A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE OPENING PHASES
OF CROSS CULTURAL
IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING INTERACTION IN RURAL MALAYSIA

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Abstract

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Interaction during the early opening phases of in-service teacher training courses in Malaysia between native speaker teacher trainers and rural Malaysian teachers involved potential cultural issues. This qualitative study of four rural sites addresses possible tensions from differences in learning cultures as native speaker teacher trainers introduced courses. There were issues of whether primary and secondary teachers accept training techniques. If teachers were to see the courses as useful there was a need for early acceptance of discourse strategies, techniques and the experiential approach. Analysis of this with teacher trainer talk, non-verbals and perceptions of early phase interaction was derived from lesson transcripts, field notes, semi-structured interviews and reflection. Interviews explored teacher acceptance of training techniques. 12 out of 16 Malaysian teachers were positive about the usefulness of training techniques.

Most teachers were positive about the early phases of the learning culture when teacher trainers introduced themselves, facilitated transferable tasks, encouraged success and included bilingual approaches. Unexpectedly, humour was important in reducing reliance on the ‘native speaker’ teacher trainer and in creating convergence. While some secondary teachers valued the teacher educator as a knowledge source, for most, the pedagogic approach was pivotal to accepting techniques which were less hierarchical than teachers’ earlier training.

Teacher educators stated that teacher interest at both primary and secondary levels focused not on cultural difference as expected but on transferable techniques. Teacher educator stereotypes were abated by cultural adaptation as training techniques reduced the expert knowledge dispenser role. Teacher educators reflected on this and the role of reflection as transcripts and field notes were discussed to develop practitioner knowledge. The teacher educators spoke positively of this reflection. This study provides data for teacher education practice where meeting everyday classroom needs were perceived as central to fostering interactive rural classrooms.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study describes and analyses interaction during the early opening phases of in-service teacher education courses in Malaysia. The interaction was between native speaker teacher educators (English Language Coordinators) and rural Malaysian teachers who were beginning courses on classroom methodology. The in-service courses were part of a five year long national teacher education Project organized by CfBT Malaysia, an educational trust, in partnership with the Ministry of Education. As the expatriate teacher educators facilitated the beginning of courses, they aimed to introduce and model ways of learning which could be transferred to teachers’ own classrooms. The native speaker teacher educators therefore sought to model a pedagogy which would be accepted by the teachers.

Before there is an adoption of pedagogy and what could be perceived as ‘imported’ tasks and techniques for classroom use, teachers clearly needed to see the techniques as acceptable and useful. This study addresses such teacher concerns and related issues with bringing in native speaker teacher educators into rural classroom situations. The native speaker teacher educator discourse strategies and non verbal behaviours as they introduce courses will be described and analyzed along with teacher educators’ and teachers’ perceptions of these. The focus is on how the teacher educators and the teachers perceived and accepted or rejected the early phases of in-service interaction.

In the early phases of the first 45 minutes when introducing a course, teacher educators introduced themselves, course aims and interactive tasks. They were also asked by the client, the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education, to model pedagogy which teachers would hopefully use later. This study therefore describes the teacher educators’ discourse strategies and behaviours aimed at fostering the acceptance of methodology. The teacher educators also had to manage teachers’ perceptions of the matsalleh (Malaysian English for European) native speaker. Both teacher educators and teachers were also working within the Malaysian national education framework with its “culture of learning” (Cortazzi, 2000). This study
addresses the tensions which could possibly arise from differences in ways of teaching between native speaker teacher educators and teachers. Both parties to the interaction are also involved in reflection on the process of early phase interaction as part of this study.

Background to the Research

In early 2002 The Centre for British Teachers, an international educational trust with headquarters in Reading, United Kingdom, was asked by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) of the Malaysian Ministry of Education to provide English Language Coordinators (ELCs) or teacher educators for selected districts throughout Malaysia. CfBT Education Services Malaysia Sdn Bhd has operated in Malaysia since the mid 1970s. The organization took up the contract in May 2002 at the same time that the Prime Minister of the time announced the start of changes in the medium of instruction for mathematics and science from Bahasa Malaysia to English. Significantly, the project came at a time of quantum changes in the country’s English language policy (for the historical context see Asmah, 1993; Pandian, 2004; Pillay, 1998; Rajaretnam and Nalliah, 1993). The aim of the Project was to raise the standards of English in the country, particularly in rural areas, through in-service English language teacher training. The Malaysian Schools English Language Project (henceforth called the Project) began in June 2002 with a needs analysis which informed the pedagogy of the Project, namely the courses, workshops and supportive observations for teacher development.

Background of the researcher

As a researcher, I brought my experience in teaching and teacher education to this research. This section is therefore a brief personal narrative describing my pedagogic background. As an educator, much of the basis of this research derives from experience and interest in rural settings, cross cultural communication and classroom interaction. I was born in a rural New Zealand district with a high proportion of Maoris and more bilingualism than in most parts of New Zealand. Rural cultural complexities are not new to me. My first teaching experience was in the learning
culture of central Indonesia with an informal exchange of Javanese music tuition for English language tuition. I had a small knowledge base from undergraduate studies of literature and linguistics and soon learnt that knowing a subject was not the same as being able to teach it. After much travel and further instances of ‘backpacker’ teaching, I studied the post graduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language at Victoria University of Wellington studying with Asia-Pacific teachers. This deepened my interest in the complexities of cultural diversity and often created reflective moments through experiences of miscommunication. Nine years of international primary school teaching in New Zealand, Nauru or Solomon Islands, in large multicultural classrooms, enhanced an interest in verbal and non-verbal interaction during learning.

I returned to New Zealand after six years in the Pacific to even greater intellectual rigor and post graduate study of the links between mathematics content acquisition and second language vocabulary learning. The focus of the research based Masters study was on interaction in pair work with an emphasis on the learners’ discourse and classroom methodology. Discourse analysis is also part of this study. From 1992-95, I was a lecturer, then Language Specialist in Singapore and taught spoken English, teaching methodology and English for Business and Technology for SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. During this period I also improved my communicative fluency in Bahasa Indonesia, which is similar to Malaysia’s national language. I first trained Malaysian teachers in Singapore and later in two in service courses near Kuala Lumpur. The ASEAN wide teacher training courses and the research into English for specific purposes led to an interest in interaction within English for Tourism. Co-authored textbooks, which were later published in international and Chinese bilingual editions, include a cultural component, an aspect which is a main strand of this research. There were often instances of communication accommodation (Giles et al., 2003) in which interlocutors adapt their usual patterns of talk and behaviour. Whether managing transnational teams of teachers for five years in a Polytechnic in Singapore or training Singaporean airport staff, as I did as a consultant for my own company, I found that learning cultures were complex and fascinating. Face to face interaction between varied cultural groups continues to be an area of personal and academic interest.
The complexity of interaction with changes in teaching and learning was central to the dynamics of the Malaysian Schools English Language Project for which I was recruited in 2002. I was appointed as the In Service English Teacher Training Manager reporting to a national Director. The project began in June 2002 with meetings between the provider, the Centre for British Teachers (Malaysia) and the client, the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education. The Project was accorded status in that many meetings involved the Director General of Education and the national head of curriculum. I worked with the Director for English language curriculum and a designated Project Officer and after the first year was given office space in the Ministry itself, suggesting an acceptance as the only expatriate situated within the office. The client responded positively to my communicative fluency in Indonesian which is very similar to the national language, Bahasa Malaysia. The role of bilingualism in terms of social accommodation is also part of this research.

Discussions with Malaysian teacher trainers and curriculum implementation teams revealed that we shared some pedagogic assumptions, which I shall describe later. Initially it was very clear that both the client and the project team as providers needed to ascertain teachers’ perceptions of their classroom needs. Drawing on my own classroom experience and earlier work as part of the early 90s Regional English Language centre post-graduate programmes with Malaysian teachers, I stated my opinion that change would never come about from centralized directives. Discussions revealed a shared view that teachers would only adapt to changes which could be accepted as part of their everyday classroom interaction or which met immediate needs. The client stated a preference for localized District based approaches focused on classroom interaction. We all agreed that nothing could be planned without a needs analysis of teachers’ classroom approaches and so this was the first part of my work with the Project.

I worked with the needs analysis, design, quality assurance and cross cultural personnel management challenges of the national project for four and a half years. I continued my interest, then research into literature on the issues of cultures of learning, native speakerism, teacher education and reflection, while managing at first twenty and later thirty teacher educators in a small team of five, with two Malaysian ministry support colleagues. Much time was spent in liaison with local level colleagues, teacher
educators and teachers in the rural districts. In late 2006, there was a change of Project direction driven by United Kingdom based initiatives seeking a quantifiable standardized model. This was not a client-driven change or change driven by teachers’ requests and so after much debate I left the Project. I became a self-funded full-time researcher. Drawing on my background, I chose not focus on evaluating programme design. I have researched the opening phases of in-service interaction; hence this work on learning cultures, teacher education interaction and reflection in a rural teacher education project.

The CfBT Malaysia rural teacher education project.

When beginning the nationwide rural teacher development project in Malaysia the client, the Ministry of Education, expressed concerns that rural teachers were engaged in too much teacher talk and the overuse of grammar translation methods. Their concern to develop more effective English language learning was seen as related to classroom interaction and a need for teachers themselves to experience greater interaction during an in-service programme. It was suggested that creating more interaction between teachers and learners was an important Project focus and that there was a need to change classroom processes to increase learner talk and to build greater in class use of the English language. This brief was the underpinning to teacher education methodology and the design for the five year project in which I was involved as the Project manager for pedagogy. I will now describe some of the client’s needs which inform some of my research questions.

The Ministry of Education (henceforth called the client), stated at the onset of the Project that teacher education should model classroom processes which were interactive and provided for productive use of the English language. Yet from the beginning of the Project, Ministry officials spoke of cultural difference impacting on how teachers might perceive the teacher educators as all knowing dispensers of knowledge. Such a perception was seen as a challenge when interactivity was an aim for the teacher educators, whom the client insisted should be experienced specialists who were “native speakers.” The choice of outsider expertise while giving perceived status to the courses also created challenges as native speaker teacher educators could be perceived as not being aware of what was workable in Malaysian rural
classrooms. Comments from the client also highlighted the importance of beginning inservice courses with motivating experiences which got away from the teacher educator being seen as the transmitter of knowledge or imported infallible expert. It was suggested that this involved changing the culture of the teacher as being the provider of all the learning to build greater teacher and learner interactivity and more learner-to-learner talk. The Malaysian Ministry of Education teacher educators spoke of the early phases of training as being critical in ensuring that teachers were motivated to return for later sessions in the courses. The pragmatic concern was that teachers would not return to courses if the early experience was not positive. The early opening phases were also seen as important as the client stated that some rural teachers may reportedly feel threatened by an expatriate or “matsalleh” teacher educator.

The client suggested that to bring about changes within English language classrooms requires understanding how teachers change or resist change within in-service courses. This concern was reported to myself as the manager of Project pedagogy at the beginning of the Project and motivates much of this research. In other rural settings in Namibia, Sri Lanka and Indonesia (Hayes, 2000; O’Sullivan, 2005; Tomlinson, 1988), much effort and finance has been spent in teacher in-service courses for teacher development, with shared concerns regarding how effective this effort was and which models of teacher education were useful. There has been little work on describing the process of teacher education interaction when introducing in-service courses. I cannot find research linking the interaction in teacher education programmes with critically evaluating the acceptance of teacher development courses in terms of how “human learning is emergent through social interactions” (Singh & Richards, 2006, p.151). One may ask why focus on the early phases interaction; aside from the view that first impressions count and the practical concern that you want teachers to return to subsequent sessions. I suggest that it is useful to understand what teacher educators do and say to create positive perceptions of their methodology as they begin interaction with practicing teachers. I have been unable to find research describing the talk and non-verbal communication of the early phases of teacher development and perceptions of the early phases of teacher education courses. One needs to turn to some research in social psychology on ‘first impressions’ and the primacy of experiences to find elaboration of the importance of early phases.
Hogg's (1988) research elaborating on work by Asch (1946) points to people latching onto their early impressions of others. He calls the early impressions 'central traits' and found that these have a disproportionate influence on how people are perceived when compared to later impressions. His work, which still has currency within the social psychology field, found evidence of the primacy effect. Hogg describes the primacy effect as “an order of presentation effect in which earlier presented information has a disproportionate influence on social cognition” (Hogg, p.47) and suggests “that perhaps people simply pay more attention to earlier information.” While recent information is a contributing factor in peoples' thinking, Jones and Goethal (1972) cited in Hogg (1998), found that first impressions (the primacy effects) often override later information (the recency effects). Should the primacy effect be a major influence in perceptions and social cognition then the earlier phases of a teacher educator and teacher interaction could be important contributing influences on how teacher education is perceived and accepted. There is also the possibility that both sides are involved in accommodating difference, for as communication accommodation theory explains, convergence or divergence may occur when differing cultures interact in the early phases (Giles & Noels, 2002).

English language teacher development also requires learning by teacher educators and teachers, as teacher educators aim to build confidence and develop techniques which the teachers with whom they work will accept and adopt. Compounding the situation are issues of how so-called ‘native speaker’ teacher educators are perceived when working in a rural generally non-English speaking setting with speakers of other languages. The ‘native speaker’ teacher educators with their international experience come into a ‘culture of teaching’ which may make the opening encounters in courses a challenging interaction. I will elaborate on the issues of native speakers working within the rural Malaysian in-service setting in later parts of this study. We first turn to the teachers’ needs as they perceived them. Although the Ministry of Education and CfBT were the principal stakeholders, the teachers were the clients whom teacher educators would train and support in planned classroom change. The Project began in the rural Districts by asking teachers what they perceived their in-service needs to be.
The Project needs analysis of teachers’ perceptions

The Project began in 2002 with a needs analysis. The purpose of the analysis, entitled Surveying Progressive English Language Teaching (SPELT), was to describe teachers’ perceptions of needs in a non-urban Malaysian District, the kind of districts in which the English Language Coordinators (ELCs), henceforth called teacher educators would work. Proposals to include student perceptions of teaching and learning were not supported by administrators as time pressures put the focus on teacher needs. The needs analysis, comprising a written questionnaire and interviews, provided a basis for focusing collaboration with teachers in Education Districts and provided information for CfBT’s partner, the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education (Hall & Dodson, 2003). The survey also aimed at gathering information about teachers to guide the learning/teaching process in a “broad process oriented view of needs” (Brindley, 1989, p.4, cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002). The following sections describe the needs analysis findings, which along with the Ministry’s agenda underpin the teacher development courses.

The needs analysis for the Project was co-authored and implemented by this writer with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education. This involved 168 primary and secondary teachers from one rural District. A District is an administrative unit similar to a county but with great variation in size as the boundaries often reflects historical events rather than topographically defined units. The survey had an 86% sample of the total English language teacher population; interviews with 50 teachers. It formed the basis for principles for initial course design. A confidential questionnaire was conducted en masse and 50 bilingual, individual oral interviews were conducted. The aim of the analysis was to gather data on the perceptions, approaches, techniques and needs of English language teachers in rural Malaysia. As such, the survey examined second order perspectives of needs, in that it asked about the classroom tasks teachers perceive they do and their classroom methods and needs as they perceived them, rather than as observed. It also asked what teachers saw as their own training needs. As such, the survey describes teachers’ perspectives, views of their own practices and perceived needs. This needs analysis then informed the Project design within which this research is conducted; namely the in-service work of teacher educators living and educating within rural Malaysia. The client then sought to balance information it had from teacher training colleges and its own observations with the needs analysis.
The Project contract (2002) stated that the teacher educators would:

- devise strategies for improving English teaching and learning
- devise strategies for improving motivation among both teachers and learners
- design and develop ideas for classroom activities and resources to complement those activities
- conduct, where appropriate, in-service training and transfer of experience for local teachers.

In order for such activities to be successful it was necessary to see what expectations and needs teachers would bring to the process, especially as the client, the Ministry of Education, was very specific in wanting a collaborative process.

*Findings and implications from the needs analysis.*

The findings of the SPELT needs analysis revealed that teachers stated that they were aware of important pedagogical principles such as using group activities. Yet check questions on teaching practice which contradicted earlier queries about theory revealed discrepancies between what was said to be done and actual practice. The survey revealed that the amount of teacher talk involved a dominant usage of mother tongue and related to students’ levels of fluency or acceptance of English language. The survey data and interviews both revealed that the frequent and widespread usage of the national language, Bahasa Malaysia, was the norm. In classrooms, product-based success, namely neat examples of correct writing was important, leading to classroom practice in which teachers organise learning so that students practised model tasks aimed at gaining high examination scores. Part of the reason for surveying the chosen District in the Project was that this approach of model exam questions and related teaching techniques had not been overly successful. Teachers expressed a need to develop their own grammar and vocabulary awareness and reported difficulties with the examinable skills of reading and writing.

The data suggested a predominance of translation and the wide use of copying coupled with the need to produce an accurate product. This translated into frequent use of closed structured tasks and blackboard copying. Teachers also favoured a quiet classroom based on textbook input as the most acceptable form of classroom organisation. In terms of tasks, reading comprehension, copying from the board and answering worksheets were widely used. Although teachers claimed to acknowledge aspects of language learning which were in the syllabus such as encouraging English
in and outside the classroom this rarely happened according to check questions on actual practice. The needs analysis also provided an open response section in which teachers requested training in general methodology, motivational approaches, grammar teaching as well as reading and writing skills development. Both secondary and primary teachers agreed that there were training needs for pedagogy and that there were also needs related to teachers’ own English language proficiency. According to the more articulate TESOL graduate teachers, only by developing the use of varied techniques could there be alternatives to writing-based rote learning. These teachers spoke and wrote of wanting to know and use alternative learning arrangements to teacher-fronted classrooms. There was therefore a need for both teacher development and teacher training, namely for teachers to develop their own awareness and confidence through professional development and also a training need to gain practical methods and techniques. There were several expressions of the opinion that there was a need to ‘do what we could do in our classrooms and learn in that same way’ (Participant 26, Hall & Dodson, 2003a). Both the surveyed teachers and the client concurred that teacher education tasks should be readily transferable to classrooms and that teachers should experience learning which they would use in their teaching.

As the teachers and the client expressed a need for teacher education tasks which could be used later in classrooms the project was based on teachers experiencing tasks which were readily transferable. The project was based on experiential learning with pedagogy driving content and task choice. The client also requested that teachers experience the kinds of tasks that their own students should themselves experience, to loop back to classroom practice. The approach was therefore one of learning by doing or experiential learning such as described in the pioneering work of Kolb (1984). The context for this research is therefore a conscious attempt to create a “culture of learning” (Cortazzi, 2000, p.83) in which the Project team and the client wanted to incorporate an experiential approach to teacher development. As the pedagogic director of the Project, this writer was then tasked with seeing that Project materials were task based with learning of direct relevance to rural classrooms in a “loop input” approach (Woodward, 1986, 2003). This meant that teachers would experience a style of teaching which they could then apply to their own teaching. Teacher education tasks were then to be tasks which could be simplified or extended and then applied in teachers’ own classrooms.
The client requested that teachers be facilitated to think or reflect on their learning. It was made very clear that earlier cascade models of training had been assessed and the Ministry did not see the expected gains in classroom change. Specific information on the operational models of teacher education which had been tried before in Malaysia was often anecdotal. Yet while the teachers’ own perceptions of their needs had been surveyed, the client, The Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education, specified that the model should involve situated teacher educators who provided hands-on experiential learning. After discussion it was agreed that the Project would be using the “loop input approach” in which training tasks would be readily transferable to classroom use (Woodward, 2003). The teacher educators were also to be resident in the District in order to relate to teachers’ situations. As such, there would be challenges, as much of the other training which teachers may have experienced before was teacher-fronted and less interactive than the loop input approach. The project then had set itself the task of working with the local teaching and learning culture in order to develop more interactive English language learning and teaching in rural Malaysia.

*The Participants and Sites for the Research*

The project came at a time of national language policy changes involving the switch of medium for mathematics and science from the national language, Bahasa Malaysia to English, which meant that the choice of who was to be the provider of the English language teacher education was a sensitive one. The client specified that there would be greater acceptance of the teacher educators if they came from outside the local setting and specifically outside Malaysia as “native speakers” (The Star, April 13 2004). The English Language Coordinators had to be native speaker Master’s level experienced teacher educators. The 2002 contract between CfBT Malaysia and the Ministry of Education also specified that the ELCs (henceforth termed *teacher educators*) reside within or very near the districts in which the teachers work. Although classroom secondary teachers had lived in rural communities in earlier CfBT projects during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the placing of teacher trainers in Ministry of Education local offices was an innovation for national teacher development.

All the Districts, which are educational administrative units, often based on inherited pre- Independence boundaries, have small towns or medium size service
centres. There are 87 Districts and the Ministry selected 30 which were medium size rural Districts. All had basic infrastructure and were in the middle range of national exam achievement bands, levels in which the client thought teacher development would have an impact. Although all Districts had lower to mid range achievement levels in national examinations in common, there is much variation in the land area and number of schools. The selected Districts are also not the most isolated provincial areas, so that there was more than the basic infrastructure with which to address the needs of English language teachers. In all Districts, the majority of teachers were Malay, yet the percentage varied from district to district i.e 99% to 60% Malay. The proportion of Malay teachers was therefore higher than the overall population proportions where 51 percent of the population are Malay, 24 per cent Chinese, 11 percent indigenous, 7 per cent Indian and 7 percent a range of smaller minorities.

The choice of particular Districts also took into account the need to distribute teacher educators with a sense of equity across the various states of Malaysia. This was done to involve all state level stakeholders in this nationally driven initiative. Nationally, the focus on rural districts is in line with the government’s developmental aim of closing the rural/urban divide educationally and economically.

The client specified in the contract that ELCs should offer courses at the local level. The sites for teacher education were therefore the purpose-built teacher activity centres, in varied degrees of use. A second choice was to use schools if need be, although schools tend to suffer from more interruptions to programmes. As such, the Project had innovative features in terms of the history of Malaysian teacher development; namely that internationally experienced teacher educators would live and work within the community of the teachers and train at the ‘grassroots level’. The teacher development space namely the teacher activity centre is one not readily identified with previous training modes or with the ownership of school administrators. The space or setting for the training was thereby different from other in service courses which were usually held in large scale formats in hotels distant from the classroom settings. The setting was also not in the District Office itself which was often where directives from the centralised Ministry would be given to administrators and teachers. By using these centres, it was hoped to create a more neutral space in which relationships between the newly arrived teacher educator and teachers could begin
with differing power relationships from those associated with large scale teacher-fronted cascade training which had often been held in hotels. As there had been earlier Projects with peripatetic consultants, the client also questioned the short term approaches of visiting experts who often have the best motives but little long term ‘investment’ in the community they were working with (Hayes, 2000). The Curriculum Development Centre set up a District supportive structure with a local counterpart as it believed that relevance and suitability would be enhanced if the ‘expatriate’ teacher educators lived in the local community. The teacher educators were therefore inside the physical community but not linked with the evaluative structure of other teacher education bodies such as the training colleges and the inspectorate.

Significance of the research

This research has four strands which make it significant, apart from being situated in the under-researched setting of Malaysian teacher education. The discourse strategies, behaviours and practices during teacher development courses in which English native speaker educators encounter teachers for whom English is a second or third language are in need of research. Secondly, there is still much to be learned within the teacher education context regarding which discourse strategies and behaviours engender varied responses from teachers, especially when there may be learning culture differences influencing interaction. There is a need to analyse the in service teacher training context within which teachers’ learning cultures interact with teacher training methodology which may be novel. Thirdly, there is need for research into how native speaker teacher educators perceive themselves and how teachers see native speakers, when both parties are involved in the process of teacher education. Most research focuses on perceptions about so-called native and non-native speakers of English in other contexts, such as teacher student interaction, as will be described later in the Literature Review.

Finally, this research approaches reflection from three major angles; asking about reflection, using research data for reflection and then involving teacher educator in reflection about the reflective process. The study therefore uses reflection to reveal the perceptions of both teachers and teacher educators of what they see as effective teacher education interaction. While reflection is often used for teacher development
purposes, this study uses reflection as teacher educators reflect on the study findings for the early phases of in-service courses. Describing teacher education reflection on data has the potential to provide insights for both the teacher education process and for the role of teacher education reflective practice.

In Malaysia as well as in other parts of Asia, little information has been garnered about what makes for teacher educators’ organization of their talk in terms of discourse strategies and their non-verbal behaviours and the kinds of responses these engender during English language teacher education. Recent work describes pre-service novice teachers’ interaction with teacher educators in other Asian settings (Farrell, 2004). I have been unable to find research in Malaysian settings on the perceptions of both teacher educators and teachers as they experience in-service courses. Summative articles on local research also make no mention of in-service teacher education in terms of the process (Kam and Wong, 2003, pp.81-99). There is also a paucity of research into early phase encounters when native speaker teacher educators introduce innovative pedagogy to teachers, with many case studies being more concerned with the wider issues than the discourse strategies or behaviours at the beginning of teacher education interaction, as in Bailey’s work on teacher education (2006). There could also possibly be mismatches and tensions when a learning culture from one setting interacts with the learning culture of a group of teachers who have their own cultural values such as in the nationally prescribed Malaysian educational system. I suggest that there could be mismatches of expectations and acceptance of changes when native speaker teacher educators have to adapt to a teaching culture which is situated within a prescriptive national education ‘culture’, an aspect I shall develop later. Such processes by which teacher educators present themselves and involve themselves in communication accommodation (Giles and Noels, 2002) are an area of interaction relevant to international teacher training. I will now briefly outline the cross cultural issues linked to teacher educators working in a culture of teaching and learning which may differ from their earlier experience.

Cross cultural communication studies have often focused on learner difficulties and classroom discourse in which cultural differences impact on learning or are thwarted by the dangers of stereotyping for example in the Japanese setting (Kubota, 1999). Such studies tend to focus on learner situations and while much has been theorized about the positioning of teacher educators when they are native speakers of
English working in English as second or foreign language situation (Braine, 1999; Cook, 1999; Medgyes, 1994) there has been little focus on teacher educator discourse and behaviours, specifically when native speakers work in a learning culture which may be new to them. As there is globalization of the English teaching profession (Graddol, 1997, 2006) there is much that could be gained by describing the talk and behaviours in a teacher education setting, when both native speaker teacher educators and teachers with other cultural backgrounds interact; in this case the Malaysian teaching and learning culture. I suggest that it is useful to describe the learning which teacher educators and teachers go through, when native speaker teacher educators bring their experience to bear on a teaching culture which may be unfamiliar to them and teachers react to this encounter. International educators could benefit from description of the processes related to teacher development on site in which both the ‘outsider’ teacher educators and ‘local’ teachers are learning together (O’Sullivan, 2002). The research therefore examines teacher educators’ and teachers’ perceptions and approaches as differing ‘cultures’ interact in the Malaysian school setting. I next turn to the issue of native speakers which will be elaborated in the literature review and forms part of the research questions.

The ‘outsider’ teacher educators in the project were expatriate teacher educators from countries where English is a first language. The teacher trainers are termed “native speakers” and many of them have said to this researcher that this term creates difficulties in terms of the Project aims. Teachers’ perceptions of the native speaker teacher educator could involve a sense of dependence or resistance, but this is little researched in teacher education. Specifically, the mutual perceptions and possible stereotyping have not been researched in the setting where a teacher educator is resident inside the teachers’ community. This writer has often heard “You are the native speaker. You know best” and extensive literature describes the issues of the perceptions of a native speaker, as will be seen in the literature review (Cook, 1999; Davies, 1991; Lee, 2005; Llurda, 2004). The paradox is that the Project aims to empower Malaysian teachers developing them to be independent professionals, motivated learners and users of English as well as effective teachers. It is possible that this perception of so called native speaker expertise influences the acceptance of pedagogy which teacher educators are contracted to inculcate. There is a possibility that the native speaker is seen as an all knowing expert and that this positioning reinforces reliance on the native speaker teacher educator, with him or her perceived as a transmitter of knowledge instead of as a facilitator of learning. Little is known of
this and so the perceptions of both teacher educators and teachers of “native speakerism” (Holliday, 2006) are researched as part of this study.

An important aspect of this study is the reflective aspect which has three major purposes. It analyses data on the importance or otherwise of reflection for the teacher educators and teachers in this study. Secondly, teachers’ and teacher educators’ interview questions provide for reflection on the interaction during the early phases of the course. Thirdly, as the teacher educators discuss transcripts and field note they reflect on the process of reflection on the early phase data. The teacher educators are therefore provided with the means to be involved in “identifying what is noticed and in establishing the connections with other events and taken for granted pedagogical practice” (Harrison et al, 2005b, p.271). This may contribute to a gain in understanding of what both teachers and teacher educators perceive as good practice at the early phases of in-service courses. By reflection one means when

The practitioner reflects on the phenomena before him, and on the prior understandings which have been made implicit in his behaviour…(and) carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation (Schön, 1983, p.68).

Ideally, reflection in education is an activity in which teachers put their own beliefs of teaching and learning through a process of critical analysis so that they develop greater awareness of their teaching practices (Farrell, 2004). This involves self questioning and is linked to confidence levels and a teacher’s sense of efficacy. Such a process was integral to the initial thinking of the project as all the stakeholders wanted to see greater teacher confidence and ownership of change.

The usefulness of reflection is a concern which this research addresses while using reflective processes. To use reflection, which could be seen by some teachers as threatening, requires an open transparent process, especially when teachers are involved with a Ministry project. For an open co-constructed process, one needs a research approach in which one gets more than “declarative knowledge” (Bailey, 2005, p.2), namely saying what concepts have been learnt. The research therefore aims to elicit reflections on what has been experienced in the early phases and subsequently
applied as a result of the learning. I address the methods for doing this when describing the research instruments.

Linked to the reflective interview is an aspect of Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2003) which acknowledges the importance of understanding and change for practitioners which can “develop directly from being involved in research work” (Allwright, 2005: 355), in this case through reflection on data about themselves. This study struggles to make the impact of the research as transparent as possible and strives for a shared process of co-constructing understanding within a qualitative framework. Integral to the research will be an approach through semi structured interviews in which teacher educators and teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their learning during the early phases of the in service course.

Theoretically, the research derives strength from a reflective approach used for the first time in the Malaysian rural context to yield descriptions of the early phases of teacher educator-teacher discourse. A former colleague in the Project has analysed teachers’ classroom practices and co-constructed materials using the Exploratory Practice model (Costelloe, 2006) but teacher educator- teacher interaction has not been researched with an emphasis on feeding reflection into practice, and a stated aim of letting the research inform research participants’ immediate practice. The teachers and teacher educators were involved in the research with the knowledge that the research including their reflections would feedback into practice in teacher education.

Research Problem

In Malaysia much hinges on initial encounters in early meetings with the introduction of those present being ordered by the perceived ranking of importance with much discourse given over to titles, positions and qualifications. I have observed Malaysian teacher training sessions where the first fifteen minutes are spent introducing the facilitator and his experience, qualifications and past and present professional positions. Even Conference papers can be prefaced by a seven minute introduction as this is clearly seen to be important positioning. The early stage meeting
in a teaching/learning situation has an importance far greater than the anecdotal ‘first impressions count.’ It is conjectured that this is especially so when trainers may be perceived as outsiders and part of a colonial past, as all the teacher educators are post graduate specialists from English as a first language settings. For all participants involved in a teacher development process which involves different cultural backgrounds there is the possibility of “Othering” (Palfreyman, 2005). This could involve cultural stereotyping linked to a perceived status gap which may impede open dialogue. Hofstede (1997) defines part of such constructs as Power Distance and his studies, although national generalizations, rate Malaysia as high in preoccupation with the social distancing and expressions of power related to status. If the teacher educators are seen as being part of the Power status reinforcement then this could impede acceptance of their efforts to build interactive classrooms where the role of hierarchy is diminished. To adapt and create interactivity may lead to discrepancies between the local “culture of learning' and teacher educators approaches and the study will analyze these aspects.

In research on in-service teacher education, little can be found on the talk and behaviours which teacher educators adapt to accommodate interacting in a new “culture of learning” (Cortazzi, 2000). This study uses the term “learning culture” to foreground the learning in the small culture of in service training. In the project, the teacher educators were situated in a community in which he or she lived for two years or more alongside teachers who have extensive knowledge about the local context. Recent teacher education work has focused more on teachers’ changes through training and development rather than on the teacher educators’ adaptations during training as in the work of Bailey,(2006) and Randall and Thornton, (2001). For all the participants in teacher education teachers and teacher educators, the changes and learning may be more intense in initial meetings in new sites, such as the Malaysian teacher activity centres, where there has often been infrequent teacher development.

This study aims to describe early phase interaction through recordings, observation and interviews and aims to record the voices of teacher educators and teachers to describe and analyse learning within the early phases of an in service course. The intention is that the researcher, teachers and the teacher educator develop reflective awareness of the early phases of interaction between a teacher
educator who is often viewed as an ‘outsider’ and Malaysian teachers who are in their own familiar “culture of learning” (Cortazzi, 2000).

Research Aims

The aim of the research is to build multi layered descriptions of initial teacher educator and teacher trainee discourse and behaviours. Through analyses of talk and non-verbals the research will provide a means for teacher educators and teachers to reflect on what they perceived as challenging and/or useful in the first part of in-service teacher development. The research aims to yield information for better practice in cross cultural teacher education. Descriptions of practice will inform orientation of teacher educators working in rural Malaysia and in other international development contexts.

Objectives

- To produce descriptions of verbal and non-verbal discourse strategies which generate responses to an English language teacher trainer in the early phases of an in-service course
- To examine links between early phase teacher development experiences and the teachers’ self-stated acceptance of methods and techniques.
- To describe the processes and perceptions of cross- cultural dynamics which impact on teacher in-service development.

Research Questions

These questions are situated within the context of Malaysian rural in-service teacher training.

1. What discourse strategies and techniques develop teacher responses during English language teacher education facilitated by native speaker instructors?
2. What approaches and techniques contribute to teacher acceptance during the early phases of in-service teacher development encounters with native speaker instructors?

3. How do perceptions of learning culture differences impact on in-service teacher education from both the teacher educators’ and local teachers’ perspectives?

4. What role do reflective activities play in the early phases of in-service teacher development and research on that process?

Definition of terms

Teacher Educators

The teacher educators are speakers of English as a first language who have post graduate qualifications in TESOL, TEFL or Applied Linguistics and teacher education experience. In the CfBT Malaysian Schools English Language Project, the context of this research, they are termed ‘English Language Coordinators or ‘ELCs’ a term which occurs in the interview transcripts. At times, teachers will use the Malay term matsalleh which refers those of European origin. All Bahasa Malaysia terms are italicised.

Teachers

The teachers in this study are primary teachers at 3 of the 4 sites and secondary teachers at site 2. All were currently teaching at the time of the study and their selection reflects a broad spectrum of the Malaysian teaching service.

The Project

The term ‘The project’ is used to describe the Malaysian Schools English Language Project a collaboration between The Centre for British Teachers, an international not for profit educational trust and the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) of the Malaysian Ministry of Education.
Summary

The setting of this study is a nationwide Malaysian Project for rural in-service teacher training. This study focuses on the early phases of in-service teacher education, specifically the first 45 minutes when teacher educators introduce tasks and organize teachers utilizing a range of discourse strategies and non-verbal behaviours. The native speaker teacher educators introduced interactive learning into the Malaysian “learning culture”. This interaction in four differing rural Districts will be described. This interaction provides data on teacher educator adaptation to the local teaching culture as well as teacher and teacher educator perceptions of the early phases of in-service courses. The study also analyses Malaysian teachers’ perceptions of the teacher educators’ methods and the impact of expatriate teacher educator discourse strategies and behaviours on the teaching and learning culture. Native speaker teacher educators and Malaysian teachers reflect on their experience of the first introductory 45 minutes of the courses held in rural Malaysia. The process of teacher and teacher educator reflections is described and analysed as a possible tool for teacher educator development.

The next chapter will describe relevant literature for research on early phase interaction in rural Malaysian teacher in-service courses. The chapter will describe relevant research on cultural constructs, native speakers and native speakerism and the role of reflection. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and the research instruments. The research instruments for the study include transcribed audio recordings, field notes and semi-structured interviews of teacher educators and teachers for each of the in-service sites.

Post course interviews add depth to the findings as does the process of reflection on the interaction as part of the research process itself. Chapter 4 includes findings on the early phases of the lesson interaction and the teachers’ responses as recorded in the teacher interviews. Site by site descriptions based on the non-evaluative field notes and lesson transcripts of the early phase interaction are presented qualitatively followed by reports on the first teacher educator interview conducted shortly after the early phase course interaction. Chapter 5 focuses on the later teacher educators’ interviews in which the teacher educators
reflect on the transcripts, the field notes and their own reflections. The Discussion,
Chapter 6 analyses the research methodology, the discourse strategies and
behaviours of the teacher education courses and teachers’ reactions. The particular
‘learning culture’ of this study is elaborated upon with analysis of the ways in which
both teachers and teacher educators accommodate processes which may
challenge earlier perceptions, including ‘native speaker’ issues. Finally, the area of
reflective activities and perceptions and the role of reflective practices are
discussed in the context of the research sites in rural Malaysia. Chapter 7
concludes the study referring to limitations, areas for future research and some
pedagogic implications. We now turn to literature related to this study with a focus
on cultural constructs, the challenges of native speakerism and research on
reflection related to this study on the early phases of in service teacher education in
rural Malaysia.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This research study concerns rural Malaysian in-service teacher education when native speaker teacher educators interact with Malaysian teachers. The focus in this literature review is on culture and specifically learning cultures, native speakers and the role of reflection, all of which the research will analyze. The rationale and relevant literature for the research tools of discourse analysis, field notes and interviews will be described in the following chapter. The first part of the literature review addresses culture. The teacher educators were living and working in a cultural setting which differed from their earlier experiences so they had to adapt to a new culture of learning without losing sight of the reason for their presence which was to change the culture of learning and teaching in the educational context. “A culture of learning can be defined as socially transmitted expectations, beliefs and values about what good learning is” (Cortazzi, 2000: 84). The matsalleh teacher educators were asked to create changes to practices that were part of the Malaysian educational culture within which they had to work. There were issues of how both teacher educators and teachers perceived changes to their “culture of learning.”. This focus forms the first part of the literature review. Following a broad analysis of culture, the review becomes more specific in terms of Malaysia and the “culture of learning” within which the teachers and teacher educators interact during in-service courses.

The second part of the literature review concerns native speakers and issues of native speakerism as the client specified that teacher educators engaged for the project had to be “native speakers.” Many teacher educators expressed the opinion that the term was sustaining a sense of a distant foreign expert who was an infallible source of information, when this was precisely the attitude which the client wanted to change within the teachers’ own classrooms. The issues of defining the term native speaker and native speakerism are therefore discussed, through teacher educators’ and teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness and relevance of this term and native speakerism.
The third area of the literature review concerns reflection on teaching and learning. At the start of the Project, reflective questions and practices were interwoven into course materials. The teacher educators reported however that teachers were more interested in readily transferable methods and techniques than in reflective approaches. I therefore decided to include questions about whether reflection could be fostered while learning about methods and techniques. Secondly, during this research, I asked teacher educators to reflect on what they learnt from discussing the research transcripts and field notes. I also asked them to reflect on the act of reflection. Therefore the research asks about reflection, uses it as part of the process and has reflection on the act of reflection as well. The final part of the literature review therefore concerns reflective approaches.

The Cultural Context

In defining culture there is an abundance of models which are relevant to classrooms. Beginning with a broad perspective, I will discuss cultural frameworks relevant to this study. From a broad framework I will describe the impact of “Power Status” (Hofstede, 1997) on the national cultural framework within the Malaysian educational setting. Later sections argue that although the national cultural framework is an important factor, that there are aspects of contestation and tension which may become more evident as expatriate teacher educators work in the “culture of learning” (Cortazzi, 2000) of rural Malaysian teacher education. To begin with a broad perspective, one finds various three part models which educationalists have adopted. Three part models as applied in educational settings, all include the material aspects, practices and the difficult to access inner world. These include:

- Products, practices & perspectives (NLSFE, 1999)
- Products, behaviours and ideas (Tomalin et al, 1993)
- Artifacts, sociofacts & mentifacts (Klopf, 1998)
- Form, distribution & meaning (Lado, 1997)

Culture can be conceived as the big C of material culture and the smaller c of shared behaviours. Hofstede (1997), most of whose work relates to large scale corporate research, notes that culture has several meanings all derived from the Latin root of tilling the soil. He uses “culture one” as a term for populist definitions which
“commonly mean ‘refinement of the mind’ and in particular the results of such refinement, like education, art and literature” (ibid, p. 5). This definition of culture in the narrow sense is based on that which can be seen and is culture often perceived as a static reality. It is a definition similar to other terms for the artifacts or products of particular groups, as in the listing above. Definitions of culture which focus on the artifacts or the material culture and rituals such as folk dance or wedding ceremonies are the most obvious aspects which can create an “essentialist” view of culture (Holliday et al, 2004, p.9). Essentialism is a drive to focus on obvious differences and runs the risk of over-generalisation and stereotyping, a danger in a cross cultural teacher education context which this research will address through inquiring about behaviour.

Hofstede (1997), working within a national culture paradigm, argues the importance of behavioural aspects using the term “Culture two” or culture as “mental software” being:

A collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. (ibid, p.5).

Culture in this sense can then be defined as “the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas” (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p.6). If one group of people used to solving problems in one way interacts for the first time with someone from outside their group, it is possible that tensions arise, and this will be an aspect of this study. It is possible that there are tensions in how the different participants present themselves and are seen by others as described in the framework of Goffman (1959). In other words there may be cultural factors impacting on how people present themselves as well as during exchanges between people as they work to solve problems (Hall, 1977), such as when expatriate teacher educators interact with rural Malaysian teachers. Such a situation albeit within English language learning rather than English language teaching led Mangubhai (1997) to argue for the influence of group factors. He answers assertions that cultural difference could be seen
as an individual matter, by arguing for group tendencies as a factor impacting on second language learning, stressing learning differences which I shall now briefly describe.

In his analysis of a number of English as a Second Language learning situations, Mangubhai (1997, p.24) suggests that individual difference is not enough to account for language learning differences in varied cultural groups. He quotes a number of case studies assessing the impact of primary socialization and cultural factors on second language learning. He found that data based on descriptions of social situations and participants' roles exemplifies cultural tendencies. He cites oral interaction studies of Japanese in the United States, Gujaratis learning and using English, Australian Aboriginal studies, as well as his own extensive experience in introducing nation wide extensive reading in Fiji. Mangubhai notes factors at work in studies within other cultural milieu that exemplify the influence of macro cultural dimensions in classrooms, including viewing the teacher as an all knowing figure whose authority should not be questioned; an aspect which I shall argue is at work in Malaysian settings. Mangubhai, as a cross cultural learner and developer of English language projects recognizes the dangers of stereotyping and asserts that behaviours of a particular group of people need to be viewed as a set of data that indicates a primary tendency which impacts on how people learn languages (ibid, p.24). One could argue, as do Cortazzi and Jin (2005) that how people learn how to teach a language may also be influenced by the cultural milieu which they have experienced and that encountering new approaches to language teaching and learning could create tensions. I suggest that Malaysia with its centralized prescriptive national system has national educational cultural factors which influence the teaching and learning of English. This notion of a national framework with tendencies at work will be outlined in the next section.

**The national cultural framework; Strengths and limitations.**

The profit-driven field of international business has produced studies and books about national cultures, some aimed at increasing productivity (Adler, 1986; Hofstede, 1980, 1997; Komrin, 1995). Although one needs to be aware of stereotyping, there is much data dealing with cultural dimensions at work in varied communication settings,
some of which parallel the high Power Status of Malaysian national educational communication. The studies cited above are based on the premise that we all belong to different groups such as the teaching profession, in which one has cultural programming, learned behaviors or mental programming within oneself. Hofstede suggests that people have a complex layering of mental programming of values and behaviors (1997:10). He describes different levels of cultural programming as follows:

- A national level according to one's country (or countries for people who migrated during their lifetime);
- A regional and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or linguistic affiliation level, as most nations are composed of culturally different regions and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or language groups;
- A gender level, according to whether a person was born as a girl or as a boy;
- A generation level, which separates grandparents from parents from children;
- A social class level, associated with educational opportunities and with a person's occupation or profession;

For those who are employed, an organizational or corporate level according to the way employees have been socialized by their work organization.

Hofstede refers to early work by the sociologist Alex Inkles and the psychologist Daniel Levinson (Inkles et al, 1969) and in a broad survey of the research across disciplines, asserts the validity of the "national" classification noting a number of common concerns which are addressed differently in different national groups. While Hofstede's work has come under criticism for his methodology (McSweeney, 2002), there has been refinement of the dimensions. Hofstede has publically recognized that national cultural models are only indicative of national tendencies, while inside national cultural groups many 'small' cultures exist. I suggest in this study that one such culture is the Malaysian learning culture. The focus is on culture in learning processes and settings. Other studies by Hofstede have included commercial airline pilots and students in 23 countries, civil service managers and up-market consumers in 15 countries. Hofstede (1997) examined attitudes to power and status along with the other dimensions evolved from Inkles and Levinson's work. He undertook a large-scale international study and used a statistical analysis of 116,000 respondents in 56 countries within the framework of the corporate IBM setting. Malaysia was part of this study. The respondents were from differing educational levels within the one international corporate culture. This scale and uniformity of the core setting of an international corporate culture in differing national settings is one strength of his work.
which those espousing the "small culture” view would have to address. I would suggest
that some of the national dimensions work is relevant to classrooms and relationships
in educational settings where the authority of a teacher or teacher trainer has
behavioural elements which include supervision, an important part of Hofstede’s
analysis. The national differences Hofstede explores are in relation to “authority,
conception of the self, concepts of masculinity and ways of dealing with conflict and
uncertainty” (Hofstede, 1997, p13). These four primary dimensions are described
below:

Power Distance Index (PDI) focuses on the degree of equality, or inequality,
between people in the country's society. A High Power Distance ranking describes how
inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow within the society. A Low
Power Distance ranking indicates the society de-emphasizes the differences between
citizen's power and wealth.

Individualism (IDV) focuses on the degree the society reinforces individual or
collective achievement and interpersonal relationships. A High Individualism ranking
indicates that individuality and individual rights are paramount within the society. A Low
Individualism ranking typifies societies of a more collectivist nature with close ties
between individuals.

Masculinity (MAS) focuses on the degree the society reinforces, or does not
reinforce, the traditional masculine work role model of male achievement, control, and
power. A High Masculinity ranking indicates the country experiences a high degree of
gender differentiation. In these cultures, males dominate a significant portion of the
society and power structure, with females being controlled by male domination. A Low
Masculinity ranking indicates the country has a low level of differentiation and
discrimination between genders. In these cultures, females are treated equally to males
in all aspects of the society.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty
and ambiguity within the society - i.e. unstructured situations. A High Uncertainty
Avoidance ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and
ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations,
and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A Low Uncertainty
Avoidance ranking indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and
uncertainty and also has more tolerance for a variety of opinions. (Abridged from http://www.geert-hofstede.com/geert_hofstede_resources.shtml)

Although all four dimensions are interesting, Malaysia presents an especially interesting case in the dimension of power status where Malaysia is top of the list of 56 countries for being hierarchical. My study also involves an analysis of Power Distance in teacher education as this is very observable in behavior and an aspect affecting classroom interaction where the teacher has a supervisory role. Hofstede found that Malaysia is most Power Status oriented with an emphasis on making positions of power evident in transactions at all levels of his sample (1997, p.26). Malaysia is in the mid range as far as individualism goes, being 36th out of 56 on the Individualism Index so that individuality is a little less important than collectivism within a very hierarchical setting. As a comparison, New Zealand (where I was born) is 50th on Power Distance Index and 6th on the Individualism Index. The teacher educators in the study also come from countries where power distance or preoccupation with status is lower then Malaysia and individualism is higher than Malaysia, namely the United States (PDI, 40 IDV, 1) Canada (PDI,39; IDV,5) and the United Kingdom (PDI, 44 IDV, 3) (ibid, p. 26, P.53. My observations of classrooms and teacher education interaction when I was teacher training in Malaysia in the early 1990s and when I began work with the Project were that status differences were very marked in the Malaysian context. This could be seen in non-verbal behaviours and heard in the attention given to describing a person’s position and qualifications in detail when teachers or educational administrators met, formally or informally. In the Malaysian context, the relationship between the role of the all-powerful transmitter of knowledge assumed by many Malaysian teachers may then be discordant with a differing approach from a less status oriented teacher educator from a differing cultural group. I shall return to this point when contextualizing cultural practices in the rural teacher education setting. In Malaysia, if one adds the collectivist dimension there could be sustaining of the power distance through group acquiescence. I will now describe the Power Distance aspect in more detail.

Hofstede (1997) produced the power distance index based on three survey questions which addressed how afraid employees were to express disagreement with managers, how a boss’s actual decision-making style was perceived and the ways in which subordinates preferred bosses to work. The focus was on how authority is valued and how accepted status differences are. In a country in which the PDI score is high, such as Malaysia, there is considerable dependence of subordinates on superiors.
in the organization and little questioning or sharing of decisions. I suggest that the national dimensions in which Malaysia has the greatest preoccupation with status, play a part in one of the agents of national socialization which bridges the macro and micro levels of society; the classroom. As Luke observes, when describing the challenging implementation of critical pedagogy, “Teaching remains about, within and for the nation, tacitly about the protection and production of its Culture” (Luke, 2004, p.24). Teachers are the facilitators of the learning culture supported by national structures and are one of the principal groups who work with cultural values of the nation. This includes acknowledgment of status difference through required behaviours in the profession and working with cultural values through classroom interaction. They are the mediators of the culture of learning. Teachers will obviously bring their cultural values into classroom processes.

In the Malaysian context, teachers themselves experience a markedly top down process with Power Differentials marked not just by titles but also by behaviours such as lack of questioning of last minute directives. Detailed discussion about seating protocol at public functions involves very close attention to status. I contend that such experiences impact on classroom behaviours and that the Power Differential was a part of the dynamics which needed to change through the Project teacher education if one wanted greater interactivity in classrooms. Part of the change which the Project client asked for was greater teacher-learner and learner- to-learner interaction. I suggest that there were challenges to the teachers’ own perception of their role, how much this would change and also how would they experience the status of the native speaker. There are also challenges for teacher educators who would have to adapt or accommodate to this dynamic. I will briefly outline the first two of these points. The challenges of perceptions of the native speaker and status issues will be addressed in a later section of this chapter.

As teachers are working with a system which is hierarchical, we could expect to find a mismatch in how teachers accept teacher education which aims to put the learner at the centre of interaction. There may be teachers working within the hierarchical set up who already organize their classrooms to be less hierarchical and there may be those who are more at ease with sustaining the nationally espoused norm. This study therefore explores whether it is difficult for teachers to change their teaching after undergoing a teacher education experience with an approach differing
from the familiar and most widely espoused teacher positioning as the unquestioned transmitter of knowledge. Teachers’ values and beliefs are very much shaped by their experiences both from their earlier education and their professional setting (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). While one acknowledges that such issues arising from encounters are inherent in much teacher education, the differences in how status is seen and implemented in rural Malaysian classrooms and by native speaker teacher educators could be markedly different. Possible tension between teacher education methodology and Power Differential norms motivates much of this research. This research was conducted within an educational system with conscious espousal of national values which I shall now discuss. Included in the values are gratitude for the teachers as givers of knowledge and respect for educators, which are often evoked in teacher student relationships and other status imbued interaction.

*The Power Distance cultural framework and education frameworks.*

As culture operates at many levels and in specific settings as described earlier, it is useful to contextualise macro views, such as a national tendency towards power distance and respect for status in Malaysian educational settings; specifically secondary and primary level classrooms. The notion of power status in the national cultural milieu relates to national influences stated explicitly and applied to teachers’ roles in Malaysia. It could be argued that in a society which has a strong status orientation, teachers backed by those in greater authority will be respected as instruments for socialization that reinforce positions of Power Status. One notes that each year the country celebrates the importance of the social role of teachers with a national Teachers Day, *Hari Guru*, with numerous press articles and high profile events. Describing a teachers’ national culture is not to argue for what Atkinson calls a limited view namely a “received view of culture...as relatively unchanging and homogeneous” (1999, 626) but to suggest that a national framework may be influential in negotiations of identity and learning processes within the power based differentials of Malaysian classrooms. Furthermore, when national statements of values are incorporated into syllabuses, texts and classrooms in a high power distance setting, then these values have to be worked with and become part of classroom learning cultures. This may be more noticeable given the milieu of acceptance of direction from people and institutions of higher status.
An overriding macro statement of the National Education Philosophy (2006) begins with an individualist approach and concludes with an emphasis on harmony:

Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are well responsible and capable of achieving high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large.

http://www.ppk.kpm.my/html/program/masteryguide/welcome.htm

To operationalise this mission statement, curriculum documents for English language learning and other subjects for Malaysian schools include 17 moral values, some of which could be viewed as sustaining Power Status. These values are used for English language text selection, and are embedded, as well as explicitly stated in syllabuses for English language. (http://myschoolnet.ppk.kpm.my/sp_hsp/sp_hsp.htm.)

These values are’ kindness, self-reliance, integrity, respect, love, justice, freedom, courage, mental and physical cleanliness, honesty, diligence, cooperation, moderation, gratitude, rationality, public spiritedness and patriotism’ (ibid). The values can also be found in the plethora of supplementary texts produced to meet new syllabus needs for schools at all levels from Year 2 through to the final years of schooling (Perriere et. al., 2004; Sebastian et. al., 2004). This conscious creation of a national value system through English language input is in place to unify the diverse population groups of the relatively new multiracial nation of Malaysia. It would appear legitimate to argue that a national school culture of values is reinforced by syllabus inclusion of stated values and learning materials. As Pandian states in his article on the history of English language teaching in Malaysia, “it cannot be denied that local socio-cultural aspects as well as the need and uses of English for the local population are important considerations in syllabus design” (Pandian,2004, p.89).
In relating to power status as a major dimension in the national culture of Malaysia one finds value statements such as ‘respect’ and ‘cooperation’. The stated notions of respect and gratitude are also captured in numerous school slogans which this writer has seen during his visits to over 90 different Malaysian schools in varied socio economic settings of the country -some as direct as ‘Respect Teachers’ and ‘Rely on and Respect Teachers’. The focusing on values of respect and gratitude to those fostering learning is also seen in school texts some of which, such as the national primary year 4 text conclude with direct expressions of gratitude to teachers (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia et. al, 1998, p.162). The promotion of respect engenders a sense of status along with gratitude. Every Teachers Day in Malaysia this value is captured in drama productions and gifts for teachers, so that nationally driven events, syllabus and learning materials reinforce the value and status of the teaching profession. The process may be described by the sociolinguistic term ‘Uniformation (cited in Omar, 1993,p.30)’ in which shared language choices and fostered values are developed through shared equal access in participatory development. Uniformation in relation to the study of societal forces and language by Hertzler describes,

a set of related processes whereby uniformity and similarity of practices in the various social relationships are established in time and space… Basically uniformation consists of the development and maintenance of uniformities of thinking, feeling, believing and acting of bringing about conformity to regnant attitudes, ideas, beliefs, usages and dominant patterns of behaviour of particular social activities.


Asmah Haji Omar notes that ‘uniformation’ brings about integration of a sociocultural and political nature (ibid, p.30) and describes it as a powerful tool for unity and sociocultural integration, albeit with reference to his advocacy for Bahasa Malaysia as a unifying tool. The need to unify in order to stabilize social differences and racial diversity through the centralized national education system may find expression in a uniform values-based approach. This approach stresses unity and consensus with support for the status of teaching and learning. Support for teaching and learning has much deeper roots in traditional cultural respect for the teacher, an aspect beyond the scope of this present research. Status and national educational values are an aspect which teacher educators coming from other learning cultures may find influencing or challenging their teacher education approaches.
The espoused national culture which I have outlined impacts on rural Malaysian teachers’ own experiences through learning materials, events and the hierarchy of the profession. The degree of this influence has not been researched for reasons which I believe relate more to the espoused values which foster respect for authority in the public domain than to issues of pedagogy. Teachers’ perceptions of being part of a status oriented system could affect classroom dynamics. I will explore this in my research to see how teachers accept or block changes from the role of being in a transmitter of knowledge to the more interactive role which the Project targets. The study will also examine how teachers perceive the matsalleh teacher educators, differing methods for positioning themselves in terms of authority and power. The study will therefore analyse the perceptions of the teacher education interaction and then whether teachers use the teacher educators’ techniques and methods themselves. I will now explore a “small” view of culture in which the national influences are at play during teaching and learning interaction. I suggest that to examine teacher education issues requires a cultural framework that while cognizant of national characteristics acknowledges that the classroom culture is a specific site which is dynamic and at times contested. The next section focuses on culture as a dynamic process in specific settings and the concept of “cultures of learning” (Cortazzi, 2000).

Dynamics and Learning Cultures in Malaysian classrooms.

Views of culture as a dynamic changing system need to be kept in mind when examining national cultural models, especially in a study such as this which is site specific and concerned with the dynamics of behaviours and discourse. To the traditional anthropologist or social scientist, culture is “composed of socially shared elements, socially shared norms, codes of behavior, values, and assumptions about the world that clearly distinguish one sociocultural group from another” (Trueba, 1993, p.34). Anthropologists and social scientists basically agree that sharing a culture means being able to operate effectively in that particular cultural group. Spindler and Spindler (1994) state that the “basic cultural assumptions and perceptions held by people of different cultures seriously influence behavior, perceptions and communication. They are the starting point of differential rewards, punishments, oppositions, consequences, and the use of power to coerce, eliminate, damage, and promote” (p. 29-30). However, in the assertions of more recent writers working within the international education context (Holliday et al, 2004, Moran, 2001) definitions of
culture should reflect its dynamic changing role related to varied settings in a complex and changing world where cultures intermingle. People are seen as being influenced by a variety of different cultural forms.

Moran (2001) asserts a view of culture as a dynamic of products, practices and perspectives which includes the roles of individuals and the place of specific contexts, circumstances and sub groups. He views culture as a dynamic construction within and among people. In a similar vein, Clifford (1986) argues for the dynamism of change being recognized in that culture is not an object to be described, nor is it “a unified corpus of symbols and meanings that can be definitively interpreted. Culture is contested, temporal and emergent” (p.476)). Britzman (1991) defines culture as that site where identities, desires and investments are mobilized, constructed, and reworked. The sites of language methodology training in this study involve teacher educators in settings which may be novel for them. Teachers on the in service course interaction may find the interaction novel enough to cause some reflection on their identities as educators. Both groups may be in an interactional setting where they invest time and effort in constructing learning which could contest some previous norms. This is not to deny the influence of national cultural elements, but to suggest that refining the framework for analysis would be helpful as one examines a learning culture where meanings of what makes good teaching and learning are developed.

It is useful to develop a dynamic view of culture which focuses on a ‘smaller’ view or site as cultural aspects in particular educational sites will be mediated by the setting. This focus, often based on comparing learners from different national cultures, has recently gained further currency with the term “culture of learning.” Cortazzi defines culture of learning as drawing attention to:

Cultural aspects of learning, not just as the cultural background of students but as the approach, process, and interaction favoured by students because of how they have been socialized into learning. This concept draws attention to what is usually taken for granted about learning, about teacher’s and student’s roles and relations, appropriate methods, about the use of textbooks and materials, and about the use of language for learning. All of these aspects of learning can receive very different emphasis in different cultures. A culture of learning can be
defined as socially transmitted expectations, beliefs and values about what
good learning is.

(Cortazzi, 2000, 83-84).

I suggest that teacher education also involves learning and that the teacher
educator may be seen in a similar way by a teacher to how a learner perceives a
teacher, especially given the role of status in educational settings. Given the paucity of
research into cultures of teacher education, it is useful to describe what is known from
cultures of learning. Cortazzi (2000, p. 82) observes that cultures of learning operate
through behaviours and language “as language learning is both socialization and
enculturation.” The language being learnt also impacts on the “socially transmitted
expectations, beliefs and values about what good learning is” (ibid, p. 84.). Cortazzi
notes that “culturally specific uses of the L1 communication carry over into the L2
classroom and are therefore part of the medium of learning” (ibid, p. 83). In the
Malaysian context, this may mean that Malaysian speakers of English and in particular,
Malay speakers are very indirect in requests or expressions of uncertainty and also
acknowledge status through interaction. I have observed that many Malaysian learners
and teacher trainees prefer to ask questions on a one to one basis after the class,
rather than in front of peers. The teachers whom I got to know well informed me that
this was to avoid being seen in front of peers as being uncertain of what has been
learned.

Cortazzi also surveyed Malaysian, British and Chinese teachers with open
questions and quotes a Malaysian teacher respondent who says that “Malaysian
students do not ask questions in class. It’s probably because they respect the teacher,
the teacher as guru, but they do ask after class, you know, going up to the teacher after
the lesson” (2000, p.96). Cortazzi also notes that Chinese and Malaysian learners may
have differing approaches from British learners in terms of participation in questioning
and in class discussion and that there can be gaps in expectations between teachers
and learners of differing national groups. There are possible learning culture
differences in different educational settings. This study will examine differences in
approaches to learning using the term learning culture to foreground teacher learning
and teacher educator learning in the interactive ‘small’ culture. The research will
explore possible gaps between the learning culture of the teachers and the learning
culture of the matsalleh teacher educators in the Malaysian setting.
Learning culture differences were evident in Malaysian students’ responses in Cortazzi’s study of 129 different students in China, 101 students in Malaysia and 205 students in Britain. He notes that “the Chinese and Malaysian groups both give …significantly more importance than the British to the teacher having deep knowledge, answering students’ questions and being a good moral example” (ibid, 88). Significant good teacher qualities which Malaysian students valued included having an answer for every question, being able to explain clearly and being caring and disciplined. In this cross-national study, he found that “Malaysian students agree very highly significantly more than the others…(Britain and China)...that a good student is hard working, pays attention to the teacher, respects and obeys the teacher and helps fellow students (ibid, p.92).” While questioning is seen as important, independent thought is less valued by Malaysian students than other students. I speculate that teachers may have experienced the same learning when they were schooled and secondly that when teachers are in a learning culture situation that they may operate with learning orientated expectations similar to those of the learners in Cortazzi’s study. I address the teachers’ expectations about the teacher educator courses and their experience and differences with earlier learning in my research.

Two Malaysian studies point to power status differentials impacting on learner and teacher processes. In Rajaretnam et al’s study (1999) learners were briefly described as often not wanting to participate in activities for fear of making errors. A further example of this is lack of participation in teacher learner interaction as described in a study of the differences which exist between rural and urban learners of English in Malaysia. Pillay (1998) has analysed the ways in which the behaviours, expectations and values which rural learners bring to urban choices of English language learning materials create incongruence. Pillay suggests that their learning culture and the ‘field’ of the nationally prescribed teaching culture may account for the lack of success in terms of examinations and motivation. This incongruence is the setting for this research which focuses on teachers in rural areas.

Following this line, one notes that there have been few studies of how teacher educators, rather than teachers, facilitate experiential tasks which may challenge prevalent learning cultures and the transmission mode of teaching. Cultural assumptions related to learning styles and participation have been described in Chinese, Korean and Japanese learner contexts (Hu, 2000; Jin & Cortazzi, 2003).
Gieve and Clark (2005) researched a group of Chinese learners in an English for Academic Purposes situation and raise important questions about the role of contextual factors for students from a cultural group studying in a situation which differs from earlier learning situations. The parallel to this study is that the District based in-service courses are a markedly different learning context, as learning is facilitated by those from another national culture and the small scale District-based setting differs from earlier training. The UK researchers’ found that differences between Chinese and European students in a programme of self-directed learning related to language abilities and learning needs and factors other than just “culturally determined dispositions” (Gieve & Clark, 2005, p.261). They note that “apparently stable culturally determined approaches to learning are far more flexible to contextual variation than we might expect and that student responses to particular contexts are not stably predicted by macro-scale characterizations of nation scale ‘cultures’. " (ibid, p.263). Based on their research they suggest that “an ethnically based notion of culture may be less powerful than commonly assumed, compared to local situationally based cultures of learning” (ibid, p.274).

This suggests a tension between notions of ethnically or nationally based concepts of culture and situationally based smaller views of culture. I speculate that such a tension is evident in both defining the cultural aspects of the teacher education interaction and perhaps within the interaction itself. There is a need to research discourse strategies and adaptations during interaction between teacher educators and teachers from differing cultural groups, specifically expatriate teacher educators and teachers in the South East Asian setting. The emphasis has often fallen to stereotyping Asian learners, rather than focusing on English native speaker teachers or teacher educators sharing learning with teachers who are speakers of other languages. The possible tension between native speaker teacher educators and teachers from a differing culture of learning interacting during teacher education is a focus of my research. The research therefore analyses the talk and the behaviours of native speaker teacher educators to see how the learning culture of the teacher educators and the learning culture of the teachers interact. The prescribing of teacher educators as native speakers has many challenges in acceptance of methodology change by teachers and also some issues in how teacher educators could see themselves especially when the role of being native speakers was given prominence. The next section addresses the definition of native speakers and the issues of “native speakerism.”
As English language teaching expands in ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, there have been demands for both in-country and international expertise. Often this expertise is sought in the form of ‘native speaker’ teachers of English. In the nationwide Project which is the context of this research the client specified that native speakers were to be recruited. The term ‘native speakers’ was part of the vocabulary of Malaysian English language teachers, the client and the public. In my experience, the use of the term was often linked to the United Kingdom which has had teacher training links with Malaysia that have continued through independence until the present day. I suggest however that the term native speaker is in itself questionable and far more complex than just a descriptor of being born with English language as one’s first language. I will outline how the perception of the native speaker as an important part of Asian English language development is still being sustained. This sustaining of prioritising the hiring of native speakers may be termed “native speakerism” (Holliday, 2005) and was an element in the project. The tension was that the client viewed the teacher educators as native speaker experts while the teacher educators viewed their work as being focused on pedagogical change not directly relevant to a native speaker approach based on a birthplace definition of who they were. This research will address how Malaysian teachers perceived the teacher educators as native speakers of English.

The notion of the native speaker is one that has been extensively critiqued yet one finds the notion sustained and described in research and in practice (Braine, 1999; Derivey-Plard, 2005; Lee, 2005). Firstly, it is useful to note that the terms ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers can no longer be viewed as a workable dichotomy. I will outline reasons why. In Davies’ (1991) thorough study of the term, he moves away from the populist notion that the language your mother spoke is your one native language “by virtue of place or country of birth” (ibid, p. ix). He notes that the binary division native/non-native avoids the fact that more and more fluent speakers of English are multilingual in the home setting. Being born in a place does not guarantee that the person will be a native speaker as the language in the home may not align with the language in the native area. This applies to two of the four teacher educators in this study as well. Defining the dichotomy in terms of language learning is also vital, according to Reves and Medgyes who note that:
The issue of defining who should be considered native and who non-native, is relevant to a large number of questions within Applied Linguistics, such as language acquisition, competence and performance, bilingualism and semilingualism, knowledge and proficiency, communicative competence, language consciousness and attitudes. (1994, p.353)

Part of the difficulty in defining the dichotomy is that is not easy to sustain an ‘either or’ situation when one examines the growth of English as an international language or lingua franca (Seidlhofer, 2001; Llurda, 2004). Jenkins, (2000,p.8) notes that “English is often one of several languages available in the repertoires of the multilingual populations of for example, India…where it is often difficult to ascertain which language is a persons L1 and which is their L2.” Higgins (2003) discusses the wider development of English as an international language by drawing on concepts of ownership of English in the Outer Circle that is countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and India. She draws on Kachru’s well known model of Inner and Outer Circles of English speakers (1992) and while acknowledging the widespread use of the categories native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) suggests that those who uncritically apply the division and even the position of Inner and Outer Circles, ignore increasing change related to World Englishes. Globalization is at work challenging simple binary notions of native and non native speakers. Higgins cites Mufene (2001) who writes that both the dichotomies of NS/NNS and Outer Circle and Inner Circle can lead to views and actions based on the notion that “only a minority of speakers around the world speak legitimate varieties, the rest speak illegitimate offsprings of English” (p.139). Kachru in more recent work (2006) has suggested that the “inner circle” is best seen as a group of highly proficient speakers of English, namely those who have “functional nativeness” regardless of how they learned the language or where they originate from. It is clear that ownership of this notion of “nativeness” is an area of contention for many.

As Modiano (1999) and Cook (1999) point out, English is no longer the property of a few powerful countries but is the communicative medium of many. Even if one settles for defining native speakers as “habitual users of English for all communicative
purposes’ (Timmis, 2005, p.123) there still remains an issue when a native speaker is seen as a teacher. When language learning is involved there are issues of the degree of a native speaker’s knowledge of how language functions and is structured as well as pedagogic knowledge if the native speaker is seen as an expert, teacher or trainer. Being born in a setting where English is the major language for communicative purposes and one of the first languages acquired in a naturalistic setting may fuel the definition of being a native speaker. Yet this is a curious rationale for hiring a teacher as an educational professional. The sustaining of the valuing of the native speaker is especially questionable when looks at the very specific skill sets needed in English for Specific Purpose teaching.

When a native speaker is working in the field of language teaching, one may overlook the fact that a native speaker is not necessarily skilled or trained as a language teacher. To use a universally loved pursuit as an analogy, being experienced and knowledgeable about food does not make you a chef. Yet the notion of a native speaker is often confused with being imbued with expertise for language teaching. Derivey-Plard’s research in France points to a “strong social construct which confuses ‘speaker’ with ‘teacher’ and native speaker’ with ‘native teacher” (2005, p.62). Kachru and Nelson have gone so far as to say that the “label ‘native speaker ‘is of no a priori significance, in terms of measuring facility with the language” (1996, pp.78-79). Some native speakers may also be fluent in a marked vernacular or less known dialect. Bailey (2005, p.3) makes the point that proficiency is not the same as “nativeness” and that people can continue to develop or diminish proficiency, although pronunciation may be resistant to change. She argues for relevant education in preparing a language educator with both proficiency and professional preparation and that skills are needed beyond one’s own communicative competence and proficiency. She states that there is a need for “declarative knowledge” about the target language and appropriate behavior as well as “procedural knowledge” which is the how of the language and “knowing how to teach” (ibid, p. 4). Such knowledge is acquired through more than being a native speaker. I will return to this point after illustrating some of the aspects that sustain the ‘native speaker’ situation and use of the term.

The native speaker is often sought after when recruiting particularly at the lower levels of professionalism, such as the backpacker teaching environment of South Korea where my New Zealand born son now works. This is perhaps based on
assumptions which are a product of the emphasis on communicative competence in TESL and TEFL, namely that models of spoken proficiency linked to the ‘Inner Circle’ are needed in interactive classrooms. Yet this emphasis on spoken English confuses ‘speaker’ with ‘teacher.’ The professional discrepancies that exist at the lower professional levels of English Language Teaching have long been documented in such work as Medgyes (1992) which describes a situation of inequity in recruitment and salaries, as does more recent work by Braine (1999). Internet search engines and a plethora of web sites such as www.tefl.com reveal that little has changed with many jobs calling for ‘native English’ applicants. Here we encounter the construct that confuses a ‘speaker’ with a teacher or educator and a ‘native speaker’ with a teacher. There is the notion that a correct accent related to birthplace acquisition of language is more important than educational skills, particularly at the entry level of English Language Teaching. This construct is problematic if one is to build professionalism, yet sustaining native speakerism is not just occurring in the private sector, as I shall now describe in reference to north Asian projects.

Within ELT recruitment in Japan and Hong Kong, the notion that employing a native speaker equals good language learning input can be seen in centralized approaches. In Japan, the Japanese Exchange Teachers scheme, which begun in 1987 still continues. In 1995 approximately 5700 Assistant English Teachers, the renamed Japanese Exchange Teachers, were working in Japan, the majority of who qualify by virtue of the fact that they speak English and originate in the Inner Circle countries (Tajino and Tajino, 2000). These teachers, often with little pedagogic background, team teach in schools, yet often the native speakers “are stuck in the role of ‘human tape recorder and the JTEs (Japanese Teachers of English) are relegated to just being interpreters” (ibid, 2000, p.5). The researchers cited research by Kumabe (1996) which concurs with their findings to show that the students often view the JTE’s role as an interpreter between the native speaker teacher (AET) and the students. While the native speaker does provide a model of speech, she is often limited in her contribution as an inexperienced teacher and so one is led to question the usefulness of highlighting native speaker spoken models being rated more highly than pedagogy.

Across the sea from Japan, the benefits of developing effective bilingualism are a concern for Hong Kong educators where English and Mandarin are two official languages while Cantonese is the dominant lingua franca. Lee (2005) reported that the
declining standard of students’ English has been blamed on local teachers. She noted that the blame on declining standards of English was not linked to changing socio-linguistic or political changes but was related to teacher performance. So called ‘local teachers’ to use the Hong Kong term (ibid, p9), were blamed as being less proficient and less pedagogically in tune with the curriculum and therefore in a causative generalization are held responsible for declining English standards. There was little acknowledgement of the impact of two rapid curriculum changes which were very different from earlier pedagogy because the onus for English language standards was put onto local teachers’ standards of professionalism, proficiency and pedagogy (Coniam and Falvey, 1999). One could argue that native speakerism is at work when one sees the government’s solution. The solution in an about-turn of policy was to bring in those with competence related to their ‘native’ language. The Native English Speaking Teachers Scheme was established in 1997 for secondary schools. In September 2002 the scheme was expanded to all primary schools. The position of the Inner Circle was sustained by focusing on native speakers as a main recruitment criterion, but at a cost to bilingual or multilingual teachers who often have more in-depth understanding of the complexities of their language and pedagogic situation.

The Hong Kong situation leads one to examine how teachers see themselves in relation to the ‘native speaker’ situation. Early work in a questionnaire based study of 216 subjects in ten countries showed perceived differences in a broad context (Reves and Medgyes, 1994). In summary, both Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non Native Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) agree that each group teaches differently, with differences derived from language proficiency and the use of a more casual communicative approach by the NESTs. In English language teaching, the researchers noted that proficiency was one issue and teaching methodology another. Both NESTs and NNESTs viewed differences in terms of teaching performance not whether or not one was a native speaker. Only ten per cent of surveyed NNESTs said that if they were in a hiring position they would employ only native speakers. Fifty per cent would employ an equal number of native and non-native speakers noting that when it comes to teaching effectively it is qualifications that matter. All agreed that NNESTs have an advantage in having gone through formal learning of language just like their students. An interesting point here is that teachers value qualifications when assessing the worth of other teachers, over being a native speaker. I was interested in whether this was the case in teacher training, namely whether native speaker qualities were more or less important than the pedagogy. Research could reveal whether there
is much to be gained from the high profiling of native speakers or is the main focus of acceptance of the teacher educators linked to their pedagogy and ways of introducing and modelling interactive teaching. Literature on students’ perceptions of native speakers is however useful to consider.

Students’ perceptions of the merits of those who have English as a first language play a strong role in the sustaining of the dichotomy of the so-called native speaker. Timmis (2002: 240) examined 600 responses from students and teachers in over 45 countries including a range of Asia Pacific countries and argues “that students views may differ from the expectations of teachers and academics” (ibid, p.248) when it comes to native speaker norms. Using spoken English as a primary focus, he notes that native speaker competence is a benchmark for teachers, but that many teachers acknowledge that most of the students will not be using English within English as a first language setting. Teachers also stated that written grammar and clarity may be as functionally important as some pronunciation ideal, i.e. written accuracy is as important as the spoken mode and that this focus does not need to be native speaker based. Many of the teachers then described the norms as being the ones that best meet student needs. Students were divided on the value of native speaker spoken grammar, yet value what they perceive as the authenticity of the native speaker input. The students therefore valued native speaker spoken input more highly than teachers did. Timmis concluded that “teachers seem to be moving away from native speaker norms faster than students are” (ibid). Native speaker norms and employing native speakers is also a practice which the Malaysian authorities moved towards when embarking on rural teacher development. There is little research on native speakers working in Malaysia yet press reports from the beginning of the Project help contextualize the challenges of native speakers being placed in rural Malaysian settings as shall be seen in the next section.

Native speakerism and Malaysia

In Malaysia the development of English language is still seen by some as linked to native speaker input. A number of gap year students, those between secondary schooling and university with no teaching experience, were sponsored in government schools as teaching assistants (The Star, June 11 2005) while a State education
department embarked on a programme of placing 10 American graduates in schools as English teaching assistants in 2005-2008. One notes in The Star, and other press reports, that there was a grouping of varied programmes as native speaker input; namely gap year students along with experienced teacher educators. The Star report included the Project which was a national teacher training programme with experienced Masters degree holders, as part of native speaker initiatives. The report on the American programme launched by the Minister of Education was as follows

Under this programme, 10 American graduates were chosen to assist English teachers in 10 selected schools in Terengganu from the aspects of teaching and learning. He (the Minister of Education) said (an) English Language Fellow was placed at the Sultan Abdul Halim Teaching Institute to assist in the planning for English in other institutes. At the same time, he said the ministry was also working with the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) for various programmes including the District English Language Coordinator, Project English Teachers and State English Language Coordinator. Under these programmes, native English speakers from Britain are placed in schools, district education offices and state education departments to assist the ministry in increasing the mastery of English in rural areas, he said.

(The Star, June 4 2006, p.6)

The article generalizes native speaker programmes as did earlier reports and speeches; a situation where 30 trained Masterate holders of either TESL, TEFL or applied linguistic degrees are seen as input at the same level as non trained “native English speaking “ graduates. In the perceptions of educational reporters, sub-editors and one fears, even the Ministry officials there was the notion that it was native speaker input that mattered rather than pedagogic expertise.

The project sought to balance the perception of the native speaker as an all knowing expert through interactive experiential methodology. To do this, the teacher educators worked closely with teachers in group or pair work. There was a deliberate teacher educators’ approach to foster greater interactivity. Part of the CfBT project approach was also to hire trainers who are speakers of other languages. As part of their orientation induction, trainers were urged to share their own language learning experiences as part of their teacher training programmes. In fact, some began core
courses by modelling foreign language learning in languages such as French, Spanish, Korean, Mandarin or Maori. The positioning of the trainer is then to demonstrate that all educators, native speakers or otherwise are learners. The native speakers as the Malaysian press called them, were also living in the local community and this was to make them more aware of local needs to avoid a ‘one size fits all approach’ to teacher development. This was part of an attempt at deconstruction of reliance on the “native speaker knows best” approach. To assist with classroom changes the Project also set out to develop reflective practice in the courses. I now turn to reflective practice and the research into reflection as part of the Project.

Reflective Practice

Many current teacher development models include an element of reflection (Farrell, 2004; Freese, 2006; Harrison et. al., 2005a; Loughran, 2002). The Malaysian Schools English Language Project included reflective practices as part of the teacher educator brief. Colleagues on the Project reported many difficulties in developing reflection as part of Malaysian teacher development and subsequently suggested that this area of difficulty be part of this research. Research questions therefore reveal data on the importance or otherwise of reflection within the Project. Teachers and teacher educators also reflect on early phase interaction through reflective discussion. The methodology incorporating reflection is therefore providing data and also facilitating the development of teachers and teacher educators. I will briefly outline some aspects of the literature on reflection.

A reflective approach to teaching has gained widespread acceptance in many English speaking countries (Wallace, 1991; Stanley, 1998). Schon (1983) describes a need for problem identification and problem solving through continuous reflection and professional inquiry into practices. To summarise core ideas, one can turn to Korthagen et al (1993) who found that reflection in education occurs when teachers put their own beliefs of teaching and learning through a process of critical analysis and take greater responsibility for their own actions. Here is a link to the reason for teacher development: teachers taking responsibility for classroom change and their practices or behaviours. Richards describes reflection as “an activity or process in which experience is recalled, considered and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose” (1990, p.5). Reflective frameworks have been advocated in language teacher

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education (Bailey, 2006; Harrison, 2004; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Richards & Nunan, 1990;) yet there is little description of teacher educators’ reflections. Freeman (2002) advocates a central role for reflection for teacher education:

'If teachers’ mental lives are stories or narrative webs of past and present experience, if their knowledge is reflective of their position in the activity of teaching then it makes sense that reflective practice must become a central pillar in teacher education... Teacher education must then serve two functions. It must teach the skills of reflectivity... and it must provide the discourse and vocabulary that can serve participants in renaming their experience. We need to understand that articulation and reflection are reciprocal processes.'

(2002. p.11)

While reflection has been defined with varied terms, such as critical reflection, and reflective practice (Roulston et al., 2008), there are suggested conditions for reflection which researchers working in teacher education have found useful in fostering awareness of pedagogy. Citing Van Manen (1991), Harrison and her colleagues describe a four level approach which has been found to be practical when mentoring change. The first level of reflection is thinking and acting on the everyday, before moving to reflect on a second level of specific occurrences. The third level is "the development of understanding through interpretation and is gained by reflection on personal experience. The fourth is reflection on the way we reflect, in other words, reflecting on the conditions that shape the experience" (Harrison et al., 2005b, p.274). It is perhaps with this fourth level that a supportive non threatening environment is most needed so that being critical is not seen as being criticized. The researchers describe this framework of levels of reflective practice as several processes whereby “evidence from practice may be examined and explored (i.e. previous practice is deconstructed), personal theories may be found adequate or not and alternative understandings may be formulated” (ibid, p.275). In teacher development, these processes usually involve understanding the technical aspects of teaching, personal growth and developing an awareness of the particularities of local conditions (Harrison et al, 2005a). This process would ideally involve the teachers and teacher educators in sharing reflective approaches to local conditions.
The difficulty however is “how to engage teachers in articulating and publicly representing the complexity of teacher learning” (Freeman, 2002, p.11). For successful reflective mentoring on a teaching and learning event there is a need to “differentiate…between giving an account of and accounting for a situation…while the process is “moved toward greater impartiality in relation to the event” (Harrison et al, 2005, p.289). This challenge is significant, yet the practicality and efficacy of reflective approaches has not always been backed by research (Hatton and Smith, 1995). One finds other questions about the reflective approach in recent research in English as foreign language contexts, where particular learning cultures are at work (Akbari, 2007). Akbari cautions against the widespread adoption of reflective practice in the Middle Eastern context observing that teachers need considerable time to become familiar with the “metadiscourse of their field to be able to challenge the existing theories and to construct their own personal views of learning and practice “(2007, p.203). Such time may be limited in large class environments and large teacher education programmes where teachers have many demands on their time.

Concerns about the acceptance of reflective practice are evident in a Spanish context where a teaching methodology course adopted a reflective approach (Halbach, 2002). Students on a teaching degree course were asked to keep a diary, ask questions about the course and its methodology and develop their critical thinking. Those students who had a good level of English produced some reflective comments, but most were not prepared to self critique or analyze their changes. It appears that the reflective rationale of changing ones own formative educational experiences did not occur. Halbach suggests that apart from linguistic competence, that ‘the other possible reason for the difficulties with reflection lies in the Spanish educational system which follows a rather transmission based mode of teaching, where little space is left for critical thinking’ (Halbach, 2002, p.247).

These concerns are often reinforced by the number of other demands on teachers which take priority when teaching large classes. Questions have been raised about the usefulness of reflective approaches in situations of large classes in developing countries (Ebbutt & Elliot, 1998). In Malaysia, for example a teacher may be marking four sets of forty five learner scripts every month. It is likely that reflecting on practice becomes a lower priority. O’ Sullivan (2002) within an action research study of a large scale 3 year INSET programme examined reflective approaches in large
classes. She describes reflective practice as conceived in western contexts and problematic when applied to the training of unqualified and under qualified primary teachers in Namibia. She notes that:

there seems to be a tendency by western academics to simply export reflective approaches to developing countries contexts. For example, Avalos (1992) and Burke (1996) supported Papua New Guinea’s proposed development of their traditional skills-based teacher training programmes to programmes that would enable teachers to take a more active part in their own professional development; they argued that reflective practice would be a useful method of enabling this.

(ibid, p52)

Drawing on her extensive teacher development experience O’Sullivan (2002, 2005) highlights how important it is to value the trainees’ sense of identity and to build their confidence. She states that reflective tasks are only useful if teacher educators recognize complex identity issues in multilingual environments and if teacher educators recognize the demands of large classes. It is suggested that cultural identity issues are a factor along with physical resource constraints. O’Sullivan found that there was only interest in reflection when reflection was based on solving everyday classroom problems in, what she terms “structured reflection” (2002, p.534). This structured reflection which took gradual introduction in cycles, addresses everyday methods and is not necessarily aimed at teacher autonomy as much reflective practice is (Akbari, 2007, p.204). This suggests that there could be cultural issues with reflection and reflection may need to be structured differently in different cultural settings. However, it is not clear if the issues are derived from cultural differences or everyday time constraints. I suggest that class numbers and the physically demanding classroom environment make classroom needs a priority over reflection and this study will investigate whether or not this is the case in Malaysian rural classrooms.

O’Sullivan, drawing on her Namibian experiences also noted that a teacher’s sense of identity and self efficacy is important, concurring with Richards and Singh (2006, p.37) who ask for greater sociocultural awareness. They argue that “if we understand how identity is socially situated and linked to power we can better
appreciate how implemented changes at personal level do not translate”. Their use of the personal level here refers to teachers as individual practitioners who may not feel empowered within the educational system. Stanley (1998) notes that the process of reflection needs a supportive listener; one who is aware of local constraints. Reflective teaching assumes a non-evaluative listener or mentor, as described in the recent work in British beginning teacher contexts (Harrison et al, 2005a.). Fostering such a supportive mentoring listener role may create tension within the Malaysian educational service where teaching colleagues compete for promotion and grading. This may be more so than in the Malaysian setting than in some other learning cultures, for as I have argued, Power Status is a factor influencing relationships. It is also possible that reflective practice is not seen as linked enough to the accountability structures of examination marks which school principals value or is not seen as useful for meeting classroom needs. Teachers may also not be used to being reflective or have the confidence or language for self analysis as a teaching professional. The uptake of reflective practice could also relate to how the practice was introduced during teacher education.

Reflection is advocated as important for teacher education yet there is little research about this approach for teacher educators. Reflection on the teacher education process by the teacher educators will use the transcripts as a springboard for the process of reflection. Ideally such reflection involves “exposing one ‘noticing’.” (Harrison et al, 2205, p.270) to the interviewer. This area of teacher educator reflection, an under researched area of reflective practice, will be part of this research study.

Summary

Teacher educator and teacher interaction in the Malaysian Schools English Language Project occurred within a learning culture to which expatriate teacher educators would need to adapt while bringing about change. One could speculate that this could create tensions for teachers and teacher educators, as the client requested changes from teachers’ earlier training towards greater interactivity and less teacher fronted delivery. Teacher educators also had to adapt to the Malaysian culture of learning. As has been described, national cultural factors are part of this situation. There could be possible tensions between teachers’ expectations and past experiences within the project teacher education process. This process of adaptation is
therefore within a context where behaviours related to hierarchy ways of learning may create tensions between teacher educator and teacher expectations and behaviours. The analysis of discourse strategies and behaviours will provide evidence to how much these cultural factors play a role, as will be described in the next chapter.

While teachers were adapting or otherwise to early phase course interaction which could challenge their learning culture and earlier experiences they were also relating to native speakers. As teachers were interacting with the native speaker, teacher educators, I suggest that teacher perceptions could impact on their acceptance or otherwise of what they were experiencing during the interaction. For the native speaker teacher educators who were tasked to be facilitators of an experiential approach, there could be a tension with their perceptions of the learning culture they wished to develop and that of the teachers. In order to uncover some of these possible mismatches, teachers and teacher educators will reflect on the early phases interaction. A reflective approach will be used to analyse the role of reflection and to look at the early phases interaction.
CHAPTER 3

The Methods of Research

Research Aims

The aim of the research is to build multi layered descriptions of the early phases of in-service teacher educator-teacher exchanges. The research builds a description of the discourse strategies and behaviours with which teacher educators open courses in rural Malaysian settings. At a time when local cultures of learning are confronted with globalised language learning, it is important for future teacher education projects to understand how cultural factors impact on in-service English language teacher education. In-service teacher education is also often impacted by the role of native speakers of English and perceptions of them as developers of classroom change. Through analyses of discourse strategies and teacher educator techniques the research provides data and a means for teacher educators and teachers to reflect on what they perceived as challenging and/or useful during the early phases of teacher education courses. The data itself is used by teacher educators to reflect on the findings and to reflect on the role of reflection as part of in-service teacher education. The research therefore aims to yield information so that understanding can inform practice in cross cultural teacher development, particularly when teacher educators are working in settings which may differ from their earlier experiences. Such descriptions of practice will inform the orientation of teacher educators working in rural Malaysia and in other international development contexts.

Research Questions

These questions are situated within the context of Malaysian rural in-service teacher training.

1. What discourse strategies and techniques develop teacher responses when experiencing English language teacher education methodology?

2. What approaches and techniques are perceived as successful in building teacher acceptance during the early phases of in-service teacher development encounters?

3. How do perceptions of learning culture differences impact on experiential training from both the teacher educators’ and local teachers’ perspectives?
4 What role do reflective activities play in the early phases of in-service teacher development?

Participants and Sites

Two main groups of participants are involved: teacher educators, known locally as English Language Coordinators (ELCs) and Malaysian school teachers. I will first describe the teacher educator participants and then the teachers. In the project which is the context of the research there were 30 teacher educators in 30 rural sites or Districts. They work in rural Malaysian districts in which English language teaching methodology was and is seen as an area in need of development. All the teacher educators were post graduate English language specialists with teaching and teacher education experience. These native speaker teacher educators originated from Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States, yet all of them had worked in varied cultural settings. In order to gain the findings, participants were selected out of sixteen original volunteers. The selection was based on three main criteria: background of the teacher educators, varied levels of experience and the appropriateness of research sites in terms of providing a variety of Malaysian settings. It was important to involve teacher educators from varied points of origin and varied levels of experience, as all teacher educators and teachers bring their previous teaching and learning experiences into a teacher education setting, influencing the teacher education process (Bailey, 2006, p. 279) The selection of teacher educators in the research aimed at a range in the amount and type of previous pedagogic experience. Teacher education or training experience of the teacher educator respondents ranged from six to eighteen years. All were Master's degree holders in Applied Linguistics, TEFL or TESOL.

Of the four teacher educator participants, two were British males, one a Canadian male and one an American woman. It was important to include a woman in order to provide some gender balance and it was a ratio similar to the overall Project gender ratios for teacher educators. The inclusion of a woman also provided a more balanced description of the teacher education process. While this research does not focus on gender issues, it was seen as important to follow up references to gender in the semi structured interviews to explore this aspect of interaction, given that the
nearly two thirds of teachers in Malaysia are women (EPRD Division, Ministry of Education, 2006, p.16). The decision of which teacher educators to involve was a factor in the complexity of choosing of the sites of research which I shall now describe.

Appropriateness of the research sites involved a number of choices. Firstly, some representativeness was sought in the degree of urban and rural influences in each site, with a focus on studying the more rural sites. Secondly, the ethnic composition was considered to approximate the norm of the national complexity of multiracial Malaysia. The study therefore involved four Districts which have varied racial composition, so as to approximate a cross section of the demographics of the Malaysian teaching service. In all the research Districts, as in Districts nationwide, there is a predominance of Malay teachers, although exact District statistics are difficult to obtain. Three of the four research sites were in West Malaysia, while the fourth site was in Sabah, East Malaysia. Selection of sites was on the basis of providing a broad based sample. The sites were in Sabah state, Pahang state, Selangor state and Johor state. In summary, teacher educator and site details are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>TE background</th>
<th>TE experience</th>
<th>Ethnicities other than Malay</th>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site 1</td>
<td>British male</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>15% indigenous</td>
<td>East Malaysia very rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 2</td>
<td>American female</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>26% Chinese, 6% Indian</td>
<td>central rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 3</td>
<td>Canadian male</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>8% Chinese, 5% Indian</td>
<td>southern rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 4</td>
<td>British male</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>25% Chinese, 10% Indian</td>
<td>borders urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Teacher educators and sites of research
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teacher’s years of experience</th>
<th>Ethnicities non-Malay</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site 1</td>
<td>4 female</td>
<td>8,3,17,14</td>
<td>1 indigenous</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 2</td>
<td>3 female, 1 male</td>
<td>2,3,4,6</td>
<td>1 Indian, 1 Chinese</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 3</td>
<td>4 female</td>
<td>2,2,16,9</td>
<td>1 Chinese, 1 Indian</td>
<td>Mid primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 4</td>
<td>3 female, 1 male</td>
<td>3,4,4,7</td>
<td>All Malay</td>
<td>Mixed levels primary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2  Teachers and sites of research

Of the 16 teacher participants, 12 are primary teachers and 4 are secondary teachers. This reflects the Project direction which the client requested with a two thirds emphasis on Primary teacher development. Including secondary teachers added breadth and depth to the data as graduate secondary teachers have greater English language proficiency and content knowledge (Hall & Dodson, 2003). If one is to look at the experience level of teachers the range is from two to twenty eight years. Using Beeren’s (2000, p.56) classification for in-service training, four teachers are Beginning Teachers of two years or less experience and the remaining twelve are Experienced Teachers with three or more years in teaching. The teachers’ levels of experience and training as can be seen in the following table. An explanation of the complex range of qualification terms follows this table.
Table 3 Individual teacher backgrounds and interview length data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Interview 1 length</th>
<th>Interview 2 length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>8 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma conv</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>8.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>Dusun female</td>
<td>17 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma conv</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>14 yrs</td>
<td>Non Engl. degree</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>16.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>Indian female</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>7.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>Chinese female</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>Non-Engl degree</td>
<td>18.25</td>
<td>6.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T7</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>Eng degree</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>Malay male</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>TESOL degree</td>
<td>15.29</td>
<td>10.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma Engl</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T10</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma Engl</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T11</td>
<td>Chinese female</td>
<td>16 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma conv</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>Indian female</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma conv</td>
<td>11.58</td>
<td>10.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T13</td>
<td>Malay male</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Bahasa M. deg.</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T14</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>8.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T15</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16</td>
<td>Malay female</td>
<td>17 yrs</td>
<td>Non- Engl degree</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>16.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some teachers have a general Diploma in teaching, usually a three year teachers training college course (T2, T5, T14, T15). If their major subject was English this is described in the table as a Diploma English (T9, T10). Others have a Diploma in other teaching subjects with no English language component in their earlier training. In order to teach English, with a nation wide shortage of qualified teachers, such teachers have been on intensive “conversion” courses which may vary from six weeks to six months depending on when they did their retraining, hence the term Diploma Converted (T1, T3, T11, T12).

In the secondary service, as with the second site group, there are more graduate teachers with degrees including accountancy (T6), English literature (T7) or TESOL (T8). In the primary teachers’ group of site 4 there was a Bahasa Malaysia and religious studies teacher (T13) and a Business degree teacher(T16) whose main qualifications were described to me as a willingness and interest in English language. This complex situation can be found in other Malaysian rural districts.
Research Design

The focus is on early phases of teacher educator teacher interaction during in-service teacher development courses. Through lesson transcripts, field notes, semi structured interviews over two time frames and teacher education reflective interviews description will be built up and analysed for the early phases of introducing an in-service course. Within the English language teaching field there is little work on the discourse and processes of in-service teacher education, with more analysis focusing on teacher student communication or pre-service teacher training (Lazaraton & Ishihara, 2005). The early phases of approximately 45 minutes beginning a course were chosen. There is a lack of research into teacher education discourse strategies and techniques at the introductory stages possibly because most analysis has focused on the more interactive discourse strategies of questioning or group work during which there is often a rich complexity of interactional data. The setting up of a course is by nature more of a one way interaction initially. However, due to the “primacy effect” early phases are important. Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1973) Initiation, Response Evaluation (IRE) pattern has become widely known and critiqued but their framework of an “opening phase” still has relevance, especially when an early phase is linked to the start of a longer period of commitment for teachers at a time when there could acceptance or rejection of the teacher educators’ approach. In this study, the term I use for the opening sequences is the early phases of teacher/ teacher educator interaction, in light of the “primacy effect” (Hogg, 1998) described earlier.

By early phases, I mean the beginning of courses in which the teacher educator is introducing the teacher development process to in-service teachers. In such beginnings when a teacher educator from outside the local community comes into a novel cultural setting for the first time, there may be much to be learnt by both the teacher educator and the teachers. The early phase of social and professional meetings and interaction is important and often laden with protocol in Malaysia, where considerable time is spent on introducing participants and positioning oneself in terms of prestige and power (Abdullah-Amir, 2000) This aspect of early phases of meeting has been described in terms of a “dramaturgical approach” in seminal sociology work by Goffman (1959, 1981) with his work on presentation of Self,(Barnett, 1994) but this has not been examined in terms of teacher education interaction. Most research into discourse and non verbal behaviours and practices for teacher education is focused on
pre-service teacher training or student discourse in the middle phases of interaction as in the wide-ranging teacher education descriptions of Bailey (2006) and others (Johnson, 2003; Mann, 2005; Widen et al. 1998).

The early opening phases are defined as approximately 45 minutes, based on previous observations that such a time frame would yield information on introductory processes and include the introduction of at least two pedagogic tasks. In addition most of the analysis of communication in classroom based settings is not of the introductory phase which is the time when the facilitator, whether a teacher or teacher educator, will set up the *academic task structures* which are the sequencing of subject matter and tasks and the *social participation structures*, which are how classroom talk is organized. (Erickson, 1982 cited in Farrell, 2004, p.24). The setting up of the actual tasks which is the content of learning and the learning arrangements or participation structures, such as pair work or small group work, are equally important as “joint construction of interactions” (ibid, p.25). These two aspects of pedagogy, namely the tasks as a learning process and the social participation structures relate to pedagogy which the teacher educators were asked to use as part of their introduction to the courses.

The client had expressed concerns that previous large scale training had not involved enough participation of teachers or opportunities for them to use the language while experiencing interactive pedagogy which teachers themselves could use. Part of the teacher educators’ orientation therefore charged them with introducing an academic task within the first 15-20 minutes in order to model the importance of interaction and experiential learning. This was a focus on “the task-in-process…the actual pedagogy or what actually happens in the classroom” (Seedhouse, 2005, p.535). The focus of this study is therefore on the actual classroom events rather than on teaching plans or “task as a range of workplans” (Breen, 1987,p.23) as there are often differences between teaching plans and what actually happens in teaching and learning interaction. Seedhouse (ibid, p.537) lists considerable research which shows that tasks-as-workplans often do not link to tasks-in-process. He argues for a need to research tasks as interaction or processes. As the structuring of teacher education in the Project was designed to be different from other large scale training which most teachers would have experienced, there was a need to see whether the tasks as work plans became interactive “tasks-in-process.” As part of planning, teacher educators
had also been orientated towards social participation structures which maximized teachers’ own practice of English language to create greater teacher talk. The client specified that the social participation during the in-service courses should model learning which could be transferred to classrooms. This was contrast with earlier training which was large scale and instruction based. The social participation or the processes of learning were then supposed to be introduced early in the courses through the organization of tasks and teacher educator discourse strategies. This research analyses this for the early phases of teacher education.

One notes that Farrell's (2004) research in the Asian context tends to concentrate on talk in the middle phases of tasks and much of the well known research on teacher talk, in particular, research on questioning also derives from mid session discourse, pair work or group work (Dillion, 1990; Nunn, 1999). Notably, there is little research into teacher education talk and interaction as compared to teacher and student interaction, especially in the South East Asian setting. This study therefore analyses early phases of teacher education interaction with a variety of research tools which are now described.

Research Instruments

The research instruments were designed to provide opportunities for data triangulation. There are six sets of research instruments. Firstly transcribed audio recordings of the early phases of a course with field notes describing what happened during the interaction. After the lesson interaction, there were semi structured interviews for teachers and semi structured interviews for teacher educators. Post course interviews for teachers and later post course reflective interviews with teacher educators were conducted. The data comprises:

- Audio recordings transcribed for each of the four training sessions of approximately 45 minutes
- Field notes by the researcher focused on classroom arrangements and observed teacher reactions for the period of transcription (4)
- Semi structured teacher educator interviews (4)
- Interviews with 4 teachers for each of the in-service groups (16 in total)
• Post course teacher interviews with the same 4 teachers of each of the in-service groups (16 in total)
• Post course teacher educator reflective interviews based on observation feedback and conversations about the lesson transcript (4)

For each teacher trainer there were two interviews (30-60 minutes each) and for each teacher two interviews (7-20 minutes each). See Appendices B, C, D and E. There were three time frames for data gathering at each of the four sites. The first time frame was at the beginning of a course when approximately 45 minutes of interaction was observed and recorded. Immediately following the course, or on the following day, if there are logistic constraints, the teacher educator and four teachers for each site were interviewed. At the end of the course, namely after a minimum of ten hours of face to face interaction, the four teachers for each site were interviewed again. The time frame for the research reflects the project structure where courses of a minimum of twelve hours are operable within local constraints and seen as beneficial, based on Project evaluation data. At a later date, no more than one month after the start of the course, a teacher educator reflective interview based on the earlier transcript and field notes was conducted. An overview of the sequence of the research is Appendix A.

A detailed rationale for the interview process follows a description of the research instruments. The six research instruments are now described in detail.

1 Transcribed audio recordings of the early phases of training sessions.

The use of recording provides some emotional distance from the teaching act, enabling later discussion of what transpired to be more dispassionate than the immediate observational feedback approach (Bailey, 2006, p.128). Fortunately the size of the digital recorder, which is smaller than a mobile phone, makes the act of audio recording less obtrusive than in the past. The high quality digital recording was transcribed using the utterance as the basic unit with standardised discourse markers (Clennell & Nichols, 2003). The utterance is defined as a stream of speech bounded by pauses of variable length, under one intonation contour and constituting an idea unit in which there is content unity (Hall, 1991, p. 92). The analysis uses this discourse unit and includes strings of ideationally related utterances sharing emergent themes. When themes arose out of the data the transcripts were re-listened to and intonation within utterances was underlined, identifying the foregrounding of tonic
stress as signalling more important content (Brazil, 1992). The focus for analysis of the utterances was on discourse strategies. The turn taking unit of Conversation Analysis was problematic for the early phases as the teacher talk introducing the course organisation and content does not include many 'turns'. However, the research followed the CA principles of not using predetermined coding as such quantification of data tends to 'pigeon hole' information. Seedhouse (2005, p. 536) argues that CA is a useful tool for establishing the participants’ perspectives if one is able to rely on “the minute details of talk in its own sequential environment” when one focuses on tasks in process. Recurrent analysis of the discourse strategies at the utterance level drove the categorization so that the talk itself drove the emergence of themes (Lazarathon & Ishihura, 2005; Lee, 2003) with the themes being data-driven (Carspecken, 1996).

2 Field notes by the researcher observer focused on how the teacher educator organised the early phases of the course.

The field notes focused on a number of aspects of the teacher educator’s behaviour. Observation and note taking recorded groupings, physical layout and non verbal behaviours such as proxemics, given that social participation was important to the client’s needs and is an integral part of classroom interaction. The field notes were also important later in data gathering as they had a mnemonic function of triggering memory by aligning recorded data of the teacher educators’ talk with the recall of behaviours. However, a pre-imposed coding for the observation notes could be seen as artificially structuring the observer’s perceptions as in the deliberate use with the well known instruments of CELTA and DELTA. Observation categories could have been designed but I choose to not use predetermined categories as the study aimed to be holistic by recording the “co-creation of an unfolding mini-culture by the participants” (Parkinson, et al, 1998, p.91) with the focus on the context of the classroom site. As has often been noted, particularly in pre-service teacher training, the act of observing is far more complex than acknowledging numerically based descriptors (Johnson, 2006). I was also very aware that my role was as a researcher observer and not an evaluator and it was important to position myself as distant from earlier roles in the Project.

Yet Bailey (2006, p.115) in her recent work on teacher supervision notes that “observers bring ‘conceptual lenses’ into the classroom, regardless of whether or not
they use observation systems”. An observer generating field notes for example “may focus on issues of interest to him or her, based on his or her beliefs and background knowledge” (ibid). I concur and consciously focused on observable non-verbal behaviours, drawing on my own experience in cross cultural customer service training, as well as teacher education in varied cultural settings (Hall, 2003). A focus on observing non-verbals enriches the data, especially when non-verbals are commonly acknowledged as critical in face to face communication (Axtell, 1993; Morris, 1994). Observable behaviour, such as gestures support face to face communication. Other aspects were proxemics, eye contact and movement around the classroom.

There is a need to consider the use of gesture in cross cultural settings, as in my experience working in airline customer interaction. Non-verbals Many English language native speakers when speaking English may use non-verbal communication at a subconscious level. It has been argued in the context of using gesture in teacher education that “language teachers must become aware of its largely culturally specific nature, as well as the ways they actually use it” (Lazarathon & Ishihura, 2005, p.539). McNeill (1992) provides a very detailed taxonomy of gesture which is well known to be an area of much cross cultural miscommunication. Elements of McNeill’s details were used for description, but as I was observing for more than just gesture, the description is more general than in his system. As the process of observation is an intense one ‘At the time’ questions which arose in the observer’s mind were also written down for the post course teacher educator discussion. This was a process of observing my observations and recording queries for later reflection.

3 Semi structured interviews with 4 teacher educators

As all the interviews have an underpinning rationale, I shall describe the interview process itself, after outlining the operational aspects of conducting the three rounds of interviews. For three of the four teacher educators the first round of teacher educator interviews were conducted the day after the lesson with one interview being in the afternoon of a morning’s lesson due to transportation difficulties. The purpose and confidentiality agreement was made clear to all teacher educators and teachers before beginning the semi structured interviews.
4 Early phase Interviews with teachers, 4 from each training group (16 in total).

The teacher interview was held after the first session which opened the course. For two participants this was held the morning after the course due to travel constraints. The interview methodology parallels that of the teacher educator interviews. On three occasions during interviews, I found that interviewee’s English proficiency was creating responses with pauses of longer than five seconds for particular questions, so there are occurrences where interviewees choose to continue in Bahasa Malaysia, which I understand. Translations were checked with a fluent Malay speaker.

5 End of course interviews with teachers, 4 of each training group. (16 in total)

These interviews revisit points of the earlier interview after the course input, which is between 10 to 12 hours. The interview provided an opportunity for the teachers to clarify, contradict or elaborate on any earlier statements, as I made sure I listened to all the first round interviews before conducting the second round. The second focus for the end of course interviews was to clarify if further input had changed earlier perceptions of the teacher educator’s early phase techniques and the teachers’ thinking about teaching. The post course interview also provided for reflection on whether or not particular techniques or methods introduced in the course had been used in classrooms. If such classroom application was reported the researcher probed in detail to verify reported information in very specific terms such as the specific technique used, the class level, the text used and the specifics of learners’ responses. This was to check the tendency of telling what was expected and to balance teachers’ perceptions of what they expected I wanted to hear. I therefore probed for details in their personal narrative and much of that depended on the interviewing processes which I will now describe.

6 Follow up reflective interviews based on observation feedback for 4 teacher educators.

The reflective interview was conducted at the end of the course. Murdoch (2000) describes post observation discussion as part of teacher development. He notes that when there is collaborative reviewing discussion on recorded specific events, one has a useful tool not only to describe teaching events but also that one
is able to “create useful dialogue about strategies, and the identification of future foci for lesson preparation” (ibid, p58-59). The teacher educators and I explored shared concerns in such a reflective manner as the research provided learning opportunities through the asking of questions of oneself (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Gebhard found that “teachers often discover aspects of an instructional context through concentration on the transcription” (1990, p.518) and this approach was applied in this study both as part of the research design and also for teacher educator learning. Others have used this approach. Bell (2005) explored humour in classrooms by using playback interviews and copies of transcripts to focus on specific lines or utterances to elicit understanding in a reflective approach. She was able to check the validity of her analysis and to elicit the participants understanding to inform the research. This approach enabled checking of her research, and informs my methodology. As in Bell’s work, transcripts in this study were discussed in a collegial process as a type of member check in that the practitioners had a chance to question and or check the researcher’s observations. The discussion of the transcripts and the field notes therefore aimed to yield findings which were developed in an attitude of shared reflective practice. In other words, the reflective interviews with the teacher educator also acted as a data triangulation process with elements of a member check of the emergent themes.

**The Interviewing Process**

Ideally, qualitative interviews involve clearly defined meaningful dialogue for seeking out and soliciting by objective means the views, ideas and aspirations of those who are being interviewed. However, from a number of perspectives there are difficulties in describing interviews as an objective process, especially when the focus is only on the subjects’ responses. That which is not said or is avoided is also an important part of interviewing. It may be more realistic to understand interviews as interactional events which are influenced by varied factors. As interactional events, interviews are seen by many anthropologists, sociolinguists and educationalists as co-constructed discourse events (Mishler, 1986; Holliday, 2002). This study uses the approach of treating interview data as co-constructed discourse especially as the framework is semi structured, as described earlier.
In the co-constructed discourse of an interview, both participants will draw on their linguistic and social backgrounds to meet the purposes of the structured pre-arranged exchange. Both participants are building a public social self who is either asking or answering. The very nature of the discourse structure is one in which there is an inbuilt power relation in that one person has the societal sanction to position herself in the role of an inquirer, asking for her own purposes (McCraken, 1988). However some work on using reflective approaches to interviewing goes some way to balancing the process (Barwell, 2003) and it is this approach and foregrounding my position as an interviewer which underpins this research. Working with clear statements of confidentiality I stressed the reflective aspects in that teachers and teacher educators would share findings and reflect to gain understanding in a non-evaluative process.

In an interview the interviewer generally leads the discourse by controlling and choosing the questions, the domains of the topics to be discussed and the length, content, depth and conclusion of the interview. As such, the form of the discourse is already one with less equity than a conversation and the form of an interview is more prescribed than most dialogues. The situation is one in which the researcher’s own agenda and interactions play a major part. In describing the interactional process of an interview, Pomerantz (2000, p.3) contends that as:

> Individuals choose among the possibilities for stating a particular idea, they are aligning themselves with both certain ways of understanding the social world and the people who have historically understood the social world from that perspective.

One could go further and ask if the answers given as the interviewee aligns herself with her social world are in fact ‘representational’ of events or ‘presentational’ of the interviewee (Block, 1995, p.758). It is to the notion of interviews as ‘presentational’ of the interviewee’s own position that we now turn.

Many analyses of interviews have revealed answers that are unexpected or appear to be the interviewee establishing a viewpoint or position in relation to the interviewer, context or topic as much as in relation to the question itself. This social
response of presenting part of one’s multiple identities has been termed positioning (Davies & Harre, 1990). Linked to the concept of positioning, Kyale (1996) cited in Block (2000) contrasts two readings of interview data which align with Block’s earlier definitions of representational of events or presentational of individuals. Kyale sees veridical data as reliable accounts of realistic data provided by well meaning respondents who are involved in sharing verifiable data; a representation of events. In symptomatic data, the focus is on “the participants’ relationship to the topic and the interview context (rather) than about the topic being discussed, an approach to presenting ones own views or schema of a situation” (Block, ibid p.758). Such symptomatic data may be contested by triangulation with other sources or other interviewee data as Kyale found. An interviewee may be identifying herself with certain positioning. This has been termed “subject positions' and in critical discourse this “refers to the possibilities for social identity that are available at particular times and places. The notion of subject positions is thought to capture the idea of social identity as multiple, complex, dynamic, locally situated and open to negotiation.” (Pomerantz, 2000,p.3).

One could postulate that the interview is also seen as a listening situation where expressing one’s own opinions about the designated topic is possible without any comeback once the interviewer’s position regarding decisions which affect the interviewees’ occupational position is clear. Block (2000) develops this approach to ask for recognition of interview data to include how interviewees relate to the process of the interview. As such, an interview is not only a collection of data generated by defined research questions, but is also a shared construction of meaning in which the respondents' voices and generation of discourse play a vital role.

When a researcher is concerned with the means of accurately analyzing the ways in which people consider events and relationships, then he or she needs to acknowledge the covert role of the interviewer in the discourse. This may entail a reflective approach to the interviewees’ responses (Barwell, 2003). I aimed to be an active participant observer co-constructing “as holistic a picture as possible by documenting or portraying the everyday experiences of individuals” (Frankel & Wallen, 1996, p.453) and I was reflective during this process. I was explicit when starting an interview to position the research as concerned with gathering confidential feedback for teacher education practice. Teacher educators and teachers in fact stated that they
could say more to me as I had documentation that I was no longer linked, employment wise, with the Ministry. As such I spoke of myself as an ‘Other’ (Palfreyman, 2004) while making my past experience and familiarity with the teaching and learning context transparent. This required a balance between distance and sharing some of the known vocabulary of Malaysian classroom discourse. In terms of creating space for openness so that honest responses would emerge I worked with Luke’s (2004) approach to “Othering” which entails an “epistemological othering and doubling of the world - a sense of being beside oneself or outside of oneself in another epistemological discourse and political space than one typically would inhabit. This is a kind of distantiation which entails the capacity to watch oneself without slipping into the infinite regress of ontologically ungrounded perception” (2004, p.26). To create this required a clear presentation of my purposes for researching teacher education, as well as a reflective mode of self awareness. I asked all the teacher educators to introduce me as a former project team member who was researching. I presented the purposes of the research at each site. In order to provide discourse space and a relaxed atmosphere no notes were taken during the semi-structured interviews. I will now turn to the possibilities of how a semi-structured interview can broaden the range of possible responses to accommodate the interviewees’ ‘voices’.

Structuring the interview instruments.

As structured interviews are formal and consist of predetermined questions to elicit data, there is a danger of limiting respondents to the questions posed (McCracken, 1988). As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) point out, closed questions lead to more uniform structure resulting in data that is easier to compare, but to the detriment of losing opportunities to understand interviewees’ interpretation of topics. I applied the a semi-structured approach as a robust tool that provides greater opportunities for a range of responses by providing points of departure from set questions. This is especially important given that “the standardization of question wording does not necessarily imply standardization of meaning” (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 2000, p.8).
Facilitating the co-construction of interviews.

Through an analysis of critical epistemology, Carspecken (1996) describes a framework for critical qualitative research and the construction of interviews dealing with social and cultural issues in education. He argues that whether we like it or not, we are involved with bringing values to research and that the value of critical research is to “include the nature of social structure, power, culture, and human agency” (1996, p.3). He draws on a large scale study of a failing low income British neighbourhood school with concerns with students’ success, classroom disruption and low teacher morale in a multi cultural setting. He argues for “thick description” and reconstructive analysis and details how interviews can provide rich data.

Interviewing is described as being the meeting of different views of objective reality with the term ‘multiple objective reality’ (Carspecken,1996, p.67). An example of this is when this writer experienced numerous incidents of time referencing where realities in terms of behaviours and the conceptual frameworks use the same terms but the outcomes are not what one always expects. In Solomon Islands in the West Pacific ‘very soon’, straight away’ or `early this afternoon’ are understood phrases with realities that tested the considerable patience of this speaker of New Zealand English. This and numerous cross cultural experiences, which are too numerous in the literature and in my own experience to describe here, suggest that we operate with ‘multiple realities’.

The range of objective realities is the same but categorization and interpretation differ. Carspecken suggests that “description takes the form of different appearances rendered through different interpretative schemes of the same reality” (1996, p.68).

Multiple readings of reality also include the interview situation where the interviewee privileges the researcher with a controlled access to her views and opinions. The interviewee has knowledge of her own inner world and in disclosing emotions, opinions and intentions may only show the interviewee a part of reality described in personal terms (Bangerter, 2000; Barraja-Rohan, 2003; Shah, 2004). Goffman (1981) has described this in the context of dialogues with the concept of footing as “the alignments we take up to our selves and the others present, as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (p.128).
He points out that people choose different “subject positions” constrained by one’s social role, the discourse genre and the relationship with the other interlocutor.

Carspecken (1996) and others note that questions allowing an interviewee’s own voice link to how one structures the dialogue. He uses the term ‘dialogical data generation’ as research conducted with interviews are specialized intense dialogues generated by both parties. In building a valid critical discourse approach Carspecken also argues for a sharing of open and transparent research processes which recognize a “common set of social theoretical concepts such as ‘social structure,’ ‘culture’ and ‘social reproduction’" (p.3). This was operationalised in my research through three main aspects in an interview process: the types of questions, the interviewer responses and the subsequent data analysis. The following section will focus on interviewer responses.

**Responding to interviewees**

Recognizing that an interview is already a socially imbalanced speech act in terms of the power relationships, Carspecken (1996) argues that to prepare for an interview one should construct an interview protocol that allows for maximum flexibility during the interview process. This is probably an even greater need in a second language situation, such as rural Malaysia, where one has to add in the element of a native speaker interviewer. Flexible interview protocols, such as this research used, avoid what Wragg terms the “straitjacket interview” where detailed schedules provide little latitude for other than the interviewer’s imposition (2002, p.144). In Carspecken’s experience formulating two or three lead off questions before an interview is generally sufficient as the first level of a framework. He states that,

the most effective way to use qualitative interviews with subjects is to get them to describe events they remember taking part in; to begin at a concrete level where a specific action situation is recalled and then to work toward articulations of interpretative schema that the subject applies in many diverse situations (Carspecken, 1996, p.38).
There is a need to formulate lead off questions to open up topic domains of the issues one wishes to address and a need to list the topic domains to cover prior to an interview. Carspecken states “once a topic domain is opened up, the interviewer must respond skilfully to what the subject is saying in order to guide, without leading, across all the covert categories” (ibid, p.157). Follow up questions are also important as it is in these that one can move from more concrete less threatening topics to more emotive issues. Integral to successful interviews are the responses of an interviewer. It is well known that interviewer’s responses are an important part of effective interviewing in varied contexts (Alvarez, 2002). Carspecken pays particular attention to the importance of responses and being aware of the sensitivity needed to elicit in depth data, and draws on Kagan’s work for clinical counselors (Kagan, 1980; Kagan, 1984). The following useful typology shows responses for the elicitation and sharing of meaning in an adaptation of Carspecken’s typology which this research applied:

A. Bland encouragements

These positive sounds are usually short one word utterances or lexical fillers such as “humm” or gestures showing attention or interest. They are to be used often and are important when beginning an interview.

B Low inference paraphrasing

Restatements in new words without new content clarify understanding. These indicate that a point has been grasped and keep the speaker on topic. The frequency of this encouraging talk will vary with the talkativeness of the interviewee,

C Non leading leads

Types of questioning or prompts to add variation to responses and elicit more information on the topic at hand. Examples of non-leading prompts are such phrases as ‘Tell me more about that’ or ‘Can you tell me more details about this?’

D Active listening

This involves the interviewer using her own words about some topic. Responses help establish rapport when the participant is being more expressive non-verbally than verbally with phrases such as ‘you sound angry about that’. The interviewer is disclosing some of her self here, so she needs to be cautious about the degree of feelings in her disclosure.

E Medium inference paraphrasing
This involves interviewer speculations about meaning to check out ideas. One articulates implicit beliefs and theories but not feelings. Responses are based on extending the wording of the interviewee so has not to impose ones views while teasing out an underlying idea.

F High inference paraphrases

Paraphrases of suspected background beliefs that have not been explicitly stated enable one to check out the subject’s general beliefs. Such speculation should be kept for the end of an interview as it may involve leading the interviewee, yet high inference paraphrases can be effective for checking out a summative statement. Over use of high inference paraphrases in response to time pressure has been well documented as a pitfall where the construction of realities becomes one sided (Ohlson, 1998; Spradley, 1979).

These techniques and Carspecken's approach were adapted for a study by Lee Su Kim (2003) in the Malaysian context in which this writer works. Her study informs much of the interview structuring in this research. Lee reported success in yielding rich data for her qualitative ethnographic study which I shall briefly outline. She investigated how English language impacts on the construction of the sociocultural identities of Malaysian ESL speakers and how their “identities are shaped in the acquisition of the English language” (2003 p.141). Her qualitative study used intensive one to one interviews, a written questionnaire and personal narratives. She used interview protocols that were open and avoided prescribing the interviewee responses towards the researcher’s point of view. The interview topic domains opened with concrete questions such as “How many languages do you know? How and when did you learn these languages?” (Lee, 2001).

She began with several such opening biographical questions, before exploring more abstract areas of attitude and perception using topic domains which moved from most concrete, language use to culture, to public issues, then to social identity. The latter questions focused on the personal domain with questions that concerned more emotive areas and could involve issues of disclosure. Importantly the researcher covertly acknowledges her shared background with the interviewees and so she is able
to reflect and co-construct experiences. This approach and the research described in this section informs the interviewing process of the study. Crucial to all interviews is the willing participation of teachers and teacher educators and their engagement in an ethical manner. We now turn to ethical issues in the study.

Ethical Issues

A cover letter making the voluntary participation of all teacher educators and teachers clear included a confidentiality agreement which was discussed and signed by all participants. See Appendix A. This was a signed agreement. The researcher verbally reaffirmed that the subjects voluntarily agreed to take part in the research prior to each observation and interview. All names reported in the study have been replaced with pseudonyms. All teacher educators and teachers in the study were informed of the researcher’s role and confidentiality of all interactions prior to recording. As the centralised education system in Malaysia is often gathering data for evaluation, the non-evaluative nature of the research was clearly stated and verbally repeated before each interview occasion. The findings will be presented to teacher education colleagues and shared in international conferences.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data gathering occurred between April 10 and June 30 2007 over 4 sites. A pilot of the interview protocol was undertaken earlier in different site in Johor as an opportunity arose and this was followed by an initial analysis of the transcript. The interview protocols were simplified and reordered as a result of this. In the research study itself, four sites were selected after permission had been obtained from the Ministry of Education. A selection of courses to be observed was also part of the decision making process so as to have varied content input. The site designation of 1-4 reflects the chronology of the research. I recorded the early phase (approximately 45 minutes) of the first day of an in-service course while making field notes. After recording the early phase interaction, teacher educators were interviewed using the semi structured interview protocol. The interviews were often the following day. Teacher interviews were after the lesson or in four instances the day after the lesson. I
sought four volunteers and was able to select interviewees to provide a range of responses.

I returned to the sites on a later occasion for the second teacher interview held after a minimum of 10 hours of course interaction with the matsalleh teacher educator. The time frame for the research reflects the project structure where courses of a minimum of twelve hours are operable within local constraints and seen as beneficial, based on Project evaluation data. Therefore the second teacher interview probed for views on the course and acceptance or otherwise of the techniques which had been experienced, as well as perceptions of interacting with a teacher educator from another culture. On a later occasion within a month following the early phase interaction, I returned with the lesson transcript for a reflective interview with the teacher educator in which we talked through the interview and field notes. This including checking my field note observations with the teacher educator. Teacher educator reflective interviews varied in length with Site 1: 45 minutes, Site 3: 30 Minutes; Site 3: 1 hour 22 minutes and Site 4: 1 hour 56 minutes.

In summary in the first phase of data gathering for each teacher trainer there are two interviews (30-60 minutes each) and for each teacher two interviews (7-20 minutes each). The reflective practice interviews held later were lengthy with one running to two hours so transcription was selective linked to earlier emergent themes, hence the use of time descriptors in the reflective practice interviews to identify quotes, rather than line descriptors for shorter interview transcripts. For examples of protocols see Appendix F.

The areas for comparison are therefore between the teacher educator interviews immediately after the early phase lesson and the later reflective interview. The other important area is the comparison between the actual discourse strategies captured in the transcript and later reflection. In a study on microanalysis and self reflection for language teacher education, Lazarathon and Ishihara (2005, p.529) note that "close examination of classroom discourse recorded precisely as it happens not only allows detailed analyses of classroom practices, but can also validate or provide counterevidence to the self reflection." As a researcher I could also compare the data through the teachers’ interviews and the teacher educators’ interviews. As such I
worked with convergence of data through comparing sources and data gathered on more than one occasion.

Transcription of the early phase data, using the utterance as the basic unit of analysis (Crookes, 1990, Hall, 1991) was undertaken by the researcher and a research assistant. All transcripts were checked by a research assistant against the recordings for accuracy after the first round of transcription by myself. A Malay speaker with discourse analysis experience checked my translations. The study started with a process of “unmotivated looking” (McKay, 2006, p.104) at transcripts of lessons and interviews in an ethnographic approach. Transcripts were analysed for emergent themes or topics (Carspecken, 1996). Emergent themes were then identified based on recurring utterances, so that coding was drawn from the data across the participants. When themes were longer than the utterance or sentence length, sequences linked to themes were listened to and stressed syllables were identified and underlined to indicate fore grounded or important information (Halliday, 1985). To do this I adapted Miller’s (2003) topic inventory categorization approach in her work on researching teacher consultancy via Exploratory Practice. Emergent themes were checked and some classifications altered in collaboration with the discourse analysis trained research assistant. An experienced third party researcher was asked to check classifications resulting in a further round of assessing the emergent themes. The next stage was to look at teacher educators’ data, then the teachers’ data and then to compare across all participants.

The lesson transcripts were closely analyzed to provide evidence or otherwise of the teacher educators’ professed aims, techniques and use of language. Farrell, researching Asian classroom communication and teacher education, describes the search for a disjuncture between aims and practice and states “the most important type of data a teacher should get is in the form of classroom transcripts” (2004, p.3). This can also relate to teacher education where the use of teacher education transcripts for in-service is in need of research. I compared the early phases transcript and the teacher educator’s professed approach as shared in the first interview with the transcribed interviews of teachers at the start and conclusion of courses. In a way this is a triangulation, firstly through the methods of recording the process, with field notes augmenting the audio recording. Secondly, there is checking through alignment or otherwise of how teachers, the teacher educator and researcher perceive the early phase interaction. Thirdly, there is a time factor in that the second round of teacher interviews enabled checking of earlier views as well as changes. Finally, the reflective
teacher educator interview provides for exploration of practice as seen in field notes in the transcript and for reflection on teachers’ responses. During the teacher educator reflective interview I was also able to check my understanding of the teacher educators’ strategies.

Summary

This research analyses the early phase interaction between teacher educators and teachers as they begin an in-service course. The first focus is on teacher educators’ discourse strategies and what they do when introducing their pedagogy. Analyzing the talk is augmented by the researcher’s field notes which records the non-verbal behaviours linked to introducing tasks and introducing the ways of doing tasks. The data will provide information about learning culture differences which may occur as teacher educators and teachers interact. Central to the research are teachers’ reactions described in two semi-structured interviews, one very soon after the early phases of the first course session and the other later in the course. Teacher educator perceptions have similar elements of more immediate recall and retrospection through interviews. A third teacher educator interview uses the transcript of the early phases lesson and the researcher’s field notes for teacher education reflection on the ways in which the course was introduced.

The data then provides a platform for teacher educator reflection on reflective practice. Through these research instruments the study aims to describe and analyse both teachers’ reactions to working with pedagogy which may be novel and teacher educators’ perceptions of what they do as introductory strategies. This pedagogy in which native speaker teacher educators interact in a Malaysian learning culture may or may not be accepted by teachers. Teachers are involved in tasks with native speakers who were tasked with creating interactive learning and reflection on learning in a manner differing from many of the teachers’ earlier experiences. The responses that the interaction creates will be described in greater depth in the following chapter along with the ways in which teacher educators and teachers perceive the early phases of rural Malaysian in-service courses.
CHAPTER FOUR

Findings - Teacher Educators and Interaction

Introduction

The findings are presented in two chapters. This chapter focuses on lesson interaction transcripts, the first teacher educator interview and the two teacher interviews. The following chapter will describe the teacher educators’ reflective interviews. The first part of the Findings to which we now turn, describes the early phase interaction in the first session of a course. Site by site findings based on the non-evaluative field notes and lesson transcripts are described, followed by reports of the first teacher educator interview conducted shortly after the lesson. I have chosen to use a site by site basis to capture the diversity of the project work and to provide the setting for the discourse and observed behaviours. At the same time, a foundation is provided for later discussion of emergent themes arising from the teacher interviews. The two teacher interviews are described in terms of themes which emerged from the data.

Describing the lesson interaction for each site

The data from the four sites reveals both localized features and some shared features. In order to contextualise the themes described in the literature and discussed later, a site by site approach is used in this descriptive chapter to situate the uniqueness and commonalities of the early phases of teacher education interactions. The interaction will then be described for each site along with the first four teacher educator interviews. These interviews were held very shortly after the recording. Shared themes, comparisons and contrasts will be explored in the discussion. I will now describe the findings, site by site, focusing on the early phases of the courses as seen and heard in the lesson and the teachers’ interviews.
A table below outlines the four sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>Course hours</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site 1- East</td>
<td>Communicative Classrooms</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Early Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 2 - Pahang</td>
<td>Teaching Grammar</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 3- South</td>
<td>Early Primary Using Music</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Middle Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 4 - Central</td>
<td>Communicative Classrooms (Speaking)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mixed Primary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Research sites data

*Interaction at Site One*

Site One in a very scenic East Malaysian district was the District Education training room located inside a primary school. The very experienced Teacher Educator A was newly arrived in the District. The tables in the training room were arranged in a fixed horseshoe shape and the majority of the 24 teachers were primary school non-optionist teachers, namely teachers without specialised English language training. An overhead projector was in place. The teacher educator had not worked with any of the 24 teachers before they came for the Communicative Classroom course for primary teachers, although he had visited four of them at their schools. Teacher Educator A (henceforth termed TE A) began the session with a minute and a half description of the course requirements and welcomed late comers; late comers being a culturally common feature of all local events, including each of the site interactions in this research. His first remark and first question involved self-deprecatory humour where he recounted his arrival.
Come in, please come in, come in! OK. Sit down! We’ve just started. We have started. Yeah, erm....Do you know who I am? I’m not surprised if you don’t, because no one asked me who I was when I arrived.

TE A Lesson L8-10

The next section was a presentation of the teacher educator’s bio-data. In the teacher interview, he stated that in the years he has spent in the Malay or Indonesian speaking world, he has learnt that putting some personal details at the beginning of an interaction puts Malay speakers at ease. During the three and half minutes of describing his personal and professional background, Teacher Educator A used eye contact with all the teachers. He applied the public speaking practice of addressing the front third, middle third, then the back third of the classroom with gestures towards different areas of the space. In three instances I noted that some female teachers avoided his eye contact looking away suggesting that they may be uneasy with this. He also moved from the centre to the right to return to the centre, then to the left, then back again to the central area. After four minutes of introducing himself, he used encompassing open handed gestures (McNeill, 1992) and looked out the window to comment positively on the local setting. This is followed by an explanation of the project, which included contrasting the teacher development work of his role with the role of an evaluative Inspector.

Now, this is for the ELC project, this is. I am an English Language Coordinator. I’m attached to the PPD here and my job is to visit the English teachers, to work with the English teachers. I’m not a nazir.

(Inspector)I’m not here to evaluate you, to measure you like an ... instrument. I’m here to work with you, so when I go into your classes, some of you, I’ve been into classes already... I work with whatever you’re doing... so it’s like you have an extra teacher. So when I say I’m coming to visit you, don’t be takut (scared)
The next comment to an individual teacher whom the teacher educator had visited earlier was a direct statement to build confidence and rapport. He commented bilingually that the teacher had not been embarrassed or afraid during a school visit. The practical nature of the course was then described as “The main part of the courses are practical things to do in the classroom. Everything we are going to do …everything... can be produced in the classroom” (TEA Lesson 1 Site 1 47-49).

Then I was introduced by TE A. The introduction of myself as researcher included a request for interviewees. This was followed by TE A outlining the role of the C/BT Schools English Language Project for a minute. At eight minutes into the course the first activity for teachers was introduced with a question and a gesture to the board and clapping of the hands, which was one of his signals of task change or topic change. The first activity began with a question which all would know, namely “What are the four main language skills?” After eliciting the answers of reading, writing, speaking and listening, he outlined the techniques which the teachers would work with for the session for one and half minutes. This agenda setting was linked to both learner and teacher needs:

105 .....a lot of teachers

106 have told me, “How do we get our students to read? They aren’t motivated to

107 read the text. It’s difficult to get them to read the text.” So, I’m going to

108 show you two different techniques I use to get reluctant students to do the

109 reading. And this is one of the ways. It’s quite an interesting way because it

110 works for the lowest ability, and, of course for the abler students as well. So,

111 that’s the agenda for today and we’ll be finished by four.

TEA Lesson 1 Site 1 L 105-111

The teacher educator was very explicit about links to learner needs as he presented peer dictation for a five minute stretch. When structuring the academic task he would provide reasons why techniques should be used but not the pedagogic understanding underpinning the choice of task. Classroom management points, such as where a teacher should position herself during group work were interwoven with the task. When at 17 minutes into the lesson, he asked teachers to peer mark, there was
on-task teacher conversation, even while teachers were organising for peer marking. I observed very animated interest amongst teachers and heard on task discussion as they moved into peer marking. (Regrettably, external noise made recording this talk difficult). The teacher educator moved throughout the classroom as teachers peer marked from answers projected on the screen. He then got teachers to stand up to show how many answers they had correct, so that they were physically involved. This was used as a pedagogic point, contrasting the role of auditing learners by seeing who attained which marks as they stood up with auditing by the more common feedback method of raising hands. The physical experience of this technique was then followed by a brief pedagogic explanation, a method which he said he often employed. None of his explanations were over two minutes long and in the teacher interview he told me that he contrasted this approach with some of the experiences which teachers had undergone, as part of what they call the “other trainings.” I shall develop this point further in the Discussion.

The second task, a little over twenty minutes into the session, was pronunciation of key vocabulary from the earlier peer dictation. This involved frequent use of Malay bilingualism, an aspect which will be analyzed in greater detail in the discussion. The pronunciation part of the session involved much positive reinforcement with encouraging phrases such as “very nice, very nice” (TEA Lesson 1 Site 1 l 163) “Ah, you got it.” (ibid, l 169) as well as frequent uses of “Okay” and “Good”. Specific points common to Malaysian English language pronunciation features were also interspersed with positive reinforcement. These were generally initial phonemes such as t/d, v/w.

The rapid pace of short tasks was evident as twenty-five minutes from the start there was a third task - a guessing game focusing on pedagogic content. This was a guessing game similar to hangman with a diagram with three cloze words which teachers had to guess. These were ‘interest’, ‘retention’ and ‘reception’. The teacher educator set up a competition between himself and teachers. For five and a half minutes, this guessing game provided a framework for the modelling of questions and answering questions, a number of self deprecatory humorous remarks and frequent positive reinforcement. After one sentence describing his academic background, he reinforced core pedagogy and the underlying principles of his teacher development approach and teaching approaches in parallel as can be seen below:
You know when I was at university, I was doing my Masters, I put this on my front introduction page. I put, ‘interest equals attention, reception equals learning’, and the professor who was supervising me said, “Prove this. You haven’t quoted any sources, so how can you prove this?” I said, “I don’t need to. This is common sense.” Isn’t it? When you’ve got interest, you’ve got attention, when you’ve got attention, you’ve got reception and then there’s going to be learning. Ah.

TEA Lesson 1 Site 1 L 277-283

This discourse links to an area which some have commented on as part of the Malaysian social structure which often involves foregrounding a hierarchical placement of people (Hofstede, 1997, p.26). Yet at the same time TE A appeals to shared ‘pedagogic knowledge’ (Freeman, 1989) while the description of his academic background is limited to a clause perhaps to downplay the status aspect.

For five minutes, further points about classroom methodology were explained in short sentences, before the fourth task was introduced at 33 minutes into the session. Teachers were organized into pairs for a split information gap reading task (Hall, 1991) with six minutes of modelling instructions and classroom management. Grouping arrangements were indicated with clear, open palmed gestures with the use of clapping to mark transitions. He also moved to different areas of the classroom and teachers’ body language showed that they were looking at him during this task instruction. The TE A next created a loud buzz of teacher conversation by remarking that there is a place for mother tongue instruction during English language learning (L 370-381). His description of the role of bilingualism focuses on young learners, yet all the teacher educators acknowledged the important role of the mother tongue, as will be seen in the discussion. The task modelling was once again explicitly linked to its usefulness in classrooms. The teachers then began the pair work 41 minutes into the session and so I decided to stop the recording at this point, a little earlier than the originally planned 45 minutes.
Site One Teacher Educator First Interview

Responding to the first question about the session the teacher educator noted that he introduced himself and myself before “we got stuck into the peer dictation exercise after the initial brainstorm about what creates interest” (TE A Interview L 6-7). He followed the planning during the session. In addressing the interview question about building confidence, TE A was very pragmatic:

26 Building confidence…I think you don’t want to give teachers too much
27 information initially. You don’t want to give too much theory. You want
28 to do something that’s practical…that’s do able which they can see is
29 utilized in the classroom. Yeah. I think it is important for the teachers
30 to feel that what they are doing is stuff they can use in the classroom,
31 practically. I think that gives confidence. They are happy. They are
32 attentive. They feel it’s a worthwhile waste of time coming in for the
33 afternoon session, because they have been teaching all morning so they
34 are tired, so it takes a bit of psychological push to get in the car and
35 come to the course. Now if they can see that what we are doing is
36 practical…useful…..

TE A Interview L 26-36

When it comes to other means of building confidence he spoke of the importance of humour but not to the extent of “being a ‘comedian’ (L 40). But “just little funny things, I’m not sure how I do it but generally, I find that they felt pretty relaxed after a few minutes. Maybe it’s the way you introduce yourself. Maybe it’s throwing in a couple of Bahasa Melayu phrases, but the thing is they don’t feel intimidated” (L 42-44). The teacher educator then paused before he asked himself in a reflective manner about how to avoid intimidation when working with a ‘native speaker instructor’. He said that teachers are keen to go to courses with ‘native speakers’ (orang putih) and he recalled that often in his earlier location, he heard the following.
I think a lot of them are very keen to attend courses with native speaker instructors. ‘Oh there are orang putih running this course. Let’s go see what its like. Lets attend for the first few sessions anyway.’

TE A Interview L 46-49.

The teacher educator stated that if teachers did feel intimidated that this changes rapidly. He stated that this happens when teachers experience the practical and useful nature of the course and once they understand the teacher educator’s role which he explains explicitly. His view regarding the perceptions of the so called native speaker is verified in the teacher interviews as will be seen later in the findings. TE A was very explicit when explaining his teacher developer role, as being different from the evaluative function of an inspector: “A trainer on the ground has to be very practical. Take this, you can use it in the classroom. Go, see you next week in the classroom using I ”(L 125-126). However, at the very start of this early phase encounter, this teacher educator used a comparatively lengthy introduction about himself and not an introduction to practical training. This biographical introduction was something he reported he had not used as an introductory strategy in earlier courses in Malaysia, but had adopted in response to numerous occasions of the same questions.

So, they like to know. You know when I first started I never did this I just went straight into the session said my name and I’m the ELC for ___. This is the Malaysian school project the CDC etc.. Then I said, “Right. Let’s start, let’s go.” and then I found afterwards, they were asking, “Where are you from?” All these questions. They were so interested. So now it’s a routine… at beginning of every session with new teachers, I go through the history, background and they want to know if you’re married. I never tell them that but it always comes up, “Are you single or are you married?” They want to know. They want to know about you. It’s not hostile. It’s just their way. … People like to know as much as they can
This was an adaptation linked to culturally based behaviour norms where the notion of what is public knowledge and what is private knowledge or a private life space can differ from one cultural group to another (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p.65). There is a concern which Trompenaars and Hampden Turner in their business-oriented writing about cultural difference have termed the “particularist approach” (ibid, p.33) in which people want to know the personal aspects before entering into an interaction. Positioning where a person belongs perhaps echoes features of small rural communities where everyone knows everyone. TE A who has much experience in rural settings reported however that the Malaysian experience differs from other areas in the region where he had worked, as the Malaysians teachers were ready to accept his approach once he included the biodata and this seemed a greater area of interest than in other South East Asian countries. Generally he did not focus much on cultural difference as an influence on his methodology, either in what I observed and recorded, or in what he said in interviews. During interviews, he stated that he did not see cultural differences as a major issue, noting that while “theory tends to dampen them a bit” (L86), teachers respond as long as they know who he is and as long as the experiences he facilitates are new and applicable to classrooms. TE A said that if he was training in China or another country, he would follow the same approach, although in Malaysia he could use Bahasa Malaysia for social convergence.

The interview next turned to the role of reflection. When asked about reflective practice in his courses, he said there is no “specific stage” in which this happens but the underlying theme of maintaining learners’ interest underpins what he does. He stated quite emphatically “Like I said, right from the beginning, how can I be interesting? That’s part of the reflective process because I have to say ‘How can I present this body of language’ or whatever it is… I’ve got to teach in an interesting way. The main concern is what works and what does not work” (L63-65). Although he is aware of the work on reflection, he prefers to work with practical techniques in the training situation. As a teacher educator however, he sees reflection for himself as a natural process of thinking about what went well in a session.
Interaction at Site Two

At Site Two, seventeen secondary teachers from the national medium, Chinese medium and Tamil medium schools were observed in the cool, central Pahang hills. The teachers’ group comprised ten Malay women, three Indian women, two Chinese women and two Malay men. The teacher educator had been in the District for two and a half years. The course on teaching grammar in context was for secondary teachers who generally are graduates with a higher level of proficiency than primary teachers (Hall & Dodson, 2003). This research site within a secondary school was a District Education Training Centre, an hour from the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. The site is a diverse district which I know well, as the project’s initial needs analysis was conducted by my self and a colleague in July 2002. Unfortunately, delays caused by an accident on the highway meant that I arrived six minutes into the session and so documentation of the initial ‘warm up’ part is reliant on the Teacher Educator and teachers’ interviews. The classroom was arranged with clusters of school desks with four or five in a group. The teacher educator reported that she had met half of the teachers before (TE B Interview 1 L 8). After telling them all her name and position, she began with a pair work quiz activity. If teachers came late, as invariably happens, they can begin at any point of this initial awareness raising task which focuses on common local grammar errors.

Teacher Educator B began her course proper by outlining the aims of the session and the content for two minutes. There were brief but precise task instructions so that after three minutes teachers began group discussion in groups which they chose. The task involved finding differences in sentences and phrases related to form and function e.g. ‘We have some room in our hotel. We have some rooms in our hotel’. During the nineteen minutes of group discussion, the teacher educator moved around talking to all the groups. I observed that the teachers were on task and recorded and overheard discussion which was about the grammar items. I also noticed that the teacher educator spent more time with a group which was slower at completing tasks than the other four groups. She talked to some individuals at greater length than others and in the teacher interview, revealed that this was to individually introduce herself to the participants whom she had not met before. When she was talking to groups there were close proxemics and no physical signs that this was an uncomfortable situation from teachers.
Twenty minutes into the session proper, the teacher educator called for whole class attention and went through the eleven phrases or sentences which had been discussed. These were relatively high level discrimination tasks which generated much interaction such as ‘My uncle had a heart attack. My uncle has had a heart attack.’ During the next eight minutes of whole class discussion, there was frequent use of elicitation and, unlike other sites, teacher questioning with overlapping teacher answers. Examples follow:

50  TE   Ah .um…I have had a lot of experience. ‘I have had a lot of (5 secs) yeah (rising intonation) so what is the difference in the form between the two?

51  T4  some. One kind…vague not can count them (overlapping with”Ah ”)

52  TE   Ah…so different kinds of experiences

53  T5   Experiences you can’t count

54  TE   Experience is it countable or uncountable?

55  T5   Uncountable

56  TE   Yeah. In what situation would you use ‘I have a lot of experience’?

57  T5   Job interview

58  TE   Job interview. Talking about your skills. How about experiences?

59  Ts 3 Overlapping answers

60  T2   Lots of experiences. The other is experience as a kind…

61  TE   OK. OK

62  T4   You have been lots of places and you have been doing lots things

63  So it could be doing several different things at several different places.

64  Ah…let’s say you were in a job interview and you told your employer

65  had a lot of experiences?

66  T2, T5 (male laughter)
During the interaction, there were content based questions from the TE as well as grammar explanations interspersed with humorous comments. The teacher educator moved around the groups frequently and used eye contact to make sure that discussion was not dominated by the more frequent replies of male teachers, most of which were humorous one liners. In four instances, when a point involved a longer than average wait time, the teacher educator would emphasize her follow up explanation or questions with animated hand gestures as when explaining the difficult word ‘rather’ (TE B Lesson L 1). The longest explanation about classroom practice was three minutes long (TE B Lesson L 162-172). This was to explain the importance of using demonstration and visuals, for teaching new vocabulary rather than using long definitions. In the later part of the lesson, the teacher educator used a comparative example from Malay to illustrate the role of redundancy in grammar which drew teacher comments of agreement. Teachers laughed and commented positively on this one usage of Malay.

In summary, this was a very interactive session with a high proportion of teacher input on some complex grammar areas of form and function, with limited attention to building teachers' own understanding of pedagogy. As will be seen in later discussion, the teachers’ linguistic levels impact on the interaction as does the fact that half of the teachers knew the teacher educator. The main focus was on practical transferable techniques with explanations linked to reasons why learners would find the techniques useful. There were a number of recurring examples of the use of short explanations, humour and the use of group activities which will be discussed later in this study.

*Site Two Teacher Educator First Interview*

The teacher educator at site two (TE B) reported that since beginning two and a half years ago, she had changed her way of introducing courses so as to manage complaints. She therefore chose to introduce herself individually and “went around
putting a name to a face, one by one” (TE B Interview L 24). In her view, the one-to-one introduction method lessened the likelihood of the introductory session turning into a problem sharing discussion which usually foregrounded everyday professional problems in a negative way. She noted that “many of these problems are administrative and beyond our control and it starts the course off negatively” (TE B Interview L 29). She preferred to meet teachers individually, introduce herself briefly and use hands-on tasks relevant to classrooms as the motivating tool.

She had found that with the one-to-one introduction, a lot of teachers will talk about themselves and their needs as the one-to-one introduction is less public. “They speak of more than just their schools name, their position and years of service” (TE B L 44). She observed that there seems to be “group dynamics at work in which one does not want to speak out in a public setting before knowing who is who and what their roles are. ‘Compared to what I am used to and where I worked before, they are more deferential to what they think authority wants” (TE B L 47). In this teacher educator interview, two minutes of dialogue also focused on the role of school principals who can make considerable decisions for teachers’ professional development and lives. The teacher educator noted that this was also a topic which would come up in earlier introduction sessions once teachers felt they could trust others.

The teacher educator has found that Malaysian teachers are also at ease in groups. Since arriving here, she has increased the amount of group work which is integrated into teacher development, and commented that “in small group work I like to go to all the groups ‘cos there are teachers who dominant” (TE B Interview 1 L 38). I noted that I observed one group who had an experienced older teacher who spoke most of the time and that the teacher educator had to go back there three times to check on task sharing. In TE B’s view, a lot of Malaysian professional development processes, social events and pastimes are very group based. She recounted that the teachers are “shocked that I go anywhere by myself and shocked that I live by myself. Why on earth would she want to live by myself?”(TE B Interview 1 L 52). She stated that she continued to find this reaction to living alone a real difference from her way of thinking.

As the only woman teacher educator cooperating in this research, gender was an issue she wished to discuss, particularly as I noted that she had single sex groups
which is unusual in the Project and was not part of the interaction at the other three research sites. TE B noted:

73    TE  Gender rules are very clear
74    I    Can you give me an example?
75    TE  Take the... The text…”A person who cooks a meal could be a son.
76    Ah the lesson….I put the men together so they might..might do some
77    work, With the women they do not do much. The guy puts in a few
78    ideas only but the women do the work. In the Malaysian context single
79    sex workshops are great. Mix up the sexes. I am like no. More gets
80    done if it’s separate

TE B Interview Site 2 L 73-79

This issue of cultural differences and gender is a complex one and all the teacher educators noted that male and female participation differs during in-service training. The educational profession is skewed with higher level administration being predominantly male and the workforce being overwhelmingly female. This research sample which is not atypical of the grass roots workforce comprised fourteen women and two men. However, examining the possible inequities related to power and gender within the “small culture” (Holliday, 1999) of Malaysian rural schools is beyond the scope of this present study. There are also issues here of the perceptions of what is public and private knowledge of a teacher educator living within the community. TE B noted that teachers are very interested in personal details, as was earlier reported for the first site. We will now turn to Site Three to explore another early phase in service teacher development interaction.

Interaction at Site Three

This site in the southern state of Johor is surrounded by oil palm plantations which dominate most of southern and central peninsular Malaysia. The teacher educator
had worked elsewhere in the State for three years, but was new to this particular District. The 25 Primary teachers involved in the southern state of Johor were fourteen Malay females, three Malay men, four Chinese women, one Chinese man, two Tamil women and one Tamil man; a cross-section sample of the population of peninsular Malaysia. The course for these lower primary teachers was pronunciation skills development through the use of songs and music.

As teachers came into the training room where desks were arranged facing the front but in clusters, they keyed their names into an electronic database. I overheard a comment that “this person knows IT,” from a younger teacher, many of whom in my experience, enjoy information technology integrated with teaching. Teacher Educator C (TE C) asked teachers about their schools and chatted to each person as they came in, commenting if he had visited their schools and asking questions if he had not. He walked around while waiting for latecomers to ask about the names and schools of the majority of teachers. As he introduced himself to the whole group, the teacher educator commented on his name using self deprecatory humour as well as comments such as “If I told you my name …it’s too long, so_______ it is” (TE-C Lesson L2). He then introduced a novel way of foregrounding his personal details which is often an area of inquiry relating to how one is seen in a hierarchy as discussed earlier (Abdullah-Amir, 2000). TE C showed a series of Powerpoint slides with personal photographs and multiple choice questions all related to himself.

During the question and answer interaction, the TE would pause to greet each latecomer with a smile. The choices for the multiple choice questions drew lots of laughter and there were wait time periods of between seven and eighteen seconds while teachers worked through the quiz format. I overheard side talk from teachers who were discussing the quiz. During the quiz the TE showed local knowledge making reference to the judge of the popular Malaysian Idol contest.

15 Number six…hello…this is a test… Number seven… ____ is visiting
16 school tomorrow, you should, ‘a’, prepare your record book, ‘b’, buy a souvenir,’c’, prepare special food,’d’, be scared or ‘e’…
The teacher educator improvised a question about myself into the so-called test which provided an introduction to my researcher role. He asked “Who is the other Matsalleh (European) sitting in the back?” (TE-C Lesson L 27). I introduced myself after a series of guesses including “my brother?” to which the teacher educator quipped, “All Matsalleh look the same right?” By then the teacher educator had clearly shown the ability to laugh at himself and his role. The humorous mood could be seen when there was a quick interjection from one teacher when I said I would like to interview four teachers. She cut in with “Four lucky persons” (P 5 L 48). When I replied “Thank you for being the first to volunteer”, her “OK” was followed by general laughter. The teacher educator returned to the first answers to his questions by asking each group to guess his age. There was frequent volunteering of answers for this question as well as the question on the topic of food preferences which the TE summarised with “Satay is right. Satay is the greatest invention of mankind. I love satay” (TE C Lesson L 105).

In summary, a little over 20 minutes was spent in this quiz format before the TE outlined the general course objectives and involved groups in reading objectives aloud. The reading aloud enabled some on-the-spot assessment of the reading aloud skills and pronunciation features of some participants. After three minutes of going through the course objectives, the issue of materials for songs was addressed with some discussion of copyright and music file sharing. The educational benefits of music in the classroom were outlined and then the teacher educator mentioned that shareware songs would be distributed as part of the course. After 25 minutes into the course, the songs for phonics or early pronunciation were introduced with direct links to classroom practice.

I observed full participation from the teachers in the next ten minutes of songs and pronunciation activities. The teacher educator would intersperse two or three sentences of pedagogical points after three or four minute chunks of activities
which were early primary level songs and chants based on a CD. A second set of activities was introduced fifty minutes after the start.

Site Three Teacher Educator First Interview

The teacher educator began the forty minute interview by describing the lesson aims and how he “tried to get them up and moving” (TE C Interview L7). He said that it was “an active lively training session… and I went away with a very positive feeling“ (L 10-11). He then described his rationale for using the introductory strategy of a Powerpoint quiz based on details about himself.

–my experience with

17 **Malaysian teachers** is they are very curious about my personal details.
18 what would, in my **own culture** would consider personal details,
19 they are curious about that. And I **don't** always know their level of
20 listening. So if I – I've found that when I've stood up and said my name
21 I'm from______, you know I'll find at the break I'm being asked the
22 same questions so they didn't get it or – I've thought for some time how
23 could I do it, **introduce** myself, t things they are curious… **anyway** as
24 the opener to the course **without** it being a monologue. So **sometime**
25 along the road I came up with something they do very **– they are very**
26 **familiar with**, a test

TE C Interview L 17-25

Although I observed that this test was an engaging start, TE C reported that sometimes he uses a pop song cloze as an introductory activity. He reported that a pop song which all can participate in such as a “gushing love pop karaoke special …goes over huge usually…you know, missing words, teachers listen, fill in the blanks”(L 40-41). TE C states that confidence building needs a structured approach with non-threatening participatory tasks, yet he puts the teacher educator strongly at the centre of interaction. For him what he terms the “inner objectives” (L 63) are as follows:
Could you talk about building the teachers’ confidence during the session?

Yeah. That’s an important part of the – of my own, I guess, inner objectives for training. The first one would be the affective factors relating to me personally and trying to remove the barriers of foreigner to local and expert to non-expert and remove those kinds of things, that’s my sort of inner, primary inner objective. The second one would be teachers’ confidence and So yesterday’s training for instance, I like to make use of singing which is a non-threatening, all participating activity so we had several phonic songs related to that.

When it came to reflecting on the training, the teacher educator noted that he has three unwritten objectives: the breaking of barriers, affective factors and a third in “seeming contradiction” (L 88) to that of preferring “quite structured classrooms” (L 89). He talked of reflecting on what he terms the “tabbed browsing going on in my brain” (L 97). These multiple ‘tabs’ were “my ideal lesson as learner myself, the cultural situation in which I find myself” and the “objectives of the lesson” (L101, L 103).

He spoke of the biggest internal struggle being that of being seen as “the VIP, an expert. It’s more natural for me to say, ‘Let’s learn together’, so I sort of have an internal war at times about that” (L124-125). This links to the concepts of Power Status which were discussed earlier as he sees teachers perceiving him as a VIP, while he struggles with a less hierarchical approach. Outside of the recording time of the research, an incident occurred which illustrated this issue, when a local District Education administrator came into the middle of the session and asked teachers to sign one of the multitudes of forms that are part of their professional lives. TE C recounted how part of him felt he was losing training time but that he had to switch to his ‘cultural tab’ and accept the unforeseen diversion from the course learning. He described this as a decision to “go with the flow culturally” (L147). He used the metaphor of the “internal war” in some interesting detail in response to the issue of crossing cultures:
So what about the cultural tab?

Hmm. Yeah. I think every person who is training cross-culturally is in an internal war. Internal war not our external one. An internal war and encounter things that are not done the way that we do them, all the time. We are also, those of us who choose to work in another culture, enjoy that, to some degree, we enjoy seeing new things, new ways of looking at things, experiencing new things. And then we are also cast in the role of expert, rightly or wrongly. And so there’s sort of a conflict going on. I want to give them what they came for. I don’t want to waste their two and a half hours on a hot afternoon but I also recognize that my way of doing things is, I carry (in it) cultural assumptions, cultural values and I don’t want to impose them so I’m fighting a war on several fronts, I think, all the time, in my mind.

We discussed the challenges in linking classroom needs to training. The teacher educator expressed the view that while practical course content was in his view appreciated, there were times when classroom follow-up in a large district was not always operationally easy. Coordinating follow-up visits to schools was an aspect which the teacher educator saw as impacting on course effectiveness. He remarked that once he had visited a teacher’s school that their motivation and involvement in the teacher education process increased.

Interaction at Site Four

Site Four is one of the most urban of the sites. The teacher educator had been in the District for two and a half years. 11 of the 16 primary schools teachers on the course were following up on a Communicative Classrooms course which they had attended a year before, to complete the Speaking section. When asked in the post course interview whether this made a difference in the way that he began a course the TE said that if he had not met the majority of teachers before he would add a two minute biodata but no longer. He preferred to get directly into classroom tasks and sees this approach as being culturally different from other course providers. This
difference with earlier course provision will be discussed later in this study. Desks were arranged in a U shape around the perimeter of the classroom. Four of the teachers in the course were from Chinese medium schools and the remainder were Malay teachers from national schools. At this site, the majority of teachers had met the teacher educator before but three of the interviewees had not been to any of his courses before and so were new to the teacher educator’s approach.

The teacher educator greeted every one arriving and engaged in small talk about teachers’ schools. Once again, humour with a cultural reference came in early with the comment “Hello, come in. You're not late, it’s ok… Well, actually you are two minutes late, but in Malaysia you are on time. Come on in and sit down please,” (TE D lesson L 3-5). In under less than a minute, the warm-up activity had started. This was an activity which people could be involved with on arrival at different stages, a common academic task structure and social participation pattern for all the research sites.

The most notable feature of the chain story activity was the frequent use of positive reinforcement and the use of repetition. Within the first five minutes of the warm up chain story, there were fifteen positive utterances which praised each participant’s contribution. Teachers were also involved in the task which is immediately transferable to a lower primary class, a principle which the teacher educator spoke of as important in motivating teachers. The teacher educator was quick to stop side talk with direct statements (L 23) so that teachers were focused on listening to each other in terms of the vocabulary being used with the chain sentence developing from “I bought a mango, an orange, an apple etc”. There was also frequent hand gesturing to emphasize points. After six minutes, the activity stopped and questioning focused on the skills being used and ways of using the technique in the classroom.

When eliciting answers, the teacher educator would often use repetition, in which he not only reinforced the answer and provided an example of clear speech but also addressed a practical classroom management point. It was evident from non-verbals which I observed that others in the training session could not always hear what is said by their colleagues, unless the teacher educator repeated key points. In the field notes I noted that the volume of this teacher educator’s speech was such that he could talk above all the teachers and he would raise his volume as soon as there were one or two
utterances when teachers started side conversations. He would use repetition of the teachers’ input to not only reinforce points but also to control conversations which I observed occurring at the side of the interaction. I made field notes that his use of repetition could be viewed as a very controlled approach. The teacher educator noted in the interview that he used the louder echoic repetition often as Malaysian teachers were more soft-spoken than other groups of teachers whom he had worked with before. The following example, one of many instances, relates to maintaining interest in the chain story technique and illustrates echoic repetition:

83   T  The level of the students? What do they have problems with?
84   P7  Memorisation,
85   T  They have problems with memorization and it’s difficult, OK.
86                and what about this student here?
87   P8  He gets bored,
88   T  He feels bored… he gets bored because he’s not taking part
89

There was never any teacher educator talk which was longer than two minutes and by the time it was eight minutes into the lesson, a second task began. Ideas for other topics for the technique were elicited before I was invited to speak briefly about the research. At thirteen minutes into the session, there was a one minute introduction of the course aims of developing fluency. The third task was then introduced after the teacher educator split the male teachers up to provide mixed gender groups.

Five groups discussed printed dialogues to analyze them with ‘W.H.’(who, where, when, what and why) questions The talk was animated for twelve minutes. I observed on-task talk with some peer checking by teachers in Malay to clarify content or vocabulary items. The trainer first checked the instructional understanding of each group by kneeling down to talk to them. I observed that his replies were often ‘Wh-questions’ to which he would leave wait time for teachers in the particular group to answer. There were two instances of his use of Malay which drew smiles from teachers in the particular groups. The teacher educator smiled frequently and was quick to
respond to a raised hand from one group. He talked to each teacher during the group discussion.

Before the teacher educator called for the start of a group reporting back session, he squatted close to each group to tell them that they should prepare to report. Once again, he would physically come down to their level. During reporting back, there was not a single negative comment and if an answer was incorrect, phrases such as “That’s one possibility” (L 232) were used. Specific points for pronunciation were given with praise moderated with a request for changes so that those speaking heard positive reinforcement before a request such as “well done. That’s slow, that’s loud, that’s clear. Could you just do it once more, just the same…a little more expression perhaps” (L307-308). There were many instances of “OK” some with a checking upward intonation and others with confirming falling intonation (Brazil, 1994). This was not acceptance of everything teachers said however. With the focus on spoken language, TE-D would be explicit about accuracy, after providing reasons for teachers to change what they were doing. He would use animated hand gestures while standing in the centre of the classroom and would provide reasons for changes or different ways of expressing an idea. An example follows:

218  T finish. OK so, who’s going to read it? Loudly, slowly…clearly.
219  P1  [reads the text]
220  T  Good. Stop there. Now, of course you are very familiar with
221       the text because you’ve been working on for ten minutes but they’ve
222       never heard it. It needs to be a little slower a little more expressive...
223  OK, a little slower and a little bit more expressive. OK, good, again.
224  P1  [reads the text again]

TE-C Lesson l Site 4 218-224

In summary, the TE would greet each teacher with a smile, making sure that latecomers were incorporated into group work. The session involved numerous instances of positive reinforcement with short utterances of ‘Okay’ and ‘good’ as well as specific positive comments about how a teacher spoke. There were frequent ‘W.H.’
comprehension questions which were more than display questions and related to the text of spoken dialogues. The TE would thank teachers for their contributions to discussion (L 203, L 367, L 469) and used an awareness of proxemics to be close to groups at work at the physical level at which they were working. He used a task which teachers would succeed in from the very beginning as a warm up until all teachers were present and like the other teacher educators, kept explanations concise. We now look at his views of the session with responses to the teacher educator interview.

**Site Four Teacher Educator First Interview**

The interview began with the first general question leading to the importance of building confidence and putting teachers at ease by welcoming each and every one of them with a smile. Teacher Educator D then linked the importance of welcoming each individual with creating a positive affective climate by the choice of the first task. He said "it's important to put them at their ease and that's why I think the first activity needs to be dead easy because you've got to give them some kind of success." (TE D Interview L 24-26). TE D recounted an experience he had on the day before in a school. At the school all the teachers, none of whom he had met before in either the morning or afternoon sessions, sat at the back keeping their distance in all possible ways. This experience which he reported also occurred on numerous occasions when he first arrived in the District. For this teacher educator, such experiences link to cultural differences and inform his approaches to the early phases of in-service teacher education.

32 most of them hadn’t seen me before, so they were all sitting at
33 the back and I said, “Would you come to the front?” And (so)
34 they were all dead scared so you have to put them at ease right
35 at the beginning to show that –ay– you are not going to ask them...
36 them anything difficult and if you do ask something it doesn’t matter,
37 whether they get it right or wrong. I mean ..I think that’s absolutely
38 vital because they come expecting it to be difficult, you know, There
39 is a culture in Malaysia – that – you know, people are motivated getting
I don’t believe it for a minute. I think people are motivated by getting things right. But, I think there is a slight tendency to be critical of people, to make them ill at ease, a little bit. I’m not sure why. There’s a slight feeling that praising teachers makes them lazy.

TE D then spoke of learning culture differences, referring to his primary teaching experience in Europe. He contrasted his Malaysian experiences with European pedagogic beliefs that encouraging pupils makes them perform better and that praise is important. He said that what motivates both pupils and teachers is “success rather than interest” (L53). He then linked his European classroom experiences to teacher development, recounting how he would use a challenging question about South American geography for teachers, as an illustration on how pupils must feel when they are asked a question which they cannot answer. He does this occasionally but never at the beginning of a class preferring to “always start quite soon with an interactive task that’s really easy, like today was the chain (story)” (L 63-64). He started that he always begins, as do all the others in this study, with something related to success which can be linked to classrooms asking teachers “Can you do this with your pupils? What would you change?” (L 73-74). He follows this up by talking to teachers who arrive early to a session by talking about which techniques they have tried out but has found that “if you ask them too many questions about what they’ve been doing, they go on the defensive a bit” (L 106-107).

When asked about the role of reflection, he made the point that teachers may respond to reflection on practice as evaluation. TE D said that it makes more sense to do more activities with teachers to try and give them more confidence. He linked reflection with a localized view that questioning of what one does in a classroom is often seen as evaluation. He expressed the view that a preoccupation with product may limit an awareness of language learning as ongoing process. He continued by describing a need to be practical and a need to see that the mother tongue has a role to play in the early stages of English language learning. In conclusion, after a lengthy
discussion of pedagogy, he contrasted the query of some teachers and administrators who have approached him “to give them knowledge” (L 354) with the positive responses of teachers. He expressed a preference that rather than being seen as a source of knowledge that teachers see him as providing opportunities to “understand the skills that are involved” through experience and the enjoyment of “the fun” (L 367). We now look at how teachers perceived the early phase interaction.

Teacher Interviews

There were two teacher interviews; after the first session and at the end of the course. The second number in the descriptor indicates if the interview was on the first occasion or second. Themes are the focus in this description across the sites which can be identified by the teachers numbers i.e. Site 1 being T1-4, Site 2, T 5-8, Site 3 9-12 and Site 4 T13-16. The teacher interviews were of varied length from four to seventeen minutes long and were framed by first asking the interviewee about themselves, as teachers, followed by the general lead in questions. Malay translation which has been checked by a Malaysian academic colleague is indicated by italics and stressed words are underlined in the discourse transcriptions. The full interview questions are in the appendices but the key lead in questions below, provide the context for the findings:

First interview lead in questions.

1 Could you tell me a little about the training session? (Follow ups included reasons for attending and expectations.)

2 Could you talk about what you found useful during the session?

3 Would you comment on how the session started?

4 What kind of cultural aspects did you see contributing to the training?

5 Could you talk about what happened in your learning and how it links to rural classroom needs?

6 Is there anything else you would like to say about any of the training?
Second interview lead in questions.

1 Could you tell me a little about this course? (The focus was on the whole course.)

2 Could you talk about any ways in which the course may have made you think about your teaching?

3 What kind of cultural aspects did you see contributing to the training?

4 Could you talk about the course and how it links to rural classroom needs?

5 Is there anything else you would like to say about the course?

Teachers’ Interview Responses

Responses to the general prompts above have been categorized across the two sets of interviews at the level of utterances ith recurrent content analysis so that categories are derived from the data itself. These categories are:

- Descriptions of expectations
- Positive or negative evaluative comments on the courses
- Comments about the academic task structures and participation in the early phases
- Comments in response to how the courses developed thinking
- Comments on the relevance and application or non-relevance and application to classroom practice
- Comments on ‘native speakerism’ (Holliday, 2006) and cultural issues.

The reporting of the interview data in the findings parallels the flow of most of the interviews, where at the start of the interview and for later parts of the interview, teachers were focused on the immediacy of classroom demands and the practicalities of teacher and learner needs. The reporting here does not therefore parallel the literature review in the ordering of topics, but follows the progression which occurred in the majority of interviews. The last part of this chapter will therefore describe the cross cultural aspects after describing the course delivery aspects. Teachers began by describing why they came to the courses and their expectations. There were some deviations from the interviewer’s protocols in both teacher and teacher educator
interviews. These were often driven by information which arose out of the dialogue and so I followed these leads as a responsive interviewer.

As I followed the conversational leads, I would ask further questions about what I heard, rather than just relying on the predetermined prompts, using the semi-structured approach as described in the Methods chapter. An example of this arose during a teacher interview regarding a question about experience with a matsalleh teacher educator who had formerly been working at one of the research sites. The branching out from the follow up prompt questions revealed information on pacing and how the amount of information or number of techniques affected the teacher's perception of courses and her reported motivation. She had been to 'training' with a matsalleh (European) before and she preferred her more recent experience as fewer techniques were used in a less rushed format (T 4 1 L 117-126). This aspect of teacher development methodology will be developed further in the discussion chapter.

We turn now to teachers' stated expectations and then to general responses; positive and otherwise.

_Teachers' expectations prior to courses._

Several teachers expressed the view that they came to the course expecting "something different, something new for me to teach the children" (T1 1 L8) and the main focus was classroom tasks. Such statements as "I expected I can understand and practice this in my school" (T 13 1 L 20) were made for every site. This common theme began in my very first interview, which was brief and in Bahasa Malaysia for about a fifth of the time. The teacher in her eighth year of rural teaching had no English language teaching training at all, yet she had taught herself through reading and television. I and my teacher educator colleague were the first 'matsallehs' she had ever talked to. Her response to the course was "I loved it." (T1 1 L 38) followed by "I think I can do to my student" (T 1 1 L 40). She continued "so when sir TE A show how we are going to make our student to love English. I like it." In being more specific about what she wanted from the course the teacher, whose proficiency was the least of any interviewee, commented “I want from this course is how I am going to to …what my student can do” (T 1 1 L 52).
Three teachers stated that they came to the course because they liked the title and had to come, for as one of the three stated “I didn’t expect anything. I only knew the title” (T2 2 L 3). At Site 3, two teachers and at Site 4, two other teachers, came because they had heard of the teacher educator from colleagues. One teacher rushed from a professional examination held fifty kilometres away, on the basis of hearsay:

T4 1 1 L 29-36

In addressing the question of how teachers respond to courses, one finds many positive general statements. Some examples were; “We can understand...we can accept what he talks to us....(T 1 1 L86) and two utterances later “because we never, never got like this one. Mr... TE A had our.. my eyes open” (T 1 1 L 88). The affective factor was reported with “I feel it’s very interesting” (T 12 1 L 18).and from another, “The course must be interesting because I enjoyed the class. I will be enjoying the class after this”(T 10 1 L 18-19). On course completion, the same interviewee said, “this is an important course and it is a new experience” (T10 2 L 25). Other general comments would mention the experience of the learning and the importance of the tasks or techniques which could be used. Typical of these were statements such as "I learnt many things from TE A ...especially the activities and the way how to teach" (T3 2 L 6) and from another site “Wonderful training. The
workshop is not boring and the handling of the course is fluent and smooth and ‘ah something new’ (T 12 2 L 22-24). The activity approach of courses where tasks are introduced quickly was described as “interesting because the trainees participate in the activities” (T 10 1 L5-6).

Although the majority of responses were positive, four teachers spoke of factors which impact on motivation; the timing or attending a course after a full day’s teaching. A general statement after the first day of a course at site 3 exemplifies this: “It’s something that really interests me, because, you know, it’s 2 p.m. in the afternoon. It’s my sleeping hour. Not easy.” (T 9 1 L 9-11). When probed about whether this response was driven by the content or the delivery, the interviewee replied that the course introduction had helped counter her initial perceptions. “The ice breaking session was very interesting whereby Mr__________ introduced himself and we have to guess” (T 9 1 L27-28).

Two interviewees, one secondary (T7) and one primary (T3) expressed concerns that although the course delivery was engaging, the level of course materials was too difficult. Overall, however, most comments were specifically positive and detailed about course tasks and their relevance to teaching. The perception and experience with tasks may relate to the “primacy effect” of early phase experience of teachers, to which we now turn.

*Teachers’ interview responses to early phases of the course*

Five major themes emerge from the teachers’ responses to the delivery aspect of the early phases of the in-service courses. In order of frequency from least to most frequent, these are the teacher educators’ preparation, the use of gesture and movement, the presentation of aims and instructions, humour which was part of introducing oneself and facilitating interaction which links or uses classroom tasks. Four teachers mentioned the use of questioning as important and new to them (T1, T6, T12, T13). Questioning was seen as crucial from the teacher educators’ viewpoints and this will be explored in the discussion. The most common teacher response was that courses provided experiential learning of tasks or techniques
which could be applied in classrooms. We begin with preparation and the delivery of
tasks which created responses to the early phases of the course.

As a relatively inexperienced primary school non-optionist observed; “I’ve
noticed he has been prepared for all his materials for his session, OK? He’s very well
prepared, and then, I think, the way, he deliver” (T 13 1 L 189-191). The teacher then
described how the delivery was not boring, describing how the activity that “he
wanted us to carry out and the way questions were asked” (L 189-191) as well as the
method of accepting answers motivated her. She added that the use of examples
captured her interest on a normally soporific afternoon (L 198-204). This teacher and
others at each site, commented on how there was more than static teacher fronted
delivery:

One trainer was compared by two teachers to Rowan Atkinson’s character, Mr.
Bean with “how his face, the gesture..the posture. He himself a good teacher” (T13 2
L 12). At another site, a primary teacher noted that the teacher educator was not
really “Fierce” but “actually funny, a very friendly person” (T 10 1 L 61). At the end of
the course, this teacher links humour to methodology.

1  Mr _ begins with good set induction. He has good communication
2  skills and you can see the good two way interaction, No actually
3  ah.. there three way communication that he gets going. Three
ways, trainees... presenter... and really good amongst the trainees. I like the way trainees actively participate. This could be, as the presenter has a good sense of humour. It’s very important.

The use of humour is also described in the following excerpt from a non-optionist primary teacher:

It mean Mr__ give us what we call it? More ways to improve our activities in the classroom, not pushing us to follow that instruction. ah, OK, tell me more what you mean by, "Not pushing us to follow instruction?"

he mean===

You can speak in Malay if you want?

Oh you know it mean he not become the interrogator, it mean he helps us in our teaching... is like us... and is fun and not bossy

There were many comments about the teacher educators' modelling pedagogy with tasks which could be applied to classroom practice. After commenting that she had not experienced an interactive approach in earlier training, one teacher noted that the start was very different, "a good approach. I think and we can use it to show our students in our class, different approach" (T 10 1 L 23-24). This difference between past teacher training experiences and the methods described in this study will be elaborated on in the Discussion. When describing the experiential nature of the courses namely that one learns by doing, a young primary teacher spoke of the links to classrooms through tasks which paralleled children’s learning:
(The beginning)... very interesting because all of us sing the song, it’s very fun, because the children like songs, usually children like songs. It’s the first time to, we all to be interest in course. The main things, the song is fun, then normally children like the music... so the trainer make us like a child, so they very interesting. The song is very nice and it’s good for us and it is fun.

As can be seen above, the applicability to classrooms by modelling tasks at the classroom level creates an affective response. We will now turn to the aspect of linking teacher education to application in classrooms, an area of much concern in teacher education.

Teachers’ responses to changing thinking.

Interview questions on how much teachers thinking was changed by the courses was often met by long pauses and there were only two direct responses to the question. One of the most articulate interviewees, an experienced TESOL trained secondary teacher, responded to questions on changed thinking with;

When I’m done with the lessons, I sit back and rethink what I’ve done, to students. And, all this comes from our English coordinator, you know.

She set good examples on how to go about techniques. So from that we try to improve our classrooms.

This is one of two examples here teachers speak of reflective practice in that there is a rethinking about practice (Farrell, 1999).

Other teachers avoided any abstract responses or statements of principles as in this example from a fluent secondary teacher who said “Thinking changes. Yes. Changes.
Using interesting dialogues not the typical ones” (T7 2 L 66). Questions about thinking about classroom practice were generally answered by answers which were concerned with classroom practice itself, an aspect I shall explore later in this study. With long wait times and open ended probes, I found that the topic elicited description of techniques which were planned or had been implemented as will be described in the following section.

One of the challenges in interview responses is whether or not the techniques which teachers talk about have actually been implemented in classrooms. As was discussed earlier, there are difficulties in accepting responses as in fact “representational” of events or “presentational” of the interviewee where she presents the aspects which she thinks the interviewer wants to hear (Block, 1995). I found it necessary to probe about the specific techniques and to ask for examples in order to discern between declared practices of what the interviewer might be viewed as wanting to hear and what really happened. If a teacher stated or declared that she used the methods learnt during the course I would probe for details such as class level and syllabus content which I am familiar with.

I asked for such details and these were only forthcoming for 9 of the interviewees. The interview probes revealed either no intention of applying (2 teachers), an intention to apply what had been experienced in the course (5 teachers), or details suggesting actual application (9 teachers). Concrete evidence of application was seen in one unforeseen instance. We turn firstly to statements of not intending to apply what has been learnt.

One of the secondary teachers said that when applying the tasks, the texts and materials were an issue and that “we will need help, as creating materials is time consuming” (T7 2 L12). For her, this made application of tasks experienced in her secondary level course difficult. A primary teacher working in a Chinese medium school where English language learning time is less than half that of Malay medium schools said that the course duration (12 hours) was too short. She expressed a
need for more practice and classroom time, before she would apply any of the spoken English techniques (T11 2 19). However she commented that “I should not be rushing the time and delivers the course...because I now more emphatsise (sic) on the students. I should get them to understand rather than rushing syllabus “(T 11 2 44- 46).

Five teachers stated in general terms that they planned to link the techniques to what they do in the classroom (T5, T6, T7, T9, T10). There is no evidence to align such stated intention with classroom change. An example of this is a statement such as “applying in the classroom...ah..most will apply. I can see the outcomes in my school with the others” (T10 2 L 14) and later “I want to do different things... I will” (T10 2 L 49). Some link stated intentions to methods for example; “I can make the classroom more interesting by using these songs and games” (T 9 2 L 41).

A fluent 4th year TESOL trained secondary teacher in Site 2 commented on her intended choice of materials:

54 I What things, if any, in this course made you think about what you do in the classroom?

55 T7 Yes. Using interesting dialogues. Not the typical one. In the course that one is interesting. Maybe next time if I want to have my own text I will try to involve the students...ah...use their names,

58 something about celebrities, try to get their attention, interest...

59 I Is that to do with this course?

60 T7 Yes, Humorous dialogues. Interesting scenarios. I saw that one, I have to apply that one, in order to attract the students ...ah.

T 7 2 L 54-62

It is useful to note here that the use of ‘one’ is a direct translation from the Malay and that as there was more than a single instance of dialogues in the course, the experience is likely to be more than a singular event. She also described her
intentions after a grammar centred course as “we teach in isolation. But now after this

course we will go more on the deductive way “(T 7 2 L 48- 49). Yet such statements

are only statements of intention and could be seen as answering only to please the

interviewer, which I referred to earlier as presentational data which is not necessarily

representative of the reality.

However, nine statements about practice derived from course input described

what had happened in classes as task application, rather than merely an intention.

Teachers stated that they had learnt or experienced applicable tasks in the course

and used them in classrooms. They responded to detailed probes about topic, skills

and class levels suggesting application of what had been learnt (Ts

1,2,3,4,5,8,12,13,15,16). Some examples follow.

In Site 2, a second year non-optionist teaching in a somewhat impoverished oil

palm estate Tamil medium school taught English for only two hours a week. She

stated:

58 OK. What I did in my classroom is like the course. I have used these

59 methods. The...the what I have learnt from this course I use it in my

60 teaching. I find it successful. My teaching is more successful.

T3 2 L 58

Later, at the conclusion of the interview, she commented, “We are finding the

methods, the way to teach them and the confidence we are getting” (T5 2 L82). She

then described the class level and content she had taught in detail but only after I

probed for detail.

At Site 3, I was told that the technique of miming sounds and words with hand

gestures was useful and that this had been well received in a class. When I asked

“Did you really?” in a somewhat interrogative tone the teacher replied: “Yesterday I
went to my school. I used the hand signs for year 2. They really like the technique … the hand sign. They enjoyed it very much. I used it in mathematics (T11 2 L 7).

In a bilingual interview with a male Malay teacher who asked his Principal to send him for training, an Arabic teacher spoke of how he was applying the activities to Arabic language (T12 2 L16). Earlier he said “I want to gather more knowledge. I try to. I want. I am got training in Arabic. I want to learn to teach English…and how I can speak will” (T 12 1 L 13-14). He also described how the course would also give him an opportunity to speak English and learn how “to cope with students” (L26). He reported in detail, at times using Manglish (Lee, 1998) how he generated interest in the language through using pair work and visuals for early language learning (T 14 2).

At the same site, a well-trained primary English teacher, who had worked in the corporate world, spent nearly two minutes describing the specifics of how she used pair work and group work to her classes, including detail on the content and levels (T 15 1 L 70-85). Later she described how she would adapt the chain story for a “weak class” (T 15 l 101-107). At the very rural site 1, a fluent trilingual teacher with 14 years experience in very rural primary schools was very positive in tone, while describing links to classroom change. There was notably one instance, where concrete evidence of change was obtained serendipitously:

50 Most of the things I learnt from the course I can adapt them, and teach
51 more pupils the strategies I learnt from the course, especially
52 grammar. Yeah. sing the way ______ teach us.

T 3 2 Interview L 50-52

This experienced teacher then detailed the usefulness of newly acquired approaches to grammar referring to the specific text she was working with:

68 Before I always using the deductive…always teach the rule and give
69 example. Then I learn from __________. The inductive is easier for
70 students to understand, and then more easier to learn. Easier way…
After this end of course interview, I visited her year 5 class at her invitation and saw examples of the techniques in her students’ workbooks. I view this as more than a display of the expected as the teacher had not known I was coming to conduct the second interview in her classroom, until twelve hours before. In summary, the specific detailing of tasks learned in course input applied to classroom practice occurred at all sites 9 out of 16 of the teachers. Two teachers stated they would not apply techniques and the remaining five teachers reported only general intentions.

Responses about Interacting with the ‘native speakers.’

There were a range of responses to the question regarding cross cultural aspects of training. Often I had to rephrase the lead in question by asking for views of the training with the matsalleh in terms of differences and similarities with earlier courses. In other words, the abstract concepts of cross cultural differences were contextualized in the immediacy of experiences. The majority of comments concerned the in service course methodology compared to earlier training even though the questions were not directly addressing this. The teachers’ concerns were therefore on learning culture differences rather than on native speakerism. I did probe as I wanted to bring the focus onto the native speaker issue but most responses were about methodology. One teacher found difficulties in working with an international teacher educator and I shall describe her reasons. Three expressed positive opinions in detail that “having the orang putih” was an important factor in the content of courses. One stated that it made no difference at all (T4), while the majority turned the topic to discussion of teacher education methodology differences.

There are challenges when positioning an articulate English as a first language educator in a rural district where English operates as a foreign language. At Site 1 a teacher described interacting with the teacher educator as “an interesting one” but “}
when I talks with orang putih I’m frightened that my grammar is not good because I am, in this school, we are talking in Bahasa” (T2 2 L 149-150). Although she said she wants to learn more (L 163), she spoke at length of being ‘shy’ and scared of speaking in front of the native speaker describing how the school environment does not support English usage and how she had never spoken with a European before (L 153- l 168). However after describing how she found speaking English difficult, she said the training and supportive visits were “very good because we can improve our lesson, how to use a variety of techniques in teaching” (L 217- 218).

At the same site, in which there had never been district based training before, an experienced Malay teacher who had been teaching English for fourteen years commented on many differences, highlighting pronunciation awareness with “We think we are in England” (T 4 1 L 73). She then elaborated; “I mean is that, er, the difference is about the spelling – the pronunciation and the way he conduct the lesson, the activity, ah, also very interesting” (T4 1 L 88-90). The importance of a pronunciation model of so called standard English was described after an early primary ‘phonics’ course with a contrast with earlier training.

59 T Training today is the language, other training is in Malaysian, it’s not from
60     Phonic, from other courses, the language sometimes wrong from overseas is
61     good because the Malaysian is nowadays, corrupt, we need more help from
62     overseas because improve the language, English language. Another, we
63     we get ideas from this training and then the activities are very interesting...

T 11 1 L 59- 65

Here, the teacher sees the modelling of pronunciation as providing an alternative to localized pronunciation models. She is arguing for standard English and the role of modelling as the “Malaysian (English) is Corrupt” and as an older teacher reported experiencing English medium instruction. At the secondary level, an experienced TESOL trained teacher argued strongly for more native speakers concluding his second interview in the same manner as the first by advocating that more native speakers be placed in rural districts. He described the teacher educator
as a source of knowledge and model for communicative competence and the functions of grammar.

Sometimes you **you**, you’ve got to attend courses, especially conducted by native speakers. You know they, the native speakers as I said last…week? You, you can’t get everything from, from the text book, from the reference books. You know, you know its when you have got contact with native speakers, like you foreigners, you can absorb a lot of things. We...

I **What** kinds of things?

**T** For example, you know, (laughs) **rules** (5 secs) alright…sometimes in grammar, we talk about grammar, **certain** things are departing from the rules of grammar and ah…very often you can’t find these things in the reference books.

The teacher then went on to describe the usefulness of the ‘native speaker’ teacher educators as information sources for the communicative functions of grammar items. His focus on this may relate to the course content which he had just experienced, although he said he would go to all the teacher educator’s courses. He also described at some length that the ways of generating ideas, the methods of giving feedback and responses to questions were different from his earlier extensive teacher development. He linked this to the classroom by saying “This is what I want from my students.. at least that’s where English is vomited out” (T8 2 L 52).

One teacher used the presence in the District of the *orang putih* (European) as a motivating tool for her students. She concluded that the methodology of the teacher education was the motivating aspect for her. The majority of teachers described the role of the native speaker as not being specifically related to the teacher educator being a native speaker but as being experienced as differences in teacher education
methodology. In response to open ended questions as to whether there were any or no differences between the teacher educator’s approach and earlier teacher training, teachers were forthright. There were general statements on the novelty of the approaches such as “I think it’s very new to me” (T4 1 L 58) and in a differing secondary teachers’ course; “________’s courses are the only courses I’ve been on that give me real ideas” (T 7 2 L 89).

Contrasts and comparisons were frequently made between previous training and the approach of Project teacher educators by both novice and experienced teachers in every site (T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T 8, T9, T11, T 12, T 13, T 16). The teachers commented on the different learning cultures for in service teacher training. Examples follow. Some comments mentioned the innovative approach of courses as from Site 1 “We never never got like this one before” (T I I L 88) and “before this we think English is a hard subject to teach to, students in rural areas”. A Site 2 secondary teacher commented that “training with the native speaker is interesting, ‘cos I learn a lot” (T 2 2 L 36) while another said “Ms________’s course is the only course I’ve been on that gives me real ideas and she always has group work which prevents us getting sleepy” (T7 2 2 L72-74):

This comparison between teacher-fronted model use din earlier teacher training and the use of group work was also made at the other sites, as can be seen in the next example.

80 T Actually, before my one year courses conducted by the ( ) lecturer
81  I didn’t create the activity to be, to have the trainees be motivated
82 I OK.
83 T Only he gives the lecture, then we write, the notes. No activities at
84 all.

T9 2 L 81-83

This particular teacher in his end of course interview was quite detailed in comparing large scale teacher fronted processes with the smaller group work methodology. This was but one of a number of responses where the central issue reported back was that the process of teacher education courses was markedly
different from earlier experiences with an emphasis on activities which would be experienced when “knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb (1984, 38). Classroom management is also part of this as another teacher describes:

77 T The way how _____ what you say, how he arranged the situation, groups ( ), and then the instructions is clear.

78 OK. So was this just the same from what happened before?

80 T Actually before my one year courses conducted by the Malay lecturer. Since that didn't create the activity to be, to have trainees be motivated. Only he give the lecture then we write the notes. No activities at all.

84 I So what do you think about the differences between the two ways?

85 T The two ways you mean?

86 I Well say the lecture based approach and what happened yesterday?

87 T A lecture. Compared to this is we listen (to ) lecture it means it is more to teacher centred and yesterday... ah, it was more to... they work together the teacher and the student.

90 I So did you find other things which might have done that kept you interested?

91 T Maybe yesterday, How go to each group, he is not staying in front

T 3 I L 77-92

More explicitly, some spoke of contrasts with earlier courses. In other words questions about the role of native speakers and cultural differences were answered by responses related to methodology. When on five occasions I probed for more on the native speaker roles the responses were usually focused on recounting the methodology of the matsalleh delivered courses and contrasting the interaction with the mass delivery mode of earlier teacher training experiences. I did not ask for evaluative comments and had made it clear at the beginning that all comments were
strictly confidential and that all responses, positive or otherwise were equally important. It however became clear that the experience of the training tended to override concerns about cultural difference or the presence of the native speaker whom I had anticipated could have been seen as an omniscient expert. Comparison with previous training was at times talked about very directly as in the next excerpt.

41 I OK, and you said that –you mentioned this training was different from other training. Is this the first training you’ve been to with a non-Malaysian trainer?
42 T Yes, it is.
43 I It’s? So any differences about how the training was conducted with this trainer and your earlier trainer?
44 T Well, I’m not telling that Malaysian are not good but (you see) our approach is different. Most likely, the Malaysian likes to be very, you know, he just speak and talk. This one we feel free, I personally feel free, you want say something, you want to sing, you want to act like mad or whatever, you can (say right). This is interesting?
45 I OK,
46 T Something new.
47 I OK, so it’s clear it’s quite different?
48 T Yes, it is.

A difference in the courses for a primary teacher in site 4 was not the content, which was similar to pre-service training, but the fact that she could apply the methodology due to the tasks being appropriate as “when we go to school we maybe create interest with the pupils, new course, different things, happen” (T 16 1 L 50-51).

In summary, one teacher felt challenged by having a matsalleh around while another said that the origin of the teacher educator did not make a difference. In the rural site 1, another teacher found the presence of the ‘native speaker’ was motivating for her and her learners. Three spoke of the direct benefits of a model for pronunciation or communicative competencies. However, the majority followed up the question by describing differences in course delivery and the tasks which they were involved in. This suggested that teacher development methodology was a central concern for many overriding concerns with so called native speaker interaction or cultural differences.
Summary

In the site by site description of early phase interaction for the first session of an in-service teacher education course, one finds common approaches in the three primary level sessions and one secondary level session. Although teacher educators work in diverse settings as described in the site specific descriptions, there are emergent themes; such as the use of what may be seen in some cultures as personal information and self deprecatory humour. The teacher educators reported adapting their earlier approaches by presenting what in some settings may be seen as personal information as teachers wanted to know how to position the teacher educator.

The teacher educators use group organisation and non-verbals to facilitate teacher development in which they are not approaching tasks as the dominant expert. They use tasks which are not lengthy or complex so as to engender success; an approach which teachers comment on positively. The teachers have come into the courses with various reasons as we have seen, yet generally they are positive about the TE’s modelling of tasks which can be applied to classrooms.

Adoption or adaption of these tasks for classrooms is more challenging however with some reporting that they would not use the tasks experienced in the courses. Five teachers made comments of a general intention to use the techniques used in the courses, suggesting that little will really change as they are possibly saying what they think is expected, in other words presenting what they think needs to be heard rather then representing a reality (Kyale, 1996, Pomernatz, 2000). Nine teachers were able to detail the use of techniques in specific classroom lessons suggesting some acceptance.

The issue of the Project work being centred on ‘native speaker’ teacher educators working in the rural Malaysian ‘culture of learning’ is a complex area with a wide range of responses from teachers which will be analysed further in the discussion. However, when queried about reflecting on ‘native speakerism’ and the question of changes in thinking it is clear that teachers’ major concerns are with
improving classroom practice and with differences between the culture of learning of the project courses and earlier experiences. We now turn to teacher educators' views of the early phases of teacher education interaction in reflective practice interviews.
In this chapter, I shall outline the findings from the final teacher educator interview and provide a framework for later discussion. The four teacher educator reflective practice interviews were conducted once transcription of the lessons and the first round of teacher and teacher educator interviews had been completed. As part of the interview I also presented the field notes to the teacher educators for discussion. The reflective practice interview was held four to seven weeks after the early phase lesson had been observed and recorded. All the teacher educators were given a copy of both transcripts and field notes at least five days before the exploratory practice interview and were sent the audio files within one week after recording.

The reflective practice interviews varied in length as described in Chapter 3. Transcription of the Reflective Practice interviews was selective with time frames used as descriptors, a necessity given the length of the interviews, one of which was nearly two hours in length. Selected segments included key words linked to the topic domains or responses which arose from discussing the transcripts and field notes or answers to direct questions on the topic domains. I then would go back from an initial content analysis to re-examine responses and if necessary recode the responses based on content analysis. I focused on letting the discussion of the transcript drive the interview, yet would check and bring discussion back to topic so that the topic domains were covered. My steering of the discussion followed the topic domains in the order of the teacher interview questions. However, as we progressed through the transcript and the field notes simultaneously, the shared analysis arising from ‘critical incidents’ (Richards & Singh, 2006) in the lesson drove the discussion. By critical incidents I am referring to moments which caused the teacher educators, in the case of this study, to pause and reflect or comment on an event or utterance which they perceived as important or unusual for teaching and learning. The foci were on how a course begun, what was seen as important in the session, the cultural aspects, the native speaker issues and how the session may or may not link to rural classroom needs.
The length and depth of discussion varied with two teacher educators talking for over an hour about the transcript and the field notes. The initial early phase of introducing oneself was the first point of discussion, with all the Teacher Educators noting the importance of one’s professional and more personal background. Much of the discussion was about task organization and the practical classroom management issues, the procedural steps of tasks, the use of groups and the length of tasks. At the level of classroom management, all teacher educators aimed to model the teaching in rural classrooms through using transferable tasks. This was an alignment with the principles of ‘loop input’ (Woodward, 2003), as described earlier in the Introduction to the Project rationale. The use of pair work (Sites 1 and 3) and group work, which all TEs applied early in the session and spoke about with teachers was a commonality. Tasks were never longer than 19 minutes, the longest at site 2 being a grammar awareness activity for relatively more articulate secondary teachers. All teacher educators spoke of ensuring success early in the course, so that there was a “positive affective climate” (TE Ref Prac 1 30 seconds). I will now turn to look in greater detail to how the Reflective Practice interview focuses on how TEs introduce themselves, before looking at the task organization, the talk or discourse strategies, the cultures of learning and the role of teacher educator reflection. We begin with the very first part of the course, introducing oneself.

How Teacher Educators Introduce Themselves to Foster Interaction

Introducing oneself is a basic communicative function, yet it is an under researched area in teacher development and specifically in the contexts of in-service training. I would like to reference this point but am unable to find any teacher education studies which specifically focus on this area. In the Malaysian context, all the Teacher Educators regarded foregrounding one’s personal and professional details as an important strategy with which to begin their in service courses. In the reflective practice interview, I pointed out to TE A that he had said in the first interview that he formerly did not use the foregrounding of his bio data, but he had in fact started the course which I observed by talking about himself. His bio-data presentation was the earliest sequence of his course start up. He replied that “they are so interested in where you come from and that kind of thing. They do not want you to just throw a name and your qualification…they like to see a background to a person” (TE A Ref Prac 2.10 mins). Teacher Educator A noted that he always starts by talking about himself, based on how
well it has been received in his previous two years in another District. At Site 4, TE D said that “I always do the biodata” (TE D Ref Prac 1 53 mins). This adaptation to introducing oneself was reported by all the educators including TE B, who spoke at length of her learning experience when first arriving in Malaysia two and half years before the research interview. Previously, she would ask teachers to interview each other about their names, schools and impressions of the UPSR and the best way to prepare for it. The UPSR (Ujian Penilian Sekolah Rendah) is the national primary leaving examination and she found that discussion of this important examination would create a complaint sharing session, so that the peer interviews would start to “generate a lot of negativity within the early phases of a course” (TEB Ref Prac 3 mins). She no longer begins a course by asking teachers for their opinions, but “give(s) a fairly brief introduction, my name, how many years I’ve been in Malaysia” (TEB Ref Prac 3 30 mins). However, I raised the point that she had reported to me that she began the course with a quiz and she then commented that such an activity was needed to accommodate the common occurrence of the late arrival of participants before the introduction proper. This practice was discussed in the findings for the first after course interview, as a technique which has arisen from experience in the local practices with teachers arriving at varied times.

At Site 3, the course began with a quiz based on the Teacher Educator C’s biodata. He made the analogy of how Canadian speakers visiting outside their area would strive for a shared background by commenting on the local ice hockey team and its position in the league as a form of “social convergence” (Berns, 1990). More convergence may be seen as evident in to varied degrees in other TE’s language and behaviours, a point I will develop in the Discussion. It is worth noting that “convergence has been defined as a strategy whereby individuals adapt to each others communicative behavior in terms of a wide range of linguistic-prosodic-non verbal features, smiling gaze and so on” (Giles et al, 1991). I would suggest that topic choice and the use of the local language are important parts of convergence and will develop this further in the Discussion chapter. I now turn to how tasks were organized as information presentation and task organisation are also part of interaction in which participants may converge in shared understanding or diverge in possibilities of misunderstanding.
Observations of Teacher Educators’ Task Organisation

Most of the Reflective Practice interview involved discussion about teacher education methodology, with the exception of TE C whose discussion of practice was more centred on cultural difference. His introductory task of a personal details quiz, as described above, was the most lengthy of the initial tasks which I observed. Most discussion in the other interviews centred on the task types chosen for the course, for example the chain story, peer dictation, identifying settings for text, simple chants or pair work dialogues. Yet for all the differences in content, there were commonly agreed strategies which were both modelled and commented on explicitly. I shall now describe these with select quotes linked to field notes.

All Teacher Educators moved rapidly into tasks which required teachers to interact with either the Teacher Educator or most frequently with each other. When the Teacher Educators were asked by me if this transitioning after their initial bio-data introduction into teacher–teacher interaction was in response to Project frameworks which aim for experiential learning and loop input (Woodward, 2003), all said that it was because the activity based approach worked and teachers responded positively to it. This is a point which requires elaboration in the Discussion as one of the difficulties in teacher education is matching teacher educators’ perception of what was successful with the teachers’ perception of what was workable, accepted and useful for classrooms. The teacher educators’ rationale was that positive response could be measured through continued attendance, the teachers’ responses to activities, their use of techniques and lastly, teachers’ feedback which was often given informally one to one - the later is especially difficult to verify. All stated however that the early phase of the course should focus on pair or group interaction; for example “You want to get them working right away. They have been working all morning …. You get them into lively action as soon as you can” (TE A Ref Prac 28 02 mins).

The importance of pacing was commented on by three of the four teacher educators with all describing the importance of rapid tasks where success is evident. During my observation at Site 4 it was evident that within three utterances (Hall, 1991) the teacher educator had an interactive task organised and the whole class was active. He replied “I do it and then get them to look at what we have done” (TE D Ref Prac 8...
Using groups is also a shared approach to motivate teachers, with one teacher educator noting that she tends to use group activities as she “moves into groups quickly” both “so as not to get exhausted” (TE B Ref Prac 3 10 mins) and also to provide a non-threatening environment for discussion. After responding that teachers reported that they enjoyed group work, this particular teacher educator stated that her rationale for group work was to encourage speaking in English as “there’s almost always one third who are quiet, one third who are self conscious or nervous about their ability to use English” (TE B Ref Prac 12 13 mins). She linked her use of group work to a greater number of teachers speaking English and therefore engaging in the language.

**Teacher Educator Discourse Features in Early Phase Interaction**

At the discourse level, discussion of the transcript with the teacher educators included how instructions were usually brief and utterances short. A variety of question types was evident and two colleagues noted that they had not been so aware of their use of repetition of teachers’ comments. We will now look at teacher educators’ reflections on questioning, the use of praise, and the use of Malay; three areas which were prominent in the reflective practice discussion of the transcript.

**Questioning.**

When TE A introduces a new technique 30 minutes into the lesson, he acknowledges that modelling and raising teachers’ awareness of question types is central to bringing in new pedagogy. He described conscious tactics “of instead of
saying what something is, you question about it, to keep them interested.” (TE A Ref Prac 22 50 mins).

When working with the most articulate group with the most complex content, TE B described her questioning tactics as follows, “I would do a lot of fill in the pause. One of my underlying philosophies is that students should think as much as possible. Instead of providing conclusions I want you, to come to it yourself” (TE B Ref Prac 14 04 mins). However, direct questioning was equally important for her. She stated this directly as a pedagogic principle which she would tell teachers:

I always ask lots of how and why questions. It’s not just making questions. I want them to think about why they make conclusions. So some of my students get very annoyed. They say, oh…its your favourite question …again, “Why?” I say it’s the most important question there is. Why?

TE B Ref Prac 15 39 mins

Two of the four TEs linked questions to ‘wait time’ (Rowe, 1986, 2003). At Site 4, the teacher educator with extensive European experience, observed that reading the transcript which includes annotated gaps of more than 5 seconds made him aware of his approach to wait time. He looked at the examples in detail and said he could increase his ‘wait time’ or pausing after asking a question. I discussed with him how he usually waits for three seconds and once had waited for 7 seconds. He replied that “There’s British pressure to make conversation.” Then after talking through two examples he continued that this is “Not like the Finns or French. I think if I don’t get feedback, I jump in probably sooner than I should” (TE D Ref Prac 21 40 mins). Shortly after this discussion, he reflected that “I think the answer is to wait longer” (TE D Ref Prac 23 33 mins) as did TE B when the wait time aspect was discussed with her. The most detailed exploration of the importance of waiting for teachers to answer questions was articulated by TE B.
Teacher educators therefore consciously worked with increasing wait time allowing for thinking in the second language to occur, modelling a technique which may also be infrequently used in classrooms. Acceptance of positive responses may also relate to teacher educator uses of positive reinforcement which were evident in their discourse strategies, such as using positive reinforcement.

Using positive reinforcement.

One feature which the discourse analysis made very clear for TEs A, C and D was the frequent use of positive reinforcement. This feature was less common with the secondary teachers’ group (TE B). When reflecting and using the acronym PR for positive reinforcement, TE A expressed opinions about the local learning culture and positive reinforcement as follows:

The PR is to encourage them. With one of the teachers we had a discussion and she said “oh, oh, you keep on saying ‘Good’. Is it cos they are getting it right? I
said well. I know that in Malaysia there are people who won’t compliment students… and if they are exceptional they will get oh quite good… if it’s exceptional. They are not into commending and praising, as the student has to do a lot to get praise. I have a different attitude. I say when you succeed in one area, good, onto the next. So they find it’s interesting. Do it your own way. I tell them do it your own way. Ah. The students always know from your demeanour.

TE A Ref Prac 14 mins

He expressed the view that “You know, Malaysians don’t compliment, until late in the day” (TE A Ref Prac 16 20 mins). For these teacher educators there is an awareness that the frequent use of positive reinforcement was very different from the Malaysian culture of learning. There is validity to the comments from a multilingual point of view as both TE A and TE D have a good working knowledge of Malay and long-term experience with Malaysia, while TE A fluently and consciously used Malay to “position” (Davies and Harre, 1990) himself as not being an outsider. This use of Malay was a feature which teacher educators commented on as a conscious strategy.

Discussing and using the national language in course interaction.

All the teacher educators expressed the view that the process of not wanting to be “Othered” (Luke, 2004; Palfreyman, 2004) may be aided by the use of Malay. When some instances of the Reflective Practice discussion focused at some length on the role of mother tongue, it was clear that much depended on the teacher educator’s own fluency in Malay. The most fluent TE Malay speaker at Site 1 also raised the pedagogic issues of the use of Malay both in the actual lesson and in the TE interview. He consciously used Malay as do all the others, albeit to the greatest extent reflecting his observable fluency. A sociolinguistic viewpoint underpins his view which was “As I said in the first interview, the use of Malay shows social convergence so that it’s we are not the orang putih from far away, delivering lectures and moving out” (TE A Ref Prac 17 mins). All the other TEs concurred on this point, with one using the phrase “I use Malay to deforeignise myself” (TE C Ref Prac L 129). Central to the use of the national language, the classroom management techniques, the choice of tasks and talk is the
way in which teacher educators see their role in another culture. We will now examine the reported cultural factors that teacher educators perceive as influencing teacher education practice.

Reflections on Working within the Malaysian Culture of Learning

_The role of non-verbals._

When one compares differing cultures, non-verbals often play a role (Hall, 2003). Physical positioning is especially important if one is a tall adult working with those of less imposing physical presence or a person seen as being more powerful. I recall considerable importance being put on this aspect of classroom management during my New Zealand primary teacher training in the late 1970s. Proxemics or closeness during talk is also a well researched area where cultural groups differ (Axtrell, 1998; Morris, 1994; Moran, 2001). Linked to the use of space is the use of gesture (McNeill, 1992). The field notes captured these aspects in order to contribute to the Reflective Practice discussion and created a holistic record of interaction to contribute to the final teacher educator conversation.

All the teacher educators moved around the classroom with the rationale being expressed by one as follows, “You've got to move around to engage them all. Hence the movement, in and out and around. It also keeps them awake. It’s a good thing to do” (TE A Ref Prac 18 mins 10). At times, discussion focused on particular movements which individuals had such as upwards eyebrow movements (TE B and TE D) or “Pumping the desk with my fist? Interesting. I do that?” (TE A Ref Prac 25 48 mins). A more noticeable and a more frequent aspect was moving to be close to groups and the level to which teacher educators would literally go down to when talking with teachers during group work. TE D, who is a very tall man and had extensive experience as a primary school teacher discussed this at great length. He linked the notion of hierarchy with how he moves away from front centre of a classroom and kneels down during group work. “Proximity is important. When you tell a story, they often say come and sit around for the story. Well. If people are close to you, they feel involved” (TE D Ref Prac 19 mins. He then discussed how with this primary teacher background, he was always
advised and had always worked with going physically down to the level of the children but finds that in Malaysia “there’s the hierarchical thing that gets in the way” (TE D 21 mins). He continued that “it’s difficult to get over the expert role thing.” Commenting on the same topic later he said, “So there’s proxemics. Yes, the proxemics to show we are equals.” (TE D Ref Prac 21 30 mins). This non verbal aspect is therefore linked to techniques which the teacher educators see as changing perceptions of how teachers would see the teacher educators’ place in the hierarchy of the learning culture.

*The role of visits and being perceived as non evaluative.*

Other TEs made explicit statements about the role of the teacher educators as equals and not evaluators. Statements were made to explain that TEs are not inspectors and that visits to schools were collegial as explored in TE C’s quiz question about what teachers could do when an ELC visits. The role of visiting classrooms is made explicit as TE A notes early on that he is “not a part of the inspectorate” (TE A Ref Prac 3 40 mins). I was able to share the positive responses of teachers to the school visits which were an integral part of the project mandate. I reported during the reflective practice interview that school visits are very well-received by teachers and the response from three of the teacher educators was similar to “That’s very surprising. Usually we only get the negative or none” (TEB Ref Prac 35 48 mins). Interestingly, an articulate secondary teacher (T8) said that he wouldn’t tell the teacher educator about being pleased about the visits as “that’s just our way” (T8 2 L 84). In this case the teacher himself reflects that praise is not part of his way of doing things. This difference in the teacher educators declaring their role and the teachers sharing teacher positive feedback about the teacher educators’ role, will be explored later in the Analysis chapter. There are also links here with the role of positive feedback in classrooms.

*The role of humour in deconstructing the perceived expert role.*

The teacher educators all stated that they consciously used humour as a means of deconstructing teacher reliance on the *matsalleh* who may be viewed as an expert whom one could depend on. One TE said that although he is not basically a humourous person, he would use humour when “it flys by” (TE A Ref Prac 4 47 mins).
While labeling herself as basically a serious person, TE B noted that “I like to give off the wall examples. I would rather use, like, the cop and the robber, than Ali and Bill. Or (laughter) Dick and Jane. I like to get their attention with…you know, some strange people” (TE B Ex Prac 3 20 mins). However, this teacher educator consciously uses self deprecatory humour saying that she would rather make jokes about herself than others. “I first started doing when I went overseas to counter the impression of the arrogant westerner who comes in from overseas” (TE B 20mins). This approach was most clearly articulated by TE C who spent much of the interview discussing cultural issues and less on the methodology. His conscious view of humour as a tool to deconstruct distance is detailed, as can be read below.

I **Humour** comes in early in the course. The very **first** line in fact. You notice here...and here (5secs) that you use **humour** ==

T ==I try to. I am always learning what is humorous, cross culturally.

I don’t stop learning there.

I Why such a **use** of humour?

T I like a relaxed classroom atmosphere. My assumption based on the last four years or so is that the teachers are **stiff** and **guarded** when they come on a course

I __________ Stiff and guarded? Can you say more about that?

T Teachers say...teachers tell me in private that they are afraid. They say ‘we have to be careful.’ They feel they are being... well... judged and evaluated. So my style is **different**, **Somewhat** Canadian style.

Canadian culture.

I Canadian culture?

T Well... **different** from their culture. In Malaysia they put their best their best foot forward. In **dress**, in **presentation**, **appearance**, Yeah appearance is a **big** one.
When discussing the role of humour and cultural difference, one TE drew my attention to the limitations of a simple division of Asian and European differences. She spoke of her experience in Japan and then described how much of the deconstruction of the “expert role” she wanted to “counter” (ibid) occurred in the more informal setting of the lengthy coffee breaks which occur at all Malaysian events. This, to her, was a contributing factor in the ‘culture’ of teacher education courses:

T While we are talking about culture. There’s one thing in the rojak of Malaysian culture which is good as a whole. That’s shooting the shit over tea. It’s easy to build a group dynamic here because of that local culture, compared to Japan say. It’s easy to build a group dynamic because of that local culture.

I Are you talking about the tea break in between==

T No. I’m speaking in a more general way. For a lot of Malaysians they ..ah… Malaysians are very comfortable starting off with small talk and then they start building friendliness. It all happens very quickly. In other countries, I’ve been in it.. takes a long time to bridge distance between strangers and acquaintances….and the whole Malaysian thing of sitting around for a long time and having these tea breaks ( laughter)

I Yes?

T which in their own way can be a bit annoying but it helps build a group dynamic and helps training sessions.
These dynamics were also mentioned by TE D. This building of rapport during course interludes is outside the time frame focus of this research. I suggest however, that how rapport is build and how teacher educators present themselves is worthy of further research for international teacher education contexts. This area forms a significant part of the Discussion in Chapter Six. We now consider the cultural differences with a description of the course interaction and the links to classroom needs.

*Linking to rural classroom needs.*

There was agreement in all four interviews that there was a need to make the links to classroom learning explicit. I was able to point out instances where this was evident in all four lesson transcripts. The rationale for this was expressed by one as “It’s all related, to what can be done in the classroom. OK. So we have got to constantly refer to the students and the students in the classroom” (TE A Ref Prac 10 05 mins). I noted in his particular transcript that there are eight direct references to classroom pedagogy, with such expressions as “the kids will love this” and the TE commented on these statements as being a necessary and central practice. TE A clarified that, “When I say it’s a good activity for kids, it’s because I have experienced myself. I’ve done it myself” (TE A Ref Prac 6 35 mins). The others working with primary teachers made the same point. TE C advocates that all tasks serve at all levels, “I don’t like the tripartite division…this is for teachers…this for students…this is for evaluation” (TE C Ref Prac l 112-113). In the same manner for secondary teachers, “Context is necessary. I take them through that experience” (TE B Ref Prac 30 mins). TE D noted that an over reliance on theory and explanation limits understanding. He contrasted the challenge that “no one has ever managed to explain a verb” (TE D Ref Prac 10 25 mins) with three approaches: demonstration and modelling, frequent examples and experiencing language in activities. Linking this to teacher reflection was very difficult in his view and he preferred to provide “transferable tasks” (ibid 48 mins) to teachers as his central modus operandi. He is clearly not preoccupied with teachers’ declarative knowledge but focuses on what Freeman (2002:6) describes as “internal integration in which content and teaching process (are) seen as intimately connected.”
TE B working with secondary teachers asks them to do group presentations on strategies which have been tried in classrooms. This is to get teachers to reflect on what works in their own classes by having to articulate their pedagogy as a narrative describing practice. While such an approach is very dependent on the teachers’ own language levels, she does note that it is well received and acts as an impetus for teachers to apply techniques in class. Teacher’s colleagues are quick to note when it is not a genuine report on a lesson and to later share ideas as will be shown in the following chapter. It is evident in this final teacher educator interview as teacher educators reflected, that there is both the use of modelling, direct statements and tasks which link classroom situations to in-service courses.

Reflecting on Reflection with the Reflective Interview

This section provides reflection on reflection as teacher educators discussed the exploration of practice through the conversation about the transcript and field notes. Teacher Educator A found the process of reading and talking through the transcript and the field note “interesting” as “the language comes out at the moment” comparing teaching to his earlier career as a lawyer where “You know what your heads of argument are… but not all the language” (TEA Ref Prac A 39 10 mins). He spoke of the reflection as being “very educational” (40mins). He stated that he would use awareness of “his movement around the classroom, the rhetorical questions and the clapping of the hands” in future teacher education sessions. The exploration of practice had made him aware of these things which he had not considered for many years. He spoke of the feedback as being valuable, because it was from a “neutral observer.”

Some discourse features were discussed as a way of beginning the exploration of practice. I observed that TE B’s content explanations were short and never more than three minutes in length, even though she was conducting a course on the complexities of form and function in grammar. She replied in a tone of surprise “Oh, I never thought so that. Oh, Ok. I like the activities to move along” (TE B Ref Prac 45 secs). I offered to play the audio to Teacher Educator C who did not want to do this as he said he found seeing himself in print quite revealing.
I. Let's come to the last prompt. There is much talk about reflection.

Could we talk about this process of self analysis of what we do as practitioners?

I have really enjoyed this discussion and benefited from this. To talk about what you’ve done is both revealing and exhilarating. Otherwise the only kind of reflection is the drive home. Then I tend to think rather negatively. To be asked guided questions on how it worked was really affirming. Like I did that for a reason and someone recognizes it. I looked forward to this and then there’s the teachers. Yeah the second part here. (10 secs) It would be fantastic to talk it through with them. They would do the same thing I am sure going home. I’d love to do it but it is finding a way … administratively. ah coordination

TE C Ref Prac L 131-140

Teacher Educator D spoke of the whole process of the research as “encouraging” as “it’s nice to talk to someone who knows what I am talking about. That’s because it’s what happens in the classroom that matters” (TE D Ref Prac I hour 55 mins). In order to really understand what is happening in the first interactions which may sow the seeds of classroom change, we will next turn to emerging themes for teacher educators and teachers by analyzing across the different findings in the discussion chapter.

Summary

Teacher educators reflected in detail on the talk captured in the transcript and the non-verbals annotated in the field notes. The initial early phase of introducing oneself created much discussion with each TE highlighting how foregrounding oneself professional and more personal background engendered positive talk and interest in why they were in the rural Districts. Task organization, practical classroom management issues, the procedural steps of tasks, the use of groups and the length of organization created lengthy reflective talk. Practice drove the discussion with less
attention to “declarative knowledge” (Bailey, 2005). All teacher educators aimed to model the teaching in rural classrooms through using transferable tasks so that ‘plug and play’ techniques were much more common than questioning of or discussion of pedagogic principles. The use of pair work (Sites 1 and 3) and group work, which all TEs applied early into the session and spoke about as applicable in classrooms was a shared approach. Tasks were never longer than 19 minutes and aimed to ensure success which was supported by positive reinforcement, hopefully as a model for later classroom use. All teacher educators spoke of ensuring success early in the course, so that there as a ‘positive affective climate’ (TE Ref Prac 1 30 secs). In the next chapter we look more deeply by comparing across the teacher educators’ views and the teachers views to analyse the early phases of in-service interaction.
CHAPTER 6
Discussion

Introduction

This study has described the links between teacher education during in-service courses and responses to the process during the ‘early phases’. The focus is on how a teacher educator introduces an in-service course. In discussing these processes, we shall examine themes linked to relevant literature and themes articulated in responses in the research findings. I will begin by discussing the methodology. This discussion then analyses the general aspects of the processes of the teacher education courses. The focus then moves to the research sites for teacher education and the ways in which both teachers and teacher educators accommodate processes which may challenge earlier perceptions including the impact of ‘native speaker’ issues. Finally, the area of reflective activities and perceptions and the role of reflective practices are discussed in the context of the research sites in rural Malaysia.

Methodology and positioning myself as an interviewer

In positioning myself as an interviewer I was both an outside observer and someone with insider information and background. As an insider, I knew all the Project background and had been instrumental in the Project design. There were advantages to being an insider as I was able to use detailed probing when checking how much follow up there was; for example which texts had been used and what tasks had been explored in the classrooms. Linguistically, I was able to respond in Malay, Manglish or more standard English. The challenge was to ‘Other’ myself as no longer linked to either the C/BT project which I had left or to the Ministry to whom I no longer reported. I was perhaps a little repetitive when assuring participants of the confidentiality of all data and many responded positively to knowing that the research was not linked to a Malaysian university. It is a measure of acceptance that some replies are so frank regarding local training dynamics that they produced some direct statements comparing Project approaches with earlier experiences. I was very conscious that I may
have been looking for a vindication of the operating pedagogy os would ask lead in questions about problems as well as differences. I was also aware that with the diversity of teachers, sites and teacher educators that there would be a broad range of data. I would be naive to assume that I did not have my own pedagogic preferences, but with such diversity in teachers experience as well as site based differences. I was perhaps rewarded by finding that my research concerns of native speakerism and learning culture issues were overshadowed by pragmatic concerns based on transferable techniques. It was clear that teacher trainers used pragmatic everyday work concerns and consciously choose techniques to provide experiences other than hierarchical delivery of content. Teacher educators reporting modifying their ways of presenting themselves by using narratives (Goldman, 1959) and by modifying their communication with acts of communication accommodation (McCann & Giles, 2006). The teacher educators communicated modelling pedagogy and used transferable techniques to stimulate awareness of possibilities other than teacher-fronted delivery.

Comparing Teacher and Teacher Educator responses to early phases

In comparing teacher responses and teacher educator responses we will look at the role of personal introduction, the teacher educators’ uses of humour, the use of the national language and how tasks linked to classroom needs. How these techniques were described in the interviews varied considerably, with many differences between teachers’ reporting of perceptions and teacher educator viewpoints. Much of this difference may derive from teachers’ fluency both generally and in terms of the meta language of the teaching profession. For example, teachers often spoke of the friendliness of the teacher educators; a perception which may have derived from the personalized introduction approach to create inclusion. Such inclusion was expressed by T4 as “Miss___________ is a teacher.Like us” (T4 1, L 16). The teacher educators spoke of the introduction as presenting personal details because if it was not included, previous experience had taught them that there was less talk in group interaction. Without foregrounding the bio-data in the early phases numerous questions would arise in the coffee break and after class. Previous experience had taught them that there would be less talk in the first session if they did not let teachers know who they were and where they came from as well as family details.
Teacher Educators use humour.

The teacher educators’ uses of humour were not anticipated as a large part of teacher and teacher educator interaction when designing the Project. Yet there were numerous instances of humour, often self deprecatory. In the interviews there are also references to the use of humour from teachers and teacher educators with one teacher educator even described as Mr Bean. It is likely that this element, which I have rarely observed in other Malaysian teacher courses or workshops, helped contribute to the comments about friendliness and approachability. It is evident through both observation and reflection by the teacher educators that they are perceived humour as a ‘social levelling’ tool. Humour has only recently begun to receive attention in second language acquisition research, but work includes humour being used to negotiate identities, to subvert social norms or power structures, to mitigate face threatening acts (Holmes & Marra, 2002) and of course, to entertain (Holmes, 2000). The teacher educators then present themselves as an ‘actor’ who uses and accepts humour. Much of their humour is similar to workplace anecdotes. Holmes (2005, p.675) describes such humour as a workplace socialising discourse when anecdotes have tellability, a concern with personal experience, are not a required accounting and are not ratified on ‘task ‘ business talk. She observes that such digressions “provide a means of doing professional identity” (ibid,690. In the context of NS-NNS Interaction (native speaker.non-native speaker) Bell (2005, pp.192-193) lists a number of other functions of humour and language play. These functions include humour as a marker of being part of a group through insider references . Such identity aspects were recorded in the discourse of all the four teacher educators, as described earlier. The identity aspects and the use of humour to position the teacher educator as non-threatening are most central to this research.

When examining the culturally loaded area of appropriateness of teachers’ usage with English as second language learners, Wanzer et al (2006) notes the importance of linking a teaching goal without offending the listeners. They describe how humour in classrooms has been found to make content memorable and notes that when using humour teachers may have goals such as “generating a positive classroom climate, or reducing student anxiety. Humour that is unrelated to the content or self disparaging may be particularly effective at achieving these types of goals” (2007, p.192). Instances of this in the data,in the teacher education setting, include describing
how people did not know who the teacher educator was when he first arrived (TE A), how difficult the TE’s name was to say (TE C) and how relatively old the teacher educator was (TE D).

Belz (2002) suggests that humour and playing with the unexpected in language assist language learning. He suggests that language play may help learners construct new multilingual identities and new social relations. There is little to suggest that this would not be the same for the teachers, in what is essentially a bilingual or multilingual encounter. If one then goes beyond humour as being related to acquiring language in a motivating manner or demonstrating ones skill in the language, one could consider humour as being a tool to set a context or a learning culture which is focused on enjoyment and a positive affective learning climate. Holmes (2000) notes that humour, namely utterances or actions intended as amusing by the speaker depend on the linguistic clues and context to be successful. The context of this use of humour is one of acceptance of the authority of the speaker as she or he is working out of the District Education Office, while not being part of the threatening evaluative function which some others of the District Office are linked with. The physical setting where the courses are held was also a setting which differed from school environments where teachers would be at the beck and call of the school hierarchy. With the matsalleh teacher educator there was an element of novelty and a setting for interaction which differed from the school or local community discourse setting. Possibly the teacher educators in the context of the course enjoyed an expected relief from the more formal hierarchical settings of earlier training or the hierarchical interaction within their school.

If the teacher educators are concerned with repositioning themselves with an interactive learning culture for the courses, as they reported in the reflective interview, they could use humour to provide a sense of building solidarity. This was a stated intent by all of them but not to the extent of seeing a course as comedic performance art. Politeness Theory states that “humour may express solidarity, indicating concern for the listener’s positive face needs, as well as self deprecation, which attends to the speaker’s positive face needs” (Holmes, 2000, p.164). Holmes observes that humour is a tool for working with power issues in relationships as “humour can be used to achieve the speaker’s instrumental goal while apparently de-emphasizing the power differential “(ibid, p.165). I suggest that these early phases whether in meetings which Holmes
describes or course delivery are an important part of working in what may be perceived as a hierarchy.

*Teacher educators and the national language.*

When presenting tasks, teacher educators employed varied amounts of the national language. They all spoke of the pedagogic benefits of select usage and the social solidarity building that comes from using the language of the community in which one lives. In Site 1 teachers were very responsive to the teacher educator's use of humour in Bahasa Malaysia. The use of Bahasa Malaysia was an issue of considerable debate amongst the national project team, many of whom justifiably saw the frequent use of aspects of the grammar translation method as something which needed challenging. One of the first CfBT in-house courses had been termed 'Teaching English Through English' and after one pilot it was realistically renamed 'Teaching English Mainly Through English' (TEMTE). The addition of the qualifier 'mainly' and additional sections on comparative bilingual teaching techniques in the TEMTE course reflected the rural reality where English is in practice a foreign language. A representative of the Ministry has spoken of a memo which it had sent out at the Minister of Education's request for only English to be used in schools (Personal Communication, May 2005.) The Minister of that time was effectively bilingual and had experienced elite bilingual schooling. I encountered many worried teachers after this Ministerial action in mid 2003 and teachers in 2007 still recalled this edict from the urban centralized structure. TE A who is fluent in Malay commented that it made more sense to use the vernacular when you could not show a vocabulary item visually or you were talking of abstract qualities. When he espoused the use of Malay the response was positive and audible, especially from early primary teachers. I heard audible sighs and exclamations of delight when observing the interaction. TE B said she had begun her earlier days of Malaysian teacher education by asking teachers for Malay translations so that she would use these for comparative grammar. For her the main use of Malay was social as with TE D. TE C would use his beginner's level Malay as occasional input to liven up interaction. This range of reported and observed usage links to the notion that ones greater advocacy of bilingualism in learning may reflect confidence in using both languages. Although there was varied usage of Bahasa Malaysia in the early phases for each teacher educator, all the TE's shared a common approach to linking teacher
education to the rural classroom needs. I will therefore now discuss perceptions of how the interaction linked to classroom needs.

*Teacher Educators and teachers perceiving links to classrooms.*

Many teachers stated that they expected that courses would meet their everyday needs by providing techniques which could be applied in classes. As reported earlier, in the last of the teacher interviews, a majority of teachers stated that these expectations had been met. Teachers stated that they were therefore focused on everyday concerns. However understanding the vocabulary or possessing a sense of security in articulating concerns about pedagogic principles is a factor, in that two articulate secondary teachers linked classroom concerns to their own learning theories. Teacher educators focused on techniques which could be readily applied for primary and secondary level needs, although they would state why the techniques were workable and what benefits there were for learners. Their approach links to what Clandinin (1985, p.362) termed teachers’, and by extension teacher educators’, ‘personal practical knowledge..derived from and understood in terms of, a persons’ experiential history, both personal and professional.’ Teacher Educator A was very explicit that based on his past experience both in Malaysia and Brunei that teachers wanted “plug and play” practical techniques. So while the teacher educator literature often expounds the necessity of changes in underlying thinking and teachers articulating the changes in beliefs about pedagogy (Richards et al, 2001) the busy rural Malaysian classroom practitioner wanted techniques which would motivate students and meet immediate needs it appears that teachers were either reticent or lacked the vocabulary to articulate more abstract concerns.

Within the framework of this study there was a positive reception for that which Woodward (1991) terms the “loop input approach” when tasks parallel those needed in the target situation, namely the rural classroom. The client, the Ministry of Education had spoken of the need for transferable tasks which could be readily applied to classrooms. Richards (2001, p.2) noted that ‘if teachers actually try out a particular innovation which does not initially conform to their prior beliefs or principles and the innovation proves helpful or successful then accommodation of an alternative belief or principle is more possible than in any other circumstance.’ All the teacher educators
(ELCs) had therefore been asked during their orientation to use classroom tasks based on productive use, such as group work and the chain stories with an emphasis on diminishing the widespread use of worksheets and copying. Teachers were positive about the transferable task aspect of the early phase interaction. In order to link to classroom needs the TEs moved rapidly into classroom related tasks as these had been well received in their earlier courses. They used positive reinforcement to ensure teacher success with tasks at the start of course being short and designed to engender self confidence. Teachers’ confidence was also fostered by direct statements about supportive class visits, non-evaluative visits which for many were a novel approach in their local culture of teaching and learning. We now turn to the culture of learning for the sites of this research.

The Learning Culture

The cultural context of rural Malaysian in-service interaction cannot be defined only by the nationally espoused values. I have suggested a smaller view that during the interaction, teacher educators aimed to facilitate a “learning culture” differing from large scale training which teachers had earlier experienced. Although the nationally espoused values are stated as underpinning syllabus and schools in Malaysia, it is more realistic to move beyond public statements of what those in educational planning proclaim should be, to what actually happens in in observable settings such as the sites of this study. The courses offered a special situation as it was the first time in the Malaysian context that expatriate teacher trainers had lived and worked in rural communities for more than short term visits. Although C/BT Education Services has had teachers in secondary schools in the late 1970s and early 80s the Project was the first time that internationally experienced English as First Language teacher educators lived and worked in rural communities for more than the short term. This is therefore an unusual setting for teacher education which has some similarities with volunteer services abroad placements but differs from volunteer work in the expertise levels and the close links with the national educational system. Although the teacher educators all had extensive experience living and working in other countries, it was clear that the dynamics of cultural difference would arise as behaviours and methods which teachers may have been exposed to in their earlier teacher training may not occur in the rural Malaysian context. As Trompenaars et al. state, culture can be viewed as “the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas “(1998, p.6). When
one then focuses on behaviours and not products or national guideline documents, one understands that culture is dynamic and related to behaviours. With the actions of people as a focus, it is clear that there may be a tension between espoused national educational values, especially in regard to hierarchical values and behaviour which may occur in mass delivery teacher education interaction, and smaller scale interaction where teacher educators may aim to deconstruct hierarchical values. Therefore, I elaborate on the findings for teachers and teacher educators to suggest that within the boundaries of this research setting, that a ‘small culture’ of learning evolves, a series of interactions or behaviours, which will by the nature of its tasks not involve confirming or denying nationally based views of either Malaysian teachers or ‘native speaker’ teacher educators

A situationally based learning culture, developing within the interaction of early phase teacher education may begin in teacher courses where tasks and purposes are shared. Using the findings, I suggest that interactions may transcend national statements or national generalizations for both teachers and teacher educators. Drawing on the reported experiences of the early phase interaction, I suggest that as Littlewood found in the East Asian context there is “a powerful role of the learning context” (1999, p.83). I suggest that a learning context such as the in-service courses of this research may contradict espoused beliefs when a locally based learning culture is co-constructed through interactions in a positive affective climate of teacher education.

Other research aligns with a situationally based view, namely that context may at times over ride a national model of cultural difference such as the framework of Hofstede (1997) which I explored earlier in this study. Gieve and Clark (2005) researching a group of Chinese learners in an English for Academic Purposes situation, raise important questions about the role of contextual factors for students from a cultural group studying in a situation which differs from earlier learning situations. One response which they suggest to their findings is that “apparently stable culturally determined approaches to learning are far more flexible to contextual variation than we might expect and that student responses to particular contexts are not stably predicted by macro-scale characterizations of nation scale ‘cultures’” (ibid, 263). Based on their research they suggest that “an ethnically based notion of culture may be less powerful than commonly assumed, compared to local situationally based
cultures of learning” (ibid, p.274). The parallel to this study is that the District based in-service courses are a markedly different learning context, as learning is facilitated by teacher educators’ intent of creating an interactive learning culture, different from teachers’ earlier experiences. Teachers reported a contrast between the ‘small culture’ of the District based learning context and their earlier in-service teacher education experiences. I would suggest that a situationally based learning The secondary culture is evident in the contexts of this research.

I will first turn to some situational differences within the research before examining broader issues. These situational differences illustrate both the importance of context in defining learning cultures and provide some caveats when it comes to generalisability of the findings. The most obvious difference arises from my research design including secondary as well as primary school teachers. In the secondary teacher group, there is the greater amount of talk in response to interview questions with the shortest interview being 7 minutes and the longest 19 minutes. The primary teacher interviews ranged from 4 to 12 minutes. One finds greater detail, again highlighting linguistic and contextual differences. The secondary teachers’ comments at times challenge the national cultural stereotyping of teachers’ uncritical acceptance of top down approaches. This may be as a result of my positioning as a researcher as being outside the accountability and evaluative structures of the Ministry of Education. The secondary teachers were also more articulate and may have greater confidence in an interview situation,

The secondary teachers from Site 2 were also pointed in their critiques of mass teacher instruction sessions. There are challenges to TE B’s description of teachers who are “more deferential to authority than I am used to. More passive” (TE Ref Prac 8.50). There is little deference to authority in comments such as “If you’re teaching in KL, based on my experience, in my experience, they left us hanging” (T 6 2 6.10mins) and another teacher comparing with other colleagues’ experiences: “The course they went to earlier is more to instruction. They don’t have any practice. So they come back to school and from their course they do nothing. Nothing” (T5 2 4.30 min). One of these teachers had had overseas TESOL training and so he had experienced other cultures of learning. He contrasted the practical side of the Project courses and the fact that there was classroom follow-up with long periods of listening to instruction which was common in his earlier Malaysian training. The comments here raised points about the
interaction itself in the project in service courses during which teachers had greater participation and also highlighted the importance of “practice” or the experiential approach. Two secondary teachers commented on teacher training which differed from the Project experience as the earlier large scale courses were “more to instruction” as teachers listened and were told what to do. They described their earlier courses as not providing opportunities to practice techniques and to return to learning related to the practice.

The secondary site in which teachers were the most articulate, in terms of amount of talk and complexity of vocabulary, had particular factors which made the site a somewhat different learning context from the primary sites. The secondary Site 2 situational factors included a more abstract topic for the course, a majority of graduate teachers, including TESOL trained teachers, and a site close to urban influences. Specific situational factors were also at play contributing to greater use of English. The location is relatively close to the urban Klang Valley, so that exposure to English is greater than at other sites. Teachers would also have had more training experience not just due to location, but also because the District Education Officer, now retired, was an active advocate of English language development. The purpose of the inclusion of the graduate level secondary teachers of Site 2 was therefore to add breadth to the interview findings and to capture the diversity of the context of the research.

It was clear that the fluency of the secondary teacher interviewees was markedly different from primary school colleagues with the use of longer utterances, more complex clause structures and greater use of abstraction and specialized pedagogic vocabulary. One then questions to what extent the rich details of the Site 2 findings are driven by the situational factors of the secondary training site and the teacher educator’s approach, or more simply, are a result of greater English proficiency. More importantly, it leads one to the question of how much is not reported when there is lower proficiency. One needs to consider whether differences in content between the more articulate secondary teachers and the primary teachers are dependent on the ability to articulate opinions or whether there is enough expressed to suggest some commonalities in both groups. These concerns permeate the following sections and are particularly relevant in considering the role of reflection. The more articulate group was able to reflect on practice to a greater extent than the other three
groups. We next turn to the question of perceptions of cultural differences and their impact in teacher education interaction.

This research analysed learning culture differences as factors which potentially impact on early phase interaction. Yet this was not voiced as a major concern by teachers. On three occasions early in the research, I tried leading with a statement that there could be problems which I needed to know about, “so we could all learn together”, but silence was a common response. Often I encountered pauses and non responses to the general lead-in question about cultural difference. I would often wait for up to six seconds for responses before moving on to probe for comments on the sameness or differences between earlier large scale courses and ELC District based courses. Although one teacher (T4) in the most rural setting spoke of being “frightened” and “shy”, an explanation for this response may be that she had never met an ‘orang putih’ or white man before. For another teacher, the importance of the cultural aspect was related to the teacher educator being seen as a so called Standard English model, “We feel like we are in England” (T4,1,L73) and we can listen to the “slang” (T4,1,L 75). It is useful to note that in Malaysia the term ‘slang’ is often used to designate a difference in dialect or localised vocabulary as in the ‘slang’ of Kelantanese Malay, a dialect with a strong Thai influence. Clearly for one of the most trained secondary teachers, the cultural appropriacy of language choices was an area which he appreciated in interaction with the teacher educator. He stated that he was able to learn of grammar functions and exceptions as “very often you cant find these things in the reference books” (T8,2, L 13-22). For this teacher the linguistic differences and input regarding situations of usage was something that he felt enriched his understandings of the sociolinguistic functions of language. This same articulate Malay male was adamant that there were cultural differences in teacher education with ‘native speakers’ but like most of the respondents his comments were not always related to linguistic positioning but concerned teacher education methodology and the teacher educator’s attitude to teachers.

T    Please send us native speakers. It’s totally different from the courses conducted by others. Other training.

I    You mentioned the native speaker being different?

T    She gives us her contact number, she is accessible. She is willing to accept
messages. She helps us a lot, she really helps the classroom. Gives us sufficient materials and real real, classroom techniques. She is open minded and willing to accept comments. She should be here much longer but she’s getting married.

T8,2,6.00- 6.45 mins

Most teachers’ responses differed from the responses described above which comment on language aspects, as the majority did not respond to the question on cultural differences. Most commented on behavioural differences in teacher education.

Methodology and positioning myself as an interviewer

In positioning myself as an interviewer I was both an outside observer and someone with insider information and background. As an insider, I knew all the Project background and had been instrumental in the Project design. There were advantages to being an insider as I was able to use detailed probing when checking how much follow up there was; for example which texts had been used and what tasks had been explored in the classrooms. Linguistically, I was able to respond in Malay, Manglish or more standard English. The challenge was to ‘Other’ myself as no longer linked to either the C/BT project which I had left or to the Ministry to whom I no longer reported. I was perhaps a little repetitive when assuring participants of the confidentiality of all data and many responded positively to knowing that the research was not linked to a Malaysian university. It is a measure of acceptance that some replies are so frank regarding local training dynamics that they produced some direct statements contrasting approaches. I was very conscious that I may have been looking for a vindication of the operating pedagogy, yet was also aware that with the diversity of teachers, sites and teacher educators that there would be a broad range of data. In working with data and the analysis I aimed at what McKay termed ‘unmotivated looking’ (2006, p.104). I would be naive to assume that I did not have my own pedagogic preferences, but with such diverse ethnic, experience and site based differences, I aimed at capturing the diverse complexity in an objective a manner as possible. I was perhaps rewarded by finding that my research concerns of native speakerism and cultural issues were overshadowed by pragmatic concerns based on transferable techniques. Even though native speakerism and cultural issues had a lesser role than I
had anticipated, it was clear that teacher trainers used pragmatic everyday work concerns and consciously choose techniques to provide experiences other than hierarchical delivery of content. They used transferable techniques to motivate teachers and provided experiential learning to stimulate awareness of possibilities other than teacher-fronted delivery, which was part of the Project brief.

Comparing Teacher and Teacher Educator responses to early phases

In comparing teacher responses and teacher educator responses we will look at the role of personal introduction, the teacher educators’ uses of humour, the use of the national language and how tasks linked to classroom needs. How these techniques were described in the interviews varied considerably, with many differences between teachers’ reporting of perceptions and teacher educator viewpoints. Much of this difference may derive from teachers’ fluency both generally and in terms of the meta language of the teaching profession. For example, teachers often spoke of the friendliness of the teacher educators; a perception which may have derived from the personalized introduction approach to create inclusion. Such inclusion was expressed by T4 as “Miss___________ is a teacher .Like us” (T4 1, L 16). The teacher educators spoke of the introduction as presenting personal details because if it was not included, previous experience had taught them that there was less talk in group interaction. Without foregrounding the bio-data in the early phases numerous questions would arise in the coffee break and after class. Previous experience had taught them that there would be less talk in the first session if they did not let teachers know who they were and where they came from as well as family details.

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contribute to the comments about friendliness and approachability. It is evident through both observation and reflection by the teacher educators that they are perceived humour as a ‘social levelling’ tool. Humour has only recently begun to receive attention in second language acquisition research, but work includes humour being used to negotiate identities, to subvert social norms or power structures, to mitigate face threatening acts (Holmes & Marra, 2002) and of course, to entertain (Holmes, 2000). Humorous interaction in teacher education settings has not yet been researched in detail, although there is some recent discourse analysis of native speaker/non-native speaker interaction (Davies, 2003). In the context of NS-NNS Interaction (native speaker-.non-native speaker) Bell (2005, pp.192-193) lists a number of other functions of humour and language play. These functions include humour as a marker of being part of a group through insider references and such identity aspects were recorded in the discourse of all the four teacher educators. The identity aspects and the use of humour to position the teacher educator as non-threatening are most central to this research.

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Teacher Educators and teachers perceiving links to classrooms.

Many teachers stated that they expected that courses would meet their everyday needs by providing techniques which could be applied in classes. As reported earlier, in the last of the teacher interviews, a majority of teachers stated that these expectations had been met. Teachers stated that they were therefore focused on everyday concerns and this may led one to postulate that they were less focused on their pedagogic content knowledge (Freeman, 2002, p.6) than on transferring what they had experienced. However having the vocabulary or sense of being secure in articulating concerns about pedagogic principles is a factor, in that two articulate
secondary teachers linked classroom concerns to their own learning theories. Teacher educators focused on techniques which could be readily applied for primary and secondary level needs, although they would state why the techniques were workable and what benefits there were for learners. Their approach links to what Clandinin (1985, p.362) termed teachers ‘personal practical knowledge..derived from and understood in terms of, a persons’ experiential history, both personal and professional.’ Teacher Educator A was very explicit that based on his past experience both in Malaysia and Brunei that teachers wanted “plug and play” practical techniques. So while the teacher educator literature often expounds the necessity of changes in underlying thinking and teachers articulating the changes in beliefs about pedagogy (Richards et al, 2001) the busy rural Malaysian classroom practitioner wanted techniques which would motivate students and meet immediate needs and were reticent or lacked the vocabulary to articulate more abstract concerns. These classroom techniques, practical classroom experiences, were shared through an experiential approach so as to foster acceptance of the novel classroom organization.

Within the framework of this study there was a positive reception for that which Woodward (1991) termed the “loop input approach” when tasks parallel those needed in the target situation, namely the rural classroom. As the client, the Ministry of Education had spoken of the need for transferable tasks which could be readily applied to classrooms. Richards (2001, p.2) notes that ‘if teachers actually try out a particular innovation which does not initially conform to their prior beliefs or principles and the innovation proves helpful or successful then accommodation of an alternative belief or principle is more possible than in any other circumstance.’ All the teacher educators (ELCs) had therefore been asked during their orientation to use classroom related tasks with an emphasis on diminishing the widespread use of worksheets and copying; (popular techniques according the SPELT needs analysis which I and my colleague conducted for the Project at its inception). Teachers were positive about the transferable task aspect of the early phase interaction. In order to link to classroom needs the TEs moved rapidly into classroom related tasks as these had been well received in their earlier courses. They used positive reinforcement to ensure teacher success with tasks at the start of course being short and designed to engender self confidence. Teachers’ confidence was also fostered by direct statements about supportive class visits, non-evaluative visits which for many were a novel approach in their local culture of teaching and learning. We now turn to the culture of learning for the sites of this research.
The Learning Culture

The cultural context of rural Malaysian in-service interaction cannot be defined only by the nationally espoused values and I have suggested that during the interaction, teacher educators aimed to facilitate a “culture of learning” differing from earlier training. Although the nationally espoused values are stated as underpinning syllabus and schools in Malaysia, it is more realistic to move beyond public statements of what those in educational planning proclaim should be, to what happens in educational settings in observable settings such as the focus of this study: teacher in-service courses. The courses offer a special situation as it was the first time in the Malaysian context that teacher trainers had lived and worked in rural communities for more than short term visits. Although CfBT Education Services has had teachers in secondary schools in the late 1970s and early 80s the Project was the first time that internationally experienced English as First Language teacher educators lived and worked in rural communities. This is therefore an unusual setting for teacher education which has some similarities with volunteer services abroad placements but differs from volunteer work in the expertise levels and the close links with the national educational system. Although the teacher educators all had extensive experience living and working in other countries, it was clear that the dynamics of cultural difference would arise as behaviours and methods which teachers may have been exposed to in their earlier teacher training may not occur in the rural Malaysian context. As Trompenaars et al. state, culture can be viewed as “the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas” (1998, p.6). When one then focuses on behaviours and not products or national guideline documents, one understands that culture is dynamic and related to behaviours. With the actions of people as a focus, it is clear that there may be a tension between espoused national educational values, especially in regard to hierarchical values and behaviour which may occur in mass delivery teacher education interaction, and smaller scale interaction where teacher educators may aim to deconstruct hierarchical values. Therefore, I elaborate on the findings for teachers and teacher educators to suggest that within the boundaries of this research setting, that a ‘small culture’ of learning evolves, a series of interactions or behaviours, which will by the nature of its tasks not involve confirming or denying nationally based views of either Malaysian teachers or ‘native speaker’ teacher educators. I suggest that a culture of learning evolves out of the in-service interaction with pragmatic classroom concerns as the major dynamic.
A situationally based culture of learning, developing within the interaction of early phase teacher education may begin in teacher courses where tasks and purposes are shared. Using the findings, I suggest that interactions may transcend national statements or national generalizations for both teachers and teacher educators. Drawing on the reported experiences of the early phase interaction, I suggest that as Littlewood found in the East Asian context there is “a powerful role of the learning context” (1999, p.83). I suggest that a learning context such as the in-service courses of this research may contradict espoused beliefs about shy, collectivist authority dependent learners when a locally based culture of learning is co-constructed through interactions in a positive affective climate of teacher education.

Other research aligns with what one may term a situationally based view, namely that context may at times over ride a national model of cultural difference such as the framework of Hofstede (1997) which I explored earlier in this study. Gieve and Clark (2005) researching a group of Chinese learners in an English for Academic Purposes situation, raise important questions about the role of contextual factors for students from a cultural group studying in a situation which differs from earlier learning situations. The parallel to this study is that the District based in-service courses are a markedly different learning context, as learning is facilitated by those from another national culture and there is also a reported contrast between the ‘small culture’ of the District based learning context and teachers’ earlier in-service teacher education experiences. Although the setting of a UK university is different from this Malaysian rural research, the fundamental concept of the role of the learning culture context which aligns with the concept of a ‘small culture’ (Holliday, 1999) is applicable. The UK researchers found that differences between Chinese and European students in a programme of self directed learning related to language abilities and learning needs and factors other than just “culturally determined dispositions” (Gieve & Clark, 2005, p.261). Their study was a self directed learning programme; a mode of learning seen as challenging by some, especially when viewed through a paternalistic view of cultural difference which attributes little autonomy to East Asian learners. One response which they suggest to their findings is that “apparently stable culturally determined approaches to learning are far more flexible to contextual variation than we might expect and that student responses to particular contexts are not stably predicted by macro-scale characterizations of nation scale ‘cultures'” (ibid, 263). Based on their research they suggest that “an ethnically based notion of culture may be less powerful than commonly assumed, compared to local situationally based cultures of learning”
I would suggest that a situationally based culture of learning is evident in the contexts of this research. I will first turn to some situational differences within the research before examining broader issues. These situational differences illustrate both the importance of context in defining ‘cultures of learning’ and provide some caveats when it comes to generalisability of the findings. The most obvious difference arises from my research design including secondary as well as primary school teachers. In the secondary teacher group, there is the greater amount of talk in response to interview questions with the shortest interview being 7 minutes and the longest 19 minutes. The primary teacher interviews ranged from 4 to 12 minutes. One finds greater detail, again highlighting linguistic and contextual differences. The secondary teachers’ comments at times challenge the national cultural stereotyping of teachers' uncritical acceptance of top down approaches. This may be as a result of my positioning as a researcher as being outside the accountability and evaluative structures of the Ministry of Education.

The secondary teachers from Site 2 were also pointed in their critiques of mass teacher instruction sessions. There are challenges to TE B’s description of teachers who are “more deferential to authority than I am used to. More passive” (TE Ref Prac 8.50). There is little deference to authority in comments such as “If you’re teaching in KL, based on my experience, in my experience, they left us hanging” (T 6 2 6.10mins) and another teacher comparing with other colleagues’ experiences: “The course they went to earlier is more to instruction. They don’t have any practice. So they come back to school and from their course they do nothing. Nothing” (T5 2 4.30 min). One of these teachers had had overseas TESOL training and so he had experienced other cultures of learning. He contrasted the practical side of the course and the fact that there was classroom follow-up with long periods of listening to instruction which was common in his earlier Malaysian training. The teachers were commenting on teacher training which differed from the Project experience in that the courses were “more to instruction” as teachers listened and were told what to do without opportunities to practice techniques and to return to learning related to the practice.

The secondary site in which teachers were the most articulate, in terms of amount of talk and complexity of vocabulary, had particular factors which made the site
a somewhat different learning context from the primary sites. The secondary Site 2 situational factors included a more abstract topic for the course, a majority of graduate teachers, including TESOL trained teachers, and a site close to urban influences. Specific situational factors were also at play contributing to greater use of English. The location is relatively close to the urban Klang Valley in which Kuala Lumpur is located, so that exposure to English is greater than at other sites. Teachers would also have had more training experience not just due to location, but also because the District Education Officer, now retired, was an active advocate of English language development. The purpose of the inclusion of the graduate level secondary teachers of Site 2 was therefore to add breadth to the interview findings and to capture the diversity of the context of the research.

It was clear that the fluency of the secondary teacher interviewees was markedly different from primary school colleagues with the use of longer utterances, more complex clause structures and greater use of abstraction and specialized pedagogic vocabulary. One then questions to what extent the rich details of the Site 2 findings are driven by the situational factors of the secondary training site and the teacher educator’s approach, or more simply, are a result of greater English proficiency. More importantly, it leads one to the question of how much is not reported when there is lower proficiency. One needs to consider whether differences in content between the more articulate secondary teachers and the primary teachers are dependent on the ability to articulate opinions or whether there is enough expressed to suggest some commonalities in both groups. These concerns permeate the following sections and are particularly relevant in considering the role of reflection. The more articulate group was able to reflect on practice to a greater extent than the other three groups. We next turn to the question of perceptions of cultural differences and their impact in teacher education interaction.

This research fore-grounded cultural differences as factors which potentially impact on early phase interaction. Yet this was not voiced as a major concern by teachers, even with much probing, possibly as their view is within the ‘small culture’ of their professional environment. On three occasions early in the research, I tried leading with a statement that there could be problems which I needed to know about, “so we could all learn together”, but silence was a common response. Often I encountered pauses and non responses to the general lead-in question about cultural difference. I
would often wait for up to six seconds for responses before moving on to probe for comments on the sameness or differences between earlier large scale courses and ELC District based courses. Although one teacher (T4) in the most rural setting spoke of being “frightened” and “shy”, an explanation for this response may be that she had never met an ‘orang putih’ or white man before. For another teacher, the importance of the cultural aspect was related to the teacher educator being seen as a so called Standard English model, “We feel like we are in England” (T4,1,L73) and we can listen to the “slang” (T4,1,L 75). It is useful to note that in Malaysia the term ‘slang’ is often used to designate a difference in dialect or localised vocabulary as in the ‘slang’ of Kelantanese Malay, a dialect with a strong Thai influence. Clearly for one of the most trained secondary teachers, the culturally appropriateness of language choices was an area which he appreciated in interaction with the teacher educator. He stated that he was able to learn of grammar functions and exceptions as “very often you can’t find these things in the reference books” (T8,2, L 13-22). For this teacher the linguistic differences and input regarding situations of usage was something that he felt enriched his understandings of the sociolinguistic functions of language. This same articulate Malay male was adamant that there were cultural differences in teacher education with ‘native speakers’ but like most of the respondents his comments were not always related to linguistic positioning but concerned teacher education methodology.

T Please send us native speakers. It’s totally different from the courses conducted by others. Other training.

I You mentioned the native speaker being different?

T She gives us her contact number, she is accessible. She is willing to accept messages. She helps us a lot. She really helps the classroom. Gives us sufficient materials and real classroom techniques. She is open minded and willing to accept comments. She should be here much longer but she’s getting married.

T8,2,6.00- 6.45 mins

Most teachers’ responses differed from the responses described above which comment on language aspects, as the majority did not respond to the question on cultural differences. Most commented on behavioural differences in teacher education sessions, the relevance of tasks and the usefulness of follow up support. Teachers
would describe positive qualities of the interaction in contrast to other teacher education modes and in general were more concerned with practical methods and techniques which could be readily applied in the classroom. This is not to say however that the concept of cultural differences was not articulated during the research. It was perceived by the native speaker teacher educators as an influence on interaction. The perceptions of these teacher educators are clearly linked to their experience and all of these TEs have accommodated to local norms as in their introduction styles. Their cultural norms may therefore be multi-faceted with adaptations so that when defining native speaker issues it may be more useful to consider that experienced native speaker teacher educators will accommodate and use culturally adapted techniques, such as this study describes. Yet the native speaker aspect was one area which many suggest is a continuing concern and it did feature prominently in teacher educators’ responses in contrast to teacher responses. We now look at the issue of “native speakerism” which underpinned the research and continues to feature in the literature of English language teaching (Waters, 2007).

Wider Perceptions of the Impact of ‘Native Speaker’ Teacher Educators

The national Malaysian newspaper headline ‘Schools may have more native speakers’ (The Star, 13 April 2004) is symptomatic of the nomenclature linked to the experienced ELT teacher educators working in the Project. The article that followed the headline noted that “Employing native speakers was among recommendations made by a special committee set up in 2001 to look at ways of improving the English language proficiency of students.” The Education Director General in 2004, Datuk Abdul Rafie Mahat referring to the work of teacher educators stated “The feed back is that these native speakers are happy with the programme and we want to ensure this it is renewed and not just a one-off thing." The next few sentences with the term ‘the native speakers.’ described the teacher education work of the English Language Coordinators in detail. This is a further example of conflation of teacher educator professionalism with a point of origin categorization which could be seen as sustaining native speakerism (Holliday, 2006).

In 2007 after the launch of yet another National Blueprint of Education, the challenges of much needed large scale change were described (Chandapillai, 2007). A
curious description was seen in which English speakers, Project colleagues, all acquired a shared “nativeness”. She stated that despite the deployment of native English teachers to assist with teaching in semi-urban and rural areas, and the avalanche of in house training and external courses teachers are expected to attend each year that there were only marginal improvements. In other local reporting and discussion which I have taken part in, the point of origin of international teacher educators often overrides competencies and skill levels with a sustained use of this term ‘native speaker.’ We will now look at the sustaining of this ‘native speakerism’ in wider contexts and the challenges and limitations of this very prevalent concept.

*The questionable sustaining of ‘native speakerism.’*

In outlining aspects where the role of native speakers are sustained, I shall not detail the vast backpacker market of English conversation teaching in Asia but will focus on the government sector and ELT teacher education, areas related to this research. I will relate other research linked to teacher educators’ perceptions. Firstly, defining whose English is the native English speakers ignores varieties and the fact that many English language teaching professionals are multilingual and they may be more linguistically complex and competent than a singular description of birthplace, as is the case of Teacher Educator A. He was raised as a ‘Third Culture Kid’ having been born in one country and raised in another differing from his parent’s birthplaces (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Secondly, it is not clear whose English is the ‘native’ one, as the Teacher Educator B who is from the United States related when fielding one of many queries about British versus American grammar usage and pronunciation (TE B Ref Prac 12 mins). Thirdly, initiatives to position expatriate teachers or teacher educators in other ‘cultures of learning’ may defranchise local expertise (Lee, 2005). Finally, while planners and commentators such as those cited above and numerous academics cite the issue of employing native speakers as being of concern, teachers are more focused on what they experienced while acquiring practical techniques.
The issue of which variety of English is the native one is linked to Malaysian teachers’ awareness of English language. This exposure to English is often gained through mass media, where there are differing varieties or what is termed in Malaysian English “the slangs” (T10 2 L30). In the practical situation of teacher education, more articulate teachers would ask about varieties of English, showing an awareness that English is an international language with many varieties. The defining of who is a native speaker of English is not therefore based on links to Great Britain which has previously been a major influence in English language teacher training for Malaysia (TE B Ref Prac 13 mins).

The challenges in defining English as an international language with a growing minority of English as a first language speakers, make the concept of native speaker a questionable one. As Modiano (2001) and Cook (1999) point out, English is no longer the property of a few powerful countries, as it is the communicative medium of many. They state that if the proficiency of the users of the language is related to birthplace and not to the capacity of speakers to use the language fluently and teach the language, one may support the term ‘native speaker’ but there will be little relevance to professional English language learning or teaching. In fact, it is also becoming widely accepted that English is no longer the exclusive realm of native speaking communities, as English language is a global medium in which newly arrived speakers have a right to a voice (Widdowson, 1994; Graddol, 1997). This view is also espoused by Norton (1997) who has experienced the dichotomy at work in Canadian immigrant situations, a situation in which people work with complex multilingual choices in everyday situations, much as in the Malaysian situation (Lee, 2003).

Clearly as one accepts the reality of a continuum rather than a dichotomy of native and non–native speaker, one has to deal with the many definitional challenges described above. There are also the complexities of multiple identities in bilingual or multilingual language learning settings, as is evident in recent Singaporean research (Stroud & Wee, 2007). The researchers describing Singaporean bilingual and multilingual students cite the concept of ‘liminality’ a condition where the network of classifications that are normally assigned by law, custom, convention or ceremony…
are suspended or put on hold’ (Stroud & Wee 2007, p.45). They observe that some teachers will cross over from the prescribed standard English language usage which is a normal classroom condition in an act of liminality so as to build empathy and signal less formality in the interaction. The teachers changed languages or codes, for example from English to Chinese or from so called standard English to Singlish, to create empathy with students and frame interaction in a less formal hierarchical mode. Lin (1988) also noted in her study of a Hong Kong classroom that alternating between Cantonese and English fostered a more relaxed and motivating learning climate. I suggest that the native speaker teacher educators also switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia to suspend some of the expectations that the native speaker would use only English and to signal a change from the conventional English-only training mode of earlier teacher courses. The switching languages, or as in the case of two of the TEs, the inclusion of some limited examples, could build empathy by linking to the identity of the bilingual or multilingual teachers. The most experienced TE, who is fluent in Malay, said that ‘Maybe it’s the way you introduce yourself. Maybe it’s throwing in a couple of Bahasa Melayu phrases, but the thing is, so they don’t feel intimidated’ (TE 1 L 42-44). Multiple and changing identities is a vast area beyond the scope of this study, but one underpinning a critical approach to sustaining perceptions of native speaker power (Medgyes,1994; Modiano, 2001).

In this study, three of the teacher educators made the point they had to establish their positioning and their identities as being not only a person from their birthplace but also a person who works and lives near where teachers teach. The local context then involves the teacher educator in using and displaying some local language and knowledge - often references to food - to position them selves as understanding of some details of the local culture. The links to the local situation are also established with the sharing of biodata information through which teachers gain personal knowledge of the teacher educator linked to her being non-threatenimg with a non-evaluative role and a sense of humour. Such a presenting of Self may assist local acceptance.

While some argue for redefining the native speaker /non native speaker model from a theoretical viewpoint others such as Kuo(2006), a Taiwanese researcher and some teachers in this study see the native speaker as an idealised source of sociocultural norms for English language communication. This view was expressed by
the articulate secondary teacher described earlier who argued for the native speaker as a source of sociocultural appropriateness which may not be found in textbooks. Such a rationale has often been expressed to myself in conversation with Ministry of Education officials at the decision making level. Although the post colonial Malaysia language authorities have no such public documented standards for supporting a native speaker model, there is support for the British English model through examination guides. Through the examination boards in which many examiners were British-trained, models of accuracy are defined through the frequent high stake school, State and national examinations. The so called native speaker model of British English is then used for examination writing. With the drive of testing underpinning much classroom learning (Pillay, 1998), a model of internationally comprehensible British English has been adopted in the research sites, whenever Teacher Educators are queried about accuracy.

Although all TEs could speak of and in their varieties (Welsh accent influenced with African experience, American, Canadian, Scots and English public school intertwined) they would tell teachers that the British English model is important as it is what Malaysian examiners expect (TE D Ref Prac 62 mins). In terms of the teacher education experience, teachers were exposed to more international varieties of English than any one standard, as the recordings in the appendices demonstrate. Although a few queries were about phonemic level pronunciation, as we have seen, most teacher queries were about communicative functions and situations, aligning with Kuo’s point that native speakers are a source of socio-cultural appropriateness (2006). Teacher educators were often being asked to describe culturally different settings and language functions. However as we will see, the perception that there is one native speaker standard and that learning from a native speaker is essential is not a framework which most teachers reported as central in their thinking.

Teacher responses to the question of ‘native speakers’.

There were a range of responses to the question regarding ‘native speakers’ as teacher educators working within the teachers’ communities. One teacher found working with an international teacher educator intimidating, but this was after her very first course with a European (T2). Three teachers expressed positive opinions in
detail that having the *orang putih* was important in terms of the content and experience which the expatriate teacher educators could input. One stated that it made no difference at all (T4), while the majority turned the topic to discussion of teacher education methodology differences.

At Site 1 a teacher described interacting with the teacher educator as ‘difficult’. Although she said she wants to learn more (L 163) she spoke at length of being ‘shy’ and scared of speaking in front of the ‘native speaker’. She related how the school environment did not support English usage and how she had never spoken with a European before (L 153- 1 168). However after describing how she found talking English difficult she said the training and supportive visits were “very good because we can improve our lesson’ (L 217-218). Interestingly the latter part of her discussion was about the teacher educator’s methods and this was the most common point of difference with many teachers discussion being about comparisons with previous training. An exceptional case was a teacher who used the presence in the District of the *orang putih* (European) as a motivating tool for her students (T1 2 L 60-75). She concluded at the latter part of the questioning about the TE that the methodology of the teacher education was the motivating aspect for her as the teacher educator was not only a novelty in the somewhat isolated district but a novelty for her as a course participant.

However, some older teachers with much experience saw the native speaker as a model of accuracy. These are teachers who went through the English medium of instruction, when grammar based approaches dominated ELT. It is possible that they yearn for the way in which they were taught, for as research has noted many teachers will teach and perceive learning in the way they were taught (Bailey, 2006). An example of this was an experienced Malay ELT teacher who had been teaching English for fourteen years. She commented on pronunciation awareness saying ‘We think we are in England’ (T 4 1 L 73). She then made two points that relate to language accuracy. ‘I mean is that, er, the difference is about the spelling – the pronunciation’, but in the next utterance she focuses on methodology ‘and the way he conduct the lesson, the activity, ah, also very interesting’ (T4 1 L 88-90). When the teacher described the teacher educator modelling how to organise speaking tasks she described this as ‘we are in England’ although the teacher educator was born in South Africa and left Wales after schooling in his early teens. She follows this
statement with positive statements about the teacher education methodology; an observation which is much more frequent for the teachers in this study than concerns with experiencing an English style from the originating country.

The importance of a pronunciation model of so called standard English was described after an early primary ‘phonics’ course. One teacher who had been educated in the English medium, which was the norm in most national schools before 1975, contrasted her experience with earlier courses. She described earlier language courses as ‘corrupt Malaysian’ (T 11 1 L 6). This teacher spoke of the modelling of pronunciation as providing an alternative to localized pronunciation models. At the secondary level, an experienced TESOL trained teacher in site 2 argued strongly for more ‘native speakers.’ He concluded the second interview in the same manner as the first, by advocating that more ‘native speakers’ be placed in rural districts. He described the teacher educator as a source of knowledge and model for communicative competence and the functions of grammar. This is the argument for the sociocultural competence aspect of using a language. The importance of contextualising English in cultural contexts, as described earlier, was a view expressed by this fluent user of the language with specialist TESOL training. For all the others on the Project, apart from two older English educated teachers, who tended to focus on accuracy, this was not a concern. The TESOL graduate viewed the native speaker teacher educator as an information source for the communicative functions of grammar items. Although he described the particular course content he had just experienced, he said he would go to all the teacher educator’s courses, speaking in a similar vein to other secondary teachers who were colleagues in his District. In fact he concluded, as did the majority of teachers, that teacher education methodology and affective factors were crucial to being motivated.

The majority of teachers described the role of the teacher educators in terms of what the teacher educators did rather than in terms of who they were. Apart from the modelling of standard English which appealed to three teachers most comments on the native speaker aspect focused on novel experiences facilitated by the teacher education methodology. In response to open ended questions as to whether there were any differences between the teacher educator’s approach and earlier teacher training, teachers were forthright. General statements on the innovative approaches, along with contrasts and comparisons were frequently made between previous
training and the approach of Project teacher educators. Both novice and experienced teachers in every site (T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T8, T9, T11, T12, T13, T16) compared previous teacher education experiences with the interaction described in this study. In the first interview, teachers’ comments in order of frequency were that there were differences in the teacher educators’ preparation, the use of gesture and movement, the presentation of aims and instructions, humour which was part of introducing oneself and facilitating interaction which linked or used classroom tasks.

The supportive follow up visits which were part of teacher educators brief were described as important by five teachers. Four teachers mentioned the use of questioning as important and new to them, both through experiencing the questioning techniques and as techniques which were part of how they changed their teaching. As teachers’ earlier courses would have been large scale, it is clear that the smaller project courses would involve more interaction with the teacher educator. Yet teachers were specific in that the teacher educators’ techniques differed from earlier experiences; ‘I enjoy. Because we never never got like this one’ (T1 L88). Linked to a sense of novelty was the participatory learning as ‘trainees actively participate’ (T10 L5) and experience tasks which they described as relevant as they ‘can do to my student’ (T1 L40). This suggests that the major difference is not derived from the teacher educators being a source of the English language, or being a correct model but being a model of motivating teacher education in which the experiential approach models tasks which teachers can transfer to the classroom.

*Teacher Educators and their perceptions of ‘native speakerism’.*

The teacher educators had varied perceptions of the role of native speakerism but, like the teachers were quick to contextualize the issue and cultural differences in terms of classroom management factors which create or impact on a culture of shared learning. All the teacher educators sought to contest the usefulness of what they perceived as hierarchical constraints in the learning culture of teachers wherein the native speaker could be viewed as the all knowing expert who did not understand the local culture of learning. TE A spoke of the native speaker issue as a sociolinguistic one, stating that often the term native speaker is conflated into the monolingual expert role. He argued that many teacher educators may come from English as first language.
countries but there was no clear definition of who a native speaker is, especially when English is clearly lingua franca of many (Seidhlofer, 2001) and some are native speakers of more than one language. TE A is himself a ‘Third Culture’ person and suggests that the issue is not about being a native speaker. He spoke at length of how teacher educators build social convergence through being bilingual and by identifying with the site of learning and that these approaches undermine dependence on the ‘expat’. He described himself as not a visiting expert as “I’m living here” (TE A 1 L 220). He spoke of pedagogy and classroom interaction with theoretical references to sociolinguistic convergence for which he advocates using a local language, even if minimally, to deconstruct social barriers and for teaching. “I’ve gone in and said it in Malay, explained it in Malay and they are very happy” (TE A 1 L 246-248). For him the position of a native speaker and positioning related to non-hierarchical relationship building in his immediate workplace setting. He consciously talks to and relates to peers in the office and to the pegawai (Director) down to the lowest korani (a clerk) (TE A 1 L 274-275). With such approaches the teacher educator is consciously working with his “Presentation of Self” (Goldman, 1959) with an instrumental aim in mind of creating interaction which is not preoccupied with hierarchy. Interestingly, he stated that he would do the same wherever he was teaching, (except of course that one would have to acquire the new national language). TE A said he would adopt the same process in varied countries as he sees many language teachers as being open to having stereotypical norms deconstructed, if there is a positive affective learning environment.

The teacher educator at Site 2 working with the most articulate secondary teachers found that she was viewed as a source of knowledge for finer points of usage. She reported that the senior high school teachers were interested in communicative appropriateness much as Timmis (2005) found in his research into grammar and native speakerism. TE B’s situation was also complex when she was asked about correctness in oral English, as she was a North American teaching in the Malaysian system which examined using the British models of what are correct often with an arcane preoccupation with minute details. In defining correctness, she often explained the differences between teachers’ American English television input and the examination driven correctness. As some of her teachers were TESOL trained, they then saw that although the teacher educator was a model that knew things ‘beyond the textbook’ to quote an experienced teacher, that English is an international language in which there are many varieties. To foster learning, TE B also highlighted the social relationship
aspects, speaking of how important ‘over coffee talk’ was. She described her limited Malay as appreciated, if for nothing else, as a humorous example of the challenges of language learning.

A Canadian colleague in Site 3 described his views of cultural difference as switching like a tabbed browser between his own cultural programming, local mores and the need for a structured classroom. Part of his positioning of the native speaker of English was to highlight the number of points of origin that the matsalleh could come from in both his introductory Powerpoint and in interaction. He made the diversity of origins of English language explicit in order to show the complexity of defining English language speakers and also so he could be identified as a Canadian. He was very explicit in describing an inner conflict between what he viewed as hierarchical structures, that which Hofstede (1997) terms Power Status and his own agenda as a teacher educator interested in non- hierarchical collaborative learning.

With TE D differences in learning approaches was a main response to my question about native speakerism. He rapidly turned to comparison of cultures of learning with statements such as “they come expecting it to be difficult, you know there is a culture in Malaysia – that you know- people are more motivated by getting things wrong. I don’t believe that for a minute’ (TE D 2 L 37-39). He then discussed cultural difference in terms of classroom management and this point was one which teachers also commented on – the novelty of the interactive task based pedagogy and a high level of enjoyment. TE D spoke of facilitating tasks where learners are successful, encouraged and praised. He linked this to not using reflection with teachers noting that evaluation or self questioning is often seen as a negative act linked with error correction. Drawing on his multilingual experience as he also teaches and trains in other languages, he noted that there is a different learning culture in Malaysia and he consciously set out to increase the use of positive reinforcement. He then spoke of consciously fostering change based on his experience and teachers positive feedback. The positive feedback was evident in the teachers’ interviews for TE D’s site.

In summary, even after probing and prompting, teacher educators addressed the issue of native speakerism with comparative statements about differences in cultures of learning. While TE B and her teachers responded most strongly to positive
aspects of involving a speaker of English as first language, citing the knowledge of cultural aspects in accuracy, most teachers did not make native speakerism a central concern. For most teachers and teacher educators the central concern is how learning can be maximized by building a sense of success by learning applicable techniques and tasks relevant to classrooms.

Current Reflective Practice and Research Findings for Rural Malaysian Reflection

Reflection, reflective practice and critical reflection all share self awareness techniques which have developed greater use in teacher education. The Project, within which this research was conducted, aimed to include opportunities for teachers to think about their practice and their thinking: to reflect (Farrell, 2007; Harrison et al, 2005b; Schon, 1987). Central to the orientation of teacher educators in the project and underpinning much of the methodology was the belief that courses would assist teachers in examining their own practice and reflecting on what would assist students' learning. Korthagen et al (2005) suggest that reflection in education occurs when teachers put their own beliefs of teaching and learning through a process of critical analysis and take greater responsibility for their own actions. We will now look at whether the interaction in the early phases assists this process after first contextualizing this much espoused process.

The Malaysian Schools English Language Project, included reflective practices as part of the teacher educator brief. Some teacher educators in the Project developed teacher reflective journals, a process outside the parameters of this research, but one which shows the currency of reflective practice. This jorunelling was for ‘reflection on action’ (Schon, 1987); raising awareness after the teaching/learning interaction. This approach to reflection on action was supported by the Curriculum Development Centre, the client, who had expressed concerns that teachers’ thinking and practice was in need of a change. It was suggested that if one could build teachers’ confidence and provide techniques which teachers would adopt, so that their thinking and practice for teaching and learning could change.

Early in the Project, which begun fully in January 2003, colleagues reported many difficulties in developing reflection as part of Malaysian teacher development and subsequently suggested that this research include some structured reflection on reflection itself. This concern was then included as a question about changes in
thinking or changes in views of teaching and learning, yet it became evident in the pilot study that the term ‘reflection’ was not widely known. The questions about reflection elicited responses at what could be described as the teaching analysis level. In terms of the levels of Harrison et al.’s (2005a, p. 274) framework the responses were thinking and acting on the everyday with immediate teaching and learning concerns. Kumaravadivelu (2006) draws on Mackey’s (1965) work of four decades ago to provide a useful distinction related to everyday classroom issues by comparing method analysis and teaching analysis. The former refers to an analysis of methods conceptualized and constructed by experts, and the latter refers to an analysis of what practicing teachers actually do in the classroom’ (2006, p.60). I would suggest that teachers involved in this study responded to questions dealing with changes in thinking as a concern with what they do in the classroom; classroom techniques and transferable tasks which they may have learned in training. Their responses suggest two possibilities: that the teachers prefer to focus on their core concerns, an analysis of teaching and learning and what is workable for classroom interaction or that teachers may be unused to the process and not have the language to critically reflect. The findings suggest that developing teacher reflection as part of the process of rural in-service teacher education is difficult. A possible difficulty may be that the primary teachers in this study lack the meta-language for reflection and may need a structured approach which is clearly demarcated as outside any evaluative systems. I will now link the findings to recent literature and suggest reasons for the challenges in developing reflection in the context of this research.

Ideally, reflection in education is an activity in which teachers put their own beliefs of teaching and learning through a process of critical analysis so that they take greater responsibility for actions. This involves self questioning and as Farrell (2004) notes such action is linked to a teacher’s confidence levels and a teacher’s sense of efficacy. I would suggest that confidence levels and linguistic competence are critical in terms of this research study as the two teachers who articulated responses to questions about changes in their thinking were relatively fluent, experienced TESOL graduate secondary teachers. One of these teachers reported that he uses group work and pair work extensively and stated that he regularly thinks about how he teaches and analyses the processes. When “I’m done with the lessons, I sit back and rethink what I’ve done, to the students” (T8 2 L 72). Even this phrase suggests a teacher rather than a learner focus, symptomatic of how embedded teacher focused thinking and teacher fronted methods are. At the same site, another English language trained graduate responded to the question about changes by first talking about
methodology. She compared her earlier teaching to teaching after the course input saying that, “Usually we teach in isolation. But now, after this course we will go more on the deductive way. We show the text first, then only the rules come out” (T7 2 L 53 – 55). When asked to describe how the course may have made her think about what she does in her classroom, the teacher replied that it had made her think of using more interesting dialogues, demonstrating a focus on techniques and the choice of materials. In other words, she talked of classroom practice and teaching -a teaching analysis- rather than expressing a critical self awareness of change. The teacher is therefore focused on a ‘teaching analysis’ although she was able to compare deductive with inductive methods. At the site 2 where this teacher was on the course the group had the largest number of graduates where the vocabulary of teacher and teacher educator discussion was more complex than at the three other primary level sites. I suggest that reflection in terms of teachers’ self critical awareness is dependent on the linguistic level of teachers and may need a structured approach.

Most teachers avoided any abstract responses or statements of either principles or self awareness. Questions about thinking about classroom practice were generally answered by answers which were concerned with classroom practice itself. It could be that are wary of “reflecting on their teaching if they experience blame, guilt or anger at themselves for not having taught well or for having adversely affected the students learning” (Stanley, 1999, p.12). This factor may be more marked, if teachers are used to evaluation of practice as a career linked grading process, as is usually the case of the hierarchical structures of Malaysia. Teacher educators spoke of this as a factor when prompting teachers for reflection. We will now look at other factors which may contribute to the limited responses to questions about changes in thinking.

There may be issues of ‘face’ for experienced teachers. Experienced teachers, who are part of in-service courses, are not a group who are commonly researched in the reflective practice field, so there is little to compare with. Most research into reflective practice, which I have been able to find, occurs in pre-service contexts, where there is more time and flexibility for reflective practices. There are exceptions in Stanley’s investigations into six language teachers (1998) and O’Sullivan’s (2002) report of in-service education in rural Namibia. I concur with Stanley that ‘If a teacher needs to work many hours a week to barely make a living, there may be little time left for reflective thinking and writing’ (1998, p.586). In Stanley’s 1998 research, teachers’
reflective journals provided data for a framework which she uses to describe the development of teacher thinking and self analysis, but this journal approach is a time consuming process (Ho & Richards, 1993). There is also the need expressed by some proponents of reflective teaching for teachers to regularly and persistently examine their own beliefs, again a time consuming process (Bailey, 2006).

I would suggest that the role of a skilled facilitator is important in examining one’s teaching beliefs and that perhaps my interview question on how thinking changes was overly ambitious and challenging. This may link to some suggestions that building practitioner knowledge through reflective activities requires collegial support and ongoing practice (Jones & Stubbe, 2004). Only when there is the provision for structured confidence building and co-constructed skills development can less fluent teachers move into reflection and examine their professional thinking and changes.

O’Sullivan’s (2002) research and that of Akbari suggest that there could be cultural issues with reflection. They suggest that as a teacher educator facilitates changes in transmission teaching modes, one needs to structure reflection as a step-by-step process linked to gaining the language of reflection in a supportive process. To reiterate, teacher educators may need to teach the skills of reflectivity and ‘provide the discourse and vocabulary that can serve participants in renaming their experience’ (Freeman, 2002, p.11). However, a link to practical techniques which teachers have experienced through the loop input approach is important for as Freeman continues ‘Articulation is not about words alone, however. Skills and activity likewise provide ways through which new teachers can articulate and enact their images of teaching’ (ibid).

Teacher educators also reported learning through activities. In this study, the teacher educators said that they found space and time to reflect on teaching and learning. As we shall see, reflection was put into practice by teacher educators in varied ways.
The role of reflective teaching and the teacher educators’ perspectives.

The teacher educators involved in the in-service courses did not report using an overt process of reflection during their courses. When it came to their own practices teacher educators applied an active approach to reflection for their own professional development. This included the more challenging aspect of reflection on the process of reflection. They spoke of the development of understanding through interpretation with an analysis of the way they reflect (Harrison, 2004; Harrison et al., 2005a). However reflection for teachers during the courses was less common. For three of the four teacher educators there is much more attention given to procedural knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge or reflection for teachers. Procedural knowledge involves ‘knowing how to use the target language, knowing how to behave appropriately in the target culture and knowing how to teach’ (Bailey, 2002, p.4). The latter, knowing how to teach, was an important focus through the experiential approach with frequent activities. TE A approached reflective practice for teachers from a classroom practitioner viewpoint, supporting the view that being able to talk about the language and teaching and oneself was less important than being able to teach. His focus was therefore on “Teaching Analysis’ rather than “Method Analysis” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), as described earlier. TE B spoke of questioning and self questioning as her approach to both teachers’ and her own reflection. TE C whose courses focused on procedural knowledge was very articulate in using a metaphor of ‘tabbed browsing' to refer to his own personal ‘reflection in action’ (Schon, 1987). TE D linked teacher reflection negatively to evaluative processes which he saw as too dominant in teachers’ previous experiences. We will now look at these varied viewpoints in further detail.

At Site 1, the teacher educator said that teachers could see reflective processes as too much like evaluation and that may threaten the development of trust. He wanted to be seen in a non-judgmental role and highlighted the supportive observation visits early in courses. "Right at the outset I want to get them to feel relaxed about visits. Get it out front…so we don’t get seen as part of the Inspectorate" (TE Ref Prac L 38-40). For this Teacher Educator the underlying drive of maintaining learners’ interest and modelling tasks for the classroom informed his choice of techniques. He stated quite emphatically “Like I said, right from the beginning, how can I be interesting? That’s part of the reflective process.” (L65). In other words when he observes lack of interest he reflects on why and so reflection is for him a response to others. His focus and that of
the other teacher educators could be described as professional development through experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Morine-Dershimer, 2006). Although he is aware of the research on reflection, TE A spoke quite critically of too much theory being talked to teachers, who in his view really wanted to work with practical transferable techniques. He expressed the view that a supportive non-judgemental learning situation could be threatened by reflection being perceived as an evaluation which could be “used in promotion and all that”. As a teacher educator however, he sees reflection for himself as analysis of what went well in a session and commented positively on the self analytical nature of the Reflective Practice interview. He spoke of occasionally reflecting in action, that is during a training session, but more frequently reflecting on action after teaching (Schon, 1987).

Questioning was central to TE B’s lesson and her pedagogy, to the extent that in her view, once teachers question, then self awareness will develop as described earlier in the findings. She noted however that there are cultural and institutional aspects which impact on developing critical awareness through greater use of questioning. She said that teachers need a sense of security and confidence that information would not be made public before they would reflect on their practice. Her view was that attention should be put on teachers’ use of questions and from their use of questions and observing the related learning they should be mentored in the use of self questioning. Her viewpoint here aligns with the work of O’Sullivan (2005) and others who assert the need for culturally sensitive structured reflection with progressive amounts of disclosure and self analysis. This suggests the need for a practical progression through levels of reflectivity with supportive mentoring. TE B, of all the teacher educators, had incorporated some reflective elements when teachers would report back on techniques used in classrooms and evaluate what was successful and what was not. I was not able to observe these reflective elements during the period of research. However, I had previously seen this approach which was also with the more fluent secondary school teachers who had the language to discuss pedagogy.

TE C has a sociology background which may contribute to his articulation of his own approach to reflection. He asserts that he fosters reflection in teachers by asking them questions and setting questioning tasks in pairs or groups but this is a limited view of reflection. The critical element central to reflection is seen by him as being too face threatening as teachers may see questioning as linked to judgmental evaluation,
so there may be little reflection. He spoke of avoiding teacher reflection on their own practice as it could put the private classroom practice into the public domain which may actually threaten changes in pedagogy. He observed that teachers are always testing in schools and they could possibly see the reflective process as another testing process. Within the teachers’ professional setting, reflective tasks may be seen as part of a judgmental process for “They say ‘we have to be careful.’ They feel they are being...well,...judged and evaluated ” (TE Ref Prac L 18-19). Reflection then may not be accepted as teachers may not see it as a “safe” part of their culture of learning and teaching in which self judgment or analysis may be used by those higher up in the hierarchy. It is possible that reflection could have been developed within the course framework, if the teacher educator articulated and structured the process linked to classroom application.

Teacher educator C noted that when it came to reflecting, during and after the course, he had three unwritten objectives: the breaking of barriers, affective factors and a third in “seeming contradiction” (TE Ref Prac L 88) to the first two points of preferring “quite structured classrooms” (TE Ref Prac L 89). He did not however make reflective notes of the process, but reflected on what he terms the “tabbed browsing going on in my brain” (TE Ref Prac L 97). These multiple ‘tabs’ are “my ideal lesson as learner myself, the cultural situation in which I find myself” and the “objectives of the lesson” (TE Ref Prac L 101, L 103). The teacher educator was particularly forthcoming when linking the “tabbed browsing” metaphor to the interview questions related to cultural aspects which impact on training. In using the tabbed browsing metaphor one can see reflection in that the TE is examining his understandings of things which puzzle him, in the way that Schon describes reflection:

There is some puzzling or troubling or interesting phenomenon with which the individual is trying to deal. As he tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understandings which have been implicit in his action, understandings which he surfaces, criticizes, restructures and embodies in further action.

Schon, 1983, p.50
When asked about reflection such as Schon describes, TE D made similar points to other colleagues that teachers may respond to reflection on practice as evaluation. He said that it made more sense to do more activities with teachers which would increase their confidence in using pair work and group work before fostering reflection. He is in way agreeing with O'Sullivan (2002) that reflection needs a basis of teacher efficacy, an incremental approach and a supportive structure for mentoring reflection which relates to the local culture of teaching and learning. However, for himself he found the reflective process of the Reflective Practice interview valuable. His positive response to the use of transcripts and field notes for teacher educator reflection was common to all the teacher educators.

Summary

Response to the role of working with a native speaker varied with some teachers seeing the teacher educator as a source of cultural communicative competence, while the majority deflected this aspect for a concern with the experiences that the course provided. Teacher educators were more articulate than teachers in describing native speakerism and cultural difference and the teacher educators consciously sought to deconstruct a perception that they may be seen as experts. Teacher educators used verbal and non verbal techniques, including moving rapidly into transferable classroom techniques with some bilingualism. The techniques may have contributed to teachers’ perceptions that the project teacher education process was different from earlier experiences. Teacher educators used humour and situated themselves as familiar with the learning culture. They linked to everyday needs through short tasks and positive reinforcement aiming at enjoyment and meeting day to day needs to deconstruct stereotypes to build learning linked to the local culture of learning. Reflective processes were evident in teacher educators and less articulated by teachers for whom the reflective process may need structuring as a non threatening supportive process linked to classroom concerns. Teachers’ responses to reflective processes were often responses about the techniques but this may relate to unfamiliarity with the process which would require a supportive approach to develop more fully. In the next chapter. However reflection by teacher educators using the data as a springboard for reflection was perceived by the teacher educators as a valuable tool for teacher educator development I shall describe the implications of the study, its limitations and areas for future research.
CHAPTER 9

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This study set out to produce descriptions of verbal and non-verbal techniques which build positive responses to an English language teacher trainer in the early phases of an in-service course. The study aimed to describe perceptions of cross cultural dynamics which impact on teacher training and development within the context of rural Malaysian in-service teacher education. Through observation, transcript analysis and a series of interviews, answers were sought as to what procedures and techniques develop responses when experiencing a new English language teacher education methodology in the early phases of an in-service course. With an awareness of ongoing concerns about ‘native speakerism’ the study sought to describe Malaysian teachers’ and English-as-a-first-language teacher educators' perceptions of the learning culture factors at play in early phase interaction. In order to enrich the observations and reporting, a reflective aspect was built into teacher educator interviews. This was undertaken through questions about teacher thinking in the interviews and as part of later interviews with teacher educators. The aim was to use the research itself, in particular the field notes and transcript of interaction as a platform for teacher educator reflection on practice. The research then fed back into the teacher educators’ own awareness of their early phase actions, task organisation and talk. Teacher educators expressed views that reflecting on the data of interaction was useful as a springboard for reflection.

Teacher Responses

I will summarize teachers’ responses to the teacher education tasks, talk and experiences. The majority, but not all, responded positively to tasks which are immediately transferable to classrooms. This was the Project brief but more importantly was widely adopted because it engendered both teacher educators’ and teachers' sense of success. The teacher educators involved teachers in tasks which could be
transferred to classroom use. The usefulness of the tasks was explicitly stated by all teacher educators. Within the first twelve minutes once all participants had arrived, teachers had experienced a simple technique and most teachers commented on the usefulness of this for their students.

Teachers described teacher educators as friendly, perceiving this through talk and behaviour, yet many lacked the vocabulary, for example, to describe why the teacher educator was seen as a ‘funny friendly man.’ The understanding may also relate to teachers responding positively to self deprecatory humour and clear instructions with the teacher educator being ‘Othered’ as the matsalleh, yet being accepted as being locally situated. One conjectures that the ‘friendliness’ may also be a response to courses which contrasted with previous teacher training experiences. Although previous teacher training involved acceptance of the top-down mass approach, it is possible that such acceptance is a passive compliance and that when an alternative is experienced and seen as immediately applicable to classroom needs the alternative is seen as more acceptable. The client, the Ministry of Education had also requested for an alternative to prior approaches which were large groups experiencing information dissemination and this request was part of the project. The needs analysis and teacher feedback in the early days of the project informed the approach of engaging teachers in hands-on tasks within the first twelve to fifteen minutes. It is possible that teachers are interested in teacher education which is experiential, smaller scale and more personal in its approach. Nine out the sixteen teachers reported that they used their alternative experience in the project courses to transfer techniques to their classrooms. These teachers had therefore been through an alternative to a large scale instructionally based mode with in service courses which were experiential (Kolb, 1984) with loop input (Woodward, 2003).

Teachers reported that there was clarity in instructions and that there was a sense of being involved in learning. In summary, twelve of the sixteen teachers focused not on principles of learning or the widely espoused need for reflection on pedagogy, but on transferring techniques which could be readily applied to classroom needs. It is likely that greater reflection would have been developed if teachers had been equipped with the vocabulary and a structured approach to reflection which was not face-threatening. Articulation of teacher learning was generally related to the experience of techniques which were of use to them in the classroom.
Teacher Educator Techniques

The analysis of the teacher educator discourse revealed a number of techniques which were shared across the four sites. When the teacher educator introduced himself or herself, there was the use of humour and self deprecatory remarks, an area which has been not been extensively described in other research for language teacher development. As noted earlier, most of the current research on humour and discourse strategies is in terms of workplace interaction (Holmes, 2000). In the Malaysian in-service teacher courses, the teacher educators made direct reference to status with humour and self deprecatory remarks such as colleagues not knowing who the TE was he first arrived. The teacher educators would also highlight that he or she was not in a position of threatening power and was not an evaluator. The tension in terms of Power Status was that status had been attributed to the teacher educator as he or she is working out of the District Education Office of the Ministry, yet the teacher educators stated that they deliberately undercut or downplayed this. The research supports this teacher educator viewpoint. It is possible that there is attribution of status to the teacher educators from which they can be accepted, while the teacher educators paradoxically deconstruct the status through direct statements and their techniques of teacher education. In the findings, I reported instances of the use of self deprecatory humour which was delivered in a joking comedian-like tone, as can be heard in the recordings. I suggest that there are some links here to deconstructing the perceptions which teachers may have of the native speaker expert as a giver of knowledge, part of the transmission mode of teaching and learning. The teacher educators were therefore involved in a presentation of Self (Goldman, 1959) positioning themselves as a facilitator who was accommodative and not interested in fostering status driven interaction. Generally, those seen as in positions of authority in the Bahasa Malaysia discourse community will not use humour in their instructional lecture approach. Other teacher educator techniques which are more fully described in other research included questioning, using positive reinforcement, the role of non-verbals in cultivating a positive affective response, as well as linking content to immediate needs through modelling success with tasks. Describing and using the national language, Bahasa Malaysia, was a well received aspect of the teacher educators’ delivery styles. I turn first to summarizing the role of introducing oneself.
The primacy effect (Hogg, 1988) which describes how first impressions impact on perceptions would be at work when teacher educator introduce themselves. Behaviours involving close proxemics and movement away from the norm of the teacher always positioned at the front of the class was reported by teachers as an important part of building acceptance. Teacher educators' talk about themselves to position themselves as non-hierarchical and non-threatening, such as when one TE was explicit about teachers not being afraid of him as he was not linked to the Inspectorate and that he was a ‘teacher’. In an interpretation of Palfreyman's (2002) term, ‘Othering' the teacher educators seek to distance themselves as being other than an inspector or other than linked to career evaluation. Firstly, teacher educators initiate discussion of personal details and use humour to move rapidly into hands-on classroom tasks. Secondly, through both explicit statement and techniques the teacher educators distance themselves from the role of a judgmental Inspectorate and thirdly, present themselves as more situated in local understanding.

The teacher educators all reported that teachers were very curious about the personal and professional backgrounds of the *matsalleh* (European). At Site 1, the teacher educator would give his biodata before explaining the rationale of why he was living and working in the District. This was based on his earlier experiences which were similar to the other three colleagues. Clearly, teacher educators have adapted to the local setting and made discourse choices based on perceptions of the need for communication accommodation. Details which may be construed as personal in some cultural settings such as marital status, number and ages of children if applicable and the relationship with ones parents were viewed as important in the rural Malaysian school settings. TE C noted that "my experience with Malaysian teachers is that they are very curious about what would in my own culture, be considered personal details" (TE Int 1 L 17-18).

One could postulate that small communities such as those in the rural Districts want to position a new arrival and that if one construes Malaysia as being power status oriented, albeit within the limited national model (Hofstede, 1997), then perhaps the questions are related to wanting to socially and professionally position the teacher educator. Anecdotally, I am aware of two other teacher educators in the Project who were perceived as *sombong* or arrogant. Teachers reported that these two very qualified teacher educators kept disclosure of their background to the professional
aspects. The two teacher educators were also perceived as not being humorous. It is very likely that the perception of these particular TEs would create social distancing as some teachers may view a teacher educator as positioning herself as distant and due to qualifications, as ‘higher’ in the educational hierarchy. I noted that TE C described how teachers would make their seniority, title and position in school the first part of introducing themselves and that the teachers would be very attentive during this introductory session. Perhaps providing the personal details outside the power status statements of being well qualified and using humour builds affective factors for some social convergence. A greater social convergence may assist acceptance of new techniques. It is possible that teachers’ attitudes to the courses with the novel techniques and an emphasis on peer to peer interaction through the loop input approach created the space for accepting difference. Some teachers suggested that they approached the in-service courses as a networking and social event in which they wanted to learn in an enjoyable non-threatening way. As T9 remarked in his course, “we feel free, I personally feel free”.

Such an expression contrasts with the descriptions of earlier large scale courses which most of the teachers had attended. The teacher educators were experienced enough to realize that the early experiences in an in-service course required that they establish themselves as different from other teacher education experiences. While there were techniques which they were aware of using while setting up the early phases, there were other aspects which this study has described of how teacher educators became aware through this study. However, in analysing the processes of early phase interaction there were limitations which I will now describe.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations of the study concern the target population and the methodology. I will first describe the limitations intrinsic to the group of teachers who participated in the research. These include the influence of the teacher’s language proficiency, their previous teacher education, course experience, gender, and community use of English. Then I will describe some limitations related to teacher educator interaction and any pedagogic implications, principally the role of personality.
There were also aspects of data gathering which created limitations and these are described in the last part of this section.

Limitations and teacher responses.

The reported data may be influenced by teachers’ levels of proficiency with some reporting being in a mix of languages. Although I made it clear that I understood and could speak Bahasa Malaysia, the communicative expectations of the interviewees would be that they should speak in English to an interviewer whose first language is English and whose research topic was English language in classrooms. However, I did find that for the less fluent in English in the most rural site, Site 1, the responses in Malay were useful and addressed the interview questions. The Malay was checked with a fluent first language speaker. It is clear however that greater complexity, both grammatically and in the content, is evident in the graduate secondary school teachers’ answers. How much is a reflection of pedagogic knowledge and how much is related to confidence in English language is a difficult point to decide. The optimum that one could do was to provide a non-threatening bilingual environment with a semi-structured interview approach to facilitate full responses. When I was interviewing there were no judgmental comments to any interview responses in terms of both language and content.

A differentiation between sites was evident with the varied amounts of teachers’ exposure to these teacher educators’ courses. This factor was not anticipated in the research design as it eventually proved logistically impossible to observe all neophyte participants in any of the 30 Project sites. At Site 1, all participants and all interviewees were novices in the Project training. Half of the teachers in the course at Site 2 had been to a teacher educator’s course held by the previous ELC and two of the four interviewees had attended the current teacher educator’s previous training. These two interviewees were selected in order to provide a spread of gender and teaching experience. Interestingly, the two interviewees who had attended previous courses were the most articulate in comparing the Project approach with other providers in terms of the number of utterances and in terms of detail. In particular, the interviewee with the most exposure of all the 16 participants was an advocate of the native speaker teacher educator as a model of communicative appropriateness. It is difficult to
conjecture whether this position reflects his need for greater complexity in spoken and written grammar at the upper secondary level, or whether the response was an articulation of his TESOL training or thirdly a response to what he views as a strength of having native speaker expertise situated close to his school. When probed in the first interview, he repeated that the native speaker brought both accessibility and communicative knowledge to unpacking grammar and language usage. In the final interview, he repeated his strong advocacy of the native speaker as both a model of language use and a model of teacher development with supportive school visits and accessibility. At Site 3 all participants were new to the courses. At Site 4, 15 of the 24 participants had been to courses one year before and one of the interviewees had attended previous courses. In summary, of the 16 interviewees, three had attended earlier courses and all three were positive about implementing classroom change.

Gender is an influence in all communication and an area well researched in cross cultural communication (Holmes, 2000). This study chose not to focus on this explicitly, however the choice of teacher interviewees aimed to reflect the composition of the teaching population which is predominantly female. The inclusion of a women teacher educator also aimed to provide balance in the teacher educator descriptions of interaction and was representative of the male/ female ratio in the wider Project team. Yet gender was discussed as an influence in teacher educator methodology with TE B, TE C and TE D stating explicitly that they paid attention to grouping to avoid three distinct behaviours viewed as dependent on personality but predominantly linked to male teacher presence. These were a male tendency to joke and go off task, male dominance of the group and lack of participation. There was a shared perception, which was stated by three teacher educators, that women teachers were more active participants in Malaysian teacher development. This aspect is beyond the scope of this study and has not otherwise been researched in the local context, (perhaps not unsurprisingly given a male dominated administrative structure). Specifically within the research interaction, TE B found as a woman that the questions which she would regard as personal in her own cultural setting required careful deflection but the questions were not, in her view, deliberately intrusive. She said that these questions were driven by small town curiosity where she lived and worked as a single woman encountering statements of amazement that she actually lived by herself.
An aspect which would impact on teachers’ motivation in the early phases of teacher education may be their encounters with English language outside the classroom. While the research aimed to address differences through involving teachers of different English language training and different ethnicity, the role of the environment outside the classroom was not directly addressed in the interview. At times, teachers would reveal influences such as reading as a child (T 4) and television (T 8, T 14) but for most of the teachers, it is evident that there is little English in the community. There are localised differences which I shall now describe, as there may be influences here in terms of motivation for classroom change. In choosing to use a site by site approach for describing the lesson interaction, I fore-grounded the differences where situations may be localized as the result of a number of factors which make Malaysia so diverse. The findings can therefore be seen as very situated with varied linguistic and economic influences resulting from proximity to urban setting and from racial diversity. On the one hand, it is of interest that commonalities emerge in this diversity, yet any generalisability relies on the reader finding parallels with his or her situation and his or her cultural frameworks. For example, it is very evident that the amount of exposure to English language for teachers and the students with whom they work varies considerably. At Site 1 in rural East Malaysia, where few tourists go and Malay, Dusun and Kadazan creates a multilingual environment of languages, one teacher had never talked to a European before, and one does not hear any English outside of the schools and television programmes. Site 2, in contrast, a country town with 27% Chinese speakers was an hour away from Kuala Lumpur, albeit on a mountainous highway. The amount of through traffic, the multi-racial nature of the small town and the proximity to the capital city fosters greater exposure to English language. Site 3 was a very small southern country town in a district dominated by palm oil plantations with a higher proportion of Indian teachers than the other Districts, an area where English would be rare in the immediate community but occasionally heard in nearby Johor. Site 4, near the metropolitan Klang Valley is close to wider English usage and it had the most ethnically diverse cohort of teachers involved in this study. The research design therefore set out to capture diversity in an attempt to find common themes in the teaching community. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine the role of external influences impacting on teachers’ proficiency and motivation.
Limitations and teacher educators’ responses.

An under-researched area of classroom interaction is that of teachers’ and teacher educators’ personalities. While there is research within the field and I have even observed teacher education within Malaysia which tried to merge personality stereotyping with teacher classroom behaviours, such a framework for research has difficulties. To work with a personality typology framework would superimpose preconceived categories rather than having analysis derive from the data itself. There is greater objectivity in the research if categories of talk and observable non-verbals inform analysis, without the imposition of a framework of personality variables. While some may argue that personalities are an influence on classroom interaction, this research has focused on the observable and recordable, especially when descriptions of the role of personality in teaching are open to further contestation when examined from frameworks of cultural differences.

A further limitation is that all teacher educators will bring their past experience and their own pedagogic frameworks to their reflections and methodology. Yet interestingly they all share the same pragmatic approach to teacher education. As the sample size is small, one can only suggest that there is much of interest suggested by the convergence of data between the teachers and teacher educators in the diversity of sites.

Limitations in the methodology.

The limitations of the methodology will address three main areas: the positioning of myself (Davies & Harre, 1990) as the researcher, the data gathering process and limitations within the data itself.

As a researcher, I was firstly obviously perceived as a matsalleh with a vested interest in English language. This may have impacted on the teachers reporting in Bahasa Malaysia as they could have perceived their own use of English as a loss of face when communicating with myself, the researcher. Yet while I clearly know the teacher educator and the local setting, I explicitly stated that I was not linked to the Ministry of
Project as a researcher. I aimed to deconstruct the English language aspect as much as possible by casual remarks in Malay and making my position of no longer being linked to the Project or the Ministry as clear as possible. Confidentiality was stressed before and after each interview.

When focusing on observing teacher educator behaviours and making field notes, it is likely that some teacher to teacher interactions were missed. However the alternative of video-taping the class interaction was not followed as videotaping is unusual in Malaysian classrooms. Video recording is likely to be viewed as being used as a record which could impact on promotion. According to two teacher informants, whom I queried in the preliminary stages of this research, videotaping would be highly intrusive and cause teachers to be less vocal. A second area of limitations in data gathering was the difficulty of recording group interactions, especially in two of the classrooms in which there was additional outside noise along with noisy air conditioners. It is likely that the group interactions could yield further discourse data on how effective the teacher educators’ instructions were. I chose instead to move around the classroom observing the groups at work. This led to teachers asking me questions where I could do little but respond to their queries at two sites. The questions were mostly language specific clarifications. I noted down these actions in the field notes but am aware that much needs to be researched in the area of group interactions. It is likely that the rapid development of unobtrusive digital recording technology will facilitate this in the near future.

At Site 2, a traffic accident en route caused me to arrive six minutes into the classroom interaction, although five latecomers arrived after me. The teacher educator reported that she was using a technique which would last about twelve minutes as latecomers were a recurring feature of the courses. This raises the wider issue that the interaction which I have reported operates in a learning culture in which the late arrival of course participants is a norm. Such a norm impacts on generalisability for other settings, especially when the focus is on the early phases of interaction. Approaches to being on time is one aspect of cultural difference which impacts on behaviours in many communication situations, such as with airline operations in different parts of the world, as I found when working on cross cultural training for Singapore Airlines in 2000-2002 as a consultant-trainer. As such, there is little point in generalising the processes of the first five minutes for a setting such as generally punctual contexts of Japan. A limitation
of this research is that it must be considered in light of a learning culture in which the first five minutes are often what one terms in the English language teaching world, ‘warm-up’ or ‘holding’ activities.

As well as data gathering, we need to consider the limitations to the nature of the data itself. This study focused on the early phase interaction and responses to that in terms of motivation and reported classroom changes or, at the very least, one-off experiments with newly acquired techniques. The limitation is that one cannot claim causality between acceptance of the early phases interaction and subsequent motivation to try out new techniques. However, teachers reported that the early phases of interaction influenced acceptance or otherwise of techniques. I was aware when designing the research that teachers’ views would be the focus and that probing for details of techniques used needed to be rigorous. One is dependent on the reported changes and the rigor of probing for details as described in the findings. Although there was a single serendipitous observation of a lesson which was clearly using techniques which I had described in this research, I depended on the teachers’ reporting which I probed rigorously. This study is therefore primarily about the observed and recorded early phase interaction and how teachers report their responses and attitudes to techniques. The majority of teachers reported using the techniques of the teacher courses as part of pedagogic change. The implications of how much change was fostered are therefore described in a short term framework reliant on teacher and teacher educator perceptions. The study would have greater generalisability when talking about teacher education techniques if there was a longitudinal element. Such an aspect would address one of the fundamental questions of teacher education; how much really was accepted after initial interest or did the teachers later revert to the comfort of the familiar?

**Pedagogic Implications**

A number of techniques were positively received by teachers. I will therefore suggest some pedagogic approaches and techniques for teacher education. Secondly, I will suggest that there are some lessons from the interaction in terms of teacher education design. Thirdly, there are pedagogic implications for the importance of reflection in teacher education. Teacher educators developed acceptance when they
explicitly described who they were and their role in terms of classroom needs. Although this highlighting of oneself may involve details which a teacher educator could find personal, there are benefits in learning what particular details interest teachers from other cultures. This may require ‘unlearning’ one’s own notions of what is personal or private information, for example one’s family life, in order to garner greater acceptance. Self deprecatory humour, once the teacher educator had established credibility, was appreciated by rural Malaysian teachers. The teacher educators sought social convergence (Berns, 1990,) through their use of humour and use of local references presenting themselves as understanding some of the local setting. An awareness of presentation of Self (Goldman, 1959) in terms of accommodating to a learning culture suggests a need for orientation training for teacher educators linked to presentational techniques. In this research the teacher educators techniques helped with deconstructing the power status aspects Teachers were accepting of the ways teacher educators presented themselves as the courses established their own set of different interactional patterns, in contrast to teachers’ earlier teacher education experiences.

In many cultural settings where punctuality is a fluid concept, such as in Malaysia, it is useful to begin teacher education courses with comparatively simple interactive tasks such as chain stories. This creates a space so that latecomers are accepted into the class and involved rapidly in experiencing learning. This concept of teacher education being experiential (Kolb, 1979) was central to teachers perceiving courses as useful. The repeated positive teacher refrain was one of having experienced tasks which could be understood, seen as applicable and related to a sense of success. The teachers in this study expressed little interest in underlying theory, although this interest could relate to linguistic levels and not being used to the process of reflection, as discussed earlier. Those few who did not find the training useful, namely higher level secondary teachers, were detailed in critiquing the immediate applicability of middle level tasks to their senior classes.

Clearly some pedagogic principles are well known; one needs to make the usefulness of tasks clear and information should be presented in short chunks. Questioning should come later in courses as it may be seen as threatening, as in an hierarchical system when questioning may be seen as questioning the social position of others. It was evident that pair and group activities are very useful for modelling classroom use as well as providing peer to peer interaction in a teacher education
course. For teacher development, it is more useful in the rural setting to move quickly into short tasks related to classroom needs and of short duration. No task in this research was more than 19 minutes, the longest being a secondary grammar awareness and the shortest a five minute elementary pair work information gap technique. In all of the tasks, signposting the process rather than the product was important with explicit statements of methodology again being a small proportion of teacher educator discourse. There was frequent use of praise and echoic repetition with no negative judgmental statements recorded. I will now describe some pedagogic implications for non-verbal aspects of early phase teacher education interaction.

Proxemics are often under reported in teacher education research, yet all the teacher educators reflected that moving away from the front of the class and being aware of one’s posture and gestures was important in their methodology. Teachers in fact contrasted the ‘up the front’ instructive mode of previous teacher education courses with the movement of the Project TEs with statements such as “when we are in groups, he comes down to our level " (T 16, 2 ,18). This use of the wider classroom space and the moving physically down to teacher seating level during group work was used by all teacher educators. Open handed gestures were frequent. One can only conjecture that this may contribute to teachers’ perceptions of the teacher educator as “friendly” and “like us with the kids.” While proxemics, haptics and positive responses to the use of gesture have been researched in psychology in some detail (Burgoon, 1990 et, al.) non-verbals in teacher education remain an area in need of further description.

Teacher education project challenges were interwoven with the varied rural settings and the relationship between teacher educators and teachers in rural Districts. The ‘native speaker’ issue was less challenging than initially perceived, yet clearly more articulate and qualified teachers valued the communicative competence knowledge of the native speaker who has lived in an English language culture. This knowledge should not be underplayed as it is valued, yet I suggest that it is the ‘power’ aspect and the perceptions of being seen as a transmitter of knowledge which pose greater challenges. The techniques which may deconstruct the powerful expert perception then become important in deconstructing a native speaker dependence. It is useful to note that four teachers spoke of the TE being a native speaker as being of no consequence, “cos we work together, so no matter” (T4 2 L 35). Five teachers were very explicit on the importance of participatory training as being the main point of
working with the *matsalleh*. I suggest that using participatory techniques which are experiential and based on the loop input approach is useful if one wants to build shared learning in early phase teacher education to overcome some of the wrought reliance on ‘native speakerism’.

As part of the research process, I aimed for total transparency and co-construction of teacher educator understanding. I suggest that non-evaluative field notes focusing on observable behaviours such as classroom positioning, gestures and proxemics are valuable for teacher educator development. Far too often the only observation of teacher education is evaluative. Teacher educators were positive about the opportunity to become more aware of the non-verbal behaviours and their verbal patterning, question types and repetitive verbal fillers. A self recording and playing it back may be a less time-intensive mode which could assist teacher educators to become more aware of their methods.

Teacher educators gained acceptance when using some local language according to the teachers’ statements. It may benefit all to acknowledge that explanation of abstract terms in the local language may be a better use of time than an insistence on English only, more so when English in rural Malaysia is often closer to English as a foreign language than English as a second language. Clearly, teacher educators often need to be aware of local cultures of learning when fostering change, as expressed in TE Cs ‘tabbed browsing’ metaphor. He notes that one switches between cultural awareness and an agenda of structuring maximal learning. I suggest that an orientation time in international teacher education projects is critical with time focused on classroom needs, rather than national syllabi or urban statements of the ideal. Adapting to local cultures of learning was seen as important in acceptance of the teacher educators’ approaches to sharing techniques. Teacher educators were involved in communication accommodation as they learnt to build social convergence and acceptance. As affective factors are so critical after a hard day’s teaching, the social aspects of relationship building in the class and during the coffee breaks contribute strongly to a successful culture of in service learning in rural Malaysia. Teacher educators need to approach development education as a learning process in which local knowledge is as valued as any pedagogic expertise. Techniques can then be accepted into the local learning culture. There is also a need to highlight the importance of open-minded listening and observation before transferring techniques.
and pedagogy. Teachers also demonstrated a willingness to engage in interaction with new tasks in a small group setting which may suggest that interaction in comparatively small groups engenders positive responses.

Reflective practice has been wisely advocated and is part of this research. The Malaysian teachers in this research reported more interest in everyday classroom concerns than in reflection. There may be a need to address the levels of other demands upon teachers so there is the time and space for reflection. I suggest that structuring reflection in stages of graduated disclosure with supportive mentoring could foster greater reflectivity in classroom practice. When reflection is seen as non-threatening there could be greater acceptance in learning cultures where self-analysis may not be prominent.

Teacher educators responded positively to the use of transcripts and field notes as a springboard for reflection. The use of data as a focal point for analysis of teacher education behaviours has as much potential for reflection as it has for research itself. Although much research is focussed on pre-service development the professionalism of the field could benefit by linking data from non-evaluative observation of in-service training to teacher educator reflection.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

As can be seen in the limitations of the research, there are areas for further study. This study involved four sites, all with shared features and unique aspects. Rural settings are very different from urban English language learning sites. It would be useful to research the difference between espoused national cultures of education and the localized interpretations in rural situations. At times, although English is espoused to be a second language in Malaysia, it is actually a foreign language with little communicative usage in the community and as such requires a different methodology from TESOL norms. Often language teacher education in Malaysia is bilingual, especially in areas where teachers’ own English language skills are limited. Along with this difference is the fact that increasing numbers of so-called ‘native speakers’ working in language teacher education are bilingual or multilingual. How teachers accept or
perceive bilingual or multilingual teacher educators would be an interesting path to explore in deconstructing the native speaker mythology. The role of bilingualism also points to the importance of Malaysian teacher educators as the teachers concern was not whether the teacher educator was a native speaker but was focussed on the teacher educators’ techniques.

When examining teacher education techniques, the role of humour is an area of teacher education which could yield interesting findings especially when some perceive humour as culturally loaded. Non-verbals also differ and can be areas of contested meaning. The relationship between non-verbals which model techniques differing from the transmission mode of teacher-fronted delivery is an area in need of further description. This is also a research area for tertiary tutorial situations in which transnational education is becoming increasingly common. Given that proxemics and other non-verbals differ in various cultural groups, it would be interesting to research how one can explore teacher movement in more flexibly designed classrooms in order to build effective learning.

Various stakeholders are involved in teacher education and classroom change. While the project incorporated courses for school principals, it is clear that teachers adopt new techniques and explore what they have learnt in courses, if there is a supportive school climate. This aspect of the level of school support for using different approaches was not explored in this study, yet teachers commented on the need for supportive leadership. Given the administrative power of principals and head teachers, especially through promotional recommendations, it would be useful to research the links between local educational management and the acceptance or rejection of classroom change. It is possible that an interactive classroom may be seen as noisy, disruptive and disrespectful from a traditional teaching viewpoint.

In working with teacher change, the Project placed teachers inside local rural communities. This is a relatively rare approach and it had its problems. Much needs to be researched about how all the stakeholders perceived the international teacher educator living and working in a rural setting. It would also be interesting to revisit teachers and take a more longitudinal approach to see how much was learnt and
experienced and whether or not changes were experienced by those that are central for all education: the learners.

Teacher educators in this study valued the opportunity to reflect on their learning. The use of observational data for teacher educator as a means of fostering teacher educator reflection is another area worthy of further research. Teachers however valued the pragmatic approach of techniques which could be applied on the next day in their classrooms and were less articulate about changes in thinking. This may reflect a need to structure reflection and develop techniques which build the vocabulary in a benign setting. It would be useful to research whether teacher pragmatism is related to teachers’ not being used to articulating reflective approaches or linked to work loads and prioritizing immediate classroom concerns

Conclusion

The findings of this study found that both teachers and teacher educators will come into a cross cultural in-service course with expectations, some of which link to cultural difference and perceptions of national culture and native speakers of English. The early phases which begin in-service courses were analyzed and it was found that while teacher educators may articulate and use their perceptions of cultural knowledge, both teacher educators and teachers share a more common focus - the everyday classroom need for transferable techniques. The focus was experiential learning of techniques which could be readily applied to the classroom, a focus which over rides many other concerns. Not all teachers respond positively to the newer ways of organizing learning, but the majority report using interactive techniques such as pair work and group activities in their classrooms.

Although a short term study, a diverse range of teachers in varied sites in rural Malaysia reported predominantly positive responses to techniques shared by teacher educators who lived and worked in rural sites. The teacher educators used humour, select non-verbals, questioning, and selected short tasks which fostered a sense of acceptance. They exploited a variety of techniques, including some bilingualism, to build acceptance of techniques as alternatives to teacher-fronted delivery. In this research, teacher educators also reflected on the research process itself so as to inform their practice showing the value of non evaluative observation, field notes and
professional conversations about transcripts. The research and the reflective process about teacher education was therefore professional development for the teacher educators, as the research looped back into their awareness of practice. Teacher educator reflection differed from teacher reflection. Teachers articulated concerns about techniques and experiencing tasks which related to classroom needs more readily than they described changes in thinking for a number of reasons which have been suggested. Clearly teacher educators also gained much from local colleagues whose responses helped co-construct early phase interaction which differed from teachers’ earlier experiences. Teacher educator techniques involved reworking perceived hierarchies of teacher training to foster an experiential culture of learning for the in-service courses. Although much is widely written about challenges with native speakerism, when rural Malaysian teachers and teacher educators interacted in the early phases of a course, practical classroom needs overrode cultural differences and concerns about working with a so called native speaker. This research has shown that although there is much said about national cultures and the dominance of native speakerism, in some situations, such as in this study, a shared learning culture develops around the early phases of interaction at the same time as teacher educators and teachers meet the all important needs of classroom learning.
References


http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teaching/delta_extmodule_syllabus.pdf


Appendices

Appendix A Interview Protocols

Teachers’ Interview Protocol

Introduction

Interviewer introduces himself and the purpose of the interview and the confidentially form. Asks where the interviewee teaches and her teaching and qualification background.

1 Lead Off Question

Could you tell me a little about the training session?

Had you met these colleagues before today?

Why did you come to today’s session?

What do you expect from the course?

2 Lead Off Question

Would you comment on how the session started?

What things did you hear that were interesting or useful?

What did you think at the very start of the session?

Could you comment on what the trainer did? What did the trainer say, if anything to change any earlier ideas you had about the course?

Do you have any comments on how the trainer did or did not include you in the session?

Was there anything you felt uncertain about?

3 Lead Off Question
Could you talk about what you found useful during the session?

What things did you do which you found useful?
Is there any part of today's session which you see as more valuable than others?

4 Lead Off Question

What kind of cultural aspects did you see contributing to the training?

Have you been in training with a non-Malaysian before (a matsalleh)?
Do you have any comments on differences between the way training is conducted with the trainer in these sessions and other training? Are there any specific differences with earlier training and the way the training was run?

5 Lead Off Question

Could you talk about what happened today and how it links to rural classroom needs?

What tasks used in the training do you see as useful for your classroom?
Do you have any other comments you wish to make regarding the first half and hour or so of the session?

6 Anything you would like to say about any of the training

Is there anything you want to say in Malay about today's course?

Thank you for participating
Teacher Educator Interview  1 Protocol

1 Lead Off Question

Could you tell me a little about the training session today?

Could you talk more about the first part of the session?

Had you met these teachers before today?

What were your aims for today’s session?

How much did you follow the planning for today?

If there were any departures from the planned activities what led to the changes?

2 Lead Off Question

Could you talk about building confidence during today’s session?

What tasks do you find useful in building confidence?

What do you say to help build the trainee’s own confidence?

What do you do to build rapport with trainees?

Is there a part of today’s session which you see as valuable for building confidence?

3 Lead Off Question
Would you comment on the process of reflection as part of your training?

For teachers? For yourself as a trainer?

4 Lead Off Question

What kind of cultural aspects did you see contributing to today’s training?

Are there particular behaviours which you regard as part of the Malaysian culture of learning?

Are there ways in which your experience of Malaysian ways of doing things informs your planning of training? Your actual training?

How important are cultural differences in your training?

Do you articulate similarities or differences in terms of your own cultural background and the trainees?

5 Lead Off Question

Could you talk about what happened today and how it links to rural classroom needs?

What tasks used today do you see as useful for rural classrooms?

What do you think trainees experienced today?

Do you have any other comments you wish to make regarding the first half and hour or so of the session?

Thank you for participating

Stephen Hall
After the course Teachers Interview 2 Protocol

Introduction

Interviewer introduces himself and the purpose of the second interview. He affirms the interviewee’s identity and thanks him or her for taking part.

1 Lead Off Question

Could you tell me a little about this course?

What do you expect from the course?

Did what you expected and what happened differ or not?

2 Lead Off Question

Could you talk about any ways in which the course may have made you think about your teaching?

What things did you find useful in the course?

Are there any things that happened in the course that made you think about what you do in the classroom?

4 Lead Off Question

What kind of cultural aspects did you see contributing to the training?

Do you have any comments on differences between the way training is conducted with the trainer in this course and other training?
Do you have any comments on training with a native speaker?

5 Lead Off Question

Could you talk about the course and how it links to rural classroom needs?

What tasks used in the training do you see as useful for your classroom?

Do you have anything else you would like to say about the course?

Thank you for participating

Stephen Hall
After the first session -Teacher Educator Interview Protocol 2

In this session I would like to explore with you how you worked with teachers in the early phases of the course. I would like to go through the transcripts and field notes with you and then talk about how it links to the interview we did. I would like to focus on how you start the course, how you introduce yourself and how you introduce different tasks. I would then like to talk about this interview process today as we share understanding of the early phase of a course.

1 Lead Off Question

Could we look at the first part of the training session which I taped?

Could we look at how you introduce the course?

Lets go through the transcript together. There are notes from the field notes at the side. These are what I observed.

2 Lead Off Question

Could we talk about building confidence?

Positioning yourself
Positive reinforcement

3 Lead Off Question

Could you talk about links to the classroom needs?

Choice of tasks
Explicit mentioning of links
Modelling of pedagogy
Lead Off Question
4 Any comments on cultural aspects in training?

Use of the mother tongue
Sharing knowledge of local norms

5 Lead Off Question

Could you talk about what we have talked about here today and how it links to rural classroom needs?

6 Lead Off Question

There is much talk about reflection on what we do. Could we talk about this process of self analysis of what we do as practitioners?

Any comments on this process for the teachers you work with.

Any comments on this process which we have been involved with today.

Is there anything else you would like to say

Thank you for participating

Stephen J Hall
Appendix B

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COVER LETTER FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear participant

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled ‘A Qualitative Study of Initial Cross Cultural Teacher Training Interaction in Rural Malaysia.’ I am conducting doctoral research in a University of Leicester distance course supported by local study schools. The purpose of my research is to investigate the following questions:

1. What procedures and techniques develop teacher trainee positive or negative responses when experiencing English language teacher education methodology?

2. What approaches and techniques are successful in confidence building during initial in-service teacher development encounters?

3. What perceptions of cross-cultural issues impact on experiential training from both the English as a First Language speaker trainers’ and local teachers’ perspectives?

4. What role do reflective activities play in initial teacher development exchanges?

I do hope you are interested in working with me on this research.

Four research tools will provide data

- Semi structured interviews of 5 teacher trainers with thick analysis – maximum time 45 minutes
- Interviews with teachers 4 for each of the inservice groups – maximum time 30 minutes
- Audio recordings transcribed for each of the five sessions
- Field notes by the researcher observer focused on non-verbals and proximics
- Reflective interview based on observation feedback for 5 trainers – maximum 30 minutes.
I do foresee that you should not experience any risks as a result of your participation in this project. You will no receive any direct personal benefit as a result of your participation however your involvement will provide reflection on your and others teacher education approaches. Research information which will be shared with all involved and the wider community to contribute to more effective teacher development in cross cultural situations.

You have several choices regarding non-participation in this project:

- You may decide not to participate
- You may decide not to answer any questions
- You may decide to terminate your participation even after you have begun.

Any of these choices is an option and this will in no way impact on any professional standing.

The data collected from this study will be used for education and publication purposes, however it will not be identified with you personally. In a study like this, you may be worried that something you say or write might be used against you or misunderstood. This concern is understood. When I write up the report I will never use your own name. All names in the research report will be changed and confidentiality guaranteed. This study has no relationship to reporting structures within CfBT Education services and data will not be part of input into performance evaluation processes.

Any questions about this research or related issues may be directed to the Principal Researcher Stephen J Hall. I have given you my contact details.
Appendix C Transcript Protocol
T (-) if for example next Wednesday or Thursday, you can see now that you
, you can’t come on Monday and Tuesday (-) the same course, so what
you can do on a Wednesday, they do on Monday; what you do on a Thursday,
they do on a Tuesday, so you can actually switch (some) day if there’s an
emergency, because you don’t want to miss any of the sections. You need 80%
attendance to get your certificate. OK? But I’m hoping it will be interesting
enough for you not to worry if you get a certificate or not because it’s very
practical. Come in, please come in, come in! OK. Sit down! We’ve just
started. We have started. Yeah, erm….Do you know who I am? I’m not
surprised if you don’t because no one asked me who I was when I arrived (-)
except Stephen (over there). I’ll tell you about him later. So, my name is
______ and you can see how my name (-). ________. I’m British but
I was born in Africa. I was born in a land where there are more animals than
people. Where is that? Now, let’s test your geography. Somewhere in
eastern, central Africa. Kenya (-). I was born in Tanzania. My father was a
geologist and his job was looking for gold and diamonds. My mother went out
to Africa and she was training nurses and they met by accident at a resort
up in the mountains. The Mountains of the Moon that border Uganda and
Tanzania, they are called the Mountains of the Moon. Very eerie looking
mountains and they met on holiday, fell in love, got married, so I was born
in Tanzania. [Speaks in Swahili]. That was a quick course in Swahili. (-).
Anyway, that’s my background. I studied law at first. I wanted to be a
lawyer, so I went to university to study law and I did four very good years,
practicing law. I was with the Attorney-General of Zimbabwe. I’ve seen the
prosecution of witchcraft, murder, rape, assault, you (imagine) all those cases
And then I got the bug. I wanted to travel. When I grew up, we traveled everywhere and I realized I couldn’t travel and be a lawyer. Lawyers have to be like doctors and have to stay in one place, build their reputation, etcetera, so I switched professions and became a teacher and then a teacher trainer. So prior to coming here, I was in Indonesia for five years ( - ) (Indonesia was well-controlled). Very interesting five years, many years ago and then I moved to Labuan. To Brunei first, for twelve years, then to Labuan for two years and now in Papar for my first year. (I tell you) I love it here. I love this place. Beautiful. You are very, very lucky to be here. (I’m serious). A lot of schools that I go (to, I ask) the teachers, “Do you want to transfer?” and they will say, “No, no.” If you go to schools in Labuan and you ask the teachers if they want to transfer, they all say, “Yes, yes, I want to go back to Malaysia, West Malaysia or Sabah (or Sarawak) ( - ). So, that’s myself. Now, this is for the ELC project, this is. I am an English Language Coordinator. I’m attached to the PPE here and my job is to visit the English teachers, to work with the English teachers. I’m not [just a foreigner Malay]. I’m not here to evaluate you, to measure you like an instrument. I’m here to work with you, so when I go into your classes, some of you, I’ve been into your classes already, I work with what you’re doing, so it’s like you have an extra teacher. So when I say I’m coming to visit you, don’t be (uncomfortable), don’t get frightened. I’m not [speaks Malay]. I’m coming to work with you. ( - ). OK, so that’s my job, to work with you. ( - ) part of the courses are practical things to do in the classroom. Everything we are going to do can be (produced) in the classroom. Without this. We don’t need this. The only reason I’ve got this here is we don’t have a whiteboard. (It’s not big enough) but otherwise I will do everything on the whiteboard with, er, whiteboard marker. OK. So, that’s me. Sitting over there very quietly is Stephen Hall. And he was the academic director, the number two in the project
but the number one academic of this CfBT Malaysia schools project. Now, I work for CfBT. CfBT stands for Centre for British Teachers, that’s the CfBT. And they work all over the world and Stephen was the academic director, the number one for the academic side for a number of years for Malaysia, all Malaysia. And, he’s coming here to PhD. Stephen is actually from New Zealand.

I So, I wasn’t born in Africa [Participants laugh]

T CfBT is Centre for British Teachers but we have New Zealanders, Canadians, Australians and (-). Any way, Steve.

I I’m an ex-primary school teacher and I also taught secondary schools and as ______ said I have worked with this project for four and a half years. What I am now doing is, I’m hoping that you all will be (can be) in this project and listen while ______ introduces the work of an ELK. I would like your permission in that I would like to record the first 45 minutes of this and do everything confidentially, OK? It’s nothing to do with evaluation. So I’d like to know first of all if you are OK with that and obviously nothing comes back to you. That’s the first thing I would like to do is I would like to if possible maybe after this session if I’m able to talk a couple of people for about 15 minutes each about what you think about this training. Again, it’s all confidential and you can say whatever you like.
Appendix E Field Notes for Site 2

Field Notes  Bentong  April 4  Site 2

17 sec teachers: 2 Chinese female, 2 Malay males, 3 Indian female and 10 Malay female

Four rows of desks in air conditioned PKG Bentong morning session

8.40 5 minutes outlining course outline

8.45 Researcher arrives after delay

8.50 Goes to whiteboard. Writes sleep/slept on board gestures to board. looks a front and back

Sets up group work. Moving around groups, checking. Bends down to make comments. Frequent eye contact. Covers all groups twice beginning with group which I observe are the least articulate. Many instances of individualized eye contact. There is sense of ease with close proximics. Bends down and sometimes squats

9.10 ‘Why don’t we come together’ spoken from front of class after standing there for five seconds. Wide gesture from open palms bringing hands together. A bigger gestural movement than earlier ones.

9.12 Looks to her right then left. Five incidents of gestures to those whom she talks to. Eye contact to those who answer questions. Gestures to designate who is answering

9.15 Gestures out to group with sweeping movement when talking to whole class. Looks to back right, back left than to front quarters twice

9.18 Looks to her left to counter predominant positioning which leads to majority of eye contact to the right front. Non verbals of out of the window gazing from older Indian women in back right of class.

9.20 Facial gestures and animated hand gestures linked to explaining ‘rather’

9.23 Moves more to left of centre front. Eye contact with group who does not answer

9.24 Moves back to centre. Frequent small hand gestures at conclusion of explanatory sequences

9.25 Moves to second session
You do some things to get them—you do things to get them to think about their own teaching. This idea that is quite popular in the literature is the idea of reflection.

Yes. I don’t think, I mean sometimes if one or two teachers will come in early I will say, “Have you been doing anything interesting in class?” And that gives them the opportunity to say, “I’ve tried this and I’ve tried that.” But I don’t do a lot of asking them what they’ve been doing in their own classes, really. I should, but I just have a feeling that my job is to throw gems at them. Little ideas, give them the confidence to carry it out, and then put a little pressure on to try it out. Without necessarily asking them to reflect on it. Sometimes, I think might put them off if you ask them too many questions about what they’ve been doing. They go on the defensive a it. If they volunteer it, then I will follow it up, say, “How did it go? Any problems?” you know, and they will tell me problems, you know, a few of the more talkative ones, the more confident ones, will volunteer anyway as a lady did, you know, already talking when you took the first gentleman, but, that’s on the whole, fairly unusual. It may be, partly, because at five o’clock, it’s time to go home anyway but sometimes I will have five minutes with someone if they came early or with two or three early ones but I don’t usually ask them questions in the break time about work. We usually stick to other things like ( ) or sport or whatever it might be but I don’t think I ask them to reflect a lot on their own performance and what they are doing, apart from asking, you know, “How’s it going?” or “Have you been trying something out?” But if they don’t offer anything, I tend to let it go, I don’t want to put them under pressure and make them feel they’ve failed in because they haven’t tried something out, you know, maybe ‘cos I feel it’s probably a lack of confidence and it makes more sense to do more activities
I. First of all would you like to listen to the interview?

T. Well not really I learned enough seeing myself in print. That was quite revealing.

I. Ok. Could we start by looking at the transcript. We can use the record of the lesson to explore practice and to explore what we do in early phases of the course

T. Sure

I. Humour comes in early in the course. The very first line in fact. You notice here..and here (5secs) that you use humour ==

T. ==I try to. I am always learning what is humorous ,cross culturally. I don’t stop learning there.

I. Why such a use of humour?

T. I like a relaxed classroom atmosphere. My assumption based on the last four years or so is that the teachers are stiff and guarded when they come on a PPD course.

I. Stiff and guarded? Can you say more about that?

T. Teachers say..teachers tell me in private that they are afraid. They say ‘we have to be careful.’ They feel they are being... well., judged and evaluated. So my style is different. Somewhat Canadian style. Canadian culture.

I Canadian culture?

T. Well different from their culture. In Malaysia they put their best foot forward. Yeah their best foot forward. In dress, in presentation, appearance, Yeah appearance is a big one.

I Appearance is an interesting one?

T. Well in introductions. Its its the, the first day of class when people really present. Present themselves. Full tilte, full work position. Culturally I have an inner aversion to it. I have to work with that but hey, I have to work with inside it.

I Is this to do with the slides you use?

T. well yeah. As I understand it, and erh, I am still learning. In the cultural situation here the people are at great pains to place themselves in the social order, and not above it or over it. Perhaps its my background of studying sociology. The hierarchy side here is very big. Still at a deep level I cant understand why they accept it at the bottom level. They don’t question it. Teachers are conscious of hierarchy. They have their own hierarchy. Their own experience. The hierarchy of experience, education, position at school, hand phone. Lots of markers. Different markers.

I Yes I see

T. When I step in and say lets be equals – haha – I must be causing a stir.
I. Do you see that when you are training?

T. For training that I deem a success the social hierarchy has been thrown off. Perhaps I am throwing them off perhaps imposing culturally but but its only for two hours at a time. You see to use the computer analogy, the basic hard wiring of equality is inside me. There its well maybe its must be programming – software when you look at differences cultural differences. Software. Yes, computer analogies software.

I. Wetware? (laughs)

T. (Laughs) yeah its there. That belief comes into play.

I. notice such a thing as is in lines 18-20. The examples (7 secs)

T. Quite naked. These are perceptions that teachers have of me. They have said these of me. ‘You’re very rich.’ Right (laughs) You are a foreigner, you tell me what we do wrong. You are the native speaker. (4 secs) You colonized us. Well sure – not quite as a Canadian. Not like that. I am not like that. (5 secs)

I. Shall we come back to the transcript. The pace is quite slow perhaps and the teachers can’t get anything wrong in the first set of activities, I think. Is that fair comment?

T. Right. When I ask a question I count in my head. It something I’ve learnt works It’s a technique I use. 1000, 2000, 3000==

I. For how many?

T. That depends on the question. What informs the pauses is my experience. Some was when watching, watching other DELCs. You remember when we went for the training with X. It was way way too fast. It takes a longer time than that. As teachers it was a different experience from being the trainer up front. When you sit there and as a DELC you know all that how to get into groups stuff and so on and you can do things too fast sometimes. Even with a good clear agenda

TE3 RP I 1 -72
OK, so, I’ll just put that there. So, first thing maybe you could tell me a little bit about which school you’re at and a little bit about yourself as a teacher. How long you’ve been teaching and things like that?

OK, I’m ( )… I’m 30 years old. I’ve been teaching in ( ) for seven years. I’m teaching English for standard one, year one and year four, this year.

Year one and = = Year four, yeah.

OK. So, seven years you’ve been teaching?

Yeah, seven years,

So, why did you come along to this course?

Because I want to enhance my knowledge and when I come to this course I get a better idea to teach my pupils.

OK. And you came along expecting to get some things for your pupils, for your class, yeah? Did you find that happened or was it different from what you expected?

That thing has happened and when I go to my school, I have…teach what I learned here, then, after that, I realise that when I use all the method that Mr. ___ each me, my pupils are more understanding. For example, communicative learning…

Are you saying they are more attentive or..? What’s different with the pupils?

That mean…before this, I just –that mean, they are not ready –my lesson, they are sometimes, they are –don’t want to talk. They want to speak and give the whatever I think when I ask them, they don’t want to give response.

OK.

OK? And then I just teach them using, sometimes you see the computer, (you can actually see.) They –when I teach them, I think that they are –they like to
speak and tell whatever they have –I have taught them. They learn,

OK. So they are doing things that they weren’t doing before because of the techniques, is it?

Ah, the techniques, yah,

OK. OK. So you’ve found that what you are learning links up to the pupils’ needs?

It’s linked to pupil needs for certain topics.

For certain topics. OK. And how about the way in which Mr. ____ does the training. Could you comment on that? The way that he is taking you through training. How about the way Mr. Hugh is doing the training with you?

The way he teach us? The way he teach us ( ) (we find) we can there’s not so, not bored and we have learned much from him.

What do you think makes it, that you are not bored?

All the activities that he carries out for us, interesting. Thus far ( ) sometime ( ) two to four, five (to late). Then sometimes, we feel sleepy, we come to this class we find that it is interesting.

Is it different from –have you been on other courses, other training sessions? I don’t mean with Mr. ____ ut I mean with other trainers?

–no, no, = =

You haven’t, OK.

Before this, in college, seven years,

OK, right. Is it different from the way some of training happened in college?

The way they trained us, is actually, it’s the same, but when we go to school, maybe ( ) (the pupils) (new course) different things happen, I mean, when we face the pupils, this pupil –I mean, they are not really good in English, then we just teach them, OK, the simple, simple things but we will just teach them like, for example, OK, make sentence, like that, but when we come here, Mr____ teach us how to make them talk with us, so, in the simple, simple activities, say, they enjoy the lesson and they try to talk, (if they wish). Ah!
I So that’s quite a difference, ugh? OK.

T Some of them I have tried to my pupil and they enjoy the lesson. For example,

Mr. _____ asked us to, about describing people’s (face). OK, just we give the

–like last week’s activities then. For example, they give the, what you call –lah,

for example, OK, these people have round face, like that, then they draw a

= = round

I = = Giving descriptions? = =

T = = Aye (instructions) (hah) = =

I = = Drawing it. So you tried that already?

T Right, (for them they find OK) they enjoy the lesson. (For that one is suitable

for ( ) (year two),

I OK.

T Level two.