English for Academic Purposes – the Cinderella of Higher Education

Socialisation Structures

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly internationalised higher education (HE) context, this thesis challenges the traditional concept of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) centres as merely language support units for international students. International students have increasingly become important stakeholders in higher education institutes (HEIs) especially those wishing to promote a global profile and increase international student recruitment. In response, many institutions now have EAP or English language units to support international students with language problems. Such an intervention, however, denies the complexity of transitioning into higher education for these students and trivialises the modern role of EAP. Moreover, partnerships between private providers of EAP programmes and universities pose a threat to in-house English language centres and risk deprofessionalising university EAP staff. This raises questions about the real value of today's EAP centres, the purposes they serve and how best to remain organic in their support of international students. Current EAP research has neither sufficiently focused on the experiences of former EAP students nor considered its wider impact on their socialisation, which would highlight its changing purpose in a dynamic HE environment. To close this gap, this thesis investigates the socialisation experiences of 13 international students to understand their post-EAP experiences and how their EAP education affected their socialisation. Data were collected through interviews with students, subject lecturers, and EAP tutors and analysed using socialisation theories. A complex picture of students' socialisation experiences emerges indicating that EAP tuition is more than just a linguistic intervention for these students. Despite some inconsistencies between students' EAP education and academic degree experiences, the former was perceived as a valuable pedagogical intervention that eased students' academic transitions. Undertaking an EAP course allowed students to anticipate university expectations, be familiar with assessment tasks and campus settings. The study also revealed the importance of physical and virtual spaces to students'

socialisation experiences. However, to remain effective, in-house EAP provision must adopt an iterative approach to evaluating practice and engage in ongoing dialogues with both subject lecturers and former students. Such dialogues need to be facilitated by an institutional top-down approach to students' socialisation. Doing so would help reconceptualise such EAP centres as fundamental socialisation structures supporting international student retention and very possibly, institutional internationalisation strategies.

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Publications and Conference Papers derived from this thesis

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms Used

AL	Academic Literacy
BALEAP	The British Association of Lecturers in EAP
CEAP	Critical English for Academic Purposes
CL	Corpus Linguistics
CLAS	Culture, Language and Area Studies
CoP	Communities of Practice
DC	Discourse Communities
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutes
IFP	International Foundation Programmes
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
NA	Needs Analysis
NOOC	Nottingham Open Online Courses
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIM	Professional Issues Meetings
SELMOUS	Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students
TEAP	Teaching English for Academic Purposes
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Setting the context

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) centres or English language units in universities have become a standard feature worldwide, particularly in English-speaking countries like the UK and the USA. According to the *BALEAP*[1] website, based on institutional membership, it can be deduced that there are over 100 institutions, mainly in the UK, with EAP units. This figure does not include non-member universities with EAP units. Both anecdotal evidence and EAP literature suggest the existence of similar language support centres more globally in other Anglophone and non-Anglophone contexts (Basturkmen, 2012; Fox et al, 2014; Hyland & Shaw, 2016). These language centres are primarily responsible for developing the English language skills of a significant number of international students because linguistic competence affects academic success (Phakiti et al, 2013; Hyland, 2018). Unsurprisingly, such responsibility was initially entrusted to English language teaching (ELT) professionals; over time, some of these professionals have specialised to become EAP teachers working mainly at tertiary level and sometimes collaborating with academics in other disciplines to develop the communicative competence of international students (although EAP courses can be offered to both home and international students in some ESL contexts). What is surprising, however, are the recent alliances entered into by universities in the UK and elsewhere with private providers whereby in-house EAP programmes have been outsourced, often for financial reasons (Fulcher, 2009; Fox et al, 2014). Private providers situated outside the academic community are often linked to casual contracts, reduced research opportunities and less qualified staff. This raises questions about the standards of such EAP courses (Shepherd, 2007), but more so, such alliances risk deprofessionalising EAP practitioners (Ansell,

[1] formerly The British Association of Lecturers in EAP (Jordan, 2002)

2008; Fox et al, 2014; Hyland, 2018). My host institution recently outsourced its EAP Foundation Programme to a private provider after 12 years of successful in-house provision in a bid to secure higher student numbers. Amidst concerns of this trend metastasising, one wonders what then are the purposes of university English language centres today and whose interests do they really serve? This study aims to address such questions around in-house EAP provision and better understand not only its impact on international students, but also its operational opportunities and challenges in a changing HE context. However, to address these questions, it is necessary to understand key trends in the wider, ever-changing higher education (HE) context.

There have been three major concurrent shifts across the global HE context that have had serious implications for institutions. These shifts include the internationalisation of the HE landscape, the rise of neoliberal universities and the role of English as the academic lingua franca. Whilst international students have always been a common feature of universities, especially in Kachru's (1985) inner circle countries like the US and the UK, international student mobility has today become more pronounced with universities increasingly concerned about their international profile. Many universities have internationalisation strategies in place to improve their global image and recruit talented international staff to secure further scientific and technological advancement (Knight, 2004; Choudaha, 2017; Knight, 2018). There has also been an exponential increase in international student numbers; the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates there were five million international students worldwide in 2016, showing an almost threefold increase since 1999 (OECD, 2018a). Although the presence of international students does raise the global profile of a university and serves as a driving force of internationalisation (Chen, 2008), it does not, in and of itself, constitute an internationalised institution. Internationalisation approaches have also been criticised for being theoretical and at policy level (Sanderson, 2011). The lack of active involvement of

academics and administrative staff in the development of internationalisation has also been noted (Luxon & Peelo, 2009; Hunter et al, 2018). Knight (2004) rightly stresses that internationalisation should not be a theoretical concept or recruitment strategy although it has been argued that internationalisation and marketing concepts have overlapped (Chen, 2008). Updating her 1997 definition of internationalisation, Knight (2003) emphasises it is a process that must be embedded into programmes in order to remain central. Hence, higher education institutions (HEIs) need to ensure that in their promotion of an international education they are not only employing the rhetoric of internationalisation to secure student numbers, but they are also offering good quality education, especially for their international students who are symbolic of their global profile. This would mean reviewing educational practices and policies to accommodate the increased influx of students from abroad as well as training staff to engage with and teach such diverse cohorts (Jenkins, 2014; Tran & Le, 2018; Hunter et al, 2018). Such alterations include adjusting teaching, curricula, and assessment practices (Ryan, 2005; Brown & Jones, 2007; Robson, 2011a) as well as organisational structures to ensure that these students not only enrol but are also able to complete their education.

The second major shift, also related to student recruitment, is the growing neoliberal approach to managing universities. Hadley (2015: 6) describes the neoliberal university as "a self-interested, entrepreneurial organization offering recursive educational experiences and research services for paying clients". He also adds that within that neoliberal outlook "the invisible hand of the consumer serves as the driver of natural selection to sensibly guide the economic system" (p. 5). In other words, many modern universities today operate like businesses where economic interests and quantitative performance significantly influence decision-making processes. In many respects, HE has come to resemble a capitalist or economic market (Marginson, 2011) with the privatisation of sectors now more common. The neoliberal approach to university management has been exacerbated by the massification of HE as noticeably more students are entering university or

studying abroad to improve career prospects and attain social mobility (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013; OECD, 2018a; Choudaha, 2017). Universities have adopted a marketing approach (Chen, 2008) that positions students as fee-paying clients. With a producer/consumer mindset (Marginson, 2011), HEIs have an avid interest in their student clientele, especially international students since they pay substantially more than their domestic counterparts. Consequently, universities are purposefully targeting these students, which can be disquieting if institutional financial gain is the primary motivation for recruitment. Universities must ensure that once these students are recruited, there are adequate structures in place to support and maximise their experiences.

A third shift is the assumption of English language as today's lingua franca, and more so, the academic lingua franca of the 21st century (Coleman, 2006; Lawton et al, 2013: Jenkins, 2014). Globally, there are more learners of English than any other language with approximately 1.4 million learners (International Association of Language Centres, 2016), and employment prospects in different contexts have been linked to English language skills (Kadenge & Nkomo, 2011; Thang & Wongsurat, 2016; Zainuddin et al, 2019). Consequently, this positions HEIs in English speaking countries advantageously but poses a competitive disadvantage to non-Anglophone HEIs seeking international recognition. English-speaking destinations are documented as being most attractive to international students (OECD, 2017; 2018a). Countries such as the UK and the USA in particular, which have long been host nations (Altbach, 1991), are still perceived to be among the best in the world (Lawton et al, 2013; Ahmad, & Buchanan, 2017; Kuyok, 2018), and students seek American or British education as a symbolic investment (Lee and Kim, 2010). Such countries attract an influx of international students; on average, the UK international student population is much higher than other OECD countries (OECD, 2018b) attracting 14% compared to 4% and 36% compared to 12% at Bachelor's and Master's levels respectively. At doctoral level, 43% of UK students are from abroad (*ibid*). Similarly, the USA alone has

hosted approximately a 1 million international students in the past three years (Institute of International Education, 2018); UNESCO (2019) presents a similar figure of 971,417 international students in the USA. However, Western Anglophone countries cannot assume that they will always hold this advantage because of recruitment trends in non-Anglophone and non-Western countries.

HEIs in non-Anglophone as well as non-Western countries are also intensifying their recruitment of international students. Manifestations of this intensification are seen in the provision of English-medium instruction (EMI) programmes in non-English speaking countries as well as more financially attractive options in the so-called peripheral nations (Altbach, 1991). To counter their disadvantage, universities in non-English speaking countries are increasingly using English as the language of teaching and research (OECD, 2018a; Sandstrom, 2019). One strategy is to offer more EMI programmes to attract students, especially fee-paying international students. This trend is reported to have started as early as the 1950s in some countries like the Netherlands, but became more widespread in Europe at the end of the twentieth century (Coleman, 2006; Wächter, 2008; Maiworm and Wächter, 2014). Although there has been some resistance to this trend in some contexts (Sandstrom, 2019), it is still growing both in and outside Europe. Today, countries like Turkey, China and Thailand are offering English-medium education in some disciplines (Kırkgöz, 2009; Breeze & Moore, 2017; Seneviratne, 2018). Other developing nations have amplified efforts to recruit international students from other peripheral countries by offering more affordable education and waivers for international students who cannot pay for tertiary education in the West (Matthews, 2016). India's new international student recruitment scheme intends to target students from other developing nations to improve its international reputation and become a regional hub (Bothwell, 2018). China is also targeting students from Africa through scholarships (Bodomo, 2014; Breeze & Moore, 2017; Nakkazi, 2018). Besides, locational proximity is becoming an influential

factor for international students (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2017; Griffith, 2017; OECD, 2017). All these new trends are disrupting the unidirectional flow of students migrating from peripheral nations to traditional host nations.

Moreover, to increase access to HE, many providers have sought to expand by setting up international branch campuses (IBCs) or partnerships in various developing countries blurring the traditional distinction between host countries and peripheral nations since the latter have now become the host for many international campuses of Western HEIs. More recently, there has also been a rise in international educational hubs or *knowledge cities* (Lane and Kinser, 2014) in countries such as the UAE, Malaysia, Singapore, and China, which is reported to have the highest number of IBCs (Garrett et al, 2016 in Garrett, 2018). These countries position themselves as educational hubs by allowing institutions from mainly traditional host countries to open campuses in their cities, thereby providing international education. An example of this is South Korea's Incheon Global Campus[2] (IGC) where foreign universities independently provide programmes but share facilities like libraries, creating a collaborative university platform (Schiller, 2015). With continued success, this initiative could become the future model of HE provision, especially with more students seeking a global education closer to or at home (Matthews, 2016; Choudaha, 2017). Consequently, international student mobility is beginning to adopt a multidirectional flow that no longer advantages traditional host nations.

Whilst these changes may not pose an immediate threat to more established HE providers in the English-speaking West, they are gaining significant momentum and escalating the competition among global HE providers. This inevitably upsets the flow of international student mobility to Western Anglophone countries.

[2] http://www.igc.orkr/

1.2 Implications of Global Trends

For HEIs, these three shifts not only signal an intensification of competition, but also an increasingly multifactorial and less predictable student mobility landscape. Universities in Western English-speaking countries need to be even more purposeful in their internationalisation and student retention strategies to ensure that they do not lose that competitive advantage they may have previously taken for granted. This is now more crucial since international student recruitment flow, although still growing, has lost some of its momentum (OECD, 2017; Altbach & Wit, 2018) with countries like the UK reporting noticeably slower growth (Griffith, 2017). There is also a need to diversify their operational structures, programmes and policies to cater for the different needs of their international associates. Although many foreign students currently stem from China (Griffith, 2017), institutions are facing significantly more diverse student cohorts which means new practical challenges in terms of course provision. Essentially, universities cannot operate the way they have always done as they now have to cater for the disparate needs of their varied student cohorts with the most obvious being the language and cultural difficulties that some international students have (Heng, 2016; Jones, 2017). One way of doing so is for these HEIs to focus on maximizing the success and retention rates of their international students by providing effective socialisation mechanisms for students who do choose to study abroad.

Socialisation theories, based primarily on child integration processes into society, deal with the process of adaptation of newcomers into a community (Brim, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987). Academic socialisation, more specifically, focuses on how students become participating members of their academic communities. It is argued that adult socialisation is necessary due to changing life situations that require adjustment in behaviours, values and attitudes (Brim, 1966; Mortimer & Simmons, 1978; Duff, 2008a). The mobility of international students symbolises changing situations for institutions and students necessitating a socialisation period for the latter to adapt to their

new roles abroad. International students often face problems with socialising into their new environment because they do not have the linguistic or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) to ensure a smooth adaptation. These linguistic and cultural capitals refer to the language skills and cultural knowledge needed to participate in their new environment; lack of such capitals further complexifies socialisation experiences, making a combination of academic and language socialisation necessary for some students.

To help international students adapt to their environment, many universities have opened EAP units with the explicit purpose of supporting students' acquisition of the academic lingua franca - their linguistic socialisation. However, over the past five decades, EAP practice has developed significantly by expanding its role from language support to a more comprehensive preparation for academic life. This development has been triggered by the changing demands of student cohorts as well as the growing expertise and professionalisation of EAP practitioners (Ding & Bruce, 2017; Hyland, 2018). The result is a new EAP practice that is more about achieving the academic and communicative competence to succeed at tertiary level (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). This competence is achieved by focusing more on academic discourse(s), learner autonomy, and critical thinking, meaning EAP practitioners have come to see themselves as English language educators enabling students' transition to university.

Unfortunately, the host institutions of EAP centres still hold an instrumental view of EAP units. Many UK universities view their EAP units as providing adjunct support that focuses only on the teaching of English language (Basturkmen, 2012; MacDonald, 2016; Ding & Bruce, 2017) and as simply another means for securing international student numbers. Such views are reinforced by the large number of students that enrol on EAP summer courses and usually secure places on degree programmes. Because universities gain substantial financial benefits from these students, EAP units are increasingly seen as *cash cows* (Hadley, 2015; Charles & Pecorari, 2016) that help balance financial deficits. This perception is exacerbated by the

promises of EAP private providers to bolster international student numbers (Ansell, 2008). There is little guarantee that the outsourcing of EAP programmes to private providers, who focus more on student numbers than on staff expertise, will not displace in-house EAP centres, jeopardising the careers of many EAP academics and the experiences of students.

The main implication of this new trend of outsourcing for EAP practitioners is that it is necessary to demonstrate the value of in-house EAP structures and their effectiveness in preparing international students for academic success, which consequently affects student retention rates. This would help to shift institutional conceptions of EAP teaching as remedial language support and simply another lucrative pathway for recruiting international students. Where EAP practitioners can articulate how EAP education plays an integral role in the socialisation of a significant number of students and helps to maximise the international student experience, EAP programmes will be better understood, more secure and can even inform institutional pedagogic strategies on internationalisation.

However, there is relatively little documented research on how former EAP students have fared on their degree courses, particularly on how EAP is contributing to the successful transition and socialisation of international students into their new environments. This dearth raises a number of questions regarding EAP centres as socialisation structures. Firstly, do EAP programmes effectively prepare international students for diverse and ever-changing academic communities? Secondly, how can the EAP community at this point in its development better understand students' socialisation processes into their different academic communities and use this to further develop their programmes? Moreover, what role do students play in this process? Finally, in what ways can EAP practitioners evidence the significance of their non-financial impact in neoliberal HE institutions and attain security from being outsourced to private providers?

These are critical questions that need answering not only to establish the value of EAP but also to adopt an iterative evaluation process which ensures

EAP remains effectively organic. The answers will also help reconceptualise the pedagogical purposes of EAP centres in universities today, especially those wishing to advance robust international strategies. In response to these questions, this thesis documents the perceptions of post-EAP Foundation students' of their EAP education in relation to their first-year experiences. It commences with a review of the relevant EAP literature to illuminate a lacuna in understanding the post-EAP experiences of students, and then presents the research questions that directed this investigation. From there, the logic of using socialisation theories as a conceptual framework is discussed in chapter three, and is followed by the methodology of the investigation in chapter four. The fifth and sixth chapters discuss the main findings of the research in terms of students' socialisation experiences and EAP impact respectively. Finally, the overall implications and contributions of this thesis are presented in the final chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief history of EAP development by first providing an overview of pedagogical issues and tensions that accompany EAP provision before identifying common approaches to practice. It then reviews a number of selected studies that have attempted to understand EAP impact. The chapter concludes by highlighting an ongoing need to articulate EAP influence more widely using a socialisation perspective; the focus and justification of this study are presented.

2.2 EAP: a brief history

EAP has its roots in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which in turn is derived from the broader English Language Teaching (ELT) context. EAP is geared towards learners in formal education systems (Jordan, 1997) unlike other ESP courses that target a variety of professional and vocational contexts (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Even though EAP activities seemed more obvious in the 1970s when a group of UK EAP tutors formed a working party that became SELMOUS[3] and is now known as *BALEAP*[4], EAP practices occur in diverse educational contexts offering a range of English language courses (Jordan, 1997). Dudley-Evans & St John (1998:35) identify four possible scenarios of such programmes; they include students:

[3] Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students
[4] formerly The British Association of Lecturers in EAP (Jordan, 2002)

1) studying abroad in English speaking countries e.g. the UK

2) studying in their home countries where English is the official language but students have a different L1 e.g. Zimbabwe.

3) studying in their home country where English is used to teach some subjects at university e.g. Jordan

4) studying in their home country where English is an auxiliary language and classes are taught in the L1 e.g. Brazil

EAP is mainly taught at tertiary level although other educational contexts like schools can offer similar programmes (Hamp-Lyons, 2011). EAP courses can be classified further into insessional, presessional and Foundation programmes. Insessional programmes are usually free EAP classes offered during students' degree programmes and often do not include any assessment. The last two, which are the most common EAP programmes offered in the UK, occur before students embark on their degree programmes; these are full-time programmes which are considered more 'high-stakes' as students pay for these programmes and are assessed to gauge their readiness for academic studies. In the UK, International Foundation programmes (IFPs) are further distinguished from other EAP programmes because they are year-long or nine-month programmes whose primary focus is preparing international students for undergraduate study in the UK. Learners are often young adults between 18 and 20 years who are transitioning for the first time into university with IELTS scores of approximately 5 or 5.5 (but which can be lower). IFPs tend to have an ESAP[5] approach offering language, study skills and content input through multiple pathways like a Science or Business International Foundation Programme. They can be offered either independently by an EAP unit or more often, in conjunction with a specific School (Medicine or Engineering) and, subject to successful completion, include guaranteed progression into year one of students' degree programmes. This thesis deals with EAP programmes

[5] English for Specific Academic Purposes

belonging to Dudley-Evans & St John's (1998) first classification above and its data is derived from a group of Foundation students.

2.3 Tensions & Criticisms of EAP Provision

2.3.1 Understanding EAP Practice

Even though the principal intention of EAP programmes is to prepare and support international students at tertiary level, the definition and provision of EAP is not unproblematic as there are numerous tensions. For new teachers coming into TEAP (teaching EAP), definitions of EAP insufficiently distinguish it from general ELT (Campion, 2016). This is because many of the definitions are still linked to English-teaching Information Centre's (ETIC) 1975 definition below and training in TEAP is inadequate (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; 2011). Whilst it is recognised that EAP began its disciplinary existence as English language support to international students (Jordan, 1997), its roles have become more comprehensive in addressing the challenges of diverse student populations (Hyland, 2018). As a result, interpretations of EAP's role have diverged from definitions of EAP in its infancy, which no longer fit. Early definitions of EAP's role were limited to developing the language, communicative and study skills of international students (see below). In failing to articulate the more expansive role of EAP today, Campion (2016) reasons that definitions in much of the literature are unhelpful to newcomers.

> *EAP is concerned with those communication skills in English which are required for study purposes (ETIC, 1975 in Jordan, 1997).*
>
> *{EAP is } the branch of ESP that provides teaching and other forms of language support for ESOL students completing academic studies in English medium institutions of learning" (Long & Richards, 2001: xiii).*
>
> *{EAP is} the teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners to study, conduct research or teach in that language (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001: 8).*

One can argue that such definitions also trivialise EAP's impact and inadvertently deny it credibility for its wider role. EAP tutors today are engaged in a varied number of activities inside and outside the classroom, which complexifies their role and identities (Sharpling, 2002; Hyland & Shaw, 2016; Ding & Campion, 2016). These include teaching, materials

development, linguistic analysis, researching subject-specific discourses, pastoral support, liaising with subject departments where possible, and sometimes managing or coordinating courses (Jordan, 1997; Belcher, 2006; Charles & Pecorari, 2016). These diverse roles are poorly reflected in definitions of EAP that are limited to language and study skills development.

A more apt description of EAP can be found in Bruce (2011) who states EAP courses "either prepare non-native speaker students for English medium academic study or support such students who are already taking courses in universities or some other branch of higher education" (p. 3). The terms *prepare* and *support* are better indicators of EAP's current comprehensive role and carry implications for its continued expansion that were missing in previous definitions. Yet Turner (1999) has been critical of the word *support* as it is associated with "a cinderella class . . . to mop up the problems of academic literacy" (p. 64). More fitting descriptions of EAP's aspirations are those that include preparing students for their academic experience by developing linguistic abilities and cultural knowledge associated with academia. Furthermore, the word *prepare* connotates readiness and ability, and *being prepared* can be associated with being empowered and the ability to be autonomous. Therefore, *prepare* suggests there is a fundamental value for students taking EAP courses to support their academic experiences. Previously, this preparation was evaluated mainly in terms of linguistic ability and acquisition of general study skills. Such perceptions have been overturned by the realisation that language competence alone is not predictive of academic performance (Jones, 2017; Wingate, 2017). The notion of preparing students for university is now conceived more extensively than at EAP's inception; therefore, EAP provision has expanded to include a host of competencies of which linguistic competence is only a part - albeit a significant one.

2.3.2 Relevance and Authenticity

Another tension that persists in the field is which courses best prepare students for their academic studies. For students to "operate effectively in

the disciplines" (de Chazal, 2014:5), EAP programmes have to be relevant and authentic in content and approach. This raises two questions: which English is relevant?; and how should it be taught to help students operationalise the language learnt? One way EAP provision attempts to ensure relevance and authenticity is by offering ESAP courses like Business or Engineering EAP courses focusing on discipline-specific texts and tasks. ESAP advocates believe EAP should serve a disciplinary agenda (Basturkmen, 2012; Thompson et al, 2013; Wingate, 2016) because of the heterogeneity of the academic terrain, and because research indicates that discipline-specific language courses are more effective (Song, 2006; Baik & Greig, 2009; Cargill, O'Connor and Li, 2012; Atai and Fatahi-Majd, 2014; Fenton-Smith et al, 2018). Hyland (2002a) argues that, as different subjects have their own unique practices, "{EAP} learning should take place within these varieties (p. 389). It is further claimed that the specificity of EAP courses is necessary, for without it EAP could be just another general language course and abandoned as a distinct enterprise with a specific purpose (Locket, 1999; Hyland, 2002a).

Yet general EAP courses (EGAP) are predominantly offered. Perhaps this is because for institutions they remain cost-effective. For some practitioners, however, these courses can still facilitate international students' transition into academe. This is because, despite the heterogeneity that exists across departments, there are generic linguistic features and competencies that exist across disciplines (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Spack, 1988; Jordan, 1997; de Chazal 2014). EGAP courses could be used to develop academic metalanguage; for example, what is meant by *discuss*, *analyse, criticality* and *argument*; such terms are used by lecturers, but not readily comprehended by students (Lea & Street, 1998; Ryan, 2005; Nicol, 2010; Wingate, 2012). Moreover, it has been reasoned that EAP practitioners are often not disciplinary experts (Spack, 1988; Feak, 2011). Feak (2011) places the onus on students to engage with their disciplines and identify the disciplinary-specific demands although she recognises the difficulty of belonging to multiple disciplines. It has also been contended that a general and wide-angled

approach is more aligned to education and has more long-lasting impact on students' behaviours than a narrow-approach akin to training and which is superficial in its effect (Williams 1978; Widdowson, 1983).

Furthermore, general linguistic proficiency is necessary to engage in academic circles because language impacts on academic performance (McLean & Ransom, 2005; Bretag, 2007). Students who cannot use the standard written or spoken discourses risk been marginalised and seen as unable to adapt to university standards (Preece & Martin, 2009). What remains problematic, therefore, for EAP practitioners is how to develop language proficiency without trivialising its practice to mere linguistic training (Widdowson, 1983; Turner, 1999) and how to maintain relevance and authenticity without exaggerating the generalisability of linguistic and communicative patterns across disciplines (Dudley-Evans, 1993). Whilst both ESAP and EGAP courses offer valuable opportunities for international students, it is necessary to continuously understand the experiences of former students to inform such debates, especially since there are numerous socio-cultural factors that can impact transition (Heng, 2016; Jones, 2017).

2.3.3 The Ostrich Stance

A third tension exists in EAP's apolitical approach in a politically infused context. EAP has been criticised, especially in the 1990s, for propagating a conformist approach and teaching students to adhere to dominant discourse practices (Pennycook, 2001; Harwood and Hadley, 2004). It is advocated that to truly prepare students for academic success, EAP input must empower students to become more agentive so they can make informed choices about their learning experience (Benesch, 2001). Because EAP has been commonly perceived as a pragmatic discipline (Hamp-Lyons, 2011), the political implications of its role or the location of its pedagogy is underestimated (Pennycook, 1999). HE contexts and the role of English as the academic lingua franca are laden with political issues and inequality in terms of linguistic standards and course status (Phillipson, 1992; Popham, 1996; Preece & Martin, 2009; Wingate, 2017), and EAP can be seen to be complicit

in the role of promoting English as the new academic language by providing favourable conditions (Hyland, 2018). In systematically supporting students and scholars needing English, it helps to displace other languages in the academic milieu and has been described as a "Tyrannosaurus Rex, gobbling up the other denizens of the academic linguistic grazing grounds" (Swales, 1997:374). The wider contexts in which EAP is located influence the profession, suggesting more reflection is needed on if and how it is endorsing the status quo (Benesch, 1993).

However, for a variety of reasons, this call for critical EAP (CEAP) was not universally welcomed and seen to be 'voices on the margins' (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002:10). Not many tutors seem aligned to critical pedagogies, on which CEAP is largely based, and some may perceive the growth of English as a lingua franca as a neutral development (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Swales 1997). Also, interest in critical pedagogy could have been missing because it is unclear how theoretical notions are translated into classroom practice (Usher and Edwards, 1994; Allison, 1996; Harwood & Hadley, 2004; Vandermensbrugghe, 2004) despite Benesch highlighting some practical examples of CEAP unfolding in the classroom (1996, 1999). Another reason for the resistance to CEAP could be the intensive nature of courses. Where international students are expected to make significant progress over a short period, time is better allocated to developing institutional awareness and ensuring that students are conversant with departmental discourse norms, especially where these are non-negotiable (Canagarajah, 1999).

Yet EAP's pragmatism may inadvertently be endorsing new commercial trends in HEIs by unquestioningly providing an increasing number of courses for international students who have become the economic lifeblood of universities (Hyland, 2018). Indeed, there have been calls for more reflection (Sharpling, 2002; Charles & Pecorari, 2016) and practitioner awareness of the commercial priorities of universities (Ding & Bruce, 2017), especially in contexts where students are perceived as customers (Hyland, 2018) and

where the number of students undertaking EAP classes determines the quality of the course (Hadley, 2015). EAP's pragmatic pedagogy can undermine its goal to prepare, and consequently empower, international students for today's academe.

2.4 Approaches and Responses to Pedagogical Issues

EAP's intention to effectively prepare students for their academic experience suggests that practitioners have to be conversant with different academic norms and expectations, and secondly, courses need to be relevant so that transference can occur. Responding to the first requirement, it has been highlighted that EAP's strength lies in practitioners' awareness of contextual relevance (Hyland, 2002a; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002) and a well-developed sense of the institutional awareness (Sharpling, 2002; Bell, 2016). With regards to the second, using authentic materials and tasks (Jordan, 1989; Schmitt & Hamp-Lyons, 2015) to prepare students for multiple genres in academic departments (Hyland, 2002a) have been recommended.

2.4.1 The Needs Analysis Approach

A traditional approach to acquiring the necessary knowledge about academic norms has been needs analysis (Jordan, 1989). Needs analysis (NA) has been instrumental for determining the target situation and learners' needs to develop appropriate courses because it allows course designers to demarcate the extent of EAP provision and consider non-linguistic factors pertaining to learners' needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Jordan 1997; Long, 2005). It serves a pragmatic role of analysing the local context (Schutz & Derwing, 1981) and articulating "what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation" (West, 1994:1). One initial purpose was *syllabus specification* (Munby, 1978) to identify and categorise demands of the target situation. However, there have been extensions to consider the needs of multiple stakeholders including course designers, teachers and students (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Allwright, 1982; West, 1994; Long, 2005).

Whilst an extensive literature[6] on NA has invaluably informed the design of EAP courses, there are challenges. Firstly, NA can be a time-consuming process requiring expertise and experience to balance the different dimensions and views (Tajino et al, 2005; Long, 2005). In practice, course designers cannot conduct a thorough analysis for every cohort; therefore, once a course has been successfully designed, implementation is prioritised. Consequently, the needs considered at the inception of a course are assumed to hold true long after the initial analysis even though needs are "neither universal nor everlasting" (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016:567). Moreover, as there is almost always a delay between completion of an analysis and implementation of the course, "needs assessment itself {is} in need of continual reassessment" (Belcher, 2006:135).

Another issue is that when multiple stakeholders with diverging interests are involved, the politics of power is a natural manifestation. Although students are also main stakeholders (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Tajino et al, 2005; Basturkmen, 2013), course designers can rely on experts (tutors, subject lecturers), who often have deficit perceptions of international students (Haugh, 2016; Straker, 2016; Jones, 2017**).** If students' perceptions are missing or undervalued, the NA process is deficient. Ideally, dialogues with alumni and/or insessional[7] students located in the target situation should inform the NA process (West, 1994; Long 2005) because they can more accurately define target needs and provide feedback (Feak, 2011; de Chazal, 2014). To complement NA, Benesch (2001) argues for a *rights analysis* that advocates explicit dialogues and active roles for students in their own education. Indeed, Widdowson proposes that needs are to be negotiated if they are to be part of the educational process with attention shifting from teachers to students as agents of change (1983).

[6]see Serafini et al, 2015 for a review of NA research

[7] Students concurrently studying EAP and for a degree.

2.4.2 Collaborations with Subject-Specific Lecturers

Collaborative teaching endeavours between EAP and subject teachers have also been a way to expand practitioner knowledge of disciplinary practices (de Chazal, 2014; Green, 2015). Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) classify such collaborations into three types: cooperation, collaboration or team teaching. A form of collaboration is having adjunct language classes after the content input (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Partnerships with subject specialists have been shown to be productive endeavours (Dudley-Evans, 2001; Stoller, 2001; Lee, 2009; Yakovchuk & Ingle, 2013) because both parties can collaboratively and comprehensively analyse the needs of students.

However, collaborations are only productive where there is shared knowledge, an open attitude, and mutual respect (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2009; Yakovchuk & Ingle, 2013; Green, 2015) with EAP practitioners working *with*, not *for,* subject lecturers (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). Barron (2002) describes how an inflexible approach resulted in failure to deliver a course for Science students by the English Centre and Science Faculty at the University of Hong Kong. Unfortunately, productive collaborations between EAP and subject specialists have yet to become the standard practice (Fenton-Smith et al, 2018). Possible reasons are either managerial preference for cost-effective EGAP courses, or difficulties of navigating insider/outsider identities that come with understanding departmental habits (Brookes & Grundy, 1990); outsiders like EAP practitioners cannot always obtain the interest of departmental insiders, especially if EAP is misconceived as a "crash repair shop" (Chanock, 2007: 273). A challenge that remains for practitioners is to demonstrate EAP's pedagogical value to colleagues in other departments.

EAP provision could also include direct and regular collaborations with former students who can advise and mentor current students. Although EAP debates are concerned with preparing or empowering students, students' perceptions feature relatively sparsely in the literature. Often academic staff are unaware of how students' relationships with others affect their academic

performance (Leki, 2001; Myles & Cheng, 2003), or how they operate informally in the wider university context. Lynch (2001: 398) describes the contribution of former students towards an EAP materials development project as invaluable because it gave him insights into their academic lives beyond the EAP context. Establishing relationships with former students and including them in research investigations are ways of strengthening the knowledge base of EAP practitioners.

2.4.3 Understanding Discourse Communities and Communities of Practice

Another way EAP has developed the knowledge needed to fulfil its role is to investigate academic discourse communities and incorporate this knowledge into pedagogical practice. Studies on discourse communities (DC) focus on group communication to identify discursive practices and the communicative conventions that distinguish a group. DCs exist across academic, professional and social contexts, and whilst they have been distinguished from speech communities (Swales, 1988; 1990), members tend to share common language for interaction. Swales (1990: 24-27) defines six characteristics of a DC (common goal(s), intercommunication mechanisms, information exchange, appropriated genre(s), specialised lexis, significant membership). DCs have been described as exclusive or *centrifugal* (*ibid*) because conventions, such as the specialised jargon or genres used by the community, are either unclear or unknown to outsiders. However, to engage fully in the community, newcomers must assimilate such conventions. Therefore, DC scholarship carries predictive value for newcomers and aspiring members, like EAP students, who can analyse and then adopt such practices.

In their role to foster student membership into such communities, EAP practitioners are reconceptualising academic writing as a social practice within disciplines; this resonates with advocates of ESAP and contradicts an EGAP pedagogy (Morton, 2016). Consequently, practitioners are focused on clarifying the discourse conventions of students' academic communities. However, considering that disciplines and discourse practices evolve (Spack,

1988; Duff, 2010), this task remains challenging and can be misrepresented (Hyland, 2009) by EAP practitioners who are outsiders to such practices. This challenge is further complexified by the contested notion of a discourse community (Duff, 2010; Hyland, 2009); it is unclear what comprises a community as traditional disciplines, which would seem a safe categorisation for academic communities, are merging and new disciplines are evolving (Hyland, 2009) . For EAP tutors, a compromise has been to provide students with opportunities to examine texts and communicative practices within their target or *imagined* communities (Andrew & Romova, 2012), often using corpora data (Woodward-Kron, 2004; Samraj, 2008; Triki, 2019). However, EAP's broader role comprises more than helping students understand textual discourse conventions; DC research and pedagogical applications for EAP prioritise written communication practices which, whilst valuable for students' discourse socialisation, fails to examine other factors relevant to their wider socialisation.

Closely linked to DCs is the concept of Communities of Practice (CoP), introduced by Lave & Wenger (1991), which explores how newcomers become members of a community through participation and engagement. It was initially used to investigate membership in professional and vocational settings, but is now commonly employed in educational contexts to understand socialisation (Toohey, 1998, Morita, 2004; Guldberg & Mackness, 2009; Samimy et al, 2011). As a social learning theory, CoP focuses primarily on participation of newcomers or apprentices within their communities and on how they engage with more experienced others. It is argued that their learning development rests primarily on engagement and mentoring from experienced members of their community (Samimy et al 2011). Initially, newcomers engage through limited legitimate participation; limited because of their inexperience as novices, but legitimate as recognised members of that particular community who can negotiate competence in a particular domain (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Farnsworth et al, 2016). There is significant attention to interaction between novices and experienced members and also

much interest in developing knowledge, skills and disposition (Haneda, 2006), which is not unlike socialisation theories. It has been suggested that some explicit prior learning has to occur before novices can engage in the social milieu (Haneda, 2006).

Within ELT research, most CoP studies are of TESOL teachers or trainees (Morita, 2004; Breen, 2015; Al-Maamari, 2016) and online CoPs (Dowling, 2009; Nelson & Temples, 2011; Razak et al, 2013; Asoodar et al, 2014). My own investigation into the literature on EAP students' CoPs yielded very little results for this specific focus; this may lie in the issue of which community is most relevant for students and which should be prioritised: their current EAP CoP or their target CoP. If the former, one shortcoming of CoP is that, whilst it recognises multiple memberships, there is little indication of how one community promotes membership in another community; this transference remains the key preoccupation of EAP practitioners. If the latter, CoP, which has been described as a group of practitioners involved in joint activity (Wenger, 1998) and regularly sharing the same routines (Meschitti & Carassa, 2014), is an unlikely fit for students whose target communities have dissimilar practices and routines. Furthermore, it is believed newcomers gain legitimacy through mentoring from experienced others in empowering positions. EAP practitioners, not belonging to the disciplinary communities students aspire to, are not in a position to *mentor* students for their subject departments.

2.4.4 Corpus Linguistics

Another approach to understanding disciplinary practices has been corpus linguistics (CL). Corpora have been employed to identify and teach functional lexico-grammatical patterns of disciplines (Flowerdew, 2002, 2015; Kaur & Heigelheimer, 2005; Lee & Swales, 2006). Combined with genre and discourse analyses, corpora use has also supported pedagogical approaches to developing knowledge of academic literacy and discourse structures (Hyland, 2002b; Tribble, 2002; Charles, 2007). CL has enabled learners to develop content lexis, discourse literacy, and self-correct their own writing (Todd, 2001; Kaur & Heigelheimer, 2005; Flowerdew, 2015; Bridle, 2019),

undoubtedly contributing to their autonomy. However, criticisms include the decontextualisation of language with a bottom-up approach (Swales, 2002) and insufficiently presenting all the factors that inform communication processes (Flowerdew, 2002). Moreover, corpora that are discipline-specific and relevant to EAP students are often small in size whilst larger corpora can often be too general (Flowerdew, 2002; Tribble, 2002). In response to this, the compilation and use of learner corpora has been promoted (Lee & Swales, 2006; Eriksson, 2012; Gilquin et al, 2017). Additionally, there has been a traditional focus on native and non-native varieties of language (Flowerdew, 2002) which do not sufficiently explore L2 or multilanguage use and can inadvertently position international students as deficit. More importantly, although CL has informed EAP pedagogy and materials development (Hyland, 2002b; Bridel, 2019) and focused on spoken language (Flowerdew, 2002; Swales, 2002), improving textual production and informing writing instruction seem to remain its primary use for EAP practitioners.

2.4.5 Academic Literacy

More recently, EAP practitioners' interests are in developing academic literacy, or academic literacies, a focus which has grown in use and attracted research attention across a wider range of specialisms (Lillis & Scott, 2007). This was introduced by Lea & Street (1998) who outlined in hierarchical order students' learning needs from study skills to academic socialisation to developing academic literacy (AL). Whilst they insisted that these models were not mutually exclusive, their recommendation is an AL approach which encapsulates both academic socialisation and study skills and understands literacy as a social practice influenced by epistemology, ideology and identity; the identities of the writer and reader are crucial in written communication. The academic literacy approach is transformative rather than normative (Lillis & Scott, 2007; Lillis & Tuck, 2016) as writers embrace their identity within the community they are writing for. Students develop the contextual knowledge and social competence to transform their identities from novice to skilled writers within their disciplinary communities,

thus negating the teaching of writing separate from disciplinary practices (Lea & Street, 2000). This is similar to an ESAP approach discussed earlier, but where ESAP focuses primarily on discipline-specific language, AL focuses on the participants' perspectives and how they negotiate meaning. ESAP is more neutral in its approach whereas AL uncovers and challenges power relations in written texts. It is argued that there are affective and ideological conflicts using the expected linguistic repertoire, and students may feel threatened and resistant (Lea & Street, 1998: 159).

EAP's interest in AL is mainly in writing instruction. This is because writing is considered vital to academic success (Hyland, 2009) and a core, but mysterious, skill to master (Lillis, 1999; Bruce, 2011; de Chazal, 2014). Previous approaches to understanding academic writing in EAP, such as rhetorical, genre and discourse analyses, have been predominantly technical and textual (Lillis & Scott, 2007; Ding & Bruce, 2017) as seen in the many practical approaches suggested in published materials (de Chazal, 2014; Alexander et al, 2008; Bell, 2016[8]; Charles & Pecorari, 2016). AL encourages practitioners to consider important cognitive and ontological varieties of texts and their writers resulting in a shift from purely textual analyses (Ding & Bruce, 2017; Bruce, 2011). In recognising important social and ideological influences, this approach is perceived as a new and necessary dimension for understanding academic writing.

Yet it is believed by some that AL is not vastly different from previous approaches to EAP (Ding & Bruce, 2017), but rather an old concept dressed in new robes since other approaches to teaching EAP have also considered socio-political influences of academic writing (Wingate & Tribble, 2012). As highlighted previously, writers like Benesch had already articulated the significance of political issues and challenged the disadvantaged positioning of students. Nonetheless, AL concepts have been better received than CEAP as they are more widely referred to in EAP literature. Whilst an AL approach

[8] Bell (2016) gives a detailed review of different approaches to teaching EAP over the last four decades.

has usefully informed how to teach literacy as a social practice, like other approaches, the common tendency is a prioritisation of academic writing. There appears to be less attention to the impact of EAP input on students' overall experience on degree courses and how students value these courses.

2.5 Understanding the Impact of EAP Education

In order to understand EAP's broader impact, a review of empirical studies seeking to understand students' experiences post-EAP or linked to EAP was undertaken. The selection criteria included empirical research which have attempted:

1. to evaluate EAP impact on students' academic experiences and/or performance
2. to capture EAP students' perceptions of their EAP courses, preferably after completion

The studies have been grouped into three sub-groups. The first two comprise presentations at UK *BALEAP* PIM[9]s and the third, more global studies conducted within the last decade.

The first PIM in 2006 led to the publication of some local UK investigations into the effectiveness of EAP[10]. Some investigations started at the end of the EAP courses following students five and eight months into their academic programmes (Atherton, 2006; Pilcher, 2006) with one focusing specifically on degree completion (Ridley, 2006). In contrast, Martala's (2006) investigation started whilst students were still on their EAP courses continuing until the end of the first semester. These studies capture different phases of students' post-EAP experiences using a variety of methods. Participant numbers were reasonably healthy, increasing the generalisation of the findings. However, none of these studies identified a theoretical framework for the research conducted. Table 1 below shows the details of each study's aims, data collection methods and overall findings.

[9] Professional Issues Meeting
[10] Gillet and Wray (2006) *Assessing the Effectiveness of EAP Programmes*

Based on these studies, there is evidence that EAP is useful. Students reported better understanding of writing expectations and improved language proficiency. There was also more confidence and satisfaction among students, but in one study attention was drawn to the learners themselves. Martala (2006) noted progress was slower when students did not act autonomously by asking questions, responding to feedback, or identifying their own problem areas. Unfortunately, the general focus of these investigations was limited to writing. Whether dealing with the dissertation stage or writing in general, researchers were interested in students' written performance or the usefulness of EAP writing classes.

Table 1: Overview of Local Investigations Assessing the Impact of EAP

Researchers	RQs or Focus	Theoretical Framework	Data Collection	Participants involved	Findings
Atherton, 2006 Kingston University	How successful can a Presessional course be?	None specified	Entry and exit presessional scores of 125 EAP students Structured interviews Questionnaires	EAP & non-EAP students Course directors	Presessional courses gave students confidence & they settled in quickly; overall provided students with familiarity & competency with the academic system
Martala, 2006 University of Hertfordshire	To identify whether the writing strand equips Chinese students at postgraduate level with the academic writing skills they will need in their subsequent Master's degree courses	None specified	Written data Questionnaires	EAP Chinese students	The writing input & practice prepared students, but some had problems with criticality
Pilcher, 2006 Heriot Watt University	To provide feedback to EAP tutors in the form of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their former EAP courses whilst writing their Master's Dissertations	None specified	Interviews	21 PG Chinese students - former EAP ss	Overall more positive comments about EAP than negative; some data that supports the need for EAP & advocates more links between EAP tutors and departments
Ridley, 2006 University of Sheffield	Is there a relationship btw presessional exit test results & subsequent academic course completion? How can current support for int. students be strengthened?	None specified	Interviews 4 sets of questionnaires Students' exit results	38 students Academic staff	EAP course enabled students to succeed & has some predictive validity; 84% of students completed their academic course with 70% completing at the expected time; borderline students struggled more

A second *BALEAP* PIM in 2017[11] revisited EAP's impact on students' academic success. Compared with the previous PIM, the investigative interests were more extensive (writing, critical thinking, oral presentations, listening to lectures, developing a learner corpus). Using data from individual or group interviews, some presentations focused specifically on students' post-EAP experiences; Table 2 highlights presentations most relevant to this thesis. These local investigations focused on student perceptions, task types, academic socialisation, group work and transitional experiences identifying some positive impacts of EAP input. However, areas for improvements were also noted in terms of types of written tasks taught and students' inability to recognise less obvious connections between EAP and academic courses. Unfortunately, there are currently no publications associated with this PIM.

[11] https://www.baleap.org/event/evaluating-effectiveness-eap

Table 2: Overview of BALEAP 2017 PIM Presentations Investigating EAP Impact

Researchers	RQs or Focus	Theoretical Framework	Data Collection	Participants involved	Findings
Benson et al University of Edinburgh	to ascertain how useful our course is perceived to be by students at various stages of their programme, and to receive their suggestions as to ways in which we could prepare them more effectively	None specified	Over 2 years: Questionnaires & focus groups Later semi-structured interviews	6 former EAP students	Presessional students scored significantly higher than non-presessional students, but not enough tutor feedback and practice in language skills; the programme did not help with working collaboratively
Huang & Kingsford University of Liverpool & University of Essex	to examine students' perceptions of task similarity between EAP presessional tasks and their academic assignments; to assess the effectiveness of the reading-to-write teaching materials	Transfer theories – James, 2008, 2010, 2014	Focus group meetings	22 postgraduate students who had previously completed various presessional courses	Learnt a number of useful skills (note-taking; essay organisation; referencing; how to avoid plagiarism; feedback analysis; critical thinking) More assignment types on degree courses than on presessional & more academic / subject-specific reading
Matthews University of Leeds	to develop greater understanding of students' academic discourse socialisation and how effectively EAP programmes assisted in this process	Academic Discourse	2 semi-structured Interviews	Former presessional and insessional students on their Master's programmes	Overall positive comments about EAP with increased awareness; issues faced were covered but problems lie in applying what has been learnt
Pibworth-Dolinski University of Edinburgh	to understand more about the challenges of working in groups and whether the presessional course effectively prepares students for group work, based on student reflections on their experience	None specified	Interviews Midway through 1st semester	38 former presessional students	Students found group work challenging and frustrating, issues include persuading others of their opinion and gaining consensus as well as issues relating to time management and working cohesively
Poulson University of Leeds	to discover if taking a presessional course can facilitate the acculturation and transition of international, undergraduate students into UK Higher Education	Intercultural Integration	longitudinal, qualitative tracking research interviews	Former presessional; UG students	EAP familiarises students with academic culture

Globally, there have been increasing numbers of publications of research examining the impact of EAP or academic literacy (AL) courses on students' academic performance (see Table 3 below). Studies involved current or former students using mainly qualitative or mixed methods, but some used quasi-experimental methods of pre- and post-testing to see if EAP instruction had positively affected students' linguistic abilities (Crosthwaite, 2016; Fouche et al, 2017; Fenton-Smith et al, 2018). Some studies were longitudinal, measuring impact over extended periods, and included multiple data collection points (Fenton-Smith et al, 2018; Ntereke & Ramoroka, 2015; Ramoroka, 2012; James, 2010). Using a single data set, other studies examined more immediate transfer with students simultaneously taking EAP/AL and degree courses (Fox et al, 2014; Green, 2015). The different theoretical underpinnings informing these studies ranged from academic literacy (Ntereke & Ramoroka, 2015; Górska, 2013) to transfer theories (Green, 2015, James, 2010) to discourse communities (Kırkgöz, 2009) albeit theoretical links were sometimes weak.

Table 3: Overview of Global Studies Reviewed

Researchers	Aim	Theory & Methodology	Findings
Fenton-Smith et al, 2018 Australia	To measure the effectiveness of English language enhancement courses	No theory specified: multi-perspectival (surveys; academic outcomes; scores)	Overall a positive picture with students reporting satisfaction
Fouche et al, 2017 South Africa	To assess the impact of two compulsory English Academic literacy modules	Academic literacy: mixed methods (questionnaire; written samples)	The EAP course addresses academic literacy abilities
Crosthwaite, 2016 Hong Kong	To analyse the longitudinal impact of EAP instruction on UG writing	Quantitative: writing samples	After 13 weeks, student's written production exhibited significant variation towards a more academic register
Ntereke & Ramoroka, 2015 Botswana	To understand students' & teachers' perceptions of academic writing activities done prior to main assignment	Academic literacy: mixed methods (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups)	Writing activities were beneficial; students & lecturers believed time allocated to teaching academic writing was inadequate
Green, 2015 Thailand	To what extent do students perceive they are transferring knowledge from the EAP course to the target disciplines?	Quantitative: self-report online questionnaire; insessional students	Positive student perceptions of transfer of learning to the disciplines but only for writing
Fox et al, 2014 Canada	To understand the impact of ESL and EAP programs on L2 university students' academic and social engagement	Student engagement: quantitative - applied structural equation modeling	EAP/ESL courses affected participants' academic & social engagement; for academic engagement, effects were strong & positive, but weaker for social engagement; students' levels of stress & anxiety important
Górska, 2013 UK	To investigate the writing development on an International Pre-Masters Programme	Academic Literacy: qualitative ethnography (observations; interviews)	Writing support was sufficient for understanding basic cultural & textual contexts but not for discipline-specific writing
Ramoroka, 2012 South Africa	To compare EAP and content courses in terms of writing tasks and genres	Situated learning: mixed methods; (interviews & written samples)	Some commonality across the two courses regarding essay prompts; lecturers & EAP tutors had similar views; students generally satisfied but different courses require different writings & skills
Terraschke & Wahid, 2011 Australia	The present study aims to compare accounts of former EAP students with direct-entry students	No theory specified: qualitative (interviews)	Both groups had similar experiences; former EAP students used metalanguage of learning strategies, more confident about written assessments & had a better understanding of course demands
James, 2010 USA	Does learning transfer from EGAP writing instruction to other academic courses?	Transfer theory: qualitative (interviews)	A variety of learning outcomes transferred from the writing course; however, transfer was more frequent for some learning outcomes, disciplines & task types
Dooey, 2010 Australia	To find out students' perceptions of the effectiveness of an EAP pathway programme	Language Acquisition & Competency Theories: qualitative (interviews)	Students found the course to be valuable, but readiness to study in a tertiary level goes beyond the achievement of an English proficiency score
Kırkgöz, 2009 Turkey	To evaluate the effectiveness of the English language instruction in relation to academic needs	Academic Discourse: mixed methods (questionnaires & interviews)	A skills-based EAP curriculum inadequately prepares students for academic requirements because students needed socialising into their discourse communities

Again, a fairly positive picture emerges with most of these studies evidencing EAP input supporting students on their degree courses. Linguistic and academic literacy improvements were noted as the areas where this input had been most relevant although links between English language courses and opportunities for developing learner autonomy were also highlighted (Fenton-Smith et al, 2018). Researchers called for more attention to disciplinary focus and more specificity (Kırkgöz, 2009; Ramoroka, 2012; Górska, 2013). There were also suggestions for more time (Ntereke & Ramoroka, 2015).

The general shortcoming of these studies evaluating EAP impact in different global contexts is the prioritisation of academic literacy, particularly writing. Understandably, writing is a key skill for success because of the nature of most academic assessments. However, it is not the only skill to guarantee success; writing is a complex task that requires not only linguistic skills but also cultural and disciplinary knowledge (Archibald, 2001; Wingate, 2016). A limited focus on the writing progress of post-EAP students presents a partial picture of the overall experiences of students considering that international students experience not only language difficulties (Ryan & Viete, 2009; Ramachandran, 2011; Phakiti et al, 2013; Jones, 2017). Moreover, given that EAP has developed from a language training activity to address the broader educational needs of its students, it would be beneficial to consider how EAP influences students' wider academic socialisation.

2.5.1 Understanding Impact Differently

A different way to examine EAP's impact on students' transition is to consider the experience from socialisation perspectives. Socialisation theories recognise the intersectionality of local and wider contexts and its effects on the transition process. Additionally, within socialisation theories, there is scope for a holistic understanding of group and individual experiences including students' relationships with others, especially as interactive relationships have also been considered important for developing students' competence in academic literacy (Ferenz, 2005). Whilst some attempt has

been made to explore L2 students' relationships with others and link this to the EAP context (Myles & Cheng, 2003; Leki, 2006), none of the studies or approaches discussed above (with the exception of CoP) have fully highlighted the importance of relationships with others, whether faculty or peers, in terms of supporting students' transition. This is crucial, considering that transitioning into a new environment does not preclude unequal power relations and identity formation. Socialisation theories, therefore, allow a more comprehensive analysis of how EAP education meets the aim of preparing students for academic life and helps in overcoming not only linguistic challenges but also significant academic and cultural shocks (Ryan & Carroll, 2005). Such a perspective can demonstrate the more expansive institutional role of EAP units in HE. A more detailed exploration of socialisation theories will be provided in the subsequent chapter.

My research, therefore, investigates the experiences of 13 post-EAP undergraduates in their first-year using a socialisation framework. The primary aim is to understand how their EAP education has better prepared them for their academic journeys. This is achieved by focusing on three objectives. Firstly, understanding how these students are integrated into their academic departments; the challenges they face and the strategies they use as well as the resources available to them to overcome these challenges. Secondly, prioritising students' perceptions of their transition as it is they who undergo the process; this also serves to shift perceptions of students from consumers to producers of knowledge. And finally, using the experiences of these students to evaluate and improve our EAP provision as an initial socialisation mechanism. The three main research questions are, therefore, as follows:

1. *What are the socialisation experiences of post-EAP students?*
2. *What is EAP's contribution to these experiences?*
3. *How can EAP more effectively contribute to the experiences of students?*

Such an investigation has strong implications for EAP practice as there is currently a dearth of studies that have documented students' perspectives

about the overall value of their EAP experience retrospectively. Although a local endeavour, this study is pertinent to other EAP units nationally and abroad as it involves a new and more inclusive way of evaluating EAP programmes and contributes to the changing perceptions of EAP's institutional role.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has located EAP practice within HE, focusing mainly on the UK context. In response to tensions within and criticisms of EAP, traditional and newer approaches to practice were discussed. A review of selected literature revealed little documented research measuring the wider impact of EAP education from alumni students' perspectives. Such lack can be addressed using a socialisation lens to understand EAP impact on former students. The chapter ends by articulating the research aims and potential contribution.

Chapter 3: Employing a Socialisation Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies socialisation as the theoretical framework for understanding the post-EAP experiences of a group of international students; it starts with an exposition of how socialisation has been conceptualised, then briefly explores language socialisation, which reasonably falls within the scope of any discussion on socialisation before discussing the spaces within which it happens. References to EAP and international students are made where appropriate to highlight relevance and a justification for using this theoretical framework is provided.

3.2 Socialisation Theories

3.2.1 Socialisation: a necessary experience

Socialisation theories aim to understand how novices become members of a new community. Such theories were initially concerned with child socialisation, but with the realisation that adults too face new experiences at different stages in their lives and undergo socialisation, interest in adult socialisation developed. Brim (1966) argues that adult socialisation is necessary when adults enter new phases or roles in life due to new positions and social or geographical mobility, and there is some discontinuity between past and present experiences. Similar arguments are made by Mortimer & Simmons (1978) who mention that life-cycle changes in work and social settings necessitate adult socialisation when there is *role discontinuity* or *role invisibility* (p. 425), meaning some roles end or role responsibilities are not explicit. Furthermore, radical changes in society due to technology, economic expansion and mobility inform the need to reorient oneself to new settings and ways of operating (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978: 427). This is even more pronounced since organisations and communities operate differently (Wheeler, 1966), and require various socialisation experiences.

In higher education, the necessity of socialisation is multiple. Firstly, it is linked to student retention (Turner & Thompson, 1993). Inability to belong or participate in a group results in isolation or retraction from that group; for students, this means unsuccessful participation or attrition. HE institutions

are very interested in the retention rates of students (Tinto, 1993; Golde, 2000) because they signal successful educational practices and because student attrition, especially postgraduate, can be expensive (Gardner, 2008) . Therefore, HE institutions are increasingly seeking ways to improve student engagement.

Socialisation studies provide a way of understanding students' experiences of success as well as failure (Tierney, 1997; Golde, 2000; Gardner, 2008; Lovitts, 2008). Furthermore, HE can be understood as a distinct social context which has its own practices and experiences that are unique and therefore, compel members to adopt certain behaviours specific to the roles and responsibilities of this context. Tertiary education is markedly different from school, and university teachers function differently from school or college teachers as do university students from pupils. Golde (2000: 200) describes the graduate student role as an organisational role, but this description can be extended to all university students because entry into the university community, whether as a postgraduate or undergraduate student, implies a need for institutional awareness and adjustment to perform effectively in the HE context. Additionally, the massification of HE has led to interests in students' academic and social integration (Tinto, 1993) as well as questions about how students from diverse backgrounds are socialised and supported, especially when they do not *fit the mold* (Gardner, 2008). International students, specifically, are placed in new positions when they pursue an education abroad, and their mobility to a different society and communities dictates some adjustment to new roles and group interactions. This is especially the case where previous educational experiences are at odds with those in the new context (Li & Collins, 2014). There is also some level of discontinuity as they assume different roles within their new educational setting (although of course there may be similarities to previous settings) as well as some level of uncertainty (similar to Mortimer & Simmons' role invisibility) as international students are often unclear about the expected norms in the new location, making them feeling anxious or estranged (Mann, 2001; Ryan & Viete, 2009;

Cheng & Erben, 2011). All of this has led to numerous studies around the socialisation structures and experiences of students, especially doctoral candidates (Turner & Thompson, 1993; Golde, 2000; Ellis, 2001; Lovitts, 2008; Gardner, 2008; Weidman et al, 2001; Boden et al, 2011; Li & Collins, 2014; Portnoi et al, 2015; Pervan et al, 2016 among others).

The majority of these studies have used qualitative methodology to explore the nature of socialisation. The main data collection methods utilised were interviews as the investigations were often explorative, but some studies included additional surveys (Padget et al, 2010), and observations (Meschitti & Carassa, 2014). Beatty et al (2014) used a case study approach to understand one department's experience of discipline-specific transition. The extensive nature of these studies has allowed cross-disciplinary as well as cross-institutional explorations of socialisation processes {e.g. Golde (1998) over 50 students in four departments; Padget et al (2010) drew their sample from across 19 institutions; Boden et al (2011) focused on four programs at two universities}. The limitations, however, are that the majority of these studies focus on doctoral students and have been conducted in the US, but the offset is the varied research foci – faculty perspectives (Thompson, 2003; Gardner, 2010; Boden et al, 2011), students' perspectives (Hopwood, 2010; Li & Collins, 2014), gender and race (Turner & Thompson, 1993; Ellis, 2001; Gardner, 2008) as well as attrition (Golde, 1998). These various foci have served to strengthen the growing understanding of socialisation experiences of diverse student populations across institutions. Whilst these empirical studies reinforce the main theoretical insights put forward by earlier writers (such as Brim, Mortimer, Braggs, Weidman), they also provide new conceptualisations of the process.

3.2.2 Understanding Socialisation

Socialisation has been defined as "the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and disposition that make them more or less able members of their society" (Brim, 1966: 3). Brim's oft-cited definition informs many discussions on socialisation. It is quoted by Weidman (1987; 2001) whose

socialisation frameworks for undergraduates and postgraduates are also commonly referred to in the literature (Thompson, 2003; Gardner, 2008, 2010; Boden et al, 2011; McDaniels, 2012; Rourke & Kanuka, 2012; Li & Collins, 2014;). However, Bragg (1976) also provides a similar description of socialisation although hers rests on Merton's 1957 definition, and includes values and norms in the definition. An analogous definition, provided by Mortimer & Simmons (1978), frames socialisation as a mechanism that facilitates role performance and a process involving individuals as well as groups. These foundational definitions underscore the acquisition of requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions by individuals but also emphasise group membership.

Another explanation worth examining is that of Weidman. He developed a framework for understanding socialisation in undergraduates and postgraduates (Weidman, 1987; Weidman et al, 2001). Weidman (1987) identifies four stages of the process (anticipatory, formal, informal, personal) with the first stage exposing students to behavioural, attitudinal and cognitive expectations of the target group, preparing them for future roles. As discussed in the previous chapter, EAP's preparatory role familiarises students with academic expectations and aids their academic transition; consequently, it serves as anticipatory socialisation. The formal and informal stages begin once students have assumed their roles within the given context but are still learning how to participate accordingly. The personal stage involves the reconciliation of formal expectations and personal orientations (*ibid*), and once individual interests are aligned with group interests and the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions have been acquired, full membership is achieved. The progression through the stages appears to unfold linearly and unproblematically although Weidman later argues to the contrary (Weidman et al, 2001; Weidman and Stein, 2003). Weidman's (1987, 2006) visual representations of the processes (Figures 1 & 2 below) portray the complex experience of multiple influences and interactions occurring simultaneously. The figures depict the ongoing interpersonal and

intrapersonal interactions of students integrating into campus life. There are also external pressures and influences from parents and reference groups (for example church community) that affect the experience. Empirical studies confirm this messy description of the process and show that the process unfolds simultaneously at multiple levels (Golde, 1998; Gardner, 2010). Socialisation in the HE setting can, therefore, be characterised as the exposure to formal and internal pressures as well as informal and external influences resulting in changes in abilities and behaviour.

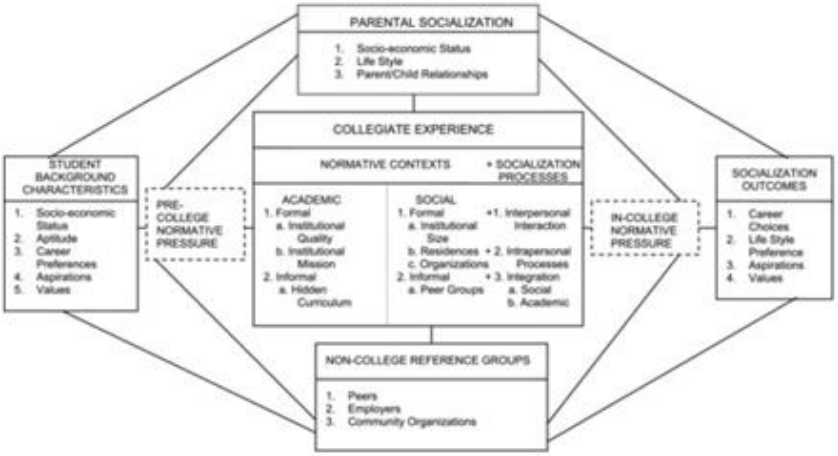


Figure 1: A Conceptual Model of Undergraduate Socialization (Weidman, 1987: 56-57)



Figure 2: Conceptualization Organizational Socialization of Students in Higher Education (Weidman, 2006: 257 adapted from Weidman et al, 2001)

However, Tierney (1997), in his examination of junior faculty seeking tenure, criticises modernist perspectives of socialisation (Brim, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987). A modernist perspective, he argues, is one of acquisition and discovery implying "a unitary and rational process embedded in an understandable culture" (p.3); in other words, predictable and controllable. He proposes a postmodernist view, which is about changing cultures and individual interpretations. Culture is ambiguous and recreated by newcomers who interpret and respond differently to it, meaning socialisation is about how individual newcomers interpret their roles and the culture within a specific context, making the process interpretive. This also makes the process fluid and symbiotic as the organisation is refreshed whilst the individual is developed by new roles. Such a perspective can be applied to EAP students' academic socialisation. As argued in the previous chapter, EAP's role has changed in response to perceived students' needs; also, depending on student feedback, tutors adjust teaching practices, thereby recreating the culture incrementally. Moreover, whilst EAP courses aim to develop a uniform set of skills and knowledge, students will interpret these differently based on their educational backgrounds and personal expectations.

In spite of Tierney's criticisms that socialisation is not simply about acquisition or discovery, newcomers still need to be aware and have a certain level of competence to successfully engage and effect change within their communities. He writes that culture is not discovered by unchanging recruits meaning socialisation is a developmental process for *socialisees*. With time, students are expected to acquire the competence and attitudes necessary to function effectively within a given group or community. Through formal and informal input, and interactive relationships, the novice acclimatises to the new role. Wheeler (1966) notes that there is a specific point of entry and exit between which there are changes. The socialisation process has also been described as a learning process and socialisees learn by doing through trial and error (Bragg, 1976) and by actively participating (Meschitti & Carassa,

2014). This relates to the pedagogical aspirations of EAP discussed earlier which are to develop students' linguistic and academic competence to acclimatise them to relevant learning behaviours and foster participation in their target communities upon course completion. However, as a learning process, socialisation can be individualistic and unpredictable because the exact time it takes for an individual to become socialised varies.

Cultural backgrounds and personal characteristics affect the socialisation process (Turner & Thompson, 1993; Tierney, 1997; Ward & Bensimon, 2002; Li & Collins, 2014) especially for non-traditional students (Ellis, 2001; Gardner, 2008). From interviews with minority women, Turner & Thompson (1993) found these participants had fewer mentorships and support networks inside their departments. This suggests the process could be comparatively longer or more challenging for some novices and confirms the personal nature of the process.

Socialisation has also been described as an ongoing process (Brim, 1966; Weidman et al, 2001; Ward & Bensimon, 2002) as the knowledge and competence needed are not static and change over time as group membership progresses or roles change. This cyclical and ongoing nature of the process is also reflected in the physical layout of Weidman's diagrams above. Most students are socialised into the academy through their first-year experiences, but, as they progress, they are socialised further in different ways considering that one is not always socialised into new contexts but into new roles (Tierney, 1997; Meschitti & Carassa, 2014). For EAP students, their socialisation may start with enrolment on an EAP course but continues as they progress on their degree courses where they develop more awareness, skills and relevant behaviours. It is incumbent that socialisers are aware of the ongoing nature of the process which is not entirely complete. This supports points raised by advocates of ongoing needs analyses in EAP (Belcher, 2006; Bocanegra-Valle, 2016).

Another important aspect of the process is that it rests on interactive relationships with socialisers or knowledgeable others (Bragg, 1976;

Mortimer & Simmons, 1978; Philips, 1982; Weidman, 1987; Hopwood, 2010). Brim (1966) describes socialisation as a series of complex interpersonal relationships through which novices learn appropriate behaviours. By interacting with others, novices learn about group expectations and participation. For students, significant others include faculty and experienced peers. Empirical research has confirmed that interaction with faculty significantly influences students' socialisation experiences (Meschitti & Carassa, 2014; Li & Collins, 2014) because they provide the necessary knowledge and skills that shape students' behaviours. Weidman (1987) places interaction as a prerequisite for integration and learning (see Figures 1 & 2), but emphasises that student/faculty relations need to be intimate and frequent to be impactful. This is possibly because more exposure allows for more opportunities to influence, and consequently, better internalisation of desired behaviours and values. Moreover, Tierney (1997) argues that faculty roles are intertwined with understanding organisational culture at the formal instructional level and informally in subtle daily activities. Faculty provide central and structured support for newcomers through advice and mentoring (Gardner, 2010; Ellis, 2001). Therefore, increased contact with faculty, the gatekeepers and powerful members of the community should result in better socialisation experiences. Interestingly, as highlighted in the previous chapter, students' relationships with staff or faculty and how they affect transition can be more fully explored in the EAP context.

Nevertheless, Wheeler (1966) reasons that students learn just as much from peers because other students tend to have the sort of information that recruits want and need to *get along,* indicating that the more informal aspects of socialisation are transmitted by peers. Exchanges with other students or seniors informally supporting integration is well evidenced (Weidman et al, 2001; Lovitts, 2008; Boden et al, 2011; Li & Collins, 2014; Meschitti & Carassa, 2014; Beatty et al, 2014). Also, it is expected where faculty and student interaction is irregular, peer support is intensified (Bragg, 1976), especially if students experience similar difficulties (Gardner, 2010). Indeed, peer support

has been described as "the single most important environmental influence on student development" (Astin, 1993: xiv). Yet some research findings have challenged the assumption that peer influence is always positive or actively sought; Maundeni's (2001) interviews with African students in Britain show there are also negative influences linked to peer interactions whilst Ellis' (2001) conversations with doctoral interviewees reveal that peer interaction is not always a priority for mature and non-traditional students. Moreover, Leki (2001) reasons that staff know little about students' relationships with peers and how they interact; such intelligence can be important to encourage or discourage behaviours that can influence socialisation, such as the positioning of international or non-native speaking students by local students as incompetent (Leki, 2001; Duff, 2010) . These ideas also relate to the Discourse Community and Community of Practices approaches to developing knowledge in EAP or ELT. As already noted, both DC and CoP prioritise the expertise and practice of experienced members to help newcomers negotiate their new contexts, but EAP has not given much priority to peer influence as evidenced in the dearth of CoP studies specific to EAP students.

However, the power inequalities that can exist between socialising agents and novices must be recognised. Wentworth (1980) notes that definitions of socialisation imply power relationships between novices and members, who almost always act as *clarifiers* for the former (p. 85). Brim (1966) explains that complex interpersonal relationships constitute the socialisation experience; the complexity could be because faculty/student relationships need careful navigation for collegiality and intimacy is required for productive relations, but contradictorily, faculty are powerful gatekeepers rewarding or punishing novices' behaviours (Brim, 1966; Philips, 1982; Weidman et al, 2001; Boden et al, 2011), revealing significant inequality.

Such asymmetrical relationships can be further exacerbated by cultural misunderstandings and insensitivities, especially where non-traditional or first-generation students are involved. Studies focusing on the socialisation of black and minority doctoral female students found their socialisation

experiences more challenging and involved more conflicts with faculty compared to more traditional students especially white males (Turner & Thompson, 1993; Ellis, 2001; Gonzalez, 2006). Similarly, from interviews with Chinese doctoral students in the US, Li & Collins (2014) found that some faculty avoided cultural differences in interactions which were important for the professional socialisation of these interviewees, and that linguistic barriers hindered the development of productive relationships. Also, from their extensive cross-institutional sample of full-time undergraduates, Padget et al (2010) concluded that student-faculty relations are better among students whose parents had been to college whilst first-generation students did not benefit as much from faculty socialisation. Among students themselves, relationships can be complicated by cultural differences. International students sometimes perceive relations with local students as culturally problematic (Lee et al., 2007), and British students may see international students as distant and self-excluding (Peacock & Harrison, 2009). Such perceptions hinder class participation (Watson, 1999; Robertson et al, 2000) and new friendships with the perceived *other*. Similarly, cultural differences can affect interactions with lecturers; researching an L2 student's relationship with her advisor, Krase (2007) found that different cultural expectations can hinder effective interactions. Therefore, there have been suggestions for more sensitivity on the part of faculty when dealing with new international students (Myles & Cheng, 2003; Leki, 2006). It seems the types of relationships necessary for socialisation lie not only in frequent interactions but also in meaningful exchanges that consider socialisees' backgrounds (Bragg, 1976).

3.2.3 Language Socialisation

Although the intention is to use socialisation theories as the main conceptual framework for understanding the experiences of students' post-EAP education, a brief exploration of language socialisation theories is inevitable since EAP students are language learners and their linguistic competence, or socialisation, can impact on their wider academic socialisation experiences.

Language socialisation is recognised as being distinct from the sociological and anthropological understandings that underpin socialisation theories as it is related to linguistic competence and acquisition which are predominantly understood from psychological frameworks (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). However, because its ultimate goal is understanding of how linguistic competence within a community is developed, language socialisation has also been distinguished from language acquisition which focuses on what constitutes linguistic competence (*ibid*). Nonetheless, language socialisation has served socialisation and linguistic acquisition research (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008). For socialisation theorists, language socialisation investigations have shown that socialisation is aided by skilful use of language as socialisation occurs "through the use of language" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986: 163). Language is seen as a source of information for recruits as well as a resource to be employed for individual gain (*ibid*). For language acquisition, it has been revealed that children or learners are socialised "to use language" appropriately (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986: 163) and socialisation experiences develop language skills (Vickers, 2007); the more socialised one is, the more competently one uses language.

Language socialisation examines how individuals become linguistically competent in social contexts through observation, reproduction and interactions. Like socialisation, initial research focused on children's acquisition of the necessary language, but it was acknowledged that adults too may need linguistic development due to changing social and/or professional roles and environments (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008; Duff, 2010). Duff (2010), like Hyland 2009, alludes to the evolving and heteroglossic nature of academic discourses and the need for socialisers to remain up-to-date about discourse practices to better aid linguistic socialisation. Moreover, native speakers, too, need linguistic socialisation, especially where professional and specific linguistic knowledge are intertwined. In her study of language socialisation within the legal profession, Philips (1982) learnt that legal language was mostly inaccessible

to outsiders and learning about law was a necessary part of learning to use the language. Duff (2002) also found that even though local students can exhibit appropriate and 'expert' oral skills in class discussions, their academic written skills may be lacking. Hence, language socialisation can often be an ongoing necessity in adulthood. As with general socialisation, there is notable dependence on interactive relationships with experienced group members; novices learn the appropriate linguistic forms and how to communicate effectively by interacting with knowledgeable others. Through interactions and participation, their competence grows and they become skilful users of the language (Vickers, 2007). Without such relationships, socialisees remain unclear about group speech norms and miss opportunities to participate effectively within their community; there is some resonance with the discourse communities approach in EAP.

Whilst language socialisation seems to be very much about observation and reproduction (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008), like broader socialisation, it still requires agency on the part of novices to adopt the practices; successful uptake allows for more negotiation of meaning and more exercise of agency (Duff, 2010). However, the process of developing linguistic competence is linked to identity and positionality (Vickers, 2007; Trudell et al, 2016). Through language, users can position themselves with or against others within the given community (Duff, 2002); equally, novices can be positioned by their lack of skills. Sawir et al (2013) in their study on international students' security found a strong relationship between language proficiency and agency; students' language skills affected their ability to interact strategically and consequently, to act agentively. Likewise, Duff (2010) argues that new students with low language proficiency and lack of cultural knowledge can be isolated in classrooms. Asymmetrical relationships are also commonplace (Duff, 2010; Friedman, 2010) with skilful language users being more powerful than learners although Duff (2002; 2007), in her discussion of academic discourse socialisation research, challenges the assumptions that native speakers are inherently advantaged or always expert users in new

academic contexts. However, where novices identify with their roles and community, they more readily use the necessary language (Vickers, 2007; Friedman, 2010). One could also argue that linguistic knowledge helps to develop one's confidence and identity within a group, especially if one learns to use the normative language to endorse one's own goals and interests (Freidman, 2010). With adults, however, this can also be frustrating because their learner or novice identity may be at odds with other more established identities.

This is particularly relevant to EAP students who may be professionals in their fields and home countries, but find that their lack of language proficiency positions them as "apprentices being inducted" (Preece, 2010: 30) in English-speaking countries. As they have yet to master the normative communicative practices of their new contexts, they can be inadvertently alienated (Mann, 2001) and/or perceived in a deficit light as mentioned in chapter 2. International students have also been seen as a threat to the quality of group work due to limited language skills (Peacock & Harrison, 2009); such positioning hinders further development of their linguistic competence, possibly undermining these students' confidence to engage with others. Furthermore, although the development of linguistic skills can be aided by having native-speaking friends (Hendrickson et al, 2011; Maundeni, 2001), lack of common interests can prevent meaningful and interactive relationships from developing (Ward et al, 2005). Absence of such relationships may in turn negatively affect the progression of these students' linguistic integration. Hence, language socialisation as well as the related issues around positioning and identity are key to the broader academic socialisation of EAP students who are learning how to function as members of their disciplines and the wider academic community.

3.2.4 Criticisms of Socialisation

Socialisation can be misconstrued as indoctrinating novices into a community with socialisees passively accepting the demands of their new roles (Tierney, 1997; Turner & Thompson, 1993). However, for socialisation to be successful,

the individual must internalise group values, or at least reconcile group and personal values (Braggs, 1976). Considering that adults are less malleable (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978), internalisation would require volition and commitment (Li & Collins, 2014). This makes the experience personally meaningful; without such personalisation, an individual may feel alienated and eventually withdraw from the group (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). Weidman's 2006 model above indicates that investment and involvement are crucial for they develop into commitment once students become professional practitioners. This parallels Tierney's argument that unless newcomers are actively involved and internalise the ethos of the organisation, the socialisation will fail (1997). However, the emphasis on institutional influence has been criticised for devaluing the individual experience and students' abilities as active agents (Portnoi et al, 2015; Pervan et al, 2016). Hopwood (2010) argues that even relationships are a demonstration of agency for students purposefully extend or limit their relationships with others to suit multiple personal needs. There have also been criticisms around the normative depictions of students that do not cater for racial, cultural or gender diversity, and subsequently, calls for more documentation of the socialisation experiences of non-traditional students (Turner & Thompson, 1993; Ellis, 2001; Ward & Bensimon, 2002; Gonzalez, 2006; Gardner, 2008). Students' responses also colour the socialisation experiences because they can demonstrate agency through deliberate choices and active advice seeking (Portnoi et al, 2015). Wentworth (1980) likewise posits that novices have some control in their socialising relationships, rejecting the view that they passively adopt the values they are exposed to. This again refutes any expectation that novices unquestionably accept the dictates of their new roles and the directives of seasoned members.

Learner agency has also been discussed in both ELT and EAP literatures (see McKay & Wong, 1996; Thesen, 1997; Tardy, 2006; Xiao, 2014 among others). Closely linked to this concept is that of learner autonomy, which features commonly in EAP as well and has been considered important for preparing

students for academia (Lynch, 2001; Chan et al, 2002; Todd, 2003; Smith & Thondhlana, 2015). Some writers in recognising the similarity of these two concepts have used them interchangeably (Toohey & Norton, 2003), but others have distinguished autonomy (sense of being in control) from agency (capacity to take action) (Huang & Benson, 2013). In socialisation theories, references are made to agency (Hopwood, 2010; Portnoi et al, 2015; Pervan et al, 2016); perhaps because the term is linked to actions or explicit demonstration of skills and behaviours which are specific and observable (Huang, 2011: 242). An alternative explanation is that writers discussing socialisation assume that agency and autonomy are synonymous even though one could exercise agency without necessarily being autonomous. The precise meaning in socialisation needs to be clarified as in Ecclestone's (2007: 121) interpretation of agency (*autonomous empowered action)* when discussing adult education. However, for the purpose of this thesis, it is unnecessary to delve further into finer distinctions than those emphasised by Huang and Benson (2013). Instead, because of their connotative associations, both terms will be referred to as complementary concepts. More importantly, the triadic relationship between autonomy, agency and identity (Huang, 2011; Huang & Benson, 2013) is recognised as more pertinent to this investigation.

Whilst Weidman's 1987 model does not explicitly include identity formation in the socialisation process, it is included in his revised 2006 model, but only once the recruit becomes a novice professional (Figures 1 and 2 above). Nonetheless, other writers (Vickers, 2007; Li & Collins, 2014; Portnoi et al, 2015) recognise identity as foundational to socialisation because where novices are passive, this too is considered socialisation failure (Merton, 1949 cited in Mortimer & Simmons, 1978). During the process, Golde (1998) proposes that through critical questions students reflect on their identity within the educational setting; reflection has been suggested as a way students can take ownership of their socialisation experiences (Beatty et al, 2014). As they reflect on their experiences and changing capabilities,

students are less likely to remain passive recipients but instead recognise changing identities. Where a conscious internalisation or developed self-identity is absent, full socialisation has not occurred for at best the novice becomes a *chameleon* who behaves appropriately but has not adopted the group values (Bragg, 1976: 30). Tierney (1997) also recognises that some novices may achieve their goals without internalising institutional values. Where an international student on an EAP course successfully progresses into their departments by achieving the required results and language proficiency, but has not adopted the values of critical thinking or learner autonomy, one can say socialisation has not truly occurred.

Another misunderstanding is the assumption that changes occur only with the individuals joining the group. Duff's (2007; 2010) description of the socialisation process as *bidirectional* is apt as it highlights that the process is not simply done to novices. Novices also impact on the group that they become part of. This is because, by becoming participating members of their communities, newcomers can affect group norms and values, thereby recreating the group culture (Tierney, 1997; McDaniels, 2012). Moreover, socialising agents are affected by the novices they interact with (Bragg, 1976; Tierney, 1997; Gonzalez, 2006; Duff, 2010) and can find that they need to change their own behaviours to allow for better interaction or socialisation of novices. To exemplify, the admission of more mature or non-traditional students would require different socialisation opportunities from younger and more traditional recruits. Therefore, lecturers may find themselves introducing new norms and having different relationships with their students.

Within EAP, the concept of socialisation has also been misunderstood. As discussed in the previous chapter, Lea & Street (1998) are critical of remedial writing programmes and argue for an academic literacy approach which exceeds academic socialisation. Preece (2010) expands their point by arguing that socialisation has been the dominant discourse in EAP to help students acculturate into the new climate so "they can reproduce the dominant literacy practices" (p. 29). Consequently, students are taught as if there is

one homogeneous discourse community; this enforces a dichotomy of legitimate and marginalised practices alienating students using non-traditional discourses. Such criticism, however, rests mainly on the erroneous belief that socialisation is a passive process of induction serving to make students conform to dominant institutional practices. Where academic socialisation is understood as a personal and active identity-formation experience for students, then EAP's role and impact may be viewed differently.

3.2.5 Successful Socialisation: conditions and outcomes

For socialisation processes to be successful and effective, certain conditions need to exist. Firstly, it must be understood as a multidirectional process that unfolds as "an intertwined web of organizational initiatives and individual agency" (Portnoi et al, 2015: 13). This refutes notions of a unilateral or unilinear development which affects only the socialisees. Such understanding also means considering the active role that socialisees play in their own socialisation; their participation and commitment is expected to accompany the efforts and guidance of socialising agents. Additionally, socialisers, not just novices, can change because of the interactive relationships that ensue during the process. Indeed, to ensure successful integration, socialisation agents adjust to respond effectively to the various needs of newcomers.

Secondly, socialising agents, especially faculty, need to be cognisant of their influential roles as well as sensitive to the needs of their students, especially as it is a personal journey (Beatty et al, 2014). Through formal and informal contact, such as class instructions and even casual interactions, faculty can consciously promote and display the very values and competence that are expected in newcomers. These contacts are believed to be more pertinent for first-year students new to academia (James et al, 2010). It also means providing multiple socialisation structures to cater for diverse backgrounds that would not ordinarily match traditional socialisation mechanisms ensuring institutional inclusivity.

Another condition is the existence of some clarity of what is needed to operate effectively in the given community. The requisite knowledge, competence and disposition for successful membership need to be clear to all involved (Tierney, 1997; Boden et al, 2011) to ensure participants are working towards similar goals and that relationships can be more productive. However, this may be problematic for there is often ambiguity in expectations and standards, and a lack of consensus among socialisers, especially in multidisciplinary contexts (Boden et al , 2011) and where socialisers change over time. With such ambiguity or inconsistencies, students receive inadequate or conflicting advice complicating their transition. This can happen where the anticipatory socialisation stage does not accurately depict the formal socialisation experience (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978), where there is a lack of awareness of student experiences (Gardner, 2008), or where staff are incognisant of their advising and modelling roles (Gardner, 2010). Moreover, environments and roles change over time, necessitating a review of socialisation mechanisms to ensure they are not obsolete. Tierney (1997) points out the undesirability of socialising students into cultures and values that are incongruent with those of the 21st century. This resonates with the Needs Analysis approach mentioned in chapter 2, which focuses on the target situation, so EAP input can be consistent with academic requirements but such approach also needs to be iterative to remain relevant.

Moreover, newcomers need to be able to participate and interact with experienced others, whether seniors or peers, in their new environment. Opportunities to observe how group values are translated into practice must exist since values are hard to decipher or emulate (Bragg, 1976) whilst opportunities to participate allow recruits to utilise their developing knowledge and ultimately, develop their confidence as group members. Such opportunities also serve as feedback by demonstrating what has been understood and what needs clarifying for better integration. This speaks to the suggestion in the previous chapter to involve former EAP students in

advisory and mentoring roles to clarify expectations for both EAP tutors and students.

Finally, if socialisation structures are too removed from the target situation (Wheeler, 1966), there will be difficulties in applying what has been learnt to the real situation. *Removed* can be interpreted in multiple ways: the geographical locations are far apart; or the operational structures and resources are very different from the target situation; or the values and behaviours learnt are not relevant to later roles meaning students will struggle to transfer acquired knowledge and skills. EAP courses can sometimes be removed from discipline-specific programmes in terms of approaches and assessments. For example, as noted before, offering EGAP courses which are *removed* from students' future programmes even though different disciplines have their own practices (Hyland, 2002a). This affects the authenticity and relevance of students' EAP experience, especially if their future academic experiences turn out to be significantly different.

To complement these conditions, there are also certain expectations of recruits. These include a change in behaviours and an improved ability to participate effectively in their respective roles and communities. Socialisees who demonstrate personal development, increased knowledge and skills, and changed attitudes, and who operate effectively as members of their communities are considered successful as the end goal of socialisation is competence (Vickers, 2007). This relates to EAP's primary aim of developing students' competence to maximise their educational experience. Such competence, however, is linked to recruits actively seeking to engage with their communities as well as a personal motivation to understand the organisational setting and exploit opportunities to fully integrate. For students, this could mean participating not only in class but also taking advantage of 1-1 tutorials and joining social networks that facilitate understanding and interaction with faculty and peers. One can further argue that it is also the responsibility of socialisees to challenge the socialising structures that do not serve them as this is part of showing agency and

effecting change within the given context. Yet because of power relations, socialisees may eschew such a responsibility, but this would result in a less satisfactory socialisation experience.

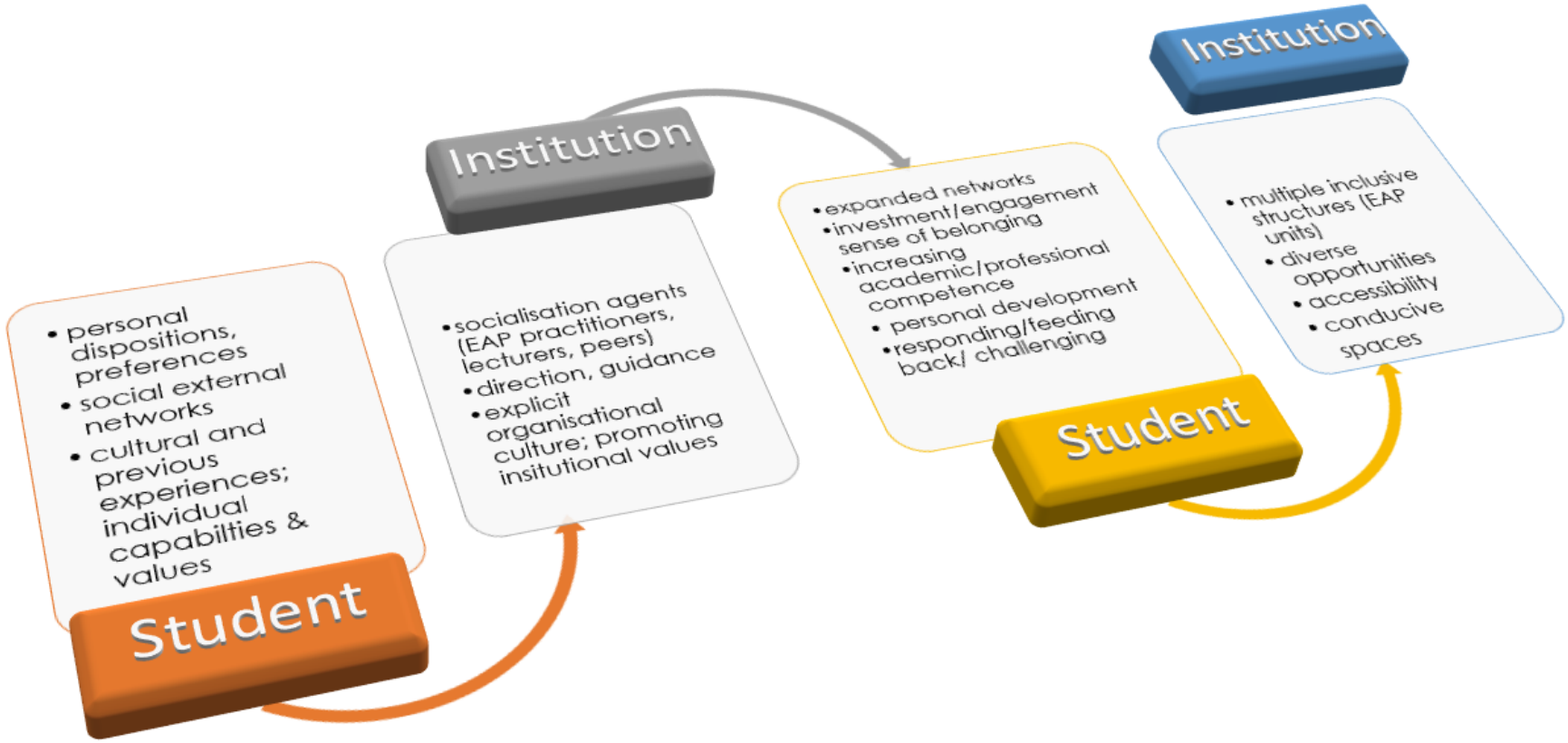


Figure 3: The Dynamic & Interactive Process of Socialisation

Figure 3 above illustrates the dynamic and interactive process of socialisation influenced by personal, professional and contextual features. The diagram serves to incorporate the various theoretical interpretations of socialisation and demonstrate how it is understood for the purpose of this thesis. It aims to complement Weidman's 1987 and 2006 models by centralising the role of the socialisee and emphasising the continuous interplay between the institutional and individual domains. For integration to happen, there must be organisational investment through structured opportunities, accessibility and conducive spaces as well as personal investment through engagement and involvement. Engagement and involvement increases both socialisees' competence and sense of belonging. Moreover, it is necessary to stress that socialisers and institutions change due to the process, especially if the needs of entrants become increasingly different. However, it must be noted that socialisers, although located within the institutional domain, do not completely represent the institution, and they too are influenced by institutional affordances.

By centralising the role of socialisees, which is necessary for successful socialisation, the process becomes more dynamic but to some extent unpredictable. This is because of the intersection of potentially wide-ranging personal, professional and contextual features which are themselves affected by numerous interrelated factors. The international student population is far from homogeneous and even when students come from the same region or country, personal and cultural differences impact on their socialisation needs, preventing exact predictions to be made by institutions or socialisers. This inevitably necessitates direct and continuous interaction with socialisees to better discern their specific needs. Moreover, because of the existence of multiple support structures, there are different institutional socialisers (e.g. lecturers and EAP tutors) who must communicate with each other to ensure efficiency of their guidance. However, the expectation is that socialisers, like students, will be influenced by their professional contexts (how much they interact with students and other socialisers), knowledge and expertise of

dealing with different students (e.g. experience of teaching international students) and even their own individual goodwill (willingness to adjust personal strategies). Finally, the process is ongoing and repeats itself; box 4 does not represent the end of the process. In a bid to continue to provide multiple, accessible and inclusive structures and spaces for students, institutions need to organically respond to the changing preferences of student cohorts as well as manage individual needs (box 1). Centralising socialisees means recognising shifts in students' habits as well as valuing individual abilities (box 1) to be able to direct or guide socialisees (box 2) which in turn ensures engagement (box 3), but from an institutional perspective, there is also a need for socialisers to collaborate and to some extent standardise and clarify socialisation practices and structures (boxes 2 & 4). In emphasising the ongoing and dynamic interplay between students and their institutions, Figure 3 both illustrates the inevitable intersection of the personal and professional characteristics as well as contextual opportunities in the process and signals potential tensions between individual and institutional needs.

As stated before, EAP as part of institutional provision has the potential to play key socialisation roles. In this diagram, its role manifests itself in both the second and fourth boxes. On arrival, many international students meet their EAP tutors who provide explicit guidance and respond to students' immediate needs – this is especially the case for presessional students who are new to a particular university. However, arguably, EAP's role is ongoing. Hence, in the fourth box, EAP centres can also be part of the multiple structures in place to support different students' needs through not only presessional but also insessional classes which increase their accessibility to socialisers. This role is more effective if there is collaboration between EAP tutors and subject lecturers, as argued in chapter 2, allowing different socialisers to work together to address the difficulties some international students have transitioning into their new HE context. Yet, as part of students' anticipatory socialisation, EAP could inform the individual domain if

students have already taken an EAP course before embarking on their degree course (this would constitute previous experiences in box 1), or if students enrol on an insessional programme, the EAP input can directly help students to engage, develop their competence and perhaps, even challenge existing structures (box 3). EAP's role in this diagram could simplistically lie within the institutional domain but can extend to the personal domain depending on students' experiences. Again, as with the interaction between students and their institution, EAP has a potentially fluid and dynamic, but also key role in HE socialisation structures and students' experiences.

3.3 Understanding Socialisation through Spaces

Despite the importance of interactions and relationships for successful socialisation, there is little consideration of the spaces in which they occur, or how spaces impact on the behaviours of participants. Wheeler's (1966) suggestion that settings can be removed or in the middle of social contexts alludes to physical location, but the assumption seems to be that socialisation settings are somewhat divorced from wider social contexts. In her description of socialisation, Bragg (1976) explains that students interact with the educational setting, which can be understood to be the systems in place and the physical structure. She additionally notes that graduate students feel a sense of belonging when allocated their own space and have opportunities to interact informally (p. 33). She also theorises that commuters living off-campus are somehow disadvantaged compared to on-campus students. However, Weidman (1987) rightly contradicts this by noting that educational contexts are not encapsulated. Indeed, Pervan et al (2016), in their study of DBA students, established that students' resources are not limited to campus boundaries as students sought resources from within and outside the university; this resonates with other studies on the adjustment of international students (Maundeni, 2001).

Sporadic references to spaces have also been made by other authors: Weidman et al (2001) state that socialisation occurs within and outside classrooms; Thompson (2003) identifies the classroom as the formal setting

of socialisation; Friedman (2010) similarly examined classrooms as sites of identity and linguistic socialisation, but Boden et al (2011) identify the department as the principal site of socialisation, believing spaces help create a sense of community (p. 749). However, these direct references are marginal, lacking in-depth exploration of the use and impact of spaces for socialisation; moreover, there is no consideration of online spaces by more recent studies.

Yet there is reason to examine physical and online spaces and their impact on the process because the interactions on which successful socialisation rests do not occur in a vacuum but in occupied spaces. Understanding how spaces are conceptualised and used can illuminate how they facilitate interactions between socialisees and socialisers. The next section will explore relevant claims from the literature on learning spaces and comment on how educational spaces can affect the socialisation experience.

3.3.1 Literature on Learning Spaces

There is an extensive literature on learning spaces and the impact of technology on learning (see reviews by Temple, 2007 and Blackmore et al, 2011). Whilst there is a focus on schools (Cooney et al, 2000; Woolner et al, 2012; Uduku, 2016), there is a growing literature focused on HE (Perkins & Wieman, 2005; Brooks, 2010; Stoltfuz & Libarkin, 2016). Different methodological approaches have been used to explore learning spaces and their impacts on users. Depending on the nature of the study and the research focus (mainly learner perceptions of their environments), some empirical studies employed an experimental or quasi-experimental design whilst others relied on mixed methods. For the purposes of this thesis, I have made use of extensive reviews[12] and empirical studies pertinent to the relationship between spaces and user behaviours to explore impacts on socialisation. There are some generalisable findings on the usage of educational spaces and strong suggestions that there is a link between spaces and user behaviours which can affect teaching and learning (Brooks, 2010;

[12] Blackmore et al's review examines more than 600 published primary studies

Woolner et al, 2012), attendance (Perkins & Wieman, 2005) and interactions (Dori & Belcher, 2005; Stoltfuz & Libarkin, 2016).

Despite the varying foci, there is a general consensus that the traditional notion of learning spaces or classrooms needs to be reconceptualised. Lippman (2010) recognises learning environments as comprising not only learners and teachers but also the physical environment. Flutter (2006) too emphasises the importance of the physical dimension and its relationship with other dimensions (social and cultural); suggesting, therefore, that there is an interplay between the physical and socio-cultural aspects in a learning setting. Interest in learning environments has resulted in an ongoing review of learning experiences that occur in physical and virtual places, and an understanding that learning can happen in multiple locations (Neary & Thody, 2009). Oblinger (2006) distinguishes between formal spaces such as classrooms and informal spaces outside of classes, arguing that learning occurs just as much out of classrooms as it does in them. This corresponds with Weidman et al's (2001) point that socialisation occurs within and outside classrooms. Furthermore, school buildings are considered to be important learning tools (Fisher, 2005). It is argued that any space can be made into a *learning space* (Lomas & Oblinger, 2006), even corridors (Van Note Chism, 2006). Not only does the literature encourage a change in perceptions of traditional learning spaces but it also reflects the changes brought on by information technology in educational contexts.

These changes are mostly documented as positive and encourage more integration of technology into learning spaces. For example, Brooks' (2010) quasi-experimental investigation showed positive results for students in technologically-enhanced environments with regards to active learning. It is believed that technology allows new possibilities for learning whilst increasing student engagement and involvement (Crook et al, 2010), which in turn increases agency. Traditional spaces, contrastingly, are criticised for not corresponding with the needs of today's learners or new pedagogic beliefs (Oblinger, 2006; Blackmore et al,2011). There are also other studies

advocating the positive impacts of using spaces more effectively and integrating technology in learning (Flutter, 2006; Crook et al, 2010; Dori & Belcher, 2005). Despite new ways of thinking about educational spaces and seemingly increasing evidence of their impact on learning, Blackmore et al (2011) caution against the generalisability of some claims and insist on more empirical evidence.

Nonetheless, suggestions for aligning learning spaces with modern educational ideologies seem valid. Propositions regarding how spaces can encourage more learner engagement and ownership of spaces seem realistic. Oblinger (2006) argues that learners today are highly social and favour active, participatory and experiential learning (1.1); such characteristics are incompatible with lectures in large halls with immovable furniture. Oblinger's core premises that today's students are more interactive and IT has had considerable impact on learning are also reasonable depictions of modern learning environments and their users. It is suggested that learning spaces can change traditional relationships between staff and students, and impart a sense of belonging (Oblinger, 2006; Temple, 2007; Woolner et al, 2012). This is key considering any divide between students and faculty could delay the socialisation process. Fisher (2005) also believes supportive learning environments promote independence and self-motivation in learners. Lippman (2010) proposes a more innovative and sustainable use of space via practice theory, which focuses on the interaction between users and the learning environment. He envisions modern learning places as ones in which the learner is engaged in self-directed and co-operative activities, but most modern technologies have yet to be fully integrated into physical environments (Oliver & Lippman, 2007 cited in Lippman, 2010). Moreover, multiple and sometimes competing factors such as cost and general practicality can influence decisions regarding the development and use of learning spaces.

The principal argument is that learning spaces are not neutral but can affect learners' behaviours, perceptions and interactions in many ways (Banning &

Canard, 1986; Oblinger, 2006; Flutter, 2006; Lippman, 2010; Brooks, 2010). It is reasonably suggested that students gravitate towards spaces that appeal to them (Lomas & Oblinger, 2006), indicating spaces can influence behaviour. Users have been known to prefer soft classes with carpets and covered seats to hard classes (Sommer & Olsen, 1980; Wong et al, 1992). Furthermore, the layout of classrooms can affect users' behaviours. Woolner et al (2012) report on a case study where students and teachers of a school were introduced to new learning environments consisting of large, shared spaces. They observed an 'experimental week' with a group of Year 8 students and concluded there was more flexible use of space and more student engagement. Contrastingly, teacher-fronted classrooms or large lecture halls discourage student participation and can affect grades (Cuseo, 2007; Kokkelenberg et al, 2008). It is not surprising that lecture halls are not considered sites for productive interactions not only between teachers and students, but even between students themselves. One study, in which seats were randomly allocated to students whilst monitoring attendance and participation, found that even seat location influenced students' perceptions, engagement and performance (Perkins & Wieman, 2005). Moreover, in a teacher-fronted classroom, the assumption is that the teacher is the legitimate speaker in that space and the one whose voice should be heard, endorsing a transmission theory in which learners passively receive information in formal teaching spaces (Van Note Chism, 2006). This may not be the intended message from faculty, but the social patterns that emerge from the use of space (Lippman, 2010) can promote a silent curriculum (Taylor, 2005 cited in Gee, 2006) and unspoken messages of campus culture (Lomas & Oblinger, 2006).

It has also been argued that institutional ethos can be displayed through campuses and physical spaces. Edwards (2013) posits that campus buildings express the higher mission of the university whilst Flutter (2006) states that a school's physical environment reflects the culture and aspirations of the community by indicating what is respected and valued; this in turn can be

assimilated by users. Similarly, Friedman asserts that classrooms do not exist in a vacuum, but are located within a web of cultural, social, and ideological beliefs affecting classroom routines (2010). Whilst it is noted that some claims lack evidentiary support and the impacts are not always predictable or simple (Temple, 2007; Blackmore et al, 2011; Woolner et al, 2012), it is worth reflecting on how campus structures support institutional values and create a sense of inclusion or exclusion (Banning & Canard, 1986). This can be done not only through building designs, but also what is explicitly visible as well as what dominant behaviours exist in common spaces. An international campus which visibly recognises multiple cultures and races through public pictures, posters or names of buildings can be said to be more inclusive than one that promotes diversity but does not explicitly reflect it in its shared spaces. At my own institution, there has been some recent renaming of buildings to recognise the contributions of international, particularly Chinese, staff. Considering the increasing number of Chinese students at our UK campus and the existence of a campus in Ningbo, this is a positive direction in helping students, more so Chinese students, feel included. A further step could be having campus signs in multiple languages, not just in English; this would render the campuses truly multinational by creating linguistic pluralism (Trudell et al, 2016) and make international students feel more welcomed.

Another crucial aspect of physical spaces is proximity. The strategic locations of spaces would allow for easier interaction between sub-groups and different users. Traditionally, the expectation is that on-campus students are more easily influenced by the campus culture than non-resident students. Also, departments and disciplines tend to be housed in the same building or close to each other. This proximity helps members of the department to develop a sense of belonging. Van Note Chism (2006) believes that the separation of staff offices from classrooms increases distance between faculty and students. In contrast, where staff offices are close to areas frequented by students, interaction between the two groups of users is encouraged as is interdisciplinary collaboration when departments share

campus locations (Lomas & Oblinger, 2006). The deliberate allocation of spaces can create opportunities for interaction and encourage integration.

Virtual spaces are also instrumental in the promotion of student engagement and active learning (Lomas & Oblinger, 2006; Read & Lancaster, 2012). The availability and accessibility of technology has led to the existence of numerous online systems and communities that also impact on the behaviours of users within a given context. In higher education, the use of platforms such as Moodle and Web CT among others has resulted in more learner engagement because students can access information via these platforms, participate in online communities and choose how much time they want to spend on a particular task; this allows more personalisation and flexibility when studying. Moreover, technology has been used to *scale-up* traditional classes (Stoltfuz & Libarkin, 2016) which has had some positive impacts on student learning (Brooks, 2010) as well as teaching patterns (Crook et al, 2010). Although Stoltfuz & Libarkin, (2016) found students in both *scaled-up* and traditional classrooms achieved similar results in their quasi-experimental study, the influence of the internet as a key resource is prevalent among students who consider the internet, not the library, their "information universe" (Oblinger, 2006: 1.2). Technology has provided relatively unlimited access to information and more readily available support (Oblinger, 2006; Woolner et al, 2012); such accessibility has reduced learning barriers (Uduku, 2016).

However, the positive impacts of technologically enhanced and online spaces is highly dependent on uptake and user expertise. Not all users can be said to have the same access to and expertise in using technology for learning. Neary & Thody (2009) comment on the digital gap between those who have assimilated this digital culture, mostly students, and those who have not, mainly faculty. Where users do not or cannot exploit such technologies, or where traditional teaching and learning behaviours persist instead of being transformed by the new technology, then the various potentials described cannot be realised. Moreover, a cautionary note is that it is the pedagogic

approach behind the use of technology and enhanced spaces that improves learning and teaching practices, not the technology in itself (Stoltfuz & Libarkin, 2016; Temple, 2007; Read & Lancaster, 2012; Woolner et al, 2012).

3.3.2 Borrowing from the Literature on Learning Spaces

These characteristics of learning spaces discussed above have significant relevance to the socialisation processes of students. There is potential either to enhance or delay the process depending on whether the physical and virtual spaces of an organisation are aligned with institutional ethos. If socialisation, as explored earlier, is about the development of the relevant knowledge, skills and disposition, then it is necessary that the recruits have access to the information that they need to develop such knowledge and skills. This may be simply providing the necessary resources in libraries, providing samples of good practice and clarifying expectations through online platforms for students to access in their own time. The existence of adequately housed resources in readily accessible spaces would significantly support students in the development of the necessary knowledge skills and attitudes for socialisation. Equally, the lack of clear information and usable resources could delay the process.

A second way spaces can affect socialisation is in the communication and relationships that are developed or prevented in occupied places. Spaces that can be used for multiple purposes and by many users will not only attract more users but also encourage interaction between occupants. Hence, study spaces with facilities for group study or lounging, supply and charging docks for laptops and phones or Wi-Fi will attract students and encourage peer collaboration. Students can more easily engage in group tasks when such spaces are available within departments and on campus. Similarly, having faculty offices close to study spaces and classrooms could minimise the divide between faculty and students and even encourage informal interaction; such interactions can lead to more opportunities for socialisation since, as has been stated, socialisation occurs both within and outside the classroom (Weidman et al, 2001). For international students who may lack confidence

to engage with staff in more formal settings, this proximity could help reduce any reluctance or anxiety to approach teachers, especially if an atmosphere of collegiality is developed in these informal spaces. Moreover, physical proximity offers faculty the chance to observe students and potentially be more aware of their experiences. In short, there are ongoing opportunities for mutual feedback on socialisation needs and expectations.

Thirdly, because spaces can carry messages of connection or disconnection (Oblinger, 2006) and instil a sense of belonging in occupants, it would be beneficial for spaces occupied by recruits to be explicitly inclusive both racially and culturally. Where students feel included, they would be encouraged to spend more time on campus and in the allocated areas of their disciplines. The result of this is that a campus will develop a truly international feel that is of benefit to home and overseas students, who are socialised into an international culture. Furthermore, when students meet in shared spaces, not only does it allow them to take advantage of opportunities to befriend and work with other students, but also to observe and emulate the behaviours of experienced members. For international students, including EAP students, this presents a valuable opportunity to learn more about the culture and language of their new environment through active participation. Also, where visibility is strategically used to laud student achievements by posting their work on corridor walls, this can be a strong motivator for students to become dynamic and successful members of the discipline or school as well as an excellent chance to show international students that academic attainment is not reserved for native speakers.

Finally, with carefully tailored spaces, students can also learn to be more agentive as they integrate into their new environment. This is especially the case if online materials and information are provided to support student transition. Where students can find and come to rely on different resources other than faculty or peers, their level of autonomy is likely to increase. Lomas & Oblinger (2006) state that students today receive information from multiple sources, especially search engines like *Google,* to amass and

synthesise information. This, they believe, creates more inquisitive and self-directed learners (p. 5.3). More importantly, the ability to access more choices through technological devices and e-platforms creates a need for learners to engage and select what best suits them as individuals, positively affecting their involvement with their institution and their courses. Another way student autonomy can be developed is by the dual use of online and physical spaces especially in large classes and lectures. Students can post and respond to questions through the use of their mobile or laptops devices through a shared class or module space which is accessed synchronously by the lecturer. This can improve student engagement and interaction in large lecture halls; as stated before, where students are more involved, they are more likely to show agency. With technological devices, new learning practices are emerging that seem to be creating more independent and self-directed learners; for new recruits this is a significant opportunity for them to more actively negotiate their adaptation into their new context.

It seems, therefore, that spaces can contribute much to the discussion on academic socialisation and help all participants navigate this multidimensional experience more strategically and successfully.

3.4 EAP as a Socialisation Structure

EAP practice resonates in multiple ways with the main characteristics of socialisation discussed above. Firstly, in its preparatory role, EAP exposes many international students to the expectations of their new Anglophone university context and raises awareness of the behaviours and skills they need to demonstrate. To some extent, it is expected that students' competence is developed at least enough to embark on an undergraduate or postgraduate course. In such a role, EAP effectively functions as anticipatory socialisation for these students although it also informs students' formal socialisation. This is when students take credit-bearing insessional courses alongside their subject-specific modules; the practice of offering credit-bearing or compulsory EAP classes is not uncommon in the field (Ntereke & Ramoroka, 2015; Fenton-Smith et al, 2018). Moreover, as an ongoing process, students

are being socialised at different stages to new roles and activities, making their need for EAP input a continuous one. For example, students may first enrol on a presessional programme and undergo linguistic socialisation; then, on their degree programmes, concurrently take insessional courses to learn more about specific tasks like delivering presentations. Later, more advanced students may need further assistance in understanding how to write a dissertation. These examples demonstrate EAP's integral role at different stages of students' socialisation.

Inarguably, like socialisation, EAP is a learning process for students. EAP practice is about achieving the academic and communicative competence to succeed at tertiary level (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). It is expected that by the end of their EAP education, students would have acquired important skills, linguistic competence and knowledge for studying in their new university environment. It is also predicted that students develop, or at least begin to develop, key qualities such as autonomy and criticality and appreciate the academic values of life-long learning and knowledge exchange. Many EAP courses have end of term assessments to demonstrate what students have achieved after EAP input and gauge readiness for their degree programmes. This is analogous to Wheeler's (1966) comment that there are specific points of entry and exit in the socialisation process between which there are changes. For EAP students, these changes would be improved understanding of general academic norms, increased linguistic competence and specific institutional practices upon course completion.

EAP education is also about fostering group membership by improving students' abilities to participate and engage in their contexts. EAP classes tend to be small and intimate so students enjoy closer relations with teachers, therefore making them suitable socialisation sites for new international students. Furthermore, in EAP classes, there is usually ample opportunity for class engagement and cultural acceptance; such cooperative environment, as opposed to a competitive one, is also ideal for peer support in the socialisation process (Bragg, 1976; Turner & Thompson, 1993; Beatty et

al). In terms of fostering membership into future departments, EAP practitioners are reconceptualising academic writing as a social practice within disciplines as discussed in the previous chapter, and DC and AL approaches have been employed to examine the communicative practices of academic disciplines in order to inform EAP pedagogy. However, in EAP the focus on group membership is fairly limited to textual discourse practices and to some extent speech interactions, not the wider relationships that pertain to group membership. Moreover, as noted, CoP which prioritises relationships between novices and experienced members has not been employed to examine the learning communities of EAP students and how this might benefit their transition into academe.

Adopting a socialisation lens to understand EAP practice addresses some of the shortcomings of the pedagogical approaches discussed in the previous chapter. As socialisation is focused on recruits' broader and ongoing transitional experiences, this forces one to reflect on the wider impact of EAP's purposes and how future directions for EAP might be influenced by the trends that emerge from the wider HE context; this would help ensure global relevance and authenticity in EAP provision. Whilst EAP literature and research has exponentially expanded, it was argued that this has been very much around the teaching and learning of academic writing, and empirical studies examining EAP's effectiveness have also tended to focus on writing or academic literacy. Hence, there is still need to measure EAP's success by its broader educational purposes, which can more easily be achieved when a socialisation lens is adopted. Socialisation allows a comprehensive examination of EAP's relevance to target situations, its efficacy as a learning process and its preparation for relationships with significant others. Indeed, in the studies reviewed in chapter 2, none discussed the relationships students had with either peers or lecturers or considered how such relationships could help the transition process. The success of EAP courses rests primarily in their ability to help students participate in their academic communities, not just improve their writing performance. Hence, a

socialisation perspective would permit a more holistic investigation of EAP impact.

Finally, when viewed as part of the wider socialisation structure of institutions, EAP courses are less likely to be seen as adjunct or *crash repair* language courses (Chanock, 2007). Using a socialisation lens to understand EAP's holistic impact on international students would address issues around its institutional role and hopefully, minimise perceptions of units serving predominantly as cash-cows (Charles & Pecorari, 2016; Hadley, 2015). An added advantage lies in host institutions perceiving the need for EAP practitioners and subject lecturers as socialisers to collaborate in order to provide better support mechanisms for their international students. Working with subject lecturers has already been highlighted as a way EAP practitioners develop their knowledge and offer more relevant courses. It was also highlighted that such collaborations are uncommon and not always successful; perhaps as opposed to modest departmental initiatives, such collaborations could be strategically planned as institutional interventions and become more prolific, but this would require seeing EAP as fundamental to students' socialisation.

The advantages of seeing EAP as a fundamental socialisation mechanism relates also to host institutions. Socialisation mechanisms function in relation to a wider context, not only in terms of measuring their success, but also in terms of a symbiotic relationship. Where socialisation structures are effective in preparing new recruits for entry into a given community, it can be expected that both the entrants and organisation benefit from this success. Universities, as the wider context, can boast of higher retention rates if international students experience successful transitions from previous educational contexts.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explicated what is meant by socialisation and justified its usefulness for understanding EAP practice. It first articulated the necessity of socialisation within the HE context in terms of international students and

their transition into a new learning environment. The term socialisation was clarified to mean the multidimensional process of acquiring new skills, knowledge and dispositions to undertake a new role or membership in a group or community, rather than one of indoctrination. Overall, it was established that it is a cumulative and social process that impacts on the identities of all involved. Language socialisation was also briefly explored as EAP students are learning to use the language of their community and relevant issues with such experiences were noted. This chapter additionally discussed the minimal consideration of online or physical spaces on the socialisation process. Spatial impact is deemed relevant as socialisation happens in designated spaces which can be enabling or disabling for users. Finally, this chapter concluded by pointing out the resonance between EAP practice and socialisation theories; it identified how socialisation can address some of the shortcomings of traditional EAP approaches and articulated the benefits of considering EAP practice from a socialisation perspective.

Chapter 4: Methodological Approach

4. 1 Introduction

This chapter rationalises the methodology used in this investigation. Here, I discuss the data collection choice, my position as an insider/outsider researcher and the data collection and analysis processes before highlighting the ethical issues encountered.

Socialisation theories sit well within the constructivist/interpretive paradigm (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) because socialisation experiences are rarely identical as recruits construct individual experiences through interaction with others. Constructivism values what is meaningful to individuals and whose perceptions are influenced by their socio-cultural leanings (Creswell, 2009; Robson, 2011; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Such epistemology matches my relativistic ontological belief that humans differently interpret the world around them. These different interpretations are reflected in investigations focused on people; hence, why social science research has been described as messy (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003; Smyth & Holian, 2008). As a researcher, I am located within this constructivist/interpretive paradigm (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Patton, 2002; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Crotty (1998) defines constructivism as 'the meaning-making activity of the individual mind' (p. 58). This understanding of constructivism is shared by Robson (2011) who suggests that constructivist researchers aim to understand pluralistic constructions of meaning. Constructivism involves understanding how participants make sense of their experiences and how idiosyncratic conceptions affect views of reality; hence, there are multiple possibilities of a single phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Moreover, researchers are not separate from the process but affect it through their own experiences (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, constructivist inquiries are differently validated due to the subjective nature of collecting and representing of data. Creswell & Miller (2000) suggest promoting validity through prolonged engagement and thick descriptions; triangulation can also be used to collect plural interpretations and expand knowledge of a

phenomenon, not to prioritise one participant's account over another (Creswell & Miller, 2000) My interest in pluralistic interpretations of students' socialisation experiences dictates using an interactive data collection method.

Data were therefore collected through interviews; my primary reason for choosing face-to-face semi-structured interviews is appropriacy. Interviewing students was the most suitable means to understand students' perceptions of their socialisation experiences and the relevant impact of their EAP education.

My initial data collection the year before included focus group interviews with different students. There were logistical difficulties organising meetings, and vocal participants tended to dominate the conversations (Barbour, 2007). Furthermore, the attrition rate within two months into the investigation was significant. Perhaps, this was because there was little homogeneity (Morgan, 1997) in terms of disciplines and culture, which affected group cohesion and dynamics (Fern, 2001). Therefore, I decided to pilot questions with these students and develop my understanding of student experiences. Doing this helped me clarify what I, the researcher, wanted from this investigation which was: *understanding students' individual perceptions of integrating into university*. However, to construct a more comprehensive picture of students' socialisation experiences, it was fitting that the views of relevant staff were also considered. So, I decided to interview staff as well, to gather diverse viewpoints and triangulate the data refining my comprehension of the phenomenon and my ability to gauge trustworthiness (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Interviews allow participants to relay complex and in-depth information about themselves and their experiences (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013; Patton, 2002; Kvale, 1996), and can be seen as interactive encounters or conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee (Robson, 2011; Cohen et al, 2011; Mann, 2011) or, more aptly, an "intersubjective enterprise" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015: 218) . This is particularly the case with semi-

structured interviews, common in qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013; Bryman 2016), when open-ended and additional questions can be used giving the researcher the opportunity to clarify and pursue unanticipated topics. All these opportunities render the interview a locus for co-construction of meaning (Mann, 2011). Furthermore, interviews can be highly personal (Patton, 2002: 407). Schostak (2005) describes each interview as "a period of getting to know each other" (p. 49). Through 1-1 interviews, I could vicariously explore interviewees' individual experiences (*ibid*) and create a safe space for participants to explore topics without being unduly influenced by others, which can occur in focus group interviews. This opportunity was especially important for student participants who had mixed levels of language proficiency; with some students, I believe the 1-1 interview set up made them less conscious of their language difficulties.

Whilst this language concern did not apply to staff, they too had the opportunity to express their perceptions confidentially. As personal accounts, I recognise that interviews are subjective as information is filtered through interviewees (Creswell, 2009; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015), but this aligns with my research aims which were to reconceptualise EAP education by allowing students to describe their socialisation experiences and to document others' perceptions of the process. Additionally, successful interviews rest on good rapport with participants (Patton, 2002; Savin Baden & Howell Major, 2013; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). I felt using face-to-face interviews was a good way of building rapport with my participants as opposed to relying on virtual media. Moreover, with face-to-face interviews, I could better observe non-verbal cues. Although video recording can now be carried out more discreetly, I chose to audio-record interviews as I considered this less intrusive not only for participants but for myself as the researcher; it is believed that interviews are already intrusive in nature and sensitive details can emerge in this exchange (Patton, 2002). Notes were made during all interviews.

Practicality was another influential factor. It was easier to arrange individual interviews with participants and access campus locations where all interviews took place. This second attempt at data collection was more successful because there was more flexibility with individual interviewees. My decision to use interviews was also practically supported by the plethora of resources available, which was crucial for me, a novice researcher, considering interviews can be misconstrued to be simple and straight-forward (Patton, 2002; Schostak, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Indeed, an experienced interviewer utilises a myriad of skills. My first interview (Grace) lasted only fourteen minutes partly because of my naïve view of students as mere respondents and my expectations that with the right questions, they would reveal all to me unproblematically (Block, 2000). With more insight from the literature, I adjusted my approach and developed the skills to conduct more collaborative interviews; my second interview with Grace lasted twenty-seven minutes.

Moreover, Delamont (2002) advises careful consideration of the political, academic and management feasibility of an investigation (p. 79). Political feasibility involves access to contexts otherwise closed to other researchers. As established, I had access to my participants as we were members of the same institution. Academic feasibility considers the ability to analyse the data, or learn to analyse the data, one has collected. As an EAP tutor, I exploited some of my professional skills and knowledge, and as a doctoral student, I was developing the competence needed for theoretical conceptualisations (*ibid*). Finally, Delamont further emphasises manageability. Face-to-face interviews are time-consuming so I needed to consider whether my research was realistic timewise. Because interviews were conducted on campus, I could work around my teaching schedule. I decided to interview students first to identify which topics to discuss with staff members. Student interviews were conducted between September 2015 and 2016, and staff interviews were conducted between April and June 2017 (see Figure 4 p. 93). The gap between the sets of interviews allowed me

to transcribe, analyse and write up summaries of student interviews before finalising interview questions for staff members. This strategy not only helped to prioritise student voices, but also to manage the interviewing process. All these practicalities supported my choice to utilise interviews as my main data collection method.

However, because interviews are interactive (Kvale, 1996; Schostak, 2005; Mann, 2011), it is important to consider the influence of the researcher and interviewees' impressions of the researcher (Block, 2000; Delamont, 2002). Savin-Baden & Howell Major (2013) note that one challenge of designing interviews is that they are affected by the researcher's philosophical and methodological attitudes. My values and prejudices are reflected in the questions I chose to ask and how I probed. Schostak (2005) contests the ability of the researcher to remain objective especially since *inter-views* represent an intersubjective and intertextual experience; the deletion of the interviewer is considered a liability in interview design (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Similarly, Mann (2011) criticises studies that do not fully illustrate the role of interviewer and emphasises *the what* and *the how* of interviews. For me, this means the recorded interviews are the real data and even when transcribed verbatim, transcripts can inadvertently cause one to prioritise content (*the what*) since key conversational features like intonation which help to comprehend *the how* are lost in written texts. Regular listening to the audio-scripts was necessary to consider *the how* of these interviews. Consequently, to present my interviews as the interactions that they are, it is necessary to clarify my position in this investigation.

4.2 My Insider/Outsider Position

For this research, I was both an insider and an outsider. Insider researchers are those studying a group to which they belong (Breen, 2007: 163). Participants and I were members of the same institution; when some students mentioned the architectural design of one of our libraries, I understood what they meant, having the necessary insider knowledge. Secondly, with the exception of subject lecturers, participants and I had

shared experiences and knowledge of the EAP world. Furthermore, I understood the generic group culture and interacted naturally with participants (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). Yet, an individual's status is not singular (Merton, 1972), and researchers can assume multiple identities (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) partly because the distinction between insiders and outsiders can be nebulous (Adler, 2004; Mercer, 2007), or their position may be an *in-betweeness* (McNess et al, 2013). I was also an outsider; students and lecturers were members of academic departments to which I did not belong.

One obvious advantage of being an insider is access to participants, as previously noted. I felt participants were more inclined to be interviewed as we belong to the same institution and practical barriers could easily be surmounted. Furthermore, I could access the academic profiles of participants and had useful local knowledge. However, there was an inherent tension between my organisational and research roles (Smyth & Holian, 2008). Because I am an EAP tutor, there were initially remnants of the power relationship with students. During interviews, students sometimes expected me, *the tutor,* to lead the discussion. However, as a researcher, I wanted participants to be candid about their experiences, including their EAP classes, but students perceived me as their tutor who had enthusiastically advocated our course's usefulness during their EAP year. This undoubtedly influenced their responses.

Another tension that emerges with insider research is trying to distance oneself from familiar contexts. Insider researchers are vulnerable to familiarity (Breen, 2007; Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002; Kanuha, 2000; Sikes & Potts, 2008). Too much familiarity affects how the researcher makes sense of the data and the setting, making it incumbent to make the familiar strange (Delamont, 2002; Bonner & Tolhurst 2002). I employed strategies to distance myself and prevent *a priori* knowledge from unduly affecting how I analysed the data collected (DeLyser, 2001). Strategies included noting personal biases and professional differences as well as continuously reviewing my

approach and interpretations to ensure there was a productive balance between what I know and what participants are saying. In my development of the interview questions, I could sometimes recognise how what I know affected how I approached the whole process, even wording questions. This realisation informed decisions regarding the timing of questions; I sometimes postponed or revisited questions to minimise researcher bias (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). For example, students were asked about the impact of their Foundation year on their current experiences in the final interview, rather than in Interviews 2-4. The rationale was to allow students to independently make connections between their EAP and their degree programmes during the year. Also, waiting till the final interview to evaluate our programme's impact meant both parties could be sufficiently distanced.

Other strategies employed to distance myself were reviewing my notes and keeping a personal diary (Ortlipp, 2008) to note my own attitude. Although this diary was not religiously approached, it helped me to notice tensions between my researcher and tutor identities. I noticed my dual identity in my transcripts; when I had gone into *tutor-mode* out of habit and over-empathised with students, but also when I maintained *researcher-mode* by refraining from commenting on managerial decisions when a colleague vented her frustrations. I am not attempting to deny my researcher subjectivity, which is problematic to eradicate (Schostak, 2005; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013) and should be acknowledged (Ortlipp, 2008; Mann, 2011). Rather, I am trying to illustrate awareness of my impact on data procured and interpretations offered (Griffith, 1998; Roulston et al, 2001).

Additionally, I believe personal characteristics worked to my advantage. Because I am relatively young, this may have increased students' willingness to participate. This realisation occurred when a participant commented on the age of some of her lecturers, highlighting an age barrier. I believe being a comparatively younger member of staff influenced students' decisions to partake in my investigation. A second advantage lies in my multicultural background. African students felt endeared to me on a racial level; having

learnt Arabic in Lebanon, Arabic speakers also felt some connection with me. Other participants, I presume, perceived me as an international, as opposed to a British, member of staff. These personal characteristics, referred to as *passive researcher bias* (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), very likely influenced students in supporting my research.

Nonetheless, in many ways I was also an outsider. Participants and I were now in different subject departments whose daily operations were largely unknown to me. As an outsider, I did not always understand how things worked; for example mooting sessions in law school. Tutorials also had a different meaning in the law school. I had to rely on participants to clarify disciplinary practices. Subject lecturers were asked practical questions to clarify what students had said about their departments; this would have been unnecessary had I been an insider in those circles. Yet, as an outsider, I could throw new light on established practices (Bridges, 2001) and objectively question departmental norms (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). With lecturers, my outsider identity was more pronounced; we had few shared experiences except that we worked at the same institution. Whilst lecturers generally had some intimation of EAP, it was an unfamiliar territory. Moreover, the unquestioned academic status of lecturers contradicted the tenuous position of EAP staff who are not always seen as being *real* academics, as discussed in chapter two, exacerbating my *outsiderness*. I am merely considering this possibility; there were no indications of this from lecturers. Perhaps, it was the assumption of multiple identities needed to undergo this investigation; as a seasoned EAP teacher, assuming a researcher identity felt like Macbeth in *borrowed robes*. With lecturers, I was acutely aware of being a novice researcher and outsider.

4.3 Interviews with Students

A purposive, or non-random, sampling (Cohen et al, 2011; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun,2015) was employed when choosing student participants as it was necessary to recruit students who had completed one of our EAP programmes and would be studying at this institution: meaning students also

needed to have met the entry requirements for their degree courses[13] at this institution.

Because of our tutor/student relationship, I needed to fairly obtain students' consent (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Therefore, I introduced my research to students towards the end of their EAP year and asked for volunteers after their final exam. Twenty students volunteered and provided me with contact details. Once students' results were released, I emailed fifteen[14] students to formally invite them to participate. Out of these fifteen, one failed to respond, and another did not return to the UK. In September 2015, I started interviews with thirteen students enrolled on UG programmes at my institution. Table 4 below is a pseudonymised list of student participants. Students' end-of-year grades were also collected from their respective Schools and served to triangulate the data.

[13] An overall distinction (70% or above) and distinctions in English language modules.
[14] Five students went to other institutions.

Table 4: Pseudonymised List of Student Participants

Participant	Gender	Nationality	L1	School	No. of interviews completed
Grace	Female	Nigerian	Unknown; NNS*	Law	5
Kai	Male	Burmese (Myanmar)	Burmese	Business	5
Tony	Male	Burmese (Myanmar)	Burmese	Business	5
Yixuan	Female	Chinese	Mandarin	Business	5
Rebecca	Female	Namibian	Unknown; NNS	Law	5
Naomi	Female	Hong Kong	Cantonese	Law	5
Thomas	Male	Hong Kong	Cantonese	Law	5
Ifeoma	Female	Nigerian	Unknown; NNS	CLAS	5
Sam	Female	American	NS*	Law	4
Amira	Female	Qatari	Arabic; NNS	Business	5
Victoria	Female	Singaporean	Unknown; NNS	Law	5
Faith	Female	Nigerian	Unknown; NNS	Law	5
Ghassan	Male	Moroccan	Arabic/French	Business	3

* ***NNS = Near-native speaker (L1 unknown); NS = native speaker***

I conducted sixty-two interviews with students over the year (see Figure 4 p. 93) to capture their experiences of university life and consider how their EAP education benefited them. Except for two, each participant was interviewed five times, and interviews lasted approximately twenty-five minutes, albeit the initial interviews were noticeably shorter. Unfortunately, one participant (Ghassan) withdrew unofficially after the third interview when he left the University, and another (Sam) ceased correspondence after the fourth interview. I emailed these students to rearrange the interviews but their failure to respond implied they no longer wished to participate. Although I could have sent messages through other participants, I felt this would be coercive, and I understood their disinclination to explicitly withdraw because of our previous tutor-student relationship.

As these were semi-structured interviews, the same main questions were asked of all participants; however, warm up and follow up questions were phrased differently depending on the personalities, responses, and language levels of participants. Participants generally had good levels of spoken English, being either native or near-native speakers (see table above); only Kai and Yixuan experienced some language difficulties during their interviews. Interviews were staged so that students were capable of answering the questions posed based on their most recent or current experiences. For example, interview 2 which took place approximately two months after students had started their degree programmes explores their initial success and struggles, but interview 3 explored the places students used and visited which could not have been fully explored at the start of their academic year when their academic experience was limited to only a few weeks.

The initial interviews (interview 1) were meant to establish how ready students felt at the start of their programmes. I contacted students at the beginning of the academic year in September to arrange interviews before they started their programmes. However for some, classes had already started when our interview took place. Nonetheless, all interviews were

conducted within a month of starting their programmes. The purpose of this first interview was to explore how students gauged their readiness for their degree programme and initial impressions, but more importantly whether they linked that readiness to EAP input. In other words, whether they perceived their EAP foundation year as anticipatory socialisation (Weidman, 1987). In this first interview, there were five questions around readiness, expectations and concerns. The main justification was to keep the first interview focus simple and explore students' expectations and notions of what university life would be about. To understand if students linked their feelings of preparedness to our Foundation programme, two questions were explicitly about the Foundation programme: had it been helpful in preparing for this year and what they considered most useful about the programme at this stage. This explicit attention to our programme was to note and compare these responses to later responses over the course of the year especially if there were any changes in students' impressions or perceptions considering that the socialisation experience is a process and characterised by trial and error (Bragg, 1976) and to ascertain the effect of EAP input on students' current confidence and later performance.

A second set of interviews was conducted in November/December 2015, approximately two months later, to identify students' successes and struggles. This interview like the previous was still meant to set the scene and assess students' initial successes and struggles. Again, emails were sent out with the questions and interviews were arranged on campus. The interview began by asking about students' experiences so far. This was done to link the last interview with this one and establish whether students' experiences had been as expected or completely different. Wheeler (1966) comments that individuals most shocked are those who follow the prescribed guidelines with little or no input from peers. Hence, this interview helped to explore whether and how students' expectations had been challenged and provided them with the opportunity to confirm or revise their expectations. It was also generic enough to capture diverse individual experiences which is

expected in the socialisation process (Weidman, 1987; Tierney, 1997). After this first question, students were asked about their successes and struggles around workload, time management, facilities, language and social activities and how these related to their confidence. This was to begin to identify the different stages in the process (formal, personal and informal) and what barriers students experienced. The socialisation literature also alludes to students oscillating between stability and instability (Weidman, 1987) and so an additional aim here was to establish whether the confident students in the previous interview now felt somehow destabilised having experienced almost two months of university life, or whether the concerns of the less confident students had materialised or subsided. More importantly, even though none of the questions in this interview explicitly referred to the Foundation programme, it was expected that students would link some of their successes (and struggles) to what they had learnt (or not learnt) on their EAP course and provide an initial evaluation of our EAP course as a socialisation mechanism. The interview ended with questions about what could be done to improve their experience and if students wanted to add anything. This allowed for some level of reflection on students' part in terms of what was working for them or what was not and to give an embryonic assessment of the structures in place at this university.

Interview 3 started with a general update since the last interview and students' exam experience because students had been noticeably worried about their exams in the previous interview. Hence, these two topics rendered the data collection process more dialogic, and again, gave students opportunities to clarify or review previous points (Mann, 2011). However, the main focus of the third interview was spaces used. Based on the frequent mentioning of spaces in previous interviews, I questioned students about spaces to understand their impact on students' experiences. Although the socialisation literature does not focus much on spaces, I pursued this line of questioning because not only did students regularly refer to physical or virtual spaces, I believe spaces are related to the first research question (What are

the socialisation experiences of students?). As stated in chapter 3, there is little consideration of the spaces in which socialisation relationships occur, or how spaces impact on the behaviours of participants. I argued that because interactions do not occur in a vacuum, it is necessary to acknowledge the spaces in which they occur. Understanding how spaces are conceptualised and used can illuminate how interactions between socialisees and socialisers are facilitated or hindered. Before the interviews, students were asked to email photographs with written explanations of places they visited based on a prompt **(**Appendix 1: Interview 3**)**. Each participant was asked about places where they spent a lot of time, where they had to go, places that helped (or hindered) learning, improvements needed as well as speaking and writing in public spaces. Their pictures served as visual aids and a kind of projection or elicitation technique (Patton, 2002; Harper, 2004; Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015), where students were asked to describe their pictures, resulting in the collection of visual and verbal data - another form of triangulation (Flick, 2004). Even though this led to some divergence in the exact questions explored for each participant (due to different visual aids being used), this was a useful strategy as the less loquacious students conversed more freely. This interview also provided insights into how the availability and familiarity of spaces affected students' behaviours and interaction with others including their concerns about losing face; all this consequently affected their socialisation experiences.

The fourth interview was different from previous ones as students were asked to use metaphors to describe their academic experiences and indicate their sense of belonging to the university and their departments (Appendix 1: Interview 4). This was because the socialisation literature focuses on relationships and becoming part of a group or community (Brim, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987). It was therefore important to understand students' sense of belonging and how they interacted with others in their communities. Moreover, socialisation is a complex process with multiple factors at play (as depicted in the diagrams on pages 37 & 53). As metaphors are valuable tools

for exploring unconscious thoughts and understanding actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), I hoped students' metaphors would usefully unpack some of the complexity of the process especially since abstract concepts can be hard to articulate. It was felt that a phenomenon like *belonging* is quite abstract and therefore, perhaps more easily described metaphorically giving students a chance to reflect on their learning and transitioning process (socialisation) through their metaphoric depictions. Such focus served to provide data on how students perceived their learning experiences and what shaped their perceptions which relates to the central research interest. More importantly, this interview helped to understand socialisation as an ongoing and active process with a cumulative sense of belonging to a community (Brim, 1966; Weidman et al, 2001). Consequently, allowing more insights to develop about students' engagement, strategies, and obstacles which can serve to understand EAP's current or potential role in their transition.

Being different from the previous interviews, it also maintained participant interest by not repeatedly asking similar questions. The main questions in this interview included what learning is like for participants and describing their academic experience so far. Students were then asked whether they felt part of the university and about the impact of living on or off campus. This latter question also served to link this interview with the previous one by revisiting the impact of space on students' experiences. In their responses, some students provided their own metaphors, but I also provided a list of metaphors about learning (Lawley & Tompkins, 2000) in case students were at a loss (e.g. Amira). I had assumed that using metaphors would be easy for these students because they had studied metaphors in academic writing on the Foundation Programme. This exemplifies *a priori* assumptions that can bias the data collection (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Nonetheless, these interviews made students' perceptions and expectations of academia and their sense of belonging more salient.

Final interviews were conducted in May and June when students had completed their end-of-year exams. Once again questions were sent out in

advance for students to reflect before the interviews. In this fifth interview students rated their first year (*great/good; satisfactory/unsatisfactory; difficult/ terrible*), reflected on their expectations, identified what they would do differently, assessed what had been most instrumental and considered the impact of their Foundation programme. The main aim of this interview was for students to provide an overview of their first-year and highlight what they considered most important through their topic focus as "inter-views create the conditions to see what is at stake for individuals" (Schostak, 2005: 2). This aligns with the personal and individual aspect of the socialisation process. In this interview, some students chose to discuss the exams (Kai), others the school culture (Victoria) and yet others the relationship between home and international students (Rebecca). These different choices again reiterated the existence of multiple perspectives of the same phenomenon and the need for multiple socialisation structures. By highlighting what was instrumental to them, the fifth interview also provided insights to research questions two and three (What is EAP's contribution to these experiences? and How can EAP more effectively contribute to the experiences of students?). Moreover, this interview was linked to the first interview by comparing what students had said in terms of being ready and how they had actually fared over the year, their expectations and perceptions at the start and end of the year, and finally, their evaluation of EAP input now that their first year was over.

Naturally, some analysis was taking place even as I was conducting the interviews. This was because I was influenced by the theoretical concepts of the socialisation, and attentive to participants' responses that either aligned or contrasted with the literature. For example, when students mentioned the influence of peers, I tended to probe and note their responses because relationships are important (Bragg, 1976) and recruits learn just as much from peers (Wheeler, 1966; Weidman et al, 2001; Li & Collins, 2014). Similarly, I paid attention to these students' accommodation choices and external relationships because of contradictions in the literature. Bragg's (1976) notes

that students living off-campus are somehow disadvantaged suggesting the importance of accommodation choices and that external relationships are not as instrumental. Contrarily, Weidman (1987) upholds that educational contexts are not encapsulated and, as already mentioned in chapter 3, Pervan et al (2016) established that DBA students' resources are not limited to campus boundaries; their students sought resources from within and outside the university. Resources outside the university setting included friends, family and professional networks. More details about my approach to data analysis will follow in 4.6.

4.4 Interviews with Lecturers

Interviews with lecturers were conducted about six months after I had transcribed the student interviews. This allowed me to reflect on student interviews and re-consult the literature on socialisation to plan how best to utilise interviews with lecturers. Like students, I purposefully selected lecturers involved in the teaching of first-years, believing they would provide better insights into the socialisation process. I was merely seeking to understand students' socialisation experiences from diverse viewpoints considering the process involves multiple actors and lecturers are important socialisers of students (Bragg, 1976; Gardner, 2010; Ellis, 2001). However, my access to lecturers was limited so I had to adopt a form of *snowballing*. *Snowballing* is when respondents refer or introduce the researcher to other eligible participants (Delamont, 2002; Cohen et al, 2011). Students did not directly recommend lecturers for interviews. Instead, I noted the names of lecturers mentioned in student interviews, and in their second year, emailed students for names of lecturers who had taught them in year one. This, I thought, would make students less apprehensive about providing the names of their lecturers. Using students' lists, I emailed staff briefly explaining my research and requesting interviews. I sent fourteen emails and received responses from twelve. I eventually conducted interviews with six lecturers from the three departments between April and May 2017 (see Table 5). Prior to the interviews, I sent the participant information and consent form before sending the questions. This gave lecturers the opportunity to understand

their involvement in the research and time to reflect on my questions. Of the six interviewees, four had been named by students, another was recommended by a lecturer unavailable to participate, and the sixth I met serendipitously.

Table 5: List of Subject Lecturers Interviewed

Lecturers & Schools	Qualifications	Teaching Experience
L1 Law School	PhD in Law FHEA – working on his SFHEA Teaching certificates: PGCHE (postgraduate certificate in higher education)	8-9 years including first years
L2 Law School	UG in Law PG Law Lectureship Induction	45 years including first years; more recently mostly first years
L3 Culture, Language & Area Studies (CLAS)	Doing PGCHE – completed 30 credits PhD	10 years including first years
L4 Culture, Language & Area Studies (CLAS)	MA ATP (associate Teachers Programme) - completed teaching modules, not the course work Completing a PhD	4 years 1 year - first years
L5 Business School	FHEA MSc	30 years 25 years – first years
L6 Business School	Diploma in Teaching & learning at HE FHEA* PhD*	20 years

Information not mentioned in interview, procured from staff profile

Lecturers were amiable and interested with two asking for an executive summary of the findings. I have already emailed one a bullet-point summary of what students said. However, two interviews were difficult for me. One lecturer from Law did not respond to my email so I decided to call as emails can be easily ignored. Making the call turned out to be a fruitful endeavour as she agreed to participate. This particular lecturer, although a bit aloof initially, did provide detailed information of her experience of teaching undergraduate students including first-years. However, it was difficult to connect with her partly due to age; being much older, she seemed set in her ways, admittedly a judgement on my part. Whilst I managed a few probes and comments, the interview was not very collaborative. Furthermore, one

student had mentioned her in an unfavourable light, and I felt some empathy for students even as I tried to remain appreciative of her detailed contribution. The second lecturer was from the Business School, and we had met before for professional reasons. Because of this, he was one of the first to be contacted and who agreed to be interviewed. Yet compared to other lecturers', his interview was disappointingly very short with abrupt and direct answers. Whilst he appeared willing to be interviewed, there was a strong sense of being preoccupied. Again, I felt unable to probe as well as I did with other participants and even though his was my last interview, I felt like a complete novice again and dissatisfied with this interview.

These incidents show how research contexts and interviewees can position the researcher (Block, 2000; Schostak, 2005; Khan, 2016) although interviewers are generally thought to have more power (Bourdieu, 1996; Patton, 2002; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). In these two interviews, I had little power although I had asked the questions and chosen the topics. Delamont comments on researchers feeling disempowered due to power asymmetries (2002: 144). These two lecturers had wielded their own agendas in the interviews and, compared to student interviews, admittedly I approached lecturer interviews less confidently. Two possible explanations are that I did not know much about the workings of the departments and was very much aware of my outsider identity. I was apprehensive about which follow-up questions to ask to fully exploit this singular interaction without sounding too inexperienced; again, my novice researcher identity surfaced.

Secondly, I was aware of the unequal power relations of these interactions. I had more at stake should they not occur whereas these lecturers, even with the best intentions, would lose nothing if the interviews had been cancelled. Additionally, there were no formed relationships or shared experiences incentivising lecturers; these interviewees were doing me a favour, altering the power balance of the interactions. Moreover, I believed that some lecturers knew little about EAP in general or some may even perceive EAP as a pseudo-academic field. As indicated earlier, there was no explicit evidence

of this, but with this belief, I felt less of an equal partner and less confident. Nonetheless, interviews with lecturers provided insights into the academic environment of students placing me in a better position to understand students' engagement with their new settings. Lecturers' perceptions complemented those of students, albeit from individual perspectives; it was clear from interviews that uniform practices were a rarity.

The interviews with lecturers focused on lecturers' perceptions of their responsibilities in order to understand how they viewed their roles as socialisers. Practical questions were asked at the beginning of each interview to clarify some of what students had said (e.g. peer mentoring or permission to record lectures). Whilst lecturers clarified some of the information derived from students, their insights were not meant to validate students' interpretations. These interviews also addressed some of the challenges lecturers believed students, especially first years, faced and how they (lecturers) responded to the challenges (strategies employed to support students). This was useful for understanding whether lecturers and students conceptualised the process in a similar way, and whether students' self-reported struggles matched the challenges that lecturers believed students had. Some divergence of perceptions is expected due to their different positions in the socialisation process; however, this divergence should not undermine the relationship between socialisers and socialisees. The socialisation process could be derailed if expectations are very different (Tierney, 1997; Boden et al, 2011), or there is a lack of awareness of socialisees' experiences and needs (Gardner, 2008; Li & Collins, 2014). Moreover, the interview questions covered departmental strategies and opportunities for interaction between students and staff in order to explore the validity of Weidman's (1987) point that frequent and intimate interactions were necessary for relationships to be influential. These interviews helped to clarify if interactions between staff and students were sufficiently frequent and gave lecturers an opportunity to reflect on their strategies. The interview also explored lecturers' knowledge of our EAP centre, which students had

taken our programmes, and any departmental strategies to direct students to our centre. The intention was to establish to what extent socialisers at this institution were aware of each other and collaborating to promote the organisational culture (Tierney, 1997).

After each interview, I added to the notes made during the interviews and my own impressions of how they had unfolded; these notes were saved with the audio-recordings. I also re-listened at the earliest opportunity making additional notes. I heard learnt from doing previous interviews that my attitude changes over time and my memory is not infallible. This also gave me the chance to do some early analysis.

4.5 Interviews with EAP Tutors

EAP tutors were also interviewed after completing the transcription of student interviews. Again, these interviews were semi-structured to ensure there was some flexibility in the interaction (Mann, 2011). I deliberately interviewed four colleagues who had worked on our Foundation Programmes (see Table 6 below). My primary purpose for these interviews was to consider other EAP tutors' views. Concerned about relying only on my own EAP experience and knowledge, I wanted to include the perspectives of other EAP tutors, hoping their input would confirm but also challenge my beliefs. Three interviews were conducted in classrooms, but one was conducted in a shared office (Zoe). Interviewing in neutral spaces (classrooms) seemed to help minimise interruptions and participants assume the somewhat awkward roles of interviewer and interviewee. However, for Zoe's interview, a mutual and impromptu decision was made to use a shared office. Unfortunately, the awkwardness was more pronounced with Zoe, perhaps because we have a closer professional relationship. It was slightly uncomfortable to take on a researcher role and enquire directly about her qualifications and experience of teaching EAP; this could be construed as challenging her expertise. Nonetheless, I felt staying in the office served to soften my prejudices against this tutor's attitude to continued professional development. In spite of a harmonious relationship, Zoe's vocalised disinterest towards continued

professional development has always been at odds with my professional beliefs as it reminded me of contradictions that still exist in EAP. Because EAP tutors are involved in developing students' attitudes to lifelong learning, I have questioned tutors' ability to do so when they themselves refuse to cultivate such attitudes. This represents my *baggage* in this interview context (Scheurich, 1995; Ortlipp, 2008). However, as the interview proceeded and sensing her own nervousness, I decided not to challenge her or probe too deeply to preserve our professional relationship.

Table 6: Pseudonymised List of EAP Tutors Interviewed

Tutors	Qualifications	EAP Teaching Experience	EAP Courses Taught
Gail	MA & PhD in English Teaching certificates: CELTA & DELTA	10 years	Presessional & Foundation programmes
Anita	BA in TEFL BA in Economic and Political International Relations MA in English Philology MA in International Relations	12 years	Presessional, Foundation & Insessional programmes
Alasdair	MA TESOL SFHEA CELTA	9 years	Presessional & Foundation programmes
Zoe	TESOL certificate	13 years	Presessional & Foundation programmes

I had pre-existing relationships with these participants (Mann, 2011). I had worked with all and socialised with two of these tutors, rendering these interviews *acquaintance interviews* to some extent (Garton & Copland, 2010). My relationship with these participants made it easy to organise the interviews although it also affected the nature and content of the interviews (Roulston et al, 2001; Mann, 2011). EAP tutors made references to my position as a fellow EAP tutor and included *you know what it's like* in their responses. Following a similar procedure as I did with lecturers, verbal requests were followed by emails containing the research information and consent form clarifying their role. I conducted only one interview with each

tutor; therefore, to make the best of it, I sent the questions in advance so participants could prepare. A group interview would have been easier to conduct with these participants since we all work together in the same building and have similar timetables, but I resisted the idea as I knew tutors had different attitudes to EAP and felt participants would be able to explore their own ideas more fully in 1-1 interviews.

Each interview started with practical questions about participants' qualifications and experience of teaching EAP. Practical questions were then followed by five main topics; the first topics covered were their roles as EAP tutors and the importance of EAP courses for international students. These were deliberately included to challenge my personal beliefs about the importance of EAP programmes and secondly, to understand how these tutors perceived their role in relation to students' socialisation or transitional experiences. I have already outlined in the previous chapter ways in which EAP courses can serve as socialisation structures (3.4). The next topic was the difficulties of implementing their roles which was followed by the strategies and knowledge they employed and developed. These latter topics provided some insight into whether there were organisational opportunities to facilitate EAP tutors' roles as socialisers including collaborations with other faculty. Conversing with a different set of socialisers, a more comprehensive knowledge of existing institutional socialisation mechanisms was possible.

As with lecturer interviews, I listened to the recordings and made additional notes after each interview. Again, notes were scanned and saved along with the audio-recording. Figure 4 below shows all interviews conducted between September 2015 and June 2017.

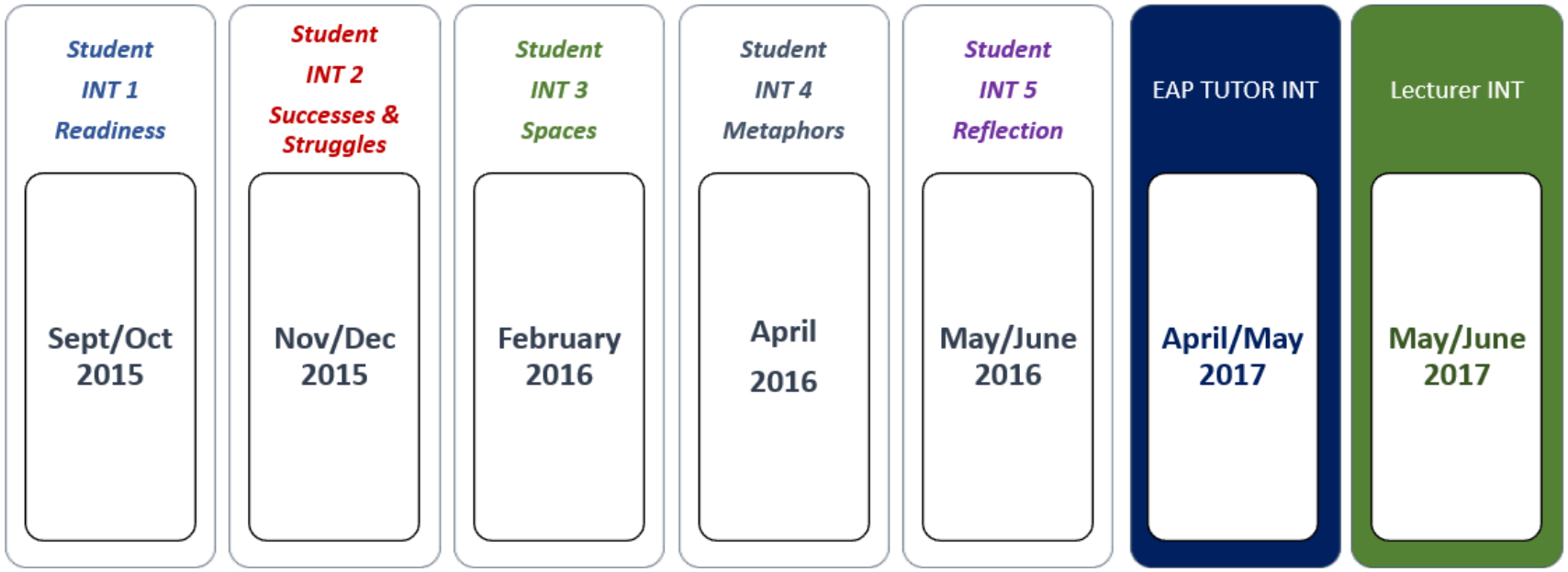


Figure 4: Interviews Conducted between September 2015 – June 2017

4.6 Approach to Transcription and Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim to maintain as much as possible the authenticity of the actual data: the recordings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I re-listened to each interview before transcribing to familiarise myself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006); this made transcription easier by recalling and contextualising the interview. Transcribing the staff interviews somehow seemed less tedious, perhaps because I was more skilled and patient with the process. Once transcribed, transcripts were *domesticated* (Schostak, 2005); I formatted each transcript by indicating interlocutors by colour and inserting five-minute intervals for ease of reference. Punctuations were minimally used to have *denaturalized* transcripts (Bucholtz, 2000) and retain some characteristics of spoken discourse. Transcripts can be described to some extent as 'broad' transcripts (Henderson, 2018), in the sense that I included fillers, repeats and repairs and did not correct any grammatical errors. I finally re-listened a third time to check that content was accurately depicted although transcription is partial and interpretive (Bucholtz, 2000; Davidson, 2009). Unclear utterances were indicated in red and comments added during and after transcription because I considered this part of the analysis (Bird, 2005). Once I had finished transcribing, a more detailed analysis proceeded.

The data analyses were approached by reading and manually coding typed transcripts; I highlighted certain words and phrases in different colours as well as used comment boxes available in Microsoft Word documents. Using my researcher judgment (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I highlighted things that I perceived to be relevant based on socialisation theories and my EAP knowledge; these included relationships with peers and lecturers, links between current programmes and the EAP course, language proficiency and international students' experiences. As I understood socialisation to be an ongoing process characteristic of trial and error (Bragg, 1976), I coded any data that alluded to this to understand how it unfolded for these student participants. Similarly, because I realised that language proficiency can impact socialisation, I paid attention to all participants' allusion to language skills and difficulties as well as how they seemed to position themselves or

others based of linguistic competence. This also allowed me to analyse the networking of student participants considering that the literature on international student friendship patterns indicates a divide between home and foreign students. Nonetheless, I remained opened to noticing new or different patterns not mentioned in the literature or which were surprising for me. Unexpectedly, students frequently mentioned social media, online resources and campus spaces so these were coded in all transcripts, not just those pertaining to the third interview.

Other initial themes, mainly from student interviews, included *networking & segregation, pronoun use, loss of face*. Some of these occurred regularly across data sets, but others, although less frequent, appeared important to my investigation. Some, like *pronoun use*, were deemed less important by the fifth interview and therefore abandoned. However, not all codes that were deemed uncommon were abandoned; *language difficulties* did not feature in every transcript, but I chose to retain it under the code *language* because not only was it important for some interviewees but also the symbiotic relationship between socialisation and language has been emphasised (Vickers, 2007; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008). I then started to group or split converging and diverging codes such as *peer support* and *networking*, but split *networking* and *segregation*. There were times when an event or incident could be categorised into two different codes. For example, how students behaved in lectures & seminars/tutorials was coded twice under *spaces* and *lectures/seminars* as a resource for knowledge and skills development.

My expectations also coloured the process; I expected intergroup and intragroup differences, particularly between staff and students. Therefore, for interviews with lecturers, what students had said in their interviews was considered during coding and analysis. I expected and did find some differences although such inconsistencies do not render the data unreliable or dishonest (Kvale, 1996). These differences have been suggested in the socialisation literature. Students' educational and cultural backgrounds can create different expectations and experiences (Padget et al, 2010; Li &

Collins, 2014). Therefore, I coded how these international students conceived their experience and how they talked about others especially lecturers and peers. Similarly, I coded lecturers' perceptions of students as I was particularly interested in student/staff relationships and how these facilitated transition because, as already stated, the frequency and intimacy of interactions determine effectiveness. Additionally, I expected some similarities and differences between our EAP Foundation programme and students' degree courses so references to these were also coded. However, my position as an EAP tutor affected my analysis; with the lecturer interviews, I adopted a more exploratory approach, but with the other two data sets (interviews with students and EAP tutors), I recognised some bias of wanting to confirm my own beliefs (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). This was offset by my relativist belief that others interpret reality and experiences differently, and the recursive process of analysing which serves to refine and confirm initial codes.

Once I had manually highlighted in different colours key words and phrases in the transcripts, these were transferred onto grids (see example in Figure 5 below). There were seven grids for student interviews (one for each interview set and two additional grids for interview 3 representing *language use and spaces*). I also had grids for each student documenting their responses in each interview and changes over the year. Students' final grades obtained from the relevant Schools were finally added to include academic performance; this was useful for comparing what students had said and how they actually fared, and determining the extent of individual experiences on student performance. For staff interviews, however, there were only two grids representing each staff group.

The grids allowed the data to be more manageable and for easy comparison of *data corpus* and *data items* (Basit, 2003; Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, because the grids represented summarised versions of the data sets, returning to the transcripts or audio recordings to verify exact wording was common; this demonstrates the recursive nature of data analysis (Basit,

2003; Braun & Clarke, 2006). After completion of the grids, similarities and differences were identified and refined to match the socialisation themes. Codes were once again collapsed to match the broader theoretical concepts (e.g. *lectures & seminars* and *spaces* matched interaction with the educational settings). These grids led to the production of summaries written to manage the volume of information collected and examine how the themes cohered; I wrote summaries for each set of interviews: five for the student data and one each for staff groups. These summaries informed the findings and discussion chapters.

INT2	Workload: FP & Acad C	Space	Lectures vs Seminar	OTHERS: Them & Us	Others: Networking	SU/University	Language	Isolation OR Segregation
Grace – Self-aware reflective self-soothes	increased workload; refers to FP coursebook – still thinks cwk was useful realises that everybody is not on equal footing (compared to those who did Law Foundation) involved in mentor scheme group work just need to be selective & not overwhelmed by all the reading not procrastinate – repercussions if you do hasn't been easy believes ss have enough time	uses her phone to record and store lecture recordings YouTube for additional input only studies in a group if she knows her stuff it's been easy using online facilities (UoN) we don't go to tutorials looking unprepared (space for participation)	records lectures answers questions in tutorials 1 lecturer's use of sound effects; makes subject interesting and moves around R: Anything that the teachers themselves have done or the lecturers P: Oooooh no they're just lectures they just do what they do we don't go to tutorials looking unprepared	I don't know if he is actually British Before the moot I just felt everyone would do better than me so let me just let me just keep doing what I can do and	Mentor scheme church influenced by others: best mooter, not as stupid after the moot I felt oh I'm like you guys if you guys are smart I guess if you guys can do this I can do this too then it really boosted my confidence in that aspect	only joined mooting society – recommended by lect. briefly student rep for energy – for money; quit because too time-consuming Law School has done enough: essays that can be submitted and tutorials Uni fine	the school **allows us** to do 1-1 discussions with teachers teachers not lecturers some '**they**' they '**attach**' you; money attached to it '**removed myself**' from it – the st rep of energy role	doesn't often go to social events – seems she rarely goes they are the times when I actually go out distances herself when convenient – panic does not like group study

Figure 5: Example of Analysis Grid (Grace INT2)

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Every investigation is unique (Pring, 2004) with its own ethical complications and contextual dilemmas (Delamont, 2002; Piper & Simons, 2011). Therefore, a recursive approach is advised since ethical issues can materialise after consent protocols have been completed (Patton, 2002). Adhering to BERA's[15] ethical procedures, ethical clearance was first obtained by the University's School of Education Research Ethics Committee for the pilot and final interviews, but other ethical steps were taken.

Firstly, recruitment of student participants was carefully considered because of the power gap in our relationship. Students may have initially felt obliged to me, their tutor. As a novice researcher embarking on my first official research, this was an exploitable opportunity, but as their tutor who had connected with them, students were not to be exploited; hence, students were recruited after they had completed our programme.

As documented in the consent form, participants were also verbally assured of their freedom to withdraw at any time. This freedom to withdraw was obviously not in my interest because my research depended on participants. Yet, I was careful not to coerce participants. When two students informally withdrew, I sent two subsequent emails but refrained from further contact to avoid harassment and for other participants to feel comfortable about withdrawing. Participants were given the contact details of my supervisors and those of my School's Research Ethics Committee to report any complaints.

Students also assumed I had access to their semester 1 grades, having obtained their permission to do so directly from Schools. This heightened their vulnerability in interviews so I clarified that grades would only be accessed at the end of the year to compare them to the interview data, not to surveil their progress. Feeling less vulnerable and realising I had no *power*

[15] British Educational Research Association

over them, they perceived me less as an authority figure. Moreover, increased preoccupation with their studies made students more aware of their option to withdraw. My need for them to complete all interviews became more salient to students as the year progressed. Participants completed the interviews on a more equal footing than at the start of the year.

For staff, although they were experienced professionals, there is still the interviewer/interviewee relationship where power asymmetry can be pronounced (Bourdieu, 1996). This asymmetry was minimised by informing staff that my primary focus was on students' perceptions and that theirs were supplementary. This, I believe, made them feel relaxed about their contributions. Additionally, most staff were cognisant of research dynamics, being researchers themselves or having previously conducted research, which possibly reduced any researcher dominance.

Pseudonyms have been used for participants and friends mentioned. For EAP staff, random pseudonyms were allocated. For students, pseudonyms represent their cultural and gender identities; some, however, preferred to use English names so this preference was accommodated. Additionally, I removed potentially identifying details although some participants may still be recognisable to other members of this institution because it is difficult to anonymise data involving thick descriptions (Howe and Moses, 1999) or members of the same community (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013).

Whilst I have agreed to provide lecturers with an executive summary of the findings, this will not include revealing details. The bullet-point summary already emailed to one of the lecturers did not compromise participants' identity. However, one unexpected dilemma arose with one of the EAP tutors. Being a Foundation year tutor, Anita was interested in students' feedback regarding her module so she asked about students' comments. Unfortunately, these were not very positive so I was uncomfortable sharing them. Although she did not know which students had participated in the interviews, she had an impressive memory, and I felt that she may recognise

participants from their comments. My initial strategy was a cowardly avoidance, but fortunately, she stopped asking. Nonetheless, I revisited the data to further minimise any possibility of identifying participants.

Confidentiality, which extends to reassuring participants that data will be securely stored and destroyed at the end of the study (Tinson, 2009), was also maintained throughout this study. This meant ensuring that data were shared only with my supervisors and used solely for the purpose of this research. A confidentiality clause was included in the participant information handout and was respected even when I referred to participants' stories in my professional life.

Piper and Simons (2011) propose that ethical considerations should also be about beneficence. Asking participants to describe their experiences of socialisation processes served to reflect on daily practices some may take for granted. Rebecca mentioned that she found these interviews useful as they gave her the opportunity to review her experiences differently and even discussed some of my questions with her friends. This is an example of how the research was rewarding to participants, not just myself as researcher. Nearly all EAP tutors mentioned that they had to think about the questions which I sent before the interviews, indicating that the questions caused them to reflect on their practices and EAP's role. I would like to think that participants reflecting on their student and professional lives was a positive consequence of this research and continued after the audio-recorder was switched off.

Chapter Summary

This chapter identified constructivism/interpretivism as the paradigm within which this inquiry is located and my relativist worldview that informed the research design. A justification for using interviews as my main data was provided, and the key challenges of such a method addressed. My dual position as an insider and outsider was also discussed along with its accompanying benefits and challenges. The chapter also explained how

interviews were conducted and the data manually analysed. Ethical issues relevant to this investigation were also discussed.

Chapter 5 The Socialisation Experiences of Students

5.1 Introduction

Having described the theoretical framework, the data collection method and data analysis in the previous two chapters, this chapter presents the findings from interviews to describe how these students' socialisation experiences unfolded. The data discussed here are derived primarily from student interviews, but multiple references are made to lecturer interviews to supplement what students have said, noting similar views or differences in perceptions. The chapter is sub-divided into relevant socialisation themes, which were discussed and coded in chapters three and four respectively. They include *the process, relationships with others, interacting with educational settings (spaces), language socialisation* and *exercising agency,* and findings are discussed in light of the literature and previous research. This chapter also serves to address the first research question (*What are the socialisation experiences of post-EAP students?*). Each sub-section concludes with a summary, but an overview of the significant findings is presented in the chapter summary.

5.2 The Socialisation Process

Students indicated that their socialisation experiences were cumulative, and they learnt what is expected of them over time (Bragg, 1976). The initial interviews showed that students were generally satisfied, but by the second round of interviews, they were noticeably overwhelmed by multifarious academic demands. This lasted until their first exams in January, when students felt more confident and assured about their capabilities because of their results and familiarity with their roles. By the end of the year, although still concerned about grades, students sounded more optimistic about academic challenges and their courses; the law students were making arrangements for internships which they now seemed ready for. Additionally, all students progressed to year two although two Law students had to re-sit some modules. Weidman's (1987) comment that students oscillate from stability to instability is consistent with the accounts provided by these participants as the example below demonstrates.

Naomi

Interview 1

I feel quite ready because I've been like waited for a year to study something that I'm really interested in which is law so I feel quite mentally ready

Interview 2

things has been worse i think because of the increase in workload and i didn't really expect that so much work to do . . . because i am just in the first year

Interview 4

I'm *still struggling* but it is okay . . . I've been like *adapting more* and *more* . . . Both academically and socially

Responses from students also showed that the process is staged although not necessarily in a linear fashion. Students built on what they knew from their Foundation programme (the anticipatory stage) by learning new skills and acquiring more information during their first-year (formal stage) and more casually through peers (informal stage). Towards the end of the year, as students reconciled their goals with institutional and disciplinary expectations, one can say they had reached the personal stage of the process. However, these stages are ongoing and unpredictable as informal socialisation seemed to continue for some students after scheduled classes had ceased, and others reached the personal stage much earlier than their peers. To exemplify, Rebecca sought the aid of a postgraduate student for her resit exams after formal instruction was over. Victoria, in our first interview, stated her personal goal was to "write a never before seen argument" and hoped to use the resources provided by the Law School to attain this. Similarly, responding to the motivational structures of her School, Grace's goal at the start of the year was to win the School's prize for the best undergraduate student. For these students, they experienced the personal stage very early in the year; others experienced this much later in the year when they contemplated new personal strategies to engage more with their environment (e.g. Tony, Naomi). Moreover, the stages were recursive; this first-year prepared the Law students for their internships so, in a way, students were experiencing another anticipatory stage. The data show students engaging with Weidman's different stages at different times. However, *stages* may not always be a useful terminology as it tends to imply

fixed linearity of the process; the socialisation of these students did not appear to be completely linear. Whilst there is a clear development of knowledge and skills, their experiences seemed layered as there were overlaps in terms of the formal, informal and personal experiences with students undergoing the different *stages* recursively at different times in the year.

In the fourth interview, three quarters into their first-year, students were asked to use metaphors to describe their experiences at university as well as their understanding of their progress. Students' metaphors consistently depicted socialisation as an ongoing process (Brim, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987; Weidman et al, 2001; Ward & Bensimon, 2002). The common metaphors used by students were those alluding to a journey or quest, eating or digesting, and planting or growing crops; each of these categories were used by at least three students. These metaphors revealed students perceived studying at university as a continuous learning experience. From these different metaphors, it can be said that students understood their first-year as "*a natural rite of passage*" (Weidman et al, 2001: 5). Learning took time and personal investment, and only by going through one stage could they develop and move on (Amira).

Grace: it's a river really cause it just feels like the school just keeps going and going . . . I know in second year; it's going to be worse . . . It's, it's just you would like to keep pace with what's going on. you are accumulating leave some things behind. So, I think it's just normal, but then . . . if you actually do not keep up, you are going to stress yourself

Kai: Errrh so it's like a quest and it's like I'm erh searching . . . It's like searching something . . . It is like elusive . . . But every step I take is taking me closer to what I need to know . . . but I never got there is like continuous journey . . . a journey is like it never end . . . oh because I think knowledge is very broad . . . Is very wide range of area

Faith: but I'd say it's like taking a long journey . . . before . . . you embark on the journey you are always very eager . . . and it's like half way through I get tired and I realise I'm not even close I literally start breaking down . . . start giving up . . . but then over time I just . . . start to like build my momentum . . . I still have quite a long journey ahead like this is the first year I still have two years before the end . . . it's still going to be very long two years so I definitely have to . . . pace myself so I don't wear myself out.

5.2.1 A Personalised Process

Students also conveyed the individual nature of socialisation. Although all students were undergraduates, and most were enrolled on the same

programmes (LLB or Business & Management), they experienced differences in their transitioning due to personal dispositions and capabilities (Figure 3 - chapter 3). Some were notably more confident and learnt much quicker whilst others struggled even with seemingly simple tasks like finding other students to work with (e.g. Yixuan).

Both Grace and Faith were enrolled on the undergraduate law programme. Coming from Nigeria, both had fairly strong English language skills. Yet Grace adapted relatively easily and was ready to accept the challenges of university life. Her comments, especially concerning her studies and the department, reflected a *can-do* attitude. She took advantage of the peer-mentoring scheme and met with a senior from her School, recorded her lectures, and selectively consulted prescribed reading lists. Surprisingly, she also believed that the intensive workload is achievable if one does not procrastinate. She internalised the institutional role of a student (Bragg, 1976; Tierney, 1997). She exploited university online facilities to ensure she was acquainted with the requirements, but also browsed on *YouTube* for additional input. She was voted the best *Mooter* in her group and targeted the best UG Law student prize. Whilst Grace did not appear to resist any of the directives or practices of her school or the wider institution, she was not a conformist as she set her own agenda and reconciled that with the opportunities in place. She stated in one interview she is happy to study in a group if she understands the basics and can discuss intelligently with others. She also emphasised that she cannot go to a tutorial unprepared, insinuating she would rather skip tutorials than go unprepared. It is important to note that she appeared to have the best attendance among participants.

In contrast, Faith found her first-year difficult and contemplated changing her course. She started the year comparing herself negatively with other "A star" students who had the right A levels and a background in law; conversely, she had only the basics. Whilst she initially felt ready before starting the programme, this changed on meeting students on her course, describing her emotional state as "my spirit is just down". Ironically, she admitted that the

Foundation programme had been useful in a number of ways, but could not seem to apply its usefulness to her advantage, feeling *stupid*, *confused* and *lost* in a subsequent interview. Moreover, Faith failed to take advantage of the formal opportunities available to her: she skipped lectures later in the year; after submitting one ungraded essay, she decided not to submit any more because the formative feedback was not detailed enough; she did not visit the legal skills advisor or use the peer mentor scheme although she did set up her own *WhatsApp* group. Unlike Grace, Faith appeared more resistant of the formal structures in place, preferring to do things her own way. Unfortunately, her resistance was costly emotionally, and it took time for her to reconcile her goals with those of the department. In our final interview, she expressed that she would like to do things differently by attending more classes and talking more to her tutors, including her personal tutor. At the end of the year, despite recognising a number of instrumental skills developed in the previous year, Faith commented retrospectively that she regrets taking the Foundation course due to the lack of legal input. Nonetheless, despite different emotional experiences of their first-year, both Grace and Faith completed the year with very similar averages: 58% and 57% respectively although Grace had better individual scores for most modules.

Another pair of students that had comparable, but very different socialisation experiences, is Amira and Ghassan. Both were native Arabic speakers enrolled on the undergraduate business course. Although Amira's English language proficiency was better than Ghassan's, the latter was reasonably fluent. Amira lived off campus and commuted on a daily basis. When questioned about how this affected her ability to interact with other students, she stated it had little impact on her networking. In fact, she was convinced that this was the best arrangement due to her religious beliefs allowing her to deliberately engage or disengage with her university setting. Certainly, Amira did not seem isolated as she was one of the few interviewees who joined a society and participated in extracurricular activities. She also had a range of friends despite expressing some disappointment with home

students. Amira stated that her intention was not simply to acquire a university qualification but to expand her network, which would benefit her professionally. In one interview, she described herself as multicultural, which aligns with being at an international university and seems to be the natural destination for a student who had attended an international school. Amira was aware of her cultural and academic backgrounds evidenced by references made during interviews and used these backgrounds to direct her transition by accepting and rejecting what was appropriate for her. Amira also seemed aware of her future plans and how her present situation could subsequently serve her. Not only was she showing significant agency, she was developing a special sense of identity (Vickers, 2007; Li & Collins, 2014; Portnoi et al, 2015) which, albeit personal, is not at odds with her new learning environment. Amira viewed her current socialisation experiences as a continuation of her personal development and academic competence interlinking past, present and future events. She completed the year with an average of 63.33%.

Contrastingly, Ghassan lived on campus but seemed somehow disconnected from his cultural and academic backgrounds. Even though his networking seemed more extensive than Amira's as he befriended both international and home students, he was not as strategic, failing to link his personal and academic goals with institutional opportunities. Ghassan adopted the social habits of his new environment, but forgot the primary reason for being at university and became distracted by partying, primarily with home students. This phenomenon is not uncommon among first-years according to one of the lecturers; students can be distracted by their new freedom and consequently make poor choices (L4). Eventually, Ghassan found himself isolated from his Foundation friends as well as his family, who disapproved of his new habits. Unable to reconcile his past and present, he decided to withdraw from this university at the start of the second semester.

A final pair worth examining is Victoria and Thomas who were both from South East Asia, although different countries, and enrolled on the LLB

programme. With this pair, however, there are significant differences in English language abilities, with Victoria being more fluent and articulate than Thomas. What is interesting was their different approaches to year one. Thomas was a conformist, and like Bragg's (1976: 30) *chameleon*, behaved according to the institutional dictates of his school. He worked hard and invested a significant amount of time studying. Thomas attempted to adhere to the stipulated study hours prescribed in the student handbook; one lecturer estimated that students were expected to invest 300 hours of study for a 30 credit module (L1). Thomas complained about not sleeping and having little time for extracurricular activities. Despite his efforts, his progress was minimal, and he wondered how other students could afford to have a social life. He was extremely conservative in his network, deliberately shying away from socialising with other students in his dorm. It is unclear if this was because of his limited English language skills; he also stated that he hardly visited his close friends.

Victoria also initially found the law course "crazy stressful" and at first invested hours each day studying in the library with another student but soon abandoned this formally prescribed strategy. Instead, she began to rely on the notes and advice of her seniors, skip lectures and dedicate more time studying in a way that allowed her to make sense of the influx of information. Victoria also strategically employed a relatively wide network of international friends, which included Foundation year friends and new ones within the Law School. She attended school events and maintained a social life. What is most striking about Victoria's journey is that she was willing to challenge the practices that did not work for her. At the end of the Foundation programme, her initial application to our Law School was rejected. Hence, she had contacted the Law Admissions tutor asking that her application be reviewed considering that her grades were as good as others who had been accepted. Her first attempt was not successful, but she persisted until she was offered a place on the programme. This agentive disposition continued in her first-year when she realised the generic departmental guidelines did

not work for her and with her personal goals in mind, she resisted conforming to standard expectations. She appears to have developed an ability to think autonomously whilst remaining committed to her personal goals (Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987). Her reward is an average of 63% in that first-year, the highest average among the law participants. In a casual follow-up meeting in her third year, Victoria stated she was expecting to graduate with a 2.1. Thomas, despite his attendance and constant efforts, ended year one with an average of 45% and two resits.

From these accounts, it appears that Grace, Amira and Victoria had easier transitions than Faith, Ghassan and Thomas respectively. Students' grades also showed differences in favour of the former three students, albeit only a minimal difference for Grace and Faith (see Table 7 below). It appears that one's personal disposition and ability to show agency is key to transitioning. Whilst the formal structures in place offered affordances to learn about the expectations and develop the appropriate behaviours (as in the case of Grace), much rests on the individual's ability to interpret them and reconcile institutional values with their own personal values and backgrounds (Amira) as well as to challenge or resist structures that seem unfair or unproductive (which Victoria did). The ability or maturity to manage one's emotions when faced with challenges and temptations is also necessary, as there are affective dimensions of the socialisation process (Weidman, 1987). Thomas, Faith and Ghassan seemed less able to do this. Linguistic ability did not seem to be as significant as the values developed and behaviours demonstrated even though Thomas' English language proficiency was markedly less developed compared to Victoria's. Autonomy, agency and a tolerance for change and diversity (Bragg, 1976; Tierney, 1997; Gardner, 2008; Lovitts, 2008; Li & Collins, 2014) are as important, if not more important, than the linguistic and academic expectations dictated by faculty. Additionally, there is a need to remain focused on personal objectives. That personal engagement, which has been emphasised (Weidman, 1987) and depicted in

Figure 3, was instrumental to the more successful socialisation of Grace, Amira and Victoria.

Table 7 - Comparison of Grades

Law			
Grace	58%	Faith	57%
Victoria	63%	Thomas	45% - 2 resits
Business			
Amira	63.33	Ghassan	13% - incomplete

5.2.2 Lecturer's Perspectives

Lecturers' comments about their roles was consistent with the notion of a cumulative and staged experience. Lecturers confirmed that there were various formal structures in place to socialise first-year students. All interviewees described their role of teaching first-years as facilitating students' transitions by developing disciplinary knowledge and for law, providing initial professional orientation. This was done through lectures, seminars, personal tutorials, and Moodle. Formative assessments were also strategically set up to accommodate adjustment. The first-year, which does not count towards graduation, is perceived by faculty as a learning curve for students although for CLAS[16], lecturers noted that students who do well are favoured for internships in year 2. As socialising agents (although they did not refer to themselves as such), their responsibility was to introduce the foundational theories and debates to first-year students regardless of educational backgrounds. Students with A levels in a particular subject were not necessarily advantaged because the expectations, assessment and behaviours were different in the university context (L2). Hence, all students needed to adjust to a context where the guidelines can be ambiguous. Part of lecturers' roles was also to help first-year students become autonomous learners and foster new learning styles and behaviours which took time. Interestingly, most lecturers felt that international students and home

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students generally have similar problems transitioning to their new learning environment. The former group was not necessarily disadvantaged unless they came from very different educational backgrounds with poor English language skills and refused to engage, signalling once again the importance of agency. One lecturer suggested sometimes international students are better equipped than home students because they often complete academic writing and grammar courses and mentally prepare themselves for difficult experiences, only to discover things are not as bad as they had envisaged. On the other hand, some home students have inappropriate writing styles, have learned little grammar at school and surprisingly, experience homesickness (L3).

In summary, the socialisation processes experienced by these students corresponded with the literature by occurring in a cumulative fashion and displaying a multidimensional nature that embraces personal aspects as Figure 3 attempts to show.

5.3 Relationships: interacting with Socialising Agents

The findings suggest that the socialisation experiences of these students revolved around their interaction with peers, staff and their institution. This is consistent with the literature which specifies that formal and informal information is provided through interaction with faculty and peers (Brim, 1966; Wheeler, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Mortimer & Simmons, 1978; Philips, 1982; Weidman, 1987; Hopwood, 2010). Weidman (1987) also argues that relationships which are intimate and frequent are more influential than infrequent and impersonal relationships.

5.3.1 Interaction with Peers

Peer influence is a significant part of the socialisation process (Brim, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987; Portnoi et al, 2015) because peers have the informal information that a recruit wants and needs to get along (Wheeler, 1966: 85). Participants acknowledged receiving information about their courses and university life from friends already at university. Similar to

Górska's (2013) findings on EAP students' experiences, students consulted other students about issues related to their study.

Faith: Most times I actually try to remember to check it (email) but the thing is, well the way everything is especially it's like you have a lot of friends from law, you don't really need to check. Like obviously you do but because there will always be someone like for example Grace . . . to tell you oh yeah check that

Participants preferred to ask friends for alternative explanations if they did not understand lectures. It was also common for them to ask year 2 students to explain concepts and exam expectations; postgraduates have also enlisted the help of seniors on their socialisation journeys (Portnoi et al, 2015).

Victoria: I feel if I didn't have my senior friends I'd fail first-year

Wheeler (1966) also claims that individuals most *shocked* (my emphasis) are those who follow traditional guidelines instead of peer advice, meaning students who follow formal advice from faculty are likely to face unexpected realities. Whilst my interviews with students did not entirely support this claim, both Yixuan and Thomas who attempted to adhere to the formal guidelines of their departments rather than to the advice of peers seemed to be more frustrated. Yixuan had stated that she did not see the value of group work, but eventually, both recognised the need for more interaction with other students.

Thomas:

Interview 1

you should ask question by yourself or you should really focus on the classes . . . you need to go back to your accommodation and you need to revise it and prepare by yourself

Interview 5

R: do you feel anything has changed . . .

Thomas: Yes . . . I tried to study with my friends together . . . Because when there's someone studying with you, you will be a bit more I cannot say relaxed but you will be a bit more comfortable

5.3.2 Interaction with Peers: *the others*

Similar to previous studies on the networking patterns of international students (Baloglu, 2000; Myles & Cheng, 2003; Sawir et al, 2008; Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009), participants neither bonded with local/EU students nor sought academic advice from them, but mainly socialised with students already in their network. It appears that these students, deliberately or unintentionally, segregated themselves from students who were not from their national or regional groups or former Foundation students. The reasons given were the natural existence of cliques on campus and that local students were not very accepting of them; they (international students) had to somehow "prove" themselves (Rebecca) and constantly needed "to hold their own" (Leki, 2001: 62). To exemplify, when one participant (Yixuan) told her group that Wikipedia was not an academic source, and they needed more references in their coursework, her advice was ignored, resulting in a low group score. This resonates with findings that one of the challenges international students face with group work was convincing others, especially local peers, of their opinions (Leki, 2001; Pibworth-Dolinksi, 2017). It was also noticed that students tended to identify their friends by name (perhaps because I knew them) and failed to do so for the other group members they worked with.

Rebecca: I think it's harder to relate to British students it's very easy to make friends or interact with international students cause I guess they are in a similar position but I feel like British students it's more difficult. . . with the British students I think there is a divide . . .

Furthermore, participants were somewhat hostile in their views of these *other students* who were referred to as "competitors" (Kai) or "slackers" *(*Amira*)*. Students felt they were at a disadvantage compared to students who had used alternative pathways such as A levels to secure a place on the same programmes. The reason given was that these *competitors* already had content background and appeared to be coping better with the subject. Some participants also thought that local students knew more about academic practices than international students; the fallacy of such thinking has been highlighted by Duff (2002; 2007). In spite of that, some did admit to

having some advantage over *competitors,* having completed their Foundation year at this university. Only a few participants later deliberately sought to work with students they did not know (e.g. Tony). Even though there were compulsory group work activities, no significant relationships developed between these participants and British or EU students.

Probably, the convenience of consulting peers with whom they shared similar experiences and the logic of asking experienced seniors made other relationships redundant. Participants had established relationships with other Foundation students interacting regularly, if not daily; similarly, in their first-year, it seems reasonable that students sought advice from seniors met through national or cultural connections. Having a common basis with both former Foundation students and seniors within their national groups, it is comprehensible why these friends would serve as primary sources of support and information. In contrast, these participants did not have sufficient shared experiences (Ward et al, 2005) or intimate interactions with local/EU students to develop influential relationships. With regard to this group, there did not appear to be many social opportunities to interact with local students. The places participants frequented were either different from those of local students (some participants emphasised they did not go clubbing), or when they did meet outside class, they stayed within their cliques. Furthermore, it can be reasoned that students in their uncertainty were not quite willing to "branch out" of their comfort zones (Sam). This interpretation is supported by the fact that in later interviews, when more settled, a few students indicated that they would like to work with other students they had never worked with before (e.g. Tony, Amira) and expanding their networks was one thing they would have done differently (e.g. Grace), demonstrating a changing perception in terms of networking.

Grace: People say sometimes, like the Africans go to Nottingham 1 and all the Asians go to Broadgate Park...

The Law and CLAS lecturers reported that peer socialisation is encouraged, and it is standard practice to assign students mentors from the year above. It is hoped that mentors can relay necessary information to new students and

support them collegially through the first term, but there is no official obligation thereafter. The Business School lecturers interviewed did not mention any mentorship scheme, but their School could very well have one as the University does have guidelines around student mentorship. Additionally, one lecturer emphasised that networking was key, and international students adjusted well when they interacted with home students and formed friendships from different cultural groups (L4), but like most academics' knowledge of students' social/academic relationships (Leki, 2001; Myles & Cheng, 2003), she seemed unaware of the challenges of such relationships or any divide between local and international students.

The findings indicate that even though peer socialisation can be a central part of students' experiences, as was the case with these participants, students can be quite selective when seeking support from peers and which networks they establish. Even though these students blamed the local/EU students for the lack of closer relationships, they did display preferences for their own national groups and other international students, especially those befriended on the Foundation programme. They were generally dissatisfied with their relationship with home students, not unlike the findings from previous studies (e.g. Hendrickson et al, 2010).

5.3.3 Interactions with Faculty

My findings indicate that students believed interactional opportunities with lecturers were mainly limited to lectures and therefore failed to foster the necessary intimacy, which Weidman (1987) counsels, to effectively influence students. This slightly contradicts socialisation theories where expert/novice (or tutor/student) relationships are central for students' successful transition. On the other hand, however, this made the influence of their peers more significant and caused students to develop a subculture of referring to peers for advice, as opposed to lecturers, resulting in a degree of segregation from lecturers. Out of the 62 interviews conducted, the names of only three lecturers were mentioned for commendable teaching. Participants generally

referred to lecturers as a collective group, using the pronoun *they* or occasionally using *he* or *she* to refer to individuals.

Grace: in the course **they** also have this mentoring programme. It's a community where **they** kinda attach you to someone who has done what you are doing . . .

Although tutorials and seminars allowed for more interaction and tutors "got to know you a bit more" (Sam), there was not much development of personal relationships between students and lecturers. Students had personal tutors assigned to them and were aware that they could meet with lecturers out of class for further guidance. However, only two students explicitly stated that they exploited these opportunities and admitted to meeting their personal tutors more than the required standard meetings. Others felt more comfortable sending emails, perhaps they perceived this to be a minimal risk-taking activity (Skyrme, 2010), and did not seem to take advantage of other face-to-face out-of-class opportunities.

Victoria: . . . the biggest thing that I struggle with is making use of the resources they give us . . . Like you know like professors or like personal tutors they are there but I have not like utilised them like I don't go to them for like advice

Nonetheless, lecturers served to clarify assessment information and provide feedback. This was done formally in lectures and seminars as well as group or individual tutorials but also via emails. The Law students had the opportunity to submit ungraded essays before final submissions, and there were faculty members placed to support student integration into the disciplinary community (a legal skills advisor). For Business students, there were similar opportunities to meet tutors on a one-to-one basis and receive support. Ifeoma, pursuing a degree in International Media Communication, reported meeting regularly with her personal tutor, who at one point was also her academic tutor, and finding these meetings useful. However, some participants were unhappy with their interactions with faculty. Yixuan, from Business, did not find her meetings with her personal tutor particularly helpful as he always referred her to a third party; she learnt to direct her questions to others, such as her Economics lecturer, instead of her personal

tutor. Students also questioned lecturers' ability to provide useful feedback or convey the necessary knowledge. Whilst they believed that their lecturers were experts, some felt they were unable to transfer that expertise to them (e.g. Faith, Yixuan), which correlates with Duff's (2007) point that not all experts are good socialisation agents. Rebecca, despite consulting the legal skills advice on multiple occasions, had to re-sit one of her modules and claims this left her "clueless".

Victoria: he moves on you have no idea it's like the next point and when you go home and read your notes you . . . have no idea what you wrote like it's not coherent it makes no sense and when you ask your friends . . . They are all like the same . . . So for his lectures no one goes like everyone just reads the text book cause it's so bad . . . even though they are experts in their field but I feel like they don't know how to teach

Finally, interactions with staff were affected by the individual lecturer's ability and willingness to address the needs of students. Other investigations have noted that sensitivity and willingness to accommodate the particular needs of students, especially L2 or international students, can vary among individual lecturers (Leki, 2006; Skyrme, 2010). Grace and Victoria praised their Tort lecturer for his enthusiasm and effective delivery of lectures; Faith also commended another lecturer for useful explanations and instructions. As a reward, these law lecturers were distinguished from others and referred to by their names. Similarly, Yixuan recalls that her Accounting lecturer very helpfully arranged a drop-in session prior to exams and was willing to provide additional one-to-one tuition unlike other tutors who explicitly warned students about wasting their time by asking "stupid questions". Ifeoma also states her semester 1 personal tutor was quite knowledgeable and helpful compared to her semester 2 personal tutor, who often did not recognise her; this is similar to James et al's report on experiences of first-year students, who felt few academics knew them by name (2010).

Lecturers generally had a slightly different and more positive perception on their interactions with students. In terms of teaching first-years, the subject lecturers interviewed believed they were accessible and there was adequate support in place for students. In terms of teaching first-years, they described

their roles as mainly facilitative as they tried to help students understand the HE environment and develop foundational knowledge of the discipline. Lecturers also articulated the importance of students taking ownership of their learning experiences; this is implemented by gently nudging them in that direction or using harsher strategies to bring them to that realisation. Transitioning, autonomy and critical engagement were key characteristics identified by the six lecturers interviewed across three disciplines. In short, lecturers described their roles as facilitators supporting students in their transition into a community where they (students) take up new roles as critically thinking and independent learners. The descriptions provided by these lecturers were in line with the main characteristics of successful socialisation that rests on socialisees willingly engaging and actively exercising agency in the shift from being a newcomer to a participating member (Bragg, 1976; Tierney, 1997; Gardner, 2008; Lovitts, 2008; Li & Collins, 2014). Such descriptions also resonated with how EAP tutors described their roles and definitely with my own twelve-year experience of teaching EAP. For the most part, EAP practitioners play a facilitative role in trying to help students understand what the educational and linguistic demands of their new environment are. Ultimately, both groups of teachers aim to develop independent learners who engage actively and critically with their learning communities; to do this they employ a myriad of strategies.

Interviews revealed that lecturers can approach their roles differently by employing standard and personal strategies. Standard strategies included having office hours or an open-door policy, responding to emails and posting frequently asked questions on Moodle for students to access. Individual strategies included recording fifteen-minute summaries of lectures and posting these on Moodle (L1) to give students the highlights of tedious lectures or using humour to let students down gently when they make mistakes (L2; L4). Another tutor, however, is a hardliner and believed in "the big bang approach" of not pampering students (L6). This, he felt, was more effective as students realise from day one that they are expected to be

independent; for this, he is rewarded with negative student evaluations. However, it has been noted relationships with students are negatively affected when lecturers are rigid in their views (Portnoi et al, 2015). Similarly, focusing particularly on an L2 graduate's experience, Krase (2007) found ineffective relationships can materialise when advisor and students have different notions of their relationships and are not very accommodating of the other. Moreover, James et al (2010) emphasise close interactions between first-years and academics to support success at university. This is also echoed by Leki (2006) who believes socioacademic interactions, including those with staff, can affect international UG students' success and failure at university. Nonetheless, lecturers in this study unanimously believed there are enough opportunities for students to interact with them, but unfortunately students tended to exploit these only at the beginning of the year or closer to exams.

This suggests that the socialisation practices of lecturers can be varied, which may be useful to students. As argued in chapter three, one of the conditions of successful socialisation is ensuring socialisation structures flexibly cater for diverse students' needs. Hence, the existence of multiple strategies, both standard and personal, would indicate that diverse needs can be supported, but it is necessary that students do recognise and seize the opportunities to interact with lecturers. Furthermore, lecturers' strategies may also need to be more intentional, thought-through and collaborative as opposed to individual and possibly ad hoc responses to students' needs; this would serve to reduce student confusion when seeking advice. It was unclear how open lecturers were to adjusting their own strategies over time in response to students' needs; the interplay between socialisers and socialisees shown in Figure 3 (page 53) proposes that the former reflect and change in response to novices' needs to be inclusive and accessible. Based on some of the lecturers' comments, there was an implication that personal strategies are not always revised over time in light of particular socialisees' needs (e.g. L2; L6).

L2: okay I do not use power point slides because I don't believe in them . . . actually questions in lectures are not a good use of the time . . . because erhm you know you have to get through the stuff they have the opportunity to ask questions in tutorials and I always tell them if you wanna drop me an email to ask me a question after the lecture then do so or speak to me after the lecture . . . although I think that it's very unusual for students to beat the path to your door

L6: there's two extremes . . . there's the big bang in which the school is over and university starts and that's it there is the approach of treating first year first semester modules more like high school and easing people into it now I've always gone with the big bang but I get dreadful teaching evaluation for my first year first semester modules as a result

5.3.4 External Relationships

Students also relied on the support of others not within the university, indicating that their socialisation experiences were not immune to external influences (Weidman, 1989, 2006; Pervan et al, 2016). There were multiple references to family and friends in other institutions and abroad, supporting the notion that important support systems for international students comprised family and friends (Baloglu, 2000). They communicated with their external network regularly for emotional and financial support. This is not surprising considering that students' ability to self-regulate can be determined by age and cultural background (James et al, 2010). These participants were fairly young, some still in their teens (Faith, Grace), and from cultural backgrounds where it seemed collective decisions were made (Yixuan, Naomi), or extended family relationships and support were the norm (Ghassan). Therefore, these external relationships were important for these participants, showing that educational contexts are not encapsulated (Weidman, 1987).

Sam: so for me it's like I had no reason to be doing things with the school . . . because I had my friends at home I had my boyfriend and I had my lectures

Ghassan: My mother's sister . . . is helping me . . . she sends me money every Monday . . . without my parents knowing

Overall, the findings suggest that interactions with others helped students to understand and cope with the demands of their new educational environment. However, participants avoided British or EU students and considered their interactions with staff limited. The cultural backgrounds and

English language proficiency of students did not appear to be a major factor; native and proficient participants seemed to have the same distant relationships as those who were less proficient in English. Instead, there is some indication that the effectiveness and relevance of these interactions depended on individual students and lecturers, perhaps due to personal priorities and expectations. Whilst some students exploited opportunities to engage with their lecturers (Ifeoma, Rebecca), others did not, and some lecturers were more approachable than their colleagues (L1 compared to L6). Furthermore, both EAP teachers and lecturers played similar socialising roles facilitating students' transition into HE, using a range of strategies. Finally, relationships with significant others outside the university remained important to these students.

5.4 Interacting with Educational Settings

From the data, it is clear that students interacted not only with their peers and lecturers but also the educational setting; this was done through their use of physical and online spaces. Students described in multiple interviews how spaces directly and indirectly supported their learning.

5.4.1 Physical Spaces

Students reported spending significant time in their rooms, attending classes and visiting libraries. They also spent time, although on a lesser scale, meeting friends in campus cafeterias. When asked where they enjoyed spending time, most listed their rooms as the place or one of the places they liked *hanging out* because it gave them a sense of their own space.

On the other hand, lectures and seminars/tutorials were listed as places they had to go, and none said they enjoyed attending lectures. A few like Faith and Ifeoma mentioned lectures as the place where students receive key information and everything is explained in detail, but this was not a common perception. Although the formal sites of socialisation, the general perception of lectures was negative; participants complained about lack of space to house the large number of students, or at other times, halls being too big and not being able to hear lecturers. Additionally, although students met in

lectures, it was noted there was little or no interaction. Interaction was more likely in seminars or tutorials where students were expected to actively participate.

Thomas: when we get . . . into the lecture hall we just sit down prepare our things . . . and then listen to the lecturer and then finish our lecture . . . so we don't talk much. . . We don't interact . . . but we could interact with one another in the tutorial

Libraries were also identified as places students needed to visit for a variety of reasons. Some studied there or used it for group work. Most students described the libraries as conducive, well-resourced and having a good atmosphere, but some admitted to going to the library only to find resources or closer to exam periods, implying that they did not make much use of these spaces (e.g. Ghassan). Others avoided studying in the libraries because they were crowded and noisy (e.g. Thomas, Faith). Two students commented that the architectural layout of one library was particularly unattractive to them. Interestingly, one participant (Sam) enjoyed spending time in one of the libraries because of the furniture in the open area, supporting Lomas & Oblinger's (2006) claim that students gravitate towards aesthetically-pleasing spaces. Nonetheless, this student found the library too distracting for revision purposes although arguably her going there increased her chances of interacting with other students.

Kai: The library is you can you can find anythings anything for academic you want

Naomi: . . . so it [the library] is really convenient for us if we would like to do some research . . . so our groups would just book the room and do the tutorial group essays together in those rooms

Amira: . . . Like we had an Excel exam so I would go and practice there[the computer lab] . . .

Other popular places on campus were atriums, foyers and cafés. In addition to libraries, students met classmates in communal areas to discuss or work on group assignments. One participant thought a good feature about Law School is that classes and tutor offices are all in one building (Thomas). Law students mentioned an open area they used daily because it is close to their lecture hall. Although this place is not conducive to studying, being an open noisy space, students met there between classes because it was conveniently

close. With other students whom they shared more personal relationships, students would meet in social areas like cafés or food halls in addition to going off campus to socialise.

Participants were also asked about their accommodation. Only one lived on campus; two lived in privately-rented accommodation in the city, and the rest in student accommodation near the University. Their accommodation did not appear to have any significant impact on their interactions with their educational setting, contradicting Bragg's (1976) suggestion that commuters living off campus are disadvantaged because they have no break from external influences. Students off campus commuted daily and had as much access as the student who resided on campus. Of the two who resided in the city, slightly farther away, one stated it was deliberate and she did not need to live on campus (Amira). She was also one of the few students who engaged in extracurricular campus activities. Contrastingly, the participant who lived on campus felt her location influenced her integration; it was more convenient, and therefore, more compelling to attend extracurricular events believing, had she lived off campus, she would have been less inclined to attend these activities (Ifeoma). Similarly, another participant felt discouraged to study in the library on the main campus where the law books were because she had a longer commute. Nonetheless, towards the end of their first-year, students did not want to live on campus or in student accommodation. In fact, a few were already planning to move to nearby privately-rented accommodation with friends in their second year (Rebecca; Thomas; Victoria). It seems they were eager to have their own space; students mentioned noisy neighbours and thin walls that sometimes affected their studies (Yixuan; Thomas). Others referred to the problems of living with other students whom one did not know (Rebecca). The cultural divide on campus between home and international students could be an underlying factor for wanting to move; in their second year, participants were planning to live with students from their home countries or similar regional backgrounds. It is possible that they wanted to relocate to feel less culturally

excluded; if so, this challenges the University's efforts to be an internationalised institution where racial and cultural diversity is recognised.

Similarly, the location of faculty offices did not appear to impact on these students' engagement. Law faculty were housed in the same building as classrooms, and students frequented lecturers' offices for tutorials. Business faculty, however, were housed separately from lecture halls, and there were no tutorials in lecturers' offices; seminars took place in different buildings on campus. The International Media Communication student seemed to have a similar arrangement to that of the Business students with classes happening in different buildings. Yet, the law students did not seem to have closer relationships with their lecturers or view them differently from participants in other schools. It is possible that students and lecturers perceive casual encounters and voluntary/optional out-of-class interaction as secondary to attending the compulsory lectures, seminars or tutorials even though the nature and primary purposes of these, as described by Thomas above, are mainly to provide information to a (large) number of students, not to interact.

5.4.2 Virtual Spaces

Students found digital spaces useful for integration into their academic environment. Online resources were described as *helpful* or *useful* regardless of whether or not they were provided by the University. Moodle, one of the University's official online platforms, kept students updated and held lecture materials, exam information and past papers. For the Business students, Moodle also had lecture captures, albeit not used by all lecturers. Due to course structures, students accessed Moodle regularly, rendering it essential to their academic survival. Law students were recommended online resources to access case studies: *Westlaw* and *LexisNexis*. They were also directed online to learn about OSCOLA[17], the reference system for Law. Compared to their previous year, students seemed to be more actively using their emails and university online facilities; students also seemed to access some sites more than others if convenient. Emails were not checked as often

[17] Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities

as Moodle, but students said they would do so if they had the app on their phones.

Faith: I practically go on Moodle every day.

Ghassan: I'm not a big fan of Moodle but it's very important

Students also resorted to non-academic e-resources to support their understanding of their learning environment. *YouTube* provided simpler explanations of difficult topics; *Facebook* allowed students to appraise other group members and keep a group study chat going; *Google* was the ideal limitless resource with one participant referring to it as her professor (Amira).

Amira: I google everything . . . everything . . . Rather than using a book I do my reading online . . . Yes Google is my professor . . . I would fail without Google

Additionally, digital spaces were important for networking. *WhatsApp* and *Facebook* allowed students to chat with group members, and discussion boards on Moodle were another means of interacting with other students and sometimes academic staff. Face-to-face group meetings were supplemented with online spaces like *WhatsApp* group chats and *Google Group document* where each student could track and update group progress and support each other. Faith set up two group chats on *WhatsApp*; one for her local law friends and the other for law friends elsewhere. Less confident students emailed tutors rather than ask questions in class. As one participant explained, "they (online spaces or resources) are all used for different things" *(*Ifeoma*)*. Technology provided spaces/platforms to access external resources and support including friends and family. Participants reported asking friends abroad for support. They communicated with family or parents to make key decisions. Faith had lengthy conversations with family in Nigeria before deciding to complete the year; Yixuan and Naomi continually sought parental guidance. External relationships, which all had positive effects on these students, are mostly maintained via online spaces.

Interviews confirmed the importance of academic and non-academic virtual spaces to access relevant skills and knowledge. The data showed that

students' exposure to digital information and technological devices provided varied sources of information as well as continued access to external influences, consequently changing the socialisation game. Influential and interactional trends within and outside the physical location of the institution are now altered, positively or negatively. Group work collaboration seemed easier as students could set up meetings and stay in touch conveniently via phone apps. However, the use of technology seems to have somewhat displaced the need for lecturers, increasing the divide between students and faculty, echoing James et al's findings that ICT uptake among students negatively affects face-to-face interaction with academics (2010). Students appeared more empowered and less dependent on these socialising agents for information as educational structures deliver courses via multiple spaces. When exploited to their advantage, technology allows students to be more agentive and autonomous.

However, students did not perceive all spaces to be safe and had a preoccupation with losing face, particularly in large lectures. Participants were conscious of other students, especially among the Law students who were highly competitive, and everyone was always trying to "prove" themselves (Rebecca**).** This loss of face extended to virtual spaces where students were worried about asking *stupid* questions as posts are not anonymous; one lecturer believed this lack of anonymity on Moodle's discussion boards was a disincentive for students (L1).

Lecturers also indicated that spaces altered the socialisation experiences of students. Lectures for first-year Business students were held in two main lecture theatres which housed as many as 600 students, preventing personal interactions with students (L6). Lecturers' offices were housed in three buildings; one had an open space for students to work in close proximity to lecturers' offices (see Figure 6 below). One of the Business lecturers said students were increasingly using this space, and it was now common to see students near their offices. One Law lecturer mentioned that having tutorials in faculty offices created a more intimate setting. They also realised students

were more worried about making mistakes in front of each other rather than lecturers; this is comparable to the data from student interviews. The idea of creating a safe space was noted by lecturers; they realised that students can be self-conscious, and there is a need to create safe learning environments where students can make mistakes. Yet, most lecturers stated that students did not exploit one-to-one consultations with tutors. Lecturers repeated that technology was used frequently, and confirmed that Moodle is the most used and promoted online platform; lecture slides and other course materials are posted there. Interactions are also encouraged via the discussion board. Other platforms included *Outlook* and *Bluecastle* for communication, accessing results and doing online SET & SEM[18] surveys. Technology and e-spaces are part of formal socialisation structures.



Figure 6 An Open Space for Business Students

To summarise, physical and virtual spaces contributed significantly to helping these students socialise into their academic communities. Participants interacted mostly positively with spaces to integrate into their departments despite their preferences for virtual spaces and inhibitions about losing face. There were ample physical and virtual spaces to be used in multiple ways. The location of physical spaces did not substantively dictate how students

[18] Student Evaluation of Teaching and Modules

used them; rather, convenience and necessity appeared to be the chief determinants for usage. It also appears that user preferences and preconceptions dominate how learning spaces, real or virtual, are exploited by users.

5.4.3 Spaces: a missing construct in socialisation

The extant literature on socialising neophytes into communities explores in depth the main players of socialisation, their roles and relationships as well as the multidimensionality of the process. Yet, there is little deliberation of spaces as a key factor aiding or impeding this process. Due to this oversight, reference to the literature on spaces was considered in chapter three to emphasise the important role spaces, whether physical or digital, can play in the process of adapting to a new community.

The findings revealed spaces played an important role in students' transition onto their degree programmes. Although lecturers alluded to the impact spaces can have on socialisation, it is the contribution of students that clearly illuminates this link. Students emphasised the advantage of knowing about the campuses and online systems when they started their degree courses. At the start of their programmes, these students were not stressed about acclimatising to their new community's spaces because the Foundation programme (their anticipatory socialisation) had exposed them to these spaces. As indicated by Weidman (1987), the anticipatory stage of any socialisation process allows students to start to develop knowledge about their target community.

As can be seen from students' vignettes in the previous section, knowledge of navigating the university's spaces not only made their lives less difficult but also helped them to work productively with peers and fulfil some of their institutional roles. All students had to partake in group work at some point on their courses and interacted with peers outside of class. These group work activities and informal interactions were facilitated by the availability of a multiple number of spaces. Open places, library study rooms and cafes were used to meet and work on group reports or assignments. Digital spaces such

as *WhatsApp* and *Facebook* were important for group interaction. Less confident students posted questions for lecturers via email and discussion boards on Moodle. Interacting with these different platforms facilitated access to important information and support as well as enabled the development of a variety of skills that contribute to being part of their university community; knowledge and use of these spaces had been introduced on their Foundation Programme.

Moreover, the findings showed these participants to be more active users of e-resources and virtual spaces as opposed to physical places; this is evident in their descriptions of Moodle, the University's main online platform. Perhaps, it is because students could be more involved in the learning process. As described by Oblinger (2006), students appear to be highly social and participatory within digital spaces. They are frequent users of online spaces for social and academic purposes with some choosing to send emails instead of visiting faculty in their offices. Students used multiple virtual sources at their disposal to understand the expectations of their relatively new environment and supplement their understanding, especially if they felt that information provided by lecturers was insufficient or too difficult to comprehend. This gave them not only some flexibility in terms of resources but also contributed to them taking ownership for their own learning. Furthermore, students engaged with other students in other institutions to compare and discuss their courses (e.g. Ifeoma, Faith). Such spaces inevitably allow students to become more engaged in the learning process but also interested in the wider structures of university life. This can have the positive effect of helping them more actively navigate their learning environments.

Finally, spaces provided a channel for support. Via electronic devices and digital technologies, students could access not only their immediate environment but also external environments. Whilst it may be argued that this is the result of advancements in technologies, these technologies create the space for relationships with families and friends to remain significantly

active even when socialisees are physically separated from their personal networks. This means that during their socialisation they are not restricted to the influences of lecturers and peers, but are still able to connect with other important external influences. This has the potential to impact students positively or negatively; it reduces isolation on one hand, but also potentially reduces engagement within their new communities (Bragg, 1976). For these participants, the effects were mainly positive. They accessed both emotional and academic support from family and friends abroad by discussing not only their experiences in their first-year, but also important decisions. This shows that the socialisation scene is not isolated, and spaces can allow neophytes to access necessary external support. Regardless of how spaces are exploited, they have the potential to reinforce institutional and educational values such as autonomy, collaboration and diversity. This potentiality will now be discussed.

5.4.4 The Impact of Learning Spaces on Socialisation

One is inclined to accept that spaces do affect learners and can implicitly enforce certain cultures such as encouraging and discouraging interaction. For example, classrooms with movable furniture and libraries with study group rooms promote interactive learning as opposed to lecture rooms with one focal point and fixed front-facing seats. This is inextricably linked to socialisation in multiple ways.

Firstly, socialisation is about helping learners belong to a group or community mainly through interaction; if it is acknowledged that spaces alter learners' behaviours by 'silent messages of disconnection' (Oblinger, 2006), or connection, this invariably changes their socialisation experiences. This is very similar to Friedman (2010) who also maintains that diversity and inclusion occurs through explicit and *implicit* messages (my emphasis); such messages can be derived from spatial characteristics. Where educational spaces make learners feel like they belong, then learners would spend more time in them, consequently exposing themselves subliminally, but continuously, to the core values of their learning communities. Student

participants admitted they felt more at ease compared to other first-years having done their Foundation Programme at this university. More so, some students expressed a preference for the campus on which they had studied even though their degree course was now on another campus. This could be related to their sense of belonging having previously spent time on that campus. However, only one student lived on campus; this student believed residing on campus encouraged participation in extra-curricular activities. Contrastingly, other students exhibited a strong preference to live off campus because of the party culture of home/EU students; these participants perceived such culture as alien. Participants' preference to reside outside campus can be interpreted as a social disconnection from the dominant culture of the general university space. Ultimately, the space culture affects students' sense of belonging.

Thomas: My flatmate is quite noisy . . . maybe because they are local students maybe their subject is not as difficult as mine . . . Because I don't know why they can play every night so it's a big affect and it will be annoying too . . . Neither way but I would not live in Broadgate any more . . . I don't like the environment

Furthermore, as a social process (Bragg, 1976), socialisation is reliant on the relationships between students and significant others. However, such relationships must be intensive and regular. The assumption is that the closer a socialisee is to their mentor, lecturer or a senior, the easier it is to emulate the required behaviour and adopt similar values, consequently allowing internalisation to occur (Bragg, 1976). Therefore, learning spaces that encourage collaboration and enable access to faculty allow for more natural interaction and formation of relationships, making the socialisation process easier. Large lecture halls housing hundreds of students and only one lecturer are not conducive to fostering such intensive, collaborative or informal relationships because of the lack of intimacy and equal status among users. Contrastingly, smaller learning spaces seem to; a law student reported that she not only enjoyed her tutorials but also learnt more from them (Sam). Tutorials involved six to nine students in lecturers' offices with students sometimes sitting on the floor. As shown in Figure 6 above, an open space is dedicated for Business students on the same floor as the offices of

some of their lecturers; one lecturer commented that this was a positive step towards encouraging students to interact with lecturers less formally. Arguably, the intimacy and proximity of learning spaces can yield more positive relationships between users. Sam's comments below exemplify students' sentiments about how spaces affect their relationships with others.

Sam: lectures [which] are really big . . . so obviously it's hard to like bond with people . . . you do develop a closer relationship with people in your tutorial groups.

Moreover, sufficient safe communal areas are necessary as they are one way in which cultures and values can be made explicit since students can observe and emulate what is expected of them. Unfortunately, student participants found lecture halls to be intimidating and so were reluctant to ask questions affecting their participation in those spaces. Conversely, if spaces are perceived as safe, students will participate more and, therefore, learn by doing - a key characteristic of successful socialisation. However, relationships can be affected by practices and routines (Friedman, 2010), meaning despite the intention to create safe and collaborative spaces, this might not happen due to prevailing cultural habits. Nonetheless, there is an argument for creating safe spaces to help students engage and transition better into their learning communities.

Spaces can also help students become more autonomous and have a personalised socialisation experience. This can be done mainly through the availability of conducive spaces as suggested in chapter 3 (Figure 3). Flexible and multiple infrastructures, physical and digital, will allow students to selectively employ what suits them. There is a suggestion of students contributing to the design of learning spaces since they have legitimate and valuable perspectives on what spaces work for them (Lomas & Oblinger, 2006; Flutter, 2006). Since not all novices respond identically to their environments, a range of opportunities to comment and engage in their environments must exist, ensuring not only that they actively operate in their community, but also that different preferences are accommodated. Technological innovations are often employed to this effect; the general

argument for including technology into learning contexts is to improve learners' experience and develop more engaged and self-directed students (Brooks, 2010; Crook et al, 2010). In the case of my participants, digital spaces offered different opportunities to engage with others. Although availability of technology does not equate to uptake (Crook et al, 2010), the existence of opportunities and the multiplicity of well-resourced online spaces give students more choices and provide more flexibility (Gallagher, 2001), resulting in the empowerment of students by allowing them more independence and agency. The existence of Moodle, for example, offered these students some flexibility. Students sought general information about their courses or retrieved specific lecture recordings. This University now has NOOCs[19] to support first-years as well as international students in different ways. Many institutions today are increasingly using virtual platforms to deal with the practicalities of student life and individualise the student experience; from a student perspective, the adaptation process is made not only less daunting but also more flexible and personal.

However, less positively, virtual spaces may widen the gap between students and faculty. These students seemed to require fewer clarifications from faculty since they derived those from peers or the internet. Furthermore, some preferred to send emails as a way of interacting with staff with only a few visiting lecturers' offices. Whilst student autonomy seems to have increased, the interaction between students and staff seems to have decreased, especially face-to-face interaction.

> **Sam**: Moodle is really really helpful I don't know about any other courses but for su . . . it's like to be honest like my teacher should never know this . . . but to be honest it's one of those things where lectures aren't even that lectures are not necessary to go to

Moreover, although lecturers respond to student discussions and questions on forums like Moodle and some set up Facebook pages for courses, one student thought that students are not keen to engage with staff online

[19] Nottingham Open Online Courses

(Ifeoma). Students sent emails to staff as a last resort and considered it a safer option to asking questions in class or going to see lecturers. One explanation could be that these young students who can be labelled as the *digital generation* do not perceive older staff members as contemporaries to interact with. Victoria's comment about a social event organised by the Law School conveys the generation divide between faculty and students.

Victoria: you know they are so yeah and they are really old . . . It's like having really old dad grandpa . . . Cause you know all the lecturers are like all these distinguished old men

However, it is important not to generalise as the relationship between spaces and learning can be complex (Woolner et al, 2012). It cannot be assumed that students are always comfortable using modern technologies, or spaces will be used as intended. Students in this study did not always take advantage of the spaces on campus or use them for their original purpose. Sam liked going to the library because of the spatial aesthetics, but not to study. Students were wary of losing face in classrooms and on online forums, and therefore, did not always interact fully. It has been suggested that students favour smaller, interactive or *sociopetal* spaces (Osmond, 1957 cited in Douglas & Gifford, 2001; Oblinger, 2006) spaces over large group settings. Thirdly, as indicated by Ifeoma, students may feel constrained by the idea of having informal online discussions with faculty, especially if face-to-face interactions remain limited and formal. Moreover, it should be noted that whilst physical and virtual infrastructures may allow more active learning, it is the educational pedagogy that should inform the use of spaces and therefore make a significant difference, not simply scaled-up classrooms (Gallagher, 2001; Stoltzfus & Libarkin, 2016). Finally, the digitalisation of HE is occurring at a rapid rate; more consideration needs to be given to developing the competencies of users, to the impact of these spaces, particularly on newcomers, and to institutional ethos implicitly promoted. Questions as to whether they engage users critically or position them as passive recipients of information and existing status quos should be asked.

To summarise, physical and virtual spaces can play a key role in helping students socialise into their academic communities, especially if examined with pedagogical and institutional values in mind. As a multilayered and interactive process, socialisation unfolds in physical and, increasingly, virtual contexts that undoubtedly vary its nature and consequently, prevent identical experiences from occurring. It is, therefore, necessary for socialisation research to focus more explicitly on how spaces enhance the socialisation experiences of socialisees or students and to consider any spatial impediments to the process. This will allow better identification of what more can be done by both faculty and students to engage with already available online and physical spaces.

5.5 Language Socialisation

As discussed in chapter 3, one cannot fully examine socialisation without some reference to language socialisation. This is because language competence impacts on socialisation, especially the cultivation of interactive relationships with significant others, and socialisation experiences serve to develop language skills (Vickers, 2007). In situations where academic or professional knowledge is embedded in specific language usage, this symbiosis is more pronounced. Moreover, according to language socialisation theories, language is both a source of information for recruits and a resource to be employed for individual gain (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

5.5.1 Proficiency, Identity & Positioning

Generally, the more proficient students in this study did not make explicit connections between their language skills and their transitioning experience, but less proficient students (Kai, Yixuan, Thomas, and Naomi) made multiple references to their language limitations and non-native speaker identity. Language appeared to shape not only their academic transition in terms of understanding new content derived mainly from texts, but also their interactions with others. Yixuan's repeated difficulties with EU/home students seem more noticeable compared to others and Thomas' self-isolation in his dormitory may have been partly due to his relatively limited abilities to socialise in English. To some extent, their preferences for

communication with lecturers may also have been determined by their language abilities; Thomas, for example, deliberately chose to email rather than engage in face-to-face communication with lecturers.

The argument that language is closely linked to identity and positionality (Vickers, 2007; Trudell et al, 2016) was obvious with these participants, who felt disadvantaged because of their non-native speaker identity. Sawir et al (2013) also argue that there is a strong correlation between linguistic ability and acting agentively. Whilst Kai became more confident as his language skills improved, the other students (Yixuan, Thomas and Naomi) believed being non-native speakers negatively affected their participation and therefore, to some extent, their overall experience. This ties in with previous research findings that non-native speakers or students with low or lesser language proficiency and lacking the content or cultural knowledge can be alienated or marginalised in classroom and group work discussions (Vickers, 2007; Duff, 2007; Leki, 2001).

Naomi

I think it might be because there are many local students in the class so I think they {lecturers} expect us to know about the style of writing and format university students

Because in virtual spaces for example like Moodle . . . you commented on something or you post a question it . . . Is going to stay there for year and everyone can notice your grammatical mistake . . . So it is quite embarrassing in the end

Yixuan: some students will think you are international students maybe your English level is not really quite good so you cannot . . . communicate with them or . . . they will think you cannot contribute to the group . . . such as you are useless and you decrease my group performance

It's like something I put on the discussion forum too . . . because I last semester I cannot find a group so . . . I post something introduce yourselves and I have the skill to find more resources . . . to analyse and I am good . . . to let them think I'm not the person you think

The statements above represent some participants' belief that their English language abilities and non-British identities disadvantaged them. In classroom discussions, they can be inadvertently positioned by lecturers who are insensitive to their linguistic difficulties, or more consciously by other students, especially British students, who can position them as incompetent

or *handicapped* (Leki, 2001). As reflected in Figure 3, individual capabilities including language capabilities will impact on students' experiences. Naomi's comment above alludes to the importance of saving face among these non-native speaking students which has been highlighted in previous research (Duff, 2002). Yixuan's comment above is her explanation of why it was hard to work with home students and how she tried to *advertise* herself on an online forum to join a group. It also represents her efforts to respond and challenge (see Figure 3 – box 3) local students' a priori expectations (Leki, 2001) and position herself differently (Duff, 2010). This, however, contradicts the overall pattern that lack of language skills impairs one's agency (Sawir et al, 2013). Yixuan, I believe, is exercising her agency to offset her language skills. In fact, in our second interview she acknowledges that she has always had to work harder compared to other more proficient Foundation students. Yet, Duff (2002; 2007) questions the assumption that local, native-speaking students are always advantaged and challenges simplistic notions of the relationship between language proficiency and academic discourse socialisation. Correspondingly, lecturers, as mentioned before, did not think non-native speaking international students are automatically disadvantaged.

5.5.2 Disciplinary Jargon

Additionally, students were affected by the language used in their disciplines. Comparable to other investigations into language socialisation (Philips, 1982; Vickers, 2007), students found understanding the technical language of their disciplines an important part of their socialisation experience. This was especially the case for the LLB programme and when some terms were used differently in their disciplines. Students were also challenged by the syntactic style of materials as well as cultural references in written texts. Ifeoma, for example, not only found her technical modules more difficult, but was also unfamiliar with the cultural allusions in the case studies used on her courses. Kai struggled with long sentences in texts and explained this slowed his reading speed. Some students (such as Faith, Victoria, and Naomi) also believed those who had enrolled via a different pathway, and subsequently

had a different anticipatory socialisation experience, fared better when it came to disciplinary content. Noticeably, these were mainly law students.

Kai : For me if the sentence is very long . . . And complicated . . . Sometimes I have to look two or three times to understand.

Rebecca: the problem is that in law a meaning in English is not the same as in law so it's hard to get the two differences

Naomi: there are a lot, there are many political terms about the UK but I'm not very familiar with the UK politics so I find the terms quite difficult to understand

Whilst lecturers acknowledged students' difficulties with disciplinary jargon and managing reading lists, they were more concerned with students' approaches to reading and written tasks. From their perspective, students struggled with reading critically and not knowing which reading skills to apply to lengthy texts or case summaries. Writing argumentatively was also an issue with some students erroneously engaging a secondary school style for their tertiary assignments instead of making an argument (L1, L2, L3). Another challenge for students, according to lecturers, was the academic discourse or style. Both the Law academics perceived law as very much a language-based discipline with its unique writing style and rigid codes of appropriacy; one lecturer commented on students having to learn *legalese (*L1*)*. Students, therefore, needed to learn how to communicate effectively in their disciplinary communities, and this is often by emulating the set reading.

5.5.3 Observe & Reproduce

To overcome the hurdle of disciplinary jargon, students attempted to use the language they had encountered in texts. They emulated the linguistic styles of various resources (*textbooks, journals, law websites*) and of skilled others to improve their communication skills and meet the standard expectations. Their ability to reproduce the appropriate linguistic style aided their sense of belonging to their disciplinary tribe and increased their confidence in their own academic abilities (e.g. Grace, Rebecca).

Rebecca: I think also my writing skills because I have gone to see her {the legal skills advisor} and I write I've written a lot of pieces . . . So I'm a bit more confident going into the exams as well . . . And I've read a lot of past papers and answers that they have given to us so I think I've an idea of what they expect and what they want

Victoria: And you'll go up alone and you have to be like if this pleases the court your Lordship your lady . . . All the formal language . . . it was like a taste of what law would be like you know . . . cause we are all lawyers for different people I was lawyer a lawyer for women's rights so I could argue both ways cause it was like surrogacy case so like who gets the baby

and I read like the first class answers and . . . I read it and literally like I look at my essays and it's nothing like the first class one . . . It's like the language they use and the way they write . . . You know like you have to cite cases and judgements and stuff

Kai: I read more books in order to learn understand so I read articles journals . . . so I will try to learn their style and . . . covert it to my own style

With regards to language socialisation, the findings suggest that language abilities can colour the socialisation experiences of students. Reasonably, when students' English language abilities are limited, it is more difficult for them to cope with the acquisition of new disciplinary knowledge and understanding discourse practices. More importantly, it can impact on their interactions with others, especially networking and making new friends not within their national or regional groups. The more proficient students in this study did not mention language or imply that it had influenced their relationships; they may have taken for granted their language skills and ability to interact more easily with others in English. Their main relationship concerns were about cultural differences and the attitudes of home students. However, when it came to disciplinary jargon, it appears both proficient and less proficient students struggled initially but over time learnt the terminology and language needed to perform, mainly by emulating written texts, following instructions and participation. This developed their academic and, to some extent, their professional competence, which subsequently increased their confidence and sense of belonging (Figure 3). Towards the end of the year, the less proficient students acknowledged an increase in their linguistic skills or at least seemed less conscious of their language abilities; Yixuan completed the year with an average of 75.58%, the highest among the Business students, indicating she overcame some of her linguistic problems and must have learnt to engage appropriately at some level. In

short, it can be stated that these students' socialisation and familiarity with the linguistic and communicative conventions increased in tandem.

5.6 Exercising Agency

The data revealed that students demonstrated significant agency during the process through the choices they made and how they responded to situations and others. Students astutely sought out and used different resources to learn, engage and succeed. They tailored their choices according to their academic, emotional or practical needs (Gonzalez, 2006; Hopwood, 2010).

Academically, some students developed friendships with seniors to secure their advice and notes from last year (e.g. Victoria; Amira). Other students consulted faculty members for out-of-class support whilst others preferred to seek the advice of peers. One participant created a *WhatsApp* group for law students to share knowledge and advice (Faith). Students also knew they could rely on each other for information and recorded lectures. One participant recorded all her lectures, which she shared with other Foundation students; another participant said she rarely viewed her emails as her friend kept her updated on administrative information (Faith). However, some students seemed to know when they needed to seek advice directly from lecturers and not rely on peers (e.g. Ifeoma). This was often the case with exam papers and questions, or to clarify what was said in a lecture. However, those who tended to struggle were those who depended mostly on lecturer input without thinking creatively around how to supplement this source of information when it was inadequate. Thomas, in the first part of the year, appeared to rely only on the formal input from classes; similarly, Rebecca relied quite heavily on the legal skills advisor to help her write better assignments, but in the end, for her resit, it was the help of a PG student that made a significant difference. This suggests the need for students to seek out multiple resources in their efforts to develop the requisite knowledge and skills.

When it came to emotional support, students tended to naturally draw on a different set of resources. Some referred to family, close friends or church

members to navigate emotionally difficult times. Faith, who at one time considered withdrawing from the law programme, relied heavily on her mother and family friends to overcome her doubts. Naomi, who faced some cultural estrangement, spoke to her parents and a friend in Hong Kong to overcome these difficulties. Amira deliberately associated with friends from her country when she missed home, and Grace was happy to receive moral support from seniors she had met at church. Practically, students chose whichever resources could most efficiently address current needs. Victoria, although not very close to Grace, sometimes acquired lecture recordings from her. She studied with Rebecca, also a law student, after class, but at other times studied with Amira when she wanted home-cooked food and to be away from campus. Tony in semester 1 deliberately chose to work with other Foundation students on a graded group task because it was easier to do so. But, again, students like Grace, Amira and Victoria, who seemed to have smoother transitions, were more agentive and more astute, drawing on several sources of support for their non-academic needs.

Students also demonstrated agency through class attendance. Once students had decided a lecturer was boring or ineffective, they skipped those lectures and found alternative input. Some relied on recorded lectures saved on Echo 360 or the notes of seniors to avoid sitting through boring lectures. This was because they could selectively listen to or read only the sections that were deemed important. Reading the notes of seniors saved one participant a significant amount of time going through textbooks that were often incomprehensible (Victoria). Another student preferred to go to the less crowded morning lectures as he felt only then could he focus (Kai). Amira stated she usually found information on missed lectures on Google, but would always attend well-delivered lectures. More generally, students felt that seminars were important and did not report missing these as often as lectures. This indicates that students valued smaller classes and where students felt they benefited from certain lecturers or classes, they would attend; conversely, they had no reservations about missing classes that were

boring or unproductive, enforcing the idea that students were discerning in their approach to class attendance.

Students' agentive choices were not only limited to seeking out help or lecture attendance, but also included what they decided to endeavour on their own. Law students could submit two ungraded essays in semester 1 ahead of their exams. They also had a legal skills advisor to consult. Only Rebecca mentions taking this opportunity and, for the ungraded essays, only two of seven students submitted essays. Additionally, it seems that when students exploited opportunities and were disappointed with the outcomes, they decided to attempt to do without the available help. Faith was not satisfied with the level of feedback given to her and explained this is why other students did not submit their ungraded essays. She chose not to submit a second one but instead risked studying on her own and relying on the advice of peers to prepare for exams. Similarly, Grace and Kai preferred studying alone when they had yet to understand the basic concepts. Once they had developed this understanding, they were happy to partake in group study and discuss with others. Ifeoma stated that she was sometimes wary of peers who can impact negatively on one's academic experiences and emphasised the need to know when to attend lectures. It could be because some students realised the limitations of their resources, so chose to either *go-it-alone* or seek alternative sources of support.

Ifeoma: sometimes I feel pressured to go out with them but I know the way we manage our time is different . . . For example I don't work very well under pressure . . . Like I can't have five hours to do an essay I just feel I'll submit it late or I won't be able to do it but they just write in one day . . .

in the last lectures . . . They (lecturers) were all about how the exam is going to be and the teachers were giving very big tips as to what we should study . . . some people were not at that lecture and I was thinking how they were gonna make it through the exam

There were instances when these students often consciously negotiated their challenges independently rather than use the support available. One participant (Amira) who engaged regularly with seniors came to realise that she could not always rely on their advice. Following their suggestion to focus on one module over another, she realised that she needed more time for

what was supposed to be the easier module. Therefore, in semester 2, she accepted the advice of seniors selectively. Yixuan, in her frustration to comprehend the content of a particular module, declared that lecturers were sometimes "useless" in passing on the necessary information; she seemed resigned to having to find alternative ways to develop her knowledge. Whilst Yixuan's comment seems extreme, these students did seem to understand the need to supplement resources and selectively use what is available to them, whether because of the lack of a singular comprehensive resource or their personal preferences, which also influenced how they used the available resources.

Admittedly, students' choices did not always seem sensible and sometimes resulted in disengagement or isolation (Gonzalez, 2006). Thomas, who chose to not ask questions in class and to study alone, rarely engaging with students in his dorm whom he perceived as distractions, ended up spending long hours reviewing class content (three to four hours per topic). Eventually, he did seek help from friends within his own national circle and in Hong Kong and, occasionally, the help of tutors, but this was done after much frustration and unproductive independent study. Similarly, Ghassan in our third interview admitted to knowing that he could get advice from the University Counselling team and his personal tutor, but chose not to do so and attempted to solve his issues independently. This proved to be unsuccessful and resulted in his withdrawal from the University.

What all this means is that students do show agency in their socialisation. In line with the research on doctoral students (Hopwood, 2010; Portnoi et al, 2015; Pervan et al 2016), these undergraduate students were also fairly agentive in how they used resources, decided which classes to attend, and when to independently attempt tasks. They also employed a myriad of resources to meet their academic and non-academic needs. As noted earlier, language proficiency did not seem to impact significantly on agency unlike Sawir et al's (2013) findings. From these students' experiences, it appears more successful or smoother transitions happen when students recognise not

just the limitations of the available resources, but also their own limitations, and can astutely decide when to *go-it-alone* and when it is incumbent to seek more knowledgeable others. It is also necessary to decipher when to break rules and be a maverick (for example skipping lectures) and when such a choice is costly (missing tutorials or classes just before the exams). This supports what is portrayed in Figure 3 - the interactive process of socialisation - and emphasises the continuous interplay between socialisees and their institutions. Indeed, socialisation is a dynamic process that requires investment on the part of learners (Duff , 2010); these students played central roles in their socialisation through their choices, the cumulative impact of which was not insubstantial. For successful socialisation, it appears that students must personally invest by actively engaging with institutional affordances and socialisers, whether lecturers or seniors; however, their personal preferences will influence their uptake of structured opportunities.

Chapter Summary

To conclude, this chapter presented and discussed the socialisation experiences of students. Consistent with socialisation theories, the process unfolded personally, cumulatively and recursively. Students adjusted to new roles by using previous experiences to inform decisions and, to some degree, by trial and error. There is also significant evidence that these students relied on others, especially peers. Through peer networks, students navigated their academic environment and developed their awareness of expectations, but there is evidence of a divide between international and local students, not unlike the findings from previous research. Whilst students needed faculty to impart disciplinary knowledge, these students also perceived a divide between the two; conversely, lecturers thought adequate but unexploited opportunities existed for interaction with students. Other findings, not documented in socialisation literatures, are related to the use of spaces to integrate into a new community. Students exploited physical and virtual spaces to develop the requisite skills and knowledge as well as to help perform new roles although there was a general preference for online platforms. There was some flexibility offered due to the existence of e-

spaces. It seems necessary to consider spaces, especially online spaces, as an integral part of any socialisation model. The findings also support the existence of a symbiotic relationship between language competence and socialisation although this is more apparent among students with weaker English language skills. Overall, it seems the ability to exercise agency substantially contributes to successful and easier transitions. In short, it can be said that the socialisation of these students was significantly facilitated by their interactions with others and an interplay between personal preferences and institutional opportunities.

Chapter 6: EAP and Students' Socialisation Experiences

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed and discussed the findings in relation to students' socialisation experiences. This chapter now explores the findings in terms of students' previous EAP education and serves to address research questions two and three. Once again, the discussion presented here relies mostly on interviews with students, but interviews with EAP and subject-specific lecturers have been included to complement the data from students. References are made to socialisation and EAP literatures to relate to issues raised in earlier chapters. On a macro-level, the chapter is organised into two main sections: EAP's contribution and implications for practice. The first section examines the relationship between students' EAP and socialisation experiences, identifying not only positive links but also inconsistencies between EAP input and students' later experiences. In the second section, based on the inconsistencies identified, the main implications for EAP practitioners and other socialising agents are considered before arguing for a more overarching and top-down approach to socialisation structures within the university context.

6.2 EAP's Contribution

This section identifies the ways EAP contributed to the first-year experiences of these students and supported their transition into university. From the interviews, it is evident that their EAP tuition impacted on the students' socialisation experiences in several ways. There was an overall positive response to the Foundation programme with nine out of the eleven remaining participants expressing satisfaction with their EAP preparation once they had completed their first-year; two participants had withdrawn by the final interview. Students had benefited from their EAP modules, become familiar with university life and adapted to their environment. This general finding is consistent with those of previous investigations. Collectively, the presentations, PIM publications and empirical studies reviewed in Chapter 2 attest to an overall usefulness of various EAP programmes.

6.2.1 EAP Modules

The general feedback given in the final interview, where students were asked how the Foundation programme had been useful to their first-year experiences, was mostly positive. Students indicated that they had no regrets completing their Foundation programme before embarking on their degree courses. This was because nearly all believed many of the modules that they had studied on their Foundation year had served them well, especially in developing their writing skills (see Table 8 below).

Table 8: Modules Studied on our Foundation Programme

Compulsory Modules – for all students	**Key Components**	**Assessment**	
Written Communication & Study	i. Coursework ii. Exam Writing	Semester 1: 1,000 word essay 1 hour 30 minutes	Semester 2: 1,500 word essay 2 hour exam
Oral Communication & Study	i. Listening & Note-taking ii. Presentation & seminar Skills iii. Study Plan (reflection)	Semester 1: Listening exam Group Presentation	Semester 2: Listening exam Group presentation Group Discussion Written reflection portfolio
Critical Thinking		End of year - 2 hour exam	
Content Modules	**Components**	**Assessment**	
Introduction to Business Studies: Methods and Communication - **for Business students only**	i. Introduction to Business Economics ii. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis	Semester 1: 2 hour exam	Semester 2: 1.5 hour exam
Using Media and Texts to Understand the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities - **for all other students**		Semester 1: Group essay	Semester 2: Individual essay

Students identified the written module as the most useful aspect of the Foundation Programme. This response was instinctive among participants with little or no probing. Learning to plan, how to use citations, and find appropriate sources were all benefits of the Foundation course. One participant (Faith) described how other students who had not attended the Foundation Programme were concerned about plagiarism, but they

(Foundation students) already knew how to avoid it. Students further indicated how some Foundation materials were still relevant to their academic experiences. Grace reported consulting our in-house writing handbook before starting assignments, and that another participant (Ifeoma) occasionally borrowed this handbook for the same purposes. This indicates that the writing skills and knowledge developed on our programme were pertinent to their first-year assignments and seems to have given them some advantage. Again, this is unsurprising as local investigations into EAP impact, which have been mostly around the development of writing skills, have also indicated positive transfer (Martala, 2006; Green, 2015; Huang & Kingsford, 2017; Matthews, 2017; Fouche et al 2018 among others).

> **Grace**: I remember when I was writing like my essay for public I have to refer back to the coursework eerm book, even Ifeoma asked me for the coursework book so it shows how we depend on the structure that we learnt here so yeah it helped me . . . cause when I when I was about to start the essay I didn't know how to start, like how to structure but I remembered oh wait I'm used to this from Foundation course
>
> **Ifeoma:** I'm also very organised when it comes to writing my essays because the form we had to fill out for WCS like the author's name the source . . . So when I reference I have everything there and then I make notes as well . . . before I write my essays and then I know the important details to write down like the date of publication and all that . . . So yeah it just it just makes me very organised

Another module which was deemed helpful was the Critical Thinking module, but this was mainly for the Law students who had legal cases to analyse. Whilst some students did not consider it crucial and felt it came naturally to them (e.g. Tony and Ifeoma), six of seven Law students mentioned in their interviews that this module was valuable in different ways and gave them an initial understanding of critical thinking expected at university level.

> **Sam**: CT has been super helpful especially for like our our fundamentals of Tort class they like the professor like actually presented us with like this picture it shows quite like similar to what we did in the Critical Thinking and he presented us with this picture and he said he goes okay look at these pictures of these people on the road and he said like how many of the car were to . . .
>
> **Grace**: the teacher does throw some comments on circular reasoning and if I did not do the Foundation course I'd be like what is he talking about and I'll note it down and try to look at it and google it later. So at least I understood that so when he said critical thinking it wasn't new to me

The aim of this module was to emphasise the importance of presenting valid and plausible arguments which corresponded with what the Law lecturers wanted students to understand about legal cases; the statement below from one of the Law lecturers exemplifies this.

> **L1:** The idea of that task is not really to find out what happens with Donahue and Stevens . . . it's to get an idea of how the law works how language works how the argument works . . . so one of the things we are trying to teach them is about legal argumentation and the importance of making arguments and using language in different ways to make those argument

The Oral & Communication Study (presentation and listening skills) module received mixed reviews, but was considered instrumental by some students. Students who found this module useful, however, were mainly the Asian students with lower English language proficiency levels. The more proficient students did not; whilst it was not useful overall for Rebecca, she admitted that one needed to write fast in lectures which was one of the aims of the Listening component, developing students' note-taking skills. Surprisingly, Sam (an American) and Faith (a Nigerian) stated that they found this module helped them to organise and structure their notes and stay attentive in lectures. It is interesting that Thomas who initially identified this module as one of the helpful Foundation subjects, later stated in the last interview that both the presentation and listening skills developed on the Foundation programme became less useful as the year progressed. This could be because he had built on those skills in a more immersed environment and as his language skills developed unconsciously, he felt the links to our Foundation programme had become more tenuous. Storch & Hill (2008), in their research into the experiences of international students' language proficiency after one semester of studying at an English-medium university, found that inevitably some language development happens. Or perhaps, as Thomas faced more complex oral tasks later in the year, he found it difficult to relate the basic skills covered in the previous year to more specific demands. Nonetheless, it is fair to acknowledge that there was some positive review of the OCS module.

In terms of the content modules, some students thought the Business modules taken during the Foundation year gave them some insight into their undergraduate degree course and therefore, found some of their current modules less challenging. Two Business modules were offered on the Foundation Programme to help students understand some of the tasks, texts and communicative practices of their target or, then, *imagined* communities (Andrew & Romova, 2012). It can be stated that for the Business students, these modules served as a form of anticipatory socialisation (Weidman, 1987), and students used some of what they had learnt (e.g. Kai, Amira). However, students who did not pursue a Business degree took a Media module instead. Out of eight students who studied this module, seven were Law students. Most stated that the topics covered or skills learnt were irrelevant to their academic course although two students did suggest that it had been helpful simply because they had to prepare a group essay and learn to analyse texts (Faith; Sam), but those texts were very different from what they were reading now on their degree programme (Victoria). Whilst most hedged their comments by saying it was *not very* relevant, others were more critical.

> **Victoria**: . . . majority wanted to do law and the things is the Foundation programme didn't touch on that at all and Media and Text is not useful at all for law . . . like the time could have been more productive
>
> **Rebecca**: . . . I really don't feel the media module helped at all

Although the feedback on the Foundation appeared mostly positive, there were disparities in the workload and pace of the two programmes. On the Foundation year, students had a very manageable workload. For example, for the writing module (WCS), the coursework was only 1,000 words and 1,500 words in the first and second semesters with a minimum of five and eight references respectively. For the oral skills module (OCS), students had two listening tests lasting 45 minutes each and a group presentation in semester 1 and an individual presentation in semester 2. Whilst extra reading was suggested, students could rely solely on class input. In contrast, a very

different experience unfolded on their degree courses with multiple deadlines and significantly more reading to do. This is not unlike previous findings where past EAP students have also commented on the unexpected reading workload on their degree courses (Stoller, 2001). In the second interview, after about two months into their degree courses, students reported being overwhelmed because of considerable increase in workload and the volume of reading materials. Moreover, students were shocked at the number of assignments they were expected to write simultaneously, which sharply contrasted with our shorter coursework submissions conveniently spread out for students. In other words, our programme presented a deceptively lighter and manageable workload for students compared to their first-year. In terms of how the Foundation had prepared them for this amount of workload, one participant responded that she had been almost "*blindsided"* (Rebecca). Whilst it was expected that their Foundation experience would not be identical to their first-year, *blindsided* is not a reassuring description for EAP providers. James et al (2010) note that unrealistic expectations around workload and independent study time result in anxiety and even failure in the first-year. This substantial increase in workload severely tested students' time-management skills.

> **Naomi**: the workload (on Foundation) was like lighter than in high school and a lot lighter. . . so it maybe just for me it kinda projected a false image
>
> **Thomas:** If I remember our coursework the time we have like one week or two week to prepare I just need three or four days
>
> **Ifeoma:** Cause erm in Foundation for the whole year, we had just a few chapters from Global Issues, but now those few chapters would be my reading for one seminar
>
> **Victoria**: University has been crazy stressful . . yeah hard to handle it's been I think nine weeks now right . . . It's been crazy very stressful hard to cope you know struggling honestly . . . assignments due every week tutorials there's always something to do you know there's never one day where you can just be like oh there's nothing to do it's like it's . . . This deadline, you know next deadline coursework, tutorials, seminars . . . yeah non-stop

Closely related to students' ability to cope with the workload were the specificity of module content and task types. Students thought modules and tasks could be better tailored to future courses. This was mainly among the Law students who were on the Arts & Social Science Foundation pathway and took a Media & Text module as highlighted above; students described it

as extraneous and suggested replacing it with an introductory law module. The LLB students noted that they felt disadvantaged having not done any Law modules on their Foundation programme (reflected in Victoria's comment below); therefore many legal terms were new to them. Law lecturers did not support this view, however, and felt doing a law module prior to the first-year was unnecessary. The Media & Communication student (Ifeoma) also felt that even though a Media module had been offered on our programme, the input had been very basic and not very useful for her; she also advocated that more specific input was needed. What was unexpected for the Business students was the type of assignments they were given. Business students had to cope with varying assessment activities including an online reflective learning barometer, an assessed group climbing exercise and business reports. All these activities were new to them and different from the type of written assignments they had done on our course. The group climbing task particularly confused one participant who did not understand the purpose of the assessment or how the assigned readings were relevant to that task. This could have been the case for this particular student alone. The request for more specific content on EAP programmes is not new; this has been highlighted both by researchers and practitioners (Basturkmen, 2012; Thompson et al, 2013; Wingate, 2016) as well as students (Ramoroka, 2012; Górska, 2013; Huang & Kingsford, 2017). Kırkgöz (2009) also found in her investigation with students that there was a general dissatisfaction when expectations raised in EAP writing classes did not match those on their degree courses. She concluded that a skills-based EAP approach cannot adequately socialise students into their discourse communities.

Victoria: Because I feel the things I've learnt in Foundation Course so far are not applicable to my law degree cause many students from Singapore came from Bellerbys college where they have a Foundation Programme and they did the *law* foundation programme and they learn all the basics of law that me and Rebecca and everyone else that came here are struggling through cause we have no idea and its really tough to follow up

Furthermore, in terms of written tasks, lecturers also indicated the need for students to understand the foundational theories of their disciplines to

choose a side or present a plausible argument indicating ability to cope with multiple possibilities and certain ambiguity in their subject matter, not simply demonstrate what one has read. As described earlier by L1, the focus of presenting case studies to students was for them to be able to understand legal argumentation in order to skilfully and persuasively employ language in their own arguments. In this respect, our EAP classes and assessment focused mainly on linguistic skills and our writing tasks were more descriptive than persuasive. Moreover, there was insufficient focus on the learning process to support desired behaviours and strategies for lifelong learning that are more important considering EAP courses lack the wherewithal to prepare students for every eventuality. As a result, EAP input can misleadingly focus on learning products to demonstrate achievement of target needs. One of the EAP tutors interviewed highlighted this by pointing out that one of the tensions that exist in EAP practice is the learning process versus assessment of the learning product. Ironically, it is the latter that secures students a place on their degree programmes even though it is the former that would guarantee successful engagement and performance in academic circles.

Unfortunately, these findings highlight the weakness of this particular programme to authentically prepare students in terms of workload and task types. It was emphasised in chapter two that to be effective, EAP programmes need to be authentic. Such authenticity is derived not only from using authentic subject-specific texts and materials, but also in the meaningful learning activities students engage in, which help develop the necessary competence for academic success (Widdowson, 1983; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Waters & Waters (1992; 2001) suggest developing the study competencies of students through tasks that "teach and simultaneously mirror the nature of the approach to study being advocated" (2001: 378-379). Jordan (1989) and Schmitt & Hamp-Lyons (2015) take authenticity further by addressing the general authenticity of not only EAP instruction, but also assessment. Indeed, Leung et al (2016) note that EAP assessment practices can lack authenticity in terms of what is needed for

successful academic performance. As suggested by these participants, EAP assessment tasks can be generic and not comprehensive of the different types of assessment students encounter on their degree courses, affecting how easily students relate and transfer what they have learnt in their EAP classes to their degree classes. Even though EAP programmes cannot replicate every scenario, it is necessary to ensure that any gaps are minimal because if students can relate EAP input to their degree courses, then EAP programmes will serve better as socialisation structures.

This mismatch in task types is also relevant to the never-ending EGAP or ESAP debate discussed in the literature review chapter. It was noted previously that although EAP attempts to address key needs, this is often out of disciplinary context (Wingate, 2016), rendering transference harder for students. There is some suggestion that ability to transfer learning is increased where the content is similar (James, 2010). From these students' responses, there appears to be a preference for ESAP courses. These students wanted to see discipline-specific value in their preparatory EAP education; from these Law students' general dissatisfaction with their module content, the conclusion one reaches is similar to Hyland's proposal that "{EAP} learning should take place within these varieties" (2002a: 389). The reason is that when their EAP courses are more subject-specific and task types similar, learners can more easily recognise the relevance of their EAP education to their degree courses. This points to a need for more specialism and variety in both EAP content and assessment.

6.2.2 Familiarity of Learning Environment

These participants also identified being familiar with university structures and systems as another benefit of completing the Foundation Programme. Our programme had exposed them to their current academic environment both physically and virtually. Most students had resided on campus during their Foundation year and spent considerable time there. Students had also had the opportunity to use online platforms like Moodle, the Portal, and our library's online catalogue (UNLOC), which they now accessed regularly.

Additionally, on their Foundation programme, official correspondence was conducted using university email accounts. They were pleased that they were already familiar with these university structures whilst grappling with the demands of their disciplines, indicating some advantage over other first-years who were now learning about these systems. Participants acknowledged having some advantage over other students when it came to being familiar with the university and its systems, understanding how to plan and prepare for written coursework, and some of the fallacies covered in Critical Thinking classes. They felt that in those aspects they were a bit ahead of everyone having completed their Foundation year at this university. Earlier studies on former EAP students' experiences have also indicated that presessional courses help familiarise students with the expected academic system and culture (Atherton, 2006; Poulson, 2017), which in turn helps them to settle in quickly (Atherton, 2006). Although seemingly trivial, such adjustments were described as an additional stress which they could do without.

Faith: I practically go on Moodle every day.

Ghassan: erhm I'm not a big fan of Moodle but it's very important

Tony: Facebook no yeah but for contacting some of them (classmates) . . . I went to look for new member so we I have no idea who they are I only know their name and email . . . So basically I would copy paste their name on Facebook

Additionally, some students showed a preference for the campus where the Foundation programme was based. Even though the Law School was located on the main campus and the library there housed law materials, three law students spent significant time studying on our campus and using its library. One admitted that he was used to it (Thomas) and another said she felt our campus was the real campus (Rebecca), gravitating to what they had been exposed to. This highlights again the importance of spaces on socialisation which was discussed in the previous chapter. Whilst Atherton (2006) and Poulson (2017) mention familiarity as one of the advantages of completing an EAP programme, this was with regards to academic culture or writing tasks,

not learning spaces. Like socialisation theories, in EAP literature, the impact of learning spaces on students' experiences does not appear to be of interest.

Tony: Foundation year has given this advantage of being familiar with the university and stuff like that

Yixuan: we are familiar with the Moodle . . . The systems and the campus and the libraries . . . so we don't have time we don't need time to adapt to the life in Nottingham again

Victoria: It (Foundation) has helped me integrate into university life

Ghassan: I also feel a bit ahead of everyone cause I also have eerrhh experience with submitting papers I know where everything is

Finally, group work was commonly employed on our Foundation Programme and the subject-specific courses. Students worked in groups across all modules during their Foundation year for learning and assessment purposes. Similarly, on their degree programmes, students were expected to work collaboratively with peers to complete different tasks. Law students had to write weekly group essays for tutorials, Business students had graded group assessments, and the Media student also engaged in group work. Although not explicitly stated by students, their Foundation experience helped students conceptualise group work as an academic norm. This contradicts the findings of Pibworth-Dolinski (2017), whose participants, former presessional students, found group work frustrating and challenging. The main concern of my participants in terms of group work was finding group members as they had to choose their own groups unlike on our programme where groups were allocated. Business students shrewdly chose to work with other Foundation students on group tasks, but one student (Yixuan) found joining a group particularly difficult. For the Law students, it was unclear if they had chosen their own groups; their main complaint was working with home students. Working and forming relationships with peers on their Foundation programme seems to have set the right expectations for these students, who did find that group and peer networking were expected and encouraged on their new programmes.

However, there were also gaps in the expectations raised around academic culture and conventions. For example, our Foundation classes did not

prepare students for the experience of attending large lectures where attendance is not monitored and most individuals remain silent and unknown. Admittedly, lecture-styled classes are not the best teaching setups (Cuseo, 2007; Kokkelenberg et al, 2008), but they remain a main conduit for knowledge transfer. The behaviours and skills needed by students to navigate such lecture environments are inherently different from the behaviours developed in small EAP classes where students know each other. This raises questions again around the authenticity of EAP education; attempts should have been made to ensure that students are sufficiently exposed to live lectures to develop their awareness of such experiences. This should not replace the standard setup of small classes, but rather complement it in order to create more authentic experiences and realistic expectations.

> **Thomas**: it's extremely different from what (how) we learn in Foundation . . . because there are quite a lot of students in one class, like 200 . . . and also the lecture and the seminar is different because we cannot talk to our teacher 1 by 1 during class or they cannot focus on you because there quite a lot of students you should be more independent instead you should ask question by yourself or you should really focus on the classes

However, more pertinently, the question of the type of English taught in the EAP classroom remains important. Not only is there a need to attend to subject-specific language but also the context in which students are expected to operationalise this language. This aligns with the now more commonly accepted EAP practice of conceptualising language (especially writing) as a social practice through an academic literacy (Lea & Street, 1998) or discourse community approach (Swales, 1990). Moreover, it reinforces Duff's (2010) theory that language socialisation requires familiarising students with the multimodality of written and oral academic discourse practices. The increased use of online platforms like Moodle discussion boards or more informal WhatsApp groups for study purposes further complexifies language use in the educational context and implies a need for a repertoire of competencies to operate in both physical and online spaces. There is also a need to explore how students in this digital era can use the *right* English on

these online platforms and comfortably switch between different platforms and contexts. Grace pointed out the inapplicability of what she thought were archaic phrases learnt in her Foundation year in relation to group work discussion. She highlighted that formally prescribed phrases like "I beg to differ" were not really used among students. It appears that the *English* in EAP classrooms may have to extend beyond formal academic English and disciplinary jargon, and draw attention to more socially-oriented language use to help students develop the linguistic awareness to position themselves better and engage more effectively in formal and informal discussions with others.

> **Grace**: if I'm the only one who keeps saying eerrm I beg to differ . . . they'll say what's wrong with her or something because I basically learnt from the Foundation from the paper but then they are just going to be saying what they know how to say

Students hoping to participate more fully in their academic contexts will benefit from preparing for formal and informal contexts because doing this would allow more opportunities for communication to be explored and help students develop more agency as was seen in these participants in their first-year. Students had access to a plethora of resources and could choose how they wanted to interact with their environment. Technologies employed by students allowed them to network externally and access the support they felt they needed, such as their families and friends as well as students in other institutions; for example, Faith who set up *WhatsApp* chat groups with other law students. These developments are already part of many students' reality, and therefore, it would be logical for EAP providers to exploit the digital habits of students and examine how best to utilise digital resources and embed modern technologies into a range of educational interactions. Undoubtedly, some EAP centres are employing learning technologies in different ways, but examples of good practices in local EAP contexts are not always shared more widely, making it more difficult for other EAP units to emulate them (Wingate, 2016).

6.2.3 Relationships formed on EAP Programmes

It was noted in chapter 3 that EAP presessional and Foundation courses make for suitable socialisation structures for new international students because they tend to be small and intensive, allowing students to have daily or regular interactions with socialisation agents. Tutors work closely with students and often develop fairly good relationships with them. Student participants in this study commented on the high level of support they had received from both academic and personal tutors whilst on their EAP programme. Two of the EAP tutors interviewed felt in their roles they help students to participate more in class and develop collegial relationships with academics. Our Foundation programme was intensive with tutors teaching students every day; over a year, they developed an astute awareness of students' individual abilities. Moreover, when students did not actively engage, EAP tutors could intervene and involve students since they knew them well; in other words, monitoring students' academic engagement was easy for tutors and expected from students. Students came to rely on tutors to prompt them when they were underperforming and this prevented them from making serious mistakes in terms of not fulfilling their roles as learners. This would explain why at the end of their Foundation year nearly all students expressed readiness for embarking on their degree programme. Students' responses in the first interview indicated most felt they were fairly ready to start their academic degree programmes at university. These close relationships with tutors not only increase the effectiveness and influence of these socialisers (Weidman, 1987), it instils a sense of belonging in students (Beatty et al, 2014). For L2 students in particular, close relationships with advisors or faculty can have long term positive effects on their educational experiences (Myles & Cheng, 2003; Leki, 2006). However, such a level of intimacy often enjoyed in small EAP classrooms is not replicated on students' degree programmes.

Yixuan: I think *we* need more communication with *them (personal tutors)*

Ifeoma: I only met my personal tutor once . . . for the second semester . . . And he didn't even recognise me and he didn't even know what to talk about . . .

Whilst students were supported in their first-year, the scenario on their degree programmes was very different, as shown in Faith's statement: "It's not like Foundation where almost everything is given to you". Or, as one lecturer commented (L6), in a lecture of 600 students, individual student time is almost impossible which explains why Rebecca felt they (students) were now "less of a presence" in much larger lectures. I have already argued in Chapter 3 for the necessity of interaction between socialisers and socialisees as this serves to ensure there is clarity of the process (Tierney, 1997; Boden et al, 2011) and socialisees can experience more individualised support, which is hard to offer if lecturers teach large student cohorts or do not see students regularly enough. It was also pointed out in the previous chapter that such close relationships with academics are even more consequential for undergraduates and first-years (Leki, 2006; James et al, 2010), whether home or international students.

Moreover, as explicated in Chapter 5, relationships with faculty were considered limited by students and lecturers felt students failed to exploit opportunities to interact. This suggests that significant onus is placed on students to take advantage of the fewer (limited) opportunities there are to interact with lecturers and engage with their studies. Students' disengagement had serious consequences since they were more responsible for their own learning as lecturers could not monitor attendance in large lectures, let alone individual engagement. This onus corresponds with the personal investment from students highlighted in Figure 3. Yet this new responsibility of monitoring their own progress was a steep learning curve for these students. The implication is that there is a need to learn not just linguistic and general study skills on pre-degree courses, but also to adopt certain critical behaviours, such as a more autonomous approach to learning. There is a strong possibility that this new form of student/tutor relationship

contributed to the unsuccessful socialisation of Ghassan, the participant who failed to complete his first year. Even though he stated in our third and final interview that he knew where to go for help, he did not feel that the support was readily available to him; this could be because the more intimate and explicitly supportive student/tutor relationships that he was exposed to on our Foundation programme were now missing and unfortunately, in his case, he could not independently navigate the responsibilities that accompany university life. Subject lecturers identified balancing social life and academic responsibilities as a key challenge for first-years. For students to competently engage in their academic communities, more explicit attention is needed to forming supportive but empowering relationships with tutors, as opposed to dependent ones; Leki (2006: 149) rightly encourages this as part of EAP's pedagogical remit.

In terms of relationships with peers, our Foundation course also served to provide students with a supportive and ongoing network; this relates to the expanding network depicted in Figure 3. The majority of participants' friends seemed to be students they had met on our Foundation programme. As already stated, EAP classes tend to be small and intimate, allowing for students to form friendships. These participants got to know each other well on our programme and were comfortable in their class groups so were less preoccupied about saving face. More importantly, however, these participants maintained the friendships they had formed on the Foundation year[20]. Thomas' comment below is a fair representation of students' descriptions of their peer networks as there were references to other Foundation peers in students' accounts showing that friendships formed on our course continued in their first-year. This shows that our programme had helped students develop meaningful interactions with others, which facilitates socialisation (Bragg, 1976), and again, had given them a sense of

[20] This group of participants bonded particularly well during their Foundation year.

familiarity and belonging. Unsurprisingly, students tended to seek out their Foundation friends, who provided some comfort in terms of familiarity.

Thomas: most of my friends is from the foundation year

Grace: I also study with Gemma (another Foundation student) sometimes and she comes over

Amira: So I tend to study maths at home and I study with Bella (another Foundation student)

Faith: I still have friends from Foundation erm I have friends from like . . . societies the I'm a member of The Africultural society . . . I'm a member of Nigerian society so I do have friends from there then I get to meet their friends

Whilst this provided them with a strong social network and familiarity to transition more smoothly, it is necessary to attend to EAP students' networking skills to enable them to negotiate new intercultural relationships. As has been highlighted in the previous chapter, some discrepancy existed in students' EAP and first-year experiences regarding networking. Whilst these students maintained their Foundation friendships and seemed to make friends easily with other international students, they seemed unable to form close friendships with British and EU students whilst on their degree courses. Possible reasons for this, examined in chapter 5, include some level of cultural/national segregation or preference for other international students. Participants generally blamed home students for having an attitude (Rebecca), not willing to initiate contact or respond positively to their initiatives to work together (Yixuan, Ifeoma). They also indicated a lack of trust that international students are knowledgeable (Yixuan, Amira, Ifeoma). Whilst home students may have indeed been apathetic to these participants, it was noticed that the latter preferred to interact with other Foundation and international students, as evidenced by their friendship and network circles. This is compatible with other research findings that there is a preference for co-nationals (Bochner et al, 1977; Furnham and Alibhai, 1985; Sawir et al, 2008; Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009); it seems the friendship patterns of international students may not have changed much over the decades and establishing friendships with home students remains challenging for some.

In short, participants' EAP experience did not prepare them with the soft skills of interculturality to negotiate new friendships with others from very different cultural and educational backgrounds. Developing such intercultural skills to facilitate adjustment has been noted in previous research into the social and cultural life of international students (Myles & Cheng, 2003). A *BALEAP*[21] PIM[22] entitled *Intercultural Communication and EAP* (November 2017) addressed the need for intercultural competence in EAP education. Some presentations identified links between cultural competence and learning as well as social networks (Brydon & Husman, 2017), and recognised key aspects such as relevant knowledge, skills, attitude (which match the fundamental tenets of socialisation) to inform interactions (Koukouraki, 2017). However, lacking was the emphasis that merely interacting with students from different cultural backgrounds does not equate to fostering intercultural practice. More importantly, the concept of interculturality in the EAP context needs be thoroughly explored and empirically investigated to establish best practice(s) and skills development for EAP students.

6.2.4 Autonomy & Agency - creating the right environments

The importance of agency in the socialisation process was established in previous chapters: both in the theoretical examination of socialisation in Chapter 3 and in the empirical evidence of these students' experiences in Chapter 5. Through their lecture attendance, friendships and utilisation of resources, students demonstrated a capacity to act in their own interest and respond to circumstances outside their control. For example, Yixuan advertising herself on Moodle when she could not find a group to join; Victoria skipping lectures and seeking the help of seniors; or Rebecca consulting an LLM student to help her with her resits. Most EAP practitioners recognise that developing autonomous learners[23] is important for success at

[21] formerly British Association of Lecturers in EAP
[22] Professional Issues Meeting
[23] The complementary relationship between autonomy and agency was noted in chapter three.

university (Lynch, 2001; Chan et al, 2002; Smith & Thondhlana, 2015) and therefore, falls within the remit of teaching EAP courses (Todd, 2003; Fenton-Smith et al, 2018). Alasdair (one of the EAP tutors interviewed) clearly saw developing students' autonomy as one of the challenges of teaching EAP. Although the other tutors did not directly discuss autonomy or agency, they implied its importance by explaining that, by developing students' skills and raising their awareness, students would be better equipped to navigate their educational environments. From the perspective of students, however, there is a strong suggestion of a mismatch between our EAP Foundation programme and students' degree programmes in terms of opportunities for developing autonomy and exercising agency.

As pointed out earlier when discussing the workload differences between the two programmes, our programme did not prepare students for the level of autonomy expected of them in their first-year. This could be because EAP classes (especially UG Foundation Programmes) can be prescriptive environments where students come in as young novices, coupled with language problems, and unconsciously positioned by EAP tutors as passive recipients of cultural and linguistic knowledge. This is exacerbated in an environment where features of the target situation are valorised at the expense of learning (Benesch, 1996: 732), and there is much focus on students achieving certain linguistic and academic targets in end of term/year assessments.

The students who participated in this study were on our full-time IFP enjoying 15 hours of contact hours with the same tutors over the year. They also had more regular one-to-one support. Moreover, attendance was compulsory and closely monitored to ensure students complied with their visa requirements. On our Foundation programme, interim drafts were also compulsory and partly informed students' final grades, and assessment deadlines were conveniently spread out for students to enable them to cope with each assessment task. This set up contrasted starkly with students' degree programmes where they could skip lectures without being

reprimanded or, as in the case of Law students, could choose not to submit a draft before final deadlines. Students also had to manage multiple deadlines across several modules. This kind of setup meant students were forced to purposefully and creatively manage their own time and resources, creating the chance to develop agency. Our Foundation programme created an environment where there was regular and constant support and directives from tutors so it was easy for students to become reliant and assume passive roles. Their degree programmes, however, presented them with looser and more ambiguous structures that compelled them to act and make choices, consequently developing more agency. This was similar to Portnoi et al's (2015) finding that students' agency was sometimes kick-started when advisors were hands-off. For these participants, it seems that it was only when they started their degree programmes that they were truly challenged to act independently.

Tony: in my country we have this metaphor eating beans with a small butt . . . what this metaphor means is trying to do something that you can't handle it

Sam: it seems like mostly it's all on us, you know what I mean it seems like mostly they give you like things to read and just expect you to do it nobody is like checking up on you there is no Sandra emailing did you do this

there's this other part of you that's terrified . . . and you are feeling so overwhelmed you are not really sure of what's going on where you should be and all that

Even in their relationships with other students, these participants were presented with opportunities to exercise agency. Hopwood (2010) reasons that relationships show agency as students deliberately choose to maintain some relationships and not others to fulfil personal needs. On our course, students met the same classmates who were also international students in classes for three of their four modules; for the fourth content module, there were mixed class groups. Nevertheless, in close proximity with a relatively small number of students (approximately 53), it was much easier to recognise other students and inevitably friendships developed although it can be argued that students chose to maintain some of these friendships after their Foundation year, consequently showing some agency. Contrastingly, on their degree courses, students met with different sets of students for

different modules and class sizes were not very conducive for developing friendships. This meant students had to consciously and actively initiate, select and maintain friendships especially with new classmates, providing students again with an opportutnity to develop their agency.

> **Ifeoma**: . . . unlike with the Foundation course where every day in some classes you see the same set of people for my course . . . you also find people that are on different courses coming for that

A final mismatch in terms of developing student agency on our Foundation Programme and students' later experiences on their degree course pertains to the use of online resources. As noted earlier, on their Foundation programme, students were introduced to the university's online facilities, such as Moodle, and official correspondence was conducted using university email accounts. Whilst this can superficially be perceived as positive, it must be recognised that daily face-to-face interactions with tutors undermined the need to check emails or even use Moodle. Students expected tutors to tell them what they needed in class or in face-to-face tutorials instead of independently searching on Moodle. In contrast, on their degree courses, students found that they were relying significantly on Moodle and needed to check their university emails. They also engaged more with many online resources, which testifies to the growing digitalisation of HE (Watling, 2009) and students' need to be socialised into new, multimodal, intertextual heteroglossic literacies (Duff, 2007). This also implies a need for multiple competencies to operate in both physical and online spaces. Students hoping to participate more fully in their academic contexts will benefit from preparing for such contexts, meaning our EAP programmes would benefit from examining how best to utilise digital resources and embed modern technologies into educational practices. Doing this would allow more opportunities for communication to be explored and help students develop more agency as was seen in these participants in their first-year. Students had access to a plethora of e-resources and could choose how they wanted to

interact with their environment. It seems necessary for our EAP centre to provide similar opportunities to help students become more autonomous.

6.2.5 EAP as Anticipatory Socialisation

From a socialisation point of view, all these issues affect our programme's effectiveness as anticipatory socialisation. In chapter 3, it was highlighted that socialisation structures should not be too removed from the target situation (Wheeler, 1966). I suggested multiple ways of interpreting *removed* in the context of socialisation; the geographical location is far from the actual location as in the case of university campuses which are somehow encapsulated but are meant to prepare students for professional lives in cities. *Removed* can also be used to describe the relationship between students and faculty as socialisers; where students are somewhat segregated from faculty and interactions are uncommon, there is potential for confusion around expectations. In contrast, where students and faculty interactions are encouraged by physical proximity, various opportunities for formal and informal dialogue exist, and confusion is less likely. EAP courses can sometimes be removed from the intended academic destinations of students in terms of duration, approaches, location, resources and assessments; for example, EAP presessional programmes, albeit well-intended, fall short when preparing students for future academic demands on account of the course length; in five to ten week EAP courses, it is practically impossible to duplicate the workload of longer degree courses resulting in some misrepresentation of the reality. Similarly, EAP courses located on different campuses with different resources from the academic programmes that students intend to pursue later may seem removed. For my student participants, many ended up on another campus but preferred the campus where they had spent their Foundation year. Moreover, EAP classes tend to be small, but students later enrol on programmes with high student numbers and less interaction as was the case for the Law and Business students. This would naturally affect the value of the socialisation experience for students.

To summarise, our EAP Foundation programme, although effective in some aspects in terms of its main purpose, was less so in other areas. Students appreciated the input around the writing process, their familiarity with academic conventions and the campuses as well as the friendships they had formed. This helped them to develop the academic competence needed (see Figure 3). However, it was necessary to establish more realistic and authentic expectations in terms of the workload, content, task types, relationships and agentive behaviours. One way this centre could more effectively prepare students for their future course is setting similar demands and expectations to access similar experiences. Although this is comparatively a low-stakes environment intended for students to develop the necessary skills before undertaking more challenging programmes, there is little benefit in presenting a skewed picture of the reality. This is also relevant to other EAP providers; the expectations set on pre-degree courses have to authentically correspond to the demands of academic programmes. This would include course content, task types, and use of digital resources. More so, the links between both programmes must be more explicit. This is especially pertinent for undergraduates who may have no previous experiences of HE or lack the intellectual maturity to independently transfer the benefits of their EAP education; James et al (2010) contend that students' first-year experiences influence success and failure at university.

6.3 Implications for EAP Practice and HE Socialisation

The relationship between the EAP education provided and the reality of students' degree courses indicates that there is a need for EAP to embrace some new roles and operational strategies for more effective provision. In this section, I make three proposals to improve EAP practice.

6.3.1 Reconceptualising EAP's Role

The immediate direction is for EAP to reconceptualise its role by recognising its broader impact on the lives of students. By positively impacting on the academic and non-academic aspects of students' experiences, EAP practitioners act as socialising agents, not simply linguistic educators, for these students. In its reconceptualisation, it would be necessary to revise course content and delivery so that non-linguistic aspects that aid neophytes to transition effectively are explicitly focused upon. These would include, but not limited to, developing learner autonomy and intercultural competencies to negotiate new relationships with lecturers and peers. Also, some attention to the use of online spaces is necessary so students can use learning technologies to their advantage and help to provide multiple structures. This would include developing more online resources for students such as MOOCs. Such projects are essential for reaching the large number of students that require help at university, not just the international student population. Furthermore, such projects will also help EAP develop an online presence that is necessary in an increasingly digitalised HE context. Moreover, participating in institution-wide projects that are not exclusive to language education and are of value to multiple parties would help locate EAP providers more centrally and counter views of it being a mere language support. This university currently has numerous online courses and support structures such as *Your University Journey,* which targets year 1 students and focuses on transition, and *Closing the Loop*, which aims to improve the feedback practices of teaching staff. The close relationships enjoyed by EAP staff and students because of small class sizes as well as our history of working with international students place EAP practitioners in a position to specialise in these areas. However, as centres, we would need to be willing to

extend beyond our language remit and broaden our portfolio of professional expertise and activities.

Finally, as part of this reconceptualisation, EAP centres could rename themselves to fully represent what they do. At the moment, our Centre's name[24] draws attention to the linguistic aspect of EAP's role, and this can be a disservice when trying to establish itself more powerfully in a context that sees language education as a lesser teaching activity (Fulcher, 2009). The English Language Centre at Durham has recently changed its name to *Durham Centre for Academic Development*, which better represents modern EAP practices. Similarly, the director of University of Bristol's EAP centre has declared on a professional forum the relaunching of their unit as the *Centre for Academic Language and Development*[25] in the upcoming academic year (September, 2019). Although a change in name does not guarantee a change in practice and culture, EAP centres seem to be initiating a move in expanding their roles, engaging in university-wide activities for student transition and publicising the comprehensive nature of EAP practice to raise the professional status of this discipline. This reconceptualisation of EAP's role beyond linguistic socialisation would involve convincing practitioners of the significance of this expansive role and of participating in inter-disciplinary professional activities. The point being made here is that, by focusing too narrowly on our roles as language educators and the teaching of academic writing, we miss opportunities to liaise with other disciplines which can help us extend the impact of our role. However, whilst the desire to work with subject lecturers is often expressed by EAP practitioners generally, and specifically by the tutors interviewed, the time to do so may be lacking even when opportunities present themselves. This is because the focus of EAP management tends to be on the delivery than the development of EAP programmes. Most EAP tutors are on contracts which include long teaching hours. At my centre, the official allocation of materials development time

[24] Centre for English Language Education
[25] Currently Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies

only started a few years ago despite its existence as a centre for over three decades; EAP tutors are expected to juggle multiple demands due to the recursive and intensive nature of EAP programmes (Jordan, 1997; Belcher, 2006; Charles & Pecorari, 2016). This leaves even an enthusiast sometimes jaded and less compelled to partake in inter-disciplinary liaison which, although recognised as relevant, is not crucial to fulfilling teaching obligations. Moreover, EAP management tends to primarily focus on the operational priorities of delivering EAP courses to secure student numbers (Hadley, 2015). The result is prioritising practical needs over the professional ones of tutors, like networking with other departments, making it a serious challenge for EAP tutors to find time outside their main duties to engage professionally (Ding & Bruce, 2017). In its reconceptualised role, there is an opportunity to balance practical needs and pedagogical visions.

6.3.2 Engaging in Continuous Needs Analysis

Therefore, another strategy that must be incorporated in EAP practice is a continuous review of performance. This review is essential for guaranteeing that EAP provision serves its theoretical goal of preparing students for their academic experiences. Such a review would employ an ongoing needs analysis approach so that programmes are informed by the changing requirements of major stakeholders. Needs analysis discussions support the importance of continuously reviewing needs (Belcher, 2006; Bocanegra-Valle, 2016) and recognising various stakeholders in order to balance students' needs and the demands of the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Stoller, 2001; Long, 2005; Basturkmen, 2013). Whilst this would ideally be a centre approach to practice, this continuous review should also be encouraged at the individual level so that EAP tutors adopt personal reflective practices. Furthermore, centres should review how they are doing in relation to other EAP centres. This can be done in a collegial spirit through professional organisations like *BALEAP* and *EAP in Ireland* with the aim of raising the professional status of EAP both nationally and globally. This is especially important to avoid the outsourcing of lucrative EAP programmes to private providers. An iterative evaluation at centre and individual levels

would ensure that EAP practitioners better fit the profile expected of academics, which is adopting an informed and inquisitive approach to practice, engaging in their academic communities as well as participating in scholarly activities.

One condition for maintaining such an informed and inquisitive approach is that EAP practitioners have to be knowledgeable about student experiences. This can be done by providing documented evidence through empirical studies, such as this research, to strengthen the link between EAP courses and students' later experiences. There may also be a need to revise communication channels. It is recognised that there is sometimes a digital divide between staff and student (Watling, 2009) impeding communication between the two groups (Prensky, 2001). This would therefore necessitate that EAP staff knowledge base expands accordingly, to engage with a new calibre of digital students. Watling (2009: 95) proposes that information literacy becomes a fundamental part of the teaching toolbox; this would also apply to EAP practitioners. However, to fulfil this potential, tutors have to be ready to operate differently to remain informed of developments of student life in the HE context and, more importantly, be prepared to adjust their understanding of their roles in light of the realisations that EAP need not be limited to linguistic development.

On a practical level, such knowledge construction could be realised through the formation of research team(s) within EAP centres that serve to expand and develop staff expertise to engage better as socialisers. These teams would have a tripartite mission of:

- Liaising with students (former and current) and subject staff
- Reviewing course content
- Implementing course revision

The principal focus would be to evaluate the centre's current practice by collecting data on current and former student experiences, changes that are happening in the HE context and disciplinary requirements through subject staff input. This information would be gathered through interviews and

questionnaires, and key themes are identified and analysed. The findings and analyses would then be thematised and reported to a curriculum development team. This information is in turn evaluated in light of EAP's theoretical and practical goals as well as current literatures around effective teaching and learning practices in HE. The evaluation should lead to the articulation of concrete revisions and new directions for practice. These concrete proposals could then inform the revision of course materials and staff development sessions, which could be offered on traditional and digital platforms to cater for different preferences and a range of learning and teaching environments.

Despite the financial investment required to set up and maintain such teams, the benefits are multifarious. EAP centres are updated about and can respond to external changes in a time-effective manner because, by remaining in the loop, they can make regular adjustments to courses. More so, centres can identify and act on new opportunities for developing professional practice and supporting students, thereby playing influential roles within the wider university context; again, expanding their role from mainly language education providers to being a key socialisation structure. Research teams would also allow for the efficient use of the diverse range of skills possessed by EAP tutors. Currently, most EAP practitioners engage in a variety of tasks from teaching to materials development and sometimes liaising with external stakeholders, all of which requires different skill-sets. Pooling the resources of staff by having tutors work on projects of interest to them would not only allow EAP centres to better utilise staff expertise, but also encourage individuals to engage in continued professional development. Inevitably, the ongoing and investigative activities of such teams and the ensuing benefits would instrumentally serve to ensure the robustness of EAP practice, ultimately raising its academic profile.

It is possible, however, that there may be resistance from practitioners to focus only on the linguistic needs of students because, after all, we teach *English* for Academic Purposes and students do need some language input in

order to participate effectively in their academic circles (McLean & Ransom, 2005; Bretag, 2007; Preece & Martin, 2009). Additionally, there would be some practical inconveniences of restructuring programmes to accommodate the role of socialisation agents. However, such resistance can be thwarted by first highlighting that EAP has been undergoing massive developments since its inception (Bell, 2016). A second method of convincing resistant tutors might be to re-emphasise our need to be linked to the target situation (Hamp-Lyons, 2001) in order to distinguish ourselves professionally from general ELT and fulfil our intended objectives. Thirdly, it is incumbent that EAP provision responds to evolving student needs (Stoller, 2001) and its surrounding context meaning as the needs and calibre of students change in the HE context so too must EAP provision. Inarguably, EAP practitioners cannot prepare students for every eventuality; what they can do, however, is help students become independent learners equipped with the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours, which characterise successful socialisation, in order to creatively respond to new environmental challenges.

6.3.3 Creating a Knowledge Triangle

A final strategy that EAP centres need to adopt is creating a knowledge triangle. This knowledge triangle overlaps with the role of the first developmental team explained above, but it is now considered from an external perspective. This triangle would involve dialogic relations with vital stakeholders such as former students and subject lecturers to exploit their expertise and improve EAP practice (see Figure 7 below). The fundamental aim of this triangle is for participants (EAP practitioners, students and subject lecturers) to be accessible to each other and engage in regular communication. Each group within the triad would bring a specific perspective and positively influence each other, ensuring more explicit and sensitive socialisation practices.

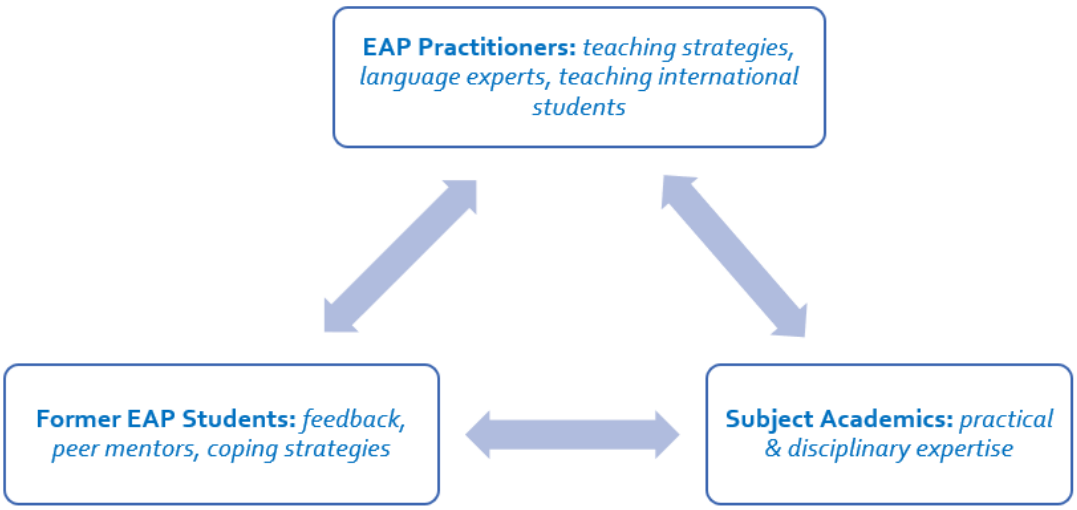


Figure 7 The Knowledge Triangle

For students, EAP practitioners offer guidance on how to navigate academia by clarifying university expectations at postgraduate or undergraduate level. Assessment criteria used by lecturers are not necessarily understood or interpreted correctly by students. Academic discourse in general, but particularly written feedback, has been highlighted as problematic and insufficient for students (Carless, 2006; Nicol, 2010; Wingate 2012, 2016). There is a need for more explicit scaffolding (Duff, 2010) to understand what lecturers want and what students need, and this can be can be addressed by EAP professionals. EAP professionals would explicitly coach students to become more autonomous and empowered by fostering lifelong learning behaviours to ease their academic journeys. Naturally, EAP professionals would continue to provide the linguistic support students need, but in a contextualised way in response to students' identified needs and their academic communities. In this knowledge triangle, the role of the EAP practitioner is to act as a negotiator, or *broker* (Leki, 2006; 149), between these two groups of stakeholders to ensure that the socialisation process not only unfolds progressively, but also fairly, ensuring students have a voice in how they are socialised.

For lecturers, EAP practitioners can offer their expertise in dealing with international students and insights into effective teaching strategies. EAP

practitioners have the advantage of being able to form more intimate relationships with students due to how courses are structured; this means the ability to access and accommodate students' needs more easily. They are able to assess what inhibits learning and what challenges students face with assignments or tasks. Because they work closely with students, they are also in a position to understand other indirect influences (e.g. family commitments) and highlight the need to be more sensitive towards international students, especially first-years. The indication from student interviews was that such sensitivity was sometimes lacking. Secondly, EAP tutors are trained teachers who have developed practical teaching strategies whilst subject lecturers can be very focused on content knowledge and research. As one participant stated: "They know their stuff but cannot teach me" (Yixuan). Completing the PGCHE (Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education) is now a requirement for most new lecturers, but developing effective teaching strategies may still not be a priority in departments. It is commonly the case that teaching receives secondary interest compared to research although there are now efforts to redress this discrepancy (Crawford, 2009; Neary & Winn, 2009). Regulatory schemes like the TEF and Advanced HE fellowships are helping to moderate the teaching and research imbalance at university; this institution also has an annual Teaching and Learning conference for staff aimed at improving teaching practices. Hence, this partnership through a knowledge triangle is an ideal opportunity for EAP practitioners to provide their teaching expertise to lecturers by offering pedagogically-sound ways of delivering their disciplinary knowledge, consequently helping students socialise into their departments. This could include highlighting linguistic challenges implicit in written task instructions or special modules designed for subject lecturers on how to improve their teaching practices; one such initiative exists in King's College London (Wingate, 2016). Again, this would help reform the status of EAP within academia.

Subject lecturers, too, have a key role to play in this knowledge triangle by specifying assessment tasks and criteria, presenting their own perceptions in light of student needs and keeping EAP practitioners informed about any changes in course demands and assessment. They can also provide core texts to be used and indicate what critical understanding is expected of students from such texts. As criticality is understood differently in each discipline (McPeck, 1981, 1984), it would be essential for lecturers to advise on the nature of criticality within their specialisms. Although the explicit teaching of critical thinking has been questioned (Atkinson, 1997), such input from subject lecturers would allow EAP practitioners to explore the concept of critical thinking in the different departments. Considering that EAP practice tends to be generic and providers are not always best placed to specialise in every academic discipline, building such relationships is vital. As mentioned in chapter two, there have been some examples of such collaborations (Dudley-Evans, 2001; Lee, 2009; Yakovchuk & Ingle, 2013; Sharndama & Tsokjon, 2014), which remain essential to precisely target the various needs of different departments. One of the EAP tutors interviewed offered two possible scenarios of such collaborations: having EAP staff located within each department and specialising in a given discipline, or having a central EAP unit that works with different subject specialists. Her response underscores the importance of institutional perceptions of EAP and, consequently, where it is located within the wider university structure. Individual institutions tend to have slightly varied conceptualisations of EAP and therefore have different locations for their EAP centres (MacDonald, 2016; Ding & Campion, 2016). Where EAP units are located within a school or academic department, they can be more autonomous, influential and appreciated for their expertise (Fulcher, 2009). However, where they are located as support services and relegated to auxiliary educational departments (Hadley, 2015), their value can be seriously misjudged, which can affect relationships with other academics. Nonetheless, regardless of institutional location, the inclusion of lecturers in this triangle is crucial, considering the misunderstandings that can exist in terms of expectations,

assessment and feedback. EAP can play a decisive role in negotiating better and explicit understanding between subject teachers and students, thereby rendering the socialisation journey easier for all involved.

The role of students in this triad is that they provide EAP practitioners with specific accounts of what aspects of EAP input has been beneficial, their challenges and, additionally, their strategies for navigating university. In doing so, students use their experiences to offer critical appraisals of EAP tuition and how well it has prepared them for successful socialisation. This is valuable feedback that can be used to inform what we do. Students can also articulate their understanding, or lack of understanding, of the tasks required at university, placing EAP providers in a better position to identify any misalignment in expectations or capabilities; such misalignments can be remedied, where possible, before future cohorts enrol on their degree courses. In addition, students can be asked to act as peer mentors for current EAP students to help them become familiar with academic norms. Peer mentoring has proven to be of significant value to participants in this research who took up the opportunity (Grace; Rebecca) and with other students (Terrion & Leonard, 2007; Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Mason & Hickman, 2017). Stoller (2001) reports on the invaluable input of past EAP students in a curriculum project at her American institution; students were not only interviewed but also visited current EAP students and led panel discussions to bridge the gap between EAP classes and future degree courses. Students will be playing the dual role of advisers and mentors to EAP practitioners and current EAP students respectively, placing them in active and empowering positions as producers of knowledge. The result is threefold: students are engaged in the process of knowledge building; develop agency by articulating their preferences and needs; and finally, reflect on the criteria needed for successful academic performance. It must be noted, however, that the main requisite for such a triangle to work is equal value for each party's contribution. There is immense value in seeing students as producers (Neary & Winn, 2009) and cultivating a feedback

culture among students to tap into their knowledge (Hagyard, 2009). Both can be achieved through collaborations with students and faculty, which Neary & Winn (2009, 137-138) argue serve to reconstruct students as producers. The necessity of consulting faculty and students in EAP curriculum reforms has been noted (Stoller, 2001). The key principle behind this knowledge triangle is engaging with vital stakeholders in our teaching and learning practice by establishing ongoing collaborative relationships with not just subject academics, but also with former students.

Needless to say, there are practical issues to ensuring long-term student cooperation. Whilst former students maintain occasional contact with their EAP tutors, it is often the case that many do not keep in touch. Asking students about their experiences and inviting students to talk to current EAP initiates could be challenging, especially if students are unwilling. A possible solution is to exploit digital platforms so that former EAP students can e-mentor current students and provide insights to their future journeys. This can be structured around students' subject departments or even national groups if this is seen as a preference. This not only minimises the effort on the part of students, but also increases accessibility and flexibility for both mentees and mentors. Furthermore, incentives can be offered to former EAP students who sign up for our peer mentoring schemes, such as recognised awards, so they remain committed. The University offers an Advantage Award in over 200 non-academic modules[26] to complement academic modules, offering students a chance to develop a broader repertoire of skills; linking EAP mentorship to such an award could serve as a strong incentive for former students. Another University pays student mentors to guide and arrange activities for first-years (The Guardian, 2019). Finally, it is worth convincing former students to be involved as this would help them reflect on their own learning experiences, both previous and current, and make links that they probably would not otherwise have. In such a reflective mode,

[26] https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers/students/advantageaward/index.aspx

students can more astutely assess their EAP education and recognise more areas for transfer.

A second challenge with creating this knowledge triangle is that EAP tutors may lose interest if their efforts to collaborate are ignored by other departments. It was pointed out that collaborations need to be carried out on an equal footing (Hyland & Shaw, 2016) and a flexible approach is necessary (Barron, 2002). Where there have been repeated efforts to engage with a particular school or department with little or no response, EAP tutors find other alternatives to learn about departmental practices like doing their own, often low-key, investigation or engaging with students where they can to address any gaps in their professional knowledge, as evident in the responses provided by EAP tutors in this study. They stated that they would browse a school's website or read relevant texts and research articles to learn about a target discipline; interestingly, whilst all four tutors desired better relationships with subject lecturers, seeking out the help of these lecturers was not their primary strategy for understanding disciplinary practices. This could be because these EAP tutors have not had the kind of reception that would encourage further direct contact with subject academics. As has been noted, "EAP practice is often an individual and sometimes a solitary endeavour" (Ding & Bruce, 2017: 110).

In addition, collaboration with subject lecturers can be further sabotaged by the short term contracts which are commonplace in EAP. EAP employment contracts are notorious for lacking continuity as many institutions try to avoid permanent contracts with tutors (Ding & Bruce, 2017). This means that transient employment is a common phenomenon among EAP staff, and many tutors do not generally stay long enough in any given context to develop the advantageous working relationships needed with subject lecturers. More so, part-time EAP tutors are less inclined to invest the necessary time and effort to engage with subject lecturers as this may be seen to be secondary to their interest of securing a permanent or long term

contract. Such short term contracts, therefore, render networking with other academic colleagues inconsistent and less effective.

A fourth difficulty with creating this knowledge triangle is convincing subject lecturers that working with EAP practitioners is a productive endeavour. As indicated earlier, team teaching and professional collaboration between EAP tutors and subject lecturers has been tried in different contexts. Unfortunately, it has yet to become common practice in EAP provision (Fenton-Smith et al, 2018). The testimonies from the EAP interviewees unanimously stating that a better relationship with subject lecturers is essential for better EAP practices and anecdotal evidence of failed efforts to liaise with some subject departments indicate that professional collaboration with subject lecturers remains to be fully exploited. This is perhaps because of the subtle but existing unequal status of EAP practitioners as academics and the lack of understanding of what we do. EAP literature has pointed at the discrediting effect of having EAP units as part of the university support structures, instead of within relevant academic departments or schools such as English Studies or Education (Hadley, 2015). This point was also noted by one of the EAP tutors interviewed who stated that the location of the EAP unit determines its status. This is also alluded to in Becher and Trowler (2001: 174) who stress the relevance of a strong academic image to establish credibility. If EAP units are seen as adjunct staff focused only on training international students to use English language, then it is understandable why subject departments would not be enthused about such collaborations, especially since it is seen to only benefit a percentage of their student cohort – the international students with language problems; therefore undervaluing what we can bring to the table. More publicised research from EAP practitioners would help demonstrate EAP's breadth of activities and expertise, and intrigue colleagues from other disciplines, who may be interested in similar teaching and learning projects. Ding & Bruce (2017) emphasise the importance of research and publication for the status of an academic discipline; individual academic reputations are also considered

important when evaluating the intellectual worth of a discipline (Becher and Trowler, 2001: 82); unfortunately, there are comparatively few EAP practitioners who are prolific and renowned researchers. Nonetheless, in light of the growing competition and number of international students in Kachru's (1985) inner-circle universities, departments are increasingly forced to operate differently when supporting students, and partnering with EAP practitioners is a positive new direction, especially if reinforced by university management.

Additionally, there is little understanding and knowledge among subject lecturers of EAP units in general or of which students have gone through an EAP programme. In my interviews, whilst lecturers knew about CELE, they did not really understand its full role, believing it mainly dealt with the linguistic problems students have. Lecturers also believed that this was the case with other members of their departments. Of the three departments represented by these lecturers, only one actively recommended students to our EAP unit, and this was mainly for language or study skills support. Lecturers also stated they were generally unaware of the educational backgrounds of students or their pathways into their courses (direct entry or EAP pathways). This would make it harder for lecturers to distinguish EAP graduates and provide relevant intelligence on their performance. Again, more negotiation between subject lecturers and EAP tutors may redress this.

There is tremendous value for establishing this knowledge triangle, not only to the three groups, but also to the University for it symbolises a merging of key resources.

6.3.4 A top-down approach to socialisation

As part of the socialisation structure within this university, our EAP centre is somewhat isolated from other socialisation structures. The interviews with all three groups of participants suggested that the support structures of the universities are fragmented. Whilst some reasons have been explored in the preceding section, one further explanation is that there is no overarching direction from university management to ensure such collaborations exist.

It appears that there are numerous, but disconnected structures in place at this university to help support students. Each of the three departments involved in the interview had courses and dedicated staff in place to help students transition and understand university expectations (for example avoiding plagiarism and academic writing). There is a legal skills advisor in the Law School helping students with their writing; the Business School offers a PDLM (Professional Development in Leadership and Management) course that has modules students described as similar to our Foundation modules; CLAS also has an academic module aimed at helping students plan and complete their assignments. The library also provides a suite of courses covering referencing styles and plagiarism. This is geared towards students who are new to the concepts and need the training. Further provision via NOOCs[27] is available to students of this university; there is presently one for pre-undergraduate students also targeting student integration and covering similar themes taught on our Foundation course. Whilst the existence of this course is undoubtedly a positive development, especially in terms of meeting the needs of far more students and incorporating online spaces, it is not only a duplication of what we do as EAP practitioners, but it was also unknown until recently to myself and other EAP colleagues. The point is that the University does not appear to be pooling its resources in terms of how it is helping students integrate into academic life, meaning that there is unnecessary duplication of the socialisation structures across the University because of lack of shared knowledge and collaboration. However, this lack of knowledge of what EAP units really do does not seem to be limited to just individual subject lecturers, but even the University Executive Board. The decision by our institution to outsource this very Foundation programme that has positively affected the lives of these students is yet another indication that the role of our unit and the impact we can have is either largely unknown or undervalued, or perhaps both.

[27] Nottingham Open Online Courses: free courses on Moodle to encourage collaboration and provide additional support to University staff and students

Finally, students and lecturers confirmed that there was a peer mentor system in place within two of these three schools. Unfortunately, neither students nor lecturers interviewed could clarify how exactly their mentoring systems worked. Generally, students in Law and CLAS are assigned a senior to mentor them in their first term. The idea is that students can seek advice from their mentors in order to better transition into university. Although officially set up for a term, it is generally hoped mentorships continue for longer. Students also acknowledged they relied on seniors unofficially to socialise them into the expected practices and behaviours within their departments and the university at large. As pointed out in earlier chapters, students too can be considered socialisation agents and play a very effective role in helping neophytes adjust to their environment (Wheeler, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987). However, again, this group of socialising agents seem to be isolated from other socialisation agents in the departments, as was evident from these first-year lecturers knowing little about how mentor schemes work; it seems reasonable that first-year lecturers should work more closely with student mentors to ensure new students receive ample support and consistent advice. More importantly, peer mentoring remains unexploited by EAP providers in spite of its value in aiding integration. Students already on their degree courses and more so, former EAP students, can be vital supporters of new students hoping to join their academic courses, but it seems that another structure of socialisation remains isolated, undervalued and underused.

In short, whilst there are multiple socialisation structures in place working to support students' transition into university or at different stages of their academic journeys, they do not seem to be working together on a more practical level. The result of this is that inevitably there are gaps and duplication. The Business students did not see the need for some of the modules of their PDLM course, and only one Law student in this study used the services of the legal skills advisor. It can be argued that because of lack of coordination and proper targeting, these resources are sometimes

redundant. Each structure can play a more distinct and efficient role as explained in the operation of the knowledge triangle above. Furthermore, mentor schemes can be introduced as part of EAP provision so former students can provide first-hand information on current needs and perceptions of their socialisation experiences, which can enlighten not only other students but also EAP staff. This type of knowledge is different to that possessed by EAP tutors. Within the socialisation structures available and provided by university, each group of stakeholders can be exploited more fully when they share knowledge and work together.

Ultimately, universities need to develop an overarching strategic vision of socialisation to ensure that structures in place are not duplicated. The multiplicity of support structures is not in itself problematic, especially in light of accommodating the diverse needs of students considering that socialisation is a personal process. Rather, the problem lies in the isolated efforts made by varying departments increasing the risk of duplication and resulting in a waste of resources. Moreover, if coordinated, there is less confusion in terms of locating the required support, given that universities have a key responsibility to advise students and set clear standards and expectations (James et al, 2010).

Finally, there is a need for universities to rethink their alliances with private EAP providers, especially if in-house centres are already in place. Such alliances are often financially driven (Fulcher, 2009; Fox et al, 2014) and secured by the promise of increased student numbers. Fulcher (2009) reports that the most lucrative EAP programmes, mainly Foundation and presessional courses, are often targeted. This undoubtedly impacts on EAP practitioners and the kind of contracts they can procure from private providers; if these contracts are teaching-only contracts and financial concerns remain the priority where EAP programmes are concerned, the value of EAP education will continue to be questioned or misplaced. Ding & Bruce (2017) note the rise of EAP private providers from 18 in 2008 (reported by Ansell, 2008) to 61 less than a decade later (reported by Bell, 2016). Such

numbers emphasise the vulnerability that EAP practitioners and centres face when seen as merely adjunct/support staff (Fulcher, 2009) and cash cow units (Hadley, 2015; Charles & Pecorari, 2016). When EAP centres are viewed as such, tutors are given heavy teaching loads to maximise resources, but this destabilises EAP tutors as research-informed and research-active practitioners (Fulcher, 2009; Ding & Bruce, 2017). Knight (2002) notes that conditions of employment for academic staff are often linked to commercialisation and privatisation. Whilst financially informed decisions are necessary for maintaining operational costs and universities' fiscal responsibility in society has become more transparent, teaching and research remain a university's core activities (Neary & Winn, 2009). Moreover, other important activities such as supporting the transition of students may also be affected in less obvious ways. As noted in my opening chapter, our Foundation Programme that has now proven to be quite impactful on the lives of these students was outsourced to a private provider without consultations with the very unit that designed and delivered the programme. The replacing of an in-house course with a proven record by one provided by an external private company even though such providers are notorious for employing lesser qualified staff at lower rates (Shepherd, 2007) appear to be financially driven by the promise of recruiting much larger numbers of international students.

Indeed, it would seem logical for universities to first assess and synchronise their most important assets, staff expertise (Blackmore & Blackwell, 2003: 23) in relation to students' interests before deciding to partner with private providers. In her report on trade liberalisation on HE services, specifically GATS[28], Knight (2002) recognises the reality of and opportunities in HE's commercial activities, but also counsels minimising threats to robust and quality educational practices. Regardless of what the real reason is behind the outsourcing of successful EAP programmes, it is clear that economic interests play a significant role in the decisions of university management.

[28] General Agreement on Trade in Services

However, if unrestrained, such fiscal interests could upset not only the core values of teaching and learning, but also capsize some of the efficient socialisation structures in place for the very students whose monetary contributions are so prized.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the impact students' EAP education had on their first-year experiences, relying mostly on interviews with students. Positive links between the relationship between students' EAP and socialisation experiences were identified; these were mainly concerned with instructions around academic writing, understanding academic conventions as well as familiarity with university facilities and systems. Students also benefited from close, supportive relationships with EAP tutors and peers; relationships with the latter served as supportive networks in their first-year. However, there were some expectations developed on our programme that were not consistent with the skills needed or behaviours expected on their degree programmes. These included strong time-management skills to manage increased workloads, different tasks and assessments as well as navigating new relationships with lecturers and classmates. It was reasoned that our EAP environment had somehow pampered students and inadvertently deprived them of developing autonomous and agentive behaviours. In terms of implications for practice, it was argued that EAP centres need to reconceptualise and expand their roles. Suggestions for doing so included rethinking centre names and revising curriculum content and delivery to focus more explicitly on developing autonomy and intercultural skills. Furthermore, establishing ongoing relationships with former students and subject-specific lecturers was emphasised as a form of continuous needs analysis to ensure EAP provision remains informed and organic. Creating a knowledge triangle for closer productive relationships with both former students and subject lecturers was proposed and some of the challenges of establishing such a tripartite partnership discussed. Finally, the need for a top-down, coordinated institutional approach to socialisation was also stressed. Whilst this discussion is premised on my research findings and

pertains specifically to my local context, there are implications for other EAP centres and socialising agents in various sectors within the university context.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter synthesises the different discussions of the previous chapters and articulates the main contributions of this thesis. It begins with a summary of the investigation which recapitulates the issues and questions around EAP provision in HE and revisits the purpose of this investigation. The theoretical framework and methodological approach undertaken are also reiterated. In the second section, the main findings are presented along with the main contributions to socialisation and EAP literatures. This section is followed by a brief discussion of the implications for EAP practice in the HE context. Finally, the limitations of this work are acknowledged before closing with suggestions for further empirical investigations.

7.2 Summary of the Research

This research has explored the first-year experiences of a group of post-EAP Foundation students with the purpose of understanding how EAP education contributed to their socialisation experiences and whether it helped to ease their transition into university. EAP centres support international students who study at British universities before and during their academic journeys. Whilst EAP began its disciplinary life as mere language support, five decades later, there are many competing pedagogic concerns that inform EAP teaching, resulting in more complex practices that displace its once remedial role. Over the years, EAP practitioners have come to see themselves less as language *fixers* and more as educators engaged in the learning and teaching of academic discourse(s). However, at the institutional level, EAP's role appears to be undervalued in terms of its contribution to international students' experiences although not so in terms of its fiscal contribution to universities. As "a multi-million dollar enterprise" (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002:1), EAP is perceived as very lucrative and centres have been informally labelled as academic *cash-cows* (Hadley, 2015; Charles and Pecorari, 2016). The outsourcing of EAP programmes to private providers perpetuates this perception and undermines their potential to enhance HE learning and teaching practices. The professional identity of practitioners, too, suffers

from such a perception. Where EAP is equated to a language school status that can operate with mostly transient and minimally qualified staff, this disincentivises practitioners in terms of engaging in continued professional development, consequently reducing EAP's institutional credibility as an academic discipline. Ultimately, in-house EAP providers would find it harder to precisely articulate the value of EAP practice beyond monetary gain; thereby, further crippling EAP's negotiating power within university management. Moreover, despite a growing literature and various pedagogical approaches, the complexity of the role of today's EAP tutor is not fully reflected in the literature (Campion, 2016) and more broadly, the role of EAP centres in today's dynamic HE context needs revisiting. Similarly, the voices of students, particularly EAP graduates, have yet to be well documented to better establish how EAP is contributing to their academic transition. All these issues raise questions about EAP's role and contribution in the HE context. This investigation focused on three research questions:

1. *What are the socialisation experiences of post-EAP students?*
2. *What is EAP's contribution to these experiences?*
3. *How can EAP more effectively contribute to the experiences of students?*

These questions represent an effort to comprehend institutional socialisation processes, to recognise the extent of EAP influence on students' academic experiences and to establish practical directions for EAP. To answer these questions, I investigated the transitional experiences of thirteen post-EAP students in the UK, using socialisation theories as the theoretical framework. Socialisation is the multidimensional, cumulative and ongoing process of acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for membership into a new community (Brim, 1966; Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987). Whilst seemingly sequential, it is quite a personal and dynamic process, but one that also affects organisations and socialisation agents since it occurs mainly through interactions and relationships.

It was argued in chapter 4 (4.1) that socialisation theories sit well within a constructivist/interpretive paradigm which caters for different interpretations

of a phenomenon by focusing on what is meaningful to individuals and by acknowledging their socio-cultural leanings (Creswell, 2009; Robson, 2011; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Within such a paradigm, interviews are commonly used to capture individual interpretations. For this study, I conducted multiple interviews with students, lecturers and EAP tutors at my institution to provide not only detailed and personal accounts, but also to triangulate different perspectives resulting in a comprehensive understanding of academic socialisation processes.

7.3 The Main Findings

7.3.1 Rethinking Spaces and Socialisation

In response to the first question, the findings revealed that the socialisation of these students relied significantly on their interaction with others (Bragg, 1976; Weidman, 1987; Hopwood, 2010). Through peer networks and friendships, students navigated their academic environment and developed their awareness of expectations although there was evidence of a divide between international and local students. Whilst faculty served as formal socialisation agents imparting subject knowledge and underscoring the necessary skills (Gardner, 2010; Meschitti & Carassa, 2014; Li & Collins, 2014), student participants identified another divide between themselves and staff; conversely, lecturers believed sufficient, albeit unexploited, opportunities existed for interaction. Furthermore, students learnt new behaviours by doing and to some degree, by trial and error, sometimes using previous experiences to inform decisions; in line with socialisation theories, it was clear that students' academic development was a cumulative and ongoing learning process. Additionally, there was some evidence of agency on the part of students, especially with regard to lecture attendance, and students had to exercise a significant amount of autonomy. However, this varied according to the individual, confirming the notion that the process can be comparatively personal (Weidman, 1987; Braggs, 1976). Whilst the findings did not show a significant link between socialisation experiences and language competence, there appears to be a symbiotic relationship between the two as the more linguistically competent students appeared to socialise

more easily. These main findings were all generally consistent with socialisation theories and previous empirical studies.

However, what was different in this study was how students exploited university spaces in the acquisition of the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours. This has been missing in previous discussions on socialisation. Peer support was fostered by the availability to meet and interact on campus; students exploited campus spaces, including libraries, to network and interact with others including seniors and group members and ultimately participated more in their academic settings and communities. Students showed preferences for some spaces; for example, participants disliked attending lectures in crowded halls where little interaction occurred. Contrastingly, there was a clear preference for digital resources and platforms to navigate their way around academia. The setting up of *WhatsApp* group chats or logging into Moodle to access recorded lectures and course materials are different ways e-spaces contributed positively to students' socialisation. This served to make students more agentive, as they accessed a range of resources themselves when these were available, but such agency strengthened the divide between lecturers and students as the latter were no longer solely dependent on lecturers or other formal socialising agents. It seems, as reasoned by Lipman (2010), a social pattern does emerge from how spaces are used. Undoubtedly, this was made possible due to access to technology and the availability of electronic devices. These findings confirm that school or campus settings are not neutral, and have the potential to impact behaviours (Banning & Canard, 1986; Oblinger, 2006; Flutter, 2006; Lippman, 2010; Brooks, 2010).

The utilisation of physical and online spaces by these students to engage with their learning environment carries evidentiary support that spaces are an important aspect of the socialisation process. This suggests that campus sites are useful spaces for encouraging interaction and promoting educational values; the availability of spaces that allow students to access information and develop key skills and behaviours that pertain to their

success is a vital consideration. Contrastingly, the absence of such spaces would only heighten the difficulty of transitioning by not providing students with ample opportunities to learn or engage in their academic communities. The tendency for students to gravitate towards spaces that appeal to them on various levels and enable, among other things, group participation indicates that 21st century campus managers need to be mindful of creating attractive and functional spaces that cater to the complex needs of multiple users as well as represent the institutional ethos so that students' exposure to and use of these spaces enhance their socialisation experiences. Similarly, as technology increasingly plays a role in educational spheres and promotes access to information, the patterns around socialisation experiences are bound to change and thus, necessitate a reassessment of how socialisation agents in higher education interact with students who are mostly digitally-oriented. In terms of the literature, there is a clear need to include the existence of appropriate spaces for developing relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours. Spaces that provide socialisees with access, opportunities, and more control over their own experiences are not only more conducive for effective socialisation but should also be seen as a fundamental component of modern socialisation structures.

However, as stated, discussions on the socialisation experiences of students have not accounted for the role spaces can play in the process; where there have been references to campus sites or locations, these have been mainly superficial, rather than deeper considerations of impacts. This study has therefore expanded socialisation scholarship by illuminating the relationship between spaces and students' socialisation experiences and showing how spaces aided the process for these students. The impact of spaces, which has been previously unexplored, can now inform future directions of socialisation studies.

7.3.2 Reconceptualising the Role EAP

There have been numerous attempts to examine the role and impact of EAP. Some studies have concentrated on the demands of the target situation and

pedagogic approaches (e.g. James, 2010; Green, 2015; Kırkgöz, 2009; Fenton-Smith et al, 2018) whilst others examined the experiences of current EAP students (e.g. Górska-Fernando, 2016). However, the main foci have tended to be on developing students' academic writing and literacy skills. Few investigations have explicitly focused on former EAP students over an extended period to capture the wider impact of EAP on students' transitional experiences. Such a focus helps to measure the efficacy of EAP practice and education and assess its role in the HE context.

This study takes a different angle by not only focusing on the impact of EAP beyond language or writing competence, but also using a socialisation framework for understanding this impact. Moreover, interviewing former students multiple times over the year enabled prolonged engagement and changing perceptions to be captured, which is not common in previous studies.

The results show that students' Foundation year did play a significant role in their socialisation experiences in numerous ways despite some discrepancies. A majority felt their first-year had been enhanced by course input. Of the thirteen participants, nine believed the education they had received on their EAP course was of significant value to them and had helped them navigate academia much more easily. And of the remaining four, only two felt their EAP instruction had not significantly helped them on this first-year with one student explicitly reasoning that this was because of the lack of content input; two were unavailable for the last interview. Students particularly noted their understanding of academic writing and plagiarism as critical learning experiences that positively affected their understanding of academic conventions and capabilities of adhering to them. Moreover, the advantage of being accustomed to the campus surroundings as well as the university systems were noted. There were also positive expectations and behaviours established regarding collaborative learning and the value of peer support. During their first-year, students gained from the friendships they had formed on their EAP course and understood group tasks as normative practices.

Nonetheless, there were some notable gaps in expectations. This was mainly in terms of the content, workload and the pace of their courses as well as the level of autonomy required on degree courses. Students perceived an ESAP approach to teaching EAP to be more effective; students enrolled on Business programmes were generally more satisfied despite some differences in task types. Law students, however, were notably dissatisfied with the lack of legal content on their EAP programme. This is consistent with arguments that teaching of academic discourses should not be isolated from disciplinary practices (Basturkmen, 2012; Thompson et al, 2013; Wingate, 2016). Students were almost *blindsided* (Rebecca) by the amount of workload involved and the responsibility they were expected to assume on their degree courses, especially as they received little individual attention from tutors. Another difference was students' relationships with lecturers; students did not enjoy the same close and supportive relationships with lecturers that they had with EAP tutors. Inadvertently, the relationships with teachers and structure of the Foundation programme had hindered students from becoming truly autonomous and agentive. This, therefore, highlights a need for practitioners to examine EAP students' relationships with socialisation agents in order to negotiate more empowering interactions.

Regardless of these gaps, the general response from students was that their EAP education had served them well and helped in their socialisation into university. These findings challenge notions of EAP education as a remedial language support (Spack, 1988; Lea & Street, 1998; Jordan, 2002; Bailey, 2013) and the belief that the effects of EAP are limited to the preliminary stages of student enrolment onto their degree courses. The impact of this EAP programme on students' academic experiences continued well after the first semester of their first-year. Hence, EAP programmes are more than simply pathways for international students to gain access to degree courses; these programmes are critical to students' understanding of institutional expectations, their roles as students and how to participate more effectively. The socialisation that students encountered on their degree programmes

resonated in many ways with the educational practices they had been exposed to on their Foundation programme. Therefore, this investigation has established that EAP is part of the wider socialisation structures in place to support students and is vital to their academic success. Within the EAP community, this broader socialisation role ought to be fully acknowledged because it is often overshadowed by specific linguistic foci and is not well documented by empirical research involving post-EAP students. The findings of this study, therefore, provide direct evidence from students to support EAP's influential and more expansive role and justifies a reconceptualisation of EAP education as not just a linguistic intervention to acquire the academic lingua franca, but a pedagogical one to aid academic transition. Such an intervention has significant potential to affect not only international students' access, but also retention and attainment.

7.4 Implications for EAP Practice

Based on these findings, it seems necessary for EAP centres to not only continuously review their role and impact but also to embrace new ones within HE. As part of this ongoing review, it is necessary to engage more with former students to gauge impact on students' academic experiences and introduce operational and pedagogic strategies that help in achieving EAP's primary goal – preparing students for academia. Moreover, practitioners would benefit from reconceptualising EAP as a socialisation structure and consider its impacts beyond developing academic literacy. Whilst this is an important part of students' preparation, it is not the only aspect that guarantees success. It was also suggested that reconceptualising could mean EAP centres relaunching themselves and moving away from centre names that depict a narrow image of EAP's role.

At the institutional level, a competitive environment requires maximising existing resources. Universities would also benefit from perceiving their in-house EAP centres as effective socialisation structures, not merely economically profitable programmes. Our Foundation Programme that was outsourced to a private provider has proven to influence the lives of these

students as it continued to support students in their first-year. It is, therefore, logical for this university to reconsider future external partnerships related to EAP programmes, and instead reassess and synchronise staff expertise to offer more coordinated and targeted support for students, especially international students whose varied contributions are not insignificant. Fully supporting and utilising in-house EAP programmes can favourably influence international student mobility flow to the UK with EAP expertise informing universities' practical internationalisation agendas. EAP practitioners can contribute to the dialogue between international students and staff to ensure the provision of comprehensive and inclusive support structures. Where staff teams work together to respond to students' diverse transitional needs, there will be less confusion at the different stages of the socialisation process. Subject academics can offer necessary discipline-specific advice to ensure EAP courses are more targeted and relevant for students; similarly, EAP expertise of working with international students can be informative to subject departments, who now have a surge of international students on their programmes. EAP practitioners can provide valuable insights into teaching a more culturally-diverse student cohort. Such insights may prove to be directly valuable not only to teaching staff, but also indirectly to students who will feel more welcomed in their departments if teaching and learning practices are interculturally sensitive.

With such effective structures in place, the retention rates of students can be improved and where they exist, attainment gaps can be addressed as well as any deficit perceptions of international students. Where international students experience smooth transitions from their previous academic environments to their new ones, they are more likely to complete their studies abroad, especially if in-house EAP courses have equipped them with the necessary capabilities to succeed.

This, however, can only be done efficiently across the university if a top-down and uniform approach to socialisation is adopted. This would facilitate the necessary dialogues between different socialising agents such as EAP

practitioners, first-year lecturers and students. As argued previously, a tripartite knowledge exchange between these groups of agents would exist. These kinds of triadic dialogues are important for a deeper understanding of student retention and in turn, the establishment of effective, inclusive and coordinated socialisation structures. Not only is a medium created for international students' voices to be heard, but this also places EAP centres in a more influential position as opposed to merely a service industry operating on the margins of academia (MacDonald, 2016).

7.5 Limitations and Concluding Remarks

Despite these findings, this research investigation is limited in terms of scope. There were 13 students involved at the start, and two withdrew by the end of the year. Six lecturers from three departments and four EAP tutors were also interviewed. This makes for a relatively small sample size and restricts the making of extensive generalisations. Whilst there is evidence of what these students experienced on their first-year, it cannot be claimed to be identical to the experiences of other first-years or former EAP students. Furthermore, there is not enough data to firmly identify the socialisation practices of each department or confidently distinguish between relevant Schools.

Nonetheless, the sixty-two interviews with students and ten interviews with staff reflect a thorough attempt to explore the multidimensional concept of socialisation. Moreover, these interviews do serve to update current knowledge about students' first-year experiences at this institution and the way in which EAP education has coloured those experiences. There is enough evidence to establish that EAP can play a wider effective role as a socialisation structure. Undoubtedly, more research exploring the transitional experiences of post-EAP students is required to further expand what is known about the impact of EAP on socialisation processes, especially if the objective is to develop effective and inclusive structures and give EAP centres a more active role in such structures. Finally, there is reasonable evidence to challenge socialisation theories that do not consider spaces as an important construct in the process. The findings from this study shed light on the

relationship between spaces and socialisation experiences, but the exact extent to which spaces are influential needs to be determined by further research into the impact of campus sites and university online platforms on students' transitional experiences. It is hoped that the findings from this investigation will contribute to both EAP practice and socialisation literature.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1 – STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW 1: September/October 2015

- ✓ *Expectations*
- ✓ *Readiness & preparation*
- ✓ *Concerns*

1. How ready do you feel about starting your degree course?

2. What expectations do you have (general and specific – language/assignments/assessments)?

3. Do you think your Foundation programme has helped you to prepare for your degree course? How so? (Why not?)

4. What did you think was most useful about the Foundation Programme?

5. Are there any areas that are still problematic or worrying for you in relation to your academic studies?

INTERVIEW 2 – November 2015
Introductory Questions
Could you tell me how things have been since we last met?

Main Questions:
Successes
What are some of the things you can do successfully?

- ✓ *Workload (reading outside class; assignments; tasks)*
- ✓ *Time management (academic and non-academic commitments)*
- ✓ *Interacting with others (students: classmates; group members and lecturers or professors)*
- ✓ *Language skills*
- ✓ *Using the facilities (**physical** – getting around campus/classes/library and **online** – finding relevant information)*
- ✓ *Social activities (societies; voluntary work)*

Which of these has helped to boost your confidence? Made you feel competent or you have achieved something

Why has this/have these made you more confident? Why is it/are they important to you?

What or who has helped you to successfully cope?

Struggles:
What are some of the things you have struggled with or have been less successful with?

- ✓ *Workload (reading outside class; assignments; tasks)*
- ✓ *Time management (academic and non-academic commitments)*
- ✓ *Interacting with others (students: classmates; group members and lecturers or professors)*
- ✓ *Language skills*
- ✓ *Using the facilities (**physical** – getting around campus/classes/library and **online** – finding relevant information)*
- ✓ *Social activities (societies; voluntary work)*

Which of these has made you feel less confident? How has this/these affected you?

What has hindered your ability to cope?

What do you think you should do to improve your student experience?

Wrap Up Questions:
Do you think there is anything (more) that could be done to improve your student experience? (from the perspective of the university; other students)

Is there anything else that you would like to add about your student experience so far?

INTERVIEW 3 PROMPT - December 2015

Following our last conversation, could you please take the following pictures and email me before you leave for holiday or before mid-January?

For **each** of the following, please take a minimum of 2 or maximum of 4 pictures

- a place or places you spend the most time in
- a place or places where you enjoy spending time
- a place or places where you have to go
- a place or places where you meet other students
- a place or places where you meet lecturers or staff members of your department

This could be a physical (classroom or library) or virtual (e.g. website) space.

For each place, please describe (see page 2 for examples)

- **What** the place is (*a classroom, a cafeteria, a website, lab etc.*)
- **Where** it is (if virtual, how can you find it)
- **Why** you go there (*like to, have to or to meet . . .*)
- **How** it contributes or not contribute to your overall student experience or academic experience

Thank you very much.

Place I spend most time:

What: *a classroom with chairs facing the board; chairs can be moved around*
Where: *this classroom is on Jubilee campus; it's easy to get to*
Why: *I have classes every day each lasting for two hours so I spend a lot of time there*
How: *I like the class because it is well lit; it also has a projector which lecturers use to explain thigs; I think it is a modern classroom which makes learning easier ; OR NOT!*

Place I enjoy spending time:

What: *my room*
Where: *on Jubilee campus; it's in a quiet/busy hall*
Why: *quiet and I can relax & study; busy and I like to meet different people in my hall*
How: *I can relax and study so I can keep up with my studies/workload; I get to meet so many people who help me with my studies or life on campus/at the university*

INTERVIEW 3: February 2016

Warmer:
How did the exam go?
Do you feel you've done well? Why or why not?
What do you think you have to do next, based on your exam experience?

Main Questions
You sent a few photos of . . .

Shall we start with the places where you seem to spend the most time (physical or virtual)?

- **What** is this the place?
- **Where** is it (if virtual, how can you find it; tell me about the first time you came here)?
- **Why** do you come here; what do you do here?
- **Any other places** you tend to visit on a daily or regular basis (again physical or virtual)?

How do these places contribute or not contribute to your overall student experience or academic experience? (What's good or not so good about them?)

Where do you tend to meet and interact with other students?

What about lecturers - where do you tend to meet or interact with lecturers or staff members of your department?

Where is your **favourite** place - place/places where you enjoy spending time?

How could the quality of the classrooms or digital spaces be improved?
In your opinion, what personal characteristics help or hinder in learning in these places that you visit?

Please describe place (virtual or physical) which you have found particularly helpful; why?

How important is it to speak and write 'correctly' in a public space; how does that impact on your interaction/participation?

Finally, why did you choose this room or place to have this interview?

INTERVIEW 4 – APRIL 2016

In the innovative and mind-expanding book *Metaphors We Live By*, linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson say: t*he essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.*

Here are some metaphors for Learning

1. *Planting flowers* -- A seed is planted in my mind which I nurture with water and sun in the faith that it will sprout and grow.

2. *Playing cards* -- I divide things into four categories and look for patterns across the suits until the logic and meaning emerges and I know which card to play.

3. S*avings account* -- I invest the time to accumulate data and information until there is enough interest that I can roll it over into the next idea.

Lawley & Tompkins, 2000

QUESTIONS

1. **When you're learning, what is it like?**
   1b. What is your metaphor for learning?
   1c. Why? (could you explain)

2. **How would you describe your current academic experience?**
   2b. What is your metaphor for your current academic experience?
   2c. Why? (could you explain further)

3. **Do you feel you are part of the university**
   3b. Metaphorically, do you feel you are *in the pond* or *out of the pond* in terms of being part of the university?
   3c. Why or why not?

4. **How would you rate your performance at this stage?**
   4b. Why?

5. **Living on or off campus: how has this affected you?**

INTERVIEW 4 PROMPT - Metaphors for Learning (Lawley & Tompkins, 2000)

1. *Planting flowers* -- A seed is planted in my mind which I nurture with water and sun in the faith that it will sprout and grow.

2. *Playing cards* -- I divide things into four categories and look for patterns across the suits until the logic and meaning emerges and I know which card to play.

3. S*avings account* -- I invest the time to accumulate data and information until there is enough interest that I can roll it over into the next idea.

4. *Switching on a light bulb* -- It's not until the light switches on that I have an insight or an 'ah ha'.

5. *Eating* -- You need to take in the basic meat and potatoes before you get to the mouth-watering dessert.

6. *Being a detective* -- It's all about uncovering the facts, looking for clues and asking the right questions until the whole mystery makes sense.

7. *Peeling an onion* -- I peel off a layer which reveals the next layer to be peeled off. Each time something tells me I'm getting closer to the core of the matter.

8. *A quest* -- I'm searching for that illusive something and every step I take brings me closer to what I need to know, but I never get there ... it's a continuous journey.

9. *Sculpting* -- You start with the raw material and shape it into a form that's pleasing to the eye.

10. *Wrestling* -- I struggle with the ideas until they're pinned down and I've captured them.

Interview 5 – May/June 2016

Question 1:
How has your first year been?

Great	*Good*	*Okay/Satisfactory*	*Unsatisfactory/Difficult*	*Poor/terrible*

(Why?)

Question 2:
Were you expecting your first year to go this way?

What were you **not** expecting?

Question 3:
Looking back at your first year, is there anything you would do differently?

Is there anything that could be done differently by your School or the University?

Question 4:
What do you think has been most instrumental in completing this year?

What was your biggest learning curve or challenge?

Question 5:
Finally, how much did the Foundation Programme year prepare you for your first year at university?

What do you think would improve teaching/learning on the Foundation Programme?

APPENDIX 2 – STUDENTS' END OF YEAR GRADES

STUDENTS END OF YEAR GRADES

LAW		NUBS		CLAS	
Grace	58	Kai	63.42	Ifeoma	70
Naomi	52	Tony	70.75		
Rebecca	46 (2 fails; 1 resit)	Yixuan	75.58		
Thomas	45 (2 resits)	Amira	63.33		
Sam	51	Ghassan	13 incomplete		
Victoria	63				
Faith	57				

APPENDIX 3 – STAFF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for EAP Tutors

Practical Questions

Number of years teaching EAP:

Teaching Qualifications:

Main Questions

How would you describe EAP and your role as an EAP tutor?

How important is it for students to go through an EAP course before starting an academic degree programme?

What are some of the difficulties of teaching EAP?

How do you address these difficulties? Are these personal strategies or centre/professional strategies?

How would you describe the relationship between EAP units and subject departments?

Do you feel you know enough about the different departments to support students effectively?

YES, where does this knowledge come from **OR** NO, where would this knowledge come from?

Does part of knowledge come from the students?

Is there anything you would like to add?

Interview Questions for Subject-specific Lecturers

Practical Questions

Teaching experience:

Teaching Qualifications:

Main Questions

What do you consider to be the key responsibilities of teaching UG level especially first years?

How would you describe the challenges students face in their first year? Do IS face different challenges from their local or home counterparts?

How to you respond to these challenges? Are these personal strategies or are they departmental?

Do you think there is enough interaction n between staff and students? Please consider where and how often you meet students, classroom sizes, tutor availability, and opportunities for small group or 1-1 interaction

Do you know anything about CELE (Centre for English Language education) or EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and its role? Have you or any colleagues in this department or school worked or liaised with CELE?

APPENDIX 4 – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION & CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research title
Life after EAP: the missing link

Research context
The University of Nottingham campuses: individual interviews will take place on either Jubilee campus or University Park campus.

Aims and Objectives
The aim of this research is to understand the experiences and perceptions of international students in their first year and establish to what extent students feel they have been prepared by their EAP courses for university life in the UK.

Your participation
Your decision to participate in this research project is purely voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any stage; this will not affect your status now or in the future. If you do choose to participate in this study, you will be asked:

- to partake in monthly audio-recorded individual interviews throughout the academic year
- for permission to access your final grades at the end of the academic year.

Anonymity, Confidentiality and Non-traceability
All information provided by you during this investigation will be anonymised in order to protect your identity and any details that could be used to identify you will also be removed.
All electronic data will be stored confidentially on my work computers' Z drive and personal removable storage devices (e.g USB) which can only be accessed by myself and will be used purely for the purposes of this research. Hard copies of any relevant documents including CDs or DVDs of interviews or journals will also be stored securely in my office at the university. Some data may be shared with my supervisors, but this would have been anonymised in advance.

Consent
If you are happy to participate in this investigation, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form.

Researcher:
Evelyn Sandra Leigh
sandra.leigh@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisors:
Professor Simon McGrath (main supervisor)
simon.mcgrath@nottingham.ac.uk

Dr. Alex Ding (co-supervisor)
alex.ding@nottingham.ac.uk

Research Ethics Committee - School of Education, University of Nottingham
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title Life after EAP: the missing link

Researcher's name Evelyn Sandra Leigh

Supervisors' name Professor Simon McGrath (main supervisor)
Dr. Alex Ding (co-supervisor)

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the individual interviews.
- I understand that all data, hard and electronic, will be securely stored mainly at the office of the researcher. Only her two supervisors will have access to the data after they have been anonymised.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed ..... (research participant)

Print name ..... **Date** .....

Contact details

Researcher: *sandra.leigh@nottingham.ac.uk*

Supervisors: *simon.mcgrath@nottingham.ac.uk*; *alex.ding@nottingham.ac.uk*

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