determine if the NESTs are facing any problems or barriers in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Based on the observation of the behaviour of the students, it has been observed that majority of the obstacles that have been faced by the NESTs are on account of the differences in cultural values and systems. In other words, the differences in the way in which the students and the teacher were brought up, which, in turn, affect the flow of communication. This is mainly because of the differences in cultural values and norms, and the way in which people in different parts of the globe are brought.

In light of the reactions of the research participants, the absence of cultural awareness has been viewed as the most prominent difficulties that the native English educator face in showing the students (the teacher being misunderstood by the students "I wasn't being hightist sorry. It went over the heads of all students."). For example, certain figures of speech that are ordinarily utilized by the British populace, might be seen from an alternate perspective by the students on account of different cultural perceptions. This prompts misconception among the students and frequently incites them and their families to develop an adverse opinion of the educator and her skills. Sarcasm and metaphors fail to be noticed as not every one of the students knows about the British figures of speech and catchphrases. This makes it challenging for the teacher to communicate and engage the students in a class discussion. At this stage, the teacher has to come up with innovative

ways which can be used to encourage the students to participate in the class discussions. However, the students that belong from societies with a high uncertainty avoidance index are unlikely to be open to such innovative ideas (Chudzikowski, et al. 2011). Such ways have to be such that it appeals to the students of several cultural backgrounds. It has been observed that this can be achieved through experience.

The students in the classroom within the private schools of Dubai have varying ethnic backgrounds. Such background differ across grades and the different schools. The vast majority of the students in the classes that have been observed were Asians (refer to Appendix D). The nationalities of the students also include Europeans, as well as the natives which is Arabs. On the other hand, the teachers were primarily from Britain. This indicates that all the students may not be familiar with the various cultural aspects of the British teachers. This is especially true since the majority of the students are Asian. This conforms to previous research, wherein, it was established there are significant differences between the cultures of Asia and the western countries (Al-Issa 2005). It has been pointed out by the author that teachers in the western countries prefer to get personal with the students to the point where they share details of their lives. This is done in an attempt to connect with the students, develop a rapport and to find common grounds of interest. However, in Arab or Asian countries, such practices are not followed. Therefore, the British teachers face difficulties in bonding with the Asian and Arab students. This implies that the teacher is now tasked with the finding new ways to connect and bond with the student, while ensuring that no culture is offended.

The results of this study conforms to existing research that has established that practices like sharing social media accounts with the students, and their ages, hobbies and other personal information are considered as unprofessional in the UAE (Roblyer et al. 2010). It has been observed that while such practices, in addition to being unprofessional, is also considered to be culturally inappropriate within the UAE (Behaviour of the teacher which may be perceived as unprofessional “The class is disturbed by the teacher’s new born baby that is being kept in the connected room with the door open. The girls are talking to each other in English medium”). This implies that the practices that the British teachers have followed in their native countries for the fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities are ineffective and frowned upon within the teaching industry of Dubai. Therefore, it can be stated that the NESTs encounter a hurdle in terms of cultural

difference when it comes to setting boundaries with the students that can be considered as culturally appropriate.

There is also a difference between the cultural context of the western and eastern cultures with respect to individualism and collectivism. While Asian countries, and the Arab nations have a collectivist culture, the British teachers are familiar with the conventions of an individualistic culture (Al-Issa 2005, Triandis 2018, Chudzikowski, et al. 2011, Hofstede, 2011). Since both Arabian and Asian countries are collectivist societies, the British teachers face difficulties in communicating as they belong to individualistic cultures. Therefore, the common practices which involve being an advocate for risk-taking and encouraging the students, speak their minds in classrooms discussions, are not common in the UAE (Al-Issa 2005). In addition, the Asian students are also unfamiliar and uncomfortable with such practices since they similarly belong to a collectivist society. Having the liberty to ask any question in class or express their feelings is common among students that are from individualistic societies. Therefore, in a culturally diverse classroom, it becomes a challenge for the teachers since they are unsure about how to communicate with the students who share a different cultural philosophy.

It has also been observed that the quality of communication is compromised on account of the difference in the matrices for measuring culture (a missed teaching opportunity due to cultural differences “The teacher is making sounds of the iron man falling from a cliff: “crush, crush, crush”. Some Arab locals react in Arabic “ Alla Akbar!!” “khaiba!!” meaning “blimme”. The researcher thinks that exclamation words should be taught at this stage.”). The majority of the teachers are British which has an individualistic society and is a low context culture (Al-Issa 2005, Würtz 2005). On the other hand, the Arabian and the Asian countries which account for majority of the students, have a collectivist society and a high context culture. Such differences contribute to the misunderstandings between the teacher and the students, as low context cultures are direct in communication. This implies that such people rely solely on verbal communication to convey a message. On the other hand, people from a high context culture rely on non-verbal cues. This implies that the British teachers are unable to perceive the actual intended message as conveyed by the Arab and Asian students. The lack of appropriate skills to perceive the non-verbal cues like voice modulation, body language, silence, and facial expression makes the teachers ineffective in communicating with certain student groups (Al-Issa 2005, Würtz 2005).

The researchers have also observed that it is common for the students to joke in class in their native language, and the teacher fails to take note of such activities since they cannot perceive the manner in which it was intended by people that belong to a different nationality (The teacher misses the jokes made by Arab students “The class is all boys (Arabs and Asians) some boys are making jokes in Arabic and one Arab student over pronounced a name of his Asian classmate but in an Arabic way that the teacher misses the joke because it can’t be noticed by non-Arabs.”). This implies that the teacher is unaware of some of conversations that occur within the classroom on account of lack of adequate knowledge about the diverse cultures. Therefore, the language barrier presents an obstacle for the teachers, which, in turn, has an adverse impact on the flow of communication. Extant studies that have investigated the struggles faced by people in learning a different language have similarly reached the conclusion that the communicative processes may be disrupted on account of the existence of multiple cultures, as well as subcultures (DeCapua & Wintergerst 2016). The results of the current study, therefore, substantiate the claims made by researchers previously by proving that the communication process within the classroom has the potential to be disrupting the classroom sessions. Moreover, the major reason for such disruption, which has also been identified to be a cultural obstacle for the NESTs is the language barrier.

Another hurdle is when the students cannot understand the accent of the instructor. There are several students who are new to the British version of English, and consequently, they face trouble in understanding the teacher. As such, the educator is ineffective in speaking with her students as they cannot comprehend her intonation (a potential misinterpretation due to the accent of the teacher “The teacher uses “you need to finish it this aft” instead of “this afternoon”.”). Also, the accents differ across different areas of Britain, which makes it difficult for the students to understand the language. The students similarly have been observed to have strong accents of their countries of origin. This is indicative of pride in the home country. However, for an inexperienced teacher, such accents may not be easy to understand at first. Therefore, there is a probability for misunderstandings and conflicts.

It has also been observed that the students do not feel that they are doing something wrong when they are talking amongst themselves while the teacher is conducting the class (Students misbehaving while in class “Naughty students would yell at each other, drag their chairs aggressively, yawning loudly, even sing and toss pens during group work even when the teacher

is very near to their tables. The teacher doesn't seem to mind.”). The teacher also seemed to be reluctant in taking any steps to stop such activities. Moreover, several instances have been observed, wherein, the students are teasing their classmates and the teacher turned a blind eye to such matter. This could be due to the fact that the teacher is unable to comprehend the gravity of such actions, and underestimates the impact that it may have on others. In this context, other researchers have emphasized that culture clashes within the classroom makes the teaching process ineffective (DeCapua 2016b). Therefore, similar to the observations made by the authors, it could be argued that the awareness of the teacher with respect to culture of the students and exhibiting sensitivity, in such circumstances, is crucial to ensure that the lessons have been effectively conveyed to the students.

The researcher witnessed that the teachers are facing trouble in teaching a boys' only class (Rude behaviour of male students “It is very clear that the boy students have no respect for the teacher.”). The researcher observed that such a classroom tends to be noisy and the teacher is not effective in ensuring that the classroom decorum can be maintained. The language barrier coupled with the rowdy nature of the male students made it difficult for the teachers to manage the class. The boys have been observed to have no respect for the teacher as they were yelling and throwing pens without any regard for the presence of the teacher in the classroom. However, the teacher seemed to be patient with such unruly students. Based on the observation of the class discussion, it is apparent that gender stereotypes exist in the minds of the students and the teacher does not make any active efforts to change such perceptions (An example of Gender stereotype within the class “Teacher: do you think this is a good way to grow up thinking about women? The class says no. (some male students are very embarrassed)”). Such barriers on account of the gender of the research participants was pointed out in previous studies, wherein, it was established that the existence of diversity has certain risks (Siebers 2018). Social differences have been known to undermine the process in which teachers can promote the sense of loyalty, belonging, respect to the country amongst their multi-ethnic students.

In previous studies, it has been observed in Asian cultures, respect towards the teacher and having a disciplined approach is common (Tan 2015). In fact, the author emphasized that Chinese culture is considered to be synonymous with ‘good teaching practices’. However, the researcher has observed that the students in the private school of Dubai do not follow such practices (rude

behaviour of Asians in class “European students are more engaged and focused in this task. Asians are talking to each other”). In fact, in a class which was largely dominated by Asian students, the researcher found their conduct to be rude at times. Negligible amount of respect for the teacher was detected in such a class, and similar circumstances have been observed in other classes which was populated mainly by male students. Therefore, it can be stated that another cultural obstacle faced by the NESTs in the private school of Dubai is that they are unable to demand the respect from the male students. As a result, there are several disruptions in the classroom, as the teacher is ineffective in encouraging the students to maintain discipline. The fact that the Asian students, who are commonly disciplined within classrooms are disorderly, is a clear indication of the inability of the teacher to manage the students. Therefore, the cultural obstacle, in this case as faced by the teachers is concerned with the lack of understanding, making it difficult for them to communicate and maintain discipline within the classroom.

Some teachers demonstrated a high degree of skill and articulation in integrating culture within a language class through the use of historic events (The Teacher integrating culture with historical event “The teacher relates the Gunpowder Plot 1605 and how Shakespeare was supporting King James. She then mentions that bonfire celebration are related to King James and goes “remember, remember the fifth of November”). The researcher thinks this is one of the best lessons that integrates culture to language in genuine contexts.”). This encouraged the students to participate in the discussion, wherein, they also made connections between current affairs and such events to identify the difference across cultures. In another class, wherein the teacher attempted to discuss about the portrayal of gender and identity and media, it was observed that the male students were feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable under such circumstances. This could be due to the existence of stereotypes being associated with women in the country, and therefore, the concept of gender equality was foreign for the students. Therefore, it is evident that there is a difference in the cultural perception between the students and the native teachers. Similar findings were reported in a previous study, wherein, the differences in perception lead to cultural conflict between the teacher and students (Moore-Jones 2015).

It was observed that laughter was not common in the classrooms (Humor being misunderstood due to cultural differences “During the spelling test, the teacher jokingly says “I can see everyone in this room from the place I am standing, why do you think these glasses for”). A student jokingly

said “can you see the space”. The teacher was puzzled then said” yes I can see the space on the floor just here. The teacher had mistaken the space (sky) with the distance in the classroom.”). This could be because of the fact that owing to cultural and language barriers, some jokes were not perceived by the students. However, the teachers continued to make efforts to lighten the classroom teaching sessions and to make it more engaging through humour. While most of the jokes could not be comprehended by the students, some made them laugh and enjoy the class. In other instances, it has been observed that efforts of the teacher to discipline an Arab student fell on deaf ears, and it may be stated that such would not have happened if the student belonged to the same ethnicity as the teacher. In a study conducted earlier, it has been emphasized that laughter within classroom should be used with extreme caution (Jawhar 2018). This is especially true in the case of a multicultural classroom. While it is true that laughter is an effective medium that facilitates the students’ engagement in classroom discussions, implementing such practices in an effective manner is difficult. It has been observed that the teacher’s attempts at using humour within the classroom is ineffective as the students did not have the cultural knowledge to understand such jokes (the lack of cultural understanding leads to the jokes not being understood “One student uses "extraordinary" the teacher jokingly says " you are testing me on that, aren't you?" No one laughs”). Therefore, another cultural obstacle that was faced by the teachers is their inability to engage the students in classroom discussion using humour.

Another complication faced by the teachers is concerned with how the students get confused between American and British English. Since English is not their primary language, the students on several instances have failed to comprehend the difference between the two versions of English. Therefore, the teacher has to be patient in conveying such differences to the students. Since the private schools that have been taken into consideration for the purpose of this study follow a British curriculum, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the students learn the subtle variation between the two dialects. It has been observed that the teacher expresses distress in pointing out the differences (The teacher no explaining the subtlety of British and American accent “Some students use American words the teacher says with an upsetting voice: That’s quite American actually. We British don’t use it (example you’ll being American).”). It could be because the teacher has repeated such aspects several times before, and the students have not been able to comprehend such dissimilarities between American and British English. The reason for the distress could also be attributed to the fact that the teacher is offended at the lack of awareness related to

language. Alternatively, the fact that the effort need to teach the students the difference between the two dialects is significantly greater in Dubai as compared to their native country. This could be reason for the cognitive dissonance as experienced by the teacher.

### *5.3.3 Influence of Native Teacher's Culture on the Students' Behaviour*

The culture of the native teacher has been observed to affect the behaviour of the students. The researcher has observed instances where the teachers that are British nationals experience difficulties in communicating with the students of other ethnicities, especially the Arabs (Arab students hesitating to participate “The Europeans were not keen in sharing their thoughts about the topic on war. Arab, Asian, and African found it very uncomfortable to share any thoughts on that topic. ”). This results in the Arab students shying away from participating in class discussions, and therefore, they face difficulties in learning new skills like persuasive writing in a foreign language. Owing to frustration with respect to not being able to communicate with the Arab students, the teachers are often short-tempered which further widens the gap. It has also been noticed that there were certain jokes made by the Arabic students, which was ignored by the teacher presumably due to the fact that they failed to understand its implication. However, in another instance, it has been observed that the teachers, through time and experience, have been able to convey British sarcasm to the students and they seemed to comprehend it and respond accordingly.

There were some instances where the teachers were observed to favour the students of a certain ethnicity and not encourage others to participate in the class discussions (A display of favouritism by the teacher “The teacher is focusing on 3 students siting on the floor with her.”). The students were found to make groups among themselves based on their ethnicities. The teacher made no efforts to encourage or instigate them to mingle and learn about each other's cultures. This was perceived to be an unfavourable outcome. This is because it is indicative of the fact that teacher has been ineffective in helping the students develop their language skills and they are, therefore, not comfortable in communicating with other students that have a different cultural background. Therefore, the lack of cultural awareness and the language barriers has presented a hurdle on the path of the teachers.

One of the participants seemed to be set in her ways and made little effort to adjust to the diverse needs of the students. For instance, she expressed discomfort when her students used the American spellings or words that were not British. This is an indication of not being willing to change

themselves to facilitate the learning of the students. Such unwillingness to adjust and modify her behaviour undermines her communication skills. Even though, the teacher encouraged her students to develop critical thinking abilities on their own, her ineffective communication skills undermined its effectiveness. As a result, the students have been observed to be distracted and disengaged in the classroom (An example of distracted students “The students are still distracted by things like sharpening their pens and moving around their tables.”). She does, however, reflect on her personal issues to highlight the importance in differentiating between formal and informal language, and in avoiding minute mistakes.

On account of the bias towards 'white-skinned English teachers of European origin', several adverse impacts on the behaviour of the students have been observed (The teacher not able to build a rapport with the students “The teacher says hard words to a naughty Arab student who is making fun of the student that is analyzing the quote on the board. She says “if your analysis is as that brilliant then you can laugh and joke”. Those words didn't give expected impact on that Arab student and he burst of laughter.”). It is true that such educators are considered to be catalysts for world class educational infrastructure (Malallah 2000). The presence of an all while European born facility may appeal to be favourable on the paper, but in reality, it would be difficult to establish a favourable rapport among the Arabs, Africans and Asian students with a British teacher. In other words, if the students have a teacher that they can bond with, they are more likely to take an active role by participating in the class discussions. On the other hand, if the students are unable to develop a bond with the teacher, they are likely to talk amongst themselves and make efforts to disrupt the class.

#### *5.3.4 Extent of Adjustment to Suit the Classroom Setting*

The teachers mostly belonged to Britain, and hence, in order to be relatable to the students of the private schools in Dubai, it was imperative that some changes be made. The changes are done to ensure that students feel comfortable in the classroom. It is essential for the teachers to make certain adjustments to the classrooms so that the students do not perceive them to be foreigners with whom they share no common ground. In this context, previous studies have established that cultural adjustment involves making a range of changes in one's action or behaviour which aligns with the domestic culture of the host nations, so as to avoid any kind of cultural conflict (Al Mazrouei & Pech 2014). The classes have a diverse population in terms of ethical backgrounds,

and hence, it is essential that adjustments are made to the classroom setting so that certain aspects are not perceived to be offensive. This is because it is possible that certain actions or gestures, that are seemingly harmless to majority of the population within the classroom are offensive to others. As teachers, it must be their responsibility to ensure that no student is offended in the classroom. Accordingly, it has been observed that the teachers have made several adjustments to suit the classroom setting.

Firstly, it was observed that all the teachers that had taken part in this study decorated their classrooms with posters of quotes, or an animated superhero, or other role models (Example of Posters and quotes “The class has a UAE flag and the Emirati astronaut “Hazza al Mansoori”. Many posters read “how to express ourselves” written in both English and Arabic.”). It is possible that the posters were used by the teachers to be an instrument of conversation so that the gap between the diverse cultures can be bridged. Posters facilitate expression, thereby, enhancing the communication process. Therefore, it is particularly relevant in diverse classrooms as observed in the schools of the UAE. In other words, the presence of posters in the classroom is a form of expression. This, in turn, instigates the students to express themselves to the best of their abilities, and thereby, the communication gap, on account of language and cultural barriers, can be bridged. However, a lack of Arabic role models was observed in most of the classrooms (An example of non-Arabic poster “The is a poster of cartoon super hero on the wall saying “I am rubbish at this. What should I do to improve””). This could be perceived as the teacher’s reluctant or unwillingness to learn about the people that the local people of the UAE would be able to consider as a role model. This could be considered as offensive for the Arab students. In other words, the Arab students may perceive such lack of posters to be act of negligence on behalf of the teacher. This could lead to the formation of an unfavourable opinion in the minds of the students towards the teacher.

Following the inference made in previous section, it has been observed that engaging students in cultural conversations is one of the commonly practiced ways for overcoming cross-cultural issues (Johnson et al. 2008). As a result, the teachers in the private schools of Dubai have made additional efforts so that students are encouraged to participate in conversations. The conversations help the students gain insights about other cultures across the globe and how they are coping with varying issues. This helps the students, as well as the teachers to understand and therefore, empathise with

people of other cultural background. In addition, the authors have emphasised that simply engaging students in cultural conversations is not enough to overcome cross-cultural issues and that reflective exercises ought to be enforced to facilitate the process of addressing such problems (Johnson et al. 2008). In the classes that were observed, there was only one instance of such reflective exercises being employed within the classroom (A high level of participation by the students “The students are having group discussions on the atmosphere of that play, instead of memorization of events; the teacher is encouraging them to relate the events to current state of affairs by pop questions around their tables.”). This could be an indication of an attempt to make changes to the teaching style so that it suits the classroom setting. Therefore, such assignment have been employed by the NESTs within the private schools of Dubai in an attempt to enhance the sense of awareness of the students.

Secondly, the use of electronic devices like laptops and iPads was common in the classroom, and most teachers had adjusted to such norms. They believed that the use of such tools enabled the students to be independent and self-reliant. This is because, during the teaching sessions, if the student is unable to understand the meaning of a certain word or phrase, they can simply look it up on their devices and there is no need to interrupt the class to enquire about it. However, one of research participants have been observed to be uncomfortable with the excessive reliance on such electronic devices and expressed her grievance at the fact that the students refused to pick up a real book (A teacher reflects their opinion on the use of iPad by the student “A student uses an Ipad to read the chosen novel. The teacher says: I wish to see you with a real book one day.”). However, in spite of such opinion towards the use of electronic devices, the teacher has not made any effort to prohibit them within the classroom. This is indicative of the efforts taken by the teachers towards adjusting to the convention of the classroom within the private school of Dubai.

Thirdly, it was noticed that the teachers make it a point to bring up instances-related to current affairs which were observed on a global scale, since it empowers the students to be aware of international issues and its consequence (The teacher encouraging discussion on international issues “The teacher asked students to conduct a research on global warming and encouraged them to voice their own opinions and talk passionately however logically”). This implies that the teachers themselves must be caught up with relevant news on a global scale. This is done to ensure that the teacher can not only provide a topic that encourages the students to engage in a class

discussion, but also so that they can be prepared to answer the questions that may be raised. Inclusion of lessons on current affairs within the classroom reinforces the knowledge base of both the student and the teacher. This, therefore, has been known to uplift the quality of the classroom teaching. This suggests that the teachers that have made efforts to integrate various cultures so as to encourage the students to learn about different cultural variations, and thereafter respect such differences.

Fourth, it has also been observed that the teachers make additional efforts so that the students are aware of the subtle differences in the English language in the way that it is spoken and written in America and Britain (the teacher highlighting the differences between American and British accent “The teacher spells Motorised and says: “I am British. I don’t like z”). Since English is the secondary language for the vast majority of the students in the private schools of Dubai, they are unaware about such minor differences and are often in the dark about the existence of any dissimilarities between the two dialects. Therefore, the teachers have been observed to make effort to ensure that the English that the students learn is the British version, so that it is aligned as per the school curriculum (the teacher highlighting the differences between American and British accent “Some students use American words the teacher says with an upsetting voice: That’s quite American actually. We British don’t use it (example you’ll being American)”). In this context, it was highlighted in previous studies that there exists differences with respect to grapho-phonology, lexico-grammar, and discourse-semantics across all languages (Kirkpatrick 2010, Jenkins 2015). In order to convey such information to the student, the teachers have been observed to amend their lessons to include such intricate aspects of the language.

Previous studies have established that practices like sharing social media accounts with the students, and their ages, hobbies and other personal information are considered as unprofessional in the UAE (Roblyer et al. 2010). However, such practices are common in the western countries, and teachers rely on such means to develop a rapport. This implies that the practices that the British teachers have followed in their native countries for the fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities are ineffective and frowned upon within the teaching industry of Dubai. Therefore, the teachers have had to adjust their approach to bond with the students. The norm in the UAE is to maintain a professional relationship with the students, and for the teachers to keep their professional and personal lives separate. This conforms to the principle of specific focus as posited in the

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture Model (Reis, et al. 2013, Bălan and Vreja 2013). This practice has helped the teachers in not offending the people of the UAE and other Asian countries (The teacher trying to discuss a sensitive issue without offending anyone "Teacher: women are not subhuman and this is global issue at the moment that has to be changed. Pretend that you are a lawyer and I need you to defend gender inequality.").

Lastly, the teachers have also been observed to make efforts in order to enhance their cultural intelligence quotients (The Teacher mentioning a local hero "The teacher approaches one of the groups that are very close to the researcher, to remind them of the young Emirati Astronaut HazzaAlmansori being from Dubai and encouraging youths to land in the moon!"). This is crucial in order to ensure that the students are not stereotyped as per the society's assumptions (Cortezzi & Jin 1999). It is imperative that the teacher neglects the stereotypes about the students based on their culture. While language is an effective strategy for reproducing social identities, such practices should not be resorted to by the teachers (Rampton et al. 2004). While the teachers make such efforts, it is also necessary for them to continue to learn about the other aspects of the diverse culture of their students. This is expected to improve the cultural intelligence of the teachers and make them more skilled at managing the diverse students. This would also ensure that the classroom discussions are comprehensive and therefore, improve the overall impact of the lessons.

#### **5.4 Summary**

Based on the analysis of the interviews, it has been observed that the major cultural obstacles faced by the native teachers in the UAE arise on account of cultural differences. It has been identified that unawareness of the various cultures and their differences leads to ignorance in the minds of the teachers, as well as the students. This, in turn, leads to misunderstandings which undermine the effectiveness of the English lessons. In addition, other factors like difference in the knowledge levels of the students, the attitudes of the parents, and the difference in independence levels between the people of diverse cultures presents obstacles for the native teachers. Based on the observation, the lack of cultural awareness has similarly been identified to be the major hurdle for the English teachers in the UAE.

The interview responses have revealed that the behavioural traits of the students are impacted by the culture of the teacher. This is because some students are more receptive towards the lesson

when the culture of the teacher matches their own ethnic background. Based on observation of the lessons, it has been identified that the Arab students experience some level of discomfort, since the teachers are mostly British and they are unable to understand the commonly used idioms. However, it has been observed that if the teacher makes additional efforts to communicate with the Arab students, it is perceived favourably.

Lastly, it has been identified by means of the analysis of interview responses and observations that the teachers have made efforts to accommodate the use of electronic devices within classrooms. The use of posters with Arabic texts, as well as English, to encourage conversations between the students have been made by the teachers. Additional efforts in terms of avoiding sensitive topics related to politics, racism, or sexuality have also been made so that all the students can feel comfortable within their classrooms. Another prominent change that has been adopted by several teachers includes encouraging the students to think critically and not simply providing them with the answers to suit the needs of the students.

While the analysis of the interview responses that have been executed following descriptive techniques has been effective, it may not be true in the case of the observation lessons. This is because the research participants were conscious about the presence of the researcher in the classroom during the observations. Therefore, there is a possibility that the research participants may have altered their behaviour on account of the presence of the researcher. In other words, the data collected specifically in terms of the observation could be biased.

## **6.0 Recommendations and Conclusion**

### **6.1 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, a series of recommendations have been provided, which can prove to be useful for teachers and the educational institutions to enhance the overall learning process for their candidates. Moreover, the recommendations can also help the institutions to take care of the interests of their teachers and to make sure that they are motivated in their workplace. Moreover, suggestions have been imparted for teachers to improve their overall experience of multi-cultural interaction in the classrooms.

The study has been conducted in a series of schools where the cross-cultural interaction and management of the native English-speaking teachers have been highlighted. It has been found that most of the English teachers belong to the western culture, and as a result, there is a striking cultural difference between them and the students. In order to bridge the cultural gap, it has been recommended that the teachers should be provided with cultural awareness training. The purpose of the training program is to make the teachers aware of various aspects of the native culture of the UAE, so that there is no unwanted conflict or misunderstanding between the students and the teachers. The cultural awareness programs should focus on training the teachers about how they should interact with the students. It can be highlighted that the cultural training offered to the English teachers should be mandatory, in order to eliminate any possible cultural conflict in the class. Being fully aware of the nuances of the domestic culture should allow the teachers to interact with the students more effectively, thereby avoiding miscommunication between them. The importance of the cultural awareness training can be further emphasised, by highlighting the prominent cultural difference between the western nations and the Middle Eastern nations like the UAE. Due to the striking difference, there is a high likelihood of cultural conflict. The nature of interaction by two individuals from different cultural background can be perceived differently, which can cause an unwanted conflict.

In this case, the students are habituated with their domestic culture, therefore, sudden exposure to a different cultural interaction can cause confusion and misunderstanding, which can even lead to conflict, thereby tarnishing the reputation of the school. Thus, it is necessary for the educational institutions that hire teachers from other national cultures, to provide them with sufficient training so that they are completely aware of the domestic culture of the UAE.

It is also recommended that the institutions should train the teachers to be more sensitive to other cultures. Due to the striking difference in cultures within the class room, the teachers are likely to come across various cultural aspects which can be completely new to them. Therefore, it is essential that the teachers should be tolerant to the domestic culture of the students. They should be taught to control their responses, which might otherwise be considered out-of-place in the domestic culture. The teachers need to be empathetic to the students belonging to other cultural backgrounds and focus on understanding their perspectives, instead of showing intolerance. Cultural sensitivity can also help in building a good relationship between the students and the teachers, which can further improve the overall teaching experience.

The institutions should, therefore, hire professional behaviour experts for training the teachers so that they can become proficient in teaching in a multi-cultural environment. Furthermore, the institutions need to ensure that all the teachers have the required level of cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication training, before they are allowed to teach in a classroom.

It has been found that favouritism towards white or Caucasian teachers is quite prevalent in the UAE. The educational institutions tend to hire Caucasian western teachers in order to create a positive image for the parents and guardians of the students. The general population holds a perception of favouritism towards the white people and considers their ability to teach English to be much superior as compared to others. In order to break this stereotyping of cultures, the educational institutions need to maintain diversity in its recruitment process. Candidates should be hired from a culturally diverse talent pool, in order to break the stereotyping of cultures in the UAE. Moreover, maintaining diversity while selecting the teachers should also help the students to become more sensitive towards other foreign cultures and ethnic groups. This, as a result, can prepare them to live in a globalised environment.

From the study, it has been revealed that the classrooms contain a significant number of students from diverse cultures, along with the ones belonging to the domestic cultures. Therefore, the educational institutions should ensure that diversity is maintained both among the students and also among the teachers. This, as a result, should help the educational institution to stand apart as a truly globalised institution, thereby attracting students and parents from various cultural backgrounds. This can prove to be beneficial for both the students as well as for the institutions.

Moreover, the teachers are likely to become more proficient in working in a culturally diverse environment which is the foundation for a globalised workplace.

The quality of education largely depends on the student to teacher ratio in a classroom. The increase in the number of students per teacher can significantly decrease the quality of teaching. This is mostly due to the fact that the teachers will not be able to pay attention to each student and their queries. Moreover, it can reduce the effective interaction between the students and the teachers, which can have an adverse effect on the quality of education. Therefore, it is recommended that each class should have not more than 16 students. Lowering the student-to-teacher ratio can significantly help the teachers to pay more attention to the students and can properly interact with them. Moreover, the process of teaching can also become more interactive, where the teacher will have sufficient time interact with each student and deal with their academic problems or queries. It should also be mentioned that lower number of students per classroom, can also reduce the effort of the teacher while teaching in a larger class room. Furthermore, it will be easier for the teachers to monitor the students more effectively, in a smaller group.

From the cultural perspective, it can be stated that the low student to teacher ratio can be helpful for the students as well as for the teachers. Owing to the cultural difference, it is essential for the teachers to spend more time with the students and become fully aware of their ethnic persuasion and their cultural background. Since, the student base in the UAE schools are often found to be quite diverse, therefore low student to teacher ratio can help facilitate in better cross-cultural interaction. In this case, it can be stated that the educational institutions should focus on the quality of education and better cross-cultural interaction, which can be achieved by lowering the number of students per classroom.

It has been found from the study that the popularity of private education has increased significantly over the past years, especially due to the increasing number of expatriate population. The parents seek to provide the best possible education for their children, which can prepare them for the globalised environment, making them more capable in their professional career. Therefore, it is suggested that the educational institutions need to create an environment for the students, which exposes them to various cultural aspects and prepare them to effectively manage the cultural differences in a positive manner. The curriculum should be flexible enough to cover the daily course modules for their exams and should provide sufficient coverage about the global cultural

aspects. It is important that the young generation of the UAE population should have the ability to be more tolerant to foreign cultures and should have the ability to interact and respect other cultures as well. The sole purpose of the new curriculum is to educate the children about the presence of different cultures around the world and how one should be able to look past the differences of each other in a culturally diverse setting and work together to achieve their common goal.

It is also suggested that educational institutions and the respective teachers need to ensure that the curriculum, teaching materials and the interaction between the teachers and the student, does not in any way, promote cultural stereotyping and promote negative mind-set among the children. As mentioned earlier, the number of expatriate population has increased significantly, which, as a result, has led to the creation of culturally diverse classrooms. Therefore, the students are likely to be exposed to different cultures from their very childhood. It is the responsibility of the teachers and the institutions to make sure that the cross-cultural interaction between the students are positive in nature, without any conflict and false perceptions. The teachers need to ensure to educate the students to respect every culture and to avoid stereotypic of behaviour based on ethnic persuasion. Thus, shaping the early perceptions of the children is quite crucial in preparing them to live and work in a diverse and globalised environment when they grow up.

The research has highlighted that the native English teachers in the UAE often face certain challenges while teaching in a culturally diverse setting. The most pertinent issue is the language barrier and difference in customs. It is recommended that as the educational institutes should hire teachers who are conversant to the local language to some extent. Moreover, they should be given some basic language training, before they are allowed to teach in a class. The teachers should be aware of common idioms and gestures which are popular in the domestic culture of the UAE. Moreover, as a part of the culture awareness training, the teachers should be trained to identify gestures and languages which may be considered offensive in the Middle Eastern culture. Therefore, it further emphasises the importance of training programs for teachers, which can help them to be more effective at their jobs. They should learn about cultural customs of the UAE and the basic differences from their home native culture. As a result, the teachers will be able to consciously control their behaviour and attitude in the classroom, thereby making the teaching experience more acceptable.

It should be ensured that there is not conflict between what is being taught in the class and what the children learn at home. The institutions need to make sure that all the teachers are trained to follow a standardised approach of teaching and interaction, which does not oppose the domestic culture. Such conflict can lead to confusion among the students and the parents. Moreover, it has been mentioned in the study that the teaching pattern and the nature of integration in western schools are quite different. There are certain customs which are quite common and expected in the western nations, but are considered offensive in the Middle Eastern nations. The educational institutes should make sure that such differences are properly addressed while training the teachers. Different nations have different ways of interaction and acceptable relationships between a student and teacher. The English teachers should be made aware of those differences and should be trained to follow the customs which do not create any misunderstanding or cultural shock.

It should also be mentioned that native English teachers are likely to have a different accent than the local population of the UAE. The children are more habituated with the local accent and may find it challenging to grasp the accent of a native English speakers. Therefore, it is recommended that the teachers monitor their accent and pronunciation and make necessary adjustments, which makes it easier for the students to understand. As a part of their language training program, the teachers need to be trained about the local English accent and how to pronounce certain words, which may otherwise lead to misunderstanding among the students. Moreover, it is also suggested that the interaction between the teacher and the students should not embed any particular national accent among the students. It should be ensured that the local accent of the children is retained, thereby maintaining their cultural identity.

It has been revealed that the UAE has a collectivist culture, where people are more inclined to carry out their daily activities in groups and show strong affinity towards their extended families along with their immediate family. However, on the other hand the western cultures are characterised by the presence of high degree of individualism. The teachers who belong to an individualist cultural background should be fully aware of this difference in social attitude. Therefore, while teaching the students, the teacher should not follow their individualist nature, but rather focus on the collectivist culture of the UAE. The students should be encouraged to form groups and participate in their daily class room activities. This, as a result, should create a cognitive

resonance between what the students are learning in class and what they are exposed to in their family.

In this context, it can be stated that the nature of exposure at home can also determine the acceptability of the teaching process by the students and their perception towards other cultures. Therefore, for a seamless education process, the parents should also be trained and educated about the cross-cultural settings and how they should educate their children at home. In most cases, children receive their primary education from home, which shapes their perception, attitude and response towards other cultures. Therefore, it is suggested that the educational institutions need to arrange for training programs for the parents, where they will be taught about how they should address the cultural differences in the society and how they should teach their children to do the same. The training programs for the parents should also cover how they should teach their children to interact with their teachers. Moreover, there should be complete transparency for the parents. It is the responsibility of the institution to make sure that the parents are well-aware of the teaching curriculum and the learning processes adopted by the teachers. Moreover, it is also recommended that the institution should completely reveal their initiative to create a globally diversified and culturally tolerant generation, who can work and sustain together. The positive implications for the students, in terms of their career development, should be well-emphasised.

It has been also found in the study that the native English teachers often find it quite difficult to manage the class, especially the all-boys class rooms. The students often engage in bullying and creating ruckus in the class, thereby making it difficult for the teachers to focus on the teaching. Moreover, it has been also found that the teachers are not able to control the erratic behaviour of the students. In this context, it can be recommended that the teachers should be trained to handle class rooms with erratic behaviour and disturbances. The training should include, definitive ways in interacting and treatment of the students in certain situations. It is imperative for the teachers to be trained to handle such situations in such a manner that it does not contradict with the local culture and customs. Moreover, the educational institutions should also arrange for parent-teacher meetings, in order to counsel them on how to manage their ward who are involved in creating unwanted disturbances in the class room. In this case, the meetings should involve, the teachers as well as the parents and the students. The teachers should be able to provide feedback of the behaviour of the children to their parents and provide them with necessary counselling for

behaviour correction. Furthermore, the institutions should establish strict policies against bullying and announce justified punishment for the student, involved in such activities. The teachers should also be trained to communicate with the parent about sensitive issues of student behaviour and counsel them about how they can promote further improvement.

As mentioned in the study, the UAE has adopted the initiative of Vision 2021, which is focused towards developing a diversified and knowledge-based economy. The educational institutions should ensure that their teaching curriculum is aligned with the proposed vision. In order to propagate towards a diversified economy, it is essential for people to embrace a globalised work culture. The multi-cultural management adopted in schools which teaches respect and tolerance towards other foreign cultures should be able to prepare the younger generation to work in a diverse and globalised work environment. Moreover, in a knowledge-based economy, it is imperative for the educational institutions to align their curriculum with the national vision. Recruiting the teachers from a diverse talent pool should help to create a strong impact on the career development of the children. They should be able to interact with people from different cultures. Furthermore, the educational institutions should also focus on alleviating the issues faced by the native English teachers working in the UAE. This, as a result, should help to attract more talents from the host nations, thereby making the nation a truly diversified economy. Thus, it is essential for the educational institutions to ensure that the next generation of talents is well-prepared to meet the national objectives.

The recommendations, as discussed above should help educational institutions to enhance their teaching process to become more effective. Moreover, it should also help to alleviate the issues faced by the teachers while teaching in a culturally diverse environment. More emphasis has been vested on training the teachers and making them aware of the local culture of the UAE and its customs, so that they can consciously avoid any kind of conflict or misunderstanding. Moreover, these recommendations can also help the educational institutions to improve their corporate image among the stakeholders, especially the parents. Thus, it can be emphatically stated that the recommendations should help the education sector in the UAE to become more productive and sustainable in the contemporary globalised environment.

## **6.2 Recommendation for Further Studies**

This research output is limited in various aspects, as the study is limited to only the educational institutions in the UAE. Further studies can be conducted in order to derive a more comprehensive idea of national culture and its impact on people. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies can be conducted to find out how different organisations in the UAE seek to take care of the interest of their diverse employee base. Moreover, it is essential to find out how the organisations in the UAE seek to improve diversity in their workforce. New studies can also be conducted to find out new methods of cross-cultural management, which can prove to be more effective in improving organisational productivity. Establishing new ways to manage a diverse work environment can help firms to attract employees from the global talent pool, thereby enhancing their competitive advantage. In this particular study, the research has been performed in one sector only, which is the education sector. A comparative study can be carried out to find out how the cross-cultural interaction and its management can vary across different industries and how organisations need to adopt different strategies to maintain harmony and foster productivity within the diverse workforce.

It is also suggested that further researches should be conducted in order to find out about the importance of the governmental policies and its role in cross-cultural management. Governmental regulations and policies in terms of recruitment and selection in different sectors can play a significant role in maintaining diversity in the national economy. New studies can be conducted in order to identify new areas of governmental intervention, which can help in the development of a diverse economy.

## **6.3 Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, English has gained popularity as a language, since it has become the official language of education, trade, health and tourism across the globe. In the UAE, as a part of the Vision 2021, the government is encouraging people to take up learning the language. According to the ambition of the country, world class education is expected to be offered by both the private and public educational sectors. In this study, the researcher has narrowed down the scope of the study to private schools in Dubai. The results of this study conform to previous studies by establishing that the UAE has a preference for hiring native speakers to teach English. This is part of the Vision 2021, which involves developing the educational sector to be on par with the global

standards. In order to meet such standards, the educational institutions have developed a preference for native English speaking people to be hired as teachers.

There are certain difficulties associated with teaching English on account of its flexibility and that fact that it differs based on the region where it is spoken, there is a difference with respect to grapho-phonology, lexico-grammar, and discourse-semantics. The difficulties associated become more apparent when English is not the primary language of the students. Due to the super-diversity environment in the UAE, people from varying cultural backgrounds exist in the country. Dubai is a melting pot of people from various cultural backgrounds, which implies that the students belong to a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. These mainly include Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Russian, and others who come from various parts of Europe, Canada, Australia and the United States of America. Teaching English to such a diverse population proves to be challenging, since they all have varying degree of understanding the language.

The researcher has expressed that she is anglophile, and her fascination for the country has prompted her to conduct this study and explore the differences in cultural values and customs. The issues that have primarily been investigated in this study is the researcher's point of view that include how NESTs perceive the cultural impression of their students, and the ability to handle the cultural aspects of teaching English to students who belong to various cultural backgrounds. The current situation in the UAE has highlighted the impact of favouritism of NESTs and have been proved to require further investigation and therefore, this study has investigated the current state of affairs of intercultural classrooms in some private schools in the UAE, in terms of how English classes are conducted. For this purpose, this study has assessed the cultural obstacles that native English teachers face in the UAE, the influence of the native teacher's culture on the behaviour of the students, and the extent to which the native English teachers adjust certain cultural aspects of their home country to suit the classroom setting. The use of humour, the suitability of instructions from a cultural perspective, has also been investigated in this section.

The review of extant literature has helped in gaining insights about the relevant concepts that have then been used to develop the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The concepts related to culture, super diversity, English as an International Language, English as a Lingua Franca, World English's, and intercultural competence have been referred to for the development of the theoretical framework. Additionally, the concepts of super diversity and the risks associated with

it, the challenges of intercultural classrooms, teachers' identity and professionalism have been reviewed for the development of the theoretical framework. Moreover, relevant studies conducted within the UAE, as well as at a global scale, have been reviewed, and the overall contribution that such studies have made to the field have been explained. This has helped in the identification of two unique attributes of the current study – focus on studying the cultural competence of NESTs and the perception they promote to their students and the cultural interactions between NESTs and their students in language learning classrooms.

In order to organise the methodology that would be used for the current study, research onion has been used. Accordingly, the research has followed the pragmatism paradigm (or philosophy) and the inductive approach, since they are aligned with the research questions. In terms of strategy, primary data was collected by means of one-on-one interviews, and lesson observation has facilitated the process of obtaining answers to the research questions. The study is cross-section, which is the data that has been collected and analysed by considering a single point of reference. This study has adopted the mono-method, since only qualitative data has been primarily used. Such data have been analysed by employing descriptive techniques. However, for certain objective questions, the results have been interpreted with the help of statistical tools like pie chart and bar diagrams. Various ethical aspects have been taken into consideration for conducting this study in terms of protection of the identity of the research participants. After the data has been collected, they have been analysed so that the research questions can be answered.

Firstly, it has been observed that the native teacher encounter various difficulties in terms of cultural obstacles. The major cultural barrier has been observed to be the lack of awareness among the teachers as well as the students. Since in the UAE, majority of the parents prefer to actively participate in the education of their children, the lack of cultural awareness among them also creates a barrier in the process. Due to such unawareness, the teacher or students may engage in some behaviour that could be perceived as offensive by others. This implies that certain idioms that are commonly used by the British population may be perceived in a different light by the students that belong to other cultures. This leads to misunderstandings, and conflict in certain situations which undermine the effectiveness of the English lessons.

Another barrier that has been observed to exist is the language barrier since the vast majority of the teachers are monolingual. This implies that the teachers do not have the required skills for

communicating effectively with the culturally diverse students. Since English is the only language that they are fluent in, they are ineffective in communicating with others who are not comfortable enough to converse in English. In addition, the teacher is unaware of some of the conversations that occur within the classroom, and they are unable to comprehend situations wherein certain hurtful or offensive remarks are made by the students. This compromises their ability to maintain discipline within the classrooms. Moreover, the use of sarcasm, idioms or proverbs is ineffective in engaging the students to participate in a class discussion, since the students are not familiar with such literary tools. In addition, the use of humour within the classroom is mostly ineffective since the students cannot perceive the intent or are not familiar with the phrases or terms used.

Since there are difficulties in the process of comprehending sarcasm, there is a lack of laughter in the classroom. This was because of the fact that cultural and language barriers implies that the jokes were not perceived by the students in the way that it was intended. However, the teachers continued to make efforts to use laughter as a tool for engaging the class. While most of the jokes could not be comprehended by the students, some made them laugh and enjoy the class. It has been observed that with experience, the teachers become more skilled in using laughter as a tool to keep the students engaged with the class discussions.

The difference in behavioural aspects and cultural norms across nations also present a hurdle to the teaching process. The majority of the teachers are British, which has an individualistic society and is a low context culture. On the other hand, the Arabian and the Asian countries which accounts for majority of the students, have a collectivist society and a high context culture. Such differences contribute to the misunderstandings between the teacher and the students, as low context cultures are direct in communication, while the people from a high context culture rely on non-verbal cues. This implies that the British teachers are unable to perceive the actual intended message as conveyed by the Arab and Asian students. The lack of appropriate skills to perceive the non-verbal cues like voice modulation, body language, silence and facial expression makes the teachers ineffective in communicating with certain student groups.

A difference in parental interference and the independence levels of the students have also been detected to present a hurdle for the teachers. In Britain, the parents rely on the teacher significantly to provide appropriate education, academically and behaviourally for the students. Therefore, the teachers have the liberty to develop their own lesson plans, which is usually not contradicted by

parents. However, this is not true in the case of the UAE on account of the Asian parents. They prefer to play an active role in the lives of the students, and hence, it is common for the parents to teach something contradictory at home. This leads to cognitive dissonance in the minds of the students, confusing them and therefore, undermining the effectiveness of the lessons. Therefore, the teachers are required to figure out how they minimise the chances of such cognitive dissonance. In addition, the students in Britain expect the teachers to provide them with the answers. However, the Arab and Asian students are more sincere and merely expect the teacher to offer guidance. Adjusting to such difference in the behaviour of the students similarly presented the teachers with a cultural obstacle that they had to overcome.

Secondly, the findings have revealed that there are instances where the culture of the teacher has had an impact on the behaviour of the students. Since the teacher does not belong to the same culture as the students, it has been observed that they are disrespectful and rowdy in class. This is especially true for the students who are Asian and Arabic, who have been observed to be yelling and throwing pens without any regard for the presence of the teacher in the classroom. In addition, the Arab students have expressed their discomfort on account of the use of sarcasm within the classroom, since they are not familiar with such literary tools.

This study has also highlighted that since the teachers are female, there have been instances where the fathers of the students have been disrespectful to them. This is indicative of the presence of gender stereotypes within the minds of the parents. Moreover, in the UAE, the parents are actively involved in the teaching process and hence, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to communicate with the parents. Since this is not the norm for the teacher in their home countries, the inability to effectively interact with the parents is reflected on the behaviour of the students. There have been instances where the parents are comfortable with the approach of the teacher, and therefore, they teach contradictory lessons to students at home. This undoes the work of the teacher, and confuses the students. It may be inferred that the parents may be more likely to trust the teacher with respect to cultural lesson, if the teacher belonged to the same ethnic background. Therefore, since the teachers are British, the native students often find themselves confused between right and wrong, and which lesson is to be followed.

Thirdly, native English teachers adjust several cultural aspects of their home country to suit the classroom setting. In Britain, the teachers are used to interacting with the students at a personal

level. Sharing social media accounts with the students, and their ages, hobbies and other personal information are commonly practiced in the home country of the teachers. However, such practices are considered to be culturally inappropriate within the UAE. As a result, in order to suit the classroom setting, the teachers had to learn to keep their professional and personal lives separate. The use of posters to instigate the students to participate in a conversation was also a practice that the teacher had to develop particularly to teach in the UAE.

Additional efforts in terms of avoiding sensitive topics related to politics, racism, or sexuality have also been made so that all the students can feel comfortable in the class. Such topics are not openly discussed in the UAE and hence, the teacher had to honour such norms by avoiding such topics in the classroom. Another prominent change that has been adopted by several teachers includes encouraging the students to think critically and not simply providing them with the answers to suit the needs of the students. This is because the students, particularly the Arabs and Asians are more sincere than British ones. As a result, they simply expect guidance from the teacher and not to be spoon-fed with the answers, which is the convention that NESTs were used to in their home country. In order to suit the needs of the diverse students, the teacher, therefore, changed their approach.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there are several hurdles that the NESTs encounter while teaching in Dubai. The results have revealed that with experience, some of the teachers have been able to overcome certain hurdles, while others have been ineffective. It is also apparent that there are certain negative impacts on the behaviour of the students on account of cultural background of the teachers. In order to fulfil the Vision 2021 which involves developing a world class education that meets the global standards, such negative impacts ought to be minimised. In addition, the need for further adjustment of the cultural aspects of the home country of the teachers to suit the classroom setting ought to be evaluated. Thereafter, the necessary steps have to be implemented so that the lessons are effective. Therefore, the investigation on the current state of affairs of intercultural classrooms in some private schools in the UAE, in terms of how English classes are conducted, have revealed that. While the teachers have been effective in taking measures to improve the effectiveness of the lesson, there is room for improvement. Ways for the improvement of prevailing circumstances have been suggested in the penultimate section of this chapter.

Based on the findings of the study, it has been recommended that the educational institutions should take the necessary initiatives to train the teachers for better cultural awareness. The training programs should help in proper understanding of different cultures and its customs, so that teachers are more effective in avoiding any form of cultural conflict in the classrooms. The training programs have also been suggested to include language training, to make the communication between the teacher and the native students easier. It has been also recommended that the teachers need to have better cultural sensitivity to understand the perspectives of different cultures. It has been further recommended that the educational institutions should emphasize on maintaining diversity among the teachers, rather than focusing on only recruiting Caucasian teachers. Moreover, it is essential to keep the student to teacher ratio as low as sixteen per class room. Lowering the number of students per class room should help the teachers to pay more attention on individual students. Since, the UAE is looking forward to create a diversified and knowledge-based economy in the near future, it has been recommended that the educational institutions should design their teaching methods and curriculum accordingly. A globalised approach should be taken, so that it can prepare the candidates for a diversified economy. The institutions have been suggested to train their teachers to handle disturbances and ruckus created by students and to also counsel their parents on how they should manage their ward.

The First Research question was ‘What are the cultural obstacles that the native English teachers face while teaching in the UAE?’. The Findings indicated that there was a significant cultural gap between the students and the British teachers. As a result, the teachers were not able to use British references to connect with the students nor were they able to appropriately understand the local references made by the students in the class properly. Furthermore, there were instances where the references and actions of the teachers were interpreted by the students or their parents as culturally offensive. Therefore, it can be recommended that there is a need to establish a Cultural Awareness Training program so that the teachers can be taught about the nuances of native UAE culture.

The Second Research Question was ‘How does the culture of the native teachers influence the behaviour of the students?’. The findings suggested that UAE has a deeply collectivist culture while the teachers originate from a culture which is individualistic in nature. Therefore, there is considerable cultural differences between the teachers and the students. The students are exposed to views and opinions of the teachers which can conflict with the beliefs of the parents who teach

their children these values at home. This can confuse the student which can adversely affect their education. Therefore, it can be recommended that the parents should also be trained about education in cross-cultural settings so that the parents can address the differences between the cultures. The training program would enable the parents to teach their children the values of their culture, effectively interact with the teachers and also allow the institutions to maintain a high level of transparency.

The Third Research Question was ‘To what extent do native English teachers adjust certain cultural aspects of their home country to suit the classroom setting within the international schools of Dubai?’. The Findings of the research indicated that teachers find it difficult to effectively manage a class if it consists of all boys. The teachers have to over-explain certain references, over pronounce words and even engage with students to ensure that they can address bullying, unruly and racially insensitive behaviour among the students. It can, therefore, be recommended that teachers also receive adequate training to address the erratic behaviour of the students and the disturbances made during the class. Furthermore, the institution should establish parent-teacher meeting so that the behaviour of the student can be discussed with the parent and how their ward should managed in the classroom is evaluated.

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**A. Informed Consent Forms of the Research Participants**

**Informed Consent**

***The Cultural Perception of Native Teachers of English with Multicultural Classrooms***

*Thank you for agreeing voluntarily to take part in this doctoral study conducted at the **British University in Dubai**. Your contribution will help me, the researcher, to understand the cross-cultural communication and interaction that currently exist in multicultural classrooms in the UAE. The study is concerned with the cultural awareness English teachers in handling multicultural classrooms, in some private schools in the UAE.*

*Please be informed that a transcript of your interview would be produced in which all identifying information are to be removed. The audio-recorded interview will only be retained for specific relevant period of one year from the date of conducting the interview. Thus, all information you provide for this study will be treated confidentially.*

**CONSENT**

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I voluntarily agree to take part in this study and will be given a copy of this consent form.

*For any further clarification, please contact:*

**Researcher No.:** 0566371117

**Supervisor Email:** christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae

**Signature of research participant**

Name of participant Amy Crane  
Date 3/10/2019

Signature of participant Amy Crane

**Informed Consent**

***The Cultural Perception of Native Teachers of English with Multicultural Classrooms***

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

**Researcher No.:** 0566371117

**Supervisor Email:** christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae

**Signature of research participant**

Name of participant ALICE MENHONNET

Signature of participant 

Date 3/11/2019

## Informed Consent

### *Investigating the Cultural Perception of some Native Teachers of English at Dubai Private Schools*

*Thank you for agreeing voluntarily to take part in this doctoral study conducted at the **British University in Dubai**. Your contribution will help me, the researcher, to understand the cross-cultural communication and interaction that currently exist in multicultural classrooms in the UAE. The study is concerned with the cultural awareness of English teachers in handling multicultural classrooms, in some private schools in UAE.*

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

Researcher No.: 0566371117

Supervisor Email: [christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae](mailto:christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae)

#### Signature of the research participant

Name of participant- BETH SWINSGOE

Date 31-10-19

Signature of participant



## Informed Consent

### *The Cultural Perception of Native Teachers of English with Multicultural Classrooms*

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

Researcher No.: 0566371117

Supervisor Email: christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae

### Signature of research participant

Name of participant--Nadine Quirk

Date --22-10-19

Signature of participant -----

**Informed Consent**

***The Cultural Perception of Native Teachers of English with Multicultural Classrooms***

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

**Researcher No.:** 0566371117

**Supervisor Email:** christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae

**Signature of research participant**

Name of participant CLAUDIA C. FIJAVAMI

Signature of participant 

Date 29.10.19

## Informed Consent

### *The Cultural Perception of Native Teachers of English with Multicultural Classrooms*

Thank you for agreeing voluntarily to take part in this doctoral study conducted at the **British University in Dubai**. Your contribution will help me, the researcher, to understand the cross-cultural communication and interaction that currently exist in multicultural classrooms in the UAE. The study is concerned with the cultural awareness English teachers in handling multicultural classrooms, in some private schools in the UAE.

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

Researcher No.: 0566371117

Supervisor Email: christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae

**Signature of research participant**

Name of participant

*Ruth Shadid*

Signature of participant



Date 18-11-19

## Informed Consent

### *The Cultural Perception of Native Teachers of English with Multicultural Classrooms*

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

Researcher No.: 0566371117

Supervisor Email: christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae

### Signature of research participant

Name of participant Miss Carly Noonan  
Date 24.9.19

Signature of participant 

## Informed Consent

### *Investigating the Cultural Perception of some Native Teachers of English at Dubai Private Schools*

Thank you for agreeing voluntarily to take part in this doctoral study conducted at the **British University in Dubai**. Your contribution will help me, the researcher, to understand the cross-cultural communication and interaction that currently exist in multicultural classrooms in the UAE. The study is concerned with the cultural awareness of English teachers in handling multicultural classrooms, in some private schools in UAE.

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

Researcher No.: 0566371117

Supervisor Email: [christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae](mailto:christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae)

**Signature of the research participant**

Name of participant Emma Philip

Date 15/10/2019

Signature of participant ePhilip

## Informed Consent

### *Investigating the Cultural Perception of some Native Teachers of English at Dubai Private Schools*

*Thank you for agreeing voluntarily to take part in this doctoral study conducted at the **British University in Dubai**. Your contribution will help me, the researcher, to understand the cross-cultural communication and interaction that currently exist in multicultural classrooms in the UAE. The study is concerned with the cultural awareness of English teachers in handling multicultural classrooms, in some private schools in UAE.*

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*For any further clarification, please contact:*

Researcher No.: 0566371117

Supervisor Email: [christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae](mailto:christopher.hill@buid.ac.ae)

#### Signature of the research participant

Name of participant Chris Maitland

Signature of participant Maitland

Date 3.10.19

Gmail interface showing an email conversation. The subject is "Interview questions - Reem".

**Reem Alhaji** (Wed, 30 Oct 2019, 13:42):  
Dear Ms Jennings, I hope this finds you well. I was wondering if you had time to answer my interview questions. I really appreciate how busy you are, Ms Jenning

**Georgia Jennings** (Tue, 19 Nov 2019, 12:31):  
Good Afternoon,  
  
I am so sorry, I completely forgot to send you these answers through, I have had many things going on.  
  
Please find answers attached.  
  
Kind Regards,  
  
Mrs Georgia Jennings  
  
Year 3J Teacher and Primary Lead Practitioner



## **B. Interview Questions**

### ➤ *Demographic Information*

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Nationality
4. Native language
5. Current teaching school
6. Current teaching grade
7. Other languages
8. Years of Experience in the Middle East
9. Years of experience in the UAE
10. The major nationalities that you have in class

### ➤ *Contextual Information*

1. Is it easy to find a job in the teaching profession in the UAE? What do recruiters look for in a language teacher?
2. What do you think are the disadvantages of being a monolingual English teacher working in the UAE?
3. Do you think UAE citizens prefer native teachers of English? What nationality do they prefer and why? Do schools/parents have any preferences for particular English accents?
4. What are the main challenges for you as a native teacher teaching non-native students?
5. What would be the great challenges of teaching culture to multicultural classrooms?
6. How often do you get asked by students/parents about your nationality? What do you think they care about it?
7. What are the intellectual/behavioural features that you think native students have as opposed to their peers of non-native students? (i.e. more polite, honest, respect, direct).
8. How do you think understanding the language of your students could improve the understanding of your students, and which language would it be in the case of the school you are currently teaching at?
9. What are the stereotyped images that natives have about teaching in the UAE?
10. How often do you use humour in class and do you think your students understand?

11. In what way are native teachers in the UAE different than their peers of natives who are not in the teaching profession?
12. How do you encourage language creativity amongst non-native students?
13. What are the missing links between teachers and students in your school, culturally speaking?
14. Do you remember a time when you found it difficult to teach someone from a different background?
15. Were you ever in a position that required considering a different perspective from your own to explore an issue? (When you had to overlook a behaviour because of your cultural awareness in a particular incident.)
16. Can you tell me of a situation that was considered very disrespectful (offensive) in your culture, yet you had to overlook it or differently handle it because of the cultural difference?
17. Can you tell me about some of the most respectful manners of your ethnically different students that are not practiced by students from your culture?
18. What, in your opinion, are the most commonly held misconceptions about people from your culture?
19. Do your students have a sense of cultural awareness? If yes, give examples.
20. What is best about teaching multicultural classrooms?
21. What is worse about teaching multicultural classrooms?
22. Did you face any cultural issues with your students because of your gender in during your professional life?
23. What do you think students need to know and understand about the relationship between language and culture?  
That we should respect both and they are greatly linked. The language creates a huge part of someone's culture.
24. What would you suggest to include in an induction programme targeting first-year native teachers? Have you had any? Please share.
25. Is there anything else you would like to share about culture?



## C. Interview Transcripts

### I. Interviewee 1

The researcher: ... just demographic questions really. Is it important even, age? nationality.

Miss Noonan: I'm British. I am 35. I am female.

The researcher: Right. Okay. That's which part of UK?

Miss Noonan: I come from Liverpool. It's a city in the north.

The researcher: Liverpool. Oh, my team.

Miss Noonan: Oh really? Is it? Wow.

The researcher: Native language obviously is English.

Miss Noonan: Is, yeah, English.

The researcher: Current teaching is Wellington Academy.

Miss Noonan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

The researcher: The grades that you're teaching?

Miss Noonan: Yeah. I teach the older... the upper part of the school, so that's year 10 to year 13. I have four different year groups.

The researcher: Right. Do you speak other languages?

Miss Noonan: I don't, unfortunately. Completely embarrassed to admit that, but no I don't. I was taught German up to GCSE level in school and then I haven't taught anything. Since moving to this school and to this country, I've never been so envious of people who can speak another language, a second or a third language even sometimes. No, I don't, but I wish that I did. I'd just like to be able to find the time now to do it. I don't, unfortunately.

The researcher: Which language would it be? Would it be the language of your students, which is your understanding-

Miss Noonan: I would like to learn Arabic, certainly just enough to allow me to express some things to them, communicate maybe on even the most basic of levels. Then I would like to speak maybe French or Spanish, I just think because they're really common as well. I can take that everywhere, I suppose.

The researcher: Years of experience in the Middle East.

Miss Noonan: Yes. This is my... I'm going into my third year. I've had two full teaching years here and this is my... going into my third year now.

The researcher: Outside of the UAE.

Miss Noonan: Outside of the UAE I've taught... I taught for 12 years before I came here, all in the UK. I've been teaching quite a long time now.

The researcher: What are the major nationalities or the current nationalities in your classes?

Miss Noonan: In the class, so Arabic students, a lot of Indian students, Pakistani students, students from Europe. We have a lot of Chinese students as well, Russian. Yeah, from all over, some American, some Canadian, some Australian, some Kiwi students. We've literally got every nationality. I think it's about 113 different nationalities in total. I don't know all of them, but that's officially...

The researcher: Was it easy to find a job in the UAE? What are the recruiters looking for in English teachers?

Miss Noonan: It was fairly easy. I think because a lot of the schools over here are British-curriculum led. Having that kind of education, that background, is desirable in most of the school, speaking from experience. Personally, I got the job through a friend. She is the current head of department. She put me in touch

with GEMS Corporation. Then I just went through the normal application process. I think one thing that might have been desirable for me, as I said, it's the British education that I received, the fact that I teach the British curriculum and I have taught for the length of time that I have, so I've got the experience. I think that speaks for itself really. If you got the experience, then you can deal with anything that you are confronted with in the classroom, to a certain extent.

The researcher: When you talk about the British curriculum, is it the same curriculum that you taught back in the UK.

Miss Noonan: It's very slightly different. Key stage three, which is the younger years seven, eight and nine, that's exactly the same. Year 10 and 11, that's virtually still the same. What generally happens with English, because it's a course subject, the exam boards change year on year. The majority of the content of the exams varies very, very slightly. Then the literature elements, so we have the English language exam and then the English literature exam. The literature exam very, very rarely changes. It's the same text that will be on there, similar questions. The content of what it is that I'm teaching hasn't changed, just the style of the way that I'm teaching is what's changed massively.

The researcher: Could you just elaborate on that?

Miss Noonan: Yeah. Things over here are much more student-led. It is very much on the student being independent for their own learning, learning to be more resourceful, learning to construct their own meaning from things and not really too reliant on the teaching telling them what to do. That was interesting for me when I first started, because I wasn't used to students being independent. I was very much used to them needing me and telling them what to do. Relying really heavily on me, prompting them and giving them ideas. Even though we are a school with all of those... with the cultures

as we've just discussed, this school for me I find, the students here anyway are very independent, very adaptable, very resilient. If they struggle, they will ask you very rarely for help. They'd rather just do it for themselves. That, for me, is something that is really, really interesting to see.

Miss Noonan: We insist on the students bringing a device to every lesson. That, again, is something that we need to incorporate into our lessons, having the students be more on the web and completing their own research each lesson. It's just a completely different style of teaching and a much more enjoyable style for me anyway. Because it just allows for you to take more of a backseat and just be the facilitator rather than the leader. I just enjoy it so much more. It's just about more of a connection really with the students. They are more open to engage with you in dialogue. They are able to verbalize their thought processes, their ideas, in a much clearer way than what I saw back at home; even though they are not native English speakers, the majority of them, which is just astounding.

Miss Noonan: I think it just goes to prove that being bilingual or certainly having a plethora of language that you speak, your brain function is slightly more, I don't know, heightened. It's better than somebody who just speaks one language. I don't know whether there's any truth in that. We've done quite a bit of that with our post-16 students. bilingualism is one of our units. There's some interesting ideas out there about bilingual, benefits of it in comparison to if you are monolingual. I do think there could be some truth in that, from what I've seen.

The researcher: I expected a different answer, to be honest.

Miss Noonan: Really? Yeah.

The researcher: I thought that English students, British students in general, are research-based and very keen on learning.

Miss Noonan: No.

The researcher: No?

Miss Noonan: No. I just think...

The researcher: I thought that spoon feeding happens here.

Miss Noonan: I think it's cultural though. In all honesty, I do think it is. I don't think children in the UK, unfortunately, value their education as much as children in other countries. Maybe that's down to the fact that they don't have to pay for their education in the UK. It's just given to them. They take it for granted. Or whether it's because they see a lack of opportunity. They don't feel as though there's a point in them studying hard, because what opportunity is going to face them when they leave school. Certainly in the schools that I was teaching in, at local comprehensives, in deprived areas where there were very little opportunities for students to leave the area and to be successful. In terms of what they deem successful anyway; which is, to them, it's earning a lot of money, owning a nice home and all of that.

Miss Noonan: Whereas when I've come over to the UAE, I've noticed that students really do value their education. Particularly in Indian students and Pakistani students, they are very academic. Our Chinese students as well; very, very driven. I do think it comes down to culture. They love to be educated. They love to learn. They are head and shoulders above other students, as far as I can see and just, well, in terms of the mentality and that drive that they've got. I just think it comes down to the fact that ultimately this is an education that their parents are having to pay for or certainly who their parents work for, are having to pay for. I think there's a real... there's a value in that they understand the importance of taking from it, everything that you possibly can because of those factors, I think

The researcher: It begs me to ask questions about Brexit, but that's just for another day.

Miss Noonan: Yeah, of course, could be here all day.

The researcher: Right. What do you think is the disadvantage of being a monolingual English teacher in your current classroom?

Miss Noonan: Yeah. I do think there's a limitation to what I can do. If I have a new student... For example, we've just received a new student in year nine. He has been being taught in a French school for the past nine years. He's French-Canadian, where one of his parents is Tunisian and he has French-Canadian on the other side. He can speak four languages. English isn't his native and so he finds it a struggle. My communication with him in the first time that I met him, I wasn't able to speak any of the other languages that he could. Only English, which was his weakest language. I just came away from that feeling as though I could have done so much more had I had that ability to communicate.

Miss Noonan: I rely heavily on having to really slow down when I speak and have to really over pronounce things and almost... Just because they struggle with English, it's not a reflection of their academic ability. I feel almost as though I patronize students sometimes, because I don't have the ability to speak other languages. I over pronounce words and so on and so forth, and over simplify things. They don't necessarily need that. They are academic. They're able. I think that that's a challenge for me. I need to learn ways to deal with that.

Miss Noonan: I think, as well, it comes down to sometimes the pacing of the lesson. I have a year 11 class at the moment, with the heavy majority of the class are Arabic. Then I have two Mandarin-Chinese students in the class who speak very, very limited English. The limitations with that particular group is that I haven't been able to keep up with the pace of the other teachers in year 11. Because I have to slow the pace right down and differentiate for a number of different groups of students within that particular class. Because of

cultural reasons with and because of the language barrier and that, me being monolingual and them speaking maybe two or three languages and English not being the strongest, it's certainly something that has to... I have to slow the pace of the lesson right down.

Miss Noonan: One thing that we usually find in English as well, for all of those students who do struggle with English, is that we don't enter them for the literature exam at the end of the year. They will... There's often, say our cohort is 250 students, there's often maybe 10 or 12 of those students who simply would not be able to access the literature paper, because they don't have a good enough grasp of the language. That's something that, again, we look at ways to get around that. Each year, we do reduce the numbers that we can't enter for both exam papers. That's certainly something that's a struggle as well, in having to make that decision about which pathway will be best for the student. Often comes down to their ability to access the language in the first place.

The researcher: Just going back to the question again, do you think being a bilingual and speaking your students' language, don't you think it would take you to another framework where you have to translate each and everything? They would take it for granted that they won't appreciate monolingual diction.

Miss Noonan: Yeah. That could be a possibility. I just think because we are faced with students that often speak a number of different languages, for me to have to learn the language, translate everything that I'm doing into, say for example, French when maybe only two students in the room speak French, or then translate everything into Arabic when maybe only five students in the room speak Arabic... I think because we're not dealing with students who all speak just one particular language, then that would be problematic in itself. I think because of the nature of the school, the nature of the community, where we have so many different language speakers in the school. I think to have to translate things into all of those different languages could be...

The researcher: Yeah. It could be daunting.

Miss Noonan: Absolutely.

The researcher: It won't be practical, I think.

Miss Noonan: Yeah.

The researcher: Do you agree that for us, non-native, teaching English, parents, students would frown upon the idea of us translating things to Arabic all the time, domesticating things for them?

Miss Noonan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

The researcher: Okay. This is a funny one. Citizens of UAE, I'm talking about the parents, do they prefer native speakers of English to teach English.

Miss Noonan: Yes, from experience, I do think that they do. I think it comes more down to, obviously, the standard English. We will try to speak same pronunciation as much... as best as we possibly can. Apart from that, I think it's more to do with the backgrounds in the teaching of the curriculum, rather than the actually language that is being spoken. I think it comes down to content and you actually being knowledgeable of that particular curriculum. For example, we have Irish teachers in the school who were taught the Irish curriculum and don't really have a background that is not the British education system. There's a slight difference there with that. I just think it comes more down to that. Yes, they would like you to be an English speaker.

Miss Noonan: Not that I've ever come across anybody who was even... had really started as an initial concern. We don't have anybody in the English department here that is not a native English speaker, for me to be able to use a proper example. I just think, speaking from experience, a parent will always say, "What is your background?" They're interested to know where it was that

you went to university. Have you taught the British curriculum before? It's those kinds of questions that they're interested in, more so than what language do you speak? What is your native language?

The researcher: In Japan, for example, they do prefer American teachers, so I've heard. What about here?

Miss Noonan: Okay. American teachers, I'm not familiar. We've got one American teacher here. She's one of our science teachers. She's the only one. As far as I'm aware, there's nobody that has ever made a preference. I'm not too sure whether the parents have communicated that at all. I just think because it's a British-curriculum school, that an American teacher, unless they'd studied the British curriculum and they'd taught the British curriculum, they'd find a bit hard to be employees here anyway. I think it's a requirement by the school that you are... you're able to access the British way. I suppose, it was American school, then I think things would be completely different.

The researcher: Yeah. They don't have any preference to a particular accent. They won't say, "This is a South-African accent"?

Miss Noonan: I don't think so. I think because my accent, I come from Liverpool and it is very strong, what we call a Liverpool accent. One of my friends who's from Wales, she lives in... she works at the school, she can't distinguish between my accent and another girl who lives in a similar area to me, but she's not from Liverpool. She speaks totally different to what I speak. I can notice the distinction, but my friend from Wales can't. She can't... When she listens to us speak, she says, "You sound exactly the same to me." I think that that must be the same for most people.

Miss Noonan: When I speak to her... She's Welsh. She has a Welsh accent. Then one of our other teachers, he is Welsh as well. I can't really tell a distinction between them too. I don't really pick up on the subtleties of the differences in their dialect and then therefore, their accent; because I'm not from that

particular area. I wouldn't actually be able to pick up on maybe the use of colloquials, et cetera. Maybe that's the case to parents as well. Because they are not from the UK, they don't natively speak English, I don't think they are too drawn into our accent. As long as we speak English and we can communicate with them, I think that's the most important thing to them.

The researcher: Right. Won't recruiters, for example, say, "Well, you sound quite like a northern. You should just listen." They say-

Miss Noonan: I actually just do that anyway. The way that I'm speaking to you now is far more pronounced and standard to the way that I would speak to my sister or my mother or my father, for example. Where I know that I can clip certain words and I can speak at a quicker pace and I can use phrases that they're familiar with and they will still understand what I'm saying. I think recruiters certainly expect you to have a professionalism with the language that you use. A certain level of tone, certainly to you, sounds English.

Miss Noonan: I think we need to do that even more so with the nature of the students that we are teaching. We need to make sure that we slow the pace of our talk down, over pronounce certain words and phrases, use standard English as far as we possibly can, try not to be too overly familiar in the things that we say. It does have an impact on relationships with students. Because when I was at home, I could quite often have a joke with the students or use sarcasm or use banter, and they knew exactly what I was talking about. I could talk about something in popular culture and they would know. Something that I'd watched on the TV last night, I'd be like, "What do you think of this?" They'd be like [inaudible 00:20:56]. We could get into a conversation about it. That's something that doesn't happen here as often.

The researcher: Right.

Miss Noonan: Yeah, exactly. I do still have a good connection with students. It's more of on an academic level. They see me as someone who knows everything.

They come to me for advice and ask me questions. Whereas at home, I think because you have that familiarity with the students, they don't see you as someone who's distant to them. Which is not a bad thing. We want that closeness. We want that relationship. I think of here, it's just that there's a certain barrier that students and teachers just don't cross. It's very, very formal and very professional and that kind of... That comes across in the language that we speak as well, I think.

The researcher: You don't use humor.

Miss Noonan: Sometimes.

The researcher: You won't say, for example, that there was a catch phrase from a popular tv series.

Miss Noonan: Yeah.

The researcher: You won't just say, "By the way, this is going viral. I think you should know it, because it's..." Just an example there-

Miss Noonan: Yeah. I think I'm more, do you know... Because I know students who are on social media. I know they're more into popular culture than I am. They know more of what's going on in the world than I probably do, because they're constantly connected to it. Yeah, I think I would. I would do that, but I'd make sure that it was something that was of a global concern or issue or on a global scale, so that they were aware of it. I wouldn't make a cultural or a regional reference. For example, I wouldn't be able to talk about something in Liverpool that... We get called Scousers. I wouldn't be able to say something that a Scouser, for example, would refer to. Because it just wouldn't sink in with the students, unless they're from Liverpool.

Miss Noonan: I wouldn't be too specific in the banter that was happen, but I do certainly try to have banter with the students. I remember when I first started saying

to my friend who got me the job and put me in touch with the school, I was like, "God, I've been trying to just have a bit of banter and stuff." She's like, "No." I was like, "Yeah, it does actually." I've learnt from that. That if you do want to chat to the students in that informal way, it needs to be about something that is more significant to them, before I can get a response from them. Otherwise, it just... they don't understand what I'm talking about to them.

The researcher: Yeah. For me, I only once tried to... I said, "Well, finally, my name made it to the dictionary." Because one of the celebrities said reem to refer to something cool. Today, in, is it Chelsea, they use reem as cool.

Miss Noonan: They understand.

The researcher: Yeah. They found it... Because in America, they use sick to do... That's so sick. Again, I don't know, sometimes I feel that I have the responsibility of making them be aware of the new words that are emerging every now and then.

Miss Noonan: Yeah, absolutely. We should have a responsibility to keep them educated on those kinds of things.

The researcher: Right. What do you think...? I think you just answered the challenges of teaching non-natives, as a native speaker of course. One thing is banter, humor. The other thing is that you have to stay formal. You can't drop titles and say, "Please don't call me miss, just..."

Miss Noonan: Yeah, exactly, all of that, but to remain very professional. I think in terms of... That's in relationships, the limitations to relationships, I suppose. Then the relationships in terms of the lesson content or the pace of the lesson, is just as I was saying before. If students are struggling to access the English language, it just needs to... the pace of the lesson needs to be slowed right down, so they can access the content and those kinds of things. Generally

speaking on the whole, with my year 11 and year 12 students, they're so intelligent. The pace is just completely flowing. I feel like I can speak quicker to them. Although I definitely use standard English all the time, I can sometimes...

Miss Noonan: When they're having a chatter, they're doing a group task, I can go over to them and chat to them about it. Then that's when I feel as though I can be more informal with them, when I'm closer in proximity to them. They can read me a bit better or maybe read my facial expression. Whereas when I'm at the front of the room and I'm giving a whole class instruction, that's when I'll be professional teacher. I need to be clear here. We all need to get the same message and then... I do tend to adapt and change the way that I speak and the style of the language, depending even on the circumstance of the lesson or what exactly is happening in that particular moment. I just think it's something-

The researcher: Back home, you tend to use more relaxed style of teaching. They call you by your first name.

Miss Noonan: Yeah. They couldn't call us by a first name. No. They weren't allowed to do that. They still have to call us by miss and then whatever our surname was. That was just the school policy, I suppose. I think most places are like that in the UK. They try to be very traditional and stick to that. For example, if I was dealing with a behavior problem at home, I could maybe be slightly more aggressive in the tone of voice that I used or slightly more, not confrontational but certainly... well, yeah, I suppose confrontational actually. I'd confront the student about their negative behavior and tell them what was wrong with it in a particular way. That was more a familiar way of speaking. Whereas over here, again, I try to be... If I do have to reprimand the student about anything, I try to be more formal about it and make it very professional, just so that they're very clear about the message that I'm trying to deliver.

Miss Noonan: Whereas at home, I don't feel I have to be like that. I could be a lot more... I'd speak to them as though they were someone that I've got a closer relationship to, if that makes sense. I just think you could be a little bit more... could use a bit more slang, so to speak, in the way that you're telling them off. You could say things like, "Don't be daft [inaudible 00:28:00]. You know what I'm talking about." You could use the word daft and they'd know what you meant. Whereas over here, I would never say that. Because they think, "What does daft mean?" Then it might be insulting to somebody and I wouldn't want to insult them.

Miss Noonan: I think there's more of a fine line over here, because of the connotations with certain words and maybe the misunderstanding of those words and cultural boundaries. We can't say and maybe do certain things that we may have done back in the UK, because of all the multinationals that we're dealing with. That's just something that you equally learn to adapt to, I suppose. That's why it's always best to stay very professional, very formal, with what it is that you want to communicate to the students so that they don't misunderstand what it is that you are saying. Somebody from an Asian background might understand the word daft to mean something completely different, to somebody from a European background. So that you don't have to worry about that miscommunication, it's best to just step away from that and stick with standard English.

The researcher: If I may pick up on something you just mentioned, parents, something that you... I do work at a university where parents feel entitled to just storm into your office and say, "Why?" Because every other student is a prince or a princess. As you know, we don't say child on board. It's prince or princess. They would... I would have these students who are very pampered. They would bring their parents in to sit down and say, "Well, you have to give them extra care, take extra care of the student because of... By the way, we know your uncle. Isn't he the CEO of...? Yes. We've got connections with him, so why don't you...?" They try to bend the... Yes. We do have this

culture, unfortunately. It's, anyway, it's from certain Arab expats and locals. I want to ask you, did you face this back in Liverpool and...?

Miss Noonan: Quite the opposite actually. Unfortunately, the schools that I worked at, there was quite a lot of parental disengagement. I'd have maybe a handful of parents who would want to stay in touch with me, who would... I'd be able to call and speak about the progress of their child and they'd be really pleased to hear from me. Nine times out of ten, the parents were just... If the school's calling them or needing to contact them about whatever, it was a hassle. It was because their child was misbehaved or because they hadn't done homework or they were falling behind. There was a huge disengagement. Quite often, you can go a whole year without seeing a certain parent in the UK.

Miss Noonan: Whereas when I've come over here, there's a huge change, huge difference. It is something that I found a real struggle to adapt to when I first started. I think some of our new members of staff this year are as well. It's the constant communication that you need to have with parents. We have a system where the parents can contact us, request a meeting. Sometimes they will just turn up to the school and come into reception. It's like, "I need to see such and such a teacher now." It's like, "We're teaching unfortunately. We can't just leave our class." That is really... I found difficult.

Miss Noonan: However, having said that, I do understand. Because they are paying for a service. This is something that is not free. It's expensive. They expect for you to do a good job. They want a certain result for their child. If their child is hardworking and is willing to put in the effort themselves, then there's no reason why you can't get to a certain point together. That is something that I think is different, certainly, over here and can present a lot of challenges. Maybe just to feel quite anxious almost, that you're not going to be able to do what it is that the parent wants you to. The expectation is so huge and you just feel overwhelmed by it.

Miss Noonan: That's not all parents of course. It is a handful, again, could be like that. Just take a lot of getting used to. I feel once you have had an experience with the majority of the parents, you see how lovely they are, how accommodating, how willing to help you help their child they are. All they really want to do, if they can communicate it, all they really want to do is ensure that child gets the best education and they succeed and as successful as they can possibly be. I understand that. Maybe it just takes that communication backwards and forwards, for you to really understand what it is that they are after.

The researcher: Sorry. Did you think teachers here are trusted enough to...? Are they not underestimated by parents? That teachers here have the final say, grades, or giving a second chance for a student-

Miss Noonan: Yeah.

The researcher: They do.

Miss Noonan: Yeah. Some students, especially when they get to post-16 and they have to start applying to university, they will come to you, literally, in September of year 13. They're like, "Will you give me predictive grades?" We have to have a conversation, "We've not actually studied this component and be in exam and done it. We haven't studied that component and be in exam and done it. We have to wait. I'll give you a real true prediction in December, when you've done your mock exams or whatever the case may be." Parents tend to be a little bit more understanding of that fact. Once you have the conversation, it tends to be the students who are pushing for those predictive grades.

Miss Noonan: I just think that once you've explained yourself clearly and once they've had the chance to speak to you about whatever it is that might be causing them some kind of concern, they seem to settle down. I just think they trust you when you prove yourself to them. For example, attendance of staff, that's...

It matters to parents, if their child hasn't come home and had full [inaudible 00:34:48] teachers that day. If you mark their work regularly and you give the students feedback, I just think there is a lot of communication between parents and students. When you're back in the UK, that doesn't really happen. The parent may say, "How's school been?" The child says, "It's been fine." That's literally all that there'll be. That's the whole communication. Whereas over here, the student will go home and they'll say-

The researcher: They'll give a full report.

Miss Noonan: Yes. "Such and such a teacher was off today. We've not had our home learning given back to us. We handed in an assessment three weeks ago, still not heard feedback." That's when the parent will then connect to you and want you to answer why that hasn't been done. If you make sure that you try to maintain policy, like school policy, you stick to those deadlines and you do what it is that is expected, then you shouldn't encounter too many difficulties. It's obviously really hard to keep up with that, but that is the nature of the job of course. I just think if you prove to the parents that you are reliable, dependable, there for the student, you know your subject, you're knowledgeable about the exam and what it requires.

The researcher: Any miss cultural... or cultural misunderstanding happened during these years, between you and them?

Miss Noonan: Cultural, I'm just trying to think. Haven't actually had any kinds of negative experiences or encounters with parents at all. On very rarest of occasions, they may come to me with these kinds of... a bit of an anger bubbling beneath the surface, ready to go at me, in case I don't tell them what they need to know straight away. Then I can sense that immediately, because I've been doing this job for years and years. I can sense it, the minute that we

have to [inaudible 00:36:40] conversation. I'll introduce myself straight away. I'll explain my background and a little bit about me.

Miss Noonan: Then I'll be like, "This is how your student is getting on. This is what I am doing for them. This is what they then need to do as a result of that." I think that just lets them know, oh, okay, you actually know what you're talking about. You actually know my child. You actually know what you need to do to get them to where we want them to be. I think as long as you have that communication with the parent straight away and you show them that you are knowledgeable and you know what you're doing, I think that that settles them down straight away, from experience.

The researcher: Okay. We covered that... I've got a question about how much parents care about your nationality or.... What are the intellectual behavioral features that native students back at home would have, that are different from... in terms of attitude, the way they address you or respond to things or react to things, that's quite different from their actions and... of non-natives? You know what I mean. I'm not talking about-

Miss Noonan: Yeah. Actually, back at home-

The researcher: ... politeness and respect and how direct they are in what they want to say. Do you find these students learn to interact? Do you find-

Miss Noonan: I find that, frankly speaking, when you are at home, the less communication you have with the student, the better. They don't want you to speak to them. They don't want you to communicate with them. They don't want you to ask any questions, because then it requires them to answer and they don't want to have to go through thought-process to have to put an answer together. It's very, very rare that a student would have come to you in the UK and been like, "Miss, you've marked me at 75% on this exam. Can you please tell me how to go up to 85%?" They would take it as what it is. They'd listen to you and take your feedback for what they need to do to improve.

Miss Noonan: It then wouldn't... A conversation wouldn't follow after that. They just want to get out of your classroom as soon as possible basically, because there's just a general lack of desire to learn or to engage you in that way. That's general speaking I'm talking here, maybe 75/80% of students. The other 20% or so are the loveliest and just want your help. Might not necessarily be academic, but really want to be and know that they need to have a decent education in order to be able to do anything further in the future and get a decent job or have a different life to what maybe they might be having at that moment, whereas the students over here...

Miss Noonan: I've got a student I'm thinking of right now. She is incessant with questions on, "How do I get full marks on this page?" She just started year 10 and she is, "How do I...? How exactly...? Can you read this line from this? Can you read a sentence from this? Tell me how that needs to be changed. Does that sound okay to you? But what if? But, but, but..." She's constant with this need to get top marks, full marks, in every single piece of work that she's got. It's quite crazy. It's admirable in one respect but it's quite... I don't know how she's ever going to sustain that.

Miss Noonan: That's the difference that I see. Because the students over here, they are competitive with themselves. They want to push themselves. Whether that is a... comes from the parents, I don't know. I don't know what the home lives are like with all of the students. Generally speaking, they are a number of studies that suggest that if the parent values education and is fairly well-educated, then that will filter down to the student. They will want it to be like that as well. Whereas at home, it's not the case-

The researcher: I think because, again, I think because the West values talents or hobbies, life experience. Whereas here in the East, we can't see life without education. We think it is the only way to be a decent, responsible person.

Miss Noonan: Yeah. I think the only thing that drives the students at the moment is the university that they're going to go to, the experience that they're going to have, the country that they're going to move to. With my year 13 students, the past two cohorts and my coming year 13, I also have a conversation like, "How do you feel about leaving Dubai?" They're like, "Absolutely not, miss. I literally cannot wait to leave this country, get out of here, go and experience something new and..."

Miss Noonan: I think that is the vision that they keep hold of. It's like, if I do well, my opportunities will take me to America or to Europe or to the UK. I'm going. That's where I want to be. I think that's what pushes them really, toward wanting to do the best that they can, so that they can get into one of these Ivy League universities that they all want to go to. I think students usually in nine and ten, they understand that as well. Whether their parents have communicated that or whether they just know it, they do know it. I think that that's what pushes a lot of them.

The researcher: From your experience, how do you think parents or students perceive or look at native teachers living in the UAE? What are the associations that are attached to natives?

Miss Noonan: I can obviously only comment on what I see of any native teachers who are in the school, native Arabic speakers that are Arabic and Islamic teachers. I think, generally speaking, they have a tough time after students. I don't know why. I really don't. Whether they see the fact that they're being taught how to speak Arabic or how to study the Arabic language, I don't think they feel as though it is of any significance to them whatsoever. They feel that if they can speak English, then that's great, because every country in the world speaks English. They don't need speak Arabic or they don't need to be taught to study Arab literature.

Miss Noonan: I don't know where that comes from. Obviously, it must be a cultural thing or it must be a thing within the family. I do feel like the Arabic staff do have a really tough deal [inaudible 00:44:51] to maintain enthusiasm in the students. I also know that, just from speaking to the Arabic teachers as well, how broad the Arabic language can be and then really how quite specific it can be, depending on which region you're from or which kinds of country you're from. That is a real challenge the students face as well. Because in order to pass the exam, the Arabic, the exam I think it might be, they have to use standard Arabic language and they can't-

The researcher: Which is quite different from the dialects that are spoken.

Miss Noonan: Yeah, exactly. That, I think, is something that the students really, really struggle with. Because the language that they're speaking on a daily basis to friends and family, isn't anything like the standard English that they have to be assessed on. I think that's causing a disengagement as well, maybe. I don't know.

The researcher: Just going back to the question again, so what's the image of the stereotype native as...? How do non-natives perceive you as a native?

Miss Noonan: Yeah, to be fair-

The researcher: ... in terms of language.

Miss Noonan: ... I wouldn't say the know-it-of-all. I do think that have a really, really good relationship with the Arabic teachers because we all teach on the same corridor. Quite often, if they have an observation lesson to do or if they have an inspection coming up, they will pop into us and ask us, would we just look over their lesson content. Does it sound as though it's going to be engaging enough for students? Have they offered enough challenge? Is there enough differentiation? They will come and just ask us to check over what it is that they're doing. I think that comes down to just the lack of

confidence within them of their teaching ability. Maybe because of the way that the students are in the lesson, they feel as though they need to constantly be trying to engage the students in different ways.

Miss Noonan: We, as a staff, as a cohort, we really, really see that the pressure that the Arabic and the Islamic teachers are under, obviously from inspectors. Know that they may not have had the experience of teaching British curriculum before and maybe have never taught in the UK, but yet they're teaching in a British-curriculum school. The challenges that that throws up, I can only imagine really. I don't see the Arabic staff being any different to any other teacher in the school. I think that's generally speaking for all of the staff. It's the students who view them differently. I don't know where that comes from.

The researcher: I think it's a worldwide phenomena, Arabic teachers from Arab origin or French, they tend to have a chip on their shoulder. It's our language, it's our... whatever. English, they would see it as invading and as an intruder. Okay. I've got a question about humor. Shall I put it down as you don't ever use humor-

Miss Noonan: I do use humor, sometimes, but I try to make it more global in terms of the humor that I'd use. I wouldn't use anything too local to my own personal region, like in the UK, because the students just wouldn't understand what I'm speaking about. I do use humor and sarcasm, but in a different way to I would with kids back at home.

The researcher: Right. That's culture. We talk about this, if something falls, what... does that have a sign in-

Miss Noonan: Exactly, yeah. We usually have superstitions. If something were to fall, I would be thinking, something's not right. Is it all right?

The researcher: There's a negative energy.

Miss Noonan: Yeah, something negative going on. That keeps falling off the wall. Someone's giving me a sign not to put it back up there anymore, because it's not where it's meant to be.

The researcher: All right. How native teachers of English teaching in the UAE are different from natives who are in other professions in the country, in terms of being more aware of the culture and getting to know certain families and having friends from a different background, keeping to themselves...

Miss Noonan: Native English speakers?

The researcher: Yeah. The teachers, how are they different from the-

Miss Noonan: How is that different to maybe Emirates Airline staff or average-

The researcher: Of course.

Miss Noonan: ... or anybody working in retail or yeah. I think, generally speaking, because we are so engaged with the students all the time, we have the experiences that we do with them, the closeness that we have and the relationship that we have, it becomes really part of everything that we do to understand their culture or try to at least be very much open to it, be accepting of anything that they choose to say, within reason. Obviously, we need to maintain the standards of the UAE. There are things that we can't discuss in class, we wouldn't expect the students to be discussing in class.

The researcher: Can you just give me examples of these things that can't be discussed? Or what is intimidating for... I don't know.

Miss Noonan: Just certain things, so with post-16 particularly, we wanted to look at maybe sex in the media, sex sells in advertising, for example. We'd have to use a little bit of caution with that. Or certainly, let the students know will be coming over the next couple of lessons before we actually deliver that content. Just to make them aware that if there are any students who will find

that content disturbing or uncomfortable, then they can let us know and they cannot be in that lesson. We could give them private study.

Miss Noonan: Just things like that really, maybe references to sexuality, any political statements that you would like to make, make sure that they are not going to offend anybody. We don't obviously deal... We deal with racism as well, in terms of the close content for English. That's very sensitive, the discussions that we'd be asking the students to have, because they all generally have different race. It's about being able to have those discussions without any of the students offending another. It's those kinds of things really.

Miss Noonan: Whereas back in the UK, I would teach a class of 30 students and they would all be English, British and Caucasian. I wouldn't have to think about those things, because those cultural, ethnical differences just wouldn't exist. They would have all grown up in the same area, had a very, very similar background. We certainly wouldn't be with the culture kids, which is what the majority of our students are. I wouldn't have had to worry so much about students offending one another.

Miss Noonan: I would have to worry about them making offensive, political statements or racist statements, because they thought that they could, because they were not thinking about the offense they could cause. Obviously as a teacher, I'd make sure that I'd just deal with that in any normal human way. I think that's something that we have to be careful of. We do get told that before we signed up to come and live and work over here as well.

The researcher: I'd like to ask you about the general perception of certain communities. Can you say, for example, that Indians feel very proud of their origin and they constantly make these references in class about... and comparisons-

Miss Noonan: Yeah.

The researcher: Sorry. Or other communities are less articulate and they'd rather not very much embracing to the Western culture.

Miss Noonan: Yeah. I do find with... whenever we ask... For example, with year 13, we studying *A Streetcar Named Desire*, at the moment. I don't know whether you're familiar with it. One of the character's Blanche. She is at her 30s. She is married. She has recently lost their home and has to then move in with her sister and sister's husband. We were just having a conversation. A few of the Indian girls in my class pulled me over and they were like, "Miss, would that be acceptable, for Blanche to be living that kind of lifestyle at the... in this day and age?" because the play was set in 1947.

Miss Noonan: I said, "At the time, she would have definitely been an anomaly. She wouldn't have been a stereotype. She would have been married or would have been expected for her to be married and so on." We had a conversation. Then the girls said to me, "Well, what about you, miss? Is that something that you care about?" I said, "Well, no, because in the UK..." I obviously draw on my experience of being from the UK. I said, "It's absolutely fine if you're 35 and you've never married. Or you have married and you've divorced and you don't have children. You don't have a partner or you're not in a relationship. That's absolutely fine. There's nothing unusual about it."

Miss Noonan: They were saying, in their Indian culture, it's very much just you are going to get married. You will have a husband by the time you are such an age. You will have children. They just said it's just a given that that is their natural path that they will take. They found it really, really interesting to speak to me about the UK and the expectations of women over there and how that is just completely different to anything that they may experience when they go back home to India or Pakistan. That's always interesting kind of conversation point, to think about those differences and how I've never come into contact with anything like that.

Miss Noonan: To listen to these young girls who are only 17 and 18, have those conversations and just be so honest about it and really open and really... I wouldn't say accepting about it. They roll their eyes and think that's why I've [inaudible 00:56:18]. One of the girls was saying that her auntie had gone to Stanford University and she'd done really well. She wanted to study for her PhD. Well, couldn't, was made to come back home to India and marry. That was the expectation for her. I think those kinds of cultural sensitivities, you need to be aware of, because you could take something completely out of turn and then totally offend somebody. Yeah, those-

The researcher: True. Yeah. I can relate to that. I'm only... Do you say bachelor? I'm still single and I'm in my mid 30s. It's like a cardinal sin. You can't be a Muslim and commit a cardinal sin.

Miss Noonan: No. Of course.

The researcher: Yeah. It's a big deal. However, trying to fight these traditions.

Miss Noonan: Yeah.

The researcher: Yeah. We've done how many minutes? Can you guess?

Miss Noonan: Hour?

The researcher: Almost an hour. Bless you.

Miss Noonan: That's all right.

The researcher: I think I forgot to read the question on language creativity. Let me just ask this one quickly. Language creativity, again, let's go to the example of full moon. If they were asked to write a creative essay, whatever, and they gave that, she looked like a full moon, she was as beautiful; how would you deal with that situation? Would you say that-

Miss Noonan: I think within English, it's quite... especially when we are studying literature, everything is all open to interpretation anyway. To listen to one student's interpretation of one thing and then listen to somebody else's, I think that that is... it's all part and parcel of the enjoyment of it. If they see a symbol of one thing as meaning something and then another student sees it something else, that would just open up a discussion, I suppose. If I were to see [inaudible 00:58:39] and somebody had written she was as beautiful as the moon, I'd think how lovely, you used a nice piece of imagery there. That's great.

The researcher: Would you ever draw the attention of that?

Miss Noonan: I possibly might. If I particularly like that one description, I might say, "That is lovely. Where did you come up with that idea?" They'd then, obviously, let me know that it's got cultural significance or whatever that might be. I just suppose it depends really on what they choose to write about, they choose to write down. I just think, sometimes, the language that they use is very creative because of their perception of things. How they look at the world and how they romanticize the world, or how they look at the world in a negative way as well. That definitely affects what it is that they write and how they express themselves. I just think it's down to the individual really. If there was anything that particularly struck me as out of the ordinary or unusual, and it was interesting to me in a positive way or interesting in not so positive, I'd try to have a conversation with the student about that.

The researcher: You won't mark it and say, "No. This had got a connotation."

Miss Noonan: No.

The researcher: "Because you're writing in English, I think you should avoid thinking in your own language."

Miss Noonan: If it's a lot of connotations then, I suppose, sometimes it can be slightly different. Say if we have the connotation of a cross, for example. Somebody, as you were saying before, from the Catholic religion, would say Jesus or God or whatever it is that they believe in. Then somebody who isn't says things like death and-

The researcher: Witchcraft.

Miss Noonan: Witchcraft or whatever, then I think I'd just take that into consideration as being something that is quite unique to them. Having a unique interpretation of something in English is what we strive for really. Sometimes it can help students, not only hinder them, to come at the text from a completely different point of view and have a completely different attitude to it. If they are totally off the mark with it, then I would address that. That would just be from a reading point of view. For me to help them to figure out how they would figure out the connotation and not necessarily tell them that what they say is wrong.

The researcher: You would say, "She was blunt and do you know that... what does that mean?" Or would you say, "She was single and she had a cat and do you know she might be a witch." Would you-

Miss Noonan: Yeah. I do feel that. Funnily enough, we were studying a passage from Witch Trials, the other day, the [inaudible 01:01:36] novel. I just had to fill that background in about the witch trials in Salem and all of that, before the students could understand what that was all about. Some of them used to do history, knew a little bit about it, but others didn't. I think that comes down to their cultural understanding and what they've studied for history as well. Coming from a British school, we would cover that within, say, an element of what we study for history, so yeah.

The researcher: I've got a question that I don't know how to answer myself.

Miss Noonan: Yeah.

The researcher: What are the aspects of good or bad communication in your culture?

Miss Noonan: Good or bad communication in my culture, I'd say, think about... bad communication could sometimes be...

The researcher: Would speak without looking at the person just like-

Miss Noonan: Yeah. It's those kinds of things. I am staring out the window now just thinking. I think bad communication is when you don't speak to somebody in the face, when you drift off, whilst you're trying to form, really, an answer. Then good communication is something that you've maybe had the time to prepare or maybe think about. Or certainly, if you wanted to write a letter or an email to somebody, I think it's easy to put your thoughts down in front of you, than it is to just project your thoughts in spoken words. That can often be problematic, especially for the students as well. They find that really difficult to express themselves verbally, without having prepared for it beforehand.

The researcher: Yeah. Let's get this quick. What are the missing, culturally speaking, between teachers, native teachers and their students, in this part of the world?

Miss Noonan: I'd say, culturally, some teachers just need to be more aware of those sensitivities and limitations. Just be very much on the forefront with that, so that they never overstep the mark. That's the only thing I can think of, really. In terms of being able to communicate the content of the courses and the curriculum, I think that's absolutely... it's where it should be. I just think for students coming from a Western society or from the UK, they need to maybe just do a little bit of background research and just explore the area and just be very much aware of what those sensitivities could potentially be, so as to never, ever get into a situation that you can't get out of.

The researcher: Again, the question on was there a time when you had to overlook a behavior because that particular student comes from a culture that is notorious?

Miss Noonan: Let me think.

The researcher: Okay.

Miss Noonan: When I was at home, if I would have dealt with a behavior issue at home, I'd just... I'd front it up with him straight away. I knew what their background was. I knew what their family was... knew where the family came from. Over here, there is a little bit... Sometimes if I've maybe told somebody off or I've had to have a heated conversation with a child about inappropriate behavior, I've often stopped that conversation and thought, "Oh my goodness, are they going to go home and they're going to tell their parents that I've raised my voice? Am I going to get into trouble for that now?" That is the only kind of example that I can think of really.

Miss Noonan: It just creates maybe a little bit of panic. Because you don't know how parents, maybe in this culture or this are of the world or this multi-culture, are going to appreciate you speaking to their in a particular way, trying to reprimand them or maybe guide them in a particular direction. That's something that I've struggled with. I haven't actually encountered it, luckily enough, because we have very few behavior problems in this school anyway. It's very rare that you do have to challenge your student for poor behavior. Therefore, you don't have the repercussion of the parent contacting you. That's the only thing that sometimes makes me cautious.

The researcher: Do you think that parents are happier with their children being taught by someone from their own background as a teacher, rather than...? Do you think?

Miss Noonan: Yeah, probably. Again, I'd just be hazarding a guess of this, because I've never had an experience of it. Maybe because people from their own background are more aware of what's acceptable, what isn't acceptable within this culture, that they would never overstep the mark or say something that wasn't inappropriate in any way. Not that a teacher from the UK would say something that's inappropriate. I'm just meaning, generally speaking, we have different ways of communicating. As I said before, we might raise our voice a little bit too high, then somebody from this culture doesn't appreciate that. I do think maybe they would like somebody from their own background.

The researcher: All right.

Miss Noonan: I think that's case for anyone that was in a... If you were to come to the UK, for example, and a teacher from a different background, was to tell off a student who is local to the area, whatever. Maybe their parent would feel as though... that they don't appreciate that, because that person from the other culture spoke to them with a particular tone or a particular aggression. I think it can go both ways. I can see where parents are coming from really. If I was to really lose my patience with a student from... who was a local, and their family were to react to me, then I think I'd completely accept it.

The researcher: For me, I'm afraid I disagree with you. Because we have parents who would chase you because you're a local and they know your whereabouts in your neighborhood. It can be that terrible.

Miss Noonan: Wow.

The researcher: They would say, "By the way, we know such and such. By the way, you graduated from that high school and didn't have good grades back then, so please don't try to do that."

Miss Noonan: Oh my goodness.

The researcher: Was there any incident that... This is question 20. Was there any incident where you received a disrespectful behavior, but then you had to overlook that.

Miss Noonan: Sometimes when... This, again, comes down to my limitations of not being bilingual and not being able to speak Arab language. Sometimes if I'm teaching some Arabic boys and they will often speak to one another using Arabic. Then they'll giggle and they'll snicker and I think they could be saying anything about me or about any of the students in the room, and I can't do anything about it. I quite often ask them not to speak Arabic. My excuse is, "We're in English. Let's speak English please." That's generally what I say. That's the only time that I've found myself in that kind of situation, where I... that, and then they've continued to speak in Arabic. Then they've just... they've gone against what I've asked them not to do. I've set down the ground rules of the classroom.

Miss Noonan: I have had to speak to a number of students outside and say, "Can you understand why I'm asking you not to?" "Yes miss, because you can't understand what we're saying." It's that kind of... I think if you make yourself clear about why you are having an issue in the first place, then they understand and it's fine. In this school, I've never dealt with confrontational behavior, apart from a few boys from the local culture, who will answer back. That's it. Other than that, nothing at all. I don't know whether that... what that comes down to. That's the only slight bit of poor behavior I may have seen or lack of respect that I may have seen.

The researcher: Question 22, what are the misconceptions of your students about your own country?

Miss Noonan: Misconceptions, I'm not too sure that they have many, because I think they are very, very westernized in the way that they think, in the way that they understand the world and the way that they perceive the world. I think some

of the things I was saying before about the year 13 girls and the fact that if you're not married in my culture, that's absolutely okay, that might be a misconception, because they didn't know that. They thought it was worldwide expectation. I think that can be quite interesting. Maybe that's a slight misconception.

Miss Noonan: Or maybe owning your own home and things, like I said quite often, before I moved over here, I had my own home. It's like, "Wow, you're a woman and you did that. You were able to do that on your own. That's really interesting. That's quite surprising." I just think those... They understand it's the bigger issues. The smaller, more personal, they don't quite understand. Just having conversations with them about things can often surprise them.

The researcher: Right. Do you think that your students are culturally... they have cultural awareness?

Miss Noonan: Yeah, absolutely, I do. I do think they are... They know where we are. They know what part of the world that we live in. They understand the laws; what you can do, what you can't do. Then I think that they are very culturally aware of the people within our community, the community of the school and the community of their classroom, very accepting of one another. I very, very rarely come across any kind of derogatory or racist remarks or teasing in any way. If ever there is that, it is just on that banter level.

The researcher: In terms of co-existing and congeniality.

Miss Noonan: Yeah, I do think-

The researcher: I'm just comparing that to kids from Liverpool.

Miss Noonan: Yeah, absolutely. They are very, very globally-minded. They see us as part of the big picture, I think, whereas the students back at home don't. That's through no fault of their own, because they just don't have that experience

of being around students with cultures, diversity. Unless you are in London or maybe Birmingham or maybe-

The researcher: Manchester.

Miss Noonan: ... Manchester, inner-city schools in Manchester, they are the areas where they do have the diverse cultures. The students can communicate and live their lives around them. I don't think they have many opportunities in Liverpool, where I taught, very few, very few.

The researcher: What's the best and what's the worst about teaching multicultural classrooms?

Miss Noonan: Just what it can actually bring to the classroom. The best thing about it is what you can actually get out of a lesson. I keep going back to the example about the girls talking about Streetcar, just those kinds of connections that you can make to students. Conversations that you can have, that weren't necessarily on the lesson plan or didn't necessarily take you where you were aiming to go, but it's where you can branch off from.

Miss Noonan: We've recently been studying race, race in communities and race in media and race in literature, with year 12. Listening to the students debate their ideas and form an opinion on their ideas of race, because they're all from a completely different background, it's just so interesting. They add, they bring so much more to those types of conversations. If was to deliver the same lesson at home, the class full of Caucasian children from the same background, they would be very, very limited in terms of what they could say or bring to that debate or conversation. I just think it adds a real richness to the classroom.

Miss Noonan: In terms of a limitation, I'd say... Be hard pressed to give you one really. I honestly can't think of one. The only thing I might say is when it comes down to writing English, that is a struggle for students. We go back to the

academic side, to things I'm reading. I had to direct them to the written word. If they could read, they could speak with fluency and confidence and they can pronounce words correctly, but then when it comes to spelling them or writing grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs, it's the technicalities, it's the written English language that students struggle with massively. That's something that we have a real challenge with.

The researcher: Right. Induction programs for new teachers, native teachers that are new to the region. Would you encourage that?

Miss Noonan: Yeah, absolutely. We do have a big induction program here at GEMS. One of the days involved, all new staff go into the Cultural Awareness Center and just... there's a lady who, when I went, there was a lady who delivered a talk. She was talking about-

The researcher: Sorry. When is it held and where?

Miss Noonan: This is right at the beginning of the year. New staff will come in about a week before existing staff actually start. It's usually around the 25th of August. They'll be in for a full week, where they'll be inducted to the school and the culture. Then existing staff come and join them for the second week of the induction process. Year on year, we have an induction, even for existing staff. It usually lasts around two weeks before the students come back in. Just to prepare everybody for the culture, the environment, the school, the setting, the protocols for this year and those kinds of things. We do have that.

The researcher: I missed it.

Miss Noonan: Yeah. It's quite extensive.

The researcher: Final question.

Miss Noonan: Yeah.

The researcher: Anything else that you'd like to add to...

Miss Noonan: Just that I do feel, on the whole, working in a multicultural school such as this is just so much more enjoyable than a British school, simply because it just broadens your own mind and your own horizons. I was, not close-minded, but I hadn't had the experiences, living back in the UK, that I have had since I've been here. There's different challenges of course, that are, well, I just think in terms of my profession and just my knowledge of the world and my knowledge of culture and identity, it's changed massively. I'd recommend it to anybody who's only ever taught in the UK or in a school where they are limited cultures.

The researcher: Miss Noonan, thank you very much.

## **II. Interviewee 2**

The researcher: Good morning, Mr Chris.

Mr Chris: Good morning.

The researcher: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to interview you.

Mr Chris: My pleasure.

The researcher: I've got some demographic questions. Age if you don't mind?

Mr Chris: I'm just under 30, I'm 29 at the moment, so I'm under 30.

The researcher: Nationality?

Mr Chris: British, from the UK, so I'd be classed as British.

The researcher: Current teaching school?

Mr Chris: Gems Founders Al Barsha

The researcher: The grade that you're teaching

Mr Chris: Three.

The researcher: Other languages?

Mr Chris: No, unfortunately.

The researcher: Years of experience in the Middle East?

Mr Chris: This is my fourth year.

The researcher: Years of experience in the UAE?

Mr Chris: Just the UAE, so just three years in the UAE.

The researcher: Right, and before that?

Mr Chris: I was in the UK for four years.

The researcher: Teaching?

Mr Chris: Teaching primary as well, so I taught everything from FS1 right the way to year two.

The researcher: What are the major nationalities that you have in class?

Mr Chris: The major ones that I have at the moment are Indian, Egyptian. Yes, it would be Indian and Egyptian, really, which are the mains one that are in my class at the moment.

The researcher: Was it easy to find a job in the UAE?

Mr Chris: To be honest, this was the first force that I applied for. I had gone through an online website. I just sent my CD off to the corporation GEMS. Then, the next thing I know, I was given an interview. Two weeks later, I was out there. It was very quick in my aspect, yes.

The researcher: What do you think recruiters are looking for in language teachers?

Mr Chris: For language teachers, that's like English speaking teachers?

The researcher: Yes.

Mr Chris: Proficiency in English, I would say good grammatical skills. I think mainly, you've got to have those skills in order to be able to teach it. If you're not secure in those skills of spelling, your grammar, your punctuation, all of that type of thing and even in your spoken word, your pronunciation, then it can hamper you a little bit because then it comes down to accents, understanding, and even though I am proficient in it, I still find myself having to slow when I speak because from where I come from, we talk quite quick. I do speak quite quickly and find myself having to slow down.

The researcher: Sorry.

Mr Chris: That's all right.

The researcher: Do you think there are any disadvantages of being one lingual in this country?

Mr Chris: Yes. Oh, yes. Definitely.

The researcher: In your classroom.

Mr Chris: In my classroom, yes. Not that it happens very often, but I always encourage my children obviously. You speak your own tongue, but you have to speak English as well. If that's what we're learning about, that's what we're doing

[inaudible 00:03:38]. You would find that those from the same country would speak in a mother tongue. Obviously, you hear it and you want to say, what are you saying? Whatever else, just trying to identify what's being said, or how something's being said. I find that can be quite difficult to try and get around because I don't want to be saying to them, "What did you say? Can you say it in English?" I don't want to be that type of teacher who's wanting to know everything and anything. It would be lovely to have the opportunity to have a different language so that you can pick it up and whatever. Pick it up, understand it, and be able to say a little something back as well. Unfortunately, that's just not my strength.

The researcher: Right. Do you notice any preference in this country for a particular nationality when it comes to native speakers? Would they prefer ... Like in Japan for example, I heard that they prefer the American accent. They see it as more of a standard English.

Mr Chris: Yes, over here, they prefer as far as I'm aware because I've done a variety of roles in this school, when the school first opened, I was head of year three. [inaudible 00:05:10] stage two. Second year, I was [inaudible 00:05:11] stage one and head of year one. This year and last year, I'm like the head of house, so I've been a bit involved a lot with parents in those first two years and always found that they would prefer the English speaking teachers. I wouldn't say it's because of the accent, I think it's because they want their child to learn the English side of it and they want the children to have that English speaking. We've got loads of different nationalities here. We all speak English, but the one that English ... what's the word? They want that native English speaker. Not like an additional language English speaker, they want that native one.

The researcher: Yes. You're right. My question is, do you have a preference to a particular anglophone country? Do they prefer Americans or is it just a matter of being native?

Mr Chris: I think it's just a matter of being the native. I've never seen any sort of preference.

The researcher: What about accents? If you have a Welsh, do they notice that or do they just go by-?

Mr Chris: Not really. They don't notice at all. I would imagine there'd be very few parents. Once that I dealt with, there's never been any preferences. Just thinking in my year group, we've got Irish, we've got Scottish, we've got me from the North East of England, we've got London as well, so we've got lots of different accents.

The researcher: What about recruiters? Would they ask you to adjust your pronunciation?

Mr Chris: No. I've never experienced it. As I say, I got an email for an interview. I had my interview with Mr Matthew, the principal, and that was it. I've never heard and I've never experienced being that kind of proficiency.

The researcher: Culturally speaking, what do you think are the main challenges of natives teaching multicultural classrooms? How are they different from back home in terms of the way they behave or the way they get things ...?

Mr Chris: I would always say the children over here are a lot better behaved than what they are back home personally. I think there's a mindset over here of the willingness to learn that isn't there back home. Obviously, some of the issues that you will find would be the cultural sensitivity really. You've got so many different religions, backgrounds, and things like that. A slip of the tongue could not cause events, but it can cause a bit of friction or misunderstanding. To be honest, I think that's the major one. It's just trying to get that cultural awareness.

The researcher: Can you give any incidents that you had where cultural was the main issue?  
I think I have a question on that.

Mr Chris: I think you've got one in there with the cultural awareness. I know that obviously the certain bits when it comes to the Star of David call for example. I can't remember what it is. Judaism or something. Where children draw it, they draw it as in that and that's just how you do it. It's an easy way to teach it. Unfortunately, it was seen and it was like, "Oh my goodness. What's going on here?" It was just a case of-

The researcher: Would they be aware at the tender age of eight?

Mr Chris: Some of them are. It's lots of little things like that. It's the case of, you have the conversation, and they go, "No, I'm just drawing a star." You've got some of them who are saying, "Well, actually it's this." You usually find that the children want it in class. They'll go home and say, "This child, my friend, or whoever did this." Then, it's mainly the parents who go, "What's going on there?" That's when it comes in, say, "Oh, no. It's just a kid." All we're doing is, "That's just how you can draw it like a perfect star without trying to do it ..." Even I can't do it like that unfortunately. It's just little things like that. It's never anything massive. It's never anything big. It's just always those little ...

The researcher: What are the intellectual or behavioral features that you think native students back home have and that knowledge of life in terms of that? I think we touched on that in terms of politeness and being direct [inaudible 00:10:48].

Mr Chris: As I said, I would say over here, they are more direct. I would say they're more respectful. Manners is a big thing. The respect of what they earned, what was given to them. That was something that was this is what I got and if it got damaged or destroyed, it was a case of actually they'll get really upset about it. Whereas, I feel that over here, I don't know why if it's just because it's Dubai and because it's about lifestyle and whatever else, I find that over here it's a lot more like a throwaway society. If something is

broken, rather than going and fixing it up, it's a case of let's forget it and we'll get another one. A case of, you broke it, that's your own fault. It was a case of, we'll just get rid of that one and get another one. I do feel there's a little bit of that. On the whole, here, I would definitely say that there's a lot more respect, a lot more respect in the schools from students to teachers and vice versa as well.

Mr Chris: I would say back at home, you would find that it would be a case of an open secondary schools, the teachers are very firm, very this is how it goes, and you always have those children who challenge. There is a clash and it's a case of the teacher going, "Right, well I'm going to make sure that you're on detention. I'm going to pick you up for every little bit and I'm going to make sure that we hammer down on you." Whereas, here when I've spent my time going up stairs doing my head of house role and seeing it, it's all about the positive reinforcement. It's all about pushing and all about giving that praise, that reward, and being like, "Well, we've had a bad day. Yes, you are on report or whatever else, but tomorrow, I expect you to get these achievement points." When they achieve them, it's all right. See, you can do it, so let's do it all the time. There's mixes, but on the whole, definitely much better.

The researcher: What is the stereotyped image of natives in the UAE?

Mr Chris: Personally, I wouldn't say there is any sort of stereotypes. None that I've seen anyway. I've always found it very respectful over here. I've always found it very non-judgemental over here. If you were to say to me back home in the UK your stereotypical teacher and your native teachers there, I would say it's very stereotypical. It's your men in shirts, the role there, and whatever else. Whereas, over here, I wouldn't say there's any stereotypical thing that really stands out for me.

The researcher: I've noticed that you use humor in your class. Something that I honestly love it, which is really amazing. How much of your humor influence do they understand or they get?

Mr Chris: It comes over the year. There's some of those children in my class currently who I taught in year one, so they know me. Humor is my teaching style. I've got to have it because my philosophy is the case of, if you're dead serious all the time, you'll find that the majority of children will just be like, "Oh, no." Whereas, humor for me is just that key of getting them engaged, getting them involved. A lot of them, I used it very early on. A lot of children didn't get my humor in year one. It took a while for them to understand. I think in year three, the more that they've been experienced to British teachers and more that they get it, they start picking up on things. I use humor every day at every possible opportunity that I can do it and it'll be things like we were doing similes and we had our KHD inspection. The KHD inspector sat in with me. We were talking about the similes and going through it. This girl last year wrote down, "I am as pretty as a princess." I said, "Why not as pretty as Mr Chris? Come on." She burst out laughing. The inspector laughed, she got a bit of a chuckle to herself.

Mr Chris: It's things like that, that they do pick up on. They sometimes don't get the subtleness of it and they sometimes don't get the sarcasm of it, so I have to over emphasize it a little bit. Obviously, there's that explanation as well. If they don't get something, I'm finding that a lot of them will say, "What do you mean?" Then, it's that explanation of bringing my culture of a, we use this. Some of them do try to follow and some of them do get it. Some of them don't, and it's not a disadvantage. It's just something that they need a little bit of time as they get older, the more they'll pick it up.

The researcher: Now, was there a time where you said, "Why did I said that? Why that innuendo?" That was terribly misunderstood. No?

Mr Chris: No. There's nothing really that stands out in my mind. No, because it's a case of, when I do it, as a teacher, you have to be very careful how you say it, especially over here as well. Things that I do see at home, for example, at home, if someone makes a mistake, one of the things that we do say is, "You sausage." It's a term of endearment, but it's just like rather than saying, "Come on, are you being silly," it's ... Over here, I have stopped myself a few times. I've gone, "You ..." I've to change it a bit. I'm always aware in the back of my head that obviously I've got lots of different nationalities and I'm aware that I'm a visitor in this country. It's a case of, I follow the rules and whatever else. I find myself having to just make sure that I've got that in the back of my mind all the time. There's nothing really that really stands out for me when it comes to that.

The researcher: Right. Question 12. In what way do you think native speakers working here as teachers are different from native who are not in the professional teaching in terms of being culturally aware of things? The way they see this part of the world.

Mr Chris: I think as native teachers, we get to understand a lot more than any other native in any other job because any other job, in my eyes, you go in and it's a case of here's the rules, this is what you follow, this is the set guideline type thing. That's what you follow and soon as it's done, that's it. They go out and you enjoy it. Then, you pick things up as you go along. I always remember my first day here. It was Mr Matthew who turned around, he had us all in the multipurpose hall, and he went, "This is no job that you've ever had before. This is something that you will continuously learn about, you'll continuously find new things out." We find out in school all the time it's a case of we could give you a set of guidelines and we could say there you go, these are the ones that you abide by, but you'll go out and you'll find that there'll be even more. There will be more that you have to pick up on.

Mr Chris: There's no set things you'll go out, you'll do something, and you'll be told you can't do that, you have to cover up, or you'll have to do something. I just find that every other job has that set of guidelines, then it's a case of word of mouth. Whereas, here, we are reduced to at least three, three and a half thousand sets of parents every day who have their beliefs. We've got UAE parents who are from the country who again let us know. Then, it gets filtered through from staff and above. It's just a case of every day is your learning curve. It's a case of we don't know what tomorrow is going to bring. It's a case of we've got to go from there.

The researcher: Right. I'd like to talk about language creativity when it comes to teaching non native students. For example, we, Arabs, see the moon as the most beautiful thing because we live in a barren land and because of the classic poetry. A beautiful lady, would always look like the moon, which is a terrible connotation in England where it's uneven, it's got a dark side to it.

Mr Chris: Yes.

The researcher: It means something else. If someone says, "She's as pretty as the moon," coming from an Arab origin, how much of that creativity do you allow? How much do you explain? How much do you allow yourself to explain and say, "By the way, I don't encourage that," because if you're writing in the target then, which is English, you best choose a lily, a daffodil, lavender.

Mr Chris: Yes, it does have connotations. You go out in the UK and there are innuendos, connotations, and whatever else. Nearly every other word, that's just how it's evolved. Here, as teachers, we may come across things and we have come across things. We do have a giggle, but we would never ever, or in my opinion and what I've seen from teachers I've worked with, teachers I've guided, we never ever see nor try and think of something different. It's a case of, explain what you mean. Give me a reason why. Give me the why you think that. When it's things like as pretty as the moon, to be honest, in

my aspect, I'm an avid star gazer. I love looking at stars. I love learning about constellations, whatever else, and there's nothing better for me than going out into the desert and having a look up at the starts and being like, "Wow." I don't get that in the UK because where I live, it's so much light pollution. We encourage them to use their imagination. It's a case of use what you have. If we say, "Can't have a moon, you have to have a lily," we're putting a barrier on top of them. We're saying, "No, you can't use that. We can't use that."

The researcher: Don't you think because you are native, there's privilege to know the language as well as the culture? Don't you think part of teaching English is to make them aware of the things that are perceived beautiful or ugly? Just to be culturally aware of the target language that they're teaching.

Mr Chris: Yes. The target language, but what is ugly to someone is beautiful to someone else. That's something that I've always said. There are general things which are not very nice, but there are a lot of things which are beautiful to someone else. If it was at a point where it was something that was not very nice, something that you're thinking, "Now, you're being silly or you're going a little bit too far," for the majority of things, it's a case of at this age, they are a little bit too young to grasp that understanding. When they get into that secondary, when their minds are matured a little bit more, you can then start explaining it a little bit more. That's where you can then say, "Actually, that's not quite right when it comes to the UK side of it. This is what it means." Otherwise, especially at this age, they take something that is silly, rude, whatever else, or for example, the moon. Obviously, that has a connotation back in the UK. If I was to explain that to my children, I know there'd be at least three, four, five, six boys in that class for sure who would be going, seeing it around, and have a bit of a laughing giggle. They just don't get that concept yet.

The researcher: Right. Would you explain it though for grades 10, 12?

Mr Chris: I'd probably explain it around ... For me, I would probably explain it around year 9, year 10. I don't know how secondary works because I'm not up there. I would imagine that it would be in a round about year 9, year 10 age range where, as I say, they're a little bit more mature and they can handle it a little bit more sensibly than what the younger ones can.

The researcher: Question 14. What do you think is the missing link between you culturally speaking and your students? What bond did you have back home that you lack today because of the culture, because everyone's from everywhere?

Mr Chris: Everyone's from everywhere and honestly, back at home, I've gone back there. I had three wonderful years back in the UK. I had one year which as a bit iffy. All my classes that I had for those four years were ureal, they were great. The bond that I had wasn't down to anything culturally there. It was honestly just me and the kids, finding out what makes them tick and using that to get them to do things. I had Italians speakers in my class one year. German speakers in another year. It was a lot of just trying to find out what makes them tick and over here, it's pretty much the same. It's that case of you create that bond as a teacher. You chat, you try and develop it, you try and find out what makes them tick, what makes them work harder, what makes them make that next step. That's where I would say.

Mr Chris: I think the only thing that would possibly remotely be lacking would be the language from my side. I'd love to be able to speak Arabic. I would. Got lovely members of Arabic staff who I get on really well with and they say to me in the morning ... They've been teaching me for the past three years in the morning. Eventually, I've managed to say hello, how are you? I've been able to say the greetings and stuff, but it's taken like three year to get to that point. I'd love to be able to speak it from my side because then you've got something else in common. I'd love to be able to speak lots of different languages. At times, having that bond being able to speak the same language and obviously say a few words in it, I think would help massively because

then you're doing something which is then getting them involved. It's something that where they're from, it's their native tongue, their native language. It just creates a stronger bond. It creates that stronger relationship.

The researcher: Right. Were you ever in a position where you had to consider the culture of a particular student or a culture of a particular parent to deal with them? Were they for example very direct, however you had to consider that as part of their culture rather than being rude?

Mr Chris: I don't think so. Not off the top of my head. I don't think so. As I say, I've had to deal with obviously when the Star of David incident did happen, obviously speak to that parent. Just obviously reassure them that wasn't the case. Apart from that, when it comes down to the cultural side of it, I've dealt with irate parents, but irate parents especially when it's something that involves their child and something that's serious, I wouldn't say I've come across anything specific culture wise yet. Yet, it could still happen.

The researcher: From your own observations, have you noticed any cultural insensitivity when it comes to Indian students talking to Arabs or to Europeans? Did you see anything that lacks harmony? Was there any sort of cultural clash from your own observations?

Mr Chris: From my own observations, not in my class. In my class, I've seen nothing. I have seen it in and around school where there'll be a fleeting comment made and it'll be directed to a student. It will be just a fleeting comment or a fleeting action. It's just a case of we then pull them straight away. It's then teaching them and saying, "Look. That's not acceptable. You might think it is, but actually it's really not."

The researcher: Can you share any incidents then?

Mr Chris: I think the one that really sticks out in the mind is it would be a few year ago doing a duty outside. There was a little girl who was from India and she

had the red dot on the head. One of the boys unfortunately was trying to be funny. It was a case of he got a little bit of mud or whatever it was, he put it on his head, and give it the kind off ... I was just like, "Come across." It was a case like you can't do that. He was like, "What have I done wrong?" I was like, "That's part of their culture. That's something that is important to them. You can't do that." Imagine if they took something that is part of your culture and then did something the same. We had a long conversation because he just couldn't quite get it. It was a case of, I don't understand what's wrong with that. At the end of it, he realized that it was that, I might have made a bit of a mistake there. I very rarely see it to be perfectly honest. That's just one instance.

The researcher: Question 19. I think it's the same question above it. A situation that you found the parent or the student disrespectful and you had to overlook it because it is part of their culture. Were the parents loud? Would they constantly ask to see you regarding their child?

Mr Chris: I get that from many parents. You always find at the beginning of the year that parents will come in. No matter what you say, it's exactly the same that comes through from it. We have a meet the teacher event. We say, "You're just coming to meet me. That's all you're doing. It's all about me tonight. It's not about your children. It's a case of you meeting me, knowing what I'm like." I don't want to be hearing, "Can you just tell me how my child's doing and blah, blah?" It's not the case. No matter how many times I've said that, the amount of parents who are like, "How are they doing in class? How are they getting on?" I find that in general. As I said in one of the earlier questions, you've got your loud parents. It's not down to a culture. You've got your irate parents who are not particularly down to a culture. Again, there's sometimes where they do feel that they are being unfairly treated, "You've ignored me or you've ignored my email." I genuinely haven't. It's got nothing to do with anything to do with culture or anything like that. You

get it from everywhere. It's just parents wanting the best for their kids, really. I don't think culture is an issue with what I've seen, really.

Mr Chris: I'm sure you could ask reception or another teacher. They might have had a different experience. From what I've seen, not really seen it.

The researcher: Would you say that parents back home are more relaxed?

Mr Chris: Yes.

The researcher: Is it because you're part ...

Mr Chris: Back home, parents will be quite chill. Parents are chill, they're relaxed. They just are in that point where they'll just be like, "Okay. If he wants to speak to me, he'll come and speak to me if he wants to have that conversation." Gets to parents' evening. We have parents' evening. That's a case of we need to work together on this. Fine. Then, you will get some parents who will avoid me like the plague back home because they just want to be like, "No. Mr Chris wants to come see me, no." They'll avoid you. Whereas, here, if I said to a parent, "I need to have a conversation," they'll be saying, "All right, I'll be in, in an hour." It's like, "No. Give me a little bit of time. Can we do after school? Can we do whatever?" There's a different mindset over here. Again, I don't know whether that is down to just want to get to the mind you've got to work, you've got to make sure you get a good job, you've got to make sure that you get good qualifications.

Mr Chris: It's the same back in the UK, but here, it's a case of you're paying for education, you're paying for this, or you want your child to do well, you want the teachers to make sure that your child is doing well. Back in the UK, it's a case of, it could be free education type thing. It could be that. It could be a case of [inaudible 00:38:19]. There can be loads and loads of different factors involved.

The researcher: Right. In terms of respect, what culture of this multicultural environment, what are the things or the mannerisms that are agreed upon here?

Mr Chris: By the staff for the children?

The researcher: By students and parents, the culture that is quite different from home.

Mr Chris: That's quite different from home. I think the only thing that I can really think of is the work ethic. The work, that's what it comes down to.

The researcher: Are you for example, as a teacher, perceived as the infinite wisdom by parents? Are you get more entitlement to not punish, but give extra work?

Mr Chris: Parents want extra work. They want more work. We're not a school that are like that, but the parents all want the extra work. They want the extra homework and they want the extra practice. They want everything from there. I would definitely say that sometimes we, our class does the infinite wisdom. It's a case of, you know exactly what you're doing. Then, two days later, you haven't replied with an email and they're then telling you, "Actually, hold on a sec. I know what my child needs or I know that this and that." I would say the work ethic over here. It's case of you just want the kids to work. In respect to respect, mannerisms, things like that, again it comes from home and it comes from the parents. We harp on about respect, manners, and whatever else. We try and buy that in, but if we don't have a spot from home, it doesn't come through. Again, I can't say which culture does it because you've got so many different ones. It's just a case of whichever family has done it and hasn't done it.

The researcher: Question 21. What sort of misconceptions, common conceptions that parents have about teachers?

Mr Chris: A common misconceptions about teachers is that we ...

The researcher: We, in the Middle East, Asians, and in general, we perceive teachers as being role models in society. They are perfect, they are saved, they have all the patience, and they are very giving. They can be too friendly with your wallet. We have this.

Mr Chris: The common misconceptions that we have over here, it's the same back in the UK. It's the same here. It's not really to do with the teaching side of it, but it's a case of we start at 7:00 o'clock and we finish at 20 past 2:00 when the kids go home. Again, we have lots of holidays. It's a case of we have that. We also get as well it's teaching. You've got everything. You've got all the resources in the world. You get paid extremely well for it. You get all of this, that, and whatever else. I agree, we do get paid quite well. The things like finishing at 2:20 and when we do speak to parents, especially the last year with my group, they were saying, it was like Thursday, "What have you got planned?" I said, "Well, I've got to do my marking. Then, I've got a meeting to go to. Then, I'll probably step out for a little bit of marking and do something else." "You'll be gone probably around about 3:00, half 3:00?" I went, "No, probably more like 5:00, half 5:00." It was a case of that, really? It's that case of that we've just got so much time on our hands. That's not the case at all. I would say the misconceptions are never to do with our teaching, but everything around the teaching side of it.

The researcher: You're not perceived as overworked, underpaid in the global perception.

Mr Chris: In the UK, yes. It was the case of overworked and underpaid. Significantly under worked and overpaid because you get taxed to your eyeballs. When you take it home, again it's one of the reasons I came out here. I lost my weekends to work. I lost my evenings to work. One of my biggest pleasures at home and what I got with my first ever paycheck was my season tickets for my favorite football team. That was like the ultimate. Then, I started to feel guilty when it got a few years down the line because I was going to the game and I wasn't working. It's an expensive ticket. I started thinking,

"Actually, I need to give this up." That was something I never wanted to do. Over here, we do work extremely hard. It is hard, it is a hard job. It would be lovely to get more money, but anybody could say that about their job. There is a global stigma over it. I think it is correct in some countries and I think it's incorrect in some other countries.

The researcher: Do you think that your students are culturally aware being in these multicultural classrooms than those who are back home for example who are mostly locals and were to have a different perception?

Mr Chris: I would possibly say it would be vice versa. I would say it would be vice versa because you've got so used to now having so many different cultures that it's just every day. Whereas, back home, somebody comes in from a different culture. It sticks out like a sore thumb. It's very apparent, you can see it. Whereas, over here, I've got like 17 different nationalities in my classroom ranging from Kazakhstan, to the UAE, to Australia. I've got a massive range. I just don't think it's really that apparent personally.

The researcher: Question 23. We have very little. What is the best and what is the worst about teaching multicultural classes?

Mr Chris: Worst bit of it would be misconceptions, language barriers. That's the big thing. I find here that I do a lot of definition of simple words. A lot of words that I would class as common back home, common words that we use, I've got to do a lot of definition work. The best thing about it is, for me, so many different things. I pick up on so many different things as well. It's fantastic to pick up on bits, see how different cultures go about things, and how they celebrate different celebrations that they've got going on. Over here, the profits' birthdays and stuff. The celebrating of Ramadan and things like that. It's fantastic. In the school, we have something called an International Day where we've got that feel.

Mr Chris: If you ever get the opportunity to come, the International Day, come because honestly, it's the best experience ever. You've got all of these different stands, you've got all of these different countries, and they've brought all of the different things from their culture and everything else. You walk around these stands, you've got all of the different foods, you've got all of the different figures, cultural dresses like [inaudible 00:47:37], the national dress. Everything about it. You can go to any member of staff in this school, you could say, "What are your favorite days here?" The majority of them will say either International Day or Flag Day. It's just it. It's brilliant. It's just one of those things. I love it.

The researcher: I take it as you are against Brexit then. Right?

Mr Chris: That's a sore subject. I am against it. I don't know what's going on with my country at the moment.

The researcher: Right. Gender. Do you face any issues being a male teacher?

Mr Chris: I don't think so. I don't think I've faced any.

The researcher: Do parents prefer male teachers? Students?

Mr Chris: Students don't mind whether you get any teacher. Parents mind a little bit more. Majority will want certain teachers. It'll go on reputation. It'll go on if they want their child to be ... just wanted a proper English language teacher, or whether it's a teacher that they've had before. That's where the big push is, that's what they want. I would say probably just those bits really, which is the biggest thing.

The researcher: Would they say, "No, I want a female teacher for grade three and four."

Mr Chris: You will probably find that at the start of the year. The teacher that's come out and be like, "Your child is in 3E with Mr Chris." You'll find that some of them will go, "Awe, yes. Brilliant, yes." Then, you'll find another one,

"Well, actually I want Ruby with the head of year. I want them to be with Miss Emma, who's our head of year." I come and get them moved. The whole statue on the school is not. That's how the class lists go. There's no moving, there's no going for priority because you could find that for example, a whole lot of them want to go with Miss Emma because she's the head of year and whatever else.

The researcher: This has nothing to do with gender then, it's about being more experienced.

Mr Chris: It could be more experienced, it could be things like their English language proficiency, it could be anything really.

The researcher: The induction programs. Have you attended any induction programs in your first year?

Mr Chris: Yes.

The researcher: How was it?

Mr Chris: Interesting. Eye opener. We did induction programs here in the school in the multi purpose hall. It was a case of dos and don'ts. Your helpful phone numbers, helpful places to call. We had trips out to certain places as well to get things done and sorted. We then did a GEMS awareness day where they were talking about the GEMS Schools. We did that at The Atlantis. Again, it was inductions from there, just getting to really know the culture, getting to know what goes on, and it was just basically a little taster session of this is where you're at and you'll learn as you go on pretty much. These are your dos and don'ts, but you'll find out more as you go on. We do have them.

The researcher: One more question. Is there anything else that you'd like to share about culture? What would be the dos, don'ts against someone who's [inaudible 00:51:53]?

Mr Chris: The dos and don'ts of someone coming in new type thing?

The researcher: Yes.

Mr Chris: The only advice that I would possibly say is you just speak with respect. You're open, you're honest. There are certain rules around you that you make sure you follow those rules.

The researcher: I'm sorry. Being honest and being respectful, isn't that ... Are these values that are in practice by code? Aren't these the features of a teacher?

Mr Chris: Yes, there is. You are finding that there is a different generation coming through. There's a different generation coming through. Again, back at home, the generation has changed to an extent. Whereas, respect and manners used to be a thing that was not hammered in, but it was a case of a child grew up and that was it. That was the first things you learned. You learned your respect, you learned your manners. Whereas, over here, the next generation coming through is completely different. It's a completely different thing. Actually, sometimes especially when you see newer teachers and newer people coming in, especially younger ones, it's a case of thinking they're untouchable.

Mr Chris: Actually, hang on a sec. Come on. Think about where you're at. This is not your country, this is not England. You can't just go, do whatever you want, and think it's absolutely fine. You've got to have that respect. You've got to have the conversation and think, "Well, actually I need to understand where this parent's coming from." There has been an instance, especially last year, when I was a leader where a teacher was saying to me, "This parent has done this, that, and whatever else," and going off on one. It was a case of actually, hang on a sec. Have you actually done this? Yes. Okay.

Mr Chris: Have you then done this and this, the follow up steps? No. I said, "Well, actually I can kind of see her point. I can see where you're coming from." You need to start thinking about ... Back in the UK, you don't use emails, you don't use that type of thing. If you want to meet a parent, you phone

them up or you have a meeting. Whereas, here, you've got the communication through emails, and other IT programs, so you've got to be making sure that you follow up on these things. You've got to give them the respect and the honesty because if you don't do that, you're asking for a lot of trouble. All that does is make you more irate, makes the parent more irate, and the bridge then goes off in different ways. Culturally wise and things like that, I would say to anybody coming in is you've just got to be honest, you got to be respectful, and just get to know the place, get to know the little things. Even just saying something as simple as hello in the language can mean a big difference.

The researcher: Thank you very much, Mr Chris, for this interview.

Mr Chris: My absolute pleasure.

### **III. Interviewee 3**

#### Demographic Information

1. Gender: Female
2. Age: under 30
3. Nationality: British
4. Native language – English
5. Current teaching school - Gems Founders School
6. Current teaching grade – Year 3
7. Other languages – none
8. Years of Experience in the Middle East – 4
9. Years of experience in the UAE – 4

10. The major nationalities that you have in class- Indian, Egyptian, Pilipino

11. Is it easy to find a job in the teaching profession in the UAE? What do recruiters look for in a language teacher?

There is many jobs in the teaching professional here in the UAE, with many different kinds of schools. Recruiters often look for flexibility and a good pedagogical knowledge.

12. What do you think are the disadvantages of being a monolingual English teacher working in the UAE?

It can often be hard to have the same impact when teaching in an English language here in the UAE, to students that do not speak English at home.

13. Do you think UAE citizens prefer native teachers of English? What nationality do they prefer and why? Do schools/parents have any preferences for particular English accents?

I believe that it depends on the school they send their children to. I have found that in an English curriculum school, they do prefer to have British teachers, as they believe this means they have a better knowledge of the curriculum.

14. What are the main challenges for you as a native teacher teaching non-native students?

One of the biggest barriers can be communication with the parents when they are not native speakers, and also the speed of which the children understand the concepts and instructions taught in English.

15. What would be the great challenges of teaching culture to multicultural classrooms?

It could be that the children are very biased towards their own culture, and may not want to understand someone else's culture completely.

16. How often do you get asked by students/parents about your nationality? What do you think they care about it?

I do not get asked about it very often, but I believe this is because the parents have been sent information about me prior to the year, which includes my nationality.

17. What are the intellectual/behavioural features that you think native students have as opposed to their peers of non-native students? (i.e. more polite, honest, respect, direct).

There can be a difference in the manners used. Behavioral issues can arise from non-native speakers, but this can often come from the language barriers and understanding the rules.

18. How do you think understanding the language of your students could improve the understanding of your students, and which language would it be in the case of the school you are currently teaching at?

I think it would help a lot, as there is often comments and ways of learning that are specific to different languages and cultures.

19. What are the stereotyped images that natives have about teaching in the UAE?

That it is not as hard as teaching in the UK , which is of course not true when you are in a good school.

20. How often do you use humour in class and do you think your students understand?

I try to use it regularly, and yes, I believe that by now the children understand my humour well.

21. In what way are native teachers in the UAE different than their peers of natives who are not in the teaching profession?

I don't really have enough knowledge of this to give an answer.

22. How do you encourage language creativity amongst non-native students?

We do small things, such as answering the register in a different language each morning.

23. What are the missing links between teachers and students in your school, culturally speaking?

This would mostly be a missing link in terms of language.

24. Do you remember a time when you found it difficult to teach someone from a different background?

Sometimes, it can be difficult when discipline and respect is seen differently in another culture. There has been times when I am encouraging respect for all, but that is not the same message the child is getting at home.

25. Were you ever in a position that required considering a different perspective from your own to explore an issue? (When you had to overlook a behaviour because of your cultural awareness in a particular incident.)

Not that I can think of.

26. Can you tell me of a situation that was considered very disrespectful (offensive) in your culture, yet you had to overlook it or differently handle it because of the cultural difference?

Some of the ways in which children speak to other staff around the school is very different from my culture, but I choose not to overlook this.

27. Can you tell me about some of the most respectful manners of your ethnically different students that are not practiced by students from your culture?

Always saying please and thank you, treating all with respect no matter their position and always sharing and being patient.

28. What, in your opinion, are the most commonly held misconceptions about people from your culture?

I am not actually sure about this. Maybe that we are all very reserved.

29. Do your students have a sense of cultural awareness? If yes, give examples.

Yes definitely. In all our moral education lessons, we discuss what cultures we all come from and how we treat every culture with respect.

30. What is best about teaching multicultural classrooms?

It is definitely having a mix of different ideas and perspectives about things. It often means there is different senses of humour and different ways of learning which is always very different. I also enjoy learning about all the different cultures and meeting parents from all around the world.

31. What is worse about teaching multicultural classrooms?

It can be the different expectations from parents that you don't agree with. This often comes up with their expectations of tests and homework.

32. Did you face any cultural issues with your students because of your gender in during your professional life?

Not from students, but sometimes from some fathers who don't always have the same respect for women as they have for men.

33. What do you think students need to know and understand about the relationship between language and culture?

That we should respect both and they are greatly linked. The language creates a huge part of someone's culture.

34. What would you suggest to include in an induction programme targeting first-year native teachers? Have you had any? Please share.

I would suggest an introduction to some of the basics from cultures you may come across and look at some of the basic phrases from those languages. It would also be useful to look at how other forms of communication can be used in the classroom.

35. Is there anything else you would like to share about culture?

Nothing I can think of right now.

#### **IV. Interviewee 4**

The researcher: Demographic questions, if you don't mind. Age?

Amy: I'm 29.

The researcher: I've got to ask this about age. 29?

Amy: Yeah.

The researcher: Nationality.

Amy: British.

The researcher: Yeah. Years of experience in the Middle East. Or is it only the UAE?

Amy: This is my fourth year, and it's only in the UAE, yeah.

The researcher: Right. Current teaching grades?

Amy: So it's all the way from 7 to 11. So key stage three and key stage four.

The researcher: What are the major nationalities in your classes?

Amy: So major nationalities. Indian, British and yeah, probably Middle Eastern. So that encompasses Jordanian, Syrian.

The researcher: Yeah. Was it easy to find a job as a teacher, and what do you think recruiters are looking for in language teachers, particularly?

Amy: Definitely. My experience from Abu Dhabi to Dubai is actually very different. So in Abu Dhabi I found the department of education there, they were specifically asking for English literature graduates, whereas here I think they're a lot more flexible than Dubai. That's just from my personal experience. I think they're definitely looking for specialists and specialist teachers. And me being an English literature graduate, I definitely felt I was more in demand and recruiters looked at me more favorably, just being a literature specialist, as opposed to maybe someone in linguistics or any other forms.

The researcher: By the way, do you speak any other language?

Amy: No, not fluently. I try and get by in French and Spanish, but no. Not fluently.

The researcher: Do you use them in analogy? Or do you compare them?

Amy: At times. Yeah, I think at times when I'm teaching in my classroom, I do try to, just to form relationships with my students. I do sometimes say the occasional phrase in French or Spanish or when trying to teach the etymology of the word I sometimes tried to make any connections I can. Just to try and promote languages wherever possible. I am a proud advocate of that. So...

The researcher: Good. Do you think parents prefer a certain accent in natives?

Amy: I'd like to think that perhaps perceptions are changing and they're a lot more accepting of all different accents. Definitely being actually from the Northeast of England, I've faced my challenges. From a personal point of view. I'm definitely aware that I've toned my Northeastern accent down, especially with certain vowel sounds. I think that is a conscious effort I've made as an English teacher. And I'm not saying that it's necessarily right, but it's something that I think I have had to do in my teaching practice.

Amy: Sorry, your original question. I think parents are a lot more accepting. I think that definitely they don't want necessarily received pronunciation from all of their English teachers. But I do think that there's, there's still... Probably, it's still a desire for the received pronunciation. But I think as long as... All different members of staff are from all different walks of life, and are from all different areas of the UK. So I generally think awareness is spreading, especially my students in particular now know, I say book as opposed to book. And I just think it's about spreading awareness. I think they probably would say that they've got a favorite accent in particular from a native specialist. But I think once they get to know the teacher and once they get to know different [crosstalk 00:04:02].

The researcher: As a language teacher if you sounded like, "It's quite hot out there." Would they say, "Oh blimey, I don't understand you. Perhaps my kid doesn't. So please could you use the RP?"

Amy: Yeah.

The researcher: Would they say this or would they say, "Oh, this is excellent, now they can speak a bit of a Scottish." Or are they not...

Amy: Yeah, I think generally what I've found from my personal experience is it's a combination, so where clarity, where they genuinely, they cannot understand what you've meant. I think that's where it becomes more of a barrier. Whereas I think little colloquialisms from all different dialects, from all over the UK, I think they genuinely like to learn and actually like to think, "Yes, okay. It's a lot more colorful."

The researcher: Right. What do you think are the main challenges for you as a native teacher teaching in this part of the world?

Amy: Yeah, I think definitely the diverse nature of our students, I think. But I have to say it's a challenge, but it makes it so rewarding, in my honest opinion.

The researcher: So how do you find a common ground, so when you're giving examples or?

Amy: Yeah, so a common ground. I genuinely always like to try to bring it back to a love of reading, a love of literature, a shared passion for English. The common ground, fingers crossed every one of my students will have had something in the vast world of literature that they've been able to relate to. And that might be film, it might be, it might not be the written text, but the reason why the narrative development, the reason why students develop a connection, I always try and bring it back. And I always tried to give a real life perspective as to why English is so important and will be a vital skill for the rest of their life.

The researcher: Can you name any challenges then?

Amy: Yeah. Challenges is literally just in terms of language acquisition. So there's stages in which obviously certain students are at, if obviously English is an additional language for them. Some challenges. I mean I've had students that come into my classroom with little to no English whatsoever, and obviously it's English being taught in an English medium school. It can be a bit isolating for them. And I think it's the isolation that I definitely as a teacher, want to try and minimize wherever possible.

The researcher: Question six. Do you get asked often about your nationality at Parents Day or is it just because you're native then it doesn't matter really?

Amy: It doesn't, I've never actually been asked directly what my nationality is. I think parents assume. They assume obviously English literature or by English specialists you must therefore be British.

The researcher: Would you say they don't prefer English teachers to teach the British curriculum?

Amy: I would say you probably do prefer, and that's not... I don't agree with it. I definitely don't agree with it but I do genuinely think that it's probably what parents would prefer.

The researcher: Don't you agree that you, as being English, you have a better understanding of the context?

Amy: No, honestly I think, not trying to be modest in any way, but I just think despite... The only difference is yes, I've lived in British culture. It definitely does not make me more qualified to teach the English language than anyone else.

The researcher: In terms of intellectual or behavioral features, how do you think students back home are different from these students that you're teaching here? In

terms of being direct? In terms of manner, attitude, being inadvertently rude or insensitive?

Amy: Just a little bit of context. The demographic that I previously taught in the UK was very, very different. It was from a socially deprived economic background. Children go through financial difficulties, emotional difficulties and in very, very different situation than a lot of our children here. So I generally found a lot more animosity in the UK. Behavior management, a massive challenge for me, every single lesson, every single day. I'm not saying it never happens here in terms of just having to manage the behavior of the classroom, but genuinely I think obviously being in the private sector here, all students and parents alike share the common goal of education first and foremost. I think the schools that I worked in in the UK, it wasn't always a united goal and the parental engagement wasn't there, so I did find it a daily challenge in the UK.

The researcher: Right. Would you say that parents get more involved in your way of teaching or... Here?

Amy: Yes, here. Yeah, I'd completely agree. Perhaps if you don't mind me say, perhaps a little bit over involved.

The researcher: A pain in the head.

Amy: Over-involved at times, but all for the right intentions and the right reasons. So I think is it-

The researcher: Just like what? Is it something with the context, the text or was it the way of teaching, the time or is it a word that you use, which is terribly rude in one culture?

Amy: From my person experience, it's never been cultural issue. It has been more of the parents wanting to follow the same syllabus and a set syllabus and

knowing exactly... In terms of the content of the lessons in terms of the structure of the overall course. I think parents sometimes are a bit uneasy when they don't necessarily know exactly what is happening in every single module.

The researcher: [crosstalk 00:10:49] Patience, patience.

Amy: Yeah. However, I truly believe the best teachers differentiate. They take pathways, they amend accordingly to their classes. And I think the only animosity I've had in this context is where one teacher... One year nine people, for example, has not been taught exactly the same content as another year nine pupil. I think that's where parents have at times become a bit irate or questioned.

Amy: My instant reaction is always it's the teacher, is a professional's responsibility to take the outline of the course and adapt and amend their teaching practice accordingly.

The researcher: I'm thinking of exams. Are they concerned about the content of the exam? Are they all over valuing over rating the exams rather than actual learning, do you think? Which is quite different.

Amy: Yeah, no, I do agree to some extent as well. They're very much focused on exam-based and exam results, whereas English is one of those subjects in particular that we try and champion just the love of learning and the love of literature and language throughout the course. But yes, I would agree with the exam-focused nature.

The researcher: Question eight. Yeah. Sorry. Question nine. What are the stereotyped images that natives have about education in the UAE, in terms of the content being taught, of IB curriculum, for example? How is it different from back home and how does much do you have to take out?

Amy: I definitely think certain stereotypes within the UAE is that the teacher stands at the front of the classroom and should perhaps direct the learning, should maybe... Not necessarily teach from textbook, but to a certain degree. I think a lot of the students that I've taught, Emirati students for example, that at times they can be a bit dumbfounded how I want them to direct their own learning and that independence. And perhaps it's just probably from a personal perspective or personal experiences of the teacher very much being the director of the classroom and the director for the lesson. Whereas I do feel, especially here, teachers, that is not the role or go at all. It's to generate learning from within and more student-led and exactly with the IB curriculum, more student-led and student-focused

The researcher: Yeah. Question 10. Humor. Did you avoid it? Do you think, "Well, I won't bother to throw a pun there."

Amy: No, not at all. I just think naturally when you teach, well, me in particular, my personality has to come through and in terms of my teaching practices, I'm getting more comfortable and getting to know my classes. Naturally elements of my personality come through and I don't avoid or shy away from humor whatsoever. I think it's really important to foster and to nurture the relationships in the classroom.

The researcher: How much do you care to explain linguistic puns or things that needs to have the background knowledge of in terms of humor? Or do you say, "No, they won't get it. No, they don't watch Jeremy Kyle's show?"

Amy: Sometimes I like to explain idioms, for example, raining cats and dogs, general idioms such as that. But what I tend to do in terms of humor in particular is trying to listen and listen to what the students are finding humorous at the minute. And acronyms are massive in terms of what they find really, really funny. So I tend to try and recast that probably to a embarrassment level, but I try and... So just to lighten the mood so that

they're... At the minute they're talking about going to the MOE, "Oh, we're going to the MOE." And I'm like, "Oh, the ministry of education," And things like... Trying to find a common ground in a humorous environment together, rather than like my sense of humor just trying to be enforced on them.

The researcher: Do you think it's part of culture and that they need to be exposed to-

Amy: [crosstalk 00:15:40] Definitely, yeah.

The researcher: English humor, sarcasm. Don't you think? Or is it, "I'm going to dilute it because, well..."

Amy: No, I'm terribly sarcastic with a lot of my students. Yeah, definitely.

The researcher: Right. As an English teacher, how do you think you're different from your peers of natives who are in different professions? In terms of understanding this crazy world.

Amy: This crazy world of teaching where you embark in this crazy world of teaching and it's a profession like no other. So I do find... Sorry, the question, is it my fellow peers who were not in the teaching profession?

The researcher: Yes. How are you different culturally. How are you culturally more or less aware?

Amy: Yeah, in my opinion, teaching keeps me very culturally aware and I do think that's one of the beauties and why I love it so much is it keeps me current as well, with the children naturally they're a generation that's moving at light speeds ahead. They're constantly evolving. And me and most of the ways, even with technology for example, they've taught me a great deal actually. And I think honestly true teachers will say right, we're simply facilitators. But actually what I learn from being a teacher is astronomical. In terms of what I learn about myself as well. I do generally smile and laugh on a daily

basis. And I do find that some of my peers in particular in non-teaching professions...

The researcher: What sort of misconception would they have that you say, "No, that's not true. If you were a teacher though, you would have noticed that these group of people do it differently."

Amy: Yeah, I do think they think as a teacher, the children's behavior, I'm constantly having to manage behavior. The true love of education. I can't actually educate. Sorry, I'm prevented from doing that because of the environment. And I think that's not true at all. So a lot of the time I think my peers who are in different professions, they think teaching is very much like spinning plates all the time, and not able to truly communicate or teach content.

The researcher: What about their perception of culture? How is it different from you as a teacher?

Amy: Oh, in particular in the UAE, their misconceptions are ridiculous about what I teach in the UAE they think, "Oh my goodness, you're in a classroom full of non-native speakers. Not enough of them must be able to communicate to..." And honestly one of the most profound things that I've learned over here is the quality of the academics, and the quality and the ability for my children to really engage in my subject and for my students... They're just so able. So, so able here.

The researcher: Language creativity, question thirteen. What is beautiful in one language could have a connotation in other... How much of a freedom do you allow? Would you say, "Hang on, this doesn't sound English, it won't sound beautiful for an English reader." Now, because you're writing in English, you should target English audience. And in that case I think you have to change, she's as beautiful as the full moon, to she's beautiful as a daffodil or rose. Or would you say, "Wow, I didn't think that."

Amy: Yeah, I always tried to challenge people's connotations of certain words, and equally what I just thought of when you raised that question is actually children's misconceptions of word evolution for example, words dropping in and out of meaning. And actually a word for example, that would have been quite maybe culturally offensive in the past, it was not in the context it was written. So I always try to teach my students, actually think of the word and think of the context that was written, and how words in the English language can evolved. And what might be the... And it's very personal. Language is so personal, and actually, that's okay.

Amy: So if the images that the students want to create are very, very personal to them, it's a form of expression, it's a form of creativity. So I try and champion that wherever possible. I always try to get my students to read it out loud and think of who would listen, and how would they respond when they hear their words, and they hear their language. So that's the only... I always get the student's written work to be just trying to say out loud to try and just really hear the... I think there's some merits in yes, reading on paper but to hear language spoken out loud, I think it definitely changes meaning.

The researcher: Yeah, yeah. Beautiful answer. Have you got long?

Amy: I was just conscious of the time. I think it might have to be the last question, just because I need to scooch off and teach. Sorry.

The researcher: Oh dear. Again, have you noticed any cultural sensitivity in classrooms?

Amy: Yes, I have, definitely in terms of modern day modern language and culture, I think students can say things quite flippantly and not realize in terms of how insensitive certain words can be and how harsh. And exactly like we said before, words can be very, very different to the individual. Cultural sensitivity, definitely where we are in the world as well. Students just sometimes need a reminder. They hear modern culture they see things in the mass media, and often I just have to remind them, think about how that will

be received. Think about how your language and your words will be received. Definitely by their peers.

The researcher: What are the best and worst about teaching in a multicultural classroom?

Amy: I think I mentioned it before. The best, is what I get out of it. What learn about all these fantastic different cultures, and actually acceptance and tolerance. Honestly, my classroom, far more so than the UK, so tolerant of one another and genuinely celebrating each other. And they're so inquisitive. So very much when I was teaching in the UK, my students would sometimes be very reluctant to ask, "Where are you from?" It's that quite English, typically English value, "Oh, you can't ask anyone personal information." And a lot more reserved.

Amy: And actually what I love here is, even in my tutor group, even in my tutor group they'll say, "Where are you from? Where are your parents from?" And actually it's not an interrogation, it's not negative in any way. It's more of a celebration. I think in my tutor group we had something like 14 different languages spoken, and 20 different mixed ethnicities. And I genuinely do believe here that the children a lot more tolerant, and a lot more open for those sorts of conversations. And they're never approached with negativity, they're more approached with being inquisitive and celebrating.

The researcher: Thank you very much for [crosstalk 00:00:23:57].

Amy: Is that okay? Thank you. I'm so sorry I had to cut you short.

The researcher: It's okay.

Amy: Bye.

## V. Interviewee 5

The researcher: Thank you very much for your time to take this interview with me. Can I ask some demographic questions if you don't mind? Age?

Claudia: 30.

The researcher: Yeah. And where do you come from?

Claudia: The UK.

The researcher: Okay. So native English. And current grade that you're teaching?

Claudia: At present, I teach year 12 and year 13, which is grade 11 and 12, but my background is from year 7 all the way through to year 13.

The researcher: Right. Other languages do you speak?

Claudia: Italian.

The researcher: Excellent. What level are you in?

Claudia: So I've not studied it, I'm just practice fluent.

The researcher: Yeah, excellent. Years of experience in the Middle East and then the UAE?

Claudia: Six years in UAE, at least.

The researcher: Okay, so it was only UAE then?

Claudia: Yes. I did one year in the UK before this.

The researcher: Okay. What are the major nationalities you have in class?

Claudia: A mix of British and Indian students, mainly.

The researcher: Any Europeans?

Claudia: Yeah, probably a smaller percentage. Yeah. European, Indian's the main nationality, then we have British and European. Mainly.

The researcher: Question number one, was it easy to find a job in the UAE?

Claudia: So when I first was looking out here I was quite an inexperienced teacher. I only had one years of experience of teaching, so it was a little bit harder for me to find a job with many other teachers, because of the experience that was really predominantly required to be a teacher in the UAE or most schools ask for. So for most schools, it's two years. This might have changed ever so slightly since I first joined but that was kind of the main thing.

Claudia: But I think the difficulty is not finding a job, it's finding kind of a school that you feel connects with your values and what you think education should be. So I think that's probably the kind of challenge [inaudible 00:02:25].

The researcher: Yeah. Good. What do you think recruiters are looking for in language teachers?

Claudia: I do think that they look for first language, in terms of that is your first language. And your ability to... your subject knowledge, absolutely, being at the forefront of being able to teach a language in particular. I think those are the main ones.

The researcher: How do you perceive your peers of multilingual teachers, do you ever talk about such things or of them wishing to understand the language of their students or is it not... or everyone is desperate to be English?

Claudia: I actually think it's a really interesting question because a lot of teachers, or we have a lot of British teachers, English teachers in our school, that teach English and often they will say, "I wish I spoke another language." And I think from my experience, I find that they are absolutely fascinated and amazed by teachers that speak different languages but also the students that

they know at home speak a different language, and I think there is a genuine amazement there and there's this wish, "I wish I'd spoken another language." And they always go back to school and in England we don't learn other languages, it's not given importance. And then there's always this sort of nostalgia for kind of I wish that I did. So I think the interest is there, very much from the teachers, really.

The researcher: And what about UAE citizens in terms of parents? Do they always prefer natives and do they have any preference to certain accents?

Claudia: This is my opinion obviously but I do think they prefer native English speakers. I think the accent thing is very interesting because children are very much exposed to American accent, American style of language through films, TV shows, music. The American kind of accent is something they're exposed to [inaudible 00:04:57] I actually think they do find it easier to understand. We're quite British in our mannerisms, in the way in which we explain things, and equally kind of in the context of the language that we use, so because they're used to seeing America in film and TV, they're used to the ideas and the concepts.

Claudia: There are some concepts that are very British, such as Brighton Pier or a drain pipe, and things like that, that actually they don't necessarily see in movies and things like that. So I think that's quite an interesting moment where that American English becomes, although the same, slight nuances can become part of the students.

Claudia: But I do think, and this is perhaps a strange thing to say, but I do think there's something about the British English. I think there's an association with it [crosstalk 00:05:51] quite nice. Yes, definitely. There's always, that kind of idea.

The researcher: What do you think are the main... Sorry, what do you think are the main challenges of a native speaker teaching students from other ethnicities?

Claudia: I think cultural awareness is really, really important. There are cultural attitudes and assumptions that we make every day and I think that's one of the biggest challenges, your gesture, the way in which you handle the classroom, the different cultures... as we've just spoke about, red pen, there's very different interpretations of things. So I think that can be quite challenging and the context of the language that we're using, English is full of particular idioms and things like that, and naturally in a classroom, having brought up with that and [inaudible 00:06:49] the UK use them, and sometimes they can be misinterpreted or not understood by the students. So I think those are kind of the main challenges.

The researcher: And any incidents that you can relate to?

Claudia: Nothing particularly serious, normally we have a bit of a giggle about it, or we talk around it, and you come to expect. I think it's more the assumption part that you make when teaching, you assume that every child is going to be following you, and sometimes you say something and then you look at them and you hear... They haven't, and I've used something very, very British there, perhaps. Nothing particularly springs to mind, in terms of that, but definitely in terms of cultural awareness, particularly in the UAE, there's poems and literature that we studies that does have reference to different things and different ideas and it's about the way in which, unfortunately they're on a syllabus, so some students have to study for their exams, but it's about the cultural kind of sensitivity in which we do teach those things.

The researcher: Did you think we were going to talk about culture... Yeah, I've got a question on that.

Claudia: Yeah, it's fine.

The researcher: Do you want to be here or afterwards?

Claudia: No, no, talk about it if you want to talk about it.

The researcher: Question five, yeah, I think you answered that. Six... Yeah. Seven... What are the... So you've taught one year in the UK?

Claudia: Yes.

The researcher: And if you are to draw a comparison between students back home and here, what sort of intellectual or behavioral features that are different, in terms of students being polite, honest, direct, in terms of the parents' involvement in where you teach?

Claudia: I think having involvement is much... parents are much involved in here, in the school, in my experience, than the school I was previously working at. So, the school that I previously worked at in the UK was in a very, very impoverished area, very, very low aspirations for the students, and therefore intellectually there's a huge gap between students that I now teach here and the students that I taught there. Behaviorally as well, many of the students that I taught were... In the UK we have a system of benefits. If you're at work you can seek benefits. A lot of the children that I taught were sort of third generation born benefits, the benefit system. So they had very, very low aspirations, and therefore they hate it here, that manifested in behavior in the classroom.

The researcher: In what way, can you draw some examples?

Claudia: Not really being able to recognize the importance and the value of being in the classroom and being educated, it was very much the attitude well, when I grow up I'm not going to work anyway. The government will give me however much, and that's what they'd seen from their parents and their grandparents and that was kind of the attitude. It was very, before you could even teach, you had to really break down that barrier. You know, lessons for them had to be really engaging otherwise they switched off completely, and they wouldn't follow the lesson because they wanted to learn, that would be them sort of just out for the lesson.

Claudia: Whereas here, students will follow the lesson because they are hungry for knowledge and they want to learn and for the most part they really, really do want to do well, so they have kind of a thirst for knowledge. I feel here generally speaking, and they really actively kind of engage in the learning willingly, whereas I always felt in the UK I was having to coerce it a little bit, out of them. Don't get me wrong, I love both, it was very special in the UK when you really did get the children wanting to learn, that moment was quite powerful. And over here, what's incredible is what you can do with the children and how far you can stretch and push and challenge them, because you have the [inaudible 00:11:30] to be able to do that.

The researcher: Yeah. Question number nine, what are the stereotyped images that natives, in general, have about education in the UAE?

Claudia: Natives of the UAE?

The researcher: Yeah. No, native English.

Claudia: English, of education here.

The researcher: So how is it different from back home? In terms of teacher Shakespeare, for example, literature in general.

Claudia: The context can be quite tough. I think that's the biggest difference in particular when teaching English and literature. Even the language texts that we explore, students kind of conceptualize what London was like. If a student hasn't been to London today, it's difficult to understand, but then you have to try to get them to understand what it was like during the 1600s or the 1900s. So that can become quite difficult, in terms of getting to understand the context of the text, and why these texts are written. For me, no text, it doesn't matter whether it's language or literature, everything that we write or communicate is a text, and why we communicate in those things.

Claudia: They can place that in this world but they find it very difficult to place it in a different context, in a different country. So that's one of the main differences where it's not easier, but it is slightly easier to be able to kind of contextualize those things, when you're in the UK.

The researcher: Humor.

Claudia: Yes.

The researcher: Question number 10, how much do you encourage humor, how much do you use it as a pedagogical tool?

Claudia: I love humor and I would say that I'm very funny in the classroom. I'm not sure if the students would say the same. I think it's a really, really great tool in creating a safe environment for students. They learn when they feel safe and they can explore things and humor really can build that trust, as long as it's the right kind of humor, not sarcastic or derogatory. But there are instances where humor just doesn't translate, and something that is-

The researcher: Can you give me examples of something that happened and was misunderstood? Something that you regretted? I'm trying think that's very British and lost in translation?

Claudia: I think there's lots of instances of things being lost in translation. I don't think there's ever a moment where I said something and regretted it, because I think in that instance the humor isn't quite right anyway. But there's been many times where things are sort of lost in translation or I find it really funny network students don't because they don't understand it.

Claudia: I think it's more that, so you can make a joke about... I can't think of any. I'll think of something after now, but if you're studying a text, you might make a reference to Shakespeare or something, about Stratford for example, where he was born. And the cobbled stones for example, and not being able

to walk on it in your heels on the cobbled stones of London, and they don't necessarily get them because they can't conceptualize it. So I think it's more the kind of understanding part that kind of gets lost, and then they often don't find it funny.

The researcher: Yeah. How much do you care to explain and make it relevant and make them more aware of the British humor?

Claudia: I don't do it... That's a really interesting question and not something I've ever really thought about. And now thinking about it, I'm wondering do I do it because I want to instill British values, and actually the answer is no, I think it's just nice for them to experience different cultures and how they use humor and things like that because what I will often do is say, "Well, do you have something in your language that you wouldn't be able to translate?" So I always get them to kind of think it back. So if we ever do have a moment like that, they recognize that it's not just a British thing, that actually it could be something in Arabic that you just can't quite translate and it hasn't got the same humor attached to it, or in Italian or whatever.

The researcher: Again, there being a British English teacher, how are you different from your peers in other professions? So natives who are in other professions in Emirates Airline, for example, how do they see this world and how do you see it differently from them? Culturally speaking.

Claudia: I think just generally being a teacher you are very kind of in tune with wanting to drive and develop minds and explore the world and cultures around them. I think in terms of the way we see things differently, I know you used the example of perhaps for example in Emirates Airline, I think culturally they're quite... because of the nature of airline, they're quite open, there's lots of people that speak lots of languages and they move around all the time. So I think we probably have quite similar understandings.

Claudia: I think with children, being a teacher, and experiencing it from seeing the child, I think there's more of a connection to the understanding of the doors that it opens for a child and how it really can kind of transform the world, seeing it from the child rather than seeing it from an adult level and looking down on it. I think it's always really, really powerful to just... whenever I have a moment in the world, I always stop and I always think about school and I think about the children who are from so many different countries and so many different cultures and yet they all get on and they play together at lunchtime and they learn together and they share together. And it always keeps me grounded in the belief that there is so much goodness [inaudible 00:18:16]. I think being a part of nurturing that just changes the dynamic of the way in which you look at it.

Claudia: I'm not sure if I answered your question.

The researcher: You did, perfectly.

Claudia: Okay.

The researcher: Yeah. 13, language creativity. I always give this classic example of [inaudible 00:18:37]. We look at the moon and say how gorgeous this thing is, I know it has a very bad connotation back in England, it's got a dark side, it's uneven, it's not beautiful, they've got lilies, they've got daffodils, they've got their own things to associate a nice or beautiful girl with. How much do you make your students aware of these things when it comes to language creativity? If they draw an analogy between something that is very alien to the English culture?

Claudia: Sorry, what was the question?

The researcher: Language creativity.

Claudia: Yeah, what do I do?

The researcher: So, if a first student wrote something like, "She was as beautiful as the moon."

Claudia: Yeah.

The researcher: Would you say, "Okay, this is interesting, class. Can I just draw your attention to this?"

Claudia: Yeah, I mean I don't think I would do it as a class, but it's language and creativity and it's all about interpretation and a child's understanding of that, they've used that with something that they've understood and they've compared to. So for me, it's about talking to the student individually and it's not wrong, it just might not be what you want or the best example or whatever, but that's come from the child; the child has kind of taken something. So it's kind of talking it through and understanding where that's come from, and then looking at does it then reflect what you want it to say and if not, then how can it, and it's getting students to unpick that language, which is a skill that we do actually quite a lot, through the analysis of the text that we do, when we really think about well why has the [inaudible 00:20:30] chosen that word, what are the connotations, what are the associations we have with that that has meant the writer has decided that they want to pick that image out for you. Then getting them to kind of flip the same sort of idea in their own kind of creative writing.

Claudia: There's been many a times when I've had students say things like, "Oh, the man was like a tree." And I'm thinking, right, why? And there's a certain, there's two things that it can be. It can either be that the student has understood the concept of comparing something to something else, but like the concept of a simile, for example, but they haven't really quite understood the real purpose behind it.

Claudia: Or it can be a cultural, that would be something culturally that you could say but actually when you translate it, it doesn't really quite work.

The researcher: This is what I'm saying. So would you say, "I can see a very foreign thinking, is this from Arabic?"

Claudia: Yes, yeah. And have that conversation with them.

The researcher: With them only, so not with the class?

Claudia: Yeah, no, I think in that situation you can then open it up to the class. I think if it's the one where they've kind of miss-[inaudible 00:21:40] it, I wouldn't want to single the child out and make them feel that they've made a mistake.

The researcher: I see.

Claudia: But if the child says, "Oh actually, in Arabic we say this," then that's where there's a nice moment where you can say, "Right, guys, in Arabic we say this. Does anyone else have anything in their home language?" That's when, yeah, then absolutely open it up to the class. Yeah.

The researcher: Okay. Right.

Claudia: And sorry, I also use my own sort of understanding of Italian, there are things in Italian that you just kind of translate. So I think when you do open it up, it's important for the children to see you participating in that as well, so it doesn't separate them.

The researcher: Culturally speaking, what do you think are the missing links between native teachers and their students from other backgrounds in class?

Claudia: I think it is that cultural sensitivity. It's not just a given. I think it's something that you have to be a bit more conscious of. So I think the main... that's the main gap, and it builds very quickly and you learn very quickly, and as long as you're open and you have a safe classroom, and you build it very, very quickly, but I think in the first instance that can often be... I remember when I first came out, even just reading the names off the register, I mean I had...

I was feeling really stressed about it and getting the names wrong and saying something that wasn't... but you learn as you develop more experience, and you get to know the children, that cultural sensitivity becomes just more natural.

Claudia: But I think that's probably the hardest sort of path at first, and also I know the question isn't that, but parents as well, and parental expectations and things like that. So often you can kind of work through with the child but there's still kind of an outside expectation. And that does take navigating because different cultures have different expectations of education in the system and anything from leveling to the pedagogy and the teaching and the content, and that actually can have a lot of impact on the classroom and the planning of the curriculum.

The researcher: It begs me to ask, how much of your collective memory, perception, assumptions, just general understanding of certain cultures, you use to aid you through dealing with someone from a certain background? I do have a question that's similar to this.

Claudia: I think a lot of it. And I think experience, as a way of knowing, is very, very important in shaping how you then interact. I think you build that through experience with [inaudible 00:24:47]. Built up with people from different cultures but also my own experiences, learning another language and speaking another language, and that I think, you can completely use that. But to varying degrees, I think dependent upon... It is dependent on mindset because I would argue that there are some teachers here that I do listen to have conversations, and I think, okay, step back from you and your mindset and open out and consider.

Claudia: And it's something that I think we do take for granted. I think you definitely take it for granted if you speak different languages or you have been brought up in a culture, with a mixed culture for example. I think you take it for

granted that everybody does think the same as you, but actually not everyone does. So I would answer that I do, but I would also answer that there are probably some people that would say that they do and they don't.

The researcher: Perfect answers. Yeah. 15, again, yeah, this is the question. Have you ever found it very difficult to teach someone from a certain background because perhaps you were talking about something that's highly inappropriate, their culture, and you didn't want to offend anyone?

Claudia: Yeah. That actually has happened to me in my first year of teaching. And it was a poem, a couple of poems that were on the specification that they were studying for their GCSE. And it mentioned certain topics that kind of culturally are not perhaps necessarily talked about. And some of the students went home and said to their parents, "Oh, we don't know if we believe anymore in this, that, and the other." And the parents came in and said, "What have you been teaching?" And it was very difficult because I completely, that obviously wasn't what was taught in the classroom but the children went home and what their interpretation of things is, it does matter even if that's not what was directed.

Claudia: But equally, it becomes very difficult because the poems on the specification for their exam, so I can not teach it, and then if it comes up then they can't do the exam. So it became a very difficult... it actually was fine, the parents, really once they understood the context behind it. But yeah, it can be quite difficult to navigate that. Yeah.

The researcher: You partially answered that. Again, were you ever in a position where you were required to act differently to consider the background of a certain student?

Claudia: Yeah, definitely. I think it happens all the time. It happens all the time, particularly in the English classroom, I think in English because when you study a text, that is coming from a very European, euro-centric sort of place,

western, there are certain things that will naturally be within the text that aren't necessarily a natural part of other cultures. And you do have to learn to be really mindful of the way in which you articulate the ideas and phrase things. And it depends on the age of the students as well, because there are certain students, you came into my lesson with year 12s. There are certain topics that we do explore but I think for me, what's really important about language and particularly the power that it has is feeling confident to recognize that it has power and recognize that it's the way in which you're using it and how you're using it that actually is where the power comes from.

Claudia: So, things can be talked about as long as we're recognizing why they aren't acceptable in everyday... You know, actually I think if we don't talk about those things then students don't understand those things. So, for example, we looked... With IB students, we do a unit on language and culture and the way in which culture informs language, and language influences culture. And then they do a presentation and two boys, one of them is African and one of them is actually Columbian. They wanted to do a study of the use of the racial slur, the N-word. And they came to me and they said, "Can we do it, can't we do it?" And the approach that they had to it is they looked at the history of the word and why the word has so much power and why the word has so much taboo attached to it and why, not the word itself, but the history that's come with it, it has the impact.

Claudia: So actually, I think it was a really worthwhile thing for them to explore because I don't think they should be afraid of things like that but they should understand it.

The researcher: Indeed, yeah.

Claudia: So I don't know if that's answered your question.

The researcher: Yeah, excellent answer. Now, cultural insensitivity. Now, for example in Arabic, we don't have a word... we do have the word racist but we don't

have sexist or ageist. Again, political correctness and cultural insensitivity. Observing this cosmopolitan world we live in, especially in this part of the world, any observations that you noticed of cultural insensitivity towards certain concepts just because they might... they just might happen not to be in their languages?

Claudia: Yeah, I think the word insensitive is interesting, because it implies that it's almost a little bit deliberate, that you've been insensitive, but I think it's not deliberate, as there are words that just aren't formed in, and I think it's about perception, isn't it, because someone could come and say, "Well, actually, that is... you've been insensitive to my culture." But actually, again it comes back from the purpose of language and actually understanding where it's coming from. I don't think I've explained myself very well at all, but yes, there are definitely instances where that happens but I think whether it's a deliberate insensitivity or just-

The researcher: Can you give us any examples?

Claudia: I'm trying to... I feel like I've lost myself on the question.

The researcher: Yeah, so, cultural insensitivity... In other words, how do some students inadvertently are offending...

Claudia: Yeah. Okay, so an interesting one is-

The researcher: Actually, we can talk about Diwali or Halloween?

Claudia: Yes. I think there are certain phrases in different languages and cultures that carry a little bit more weight than in others. So a really good one is, I don't know whether this is appropriate or inappropriate to use, but attitudes towards talking about someone's mother, for example. In certain cultures, it's an absolute, you don't talk about someone's mother or make a joke about

it or something like that. I'm just thinking about boys around the school and boys being boys.

Claudia: In British culture, it's not really a thing, like people say, people joke about it, people laugh about it, it's classed as banter, but in some cultures, it's absolutely... that's not an accepted kind of cultural thing. So there are instances where that happens, and people take offense because something that's quite dismissive and accepted in one culture actually in another culture it absolutely isn't.

The researcher: Is that an example?

Claudia: Probably a bit of a strained one but it was what came to my head.

The researcher: Any incidents that you can share where... I think you've answered that question.

Claudia: Okay.

The researcher: Yeah, manners and attitudes. How are they different? I know that please and thank you are not used as often as in English, in Arabic for example, which is perfectly fine. Just like in Spanish, or maybe Italian, but it is a big deal in English. So again, manners, how... do you think your students are aware of... In other words, I'm talking about cultural or bilingual identity.

Claudia: That's a really, really interesting question, and actually from my response I would say...

The researcher: Do they switch code to the English culture, where they are talking in English and then you can catch them talking in their own language and being [crosstalk 00:35:05]

Claudia: Yeah, no, I think you do. I think they do switch and they do adopt a very more British kind of responses when they are speaking in English and that

is perhaps [inaudible 00:35:22] slightly when speaking in native language. Yeah, definitely, I think you can perceive it. Even if you think about... Even if I reflect on myself, when I speak in English, I still use my hands quite a lot but not probably as much when I speak in Italian, my hands are alive. So even that, I do think there is a distinct and you can see it with the children as well, I do think their manners change. I think they do adopt the language that they're speaking in.

The researcher: So which one is more common? Is it the not adapting to the culture that you're speaking in? Or being very Arabic whilst having an English conversation, for example? What's more common?

Claudia: I think the Arabic students find it harder. I do think they find it harder to adapt to what we would consider as kind of...

The researcher: Okay.

Claudia: Yeah. I think European students adapt easier to that and switch in easier to that.

The researcher: What about the Asians, the Indians?

Claudia: I think they probably switch the easiest.

The researcher: Yeah, they see the culture more.

Claudia: Yeah, I think so. But then I would question how far that is because of the upbringing and the colonialization and the influence that exists quite heavily already. Whereas with Arabic students, that perhaps doesn't exist quite in the same way. So I'd say it probably comes from kind of the history of that cultural infiltration.

The researcher: Yeah. In your opinion, what are the most common misconceptions about people living here, when they think of native teachers?

Claudia: Are we talking about Emirates teachers?

The researcher: No, no. Not Emirates teachers.

Claudia: Oh, British native?

The researcher: Yes.

Claudia: Sorry, I don't know what's wrong with me. What do I think the stereotypes are attached? I think wrongly, I think native teachers are seen as better, seen as more knowledgeable, just generally as better, I think it's a wrong assumption but I think that is the stereotype. If you're a British teacher, then-

The researcher: You're the brightest [inaudible 00:38:17].

Claudia: Yes. And I do think that is an association.

The researcher: What else? In terms of manners, are they too friendly, very relaxed, in using their authority as this part of the world, we cherish teachers who say please do, give orders. Is that a thing or do they welcome...

Claudia: I think probably there is a bit of a perception that we're a little bit... Perhaps we're a little bit more strict but I think we're a little bit more holistic, and maybe discipline is done slightly differently and it's done through the relationships that are built and it's kind of that rather than just a simple black and white, I think we're probably seen as less black and white. Yeah.

The researcher: Do you think your students are culturally aware of not offending and by the time they reach grade 13 or...

Claudia: Yes. I do. I think by the time, I'm thinking of year 11s, and I'm thinking... But I think by the time they reach year 13, particularly because we study the IB curriculum, I think the IB curriculum has a huge, huge impact on making sure that the students really are open-minded culturally, kind of

inclusive, and they think about things from different perspectives. And I think the IB certainly has a huge part to play in that because I would say by year 13, majority are...

The researcher: Question 23 and 24, what are best and worst things about teaching multicultural classrooms?

Claudia: I mean, the best is the richness of the ideas and the interpretations and I think the classroom that's multicultural is so rich in that and the level of dialogue and discussion that the students have, and the way in which their mind is opened, I think is just one of the most amazing things about teaching in a multicultural classroom.

The researcher: Worst?

Claudia: I think sometimes making assumptions and then having to work out how you're going to explain something [crosstalk 00:41:00] assumption. I think that's, yeah. I think that's the...

The researcher: Did you face any issues being a woman around teenagers?

Claudia: No, not really. I've never really in particular felt anything in particular strange. They're very respectful.

The researcher: Around parents, would they say, "No, I don't want them to be mothered."

Claudia: No, I haven't... One thing that I learnt very early on, on parenting, I'll never forget it. Was to not offer my hand to shake hands with parents because not all cultures will have that interaction between a man and a woman, and I still remember the first time, because that's just a gesture in... it wasn't anything meant by it. But I never really experienced anything in terms of parents or students having any questions about teaching, being a teacher.

The researcher: Yeah. [inaudible 00:42:16]. Induction programs, have you had any?

Claudia: Yeah. So, when I first moved out, as a new member of staff, there's a kind of a week and a half of induction. Part of it's done just as the new members of staff, and part of it is joined in with the whole school induction process. And then that continues every year. So although I'm not part of the new induction-

The researcher: How rigid is it for...

Claudia: There's a very specific schedule set, and we do it through PD, professional development. So it starts off at the beginning of the year. I suppose the induction tries to hit many of these things that we're talking about, kind of the cultural sensitivity and those sorts of things. It develops throughout the year and then we do have regular professional development sessions that run continuously. So although it's not necessarily an induction, it's continuous development as a teacher, at our school. Certainly that's how [inaudible 00:43:27]

The researcher: You answered the rest of the questions.

Claudia: Oh, sorry.

The researcher: I'm done here. Yeah. Thank you very much for this interview.

Claudia: No worries, thank you.

The researcher: Thank you.

Claudia: That was good timing.

## **VI. Interviewee 6**

the researcher: Okay. Thank you for the time that you're giving me to conduct this research. I'd like to start with the demographic questions first. Age, if you don't mind?

Nadine: I'm 30.

the researcher: Nationality?

Nadine: South Africa.

the researcher: Current teaching school? That'll be [inaudible 00:00:21] Academy. Current teaching grade? That'll be grade-

Nadine: Grade five.

the researcher: Yeah. Other languages do you speak?

Nadine: So, in my country I speak English. Then my second language is Afrikaans.

the researcher: Okay, so your native language, however, is English?

Nadine: Yeah.

the researcher: Years of experience in the Middle East?

Nadine: This is my third year, as well as in the UAE.

the researcher: So it's just the UAE that you've been to?

Nadine: Yeah.

the researcher: The major nationalities you have in class?

Nadine: It's mainly Emirati, so local. Then I have got students from Cyprus Island, Palestine, Syria, I think there's a Jordanian.

the researcher: Yeah. Is it easy to find a job as an English teacher in the UAE?

Nadine: I think there's a big demand for English-speaking teachers here, based on the curriculum that gets taught, seeing as it is either British or American curriculum. So I think there is a big demand for native speakers here.

the researcher: When it comes to South Africans, how are they classified? Are they still a native or are they less preferred?

Nadine: I think South African educators are quite in demand as well. There's a big South African population in the Emirates itself. There are a lot of South African teachers come here for a number of reasons, mainly the benefits and the salary. Because in South Africa, obviously that's not very good.

the researcher: And you are going to have the same salary as native speakers who are British or America?

Nadine: I should. It should be based on your qualification and years of experience.

the researcher: Okay.

Nadine: Yeah.

the researcher: Right. What do you think recruiters are looking for in English teachers?

Nadine: Well, we're not English specific. I'm up in secondary school where I'm only teaching language. If I was teaching just English as a subject, I would then need my Bachelor's in Language to be able to teach it. But because I'm a primary school teacher, my qualification is based on primary school because I teach all learning areas. I'm not just teaching English. So for me in a primary school setting, it's based on my qualification; my Bachelor in Primary School Education. So I'm qualified to teach all learning areas. I think in secondary, you need to actually have a language degree.

the researcher: That's all?

Nadine: Yeah.

the researcher: Yeah. Do you think there are any disadvantages of being multilingual, or do you think that parents like it when you speak only in English with their children?

Nadine: I presume the parents are sending their students here to get an English education. That's why they're sending it to a school that's English medium. For myself, it's difficult when I don't understand Arabic, which is most students' first language. English is their second language. For a number of reasons. If they're talking in class to each other, they revert back to Arabic. If they're being disobedient or insulting me using Arabic, so it's hard for me to know what they're saying and understand. And also for my weaker students. When I studied, we learned about a method called code switching. So being able to translate the words; I will say it in a different way in maybe their first language, but I can't do that. I can't read Arabic, I can't speak Arabic, I don't understand Arabic. So even if I have things translated, I have no idea if it's-

the researcher: Yeah, so with which grade do you use code switching?

Nadine: So, we try and do it as often as possible, especially with our war displays. A lot of it will be translated or it'll be English and Arabic for our inquiry board. That's the main learning board that drives all our subjects. But like my English board will just be in English. My maths board will just be in maths, unless I actually download or find a resource that has English and Arabic on it.

the researcher: Right. Do you think parents prefer a particular native speakers? Do they prefer Americans? Do they prefer ... In terms of accent?

Nadine: I honestly wouldn't know. But I would presume ... This is a British curriculum school, so they chose a British curriculum where there are

American schools available. You know? So if they had a preference of the American, I presume they would then send it to American. I think there's a big influence of UK here, from my own experiences. A lot of British-speaking people here. Not as many American, I find, or haven't encountered as many.

the researcher: Right. Question number four; what are the main challenges of being a native teacher teaching, in your case, locals?

Nadine: I think it would be that whole actual understanding of language and accents. So, especially in this school, there's so many different nationalities. We all have different accents. The students go from year to year. They're exposed to different accents. They have to adapt. The way I speak might not be the same as the way someone else speaks, so that could always be a challenge when they're first coming to a class; having to learn your accent. But then also just the idea of them not maybe being as advanced as they should be, especially your weaker students. They have a very limited access to vocabulary or very limited access to comprehension skills. So even when I'm talking, how much are they actually understanding? When they're reading, are they comprehending? Where a lot of them are struggling to read and to write. English is quite a weak area.

the researcher: Yeah, yeah. I would think so.

the researcher: Question number six; how often do parents ask about your nationality? Do they care? Again-

Nadine: No.

the researcher: Yeah.

Nadine: So even my students ... I'll often say I'm from South Africa, and then it surprises me that it's been weeks. I say it again and then they go, "You're

from South Africa." So even then, I'm not too sure how much they really relate to that, that I'm coming from that country.

the researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I see.

the researcher: Number seven; okay, I think this would be ... What do you think of this question? What are the intellectual or behavioral features that students in your country have, as opposed to [inaudible 00:07:07] natives?

Nadine: Based in South Africa? So, I've actually not taught in South Africa. I studied and then left the country. So I've taught in other countries where the language wasn't so ... English was a second language.

the researcher: Okay. So you've never taught students who are native to English?

Nadine: No, only now in my class; I have one who's from Ireland, so obviously his first language is English. But even so, the Irish accent is very different and their sentence structures are quite different. You know? So-

the researcher: Yeah. Number eight; okay ... Okay, you've just answered that.

the researcher: Nine; what do you think are the stereotyped images that people have in this part of the world of native?

Nadine: I think, if we're talking about being Emirati, in my class, there's quite a dynamic of Emiratis vs. other nationalities. It actually causes behavioral issues, bullying, because they consider them not to be from here. So they're looking at themselves as being superior. So that's actually a real issue in my class, because that's how bullying is happening, students are being mean to these students that come from other countries like Syria, Palestine. They're shunning them aside because they're accepting them as part of their-

the researcher: Perhaps because they happen to be the majority in these classes?

Nadine: Yeah, so they form like a little gang. Why is he being [inaudible 00:08:42]? Anyways. So it does cause problems, and you're trying to teach those skills and those typical things of acceptance and acknowledgment and being kind. But it's a hard thing to take out of them if they have that feeling. That can also come from pre-generations. Like, what's their family environment like? How are their parents towards ... Because they learn from their elders.

the researcher: If you're going to compare them to students of grade 12 and 13, do you think it's the same mindset, because they happen to be the majority in this school?

Nadine: I can't actually answer that because I don't interact with secondary students, so I don't know what the dynamic is within the classes. I feel that this isn't an issue when they're in younger grades. It's definitely an issue that's started this year, from being separated from girls. So that's been a lot of behavioral changes as well, is because they're all boys now in the class. It's their first time. They're still young, but they're getting this feel to prove themselves to be manly and to prove who they are, really. So I've found that is hopefully something they can grow out of as they get older, because they are in a school where there are other nationalities. But in secondary, there's far fewer students, so I don't know what the dynamic is there.

the researcher: Interesting. Okay. Question 12; let's go to question 12. How do you think native teachers living in the UAE are different from natives in other professions? How do they perceive the culture, the demographic? What sort of notion and concepts that they have which are different from natives in other professions?

Nadine: I don't know. I think as teachers, we probably have to be more accepting, I presume, because we're dealing with all different nationalities. Whereas I don't know what it would be like in the working environment, because as far as I understand, the UAE is made up of mainly expats. So I think everyone would have to have that accommodating persona or skill, really,

because you're working with so many people from different nationalities. So I don't know if their perception would be very different compared to other people, as opposed to teachers or-

the researcher: So when you talk to people from back home and their perceptions of the middle east, how yours is different.

Nadine: Well, if I'm talking to my people back home, I feel like they're still very narrow minded because ... We come from a multicultural country, so we've always grown up with different cultures, different ethnicities, different beliefs and things. So we naturally are ... There's always still racism and those things that happen, but I was in class with people from different religions, backgrounds, colors, whatever it might be. So their only perception is maybe because there's a different culture here, they might be narrow minded and close minded because they don't understand it. They've never really been exposed to it. They haven't had to live and be in it. As opposed to me; I am here, so I'm accepting of what is around me.

the researcher: Yup. Okay. Question 13; how much, in your writing classes for example, or speaking classes ... How much of creativity do you allow amongst non-natives? For example, I always give this example of the moon being ugly in the English language. However, it is the symbol of beauty in the classic Arabic poetry. If you say to a native speaker, "You look like a moon," it can carry a connotation. However, all the classic Arabic poetry would resemble or would show how a beautiful lady looks like ... Compared to the moon, she looks like a full moon. Because it's a desert, dark. I've got a snake and a camel, and you've got that moon. However, in English, it's got a dark side. It hasn't got an even surface. Then they've got lilies, daffodils. They've got roses to compare ladies to.

the researcher: So language creativity. If they brought something that is alien to the English language, in terms of the symbol of beauty or ugliness, how much do you

explain of that, and how much do you allow them to express things whilst thinking in their language?

Nadine: I always try and allow for opportunities for students to be creative. So you might use stimulants or imagery to help guide their thinking or help with what they need to know, or you create a vocabulary list to help what they're describing, what they're explaining if they're doing a writing task. But what I do find is, they are starting to develop this understanding of connotations to words within English and then within Arabic. So if they will know that in English it means this, but in Arabic it kind of has a different meaning, because they'll use this word in Arabic ... Say they're using an insult, like you say. But they say it in Arabic and they switch it to English, it's not an insult. They're fully aware because I'll say, "But that's not the same." But in Arabic it is, so they're able to identify-

the researcher: Like a dog, or-

Nadine: Yeah.

the researcher: Yeah.

Nadine: You know, they are able to identify that in Arabic it has a more of an in-depth meaning than I suppose maybe certain English. So if they're doing their writing and that, I think the students are starting to develop that ability to ... Even though they're thinking in Arabic, they have that understanding of English as well. So like, the moon for example, they are able to identify that in Arabic it means that, but in English it can mean something different. So you try and cater for that always. You try and guide students as much as possible without interfering with their creativity, because you want them to still be creative. You don't want to conform them into all writing the same thing. You know?

the researcher: But if you came across something that is ... It can be said in English. However, it does have a potential of creativity. Do you point it out and say, "Class, this is very interesting. Let's just draw your attention to this." Would you say that?

Nadine: If the moment arises, yes. If I'm not aware that this word has any other meaning in Arabic, obviously no, because I don't know that. Unless a student says, "Oh, but in Arabic, this means that," then we can discuss it because then it's opening that platform for communicating it. But if I don't know, you kind of just move on as you would if I was speaking to all students that understood me, really.

the researcher: Yeah. Question 14; what are the missing links, culturally speaking, between native teachers and students?

Nadine: Missing links? I think it's just that whole cultural difference. You know? With dress, with food, with language. Like you said, you don't understand ... You can always be accepting. You read about it, you'll learn about it, you can see it. But it is still ... It's not directly impacting my life. I don't fully understand it, you know? So like, I had a student that came in his kandora-

the researcher: Kandora.

Nadine: Yeah. He said, "I won't be bad today because I'm in my kandora." So he had that idea of being respectful and well behaved because of what he was wearing that day. But on other days, when he's in his school uniform, I struggle with behavior. So that aspect, I don't understand. Because I went to a school that had a school uniform, and we didn't have ... English people don't really have cultural dress. The Africans do; the African languages, the African cultures do. But English, we have our braais, which are our word for a barbecue. That's like cultural heritage wise.

Nadine: But so it does make it difficult if they're speaking of something you don't know about. That's where you teach and learn from each other, really.

the researcher: What other examples could you give?

Nadine: Within the class, or like-

the researcher: Yeah, yeah.

Nadine: ... my country?

the researcher: Within the class. Things that couldn't really comprehend because it's part of the students' culture.

Nadine: Same thing with, in my country, my work week is from a Monday to a Friday. But here it's from a Sunday to a Thursday, and pray day is a Friday. But in my country, pray day is on a Sunday, depending on your religious. It could be on a Saturday. It just depends. Food, obviously even fasting the whole month of Ramadan. That's something that I'd never been exposed to, or it's not like nation wide. That's something that people are very proud of and it's taken very intensity. Where we don't have things like that.

Nadine: For example, I was speaking to the students about empathy. That day we were talking about global empathy, and we were trying to establish why would people needed a bit of global empathy for situations talking about sanitization, water, food. We're just speaking about it. Like, imagine ... Because we showed a picture of this child that is very hungry. I said, "Imagine what it could feel like." Now, I didn't even think of it, but I was saying, "Imagine what it would feel like without going for food and you have to wait for your next meal." One of my students said, "I do when I'm fasting." I'm like, "That is right. You actually do, because you have to go the whole day and you can't. You have to wait for your meal." So they can make that connection based on their own culture, because I didn't think of

that. I'm like, "Oh, you do fast. You fast for a whole" ... You know? Then you just [inaudible 00:19:17] saying, "You know that night, you're getting food. Imagine you didn't know and you had to try and think of that for three days without having" ... And they could get a bit of an understanding and develop that empathy.

the researcher: Yeah. Question 15; do you remember the time, any time, where you found it difficult to teach someone from a very different background? Perhaps your first year.

Nadine: No. My first few years of teaching, it was very similar cultural things. It was in Namibia; it's a neighboring country to South Africa. Very Afrikaans driven, so that was my second language so I could relate to students. It wasn't very tough. When I moved to Taiwan, that was very difficult because they have many traditions and practices that are unfamiliar to a lot of people. So then sometimes it'll become difficult if you aren't aware. If you aren't aware of someone's cultural background or their traditions or beliefs, it's hard to ...

Nadine: For example, I was writing a student's name in red pen in Taiwan. Now, that for them is a no go. That means something bad. But from where I come from, it's just red pen. I'm just marking in red pen.

the researcher: Same with Korea.

Nadine: Yeah. So you're not aware, you know? So if you are in a country where there are different backgrounds, it's good to try and have knowledge about it and try and do best practices that would avoid situations like that.

Nadine: But I think any students that come from a different background can be challenging to a point, because of cultures and beliefs. Especially if they're different to your own. You naturally revert to your own way on doing things

because it's you. You know? So as an educator, you have to try and be open minded and always try and think out the box.

the researcher: Yeah, especially with parents. Any incidents with parents where you said, "Well, if it was back home, I don't think this would ever happen"? Or that somewhat of an interference or somewhat, "They are intruding in my way of teaching, and I don't have this issue back home"?

Nadine: I feel like there's big parent involvement here. There's also big parent involvement in South African. Even in Taiwan, I wouldn't deal with parents. My TA would be communicating with parents because they didn't have an English knowledge to be able to communicate with me. But here particularly, I don't feel parents get involved with my teaching. They will always ... I think they want their children to succeed, so they will ask you questions, "How can they do better?" Or, "My child's struggling with this. What can they do?" But they will never be like, "You're doing something wrong." They're not confrontational unless it's a behavioral issue, perhaps. Confronting parents and there's some issues that you have to try and work through.

the researcher: And because most of the teachers I've interviewed so far are from Dubai, and I can see how that one is different; when it comes to Halloween, for example, is it celebrated here?

Nadine: No.

the researcher: No?

Nadine: Mm-mm (negative). Even though we're an international school, there is a sense of international mindedness. We'll speak about different events and that, but I don't think we will make a Christmas card or a Easter card, or these different things that might be hugely celebrated in my country, that we have actual holiday periods in that time. So I think that can always be

something different. So it's Halloween coming up, but we won't do anything for it. But Halloween's not really celebrated in my country either, so that's more of an American thing.

the researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Now, again, can you give me an example of a situation where you had to act differently because you have to consider the culture of that ... Yeah, of this part of the world or the culture of that student?

Nadine: Act differently? I think that's ... It will be part of ... Like, in terms of Ramadan. I can't just freely ... You have to be respecting them as well, so I don't drink in front of the students because they're fasting. That's just a matter of respect. Also the way you dress; you have to be ... In South Africa, you can wear sleeveless shirts to work because obviously we don't have to cover up there. So that was something cultural that you have to do.

Nadine: But within the classroom, you just try and accommodate, really. So if there an opportunity that you can make it local and you try and bring it down to them, then you also try and bring it out. Make them express international things, like how is it different? You're trying to give them that international mindedness as well. So I'll often refer, like, "Over in my country, we do it like this."

Nadine: So it was a good example, for example, when I was having this huge feud in my class between Emeratis and non. They will say things like, "I will break your arm because you're not from here," or, "Get out this country." So they say these things to these students. Then I had to have a serious conversation with them and be like, "But Ms. Nadine is from South Africa. I'm not from this country, so does that mean I'm not welcome in your class or in this class? Which I'm your teacher. I'm not from here, you know?" Then they're kind of like, "Oh." You know? "Oh, yes. Sorry."

the researcher: How much of their culture do they share with you, in the National Day for example? As opposed to an Arabic staff teacher.

Nadine: The students are quite proud, I would say. I think they're proud of their heritage. So when it comes to National Day celebrations, they're excited to celebrate the country. Arabic staff, we don't have much to do with them, really. I only really work with my Arabic teachers that I have in my team, so it'll only be the ones that teach Arabic or Islamic. But I mean, you always create new things. But I don't have much to do ... Even the teachers that are from other countries, like Lebanon and Jordan, that are here, don't really know much unless you don't ask.

the researcher: Right. Yeah, you've already answered that, cultural insensitivity.

the researcher: Question ... What are the things that are considered very disrespectful in your culture, however it is practiced here amongst students, perhaps?

Nadine: Within a classroom setting, I find the students in South Africa are more responsible and more self acknowledging and have accountability, but because it's enforced from a young age. Whereas here, I find that's lacking, because I have students whose nannies carry their bags for them, and drivers that come and carry their things, and nannies that pack their bags and that. We, in South Africa, have nannies; we call them maids. But they're there to clean the house and maybe they cook and maybe they look after children, but they're not doing homework with us. They're not packing things. At some households, but it's not the norm. So you have a special maid.

Nadine: Whereas here, I find that it's very commonplace. So in that sense, I'm finding I have to pick up after the students because it's not enforced on them to pick up after themselves at home and because they have a nanny that does it for them. So just that aspect of responsibility. Within my class, you can see that it's ... So I have one student who always leaves his snack laying on the floor, but I know that he has a nanny that picks up after him. So I mean, I'll be like, "I'm not picking it up for you. Pick it up and put it in the bin." You know? That's a daily thing.

the researcher: Would you say that students in this school are from the middle to upper class?

Nadine: Yes. Because it's an expensive school. It's high tuition fees, so I think it's not just going to be lower class that'll be able to afford. I think it's like 70,000 dirhams in a year, or 60,000 dirhams for the year, just for school fees.

the researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Question 20 ... Let's go to question 21. In your opinion, what are the commonly misconceptions that are held of people from your country about this country?

Nadine: I think of how strict it is, and of ... So before I came here, people would say all these things about, "You're going to the Middle East, and this is going to happen to you. They're going to take your passport. You're not going to be able to leave."

the researcher: Yeah. Are we more strict than the Chinese at-

Nadine: Yes.

the researcher: Do you think?

Nadine: Yes. Because I think the whole stigma's come around from Ramadan month, because there are these restrictions that are in place. But it's out of respect for your belief in your culture. You know? But other countries don't see it that way. So before you come they're like, "You're not going to be able to drink in public. You're not going to be able to do this. You can't do that. You can't eat." But they don't realize that the country doesn't stop. The country still ... I think, from what I can tell from my partner that's been here for seven years, he can see a change in the country with acceptance itself in the last few years. So I don't feel it's as strict as it used to be, maybe. I can't say, really; this is only my third year.

Nadine: But Ramadan, you can still go out. You can do these things. People can still do what they need to, so I think it's become more accepting. But other people from other countries don't know that. They'll all be like ... I don't know what people believe, but it's-

the researcher: "How can you live without a Prosecco?"

Nadine: Yeah. Like I said, it's very expat-orientated still, so it's like this mixed dynamic of strong culture but acceptance of other cultures, I would say.

the researcher: Are you living in Ajman?

Nadine: No, I live in Ras Al Khaimah.

the researcher: Ras Al Khaimah?

Nadine: Yeah. So, the mountain place.

the researcher: Is it by choice, or is it-

Nadine: No, I was given accommodation nearby the school.

the researcher: I see.

Nadine: They placed me there.

the researcher: How Dubai, in your opinion, is quite different than the rest of the cities here?

Nadine: I think so. I haven't explored many myself. But Ras Al Khaimah is quite a small set up, so I think it's more outdoorsy. They call it the "Emirates of Adventures" and that. But compared to Dubai, I personally don't think I'd like to live in Dubai.

the researcher: Why?

Nadine: It's too busy, too hectic. Whereas RAK is very laid back, chill, a little village.

the researcher: That's all right.

Nadine: You know? So you feel like you're on holiday. If I want to go to Dubai, it's close enough. I can drive there for the day, I'll go to the mall, I can come back. But Dubai is very far ahead in comparison to ...

the researcher: Right.

Nadine: I also find that RAK's a little bit less strict, maybe, I think in some ways.

the researcher: Than Ajman?

Nadine: Well, Ajman, I don't really know to be honest. I know Sharjah's quite strict, I think. But Dubai, yeah. I can only really talk about RAK and Dubai.

the researcher: Okay.

Nadine: Yeah.

the researcher: Do you think that your students are culturally aware of acceptance or bullying?

Nadine: Yes and no, because there's that whole stigma of being local vs. expats that's happening just in my class. I feel like it's more happening this year because of the separation of boys being in. But if you look at the lower grades, and then hopefully when they're older and they've passed this phase ... Because it is an international school, more so with teachers than students ... When you say international with students, a lot of them are still from the Middle East even though they're from the UAE. So they still have a lot of cultural beliefs that are the same; same religion, same language, things like that. So I think when you have the teachers that are actually coming from the UK,

South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, some from America, that opens up their eyes a little bit more, that they're exposed to these different aspects or accents.

the researcher: Was your gender ever an issue teaching these boys?

Nadine: No.

the researcher: Not even one incident where-

Nadine: But I have got one student who doesn't respect women as much as he respects men. That's for certain; I can see it.

the researcher: If it's one student over the course of three years, that's very healthy.

Nadine: Yes. I mean, he had a male teacher last year and his behavior wasn't as much of an issue. This year he has me, and he has a female Arabic teacher, but he has a male Islamic teacher. There is enough ... Had issues with this boy, so I've met the father, I've met the mother, I've met the grandfather, I've met the sister, on different occasions with this boy's being had to be sent home because of his behavior and that. But I've said to my principal and said, I said, "I'm going to be fighting a losing battle. Because if he does not respect women, it doesn't matter what I say or how I say it. It's not going to change. It's not going to have an impact." So it's very difficult, because that's something that's been culturally, I think, embedded within him.

the researcher: Yeah, it's entrenched.

Nadine: For example, the grandfather came to a meeting with the older sister. She's just graduated from high school. They were just speaking about how this child is very obsessed with his Minecraft and whatever he's playing at home and stuff. They can see a behavioral change through him. The daughter, his other sister, said, "He got his first cell phone in grade four." She could only get her first cell phone in grade 12. So for me, from my country, that's a big,

"Whoa." That's where that cultural dynamic between men and women come in as well. So that always plays effect, I think.

the researcher: Yeah. True, true.

the researcher: Now, question 23 and 24; what are the best thing about teaching multicultural classrooms, and what are the worst?

Nadine: I think the best is just having that exposure to multiculturalism. So I'm also lucky in the sense that, where I come from, that is embedded within us because we have 13 official languages. So for me, I'm very accepting of it. I like to celebrate the differences. The first thing I do my first week of school is I get the students to draw me flags. We put it up in class so that we're exposed to that we're not just from one country in this class.

Nadine: I think if you come from a UK-based classroom, there are lots of nationalities there, I think. It's quite a hub as well. But I think the majority, it's pretty one cultural, like the UK, unless people have come there from other countries. So that's a difference.

Nadine: But here, the disadvantage is the issues I've previously mentioned, where they feel they're superior. So it causes bullying, it causes discrimination, it causes upsets in the class, it causes actual physical fights. So that's a disadvantage.

the researcher: Don't you think that, with all this Westernized education; are they changing or are they still trapped in their own culture that has been deeply entrenched?

Nadine: I think it depends on where they started their schooling from. I think this current ... These kids that we have now in the primary school, they've only been around since 2010. You know what I mean? So they've grown up with smart phones and things like that. So their whole perception I think is

naturally ... They've been exposed to so much more. I think if you're looking at older students and you're looking at past students, I think there there would be probably more of a dynamic of that stronger cultural thing, because there wasn't as much available or exposure to as much. Does that make sense? I think they're still very much culturally embedded, because it's largely celebrated as part of their daily things. You know? But I think in class, they realize that they're in this kind of school as well.

the researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay, induction programs. Have you had one?

Nadine: When I first arrived?

the researcher: Yeah.

Nadine: My year when I started was an interesting one, so I didn't get the same that other staff got. My year was a bit different with the intake that came with me. We only had one week before the students came, where generally there is two weeks. There is a week just with new staff and then a week with all staff and then the students. I came, it was a long weekend, and then four days at school with all staff, and then school started. So I'd been here for a week and then I started with students. So it is ... If you haven't been in the country before and been here for one week, and then you start teaching these students, it is quite alarming.

the researcher: Culture shock.

Nadine: Quite a culture shock. I'm used to other cultures because I've taught in Asia and things like that. I'm used to different cultures. But a new culture is always new, you know?

the researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nadine: From going to wearing what I want to having to wear certain clothing; that was a change. But then also meeting parents, different ways of greeting. It's

always a bit awkward. I'll go to shake their hand but I don't know if I can shake their hand. I wait for that person to shake my hand. That first week was a shock because from a country where you can shake hands, you know? Then you kind of wait. Do they extend their hand first? If they do, then I know I can shake it. Or stand back and not shake it but I should shake it? You know? It's difficult, and everyone's different. Some people come in for a kiss. You don't know; you just wait. You stand and wait for someone to address you first.

the researcher: Last question there; would you like to add anything about culture and any insights?

Nadine: No, I think having cultural awareness is such a great aspect to have in the class. Because I feel the world is becoming more international and more globally accepting and recognizing, in a way. So if students aren't exposed to multiculturalism, I feel like you became very one dimensional. So I think having multiculturalism I great, because students learn from each other. You know? So it's great when we can have days of celebration so we can celebrate other countries, where we can share traditions and customs and beliefs. I think it's good for a person's character through subjects like moral education, where you can teach these ethics and things. I think it's good.

the researcher: Thank you so much for this interview.

Nadine: Not a problem.

the researcher: Thank you.

## **VII. Interviewee 7**

The researcher: Miss Phillip. Thank you very much for your time to do this interview. I'd like to ask demographic questions and age, if you don't mind.

Emma: I'm 36.

The researcher: Okay. Nationality?

Emma: I'm British.

The researcher: Right, okay you're so native and current teaching school?

Emma: I'm at Ajman Academy.

The researcher: Current grade?

Emma: Grade 5.

The researcher: Only?

Emma: Yes.

The researcher: Other languages do you speak?

Emma: I do speak German and, but quite proficiently. Other languages I have small bits that I know. I can understand more Arabic than I can speak but I can't speak Arabic.

The researcher: Right, right excellent. Years of experience in the Middle East?

Emma: I've been in the UAE for ten years.

The researcher: Right--

Emma: Nowhere else, just UAE.

The researcher: Right, nowhere else, it's just UAE. Last question there would be what are the major nationalities you have in class?

Emma: Mostly Emirate but overall mostly Arabic speaking nationalities so Iraq, Palestine--

The researcher: The Levant countries?

Emma: Yeah basically, yeah.

The researcher: Was it easy to get a job in the UAE as a teacher?

Emma: I found it easy to get a job when I lived in the UK, somebody actually approached me about moving to the UAE. After an interview I then agreed, so that was quite an easy process. Since I've moved to the UAE, this is my third school, it seems to be getting trickier, so more difficult to get a job. I think the requirements are a lot higher, one of the reasons that I'm studying my Master's degree now.

The researcher: I see. Is it easy to get a job as an English teacher for natives you'd say?

Emma: I think so, seems to be a lot trickier with equivalency and the teacher license and things like that so the standard seems to be a lot higher.

The researcher: I see. I see. Do you think of then getting a job at the universities here?

Emma: I have thought about it but my career, where I want to go is into psychology and special educational needs because that's my background. Then, yeah so I have thought about it but I think solidly as of yet.

The researcher: Yeah, now question number 2, what do you think are the disadvantages of being a monolingual teacher?

Emma: I think the disadvantages are that sometimes the concepts that I'm trying to teach, it would be easier if I understood what the word was. For example, recently I was teaching moral education about empathy. That's a very specific technical word in English that a lot of the children might not

understand. If I had the Arabic knowledge to explain what empathy was or just to use the word empathy in Arabic, they would then understand because with that word comes a whole lot of pre understandings, pre concepts that would be brought with that, that would then kind of switch the light on almost for what they're doing in English.

Emma: I think there would be, so the disadvantages are that sometimes I feel like I can't always get the point across in English and I would benefit from knowing a few of these key words in Arabic.

The researcher: It's really interesting that you should say that because it's one of my classic examples of the words that can't be translated into Arabic, empathy.

Emma: Empathy.

The researcher: We don't have an equivalence to that, we have sympathy but we don't have empathy.

Emma: Yeah, empathy, yeah.

The researcher: That's why it can be a bit tricky when taught, yeah.

Emma: Yeah.

The researcher: Yeah do you think parents here prefer native teachers to teach their children when it comes to language, specifically?

Emma: I think so.

The researcher: Yeah.

Emma: Certainly in the conversations that I've had over the last ten years I haven't had anybody say that they wished that I wasn't English as a first language. I think that I've often had comments liking my accent because I have an

English accent so I think that's a good thing but I've not had anything to the contrary.

The researcher: Which part of England do you come from?

Emma: All over. All over. My family from London but I spent a long time living in Bath and then I went to university in Sheffield so kind of all over.

The researcher: Right, right, yeah. Is there any nationality, particular nationality, that parents would prefer when it comes to natives?

Emma: Just from my experience being British I'm, I've had a lot of comments about my accent being English and that's the kind of accent that they want for their children but I don't know, I don't know otherwise. From what parents have said to me, they like the English accent.

The researcher: What would you say are the main challenges of teaching nonnatives other than the linguistic challenge?

Emma: I suppose understanding the culture and insuring that you, and the things that you're teaching, you make it relevant to them almost. I suppose that's a challenge. If you fully understand or if you understand the culture, where they're living, their family dynamics and so on, then when you're teaching you can give examples that might make that more real for them. Also, I suppose, expectations of behavior are slightly different sometimes and the independence. Children here generally seem to be a lot less independent than in my home country. In terms of things like packing their bags and being responsible for homework and things like that. I think that's, they're the main challenges.

The researcher: Right. Now so you'd say that it's best to domesticate the examples to the culture?

Emma: I think that's better. I think it helps them to understand a concept if we are, if I can give a real life example. Then I think helping to understand the culture means that you can do when it's applicable and relevant, just trying to think of one now but so ... For example, again if I think about my moral education lesson in empathy, we, they were struggling to understand the task which was to find pictures of world situations that we would feel empathetic towards. I thought, right, okay, I just helped them by like looking at, okay, look at the school that we go to. Then, let's look at a school somewhere else so just kind of, just making it richer for their experience. Again, schools that are this well equipped don't necessarily exist too much in my home country either, so the fact that some of these children are able to come to schools like this, I just compared it to other parts where they didn't. It just kind of helped to understand a bit deeper, I think. That's just one example.

Emma: I try and do that a lot whether it's with maths or with English or a story or something that we're reading, trying to kind of link it to things that they might experience.

The researcher: How much of the English culture you bring to class?

Emma: I do a bit. Sometimes I'll say things, in England we do this or in my family we say this or I might say, we have a phrase in English that's, for example yesterday I said I'm going to set up shop here. I was just going to move my seat and I said that. Some of them didn't understand what I meant. I just said oh in English that means I'm just going to make my place here. That's all. I'm going to move here. I do try and do a bit of that.

The researcher: Yeah. Okay. Question seven, what are the intellectual or behavioral features that native students would have compared to nonnatives? In terms of politeness, being honest, being direct, respect?

Emma: Okay. I think in comparison to the schools I've taught at in the UK, children here seem to be a lot more respectful and a lot more ... I think intellectual, so behaviorally I think they're kind of more respectful. Manners are interesting because in the UK it's a really big thing to say please and thank you whereas I don't find, I have to encourage that a lot, even at grade 5 level. I think, perhaps, that's where the direct translation from Arabic to English comes in because sometimes when they talk to me it's like they're giving me an order whereas in English we would kind of, I call it flowering up a bit, so we go please may I or something.

Emma: Then, intellectually, I don't see any major difference intellectually between their abilities to do something in comparison to children in the UK massively.

The researcher: Not ignore the linguistic background?

Emma: The linguistics is the, would be the only thing because, and I think that does prevent them accessing a lot of the things or fully understanding, especially when it comes to formal examinations and just reading the questions in English and understanding what they have to do. Obviously there's that additional element of working out what the English, which is not their first language says, into their own language, perhaps, so that they can try and understand it and then working out what to do. I think there's a little barrier there. In terms of their innate kind of intellectual ability I don't see that there's any difference. Obviously the language has an effect.

Emma: I think that in the test results we do see a below average mean for example in their Cat 4 tests, which is a baseline assessment that we use, that all of the UAE are using at the moment but that's mostly down to English not being their first language.

The researcher: Question nine, what are the stereotyped images that native speakers have about teaching in the UAE?

Emma: I think, I know thinking of my friends at home, think that it's easier to teach here because the hours are less and the money is more. I think when people come here they have a bit of a shock sometimes. I work really hard because not only do I have to plan the lesson but I have to think about how I'm going to get the children to kind of understand the concepts and so on. What phrases I might use, what language I might use, so I think there's that added element that's a bit more difficult.

The researcher: What sort of phrases would be okay for grade 5 and do you think it would work here?

Emma: I think in terms of instructions, I suppose. In terms of instructions, I have to think about how many I'm giving at any one time. I try to give them more like steps so they're quite short and sweet so stand behind your chair and take your water bottle, whatever. Just trying to make sure that they're quite easy to follow instructions. Whereas, if I was speaking at home, I might kind of speak more fluidly. First of all I'd like you do, and then I want you to. I do try and do that as well so that they are exposed to the correct way of speaking English like that but I also am aware of the children that, who's understanding of English is not as good as some of the others so I kind of do it in a mixed way.

Emma: I kind of give the instructions and then I, as I'm reinforcing it I kind of use other ways as well.

The researcher: Question 10, humor, how much of humor do you use?

Emma: I do use humor quite a lot. Some of them understand it. Some of them don't, especially sarcasm. Sarcasm is quite a difficult one for children to understand anyway, let alone children who have English as a second language. I know last year in my class I only had 12 grade 5 girls. This year I've got 23. Last year, some of the girls when I was being sarcastic they were looking at me and a couple of them said Miss are you being serious?

Emma: I got to explain sarcasm. As the year went on, they started understanding the humor a lot more. I hope to do the same this year as well. I want, I'm that kind of person anyway, I like to kind of play around with them and a few jokes and stuff like that, but it's the sarcasm that I don't think they fully understand, not yet, but they will.

The researcher: Right. Question 12. How native teachers of English are different to their peers in other professions living in the UAE?

Emma: Good question. I think, I don't know. I'm not really sure. I don't know many other people other than teachers but from what I can see, teachers are really dedicated and they might have bad days but they are pretty good at picking themselves up and dusting themselves off and starting again. I know that on the days that I have that are pretty bad, I reflect and I think okay well what could I do? It's not ... I'm the adult in the room, I'm the one that's steering the lessons as well and helping them along. What is it that I can do to help that process a bit better?

Emma: I get quite infuriated with teachers who say these children can't do this or can't do that because I don't believe that's a true statement at all. What I believe is that teachers have the, it's their job to make it accessible to children in any way that matters. I think that's a really good thing about teachers, about native teachers, is that they keep trying. It's something that's kind of drilled into us at home anyway is about inclusion and so on. I think that's something that we do, we're pretty good at, pretty resilient and pretty, we're good at persevering when things get tough.

The researcher: Culturally speaking, do you think native teachers understand this culture better than natives in other professions?

Emma: I think possibly because they have, I suppose they have access to these children. I love hearing the stories and hearing about the weddings that they go to and this kind of stuff and how, I mean, for example one child today,

we've been doing presentations about role models. That was a really, really interesting snapshot into who they believe are their role models. Some of them chose people like Sheikh Syed, others chose people like Hazzaa who just went to be the first Emirate in space and others chose people that were important to their country. I've got a Pakistani girl and she chose Imran Khan, so I think we're exposed quite a lot to the culture because we see the children, the children talk to us, we tell stories but we also see the parents and things.

Emma: It's only a snapshot, obviously, we're not in the culture and I've been invited to a few weddings so I see certain parts of it but obviously I'm not living it but I think we probably do, are exposed to quite a lot more than people in other professions.

The researcher: Right. What do you think, question 14, what do you think are the missing links between native teachers and their students, culturally speaking?

Emma: I think language, definitely. I mean, for example, I've been in the UAE ten years and I don't know a lot about the UAE history. I know that when they do their social studies lessons, I don't know that kind of stuff. I think that would be quite interesting to have an awareness of the background. I mean I understand about the unification of the Emirates and it became the UAE, but kind of I don't really know much about prior history to that. That would be quite, I'd quite like that.

Emma: I don't know a lot about things like, I do know about the religion but I don't know a lot, a huge amount. I think that's really important because that's a big part of culture, obviously and a person's identity. I think those are the main things.

The researcher: Just going back to the example you just gave, when a student gives you the answer to who's your role model and he says [inaudible 00:17:48] and now

when you think, back at home I won't get this, no one would say Prince Charles or--

Emma: Yeah.

The researcher: They wouldn't say, I don't know, Justin Bieber or something, these are the, okay can you give other examples of the differences between the answers that are expected?

Emma: Yeah. I think in the UAE, I think, from my opinion and the experience that I've had, Emirates are very proud of their country. I mean, for example, every morning we do the National Anthem we look at the flag, we don't get that, we don't do that in the UK. I think that's something that's really brilliant that's kind of instilled in children from a young age that they're proud of their heritage and they're proud of where they come from, proud of their language, their religion, their country. I think that's absolutely brilliant.

Emma: Because of that, a lot of the children do choose Emirate or certainly Arabic role models. I think in the UK, just thinking about my nieces and things like that, I think you're right, I think that they would probably choose, not necessarily the Royal Family but more like YouTube stars and sub-stars and stuff like that. I actually like it when children choose people from their country who mean something like that. I think that's really, really great. I think that comes from the way that they celebrate their country, the way that they celebrate being Emirate, which is, like I say, a massive difference, actually that I should've mentioned before.

Emma: There's a big difference that I see between children and the way that things are done in England in comparison to here.

The researcher: So far, the teachers I've interviewed have been teaching for the past three or four years and, in your case, it's ten years. If you're going to compare

yourself to when you first came here, were you more or were you less aware of the importance of domesticating examples to the culture?

Emma: Yeah. Well, the school that I taught at in the UK had quite a large Muslim population and who's English--

The researcher: Sheffield, that is?

Emma: Sheffield, yeah. English was not their first language. My background as a secondary teacher, I started my career in psychology, actually, working in a school that was very, very underprivileged. Lots of language issues and then various other things, but secondary school. I then did my training as a secondary teacher and started teaching psychology. I had to teach children who's language, first language was not always English, teach them difficult concepts. Just the first example that comes into my head is for the psychology GCSE so the test that they take when they're 16 years old, they have to huge words like arachnophobia, they can't say fear of spiders. Trying to do that was really, really difficult.

Emma: I did have experience before here about trying to make it kind of more real life to them so that they could hopefully remember more. I think my skills since then have come on quite a lot because I didn't quite understand how important it actually was. Whereas now I feel like, you know, it's really important.

The researcher: Again, don't you think that part of learning a language is learning it's culture?

Emma: Absolutely agree.

The researcher: How do you strike that balance?

Emma: That's a good question. What I try and do when I'm reading a story is any words that might have that cultural understanding that I have that they won't

have, I'll try and explain and then sometimes, if I can, I will try and give an example that means something to them, as well. It's really hard to strike that balance. That's where it comes, it links into the question you asked before about the missing links. If a teacher doesn't have that kind of understanding, it's quite difficult to do. I think the fact that I've been here so long makes it a little bit easier because I can say things like it's like when you go to the salon with your mum before the wedding or whatever. That's a silly example but that kind of thing because that kind of stuff doesn't happen in the UK. We don't have those big weddings, nor do the little girls go to the salons, particularly. That's a nice little thing that we can, it's a silly example, like I said, but it's just the first thing that came to my head, then.

Emma: I think that's, it's difficult but it's definitely important.

The researcher: Yeah. Thank you, question 13, language creativity. For example, in Arabic, we say this girl is as pretty as the moon, which is not particularly pretty in English culture. It has a connotation.

Emma: Yeah.

The researcher: How much of language creativity do you allow when they are giving examples and you sort of trace that it is from their country?

Emma: I'm pretty flexible because the way that I like to do things is I like to talk to the children quite a lot. If they've written something down like the example that you just said and I don't understand it from my point of view, maybe I say oh is the moon pretty? If then perhaps they can explain it to me and it makes complete sense. They say oh this is something that we say in Arabic or Miss but I think the moon is pretty or whatever. I say okay what's pretty about it? They can explain it to me then I like that because I try to encourage the children to be as creative as they possibly can and to try.

Emma: One of the things that you'll see when you come to the classroom, hopefully, is that we have a, we try our best attitude. That means being creative. That means taking risks. We say the word risk taker, are you a risk taker? Are you creative? Just try different things and see if it works. I like to think that I'm quite flexible with that and I do try to encourage it.

Emma: As long as they can explain it to me, then I'm happy to kind of go with what they've said and what they've done.

The researcher: Yeah, but don't you think it's part of school, for me it's really tricky don't you think it's part of, again, learning is to know the connotations of things and what is beautiful in one language and that's not? Don't you think they should be aware of the, just, the hidden meanings or would you always just?

Emma: No the hidden meanings are interesting, which is why I like to talk to them to find out if there's something that I don't know because I often tell the girls it's a two way learning street in our classroom because there are things that I don't know that maybe they can tell me. Things like that that I wouldn't have known that was a phrase that's said in Arabic that's perfectly acceptable, unless I talk to them and I kind of try and get that understanding. That's something that you'll find my books, for example, are loosely marked because I spend the vast majority of my time talking to them and then they can explain and things like that and I think it's, the hidden meanings behind different language is really important to understand.

The researcher: Would you, by then, draw the class attention to the English meaning?

Emma: Sometimes I do that, yeah, I stop everybody. I say this person's come up with something really, really great and I'm just going to, I want to share this because it's made me think of this or, you know, that kind of thing because we do a lot of meta-cognition in our classroom where we do a lot of thinking and how our thinking leads to other thinking and things like that. Yeah I do do that.

The researcher: Do you remember any time when you found it difficult to use someone from a different background because of the collective memory or just the perception that these people have or the sort of attitude that they happen to have towards the West?

Emma: I find it, sometimes I find it difficult to not be as free to answer children's questions as I want to be. Things like, about religions, for example, I don't feel like I can be open. If somebody asks me something about a religion of a particular country, like if they've read a book about India and they read Hindu or something, I don't feel like I can fully explore that like I'd like to. I don't want to offend anybody, either in the classroom or at home.

Emma: There are other things, as well, so things like they were talking about, for example the situation of girls and women around the world. It's very pertinent to our class, we're a class of girls. They do ask questions about things. When we've just done our role model unit, the role models that I chose to focus on were kind of women. Women like Marie Curie for example and things like that to try and inspire them, but I didn't feel like I could do people like the Pankhurst's who won the vote for women in the UK because it's democracy, it's voting, it's female activists so I wasn't sure. Things like that sometimes that I don't fully understand, I don't know how it will be received so I don't go there. Sometimes I feel limited a little bit.

The researcher: Yeah, yeah, yeah. All right. Again were you ever in a position where you had to consider the culture of a particular student? Let's say they were rude but they didn't mean it and you happened to know that in their culture this was perfectly fine and got to just overlook that or make them more aware, perhaps?

Emma: I think, I can't think of an example but if I kind of flip it a little bit what I can think about is sometimes I can involve the Islamic teacher or the Arabic teacher to help me out with the understandings from an Islamic. For

example, stealing, sometimes I ask, there was an issue in my class a couple of weeks ago with a very minor stealing of a pen and then putting it in somebody else's bag. The Islamic teacher was able to help me talk to the girls and explain why that was haram. Things like that, also, bad words, I hear all the time. Miss she said for me bad word. In English are not bad words but in Arabic, if she says that to the Arabic teacher, the Arabic teacher goes, ah, and then it's, then has to explain to me why it's a bad word. To me it sounds silly.

The researcher: Like what for example?

Emma: Calling somebody a dog, for example. In English that's kind of, it's not as serious as it would be in Arabic, or a donkey or something like that.

The researcher: Yes.

Emma: In England we'd be like oh stop being silly but here, obviously, there's this whole meaning behind it that we don't fully understand and I think when teachers first come here, they wouldn't necessarily understand the gravity of those kinds of things either. I've had to learn. I can't think of another example just where I flipped it, just the, I've had to kind of help them to understand how serious things are and take them seriously. Like I said, in England, if somebody said oh Miss, he called me a donkey, I'd be like oh come on, we can work this out. I don't want that child to go home to their parents and say Miss Emma didn't do anything about this because I obviously have to take, if it's serious in Arabic with the whole meanings that come behind that then I have to take it seriously. It's a learning curve for me too.

The researcher: That very scenario, if it happened back home and that student felt, would they feel that they are being offended?

Emma: Most likely not.

The researcher: How would they take it?

Emma: If they were grade 5 children, I don't think it would be a thing. If they were younger probably because young children always say oh miss he stuck out his tongue at me or he pulled, poked me or he did this. I think grade 5 would just kind of brush it off.

Emma: When I was in secondary school it was considerably worse than that. It was horrific, or F words and horrible words like that they would actually freely, openly, regularly use towards each other, to the point where some children were not offended when people said those words to them because they were said so often.

Emma: I think that those kinds of words like dog, maybe, donkey not so much, not in my experience, anyway, I might be wrong but not in my experience.

The researcher: I think it's, again, down to culture.

Emma: Yeah.

The researcher: If you showed a beetle to, I won't say a ladybug but a beetle would be a good example to an Arabic student, they would say eew, they would be disgusted. However, an English boy would say oh so cute can I touch it?

Emma: Yeah, touch it, yeah, exactly.

The researcher: I think it's the relationship between how we perceive or--

Emma: Similarly dogs. In England we have dogs that live in our house that kind of will sleep on our bed, these kinds of things. Whereas that doesn't happen in Arab culture, particularly. It's kind of those differences. It's understanding, yeah.

The researcher: Yeah. Don't you think things are changing within your generation?

Emma: Absolutely, 100% they are changing, yeah. The difference in the ten years that I've been here now is refreshing. It's nice. I can see kind of more critical thinking, for example and more reflectiveness in challenging things, almost. You know? The UAE culture in comparison to how when I came ten years ago is much more open. Yeah, things are definitely have changed. Even with the girls. Lots of the girls now have aspirations to become doctors and teachers because they can.

Emma: Whereas I think in generations gone past that wasn't particularly, or necessarily as open to them as it is now. A lot of my girls have mothers who work and they're, I've got a doctor, a dentist, lots of things like that that they look up to which is great. We did have a chat the other day about some of, I can't remember how it came about, but it was about being a housewife and about being a mother because I think it was in the context of role models. Not many people chose their mums and I said I'm interested, nobody said their mother. I just would like to know why.

Emma: Oh my mum doesn't work or my, I said yeah but what does your mum do? We had this discussion and some of them were like oh wow, yeah, the role of a mum is really hard and is these kind of things. They hadn't quite thought that even though the mothers were not working a paid employment that they, do you know what I mean? That was a really nice conversation to have where some of them started thinking actually, yeah, my mum doesn't have to be a doctor or a dentist to still be valued and everything else. That was quite eye opening for some of them.

The researcher: Yeah mothers. Right. Were there any case of culture insensitivity that was inadvertent? Among students or teacher?

Emma: I think, I'm just trying to think. There have been over the years. I can't think of any off the top of my head other than things like, one of the girls the other day called another girl stupid but didn't mean it in the way that it came

across. She just said oh my goodness are you stupid or something like that? Obviously where she comes from that wasn't, and that might be something her parents say, I don't know, that might be acceptable where she's from because she's from China. I don't know but this girl was really offended and said she called me stupid. I had to explain the difference. She wasn't calling you stupid, it was just a different phrase and that's not what she meant and so on.

Emma: In terms of cultural sensitivities, obviously anything religious is a little bit, you've got to be very careful. I try to avoid as much as I can because I would hate to think that I've inadvertently offended somebody like that.

The researcher: Right. Again, question 19, was there any situation where language considered very disrespectful in your culture whether you had to overlook it?

Emma: Just trying to think. Not that I can think of. No, not, I can think of it the other way where it seemed like, again, when I first moved I don't think things are like this particularly anymore or whether they were, I don't know, but racism. In my previous school we used to learn about India, it was one of our topics. A class full of Arabs and Emirates and so on were very disrespectful about Indian people and started calling each other names based on them being from India and thought that this was perfectly okay.

Emma: When questioned it was like oh my dad says that or this person says that. Even saying the "N" word and things like that. It was kind of, that was really eye opening for me because that is something that we do not allow at home at all. Something that they didn't fully understand why it was not right but I had to bring my cultural understanding in there to explain why that was not acceptable.

The researcher: Yeah, yeah of course. 20 can you give me some examples of a respectful manners that are not particularly practiced in your culture by students of the same age?

Emma: Children are obedient and do as you ask them to most of the time. There's no defiance, certainly not with the girls. I don't know you might get a different response from Miss Nadine when you ask her about the boys. I don't see any outright defiance. I don't see any children go no I don't want to do that, I won't do that, anything like that. It's much more obedient and I did experience children in the UK that were quite volatile and would just refuse to follow any instructions because they didn't want to. I don't see anything like that here, very obedient, very polite.

Emma: Polite in a different way, like I say, not with the too many pleases and thank you's like we have in England but polite in their own way. Yeah. I think that's the main thing.

The researcher: Question 21, what are the most parent misconceptions about people in your country? People here, what are the misconceptions that they hold?

Emma: About people here?

The researcher: Yeah, the way, yeah, both ways, really.

Emma: I think I'm often asked things about the role of women. Do you have to walk three paces behind your husband? Do you have to cover? Are you allowed to do this? Are you allowed to drink alcohol or those kinds of people or whatever--

The researcher: These questions are coming from students?

Emma: From people at home.

The researcher: I see. I see.

Emma: No people at home. Do you mean students asking me about England about their misconceptions?

The researcher: Yeah, yeah.

Emma: Let me think. I think they just don't really know what our lives are like in England. They don't, one of their biggest things is they don't understand the names how our names, so for example, my surname comes from my husband. Whereas that's not something that they do. Their middle name comes from their father. Whereas my middle name is Louise. Louis is a girl's name it doesn't come from my father it's more of a fashion trend or it's linked to a family member or something. Things like that. They think because based on their own understanding they then apply it to me so they, so things like that which I clear up. No, no my dad's name is not Louise, that comes from, so little things like that.

Emma: Otherwise, I mean, if they were older and they'd read the news they'd maybe have misconceptions about English people being violent. Especially with the stabbings that are going on in London. Football hooligans and things there.

The researcher: Do you think they are aware of the stabbing?

Emma: A couple of them are. I've got one girl from Ireland and a couple of them seem to be aware of world news, but not many of them read the news or watch the news. I try to encourage but they don't.

The researcher: Question 23 and 24, what are the best things about teaching multicultural students and what are the worst things?

Emma: The best things, I love learning languages and words for things and I love hearing about their experiences and what it's like to live in their culture. My Chinese girl, for example, tell me about when you do this. Even things like

one of the girls, it was her birthday yesterday. She didn't want anybody to sing her Happy Birthday. Now, in England, that would be a big thing so it's interesting that some Muslim families will celebrate birthdays and some will not. Some of the children know when their birthdays are. Some of them do not.

The researcher: Oh.

Emma: It's kind of, I find that quite interesting. I like talking to them about why do you not want us to sing Happy Birthday and explaining and that kind of thing. The best thing is I think I like to learn. I love, kind of, when they've traveled around, I like to see what they experienced as well.

Emma: We do get a lot of children that say things like I went to Thailand and I stayed in a hotel and played on the Xbox but you also get a fair number of children that say I went to Thailand and I went to this place and this place and this place. Families are obviously encouraging them to experience that local culture.

Emma: The worst things, I suppose the hardest things would be getting my meaning across fully, to be able to, for them to fully engage and access the lesson, that's probably the hardest.

The researcher: Do you face any cultural issues because of the gender? Obviously you're teaching girls?

Emma: With the girls it's fine. I guess just outsiders, I never know whether I should shake the father's hand or anything like that so I just avoid it now unless they extend it to me first, in which case I will shake it. I don't do things like that. I made the mistake of doing that once, but the man was very good, he politely declined and I felt awful. Things like that but I kind of think it's better that I just, in my head I said I know I'm not going to do that anymore just in case. I don't want to go through this again.

The researcher: Yeah.

Emma: Just one more thing about that, sometimes I do feel like the boys don't respect the female teachers as much as they do the male teachers. I do feel like that's a thing. Unfortunately. I know that if, my husband is a teacher as well here, he seems to get more respect than I might in the same situation. I do feel like that's a thing sometimes. On the flip side of it, he's had issues where parents, he teaches [inaudible 00:42:14] where parents feel like he's not suitable for their children because they want their children to be mothered and they don't feel like a man can do that.

Emma: The fact is he's got three children so he's very good at mothering so it works on both sides, I think, perhaps.

The researcher: Right. Yeah. Induction programs, did you have an induction program?

Emma: When I chose not to go to the one here. They do them because I'd already been here for so long. I knew that Ajman was more conservative than other parts. I know it's more conservative than [inaudible 00:42:50] even and certainly more than New Dubai but it was, did I go? Sorry it was three years ago now so I'm not sure, maybe I did. I know that I definitely went to the one at my first school and at my second school. By the time this school was, I'd been here eight years already so ... I don't think. I think I was excused from it, actually.

The researcher: All right.

Emma: I was trying to think.

The researcher: Bilingual identity, question 28. How much of a bilingual identity your students are or are they so young to have it?

Emma: I think they're starting to develop it, you know? We try and do a lot of bilingual things so any of the work that we do, it's bilingual. When they

come to grade 5, for example at the end of grade 5 they do an exhibition which is their own individual project. We encourage them to be bilingual in it. In fact they have to be, it's part of the assessment rubric, the assessment criteria. It's English and in Arabic or whatever language they have. Last year I had English, Arabic, but I had Emirate Arabic and Egyptian Arabic. We had German. We had Telugu is it?

The researcher: Telugu.

Emma: Yeah that's it Telugu. I can't say it properly. We had lots so we tried, we did a few things where each person said a bit in their own language and then a bit in English and stuff like that so I think they're developing it. We try to develop it in grade 5. What happens then, I don't know but certainly. There's a lot of bilingualism that goes on in the sense that for some of the weaker English children, the children who's English ability is weaker, the other girls help them with Arabic sometimes. They'll say this means this in Arabic, that's kind of--

The researcher: My question was about the bilingual identity in terms of attitude, are they, do you think that they are thinking and behaving in Arabic or Chinese for that matter while speaking in English? For example they don't say please and thank you as much or the voice?

Emma: I don't know, actually. I might ask them that because I don't know whether they think in English or Arabic or whether they can--

The researcher: From your observation.

Emma: My observations, I think, mostly they're, I think, they're developing it but I think it's mostly still monolingual. I think it's still mostly Arabic for most of them.

The researcher: Yeah so their attitude and their voice and the way that they would, just say things, would be as if it's been translated?

Emma: I think--

The researcher: They've got their identity more, they're not aware of fluctuating their voice?

Emma: I think they are starting to, yeah. I know that they're different in Arabic to the English classes. I think they are starting to develop, but I don't think it's fully developed yet.

The researcher: Last question, would you like to add anything about culture?

Emma: I guess just that I think it's, like here it's really, really important because you understand the culture and the language, they go hand in hand, they're almost inseparable. Once you understand that you know in the language you can understand more about them and so on. Yeah I think that's it.

The researcher: Thank you very much this interview.

Emma: Very welcome.

The researcher: Thank you, Emma.

Emma: Thank you.

## **VIII. Interviewee 8**

The researcher: Miss Beth, thank you very much for taking the time to take this interview. I'd like to start with some demographic questions, age if you don't mind?

Beth: Of course. I'm just about to turn 31.

The researcher: Okay. And nationality?

Beth: I'm English, gladly.

The researcher: And current school, that would be GEMS international. And current teaching grade?

Beth: I teach grade, I always get this wrong because it's linked to American, grade six through to 12. Is that right? Eight to 13. And [inaudible 00:00:44] way around they go, year seven to year 13. Yes, grade eight for grade 13.

The researcher: That's too much transcribing.

Beth: Sorry.

The researcher: Other languages?

Beth: Barely. Very badly.

The researcher: Okay. Years of experience in the Middle East and then the UAE or is it just the UAE?

Beth: It's just the UAE, two years.

The researcher: Two years?

Beth: Yeah.

The researcher: And what are the major nationalities you have in class?

Beth: Indian, Arabic and English, they're the main ones that I teach actually.

The researcher: English even, not even Europeans [inaudible 00:01:30]

Beth: Mostly English. They're normally the worst. We have a trait in England.

The researcher: Okay, I've heard some of the answers. So was it easy to find a job in the UAE? And what are recruiters looking for in language teachers?

Beth: I had a weighed experience so I was quite lucky in that my friend already worked for GEMS, so he directed me towards GEMS as a cooperation. But I had applied through other ways. So I looked at working in local schools as well like in government schools. And that was a much more complex process than moving into international school. And the main thing I found difficult about that was the lack of knowing where you were going. Whereas applying through a British curriculum and through GEMS, I knew what school I was applying to, what job I was going for, and where I would be, whereas for the others it was very, very difficult.

The researcher: Now, do you have any issues being a multilingual teacher?

Beth: There are at times, definitely, I think, actually, if you have a wider language knowledge, it's easier to make things simpler for the children, especially new words, because we've got like 99 nationalities here. So when they're faced with a new word, you don't know the translation yourself-

The researcher: But you don't you think they prefer it this way, because they didn't want to fall into the habit of translational all the time particularly to a language.

Beth: Partly, but I think when you're first learning new words it's helpful to root it back into what you know. So I know when I was learning French I'd always say, well, what's that word mean in English? What are the synonyms for it and working out that way? Because smooth English has more words than in French anyway. I think the best thing I've learned from being here is the root of words. So I now know a lot more of where languages come from. Because the kids tell me as well what they know, Miss that sounds like that French word or this sounds English or this sounds German, and it sparks quite nice conversation that way.

The researcher: Excuse me, I'm ticklish.

Beth: Sorry.

The researcher: In terms of parents, do they prefer a particular nationality where it comes to...

Beth: I think there is a bias, and I think there's a sort of world view that British teachers are the best teachers. I don't know if that comes from the way that it's advertised with Cambridge and Oxford and Eaton, which are very different schools to the rest of the country. But I think also, there is quite an old fashioned view of received pronunciation, as well. And this assumption that if you speak in this way, you will succeed more than others. So I think some parents prefer the idea of an English teacher than perhaps someone from France or Germany or Turkey teaching.

The researcher: But in terms of being native, would they have an issue with a Welsh teacher, for example?

Beth: They might do with the accent, and I think that sometimes can be quite difficult, we have a lot of Irish teachers. I think sometimes parents find it a very difficult accent to understand, I do at times. So I think sometimes there's a fear of, well if I don't understand you, my child doesn't understand you either. So I think that partly comes into play. But the language barrier is so big that the easier the accent, possibly the easier it is to break that barrier at times. Yeah, definitely, I think. Although I have to say Miss Euborn is Welsh, she has a very strong accent. So again, I think it depends on the strength in comparison to everybody else maybe.

The researcher: Right. Question four, what do you think for you as a native speaker of English and a teacher of English, what are the main challenges of teaching students from other backgrounds?

Beth: For us we're teaching British text, which is so deeply rooted in British tradition. So being firmly rooted in the Bible, for example, I read a text the other day with my year twelves. And it referenced the golden Chalice, which links to the Last Supper for Jesus the day before he's crucified. But a

lot of the students didn't have that contextual knowledge because they're not Christian, and they haven't grown up around Christian schools, a lot of our primary schools are typically Christian, even if you aren't Christian yourself. So that's a big thing. And I remember teaching Private Peaceful and the rhyme oranges and lemons came up. And of course, it's such a historical text in itself. And it links back to the poor laws in the 19th century, and people not been able to pay would go into prison, and suddenly you're trying to explain this really complex idea that's not a big part of the story, but just isn't a part of their everyday language.

Beth: And I think the other big challenge is, because we encourage so much reading in English, sometimes they're faced constantly with words they don't understand, and you can only understand a text, I think you can be challenged enough to have two new words per page. Whereas for some students they're being faced for 10 or 15. And that's a lot of information to take in. I know I'd get really tired if I try to take in 10 or 15 new things. And I'm expecting them to read say for five minutes, say five pages, that could be a lot of new language that they just don't understand, which is quite challenging.

The researcher: And do you always explain come to [inaudible 00:07:43] for every time or do you think all this is not relevant anymore today, not while it's supposed to be there. So why would I even bother to make this reference?

Beth: I try to, I can't sound perfect every time, but I do definitely try to because I think if you don't understand the text, you can't do anything with it. Especially for us teaching English, everything's rooted within that text. So if they're faced with, say, like oranges and lemons, and the person keeps repeating it, and they don't know the context behind it, or quite what it sounds like, or why it's being sung, they can't make the inference they need to about the character. So for me it's really important to explain. And the thing with new words, I always say to them, just tell me if you don't

understand the word, they don't always like to. But it's bridging that culture of actually saying, I didn't get that, and actually putting my hand up and saying, I didn't really understand what's happening here.

The researcher: Question seven, what do you think are the intellectual behavioral features that native speakers have back at home, which are not here? In terms of being direct and the way they speak, the attitudes.

Beth: I definitely noticed that this is my second in here, and I've definitely noticed, there are times where students from certain areas perhaps will speak more directly, but again it's part of culture, whereas in England, everything's very much-

The researcher: Please and thank you.

Beth: Thank you. It's very prim and proper. Whereas sometimes a student might say, give me rather than please can I have, and initially, I was like, wow, you're rude. But it probably took me about a month or so to go, actually it's not deliberate rudeness, it's just it's different to my culture. And I think that's the big thing. But I think at home, students in England, generally aren't as receptive. So they're not as willing to take on new ideas as students are here. And at times students are probably less eloquent and less able to understand everything that they're reading, which is quite interesting because they're native speakers. And I'd say students here are definitely much more polite even though they're more direct, which seems really ultimate self.

The researcher: So the figure of the teacher being a role model

Beth: Definitely. I had a classic comment just as I was about to leave my old school from a student who said, I don't understand why you would be a teacher, none of us seem to appreciate you. And I sort of was like, thanks. But I could see what she meant in terms of moving around the school, in terms of break times and lunch times, students weren't respectful. Whereas

here if you talk to a student, they respond, and they actually want to engage with you. They see you as being someone who's bringing something to the party. Whereas students at home sometimes perhaps see us as, they're going to win jazz again or are they here to do this. Because they don't see the value.

The researcher: Have you watching Waterloo?

Beth: Yes. That's all the schools I went to before.

The researcher: Question eight. I think you've answered that. Question nine. What are the stereotyped image that native speakers have about teaching in this part of the world?

Beth: What do people at home expect teaching would be here?

The researcher: Yes. Yeah. Natives in general, what do they think about education in and why?

Beth: It depends on who you speak to. Some people have very much attitude and it's light-years ahead of everybody else. And it's much more modern, it's exploring new things and willing to take on board brand new things. Other people were very much, you're teaching English to people who don't speak English, so really, you're becoming an English teacher, not an English teacher as it were. And I was like, but they do. And ultimately English is the main language of the world. It's the main language of business. So it's like, I was quite surprised by that attitude. When I spoke to people as well, they were very much like, but you're going to be very restricted in what you can teach, how you can teach. And I think part of that comes down to a lack of understanding of the culture that we're moving into.

Beth: So I think there's an expectation that the cultural difference would lead to more challenges than it might be worth. Whereas I'm very rich that the first

school thought actually is much more ahead of the rest of the world to an extent, it's much more open to trying new things. I found here I'm developing different strategies, different ways of working, I definitely would never have had back home.

The researcher: Can you give some examples there?

Beth: So we've just introduced high performance learning here. My friend runs the gifted and talented program back in the UK, I call it gifted and talented very loosely because it changed more able about six years ago. So she's been running that project. And I said to her, we've just introduced high performance learning, it's this new initiative from Deborah Ash who's wanting to [inaudible 00:13:35] more able students and all of your research is really clearly linked to moving this way and educating children and knowing how they're thinking. And she went, yeah, we don't really get it. That's all I need to get. And there's this very closed mindset I felt at home of, when it's news we'll wait and see, rather than it's new, so let's try it and let's be a part of building it and growing it. And also using technology, technology was not encouraged at home, we moved very much away from bringing your own device, bring phones. All of those things were banned and it's much more right in the book. And sit down and do it yourself.

The researcher: Don't you think or would you agree with me that technology in classrooms can sometimes be overrated?

Beth: Oh, massively, massively. There are times where it can be more of a hindrance than a help. But I think totally taking it away doesn't train students in how to use it. I'm not perfect, there's definitely times I could use it better. But I think if we can train students in how to use it and when to use it, because we grew up in a time where, I was 13 when I got a mobile phone, and the best thing it could do was send a text and play snake. Where's these kids have got everything on their phones, and it's really hard to work out,

when is it appropriate to use that and when is it not? So I think by completely taking technology out of the classroom, you're mean to eliminate student, but if you can bring it in, and try and use it the best way it can be used and teach them the best way to use it. It might help, maybe not all but some.

The researcher: I can see that you've got a sense of humor, obviously. But how cautious are you?

Beth: At the start with a class very, because I can also be quite sarcastic at times. And I'm quite aware of the fact that, especially if the culture of sarcasm isn't the norm. But I think it builds over time as well. And I think as you build a relationship with the class that you're with, they start to get used to you and start to find things you do funny. I sometimes spell words wrong occasionally, and I make it a joke then go, Chloe didn't put my brain in this morning. And first the kids are like, what does that mean, and you can see they're all being a bit confused, but I'll explain the joke to them and they go, ooh, you left your brain at home, and looking at ways to rephrase things and build in that humor and that enjoyment actually of one, well okay she made a mistake, but it's fine.

The researcher: Even if you're a teacher.

Beth: Yeah, because it's very easy to put your feet on a pedestal and be like, this person knows everything and they are this wonderful human being. They never make a mistake, but we're human and we do. And I think that my humor comes from that, and just going, oops, is the main thing. But it also fosters a love of a subject and it helps students to actually just be happy and enjoy, and when you're happy and you're enjoying something you don't notice that it's difficult or you don't notice that you're learning sometimes-

The researcher: Have you had any issues with a parent involved in-

Beth: Actually here, weird enough I have in the UK. But here no parent's ever said it's an issue at all. I think the main reason again being because they're parents who really want us to have a relationship where the students feel safe and happy with us. And so when they say, my child says you're really funny. To them, that's actually a bonus because it shows we understand each other. Whereas back home, some parents are much like, well, you should be stricter with my child. And it's-

The researcher: Do you think so, because I was going to say that our perception that native teachers are very sometimes too friendly. While in the East they prefer, generally we prefer this authority that the teacher has.

Beth: I think it's the balance. I think that's the main thing. I think if parents say, all my kid is doing is having a bit of a laugh and a joke and less in every single lesson, they're not learning anything, they're not progressing, then it's an issue. But if they can see that the students feel that they can have a little bit of a joke, they feel safe with that teacher, but also know where that line is, and I think that's the important part is sort of saying actually, yeah, we've had a big laugh now, but we'll stop and we'll move on. And it's being able to sort of switch between the two. That's really really important. I think also parents out here perhaps just really want that prospect to see that the really loves their subjects. And I think that's part of what that comes from that. Do they have a sense of humor? Are they just a normal person? And not someone that's just going to tell me this, this and this about my child. That's what I think.

The researcher: Discipline?

Beth: It's very different here.

The researcher: Everything is not allowed.

Beth: Well, there's that but I think also at home I fit properly, and to rethink my last couple of months. The last few months at my last school I probably set across five classes about 15 detentions across the last month, which is quite a lot for four weeks. Because students weren't working. Whereas here the students are working, is perhaps not only is it the right pace, but there might be reasons for it as well. So there's a different type of discipline I feel here than back home. And definitely, I'm probably stricter in the first two or three weeks here, and then can ease off, whereas back home, I would probably spend from September to December, very strict. Don't smile until Christmas.

The researcher: Oh dear.

Beth: Which is not for me because I'm quite a smiley person. But that was one of the first recommendations I had when I started teaching, don't smile until Christmas. Here I found actually, there's perhaps more of the shock and awe approach. So surprise them by being more friendly than expected. Surprise them by being more human. And let them get to know you. These students quite often have come from lots of different schools, they move quite often. They have new teachers quite often, and it makes them a little bit anxious about new people. So actually by showing them straightaway, I'm a human, it gets them on your side little bit quicker, and perhaps a little bit easier than going in with a very authoritative route to take home. So I definitely feel I have a different approach here. Back in the UK I definitely was... My sister used to call me Miss Trunchbore in the UK, which I definitely wouldn't say is the same here.

The researcher: Question number 12. As an English teacher, and native. How are you different from other natives working in our professionals in the UAE or in Dubai? So a friend of yours who's in Emirates Airlines, how do they perceive this culture differently from you?

Beth: To be honest, it's something I'm not really sure of.

The researcher: Do you think they have a better look because you tend to interact with everyone else-

Beth: Yeah, I suppose there is that but I suppose... It surprises me that anybody wouldn't be so open, partly because Britain is a multicultural society anyway. So to me, I don't approach the UAE any differently other than to be respectful in what I wear. And to think about the same things I think about back home, should I scream down the street? Should I be doing any of these things? I perhaps think about things a little bit more here than I might do at home. Just to be like, remember, don't do that.

The researcher: But in terms of understanding-

Beth: ... in terms of understanding, probably, but I suppose because we're amassed in it every single day. I've seen five classes today. Each class has got about 15 to 20 students in. So I probably come across at least six or seven different cultures and different ethnicities, which immediately means I'm going to interact differently. But I don't really know anyone outside of teaching here. Which is quite interesting. Back home my word, I'm just trying to think of anyone I know. I know about two people, but they're all friends with teachers, which might say a lot about them as well.

The researcher: Throughout two three years that you've been teaching here, have you noticed more tolerance and acceptance among students or would Indians just flock with their lot and there would-

Beth: It's always been quite mixed. I definitely sound much more aware of it, this year. On the whole, most students are quite open to be with students from other cultures.

The researcher: Even during the break, do think they like to be around their lot, someone who-

Beth: I'd say some of them, but I think it's typically the newer students, especially if you're new to the school. So my year [inaudible 00:23:59] class I teach a majority of the students are new students to the UAE and new to the British curriculum school. So for a lot of them it's their first time somebody is speaking English on a day to day basis. So a need to stay quite often will flock to a group of students that are probably from the same country or the same area. I'm trying to think of [on duty 00:24:20]. No, I'd say they're actually integrating with each other, and as they go through the years they become even more tolerant of each other. Which is really nice to see. And more open to say, well, yes. okay, where I'm from in France, that wouldn't be acceptable but in Germany it would, and those sorts of conversations I've definitely heard more of.

The researcher: Question 13. Language creativity, I always give this example. Now for example, in Arabic, we tend to see the moon as a beautiful object. It's a full moon it's beautiful. She looked back at the moon or whatever.

Beth: Yeah.

The researcher: It has a terrible connotation In English of course, to show someone your full moon. How much of language creativity do you allow in writing or speaking, would you say, okay, I can see, it is English, I can see a foreign thinking here, is this from your language? And by the way class, this is very interesting, I'm going to draw your attention that the full moon is ugly, it hasn't got an even surface, it's got a dark side, it's bad don't use it.

Beth: I quite like hearing a sample actually, I'm going to use that one. I think definitely maintenance but I think it's quite often in their sentence structure rather than the words that they choose. And so there are a lot of students that form very incomplete sentences, continually. I noticed quite often, I've

got a Russian student in my year 11 class. And she is fantastic at writing incomplete sentences, but they're beautiful. She'll write a sentence that will be as the sun glistened across the water full stop, that's lovely, but what's happening? And I'll very often bring it back, and they're also very guilty. And I think it's especially encouraged in this part of the world to use more ambitious language is, I'm not angry about this place but back home, we were never really encouraged in our everyday speech to use more ambitious vocabulary. We often didn't learn it unless it was by accident.

Beth: Whereas students here, especially Indian students have this incredible vocabulary range and sometimes you're like, I'm going to Google that, because they're completely brand new words even to me and I think, wow, they're often quite old fashioned. So definitely times I say that, and I'm [inaudible 00:27:12] what mine would say is, it's classic example, recently, I'm still to try and up level their writing. And I'd spend the whole lesson to change the adjectives, the adverbs and the verbs, but never the noun. Let's leave the noun alone, because we've all watched friends and we all know Joey, the moment that he talks about the heart pumping vows. And he'd written a sentence which was something along the lines of, the people in the crowd cheered loudly. It was something a little bit more complex, it was something like that.

Beth: And he decided to write the Homo sapiens change. It's moments like that that offer us the opportunity to talk about, okay, yes, so Homo sapiens is a synonym, but why wouldn't we use it? And those conversations definitely come in a lot more here than back home. Which I find really interesting because when I was a child, I wasn't taught grammar. And I wasn't really taught one adjective or a verb or a noun was, it wasn't explicitly taught. Whereas back home, it really is now, it has been for quite a long time. But students are perhaps less aware of the vocabulary, where students here have the vocabulary, but because they're new speakers to English, don't always have the grammatical structures. So like the French, obviously, reverse cut

off sentences so like, the shirts blur, would be the blue cats, so the reversal of the noun and the adjective. And I think it's in Arabic, I don't speak enough to know, I speak about three sentences.

Beth: I think that's the interesting thing, is actually, when you learn a new language, or at least when I learned French, I learned an awful lot of verb conjugations and how to structure my sentences correctly. So I wonder if they'll be a similar level in terms of like grammatical knowledge, because the students at home are like, bored or don't know who it is, whereas the kids here are like, tell me more, tell me more, I need to learn more. And so it's very interesting to see the comparison between the two and how there's a difference in the way that they've learned that language. It'd be interesting to see if that's perhaps with students that have been in British speaking schools but in different ones, or if it's like the consistency and the differences between them. Sorry, I've just posed you question there as well, I'm really sorry.

The researcher: Not at all. No. Culturally speaking, what do you think are the missing links between teachers and students?

Beth: I think it's a shared understanding. I know I still at times think, I'm not sure if that's okay to say this-

The researcher: Can you give us examples here?

Beth: So I was talking to my year twelves, my year twelves have already been examined, I have a whole class of Arabic speakers. So it's quite an interesting A level class, and a B class as well. I'm going to talk about the Last Supper. And I was a little bit hesitant about mentioning Jesus, I was a bit like, I've got a feeling he is in the Quran, but I'm not sure if I'm allowed to talk about him. Or if he's even acknowledged, Mohammed and hang on is Judas? And I started to get quite stressed and the kids could see it and they were like, Miss why are stressing out about this, it's Jesus. And I was like, okay.

Am I allowed to say that? I've read the Quran but it was a little while ago. And it was quite difficult to read. So I don't quite know what that was referencing. Does that mean this or does that mean this? That confusion perhaps, because I'm not religious personally, Christianity obviously is the basis of the country I'm from. So it's kind of that shared knowledge.

Beth: And the 10 commandments aren't really anything different. So our expectations of everyday life, I don't tend to kill anybody. I try not to steal. And all the things that it says not to do. So far, I've been very successful. But I think, it's those sorts of things where you think, will this offend somebody? So I often try and start a phrase with, I don't mean to offend you, but I think it could be this or I'm not sure if this might be offensive in some cultures, however, this will be the interpretation of England, so I try and contextualize it within the British sort of psyche, and then offer them the opportunity to then say to me, well actually Miss in Egypt that would be really offensive.

Beth: One of the boys, he's very much of the opinion. Women should be in the home, women should be cooking. But again, that's part of his culture, that's a part of his familial culture as well, as his national culture. And I suppose Britain, there are still people within Britain who have a very similar philosophy. It's just not as openly spoken about or is firmly spoken about. And I think that's the difference is that, what we root our conversations in, there's a gap, but ultimately, at the bottom of all of that, we're all human, we're all people. I think that's really important to remember and to discuss with the students as well. Sorry-

The researcher: No, no, no, not at all. I think you're being way too polite. Because, this hesitant of mentioning Jesus, he is mentioned more than our prophet himself. Just-

Beth: I suppose partly it's down to the fact that I'm not religious, I'm always cautious of offending people. In case what I say could be construed to be, I hope it's not, and it's not intend to make mistakes.

The researcher: Yeah. What I've noticed, being a hardcore Anglophile, is that people in England get more offended than we do here?

Beth: Oh, yeah. I try not to-

The researcher: Snowflakes I think.

Beth: Yeah.

The researcher: But, it would be very weird for someone to say, I don't mean to offend you. Just starting that line alone is an apology. I wouldn't even allow you to call me whatever.

Beth: Really?

The researcher: Yes.

Beth: That's really interesting. But maybe that is part of why I start with that phrase, because in England people would immediately become offended. And they in English expectation I didn't even realize I'd done. Very interesting.

The researcher: Were there any incident where you found it very difficult to teach a particular student or because that student happened to be on this class, you were trying to avoid things in term of culture, ethnicity, when your context was strongly suggesting?

Beth: There's been two times actually, one time in the UK. My last school, I think there were five students of different ethnicities and cultures. Sorry, six, there were definitely six across the whole school, there were 2000 students.

Everybody else was white British, which immediately creates a very typical British culture, a little bit of what I teach is our hooligan culture is sometimes being threatened. And one of our units was looking at Love and War. And so we looked at This is America by Childish Gambino. We were looking at the representation of race, we were looking at how he was exploring this idea about love and war and hate, and the political climate in America at the same time.

Beth: And I had in my class, one student who her family were of Chinese origin. She'd been born in the U.K, but obviously, there's a cultural difference there. And we have the only black student in the year group. And she was someone who often would complain about any content that whether in a good way challenged racism or just mentioned well yes, that's a racist approach and why it was wrong. And it was a big decision to actually say I'm going to teach this lesson. So actually before the lesson I pulled those two students out and spoke to them and said, obviously, you are the only two students in this group, and I didn't do it like an obviously come with me way, it was just in class in the corridor, just mentioned. What do you think of Childish Gambino? And just start to get into that conversation, and you've seen his latest video, that sort of conversation guided me to work out how they might respond. I was very lucky that the girl his family were Chinese was from quite a progressive family anyway, there's a reason they'd moved.

Beth: And they were also very keen to foster in her love of all cultures. So she was speaking about how actually, it's taught her more about culture that she didn't realize that's what America was like. She assumed it was like Britain, it was really nice. The other girl just took offense to everything that was said. And I can understand from her perspective, I am the only black student in the room and I don't feel like I'm the one with the biggest voice, and she was anxious to talk about it. So it's very interesting to talk afterwards about how she felt in that situation surrounded by a room of white students. And actually it sparked a really interesting conversation which she then did for

her own speaking and listening. But definitely the question, is this an appropriate thing to teach as an English teacher.

Beth: And also obviously teaching in UAE there are certain things that are [harang 00:38:00] there certain things that are a little bit is... Can I do this wrong? And the IB course is very Western.

The researcher: It is.

Beth: And there's a chance coming up shortly where there's a lot of swearing, and quite aggressive language and I'm still a little unsure of how I'm going to approach that. Am I going to edit that out? Or am I going to change that? Because I'm also aware of the fact that, like you say at home, it will be straight away I'm offended, letter of complaint. Here, I'm still not quite sure of where it sits. And I don't think anybody is, when I said to them, they've all gone. I might hesitate. And we're all a little bit hesitant. So I think definitely thinking of the culture that you're working in. I probably won't have the same thoughts about that with say my year 11 group that you saw me with, because I know them a little bit better. Maybe it doesn't matter how well you know that group as well.

The researcher: Yeah, absolutely. But again, I'm thinking of the parents who are sending their children to this school, if they had this women to stay at home mentality how does that work?

Beth: I don't really know. I don't know if perhaps the students want to pick up on something they know will spark a conversation. And it's always that shock factor. I know students at home do a lot, well if I say this word it's going to really shockless. That's what I just love this new word and I'm going to really freak her out. In her life, you think, no, just go ahead and say it. And I wonder if there's an element of that, but I think there's a bias towards universities in America and England, and these are places where students are going to be faced with things they wouldn't see here. And they probably

wouldn't hear here. So I wonder if there's almost the acceptance that we almost have to ignore this part of our belief or our personal feelings and put that aside for the future, the options they have maybe. And I suppose it's something that every parent has to consider whenever you're deciding where you'll send your child, what are your pros and cons in each location. Maybe that is something that comes into play.

The researcher: Yeah. Beautiful answer.

Beth: Thank you. I do try.

The researcher: I think you've answered question 16 as well where you had to consider the culture of certain students when you're teaching. Question 17. Cultural and sensitivity how is it different from home?

Beth: I think it was back to what you said, everyone gets offended by everything back home. So we almost [inaudible 00:41:14] everything with, just in case you're offended by this is here's where you can go to complain. I remember actually starting a sentence with that one, I was like, in case you're unhappy with anything you hear here this morning, please email this person.

The researcher: You were watching BBC or ITV in case you were traumatized by-

Beth: Yeah, there's always an apology for even raising an issue. It's difficult to say because the climate of the school that I was in back home. But I think I definitely got more offended sometimes than other people would have done. And I think part that stands for empathy so thinking about, and I'd often say to the to students, okay, so you've made this comment about the Chinese student for example, where you've said because she's Chinese, she's good at maths and she's good at this. Well, I knew her grades in math terrible. And she was really sensitive about that. Anyway, she was like, but I'm Chinese, I'm supposed to be good at math. I was like, you're not, it doesn't work like that. But when they made those comments, I'd be like, well, I'm offended

for her. To sort of show that shock and disgust with that lack of understanding. I think we're really lucky in this school, in that a lot of students have been together in a multicultural society for so long. And I think also because so many of the teachers are from British schools, we're so used to having to combat that.

Beth: My first school was what we would call right wing British. We were the Daily Mail school. And again, very much like my final score in the U.K, actually much worse, I don't think there was a single child that wasn't white, British and born in that exact area. And so when those students are faced with a different culture or you're introducing them to an issue that they've never come across, they can't contextualize it because they've never been in that situation. And I think that's what makes it easy, in some ways as far as actually to be culturally insensitive, because you don't understand that culture. But it's also about questioning yourself and thinking how might I feel. I remember getting on a bus in Botswana. And there was me and six of my friends, we got on the bus, and I'm very pale. And we got on the bus, and suddenly, every hand is just watching us and everyone was looking at us.

Beth: And I remember just thinking, I get it now. And I was about 17 at the time. And that was when the penny dropped for me and that was by going into a new culture and going into a new climate and being surrounded by people that I wouldn't normally be surrounded by. So for me that was when, I actually went as a child. Okay. That's strange. I think also in the U.K, we've grown up in a culture where the media are able to control what we think more than they should-

The researcher: Is it not everywhere?

Beth: I think it is. I don't know if I'm a little bit biased maybe towards Islam. But I don't feel here there's like a criticism of a Christian has done this or a Hindi

has done. I don't see that as much as I was back home. Every TV show you watch will have a terrorist and they will always be Arab. And I think well hang on a second Ireland. Should we just mentioned that one. And there's almost been an eradication of the fact that culture, every culture, there's 74 different terrorist organizations active in the U.K, and only seven of those are actually based [inaudible 00:45:11] supposedly, Islam.

Beth: Hang on I'm here to report about the 52 Christians, and I feel there's that bias and that creates the lack of understanding back home. Whereas here like you said, suppose [inaudible 00:45:26] one of my students said to me the other day, but Miss, okay, I'm Muslim, but my Quran means is no real difference to the Bible, or the Torah it's just simply a different beliefs that we hold around the importance of people and if you read them, the message is similar and I was like, oh, wow, you are much more tolerant than we would probably be back home, which is very interesting. And again, I think it comes from that climate of being surrounded by people from all over the world constantly.

The researcher: Speaking of empathy, did you know that we don't have an equivalent in Arabic for empathy? We have sympathy but not empathy. We have racist but not sexist. It's not a big issue. No even ageist.

Beth: Really? So again, I suppose-

The researcher: And we see the West they are very sensitive, and someone with red hair. They don't have red hair anymore. That we see as strawberry blonde. And this world is oblivious to such concepts that yeah-

Beth: I wonder if that's because, I don't know about Arabic, but I was reading an article recently about French. And the reason the French struggle in English. Excuse me, is that I think there's something like 170000 words in French. We've got a couple... Sorry.

The researcher: Yeah, you can

Beth: I'll grab a water.

The researcher: Do you have a bottle of water here?

Beth: We have so many words that all mean the same thing, but have a slightly different meaning.

The researcher: Yeah, just like good and not bad.

Beth: Yeah. It's powerful that it makes English so much more complex. In that, we've almost over complicated what we say, I think that's where that culture clash sometimes comes.

The researcher: Indeed.

Beth: Because like you said, other languages are just direct, when you say it it's done. Us, we like to have a good waffle-

The researcher: Yeah I know. This does remind me of an English friend of mine who was married to a Thai lady. And I said, why aren't you married to an English lady? He said, You have no idea how to misinterpret things all the time. They can be a pain and so-

Beth: The phrase I'm fine never means I'm fine.

The researcher: Yes. Yes.

Beth: And that's the interesting thing within the English language. And I suppose those are the things I'm careful of not saying and doing with the students here. Because they just wouldn't be aware of that. And that's I think what's really important, remembering those moments.

The researcher: Can you give us some of the examples where things were hugely offensive to you when your students here are totally oblivious to an incident perhaps?

Beth: In school or in public or?

The researcher: In the way in general, apart from please and thank you just like Italians and Spaniards. I guess because our languages are romantic.

Beth: Yes.

The researcher: Romantic languages don't have please and thank you because I can say to [inaudible 00:49:51]

Beth: Exactly, without needing to. Please and thank you are probably our main ones, although we've [inaudible 00:50:01]. Story about my sister. Yes, what I'm talking about. So in a situation where you're out shopping, and you're moving around, and obviously aisles aren't exactly wide enough in some shops for say two or three people to walk down. And my sister's always very shocked about they didn't move out the way, we do. With us it's very British expectation, we sent out to the kids and saying it does surprise me actually, that nobody seems to consider that, we have to go downstairs and we're very fast we can get through, and there was a, why are you so upset by that? It's just common courtesy. That's quite a British thing you would move to announce somebody through.

Beth: And I remember relating to my first cinema experience actually. Which is weird here. And it's different in different parts of the country but where I'm from in the South, you sit and watch the film. You enjoy the film. You [inaudible 00:51:24] you start chatting when it's over. My first cinema experience here was the guy next door was on the phone. The one three rows back was throwing popcorn. It was a bit of a weird you can't hear what's happening, it's like, if I can't hear it, it's blaring at me, what's

happening? And the kids were like, why would you not answer your phone when you're watching a film?

Beth: So we missed half of it. And I said, but if you miss like a whole section when you popped to the toilet, of course you're going miss the same amount when you sat in the room talking over it because you're not paying attention to the screen you're not listening to what the words that you're saying and the nuances of what they're trying to say to you as a director are gone. But you don't stop your day for a film. And honestly [inaudible 00:52:14]

The researcher: Of course.

Beth: I think those are the things that really for me, they're so baffled by. And it's kind of like, you say to them, but that's what we would do back home. And sometimes you get really offended by it, and then you think I can't get offended by it, because that's just the cultural difference potentially. That's just how it has been. So therefore, the way we do it isn't necessarily right. And accepting that difference can be difficult sometimes.

The researcher: Now, I know it's only been two years, but when you talk to your colleagues who've been here for a longer period, what are the common misconception that people living in this part of the world have about you as natives?

Beth: I think one of the best one lashing out last year was, so when did you last see the queen?

The researcher: Lovely.

Beth: Well I was dinner with her the other night, I just thought, I've met a brother, not just a brother, a son of my son. I once waved in the distance at Prince Harry. There's an assumption that the queen is almost everywhere. Because you're from England must be from London, which I think is really interesting. And I think the other thing is, often they're quite surprised that

we aren't the stiff upper lip traditional British. There are parts of me that definitely have a stiff upper lip. But there's a very British stiff upper lip.[inaudible 00:54:04] no one should come past it and I will [inaudible 00:54:11] I'm just rubbish. I'm clearly the anomaly to the British public. But it's those things, also I suppose because I'm not from London. I feel that that does have an impact, I think London is a place a lot of people may potentially have visited, some sort of say to me oh, Big Ben oh yes I've seen it. But I said but only one [inaudible 00:54:41].

Beth: What are you going to explain to them, I'm from the countryside and we have farmers and it's very peaceful, it's very different, it's very green, it's very wet. Those sort of things they immediately assume, you've moved here for the beach. Nope. I mean, it's those sorts of things like the assumption of this, you've moved here for the weather or you've moved here for the money or whatever it is that it is, that's the assumption I find. And again, I feel that stiff upper lip, traditional British lady. 1930s.

The researcher: Definitely. A suffragette. Question 22. Do you think your students are culturally aware or from what age during school you think students start to be culturally aware of things?

Beth: On a whole, I'd say probably more as they move into middle school. And probably I say around about six or seven. I that's the moment they start to solve clock on and before that it's I'm just accepted, that's just how they are. Whereas I think as they start to move towards year six and seven, they start to notice that it's because of their culture. It's because of where they're from that's maybe that way. I think that's the moment so probably around 10 or 11, as they start to become a little bit more of an agile child, that moment of that slight shift into young adulthood. The less scary part.

The researcher: And this culture of being culturally bilingual. Have you ever caught a student who was talking in their mother tongue and acting differently, and then switching after-

Beth: I feel there's a danger of assuming that children are the language because they're saying something they shouldn't be. Rather than them talking another language, because that's just natural, or because they're helping to explain something. But I definitely notice a difference, there's students in my own class who were very unfortunate that I just been watching a comedy show where the comedian has seminars to and from a little bit of Hindi. And they've been bubbling a little bit between them, they remind each other a cool lesson in English, and then suddenly flipped to Hindi and I just was like. And I could see even their faces became a little bit more thunderous, a little bit more perhaps, I wouldn't say aggressive but a bit more unkind because it moved from a banter at this point. But they obviously knew if I say there's something which, I'm in deep trouble.

Beth: So they'd used it as a tool of trying to avoid, now I have no idea what they said. I definitely didn't speak enough Hindi to learn. But I was able to say that, there'd been a phrase, that apparently I said in a Kenyan way, but there's a phrase [Foreign language 00:58:11] which means, what would they think? So I just said it and they both snapped around. Like, "She knows." I was like, I haven't got a clue what you said, but I can tell from the way that you're speaking. So I think there's definitely a way that some students try and get around and struggle for this to learn the language.

Beth: And also, I noticed some of the students when they ask me [inaudible 00:58:40] they're much more confident, which you would be. If I'm speaking French very badly, I'm generally sweating a bit and a little bit panicky, so I'm thinking, oh, what am I going to say, compared to English why nobody wants to say. I'm now having to translate in my mind. So there's

definitely more of a relaxed field than when they are speaking in their native tongue.

The researcher: What are the best and worst things about teaching students from different cultures?

Beth: I don't know if there's anything worse about it. I think the best thing is, there's a respect, and a love of learning within this culture, and within the culture of the school, within an international setting. And especially with where the majority of our students come from, there's a real, I wouldn't say desperation, but it's a need, like I need this and I want this and I want you to do better. And that's wonderful at times. It can mean I think it's worse for students rather than for me, because I think they put more pressure on themselves when they perhaps should, and I think the impact that has on us sometimes as staff is that we then try and almost to the opposite to back home where it's like, but you're doing the work. And here we're like just relax, stop, take a break.

Beth: And it's the other extreme of doing nothing to always doing too much. And I think that can be worse, especially a lot of Indian parents have tutors for their children. And when you actually sit down and talk to them about what their day is like they've got like, after six I go swimming for half an hour, I get changed, I drive to school, I'm at school from half seven till three. I do after school club till four, I get home at half four, I have 10 minutes to have dinner. My first tutor arrives [inaudible 01:00:35] my English teacher tutor, my French tutor, my history tutor, then I go swimming for half an hour and when I get back I've got this and I think, sorry, what? And I'm exhausted talking to them. And for me that becomes the worst part right from here, because they pressure themselves to do more than they need to, almost as if they feel that they're behind when realistically, they're ahead. And it's making students realize that that I think is the hardest thing. And actually sent them both.

The researcher: The parents involvement and the way you teach and their grades and begging for makeup exams, is that relevant?

Beth: I suppose so, I mean, I definitely have much more communication with parents here than I ever did at home, on a more positive level back home I get a phone call, your child's intentionally going because of... That would be almost 95% of my phone calls would be negative in all honesty, whereas here it can be a challenge, if you're constantly bombarded with I want you to teach my child this way, or they just need to know this and you don't have to do this part of it. I'm quite lucky I suppose in English that because we're not content driven. We almost have a little bit less of that involvement I know speaking to science teachers and math teachers and space history as well, they definitely get a bit more of front of it. Because it's content, I need to know these 25 facts or these 25 units of work to be able to pass whereas for us, it's really you're using the same skills from year seven to year 11 are just getting harder and more advanced, and it's on any text.

Beth: And it does make the parents and the son that much easier as well, ultimately.

The researcher: To 25. Agenda. Was it ever an issue especially with grade 13 or 12?

Beth: I haven't experienced it massively. I didn't question that one but I took year 11 group, last year's achieved. I didn't know the context of the different teachers they had before. But there were definitely times where I was sort of like are you having an issue with me explain to the audience, you're having an issue with me because I'm female. And I decided and I'd actually say it and just say is it because I'm a woman? Haven't you seen one tutor before? And they will suddenly went, oh no that's not why, but they made me realize actually may be critical, when I see you with the head of house is male, you talk to him very differently to how to me, so why? They were like, you're a man, and you're going to leave.

The researcher: And we don't have the word sexist in our [inaudible 01:03:31]

Beth: We were a bit confused why you think it's because you're a woman. But there was definitely an element which I did think actually, if I was a man they'd probably perceive me to be a little bit more of a stronger character. But we got there in the end. It is interesting sexism just isn't a thing.

The researcher: Yeah, this long explanation of, do you hate women? Are you a misogynist or whatever? I don't even have a word for misogyny.

Beth: Really?

The researcher: No. Just say, you hate women don't you?

Beth: That's what it is. That's mad.

The researcher: And when you have too many words to describe a concept it doesn't give it strength.

Beth: Yes, it doesn't give it strength. One day.

The researcher: One day. I think you've answered 26, 27 induction program. How was it?

Beth: In terms of like throwback culture and-

The researcher: Yeah.

Beth: So we had probably about two or three session, one of them was learning a little bit of Arabic. Which of course is so different because obviously our languages were written in Germanic languages and French and Latin. And so different, it's like, oh, I can't work to a pattern. So that was an interesting introduction. And we also had a few things about the do's and don'ts. Shoulders covered, knees covered all the typical things. But I actually was quite grateful there wasn't almost too much. Because there's a danger sometimes of saying be aware of this, be aware of this, you may start to

think, oh, we're very different. I think it's quite good it was just the basics, rather than the, you're going to be faced with these 300 things that could be an issue, which it's not at all.

Beth: But it allowed us to find where problems might occur. And I think it sort of prepared us enough to sort of say, it's not actually that different from home because I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't do that. And I wouldn't do that. Okay, I might have my shoulders out, but if I can't, it's not, I'm being told to get out the country. So I think it's definitely things that that were really helpful. I think actually the students take us on more of an induction through their own discussions with us and getting to know where they're from and what they've been doing lately. I've got students in year seven group now from Lebanon. And hearing information like that, because my knowledge of it comes from a book from the 80s called an evil for cradling. And in my head, Lebanon is war torn and dangerous, and really very different to what actually it is, but mainly because I've never heard very much more about it.

Beth: So the more that they teach me as well, the more I learn about that area of the world and what the differences are between Lebanon and here, and Lebanon and perhaps Europe, and it's really interesting. So they definitely give some induction because they want to know about us. And it's fascinating to learn about le-

The researcher: Are we exchanging.

Beth: Yeah.

The researcher: It's been lovely talking to you. Thank you very much.

Beth: You're more than welcome. It's been lovely to talk to you as well.

## **IX. Interviewee 9**

The researcher: Ruth, thank you for your time and,

Ruth: You're welcome.

The researcher: I've got some demographic questions. Okay, nationality?

Ruth: My nationality?

The researcher: Irish?

Ruth: I'm Irish, yes.

The researcher: Current teaching school, that would be James Wellington and current teaching grade?

Ruth: I teach from stage three, I mean three point five. So year seven to 13.

The researcher: Seven to 13. And how long have you been teaching in the UAE?

Ruth: In the UAE? This will be my eighth year.

The researcher: Eighth and the middle East?

Ruth: In the middle East, we'll probably add on another 10 years.

The researcher: 10 years.

Ruth: Because I taught in Saudi Arabia and in two parts of Saudi Arabia, Al Cobra and Jeddah. And then I moved to Cairo in Egypt.

The researcher: And then how was it different? I can just share with you because you're the first teacher really to, yeah.

Ruth: In relation to,

The researcher: Was it Gems? No, no.

Ruth: No. I, Gems when I was in Egypt, then I applied to Gems, but I was working in the UK first and then I applied for a job in, well actually I didn't actually apply for the job. I had parents who were working in a school or who were representing a school Manraj International School in Al Cobra and Jeddah, and they approached me when I was working at a school in the UK to see if I would be interested in moving to Saudi which was a very big decision on my part to go there, based on culture.

The researcher: Yeah. And was it IB?

Ruth: No, it was it's a secondary school, but they obviously offered to A levels. It's not an IB school.

The researcher: Were they locals?

Ruth: No, they were, it was an international school. So there were local people from Saudi and also other nationalities from all over the world as well.

The researcher: Yeah, international.

Ruth: But it was a Muslim international school. So the, as opposed to some of the other international schools in Saudi that were just primarily for ex-pats. So yes, there were ex-pats at the school I was teaching in, but obviously there was a, I mean it, the criteria was also that you'd have to be Muslim as well, because I have to also wear everything that reflected that culture, which is only right when you're in a different country. You respect everyone's culture.

The researcher: Yup. Yup. Okay. And was it easy to find a job in the UAE and what do you think recruiters are looking for in language teachers.

Ruth: Well when, I mean for me personally, when I applied to the UAE I think that what the school would, this school was looking for was someone who had similar sort of skills and knowledge and experience which I think I

might've had. I mean, they do put up the word outstanding, which, so they are looking for practitioners who are able to deliver the curriculum, have the knowledge about the curriculum. And also I suppose in relation to looking at the cultural aspect of things that you're also going to be sensitive to the diversity of culture within the school that you're going to work at. So I think that from my perspective, I had worked in quite a number of different international schools. So I already had that practice along with obviously quite a number of years of teaching. And also I was familiar with the UK systems and obviously this school in particular is a [inaudible 00:03:44] school. And then obviously in the year 12 and 13 their IB. So again it's like yes I did have A level experience but then when I came here obviously I was trained in relationship to becoming IB teacher.

The researcher: And now a question on that. The disadvantage of being a monolingual teacher, I'd like you to compare your experience being not monolingual teacher and teaching here and in Saudi, it wasn't that it's had, it wasn't a major issue or was it to your point, everyone's happy to speak English and learn this in English?

Ruth: Well,

The researcher: Is it an issue at all? Everyone is willing to erase the culture and they didn't have the need to know the exact word in their language.

Ruth: It depended because you see, I suppose whether or not I'm answering your question correctly, but in a lot of these international schools, children will already have been in it from the time they're very young. Their parents have put them into English language speaking schools and yes, there's a difference in the vocabulary and the language, from one language to another and sometimes obviously children can, if you're directly translating from Arabic into English in your mind, there's a lot of words that could change, like things like closing the AC as opposed to turning it off and like little

things like that within the language can be a direct translation of that. But am I not my answer, am I answering?

The researcher: Yes. Number three, do you think parents prefer a particular accent, nationality, native speakers.

Ruth: I think that from my experience, depending on different schools that I've been in, sometimes parents can be biased towards specific culture, not cultures, but the specific countries maybe they've had an accent that they may not be able to, maybe they think might affect the children's understanding of something. But I think, I think that's changing a lot. I think that's only very specific to certain countries. You do like, I mean I had a friend of mine who was actually born and raised in the UK, but she was from India, but she actually came to work in a school here, predominantly British, and she did get quite a lot of discrimination, not just from the teaching staff, but actually from the parents until they realized, "Oh, she has a British accent and she's speaking perfect English and she's a science teacher."

Ruth: So, but you still, nevertheless, it's almost like she had to work harder to maintain that position in the school than anyone else did. And I just think that's so unfair. So I think that it's a culture that needs to be changed. I totally disagree with that. I don't think that, I think anyone can, anyone can teach English. I mean, obviously I think that yes, sometimes with the pronunciation of the words, we have to learn how to do that. Who's to say that you can't teach that to teachers, that they can also learn that this is the proper way of pronunciation so that the children learn those, because there's no point going in. It's like me trying to teach French but I don't have the accent and I go in there and I'm trying to teach something so that the children then in turn out to speak something wrongly or whatever. You know what I mean? So I think it just depends on the situation. But I think they're, they're can be discrimination, which I think is,

The researcher: In terms of slangs and colloquial words, would you say, by the way in an island you say this and in the UK you say that. Did you draw the association?

Ruth: We do draw with them sometimes very specifically when we are teaching it could be like for example, GCS in the GCS civil as they had a specific unit on spoken, what's called a spoken language study. So we did look at different dialects. Like even in the UK, there are many different dialects in different parts of the world. There's like an Ireland is the same in different parts of the Ireland there are different words that are used in different dialects that are used. So sometimes within, if we're teaching like a specific short story or an extract nonfiction piece that might have dialect, then you might have to connect and explain to students who are not familiar with that, because they're used to maybe through a specific British curriculum for example, they will know these words but they don't, they won't recognize Scottish, Welsh, Irish kind of words. And yes, I would have to refer to them sometimes.

The researcher: What do you think the main challenge is for you as a native teaching international students?

Ruth: I think because I've been teaching so long, I don't think I have, I think the only challenges I can think of in relation to teaching English would be I suppose that aspect of things where you kind of expect that a child through going through a specific education system will pick up on certain nuances of the language or you know, the idiomatic speech of the language and you kind of expect that. And when, and oh yes, sorry. There's another thing, very important thing is like sometimes children I noticed because they, and it could be that they've never been in a country that where it's green, there's snow, there's any of these kinds of things like so let's say they're here, they don't see any of that because we're in the desert area, so they don't see and

they might be born and maybe they have gone on holidays or whatever, but there's certain words that they won't know.

Ruth: So I'd have to throw up images on screen of that. So you might talk about like with, I think I've grown up with, tulips and daisies and daffodils and then you say daffodil and they have no clue what you're talking about. So I think sometimes there's things within the, which I suppose when I first started teaching, I did realize that everyone should know what a daffodil is. So I think sometimes we assume that children know these things and they don't. So we have to be aware of that and be able to teach them that there's the, that certain images that they have in their mind that they have never seen before. We can't just expect them to know these things. So I suppose that's maybe something I've noticed.

The researcher: Right. Did you get asked about your nationality by parents or teachers? Is it an issue or is it just?

Ruth: Well, the kids I think here the students sometimes ask because they wonder, some of them will say like, "Oh, are you American? Are you Canadian?" Because my accent is not, the Irish accent is not very strong. Sometimes the parents would ask maybe what nationality at from time to time, but it's never, it's never been an issue here in the school. People just accept you for who you are. I think more so in well in Gems schools in general, I think people tend to be very sort of like understanding of each other. And I think there's that diverse culture within the community that it's embedded also not only within the teachers, but also in the students. You know,

The researcher: Question seven. Now, if you are, if you want to compare native students that you taught by code and international students in terms of their intellectual features or behavior features and lightness, indirect. And how would you, what would you think of?

Ruth: Well, I think where I've taught,

The researcher: The use of language and the way they, for example I observed [inaudible 00:12:00] there was a European student and the Arab student said "It's blue." And the European student said "No, it's navy blue." So these little intricacies [inaudible 00:12:12]

Ruth: Well, it would depend on the,

The researcher: They perceive things differently. How they express themselves, different.

Ruth: Well, you see that's it, if they're brought up in the educational system from a very young age. I don't see that they perceive things very much differently from the natives. Because if you are, I mean from just international students, because international students also are from different nationalities all over the world. And they're also like, apart from those who may be specifically British or Irish who only have English at home. But there is that, I know what you're saying in relation to color. Like a child could say, "Oh, that's, that's blue or that's navy." Because that person has, but then that, I mean they have the variation in that there's not just one thing, there's many. But I think that it depends on also how or where, when they'd started their education sort of here.

Ruth: I mean, I certainly notice children who start very early, from the time they're in nursery and they've had American or British teachers of whatever they're picking up on that like they're with their teachers, how long every day they're at home for the evening. But how many hours when you think the child is up in the morning, to the child goes back home, they're in the school a lot of the times. So they do pick up a lot. Yes, there can be little things like that, but I don't notice that much of a difference between the person whose parents perhaps are, but then it depends on the child. A child can be very enthusiastic about education then there is a child who are not, a child that misses a lot of school. Like maybe, you might find within the

community there's people who are like not as active in relation to wanting to come to school. So we do have issues with them.

The researcher: It brings me to ask how often have you noticed students switching between two cultures whenever they are speaking to students from their nationality then changing terms of attitudes and body language when they are speaking in English again?

Ruth: Oh yeah, definitely. I think that that is a very, very visible thing. I mean, I see that in my classroom. If I've got a number of students from different sort of like Arab countries, they have a connection. So and I see that because I seen that when I was in Egypt.

The researcher: Voice get louder and their body language starts to?

Ruth: Oh yeah. They do gestures, body gestures, hand gestures. You can see that still part of their culture that they haven't lost that or anything. And plus they kind of understand each other in that way. You know what I mean? Like certain things that they might say or sometimes dropping an Arabic word here and there obviously within,

The researcher: So when they switch into English they would have a different attitude or is it the same?

Ruth: No, I don't think I noticed. I noticed that it, it depends like I think when they're communicating with each other, if there is a tendency to use body gestures or the way they're, the way they're looking at each other and that does change sometimes if they were talking to someone who was native, I mean, I've noticed that even when I was in Egypt, the same kind of thing suddenly is the Yanni, this Yanni that, like [Foreign Language 00:15:41] and these kind of things come into their language, you know what I mean? And gestures and whatever. Yeah, that's true.

The researcher: Great, and what do you think are these two type images that natives have about teaching in the UAE. Is it still that notion of all great in the desert to teaching in a tent or did it travel the world and a will perhaps you can't teach such and such? No, no, no. Is that rhetoric?

Ruth: Is that rhetoric coming from Western countries you mean?

The researcher: Yeah, yeah.

Ruth: I think that, I mean obviously I'm a case in point because I started up years ago going to Saudi Arabia and of course my family and obviously people that I knew thought I was crazy. And of course it's the same type of idea of like camels, tents, desert, whatever. And that's going back, you're going back about 20 years ago, so we're not going 20 actually, maybe about 15. But you are going back quite a long period of time. And so people have misconceptions and that's before we had the increase in globalization technology, things started to change. So obviously when things worked around, because I lived in Egypt when the revolution was happening at the time. So you're going to see how the media has changed a lot in their perception of things.

Ruth: So yes, there was this kind of stereotypical perception of what this side of the world was like. It was only when I went to it to Saudi Arabia and I communicated back to my family that people saw a different aspect of things. You see. But you can't, that's what I tried to also instill in the children here that you can never, it's very ignorant of you to say that you think that this is the way this side of the world is then you've never actually lived here. You've never understood the people and you've never worked with the people.

The researcher: Not to add the eight years that you've been teaching in Dubai. What are the things that used to be considered to be taboo in education and now you are free express them in class first year now. Yeah. Anything?

Ruth: Oh, between the first, for the first eight years. I think that when I first came there was kind of a censorship about like certain things that could be talked about. Obviously there's I suppose from a religious perspective and then from a country's perspective, there are issues relating to that, but I think it's become from, I think Dubai had changed a lot in this. There's a lot more openness now to, if you'd like to say Western sort of ideas, that now it's not as restricting as it used to be. I mean, not saying that we, to be honest with you, there are certain things that we say are taboo, but should we really be talking about them in the first way. So I don't think it's necessarily the country.

Ruth: I think it's from your own moral standpoint, should I be discussing them? Should I be teaching this kind of novel if I am teaching a certain, because obviously at IB and A level students are a little bit older, so they have a bit more of an understanding of things. But should I be choosing texts in relation to how I see them? You know? So for me personally, if I'm teaching things where I have a choice, I will not choose things that may provoke certain emotions of feelings or anything that I feel would be, wouldn't be culturally acceptable. So for me personally though, but I'm not saying that that's something that hasn't changed in others schools.

The researcher: Yeah, question 10, Yuma?

Ruth: Does he ever come into the classroom?

The researcher: Yeah.

Ruth: Yeah, I think all the time. I like to have kids smiling and laughing and whatever, obviously when someone comes into to observe you, your personality kind of like, it kinda hides itself a little bit, but I, yeah.

The researcher: Different. That you are using it differently from back home? Do you have to adjust certain things and avoid cultural associations because you have to then kill the joke by explaining things and,

Ruth: Yeah.

The researcher: Because they tend to miss the context. So,

Ruth: I think that's in relation to humor and fun within the classroom. It's you, well, I mean I suppose you do have to consider the context of the children in a classroom. Sometimes you might see something, you might use a word, but then they'll start to get to know what does that word actually mean? You know, if they're being silly or something and you're just making fun of that, you kind of might people will, the kids without, but what does that actually mean? And you just explain it and then they'd be "Oh!" That's the word they use and when you say it again, they've kind of picked it up, but that's within your own, I suppose personal classroom situation and then they might've heard it from another teacher. So the kids kind of pick up those sort of like idiomatic or dialect kind of words. Because if you look at here in our school, we've got many different nationalities and they all have different words for different humorous things.

The researcher: Yeah. Now I know how, question. How do you think that your different from another native who was teaching in another profession in Dubai? How do you both see culture and just people living here? How do you think you're more or less aware of the things that I'm doing?

Ruth: I think that I suppose there could be a sense of equality in some aspects of it, but I think teaching in particular allows you to be aware of a lot of different nationalities, a lot of different cultures. I mean, you could be working in a job where there are primarily British or like you're working in medicine, you might, you might not necessarily have all the nationalities there, whereas in a school environment you're going to meet people from

all over the world. We celebrate things like international day, we'd celebrate different religious and cultural festivals. There's a lot of openness to every sort of creed or culture, however you'd like to say it. But I think in other professions it might be a little bit more closed in that respect that they may only meet, I'm not saying that they don't have people from different nationalities with maybe not as much as it would in the teaching profession.

The researcher: Yeah. And language creativity with non-natives now in Arabic for example, we have a lady who's a girl who's his young and passionate and innocent and healthy, we say she's like a she-horse.

Ruth: Okay, that's interesting.

The researcher: However, I remember years and years ago someone who we used to hate, we all hate her actually, princess. She's a Duke. Yeah, she's Duchess. [inaudible 00:23:00]

Ruth: Oh yes.

The researcher: Someone said she looks like a horse.

Ruth: All right.

The researcher: Then I thought, okay, this is so an insult. But in Arabic we have the competitions for the,

Ruth: Horse. Yes, yes. I know that.

The researcher: How beautiful their bodies are,

Ruth: Oh, yes absolutely.

The researcher: Yeah. So if someone looks like a, she looks like a she-horse She's, wow.

Ruth: She's, wow. Yes. This is really strong, she's beautiful.

The researcher: And

Ruth: Oh my God. Okay. Right. Okay. So she's just, so fair enough.

The researcher: Yeah. So language, creativity. Would you say, "Oh, this is an English can you explain this for me?" Or would you say, "No, this is part of your language creativity, I'll leave it?"

Ruth: But you mean to me if they've written it?

The researcher: Yeah.

Ruth: Well,

The researcher: Would you say "No, you have to think in English. We don't see horses as beautiful and we don't associate them with the,"

Ruth: Well I think, I don't think I would do that because simply because writing novels, stories, it's all about originality. So when a person writes a novel or writes a story or something like that, they may put that word in. So what they made it up, Shakespeare made half the words in the dictionary, he made them up himself. So what's just unnatural in fact a lot of our colloquialisms are words that we actually speak now have been added to the dictionary. Some of them are not great, but some of them are there. So words like humongous or something like that. So who's to say that the she-horse doesn't go into the dictionary as something that describes what you just said, why not?

The researcher: Right. But what can one to encourage them to think in English and say, "This is what a beauty is in English. We see the daffodils and the lilies as beautiful. Don't associate a woman with a woman's face with a full moon or," so it what's the line here when you?

Ruth: See, I don't agree with that. I don't agree with stopping that creativity because it may be in English things are described because the similes, metaphors, lots of figurative language is used. That is very sort of like a stereotype. Well I don't know if it is stereotypical but it's like, you try to pull the children away from, as cold as ice or whatever else you use. Because they're well worn out phrases, so. So when they put in something that's original, and if it's related to their culture, then why not? Why shouldn't they? Unless it's felt like it wasn't fitting in with the centers they were writing or it didn't make sense, then you might say to them, well if I know this makes sense within your language, is there any way we can kind of translate that? Because again, works in translation. It doesn't always work out. Like as I know jokes in Arabic, I can never understand them. Even though my kids can, because they don't directly translate. So maybe you're, maybe it would be looking to see how, could you say the closest to what it means in your language.

The researcher: Right. What do you think culturally speaking, what do you think are the missing links between you as a native and you're international students in terms of, for example, just using your eye to warn them that it's not okay to do something but they don't get it. They think that for example, in Arabic we want in our eye to show that we are angry, in English you're so angry because you just, narrow it.

Ruth: You're closing the eye.

The researcher: Yeah. How, what do you think are the missing links when you use a certain body language, for example, all your tone or a certain word that you think is an international language or international code to cross a message, yet they don't get it?

Ruth: Well, once again, because if, unless they've actually moved from a school where they were totally in the middle of nowhere and came here and never

had an English background or don't, I think they recognize, because I think kids in this side of the world are an international schools. They've had so many different teachers that they learn so many different body gestures that they recognize that whether it's widening the eyes or narrowing the eyes, they're going to know that there is a meaning there. And I think they pick that up very quickly. So what, I think a lot of our gestures may be similar. Some of them may be different, but that's only because they pick that up or they learned that from you within the classroom situation.

The researcher: Hmm, that's for English, but for us we don't, we thought, Does it smell somewhere?"

Ruth: Ah, right. I see what you mean. Yes. Yeah. Well, it's funny that we were just doing that in drama the other day looking at body gestures and different cultures. And the kids had to present, they have to present a sort of like a little sketch and used to look at the different cultures and the different gestures. And of course, like I didn't know some of them, like if something is, say thank you and you're doing it like this with your hands in Italy, they do thank you like this, there's lots of different gestures, but I think that's again, something that you pick up and you learn within the community.

The researcher: Yeah, so a drama class would take care of these things?

Ruth: Well, no. And I'm sure they take care of them. I suppose we've never really thought about it in that way. I mean, except for if something happened and somebody did a gesture, "So what does that mean?" And you might be curious to ask the person, but we do like, I've been teaching just the little ones, year seven and we've been doing that about different cultures in drama, which is quite interesting that you asked that question because it's come up there this week.

The researcher: Question 15. Do you think do you remember a time where it was really difficult to teach a certain group or of students because of their background?

And I'm not sure why I explain this thing freely as I want to because it won't work. Did you have to consider these things or say "No, it's part of the curriculum too." And then you're sure was there a parent that say "No please. This is,"

Ruth: Well I think there are certain sort of something, not here, but I think I remember when I was in Egypt there was, I can't remember it exactly, but I remember there was parents who were upset about a specific novel that was being taught. So I suppose what, response to what you've said is that I think that there are times when, as a department, if you're, you have to consider the very nature of the texts that you're teaching. Like when you're asking about, well, how will I approach that? Well then you don't approach it if it's not appropriate, so you owning, I think you have to teach things that are appropriate, that don't go against the grain of any culture or a nationality that you have that could in some ways offend them.

The researcher: Yeah.

Ruth: Or if there was something that was read there, like for example, actually there's another such case in point like *Of Mice and Men*, there's a character called Crooks and he's referred to like the words the N word is used for the kids won't say full word, it would just say N word because they are very conscious of the fact that that's there and that's out of respect for not just if they're what happened to be a black person in the classroom. It's just in general they won't say it. So they are very culturally sensitive as well. Which is interesting.

The researcher: Really interesting your answer there that's impressive. Question 17. Cultural sensitivity again in Arabic it's only recently that people are only highly intellectuals. Well educated people are using the word feminist in Arabic. We don't have a word for a misogynist or sexist.

Ruth: In Arabic.

The researcher: Yeah. We don't, we don't have an equivalent, we'd have to say it in three or four words because we didn't have one word it's not an issue.

Ruth: Right.

The researcher: Yeah. Again how much of the cultural insensitivity have you noticed in your students and you attribute that to their culture? Maybe it's missing or their culture and they won't ever get to how serious this is, how sensitive this topic is. Was there an issue or is it because you're teaching in English and everyone's speaking in English, they tend to have this empathy and that they get into a different character?

Ruth: I think they do because they have this sort of, that understanding from the time they're very young. Like both of my girls were in school from the time they're young and they are extremely open minded and very culturally sensitive about everyone that they meet for the point of actually being in Saudi to Egypt, to Dubai, to London to, you know what I mean? So I think that when the children grow up like that, I think you, you people are insensitive when they push their own views and viewpoints onto younger minds because younger minds are easily influenced. So if you're the kind of person or a teacher who wants to get across viewpoints that show stereotypical behavior, number one you'll probably act like that, speak like that and children would pick up that or parents sometimes teach that, it depends on what it is. But I think that definitely, I think in this kind of a cultural environment, children learn to understand each other.

The researcher: Yeah. Question 19, any behavior that happened inadvertently that was considered very disrespectful, your culture yet you've thought perhaps it's okay in their culture and that's why I'm going to overlook it at all?

Ruth: If something wasn't acceptable or if something was what we would expect as would be correct from behavioral perspective. I think you would have to make sure you address it. I mean obviously there are things within different

cultures that people do that you might be doing one and you might do in another. So, but then I again, I think that's about being respectful to others and to show that you can, you recognize that. And I'm not talking about necessarily bad behavior, I'm just talking about the general customs. But I think behavioral wise, I think, I don't think it makes a difference in pop culture. There's a respect that you have for, for people, for individuals. And I think that's the same in every culture. How things are done or the way things are. The relationship between father, mother, teacher, I don't know. That might vary, but in an international environment you don't really see it as much because children, there's an expectation for them. There's rules and regulations already set up for them from the time they were young to the time they're in secondary.

The researcher: Question 31. What do you think are the parents misconceptions about Western teachers? Do they think that they are too friendly or that they are not authoritative as people of their lot? So what would they say, "Please pay attention to my kid." So this,

Ruth: Well I think, I mean obviously we would be able to tell that through parental engagements, evenings and like meetings with parents. I've always had various,

The researcher: [inaudible 00:35:31] for example?

Ruth: I think you have to be a role model. I think that when parents come to see you or come to talk to you about their child, I'm sure they expect a certain amount of like a role model within the system itself, whether it's inside or outside school, I think there has to be a certain amount of that shown.

The researcher: So they wouldn't say no. It's, she's from a different part of the world. She has different, so we're not going to expect her to be, to meet our standards. So would they help us? Because for me, for example, I have to be on all the time because I'm local and I if I have, let's say a loud ringing tone, parents

would be shocked. Oh, you should be modest. And it should be, you know again, there's a lot of pressure, but for you as an outsider.

Ruth: I don't understand why you shouldn't be able to project yourself as who you are. And I think that that has to change within society. Like if you're thinking within yourself that I have to, it's not about we can, obviously modesty is important, but it's also, you have to understand who you are and how you project that to others and just being quiet and not sort of like allowing yourself to show that, because you're showing your understanding of everything. You're putting your ideas for this who you are, what you represent within the community. So why hide that and why should you be afraid or why should you think, okay, so for example, I can go and do that, but you can't do what I do because I'm from this part of the world and you're from that part of the world. I think that's so wrong.

The researcher: I know. For example, I suggested that we do a talent tonight at the university. So and because I love singing and I've thought I'm going to sing and we are going to have this whole raise awareness on breast cancer, whatever. But then they go, "You're an academic, you can't sing and teach you're a role model. You can't."

Ruth: But then you're a person.

The researcher: But teachers aren't in this part of the world. But if you are, and I think it's same in India and China teachers, they've got this aura, teachers. So again, my question is, are they more relaxed with you? They say, okay. Yeah, we'll see her one sec.

Ruth: Oh yeah, yeah. Well I think, I think that, I suppose it depends on the parents were like whoever would see you out or something like that. I mean I suppose they would see you as like, well you're just a normal human being.

The researcher: For example, how many students defend you on Facebook, are they?

Ruth: Oh no, we don't allow that. So we don't know. So parents know, students know. But sometimes, obviously if when the students have grown up and they've left school and they just want to keep in contact with you, you might put obviously on a closer like not open to everything. It might be just a closed profile in a way and your security settings for whoever. But we do not have WhatsApp. We do not have Facebook. And anyway, it's better that way because I mean the kind of things that sometimes I see the teachers here like the activities that people are involved in, that's their own private life, you have the children exposed to that is not such a good thing.

The researcher: What are the best and the worst things in teaching international students or being in a multicultural class?

Ruth: I think is probably one of the best decisions I've ever made in my life. And I don't think I would ever want to go back to just an ordinary school with one. I don't think I could say that there's anything negative about working in international schools. I think that anyone who comes here, whether they come here to teach with their children, their families, it's kind of a, it opens your mind to many different cultures, many different religions, many, many different, you know people.

The researcher: I think we're done.

Ruth: Oh wow. That's good. Because I have to pick up my grandson

## **X. Interviewee 10**

The researcher: Miss Alice, thank you very much for taking part in this study. I really appreciate it. I've got some demographic questions for you to start with. Nationality?

Alice: It's British.

The researcher: Okay. You are teaching Grade, currently?

Alice: Well, I've been teaching for five years. I wouldn't say ... I've never been graded or anything, but I got ... I can give you kind of the mark in my [inaudible 00:00:28], would that help?

The researcher: No, I thought you'd mentioned the current teaching grade. Are you teaching Grade Nine?

Alice: I see. Sorry. So sorry. Year groups. Yeah, Year Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, and Eleven.

The researcher: Right. And any other languages?

Alice: No, just English. Yeah. Well, I speak very basic French, Italian and some good German, but that's it really. Not at teaching level.

The researcher: And years in the Middle East, years of experience, that is?

Alice: It's my first three months in the Middle East. And before that I'd been teaching for four years in England.

The researcher: In England. So-

Alice: Yeah. In [inaudible 00:01:07].

The researcher: So it's only in the UAE that you're teaching.

Alice: Yes. I've been teaching in the UAE for three months, yeah.

The researcher: Right. Welcome.

Alice: Thanks.

The researcher: What are the major nationalities you have in class?

Alice: Major nationalities in class, I'd say Lebanese. It's quite a big nationality, particularly in my form group. I mean, varied really. Indian, some British, some Emirati. So huge, wide range of nationalities in the class.

The researcher: Okay. Question number one. Was it easy to get a job, and what do you think recruiters are looking for?

Alice: Yeah, I'd say it was easy, in terms of the scope of jobs available, there were lots available. I'd say it was harder to find a job that I really sort of trusted would be right for me. So I was lucky to have found GEMS WIS, because I think one of the challenges with being an international school and employing British teachers, for a British international school, is that it's very limited in terms of how much you can see them teach before you employ them. And likewise, as a prospective employee, that you can't go around the school easily, you can only trust what you see kind of on the websites and so on.

Alice: So I'd say, there were so many jobs available, but I'd say there's a more limited range of jobs which I felt would be the right fit for me. And I think, yeah, that works both ways as well, as an employer looking for a potential employee.

The researcher: As for parents and students, do they prefer natives from certain countries? Would they prefer accents?

Alice: I don't know, actually. I can't give an answer on what they've ever said to me, personally. I would imagine, and this again, this is a massive assumption really, but I would imagine they might prefer native English speakers to teach specifically English language and literature, for the fact that... Again, it really depends on, you know, the level of language proficiency you have. But at a British international school, I can see why a parent might prefer just specifically English teachers to be British themselves.

The researcher: I see.

Alice: And teach the British curriculum.

The researcher: Yeah.

Alice: It's to do with experience, I guess, the British curriculum.

The researcher: What if you had a Welsh accent or an Irish? [inaudible 00:04:02]

Alice: Oh, yeah I mean, I wouldn't count that necessarily as a non-

The researcher: Would they notice? Would they say, "Oh, I can't understand you, perhaps my child doesn't. So would you please use the [inaudible 00:04:13]"

Alice: Yeah, I don't know, I would hope not, because accents are a slight difference, but I wouldn't say they kind of impede understanding. Yeah. That would be my answer really. I would really hope they wouldn't because I can't see as a teacher from a professional perspective, I can't see why that would make any kind of difference.

The researcher: Yeah. What do you think are the main challenges for you as a native teacher, teaching students from different backgrounds?

Alice: I think language barriers really. Particularly when teaching things like figurative language, I find, I notice that the most. Metaphorical language, because-

The researcher: Can you give me some examples there?

Alice: I just had one the other day as well. So, there was a common idiom used in English. Oh, it was raining cats and dogs, which doesn't even make sense as an idiom anyway to a native speaker. But then to try and explain that to a non-native speaker, there's a real barrier there, because they've obviously never heard that saying. It's not a kind of saying that can be translated very

easily into a different language and make sense because it doesn't even make sense in British really. But that was one of, I'd say, one of the biggest challenges is kind of when you come to idiomatic or metaphorical language, that's the biggest thing.

The researcher: In one of the classes that I attended, when you said, "The color red, what does it represent?" And none of them said love.

Alice: Yeah, I know. Yeah, that's funny, isn't it?

The researcher: We, in the East, we associate it, apart from Korea and Taiwan, where you can't even use a red pen.

Alice: Gosh.

The researcher: But yeah, it can be a sign of a love. And none of your students [crosstalk 00:06:15]. Was it based on the context?

Alice: No, I mean-

The researcher: Or in general?

Alice: I agree. Yeah. I think that that was one of... that's a really good example really, of where there is that kind of barrier. And actually someone in the class, I think that day, said about its associations with China. So sometimes I come across cultural references that I don't have myself, so they kind of, particularly when talking about connotations of words and what they remind us of, there's such a range of culture references in the room, it's actually kind of hard to find common ground sometimes. So yeah, I would say, yeah, that was a barrier.

The researcher: Right. Parents, do they, in their induction day or week or parents day or parents evening, do they ask you about your nationality?

Alice: No, I haven't had any questions about nationality since the beginning of September. But again, I mean I've only been here for three months, but no, I haven't had them ask.

The researcher: What would you say are the intellectual and behavioral features of native students back home compared to non-natives in terms of being direct in language or attitude or that... Apart from the please and thank you that I understand very much.

Alice: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I think there are some, again, kind of to do with, I'd say, a student culture. It's actually not really student culture at all. It's to do with translation into their first language. And so I find sometimes that the manners in their first language are expressed differently, and it's a very polite thing to say in their first language, but when they literally translate it to the English, they lose that sense of politeness in English. So you kind of have to work with the different languages that you've got in the room and help them to understand that a literal translation doesn't necessarily mean you keep all of its original meaning and politeness, and you have to kind of add or edit it to make it fit with politeness in British language. Yeah.

The researcher: Can you give us some examples. Yeah.

Alice: You're put me on the spot here. I can't think of any specifics. I'm sure one will come to me.

Alice: Things like the British language is very obsessed, really, with kind of please and thank you. And then, I'd say, it's very natural for a native British speaker to kind of apologize, or use sorry as like a way of... not even to mean that they're sorry, but just as a way of saying, "Oh, excuse me", or "Sorry". Whereas in other languages, that's not the case. And so often with speakers of other first languages, I find that there's not a sense of apology there that I would expect from a native speaker and that can sometimes come across as rude, or even though they're not meaning to. So I'd say yeah, maybe the

lack of the word, sorry, can sometimes come across, because it's expressed differently in their language.

The researcher: So like cultural identity.

Alice: Yeah.

The researcher: Do you notice that students switch from one body language to the other whenever they are switching languages, they are different people than they are talking in their own language.

Alice: I'm sure that is the case. I haven't noticed it because there are very few instances where they have been speaking their own language for an extended period of time, enough for me to notice. So, I can't really answer that question with certainty because I haven't seen enough of them speaking their own language in front of me to make the comparison. When you see them with their friends, I think, when they're speaking their first language, particularly those who are very new to English, they're much more relaxed, understandably, because they've got a wider range of words to use to express themselves. So, that's automatically going to make them feel more relaxed and comfortable and they're with their friends as well. So, that could be a different there.

The researcher: With the IB curriculum and with these students who have these patterns, who are willingly embracing the Western culture, how much do you regret not speaking their language and understanding their culture?

Alice: Yeah. I would love to. I wish I spoke more languages really. And certainly-

The researcher: But how would it be relevant if everyone is here to-

Alice: Yeah, learn English. I see.

The researcher: Yeah.

Alice: I think more from my ability to help them to speak English. If I understand the nuances and the differences between their own language, then I'm going to be better at helping them to understand differences in meaning in British. In English. Sorry. So, I'd say, yeah, more from my own understanding. Day to day, I don't need to speak their first language in order to be able to effectively teach them. I think my teaching would be more effective if I had an understanding of their first language. A better understanding of their first language.

The researcher: Now question nine, what is your own perception of education or the Western education in this part of the world? Is it just like back in England or is it modified, do you have to take things out of it?

Alice: Yes, we do have to take some things out of the curriculum and to make sure that they're in keeping with culture in the UAE. So I'd say there are certain texts that we can't teach because they have themes in them-

The researcher: Sex education is part of the IB?

Alice: No, sorry. No, texts. So there are certain books-

The researcher: Yeah, I do understand but sex education, is it part of the IB curriculum?

Alice: I don't know, actually. I mean, I don't teach IB. I really don't know. Yeah, I mean, that would be an interesting thing to find out. But yeah, that, for example, will be hugely modified compared to how it's taught and how it's delivered in Britain, I'd say even some of the themes in books or poems or texts are not taught or taken out of the curriculum to fit with that.

Alice: And in terms of how it compares, because we're working with so many children who have English as a second language, but I find with day to day teaching, it's really much more heavily language focused than it was back home to compensate for the different languages. So I'd say that's another

difference really. And the curriculum we deliver is more vocabulary and language focus than it otherwise would be.

The researcher: Yeah. Humor.

Alice: Yeah.

The researcher: How often do you use humor. And did you have any incident where it wasn't perceived positively or that awkward moment of not getting it?

Alice: Yeah. I haven't had any incidents, luckily, where it hasn't been met with positivity. But yeah, I have to say, a lot of the times I make a joke and it kind of goes over their heads. Whether that's just because I'm not funny or it's actually because of the language barrier, I don't know. I think sarcasm is less quickly understood here. I have to work quite hard to prove that I'm being sarcastic before the penny drops, before they get that I'm being sarcastic. Whereas back home, I think, and in Britain-

The researcher: You can be [inaudible 00:14:45].

Alice: Yeah, it's a huge part of our culture really, which I wouldn't have known before coming here, wouldn't have even realized how big a part it is of our everyday humor. So, I'd say yes, sarcasm, but they're getting there, bit by bit.

The researcher: Right.

Alice: So, yeah, I mean I think they... it depends on the teacher really. And it depends on that teacher style. So I think they very quickly adapt to whatever that teacher's style is. And if that teacher uses sarcastic humor quite a lot, they'll quickly learn what it means and they kind of get on board with it then and they're more receptive towards it. But yeah, at first I think there's an initial kind of, there's a bigger barrier between when they're unsure of when I'm being funny, or when I'm being serious. So I think, yeah that's-

The researcher: And do you care to explain it often or do you say, "Well, they won't get it, it's a pun, no, it's innuendo."

Alice: Yeah. Yeah. I sometimes do explain puns quite a lot because that's really useful for teaching English literature because they're everywhere in English literature. So I will take time to explain puns.

Alice: It depends on how much time we have in the lesson and how relevant the joke was to what we're learning. And if I just think it's going to take too long to explain it, I'll move on and come back to it another time. Yeah.

The researcher: Yeah. Okay. As a native teacher living in Dubai, how are you, do you think, how are you different from your peers and other professionals?

Alice: As in-

The researcher: In terms of, yeah, in understanding culture.

Alice: So as in by comparison with non-native peers?

The researcher: But by natives who are in other professions.

Alice: So not teachers. In other... Okay. Well, that's a very good question. I think that perhaps language is less of a noticeable barrier for someone who isn't a teacher out here, because so many, I mean even the kids in Year Seven, who're speaking two other languages, the way they speak English, yes, okay, it's not as good as their first two language, but it's still so proficient and they're so good with the language, that it doesn't cause any major barriers in their understanding.

Alice: But I can imagine if you were not in teaching, you would barely even notice if somebody was speaking a different or had a different first language. It wouldn't affect your day to day life, I don't think. Because particularly in the UAE, everyone I've come across speaks good English. So, thinking of,

an example of being in business or in the corporate world, I don't think that you would notice so much that there was any kind of language barrier. Whereas when you teach, obviously you look at it in more depth. So you're more likely to notice it.

The researcher: In terms of culture, are you, do you think, as a teacher more culturally aware or do you think that you are missing out a lot because you're with this certain group of people?

Alice: I thin probably I am more culturally aware because I have to teach the kids about cultural awareness, so I have to know it myself. Because if I don't know it, I can't teach them. So I think by the very fact of being a teacher and having to set an example and having to really know lots about cultural differences and understand lots about cultural differences in order to teach the students how to approach that and how to work around that, I think, yeah, probably teachers would be more culturally aware than non-natives, than other professionals.

The researcher: Question 13. Now, in Arabic, I always give this example, we find the full moon to be the symbol of beauty. When in England, for example, it has that connotation, you say, show me your full moon and then-

Alice: Yeah, yeah, okay.

The researcher: How much do you allow language creativity in writing or expression?

Alice: I'd say that's one thing actually that is almost an advantage. If you've got another language, you're more able to be creative with vocabulary, because you've got more background knowledge about each word. There were lots of studies done about what it means to have good vocabulary knowledge and one of the things that came out of that, and it's something I read about when I was doing my PDC, but one of the things that came out of that was that better language speakers have a more... yes, have a wide range of

vocabulary, but actually have a really in depth knowledge of each word. So I find that when they have a different language, they actually have a whole different bank of references to refer to, which helps them be more creative. So their creative writing here is, I'd say stronger, really, by comparison with the same year groups that I've taught in Britain. I'd say here they're more able to be creative.

The researcher: But what are the chances that they're going to say, "Well, this is very un-English. Does that come from Arabic or your language?" Because do you... Well, class, this is a very nice example here. We have a connotation for the... We have lilies, we have roses, and daffodils. We don't find... The moon has a dark side, even. Would you say this or would you say, "Well, it's very creative. I'm not going to say anything about it."

Alice: I think I've always found with creativity as well, is I try not to, even if it's different from what we would say in English, I might give them that as an extra idea. I might say, "Well, so the moon has those connotations. However, in Britain mostly it also has these connotations", and then kind of leave them with that information and leave them to do what they want with that information. I wouldn't say... Because it's about being creative rather than about getting an answer wrong or right, I'd avoid saying, because that's not the connotation that I would think of, having British culture as my main point of reference, it's wrong, so I'd avoid saying it was wrong.

Alice: I would probably just say, "Well, in Britain we might also think this, this and this", and then leave them to do with that what they wish. But I think that's easier to do when you're being creative. Harder to do when there is a wrong or right answer, then you probably, I would have to be a bit more kind of didactic and actually say what's right or what's wrong. But if they're just writing the story, then I kind of let them write what they want, really.

The researcher: Question 14. Culturally speaking, what do you think are the missing links between you and students from all over the world?

Alice: Probably...

The researcher: So we talked about humor and language barrier. Politeness at times.

Alice: Yeah, I'd say politeness is quite a big one really, but only because it's such a culture... And actually again, and the politeness thing, it depends on the nationality of the student. I really find it massively varies and again, it's to do with the way it's expressed in their language. And a little bit sometimes I guess to do with culture, but mostly to do with the way they express politeness in their language. It's very unique to each language, I think. So I'd say, yeah, politeness, humor as well.

Alice: I'd say one of the big barriers is me not knowing how their families or their family life is, because I think, in Britain, and in fact all over the world, the way that people see their family or the way that families are made up or just the different kind of things that you might celebrate, the weekend or whatever it is, it can be so small, but I feel like that's a barrier sometimes, because I'm aware, I'm very aware that I am missing an understanding of their family lives and what they do each weekend and what they celebrate and how they spend their holidays and so on and so forth. So, I think even just really small things like that mean there's just a great distance between you and the students.

The researcher: Yeah. Yeah. [inaudible 00:24:10] Do you have a class now?

Alice: No.

The researcher: Okay, thank you.

The researcher: I know it's only been three months. Do you have any student where you struggle to have, you when you're teaching a context about, I don't know, religion, politics?

Alice: Yeah. I find I'm very wary of, more wary of how I approach any kind of a text that has a religious context. Mostly because I'm not confident enough actually in myself and what I know about that religion, and I don't want to say anything that's wrong. So I'd say any time, particularly in MEP, which is like our form time, and lots of time we talk about issues, global issues, cultural issues, religious issues. And for that, I feel like I really have to prepare and make sure I know what I'm talking about and what I'm going to say because I get nervous, really, about saying anything that would offend any of the kids, particularly if they are very devoutly religious.

Alice: I don't want to say anything wrong that they might feel, well offended by, I guess. So I think that is more difficult to manage, and culture and religion in general. Lots of the texts that I teach are old English texts and come from times where, in England, people believe in Christianity. So I have to teach quite a lot of Christian concepts in order for them to understand what that text is about. And I think with that as well, I always have to make sure that it's made clear to the class that this is a specific time in history that we're looking at. And this is a very specific set of a group of English people in 1600s who believed in these things, and by no means, ruling out any other religious beliefs or ideas in the class. So, yeah, so that's quite difficult.

The researcher: Thank you. You answered the following question as well.

Alice: That's all right.

The researcher: Question 14. Cultural insensitivity. Again, I think you touched on that.

Alice: Yeah. And teaching them as well to be really sensitive towards each other and understanding how important it is to choose words really carefully so

that they express what they actually mean, and not say something about thinking, that might really upset somebody, or make somebody feel left out, or make somebody feel inadequate in some way. And I think a lot of that comes by just choosing their words carefully. Because you know, 14, 15, they just say things, whatever comes into their head, and sometimes you have to really explain to them that that is insensitive because it's made somebody feel like this and they need you to explain why it's made somebody feel upset, before they then learn to stop doing it. And then to be careful with their words.

The researcher: Question 19. Was there any situation where a student inadvertently did something or said something that is hugely offensive in your culture?

Alice: No.

The researcher: Or other way around. Was it...

Alice: No. I mean, the only thing I can think of for me personally, that I have to be really mindful of is when I'm crossing the road, and this is completely kind of irrelevant to school, but it's kind of an example of, when I'm crossing the road, it's a habit for me to put my hand up. And I learned the other day actually that's considered as quite rude by some cultures. So just little things like that, I have to be really mindful of it. If it's a habit that I have, that actually someone else would be really offended by. I wouldn't say any of the students have offended me at all, really. I can't think of a situation where I've been offended by something. Yeah.

The researcher: Question 21. In your own opinion, what do you think are the common misconception of people living here about your culture and where you come from?

Alice: So common misconceptions about Britain?

The researcher: Yeah.

Alice: I think perhaps people might assume that we're not very private people, that we're perhaps quite public. I don't really know. That's the only thing I could really think of, other than-

The researcher: In terms of what, sorry?

Alice: I guess that we... Again, I'm kind of thinking of a typical sort of stereotypical views of British people, particularly when they go on holiday, and it's kind of that stereotype you hear about, and they're very loud and sometimes a little bit brash and public, basically. And I think that that may be sometimes is a misconception.

The researcher: But as a teacher, would they always assume that you're more friendly than someone who's Chinese or Arabic teacher? Do they find you... Sometimes maybe with teenagers they would say, "Can you give me your Instagram account?" Would they-

Alice: Oh, yeah.

The researcher: Because you just happen to be English and perhaps open minded compared to where they come from. Do you think?

Alice: Perhaps. I mean I haven't had any instances of that [crosstalk 00:30:11]. Yeah. I mean, I would always say, with regards to teaching... Yeah, I mean I haven't had any of them ask me that. But in general, even in Britain, the kids would never ask a teacher for their Instagram or anything like that, because it's kind of data protection. So there's a lot of that kind of built into British culture for different reasons, because it's part of data protection, keeping privacy settings and things like that. So I think for the kids, that's quite common knowledge that they wouldn't approach teacher and ask for their Instagram. But perhaps there's a difference in the way they respond to

you because you're British. Perhaps they... I don't know, maybe they assume that or find you perhaps slightly more open-minded. Again, yeah, I don't really know. I think it [crosstalk 00:31:17].

The researcher: Are you a role model, do you think?

Alice: I hope so.

The researcher: Because this is our perception, as East. We perceive teachers to be role models.

Alice: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I would say-

The researcher: They wouldn't expect you to go to the same gym that they do.

Alice: Yeah, no. Yeah, no, absolutely not. I think, as a teacher in general, that's kind of what I aim for every day. Oh, there's class in here now. That's why they're coming in.

The researcher: Yeah [inaudible 00:31:50].

Alice: Yeah. So, I would say, I aim to be, yeah.

The researcher: Just, quite a few questions there.

Alice: Yeah. No problem.

The researcher: Do you think that's your students, Grade Seven and Eight for example, are culturally aware that they've got this sense of culture or is there a lot of [inaudible 00:32:13] and us, our lot [inaudible 00:32:18].

Alice: I think, perhaps on the playground it would look like a very different picture. But in class they get on very well. They all mix together. There doesn't seem to be any kind of real awareness of who's from what culture or why, so I wouldn't say there's a kind of them and us at all, mainly because there's such

a diverse range of different cultures. So it's actually really hard for them to kind of isolate themselves because they're all from such a range, we're all from such a range of different cultures. Yeah. [inaudible 00:32:49].

The researcher: Last question there.

Alice: Yeah.

The researcher: Question 26. Do you find some students reluctant to embrace the English culture? Are they either very ancient or they would like to preserve their own culture, even when they are on Grade 9, 10?

Alice: No. I'd say some of them are very proud of, as they should be, of their culture and particularly their first language. But I wouldn't say that inhibits their sense of English culture too. I think they want to embrace that too. I think they kind of want to do both, really. So yeah, I wouldn't say that gets in the way. Yeah.

The researcher: Thank you very much [crosstalk 00:33:30].

Alice: [inaudible 00:33:31] No problem. Hope it was...

## **D. Lesson Observation Logs**

**School: Wellington Academy**

**Grade: 13**

**Class size: 12 mainly Asians**

**Name of instructor: Carly Noonan (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 8 Sep, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

### **Observation 1**

There is a world map in the corridor with no mark of the UAE and a very clear writing of Israel. Name of the play from 1947: a streetcat named desire. The teacher asked the students to use emojis to write a summary review of a previously discussed play. An Asian male student said that here didn't understand that plot and the teacher's reaction was surprised (oh goodness me). The teacher is very conscious of the observer, since it is the first meeting between the two. She had to tell off the students before the class and asked the observer to stay around the classroom. A student said, she is rich. the teacher corrected (wealthy) but again didn't clarify the difference between the two. A rape incident that occurred in the plot was mentioned by a female student and the teacher didn't give that enough attention and was rushing for another answer from a different student. The teacher recommended the students to attend a play that is going to be performed in Dubai. A student referred to the political practice of china, as an example of how politics and can influence a nation. The teacher however, didn't pay attention to that. The researcher feels that politics is being discussed by the students of this teacher, yet because of the teacher's conscious of the researcher, no comment was given back from the teacher to the student. Femininity and masculine figures in the plot of that story were also amongst the point that were made by a female student, yet the teacher merely reiterated what the student said without requesting further elaboration on these delicate issues. In smaller groups, the students had to discuss the play again, and masculinity was raised again by the Asian group of students. The teacher seems to be friendly and the students seem to welcome her despite being give some hard talk about their behaviorism. She sits at the edge of the students' tables during group discussions to listen from the students. The teacher is

praising the actors of the play very often. The researcher doesn't feel that there is enough attention being paid for the written word. The groups are discussing the posters of the play and how it changed through the years. The students are shown a black and white poster that of a woman in lust and enjoying being kissed in the neck. A male student commented on how women in the 1980s and 1990s were referred to a sexual objects and that perception is no longer the case. A female student from the same ethnicity agreed with him. The same female student gave the same comments on commercializing the recent posters from the 2000 by using two women dressed on their underwear only. The teachers agreed in a cold way.

**School: Wellington Academy**

**Grade: 10**

**Class size: 21 mainly Asians (4 Europeans)**

**Name of instructor: Carly Noonan (English class)**

**Date: 10 Sep, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

**Observation 2**

The teacher displayed an image of a burnt forest and asked students to relate it to a recent piece of news this week (she was, presumably, referring to the Amazon rainforest catching fire). The students had a minute to think and discuss. The students impressively exhibit a remarkable amount of knowledge about it. Students talked freely about the mentality and the stereotypes of capitalist and communist societies when talking about global warming, which is something that is hardly ever touched upon in the many schools in the UAE. The teacher talked about the importance educated and informed decision to convince others. the teacher gave a deadline for a writing task and informed the students that feedback is to be provided after the winter break. She then asked students to think of a logical justification for not having a feedback before the winter break. A student justified that teachers need time to mark. The teacher praised that and added that students need to focus on their other topics and not keep worrying about the feedback until after the winter. The teacher asked students to conduct a research on global warming and encouraged them to voice

their own opinions and talk passionately however logically. The teacher displayed three authentic tasks: writing a letter to GEMS education, writing an article for a local newspaper (Al Khaleej Times), or prepare a speech to young peers in whole-school initiative to advocate about global warming. The students were given some time to think and make a decision on the task they like to work on. The teacher clarified that if any of the students feel revolted by any of the three options, they should feel free to approach her and she is going to make little changes on the tasks. A student approached the teacher and suggested if she could talk about how American companies are responsible for many of the global issues worldwide. The teacher drew the attention of the class to this sensitive point and had cleverly justified that students should narrow their target and that from previous experience, students who were give more choices on this task reached a dead-end road. I can see how the students are highly intellectual and out spoken for their age, yet the teacher showed a great amount competence to curb any unexpected diversions made by youths that could lead towards future sensitive issues like tenting the image of America, for example. In the schools I went to, teachers used to take freely, including my history teachers, about how America is the pure evil in this world. The teacher is walking around the classroom as a helper and not the main source of information. Students are constantly on their laptops looking up names, issues mentioned by the teacher. The teacher refers to Gems initiative to encourage recycling and cut down on using plastic which is a sense of community amongst it students. Some students showed a keen interest to address current American president Trump, others felt strongly of accusing America for global warming. The teacher was courageous enough to bring the sensitive issue again to the whole class instead of dismissing these critical preferences by some students on an individual basis. Thus, the teacher this time approved on these suggestions however made a smart comment on how their speeches could be philosophical and very biased.

**School: Founders Al Barsha**

**Grade: 3**

**Class size: 32 (mainly Arabs and Asians) 4 Europeans**

**Name of instructor: Chris**

**Date: 1 October 2019**

**Duration: 55 minutes**

### **Observation 1**

The teacher high-five a brown girl for the right answer. He uses the word "spot on". The lesson is on persuasive letter and students are taught the difference between facts and opinion. The teacher asks for words to describe favorite food. One student uses "extraordinary" the teacher jokingly says "you are testing me on that, aren't you?" No one laughs. Another student gives a nice answer. the teacher says "I think should teach this class" the students laughed and cheered the student. A student uses the work "dazzling" the teacher jokingly said that "I wonder what sort of food is that" the student says "dates" the teacher gives a straight face. The student gives a different answer "dates and cookies". The teacher moves on. The students are assigned into a task to extract facts from an article and not confuse it with their opinions. There are strange portraits of the rulers of the UAE as they are all with fair skin and rosy cheeks.

**School: Founders Al Barsha**

**Grade: 3**

**Class size:**

**Name of instructor: Chris**

**Date: 3 Oct 2019**

**Duration: 55 minutes**

### **Observation 2**

The class is about spelling and grammar. The students are being tested on ten words. A student asks about the date. The teacher says: a date would help, wouldn't it? The teacher asks an Egyptian student in front of the whole class to tell their parents to buy the course book "since he has been 4 weeks in without one". The student nods and sits down. During the spelling test, the teacher

jokingly says “I can see everyone in this room from the place I am standing, why do you think these glasses for”. A student jokingly said “can you see the space”. The teacher was puzzled then said” yes I can see the space on the floor just here. The teacher had mistaken the space (sky) with the distance in the classroom. One student couldn’t reach the board to write the answer so the teacher chooses for another student and apologized for the short student say: I wasn’t being hightist sorry. It went over the heads of all students. The teacher chooses a smiley student to write the word unhappy on the board and says “go on Gabrielle you are the happies student I’ve ever had”. The class laughs in a teasingly noise. (this indicates their awareness of the British sarcasm). A student says I’m done. The teacher says “are you a chicken!” and corrected her saying “I’ve completed”. The researcher didn’t get the joke this time. Teacher asks about the word “contracting words” some students used words alike “agreements” and “business”. The teacher said “are feeling that you are plotting something here”. The class laughs. The teacher forgets was he was supposed to say and jokingly said “I’ve only walked 10 steps from there!”. The class laughs. A student approaches the teacher and the teacher says “you are like jack of the box what do you want this time”. The teacher laughs and asked to go to the toilet.

**School: Founders Al Barsha**

**Grade: 3**

**Class size: 23**

**Name of instructor: Georgia Jennings**

**Date: 8 Oct 2019**

**Duration: 55 minutes**

The teacher is asking a question and asking the students to put their hands on their fingers if they knew the answer. The teacher is teaching students about persuasive letters. Students were asked to spend a minute to learn from each other what are letters used for. The teacher asks students to put their hands on next to their ears and start thinking what persuasive letters could be used for.

Students still find it difficult to give answers. The teacher asks about the content of letters. Students reply back with: address, your sincerely, signature.

The researcher is taking these notes whilst standing. The teacher doesn't offer the researcher a chair to sit despite the four free chairs in the class. The researcher had also arrived 5 minutes early and had to wait by the door until the next period officially starts, despite being noticed by the teacher! That is very rude in Asian cultures, but the researcher thinks it is an isolated attitude that should not be generalized on the Western culture.

The teacher is discussing a high brow persuasive letter with some students. The letter is about a female citizen addressing the police officer (phrases like: I would be much obliged to have this opportunity. His judgments are temporarily clouded. "Surely you don't want to miss the perfect opportunity of "your unravel ability" will be renowned across the land" "whiles he least expects it" "A fact that you must consider that".. "the tricks he plays leave them embarrassed" "must come to a swift end". Your generosity and warm heart is greatly needed). The letter seems to be very challenging for grade 3 of non-native students. The teacher nevertheless doesn't slow down and assumes that the students. Most of students are coloring in or chatting. The teacher is focusing on 3 students sitting on the floor with her. The teacher asks students to give her some of the rhetorical questions used in the letter. The students are still distracted by things like sharpening their pens and moving around their tables. Teacher asks the students sitting on the floor about the meaning of "I appeal to you" A student replies: "does it mean please". The teacher points out "yes but that's American". After 25 minutes being assigned to highlight the arguments in the letter and the persuasive language used, the teacher reads the letter out loud for the class. The is only on Arab student replying to her answers. I think that the teacher is not aware of the challenges that a second language brings to learning a new intellectual skill like writing a persuasive letter. The class is themed with superheroes with different skin tone like a female black superwoman and an orange head hearo.

**School: Founders Al Barsha**

**Grade: 3**

**Class size: 23**

**Name of instructor: Georgia Jennings**

**Date: 10 Oct 2019**

**Duration: 55 minutes**

## **Observation 2**

The lesson is on coordinating conjunctions. The teacher asks for a definition. The class don't give the right answer. "it's the acronym used thingy" the teacher adds. The teacher asks each group to give a sentence one of the (fan boys) there seems to be a girl who has the habit of copying the answers of one of the boys in her group. The teacher notices the angry boy and asks that girl: do you think you should do that every time? The girl sheds a tear the teacher ignores her.

The teacher uses three categories grow/flourish/succeed. She asks the students how confident they are about understanding fanboys. The researcher thinks this is an excellent strategy.

The teacher says" stop acting fidgety today. I know its Thursday but you still have to learn on Thursdays.

"sit properly and choose to behave properly because I am not impressed". The teacher is very angry to the noisy class. The teacher talks to a student in from of the whole class who didn't bring his book: "this is not going to work. You parents have to do something about it" (**losing face culture is not recognized by this teacher**). There is a poster of cartoon super hero on the wall saying "I am rubbish at this. What should I do to improve".

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 11**

**Class size: 14 mainly Asians**

**Name of instructor: Amy (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 13 Oct, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

### **Observation 1**

The class is about titanic. The teacher is discussing why the maker of the ship said it is “unsinkable” a student said: it suggests that he was naive. The researcher’s answer from an Arab perspective would be: he is proud and trying to show that he is a persuasive speaker. The teacher asked the students to think of the image that comes to mind when you think of the quote: “pink and intimate...brighter and harder”. Student: they suggest love and peace. Teacher: does everyday life have “pink and intimate”? So it is unrealistic. The teacher asks what does “brighter and harder” bring to mind.

The class is all boys (Arabs and Asians) some boys are making jokes in Arabic and one Arab student over pronounced a name of his Asian classmate but in an Arabic way that the teacher misses the joke because it can’t be noticed by non-Arabs.

The teacher says hard words to a naughty Arab student who is making fun of the student that is analyzing the quote on the board. She says “if your analysis is as that brilliant then you can laugh and joke”. Those words didn’t give expected impact on that Arab student and he burst of laughter. In another scenario with another student that is native, they would have felt the embarrassment. The researcher thinks that a better way that the teacher has handled it was by saying something like: what’s so funny??

It is very clear that the boy students have no respect for the teacher. Naughty students would yell at each other, drag their chairs aggressively, yawning loudly, even sing and toss pens during group work even when the teacher is very near to their tables. The teacher doesn’t seem to mind.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 10**

**Class size: 19 mainly Asians**

**Name of instructor: Amy (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 29 Oct, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

## **Observation 2**

The teacher asks question about Shakespearian England. Male student: women didn't have rights. The teacher draws the attention to the association of women being witches at that time. There are novels of Hunger Game in the classroom. The teacher plays music from Shakespeare time with a timer while students are having a quick quiz about Macbeth. Some students ask about Scotland's current affairs with England. The teacher is very cautious with her answers and trying to sound objective. All students still have very strong accents of their countries of origin. Other students focus on witchcraft aspect of the play. (Even though Arab traditions still hold into curses and black magic in life than their peers in western cultures, yet focusing on how wizardry haunted a particular society is not really expected by Arab teachers for example. This could be due to the sensitivity towards some Arab countries that are still very much associated with witchcraft like Morocco. Moreover, black magic is still widely practiced across the Middle East). The students are having group discussions on the atmosphere of that play, instead of memorization of events; the teacher is encouraging them to relate the events to current state of affairs by pop questions around their tables. More slides about witchcraft...Teacher: people at that time didn't find it silly to believe in witches. The researcher wonders what the Asian students really think about this matter when thinking of their country homes (India). The teacher points about that witches were single women who were prosecuted just for being single. "Women were wed of from the age of 14 or 16!! Can you believe that!!" "old times!" so supernatural, religion, God, power and corruption, was a big mess at that time". The teacher relates the Gunpower Plot 1605 and how Shakespeare was supporting King James. She then mentions that bonfire celebration are related to king James and goes "remember, remember the fifth of November". The researcher thinks this is one of the best lessons that ingrates culture to language in genuine contexts.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 11**

**Class size: 14 mainly Europeans**

**Name of instructor: Claudia (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 13 Oct, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

### **Observation 1**

The class is about gender and identity in media. The teacher starts the lesson by plays a song called (Nasty Gal) (check if this a song or a marketing campaign) with semi naked women, and asks student to discuss how women are viewed that clip. Other questions she asks:

1. How women are portrayed in the video,
2. how would teen girls react to that,
3. how would teen boys in the video,
4. in what way the lyrics is affecting the video.

Students: women are being objectified. Teacher: “Yes and they have no voice in that song”. A female student pointed out that all the women were all dressed in white unlike the boys with their different dresses. A male student: it shows how men are dominating the scene and women. Students continue giving answers: it makes women feel insecure. Teacher: do you think this is a good way to grow up thinking about women? The class says no. (some male students are very embarrassed). The teacher is trying to suggest that women are free to wear whatever they want and men should never think less of them. Teacher: women are not subhuman and this is global issue at the moment that has to be changed. Pretend that you are a lawyer and I need you to defend gender inequality. The teacher allocates 6 minutes for that task. The teacher asks students to explore hidden messages in some advertisements in terms of gender inequality.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 13**

**Class size: 16 mainly Asians (4 Europeans)**

**Name of instructor: Claudia (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 5 Nov, 2019 (1 hour)**

## **Observation 2**

The lesson is not how nature can be a blessing as well as destroying (how is it dichotomous?). Student: It can be a source of inspiration of poetry and science, but it can be very dangerous. The students are asked to interpret the death of a fictional character that was introduced in a previous lesson. Students share their interpretations with the class. The teacher affirming some answers “yes all these biblical illusions ....”. Again, the researcher can see yet another example of underestimating the Bible in a factionary novel.

Teacher: what is a mechanical hound? What is its purpose in a novel? Teacher: it is like a robot and works as an agent for the government. The teaching is yelling giving instructions without please and thank you with a very affirmative voice. The teacher approaches each group and discusses how they perceive nature: Some people believe that when they die, they go back to be part of nature. Many interpretations are discussed, yet none is related to God or any religion. It is interesting the recantation that the only philosophy that most interpretations revolved around. It seems to the researcher that the class is discussing a fictional novel on a hound gaining conscious after being feed a lot of information. The teacher: It seems that the hound is being brainwashed by the society (the researcher senses a hidden message for people with certain dogmas in society). The teacher then encourages critical thinking. One student refers to religion and how we go to other worlds..that student gets interrupted by his colleague: so you are being spiritual now?!! The teacher asks other questions deviating gently from that topic. (these students could be very materialistic and worldly).

**School: Ajman Academy**

**Grade: 5**

**Class size: 16 mainly Europeans**

**Name of instructor: Nadine (English Language)**

**Date: 15 Oct, 2019 (55 minutes)**

### **Observation 1**

The class is all boys. The teacher is very friendly she welcomes the researcher and asks the boys to greet her. She then points out for the students that the research is here to observe them and her. The lesson is on using imagination to create a story. The teacher asks about the boys their dream cars. Most local students said they would like it to be black. The only European said: "I would like it neon blue". The teacher explains for the class that color. The boys discuss the prices of the luxury cars with each other. The European boy is left out. The boys are being nosy giving answers. The teacher: "I have one pair of ears. I can listen to one person at a time". The teacher asks: how many of you are happy with their bedrooms". The European student describes his room: I have a tv in my room. The teacher: aren't you a lucky boy!! The class laughs. The teacher shows a pink bedroom. None of the boys approve of it but only one points out that it is a girly bedroom. The teacher gives time for students to write about their dream bedrooms. The teacher says "in English we say, there is always a room for improvement, think of the little think things that you want to change in your room in case you're happy with it". The boys are googling images of bedrooms on their iPads and sharing it with each other". The teacher adds another prompt question on the board: how does having your dream bedroom make you feel? The teacher is walking around the class and checking sentences. She says: is there an elevator in your bedrooms. The class yell in joy. The teacher asks the boys to check their spelling online. Some students are discussing some bedroom images and referring to them being girly. The class has a UAE flag and the Emirati astronaut "Hazza al Mansoori". Many posters read "how to express ourselves" written in both English and Arabic. The teacher is talking in private to one student about being noisy and not paying attention. The teacher asked the students to thank the researcher by the end of the class.

**School: Ajman Academy**

**Grade: 5**

**Class size: 16 mainly Europeans**

**Name of instructor: Nadine (English Language)**

**Date: 22 Oct, 2019 (55 minutes)**

### **Observation 2**

Boys only class. One of the boys says loudly when noticing the researcher: you're local!!. The researcher can clearly see how prejudice is practiced in this school. The class is about introducing the story of 'iron man' cover page. An Irish student says: this is from the 90's its an old movie. The boys are not listening. The teacher asks angrily: is your listen at full force. The teacher is reading the first pages of the story and the students are asked to draw an imagination photo of him and jotting down key words. The teacher is making sounds of the iron man falling from a cliff: "crush, crush, crush". Some Arab locals react in Arabic " Alla Akbar!!" "khaiba!!" meaning "blimme". The researcher thinks that exclamation words should be taught at this stage. When the boys were told that the iron man was completely destroyed, one local student says: allahyerhama meaning: "May God have mercy on him". But the teacher ignores that.

**School: Ajman Academy**

**Grade: 5**

**Class size: 16 mainly Europeans**

**Name of instructor: Emma (English Language)**

**Date: 22 Oct, 2019 (55 minutes)**

### **Observation 1**

The teacher started with greeting the researcher in front of the class and asked the girls to greet her. The class is all girls. The class was about technologies. The majority of the class as local girls. The teacher asked about what technology is. Students give answers like: people take it for granted. Another student gives an example of iPhone being the best phone brand and how every year a new

iPhone comes out. (the students are from upper class and keep referring to brands like Lamborghini cars and things). The teachers try to keep up with them yet it is clear that they are aware of how affluent their students are. This teacher is very aware of the researcher's presence in the class, and interrupts the class to explain things to the researcher. The researcher understands the reason of that. This school get a lot of parent involvement and cultural censoring unlike the schools in Dubai. Poster of (respect the other, be responsible, stop cyber bullying) is all over the class. The researcher has noticed how the two teachers in this school relate their lessons to empathy. This might be because how these students were brought up not to appreciate the style of living they are enjoying. The teacher points out to the girls that in her country students don't get iPad devices like them. For the third time, the teacher explains for the researcher what is going on in the class. The teacher: I am giving them sometime to share what they know about technology. She is going around telling the girls how lucky they are to live in the time of technology. For the second time, she explains how she "survived without technology when she was a student". The teacher gave an example of her grandpa getting used to his old radio. She asks a question: do you do why didn't he like the new gramophone we bought him for his birthday with his favorite ? One girl answers: because he doesn't listen to music?

The researcher had two girls in separate incidents approaching her and ask where is she from. The teacher's whole class about technology evolved around music devices like the Walkman..etc. there was not mention of the revolution of technology that happened to the UAE since its founding.

**School: Ajman Academy**

**Grade: 5**

**Class size: 16 mainly Europeans**

**Name of instructor: Emma (English Language)**

**Date: 24 Oct, 2019 (55 minutes)**

**Observation 2**

The class has posters of role models from the west like Mandela, Will Smith, Richard Brandon, and the actress from Harry Potter. With pop questions of who is your role model. There is not a single Arabic figure on that board. This teacher is still very much aware of the researcher and would apologize for her in front of the class for the class misbehavior. Some girls were listening to western music in their lunch time. The teacher uses “you need to finish it this aft” instead of “this afternoon”. The class is disturbed by the teacher’s new born baby that is being kept in the connected room with the door open. The girls are talking to each other in English medium. The lesson is about the Iron Man by Ted Hughes. This is the second lesson of that story and it is on acting the story. Again, the researcher can notice the huge association between literature and acting being reinforced in these schools. Hence, actors and actresses are looked up to in the same way authors and philosopher are. This perception is not welcomed in the Arab world, were actors are perceived of profession of outsiders in societies. The debate of acting in Islam is very much alive in 21C. The girls are assigned to act the story and film it for their parents. The researcher is clearly seeing how this generation different. These girls are going to grow up appreciating actors as much as authors.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 11**

**Class size: 16 mainly Europeans**

**Name of instructor: Beth (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 29 Oct, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

**Observation 1**

The lesson is on random non-fiction readings of students’ choices and writing skills. The teacher gives five minutes to discuss what the students found interesting in their readings. If there was a God, isn’t the world supposed to be a perfect place? If I were a God, I would have designed it perfectly. But the other character in that story said: shut up! you are stupid boy”. The teacher in the class says: “oh! What a horrible thing to say to a boy”. The researcher can clearly see that the

encouragement towards not speaking of Gods in an ill manner is not considered in this class. The teacher asks another student based on his reading: do you think journalists are all honest. Students: no. they think we are stupid. (similar answers from other students).

A brain storming session on writing a letter to a friend to give some advice about hiking for the first time. Students give many tips for first time hikers. One Asian student suggested a carrying a knife. The teacher points out how frightening this could be for first time hikers and then she encouraged him to give positive thoughts and tips. Students are working in groups to work on other tips for new hikers with the word (YOLO you only live one) in the mind map of her group. One student in her group suggests to try hiking while being young before regretting it later in life (very western thinking). Another student suggesting gathering statistics and personal stories. The teacher approaches one of the groups that are very close to the researcher, to remind them of the young Emirati Astronaut HazzaAlmansori being from Dubai and encouraging youths to land in the moon! The students are not keen on that example and she gives another example. The researcher felt that the teacher is trying to flatter her by mentioning a local hero.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 7**

**Class size: 17 mainly Asians**

**Name of instructor: Beth (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 29 Oct, 2019 (55 minutes)**

### **Observation 2**

It is a reading class. Students are reading different novels of their choices and check the meaning of new words in traditional dictionaries. There are no iPad involved in this class. The teacher is asking about the idea of silence. Students are giving different answers like deep thinking and sadness. The teacher is obviously developing critical thinking habits. Students are expected to reflect on their reading. Many students are not engaged and distracted, yet the teacher is moving around the tables to explain different words that students find difficult. The teacher provokes

thinking rather than giving the direct meaning of words. What does...why do you think... how do you feel when... Students have to think and make good guesses of the meaning. The researcher finds it as a big advantage that the teacher doesn't speak the language of her students. European students are more engaged and focused in this task. Asians are talking to each other. The teacher is sharing personal experience with her being confused with emails that have informal words like (you'll, hes, shes) and how does she react to it a native teacher. It is clearly very important on drawing the learners' attention to how serious little mistakes can be, as well as the impression that convey. Students are being aware of formal and informal language. Some students use American words the teacher says with an upsetting voice: That's quite American actually. We British don't use it (example you'll being American). The researcher thinks that a uniformed novel would be more beneficial for this class. The teacher spells Motorised and says: "I am British. I don't like z". A student uses an Ipad to read the chosen novel. The teacher says: I wish to see you with a real book one day. One student asks about the word "inept" the teacher laughs and says: oh that is going to be fun to talk about. The teacher asks the student to share the sentence in which that student found it. The student was resultant and the teacher was very friendly and flexible about it and asked questions that would provoke them guessing the meaning. She uses her laptop to check the etymology of that word and gives the antonym of the word and explains the prefix. The students guessed it. However non were curious to check the direct meaning of the word in their first language.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 13**

**Class size: 13 students**

**Name of instructor: Ruth (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 29 Oct, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

**Observation 1**

The teacher is very cautious of the researcher's presence. The teacher is practicing recalling literally terminologies like: Assonance, Litotes, Diatribe, Polysyndeton. The teacher encouraged students to search for the definitions and discuss them in class. The students, hence, are not under the pressure of memorizing the terms, but rather should focus on the functions of the targeted literary devices. Some students were not clear about the functions of some tool, so they have a classmate to explain it for them and the whole class. The researcher can notice that students are very relaxed to express how confusing some points are and very happy to explain points to each other openly in front of the whole class. The teacher acts as a supervisor. (Ethical problems regarding war) was the writing assignment picked for students to discuss in class. The researcher can see how eye openers teachers are trying to be with world affairs and imbed them in their language classes. The Europeans were not keen in sharing their thoughts about the topic on war. Arab, Asian, and African found it very uncomfortable to share any thoughts on that topic.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 11**

**Class size: 20 mainly Asians (7 Europeans)**

**Name of instructor: Ruth (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 5 Nov, 2019 (1:30 hours)**

### **Observation 2**

Reading session for 7 minutes. This teacher seems reluctant to welcome the researcher to a second observation. This silent reading session is expected to be followed by an acting performance by students. The teacher is explaining the crime thriller genre. The class is very dull. The teacher does all the talking no room for participation. The Europeans are distributed among the tables yet none of the six students taking part in the group discussion; it is only Asian joking, talking, and explaining points to each other. The Europeans are working independently on the task. Three Europeans on one table having their own jokes.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 11**

**Class size: 16 mainly Asians**

**Name of instructor: Alice (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 31 Oct, 2019 (55 minutes)**

### **Observation 1**

The lesson is about Attitudes of ancient Romans and Greeks towards suicide. The teacher points out how suicide is illegal but not a crime against God, as opposed to the religious English of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The teacher” I would say that suicide is a crime, but just a sad life that needed to end”. One Asian raises the point of the punishment by God and being sent to Hell. The teacher does not comment and changes the subject to: in what way did Romans perceived suicide compared to Elizabethan England. In Roman time the soldiers were considered brave to take their lives and it was an honorable thing to do. The teacher allocates a task of writing a letter as Mary Queen of Scots to Elizabeth I while being locked up in the tower. The researcher is impressed by how this teacher created a very authentic context to get the students to write a genuine persuasive letter.

**School: Wellington International**

**Grade: 7**

**Class size: 19 mainly Asians**

**Name of instructor: Alice (English Language and Literature)**

**Date: 31 Oct, 2019 (55 minutes)**

### **Observation 2**

Today is Haloween. Young students (Grades1-5 were in costumes only).

Two students were talking over each to the teacher. The teacher pointed out how very rude this habit is. The teacher talks about the connotations of the color red, as part of a previous lesson on rhetoric tools in literature. The students are asked to practice Slam poetry which they seem to have written in a previous lesson. The teacher is supporting the first student by expressing our brave he must be the first poet. His poem was about trees and how sorry he feels for what's happening in the environment. The second student is very reluctant to share her poem. The teacher allows her to read it from her place instead of the first class. The second student' poem was about apples and thanking that fruit for giving her the energy that she needs for the day. The teacher praises that poem and encourages students to thank. The third student's poem was on the evolution of man and how he reached the moon. The researcher feels the huge sense of pride in mankind with no reference to the maker of this world and God blessed humanity with knowledge. Artemis Fowl is a novel that the teacher introduces to the students. She starts by reading the author's name and mention out that Ian is an Irish name. She then reads the end cover of that novel. The students are following the story with their rulers. In many occasions, the teacher would ask students to give the various common pronunciations whenever they come across them; like: vitamin, tissue, ..etc. The teacher reads the first few pages out loud for the class.