

Academic Literacy Right from the Start?
A Critical Realist Study of the Way University Literacy is
Constructed at a Gulf University

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

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December 2006

Abstract

The aim of this research was to examine how university literacy is constructed at a university in the Arabian Gulf and to evaluate the appropriateness of this construction where students of a low level of English are exposed to academic English (Right from the Start). Unpacking this construction is a complex task and to gain even a limited insight into the numerous Discourses, epistemologies and pedagogies constituting the construction of university literacy at Gulf universities, a stratified approach that probes the layers of ‘reality’ is necessary. Therefore, a *critical realist* approach is engaged, along with a variety of methods to probe the layers of the phenomenon.

In terms of thesis organization, the traditional empirical structure common to the Social Sciences and the argumentative structure common to the Humanities are integrated. While the information obtained by a variety of methods is analysed and conclusions are reached, this material is also used along with additional literature to support the central contention that university literacy and academic English are possible ‘right from the start’, if the students’ literacy is examined from a certain perspective and if there is an appropriate pedagogy which promotes the desired literacies. This combination of thesis structures would be deemed appropriate in the *critical realist* ontological framework since the rigour of the thesis lies both in its “reliability” resulting from the empirical data and its focus on the ‘real’; and its “reflexivity” and “persuasiveness” arising from the transparently ‘critical’ argument of the thesis (Cadman 2002). In order to conduct the empirical research, the lenses suggested by

each of the major views of literacy as outlined by Lea and Street (1998) - namely the “study skills” view, the narrow “academic socialization view” and the “academic literacies view” are utilized in succession. However, the central argument is revealed as the manifestations of each ‘view’ of literacy in the specific context are examined, the research outcomes obtained by utilizing each view in succession are outlined and both are critiqued from the perspective of the “academic literacies” view.

Corpus research is undertaken from a “study skills” perspective and the effect of the vocabulary taught to the students on their use of vocabulary in their writing is examined. Also, using the “study skills” lens, the students’ “global language development” in terms of changes or fluctuations in “fluency, accuracy and complexity” (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998) over a period of at least three semesters is examined. Utilizing a narrow “academic socialization lens”, studies conducted at the University on learning strategies and motivation and the comments made by respondents in interviews and on an electronic discussion board are compared to comments made by teachers and lecturers.

Major flaws in these views of academic literacy are acknowledged and the way each view manifests itself in the Discourse(s) prevalent at this particular university is demonstrated. Finally, Discourses evidenced in the student interviews in particular, are unpacked and then compared and contrasted with those in the lecturer interviews as well as the curriculum and

other university documents. The limitations of the study are examined and suggestions for further research and ways to address ‘problems’ associated with university literacy are given.

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Preface

I would like to thank the following people who made this research possible:

My supervisor Dr Chrissie Boughey who patiently guided this first step towards the academy without ‘colonizing’ me

My generous respondents, students, colleagues and friends in the Gulf who gave me a glimpse of your colliding contexts

My partner Gareth who helped me with my technical challenges and nagged me to keep on working

All my colleagues and students past and present who are navigating the turbulent waters of university literacy and academic English

Academic English: Probing Layers of Literacy and Context

Waiting to be Academic

In 2001, I was working as an English language teacher at a private college in Sydney when a Chinese student made a complaint that initiated the five-years of investigation that culminated in this thesis. He said, “I am sick of learning about “going to the shop”, I want to do my Masters in Chemistry, why can’t I learn about that in English?” When I mentioned this to colleagues, I received an instant response: “They can’t even write a simple sentence in English, it is not possible for them to learn about Chemistry or any kind of academic English!” and “Students require an advanced level of English before they can learn academic English”. Research into academic English courses offered across Australia (UWA 2001; Hawthorn 2006; UNSWIL 2006) and in Western countries in general (CC 2006; UW 2006) suggested that conventional wisdom in the field views an Upper-intermediate level of English or at the very worst an IELTS score of 5.0 (pre-intermediate/ intermediate equivalent) as the minimum requirement for entry even into the 1st level of an academic English University preparation programme.

I soon learned that the decision to delay teaching students academic genres and skills in English arises from a tradition of research initiated by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (cited in Cummins 2000) which showed that Finnish immigrant children in Sweden were often more fluent conversationally than their academic performance indicated. This research was extended by Jim Cummins (Cummins 1981; Cummins 1984) who made the distinction between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic

Language Proficiency) to explain why some aspects of a child's language development reached a plateau while other aspects continued to develop throughout the child's life. Because Cummins observed that children generally took five to seven years to achieve CALP (as reflected in standardized test scores) as opposed to the two to three years needed to achieve BICS, he used this distinction to justify a longer period of time spent in a bilingual education environment which he proposed as the most appropriate environment for the acquisition of cognitively challenging skills.

This research has been misinterpreted in various ways by ESL practitioners and administrators and has resulted in exclusion and frustration for numerous "English as an additional language" (EAL) learners. These misinterpretations can be seen in criticisms against the BICS/CALP distinction, which should rather, in my view, be criticisms of the interpretation of the distinction than the research or distinction itself. Firstly, some researchers such as Bernardo García (1997) have suggested that the distinction between CALP and BICS results in the prevention of students from full participation in academic activities. This in fact is what happened to my Chinese student who had to learn about "going to the shop" for four months in a 'general English' programme before he was permitted into the first level of the academic English course. Cummins, on the other hand, saw the distinction as a way of enabling disenfranchised immigrant children in the USA to acquire Cognitive Academic Skills in their native language simultaneously to their acquisition in the second language. He suggests that, if it were acknowledged that there is a distinction between the two aspects of language acquisition, immigrant children would not be removed from bilingual programmes prematurely. They would also not be characterised thereafter as deficit if unable to achieve academically on the level of native speakers. The distinction is, therefore, made not to prevent exposure to CALP, but rather to allow bilingual exposure to it.

A second issue, as García points out, is that always teaching basic communication skills and cognitive academic skills in sequence can be problematic since there are “situations in which CALP is achieved before BICS (García, 1997: 8). This issue is particularly relevant to adult learners who may have advanced CALP skills in their own language that enable them to understand texts in a specific field in the target language (for example mathematics or science) even though they have not achieved basic communicative competence in the target language and the teaching of these aspects in strict order has led to boredom and frustration among these students. Cummins (1999; 2000) counters this criticism by pointing out that the BICS/ CALP order of acquisition is “typical” rather than “absolute” and that this order is suggested as typical for immigrant children rather than for adults. The strict division and exclusion of adult learners from “academic English” and cognitively challenging tasks, is thus erroneously based on a theory of learning which was meant to be applicable only to children who would not have achieved CALP in their own language. These students, therefore, according to Cummins require a bilingual environment to simultaneously build CALP in both languages since these skills due to their “cognitively demanding”, “context reduced” nature are more difficult to acquire than BICS. In addition, teachers should not assume that children who converse easily have acquired these more challenging skills and are ready to leave bilingual programmes. In fact, Cummins’ CUP or Common Underlying Proficiency model (1989) uses the “dual iceberg metaphor” to show that cognitively demanding tasks including literacy/ literacies, abstract thinking and problem-solving are common across languages. Thus, adults who have already approached similar tasks in their native language/ languages are perfectly able to address similarly cognitively challenging tasks in another language if given the necessary linguistic tools.

The delay in teaching academic English to adults also goes against the three major elements that Cummins (1999; 2000) deems essential to an instructional programme, namely that the programme is cognitively challenging, has academic content and that critical language awareness is fostered. Rather than delaying these essential components, Cummins suggests that these are a core part of the curriculum, with the only distinction being that the curriculum

should be a bilingual one. For adults, who have already acquired at least some CALP, there is thus no reason to delay academic content and it is vital that they should access challenging, academic content taught in a way that facilitates comparison and critical awareness as soon as possible.

There are, however, several issues concerning Cummin's BICS/ CALP distinction that raise concern. Despite admitting that the order of acquisition is not set in stone and that there is an "interdependence" between first and additional languages and a common underlying proficiency (similar to Oller's (1979) "global proficiency" which he dubs CUP), Cummins does, however, make a clear distinction between the two aspects of language acquisition which he believes are acquired in different ways (Cummins 1999). He cites corpus research such as Biber (2001; 2004) which indicates the differences between conversational language and academic language in terms of lexis, grammatical structure and aspects of discourse. Cummins also defends himself against criticism such as Edelsky *et al* (1983) and Wiley (1996) (cited in (Cummins 1997; Cummins 1999; Cummins 2000) who locate the BICS/CALP distinction within an "autonomous" view of language and Edelsky (1986) who suggests that Cummin's view that a certain level of BICS is required before CALP can be acquired effectively subscribes to a "deficit theory". I agree with Cummins (2000) that his BICS/CALP distinction does not necessarily define children as deficient because they are not so proficient in terms of CALP as BICS and in fact defends them against those who would label them as such by clarifying that, as these skills are more difficult to acquire, EAL children require a bilingual environment in order to gain equitable access.

However, when this distinction is applied to adults, it results in a 'deficit theory' since it implies that adults need to relearn *ad naseum* basic interpersonal communication skills in the additional language, ignoring their primary motivation for studying English which is often to

gain access to academia. Additionally, in the EAL environment there is often no consideration given to prior learning and CALP skills in the native language. This lack of recognition of previous learning can in fact restrict adult learning. If they have already acquired CALP in their native language or have what Gee (2002) calls “elevated forms of secondary Discourse”, a concentration on BICS prevents them from “slipping” proficiencies from one language to another and markedly delays their progress.

Adults, along with children who come from working class backgrounds (Heath 1980) or cultures where Western school literacy does not form part of valued home practice (like the students in my study) are disadvantaged by a delay in the presentation of cognitively demanding material. They too have literacy practices (for example, memorizing the Qur’an); which can be transferred or adapted to cope with the new material, although these may be distinct from Western school literacy practices. Also, a postponement also delays their opportunity to grapple with demanding material that requires more from them and falsely lulls them into the impression that learning the new language is easy (sometimes to the point of boredom).

Cummin’s distinction could also be said to comply with the “autonomous view of language” as opposed to the “ideological view of language” (Street 1984) in that it focuses on decontextualized, generic encoding and decoding rather than acknowledging the historically and socially embedded nature of academic language skills. Cummins refers to CALP as “context-reduced” and “cognitively challenging” (Cummins 1997). Although I concur that academic English, specifically English for Special Academic Purposes (ESAP) is cognitively challenging, I do not regard this as a valid reason for a delay in teaching since as adults, the EAL learners have faced many cognitive challenges in their prior learning. I do not, however, agree that ESAP courses should be viewed as “context-reduced”. By their very nature English

for Academic Purposes/English for Special Purposes courses are deeply embedded in shared context with a focus on shared content and the activities and language which express that content (Strevens 1988; Flowerdew & Peacock 2001). I have personally observed scientists with little or no basic communication skills in English communicating with native English speakers on advanced scientific concepts through the medium of English. Their shared context, terminology and understanding of the discourse enable them to communicate, despite their inability to communicate on everyday issues in English. Thus for me, the delay in teaching academic English to adults has little or no theoretical basis and in fact can be seen as either a cold-blooded attempt by the 'ESL industry' in English-speaking countries to make more money out of international students (longer courses of 'General English' before they can access 'Academic English' or a form of language imperialism where access is only given to the "periphery" when it complies with the rules of the "centre" (Hadley 2004).

There were other more personal reasons why I began to feel so strongly that academic English was possible for students with a lower proficiency level in English. As a teacher in South Africa, I had observed students with low levels of English proficiency achieving high marks in other academic subjects, which they took through the medium of English. For example, I had an Angolan student who, after only two years of exposure to English, was able to achieve an A (Higher Grade) score in the national History examination. In the Arabian Gulf, I taught students academic English courses (albeit at a very low level) and after only a year in a foundation programme exiting with a pre-intermediate level of English, they were able to study academic subjects through English as medium of instruction. Additionally, my experiences as an anti-Apartheid activist in South Africa made me loath to accept the paternalistic views in the English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language 'industry' which appeared to focus almost entirely on the 'deficiencies' of the students and what the teachers and/or administrators believed was appropriate for them, rather than on their needs or desires.

An acceptance of the possibility of academic English for students of lower English proficiency; however, depends on two major factors:

- The definition and understanding of the concept of academic English
- The context within which acquisition of academic English is possible

In order to unpack the possibility of academic English and university literacy for students with a lower proficiency of English, I therefore decided to focus this thesis on one instance where I had observed students acquiring university literacy to some extent. These students had studied English in a foundation course and were studying at the time of the research in their faculties, as well as attending English for Special Purposes classes. I examine how academic English and university appropriate literacy is understood within this context and factors related to the context that encourage or discourage the acquisition of academic English and university literacy. The possibility of academic English/ literacy relies on a construction of a *need* for this type of English course and or acquisition. Thus in this research, I attempt to answer these questions:

- *How is the need for “academic English” and university literacy constituted at Gulf University?* (In terms of this question, I examine curriculum as a contested and developing document. I examine the demands of the students’ faculties, of the university mission and goals, of industry and the demands of ‘academic English’ and views of university literacy as described in the literature. I examine how all these demands are manifested as ‘needs’ in the curriculum and teaching of English at *Gulf University*).

- *How do students experience this constitution?* (To answer this question, I examine how students perceive the differences between the way in which they were taught English at school and at university, the way in which they perceive academic English in general and the way in which they experience academic English within the foundation course context.
- *How appropriate is the constitution of academic English and university literacy at Gulf University?* (To answer this question, I examine the interface between outside demands, students perceived needs and what actually manifests in their writing and narratives).

Before these questions can be answered, however, an in-depth understanding of the context of the study is necessary, thus the second chapter of the thesis involves a description of the different ‘layers’ of context, which constitute the construction of academic English and university literacy at *Gulf University*.

Layers of Context

Just like sedimentary rocks are formed in stratified layers that form the basis of mountain ecosystems, the reality of academic English occurs within a stratified context with layers of context ranging from the international to the personal and includes the interaction between these two extremes. Thus in *Colliding Contexts*, I first outline how context is essential to the conceptual framework of the study. Next, I examine Islam and Westernization (usually equated with Americanization) - the major conflicting Discourses that impact on the

construction of academic English at *GU*). I unpack how these contexts impact on the institution and academic culture in the Gulf in terms of medium of instruction, curriculum and teaching methodologies. More specifically, I examine definitions of ESP/EAP and views of literacy and how they are viewed in terms of Islam/Americanization. I also examine how the two major Discourses have impacted on education in general and on *GU* in particular. As my respondents are all female students, I examine the education of women in the Gulf and the impact of Western/Islamic Discourses on this contentious context. I also examine some of components of *GU* in more detail, including the foundation course, the ESP course within this unit and the Humanities faculty (as my respondents are all students studying within this faculty). I discuss some of the Discourses that operate within *GU* and the foundation course in particular such as benchmarking and problem-based as well as the students' performance and factors that influence their performance within the programmes. Like geologists sink wells to understand the stratification of rocks, I attempt in this study to probe the layers of this/ these complex context(s) and the Discourses that surround it.

Since context is such a vital component of the study, my literature review further extends the stratified context of the study explicating the theoretical assumptions underlying this study and the fields that inform it. There is further examination of literature as part of the data in each of the data chapters. Therefore, in a way

Converging Literature

In the literature review, I examine two converging streams of literature: literature related to “developmental education” and “language support” in universities; and literature concerning

university-based literacy/ literacies. The literature strongly links with the context of the study since views of university literacy, developmental education and language support link with Discourses that arise from the context. What is viewed as appropriate support for students is affected by whether the institution requires the students to be acculturated fully into Western academic Discourse or whether Islamic or individual Discourse is valued. In the same way, a focus on the “study skills” view of literacy, for example, reflects what the institution assumes is the purpose of literacy at university. Is it merely a grammatically correct reproduction of content, an acculturation of students into the academy or an empowerment of students to express their own view of academia and to “switch between practices” in order to express their reality? The chapter examines views on university literacy and the power of literacy in general. It describes work done by in “the new literacy studies” which distinguish between views of literacy which I relate to the ‘layers’ of ‘reality’ described in the critical framework of my research. It also describes how these views have implications in terms of teaching methods, the culture of institutions and assessment. Then, the history, concept and development of developmental education and language support are examined. I show how this development relates to views of literacy and to the *GU*/foundation course context in particular. These streams of literature and the multi-layered context they relate to, require an equally multi-faceted ontological framework and methodology/ methodologies and, therefore, I make use of the *critical realist approach* in this thesis.

A Cycling Transforming Critical Methodology

In the natural world, the construct of an ecosystem is used to explain the interaction of organisms and how they function as a unit, sustaining and transforming each other. In the same way, I found the approach of critical realism useful to describe the construct of academic English and university literacy at *Gulf University* since it reflects the dynamic interactional nature of this construct in terms of ontology (view of the nature of reality), epistemology

(view of the nature of knowledge) and methodology (view of the appropriate way(s) to study knowledge and/ or phenomena).

I first trace the development of the critical realist “philosophy” of science and how it incorporates aspects from the positivist, interpretive and social constructionist research orientations culminating in an approach that acknowledges that there are certain relatively enduring “intransitive” mechanisms and objects, while also attempting to express the internal, individual and transitive and recognising the influence of the historical and social on mechanisms, the social and individuals. I then describe how this ontology can be translated into an epistemology based on Harvey’s (Harvey 2002: 184) version of Baskhar’s (1979) Transformational Model of Social Activity which reflects the dynamic interaction between individual agency and social control which results in historically accessible forms and cultural reproduction and cultivation influencing the actual or anticipated membership in a concrete community (in this case the “concrete” English-medium academic community at *GU*). The context and literature review of this thesis as well as the ontology and epistemology leads to the methodology. This is because in order to reflect the ‘intransitive’, personal, historical and social, I require practical methodology/ methodologies that reflect all three these dimensions. Also, the literature review reflects the multiple nature of literacy and suggests that this reality needs to be acknowledged in the collection of data. The views of literacy described by Lea and Street (1998) become a theoretical model for the collection and analysis of data. Thus I finally note how I collect and analyse my data by donning the ‘lens’ of the “study skills” view of literacy which suggest that students writing is deficient and needs to be “fixed” in terms of spelling, grammar or discourse structure, followed by the “academic socialisation” “lens” that focuses on the students “orientation towards” and “interpretation of” tasks with the expectation that they should comply with the norms of the academy and finally the “academic literacies” “lens” that views literacy as socially constructed and contested and suggests that students “switch practices” and “identities”.

Contested Bedrock of Corpora Studies

In the first data chapter, using the “study skills” lens I compile a student corpus which I compare with the relatively stable/ intransitive materials corpus in terms of academic and “general English” lexis using the “intransitive” tools of the General Service List (Bauman & Culligan 1995), Academic Word List (Coxhead 1998; 2000) and British National Corpus (BNC 2000) as these tools are viewed appropriate within the foundation course at *GU*. But then I question the appropriateness of each of these measures, the data obtained and the “study skills” lens itself.

Shifting Sands of “Developmental Measures

Likewise I examine the corpora consisting of selected samples of writing from each of my seven respondents during their studies in the foundation course at *Gulf University* comparing each sample in terms of the quantitative measures of “fluency”, “accuracy” and “lexical” and “grammatical” “complexity” (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998) and thereafter query the prevailing Discourse that labels writing “correct” or otherwise without examining the context within which the writing is born.

Lakes of Strategic Socialization

In the “academic socialization” tradition, I compare comments made in the curriculum and other university documents and in interviews with teachers, faculty, curriculum designers and administrators about appropriate strategies and orientation to learning within the academy with what students ‘reveal’ in interviews and on Blackboard discussion boards and in research on “learning strategies”. This interpretative data is then re-examined by examining the role that the social and historical plays in the construction of these views.

Secret Seasonal Discourse Wadis

Just like the seasonal rivers in the desert are not always detectable, yet secretly sustain the oasis ecosystem; the Discourses (ways of being) that underlie academic English and university literacy at *Gulf University* are not always detectable on the surface, yet influence the entire construct and thus are vital to this study. I finally, use the “academic literacies” lens and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to attempt to uncover Discourses in the students’ writing using the four stages of Critical Discourse Analysis (Meyer 2001): focusing upon a social problem, identifying the obstacles to its solution, considering how it relates to the social order, identifying ways past the obstacles and critically reflecting on the analysis (Meyer 2001). Although I focus specifically on the historical and social at this stage of the analysis, my critical realist approach to the data is revealed in the fact that at every stage of the data analysis, I reflect on the individual as well as the social and historical and privilege the “academic literacies” lens as is suggested by Harvey’s adaptation of the Transformational Model of Social Activity.

A Core Sample and Further Exploration

Just as a core sample, which a geologist takes at a specific point, or a sample, which a doctor extracts from a particular organ, cannot be seen as representative of all geological formations

or organs of that type or even of the whole geological formation or body of the patient, the samples I extract in this study cannot be seen as representative of all instances of the construction of academic literacy for students at a low level of proficiency in English or even of the entire phenomenon at *Gulf University*. However, in donning the different lenses and uncovering some of the Discourses underlying the construction of academic English and university literacy at *GU*, I am able to diagnose some of the issues which prevent these students acquiring university academic literacies, show some of the ways in which this acquisition can be enabled and most importantly suggest ways in which this complex construct can be better explored in future.

My final chapter summarizes the uncovered Discourses, makes suggestions for similar programmes as most of the Discourses uncovered can be abstracted to other similar institutions and highlights areas requiring further research.

Colliding Contexts

Context and Critical Realism

Context is an important element to any research, but within critical realist ontology it is an integral part of the conceptual framework of the research epistemology and process of collecting and analysing data. As I will later describe in my methodology chapter, I utilize Harvey's adaptation of Bhaskar's Transformational Model of Social Activity (Harvey 2002), which indicates that my respondents are members or attempt to become members of an "actual or anticipated concrete community". The dynamics in this "community" and existence of this community are determined by the dynamics of the "society" which surrounds it and the "socialization and social control" it exerts. The individual respondents are products of this "social interaction"; who in turn take part in the "dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation". However, even their "individual agency" is affected by context in that this agency is an "expression of [the] communal powers" of the society from which the individual springs and the individual once again reproduces or transforms society (Harvey 2002). At every stage of this process, the contexts within which my respondents operate determine their actions and reactions.

Context and Conceptual Framework

Gee in Gee *et al* (1996) differentiates between "discourses" which he identifies as "connected stretches of language that make sense" and "Discourses" which he describes as "ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social activities". Gee also states that "Discourse" subsumes and encompasses "discourse". Thus this research examines both types of discourse and how they are manifested in the respondents' writing, and their narratives, and in the multiple contexts which impact upon

them as evidenced by curriculum documents, university mission and goals, teaching materials and the narratives of teachers, administrators and curriculum planners. The conceptual framework of the study, which is based on how three different perspectives or “models” of literacy are manifested in the curriculum, materials and experience of the respondents (as seen in their writing and narratives), is integrally linked to the context of the study. These perspectives on literacy are linked to particular contexts and Discourses as well as discourses operating within these contexts. The multiple methodologies used in this study; which are linked to the different perspectives on literacy, are also determined by context and Discourses/discourses within those contexts. For example, the comparison of the frequency of lexical items occurring in a student corpus with the frequency of those items occurring in the materials corpus and the British National Corpus (a large corpus of native speakers), implies a “way of being in the world” which denotes a certain “range of possible...sentences” as “acceptable” (Kazmi 1997) and which implicitly supports their reproduction by the respondents.

The multiple contexts in this research are integrally linked to cultural beliefs about the world, knowledge and literacy. Culture in this sense refers to “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings” (Kramsch 2000; Kramsch, 2001). In this chapter, I attempt to describe the context(s) and Discourse(s) that my respondents are immersed in and influenced by. However, the contexts and the cultural beliefs they give birth to do not necessarily have a direct or even any influence at all on the respondents, but rather, as described by Hadley (2004), “a closer analogy might be that of cultural beliefs acting like marbles in a box, each one bouncing off each other at random, thereby creating almost infinite possibilities”. Although it is impossible to describe these “infinite possibilities”, I will attempt to describe a few of the contexts and academic cultures that my respondents are exposed to in this chapter.

There are two main colliding contexts which permeate this Gulf society as a whole and, in particular, the lives of its students. The first is Islam and the second Westernization, often

more specifically Americanization. Varying concepts of Islam and Westernization colour the respondents' views of learning English as a foreign language, academia in general as well as the academic preparation of women for work outside the home. Perceptions of Islam and Westernization also colour the choices made by the government regarding higher education and by the university regarding their choice of mission, goals, curriculum, faculty composition and teaching methods. Of course, perceptions of Islam and Westernization/ Americanization differ widely in different contexts and can change radically in a short period of time. This thesis, however, focuses on the particular perceptions of these Discourses observed during the period of research by the researcher.

Ninety-six percent of people in the country where this study is located are Muslims and the traditional Islamic view of the world does not separate religion and state (Ahmad 1998; Lewis 1998) viewing knowledge (*ilm*) as a unified concept including both “sensory and intelligible realms” and “the realm of the spirit” (Asraf, 1996). In addition, spiritual knowledge should be memorized and “recited” rather than questioned, as is reflected by the opening words on the second *Sura* (chapter) in the traditional sequence of the Qur'an, *Sura Al-Baqara*: “Alif lam mim. This Book is not to be doubted” (2001). This view is clearly at odds with Western secular academia; which claims to encourage critical thinking (although Geisler (1994) points out that school-based literacies in Western societies are not usually critical and others, like Harklau (2001), show that is not always the case even at university). Whether the brand of Western thought that is exported worldwide and to the Gulf in particular is actually critical, and whether Islamic thought precludes critical thought, will be debated elsewhere. However, the stereotypical colliding concepts of Islam and Americanization affect and are affected by the other contexts in this study, and while the “battalions” of Islam and English/ Westernization are “object(s) of knowledge” which exist “independently of human activity” (Bhaskar 1997), these concepts are still affected by the “geo-historical”. Because of their pervading influence in every sphere of my respondents' lives, I will examine the effects of Islam and Westernization/ Americanization on each of the contexts. It must be noted, however, that Arab identity is not necessarily a Muslim identity. Christianity, Bahá'í and other

religions also influence the lives of Arabs in the region. However, for my respondents, the two components are inextricably linked.

Islam and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Debate about the teaching of English as a foreign or additional language and its possible negative effects on Islam pervades the Arabic media and concerns many Arab academics, parents of students and students in this country in particular and other Islamic countries in general. The level of concern can be seen in the fact that the four most frequently asked questions on www.tesolislamia.org (the premier website for Muslim TESOL specialists) are:

- What is the relationship between TESOL and Islam?
- Does the learning of English as a second language contravene Islamic principles?
- Is it possible to learn or teach English without reference to British or North American culture?
- Is English the language of the Infidel?

(TESOL Islamia 2003)

These questions reflect the concerns of many Muslim critical linguists that the teaching of English will relegate Arabic (the language of the Qur'an and therefore of Allah) to a lower status (Zughoul 2003), and is part of a process of American "cultural colonization" under the guise of 'globalization' (Asraf 1996; Kazmi 1997; Hadley 2004; Kazmi 2004) and in fact will subvert Islamic Discourse with a Western Discourse of "materialism, utilitarianism, scepticism, relativism, secularism and hedonism" (Al Faruqi cited in (TESOL Islamia 2003)).

Some scholars debate whether the learning of English is necessary or desirable at all for Muslim learners and there is often "unease and even hostility towards the rising prominence

of English in contemporary Muslim society”. However, most Islamic scholars point to the “long documented history in Islamic societies of learning foreign languages” (TESOL Islamia 2003). They also reflect on the multicultural nature of Islam as revealed in the Holy Qur’an in verses like:

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge.
Sura Al Rum (30:22)

And

Oh mankind, We have created you all out of male and female and made you into tribes and nations, so that you may come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him.
Sura Al Hujuraat (49:13)

These two verses show that in Islam, different languages are seen as a sign from Allah and an integral part of His creation.

Although some may fear that English is the “language of the infidel” (TESOL Islamia 2003), most Islamic scholars admit that English is not only the first language of a large number of Muslims, but also the an additional language for millions of non-Arabic speaking Muslims and thus has potential as a “lingua franca” for Muslims to discuss their faith and even spread it.

This view is reflected in several *Fataawa* (legal guidance issued by pious, knowledgeable Muslim scholars and based on the Qur’an, Sunnah and Islamic Shari’ah) concerning the learning of English. The most noteworthy of these fataawa are those issued by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalik Al-‘Uthaymeen (Kitaab al-‘ilm: 143) and Al-Lajnah Al-Daa’imah

(12:133). Both focus on the reason for learning English, noting that if there is a “need”, especially religious, for “calling people to Allah” and even a “worldly” need, then learning English is acceptable and even “obligatory”. However, if there is no particular need, then it is “*makrooh*” (abhorrent). However, they warn of Muslims choosing to use English instead of Arabic when there is no need since, Arabic is the language of the Qur’an, and therefore it is “the noblest of languages” (TESOL Islamia 2003).

The view that language is closely linked to religion and determines the way we experience the world (Whorf 1956) is the principal reason why Muslim scholars are concerned about the increased dominance of English in the Muslim world and are worried about the effects that learning English can have on young Muslims (Argungu 1996; TESOL Islamia 2003; Faruqi 2005). The two principal concerns are related to Western, especially American, neo-colonialism and the spread of Western secular thought, which they believe can damage Islamic values (Argungu 1996; TESOL Islamia 2003).

Islam, TESOL and Anglo-American neo-colonialism in the Gulf

Kazmi (1997)(see also Pennycook (1994)) makes use of Foucault’s “panopticon” metaphor to describe how the “technology of power” of Anglo-American hegemonic discourse is purveyed through the medium of TESOL. The “subject(s)” in this case are Arabic students learning English at university and lecturers in faculties using English as a medium of instruction, while the “supervisor” can be seen as the countries with power, in this case chiefly the USA. The knowledge that they are constantly “visible” makes “the subjects assume responsibility for the constraints of power” and “the authority is internalized and hence becomes non-corporeal” without visible control by the supervisor (Kazmi, 1997).

Kazmi further states that, although countries without international power (“peripheral countries”) are not forced to learn English, the “panoptic order makes the use of force obsolete. Its power lies in determining, controlling and manipulating the conditions for someone to become visible and remain visible” (Kazmi,1997). Thus Western and in particular US criteria dominate the “peripheral countries” and, if they wish to remain part of the mainstream discourse and obtain all the economic, political and developmental benefits of this mainstream, they have to comply with the hegemonic criteria, in this case to learn English as a foreign language and to study at university through English as a medium of instruction. The issue of English as an indoctrinating imperialist force is not unique to the Gulf context. The process of “language shift” where a community of speakers moves from speaking one language to another is viewed with suspicion by theorists such as Dorian (1993; 1994) and De Swaan (2001), who ascribe the current rate of language shift to the “language imperialism” and some, like Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), even fear that this shift will result in the “death” of certain languages.

Kazmi further criticizes the metaphor of ‘the global village’ which is frequently used to describe the increased contact between countries and the fact that English is often touted as a global medium for increasing this contact. In contrast, he shows that “there exists... a monologic and not dialogic communication between the West and the rest of the world”, where Western, - in particular USA media and academic articles - reach people all over the world, but very little of the media or academic publications from “peripheral” countries reach people in the USA (Kazmi 1997). Kazmi also criticizes the view heralded by Kachru (1980) in which all varieties of English are seen as equally powerful. Kazmi shows that the gate-keepers of the dominant “Englishes” (North American, British, Australian, etc) will always ensure that they are more highly valued than those of the peripheral countries. For example, high -stakes international examinations like TOEFL and IELTS (discussed in greater detail later) ensure that particular varieties of English are promulgated and even the standards and expectations of the academic publications in the high-status countries ensure that to be published and have

“international recognition”, writers have to “carve up” their world in the particular way expected by the dominant culture(s) and/ or Discourse(s). In addition, because many speakers of non-dominant Englishes speak it as a second language, they will always be at a “disadvantage compared to those whose first language is English” and will also start to view their own language and its cultural universe as inferior since it “is natural for human beings to gravitate towards the powerful, for that is where things happen and deeds are accomplished” (Kazmi 1997; Kazmi, 2004).

TESOL and English can, therefore, be seen as a major method of promulgating the hegemonic discourse of globalization and as it supported the British Empire in the past, it is now a major tool in the “arsenal” of the new “empire” of the USA (Auerbach 1995; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin 2003; Pennycook 2004). Gregory Hadley (2004) describes some of the American “cultural beliefs” spread by TESOL and its “armies” of teachers.

Hadley describes the first of these beliefs as “progress through practical improvement”. This view suggests that American society is constantly progressing and improving itself and that other countries should embrace change as a method for improvement. He shows how this view is reflected in both TESOL methods and the policies of TESOL publications. In the international TESOL industry new methodologies are constantly adopted in the “belief that practical issues are being addressed and that progress is being made” (Hadley 2004), while language teachers in “obscure places” have great difficulties in “getting their papers published by centre journals” as they do not necessarily know the latest research developments or “jargon” in the field. Thus as noted by Kazmi above the idea of a “global village” or ‘international’ community in academia, especially TESOL academia, is fallacious as the papers published are “overwhelmingly from inner circle countries” (Kazmi 1997).

The second cultural belief which is promoted by the hegemony is that “America is Special” with a “mission” to enlighten the world. Hadley describes manifestations of this view of

American “exceptionalism” in the dominant teaching materials, which “encourage language learners to consider (and in some cases, reconsider), various social, political and moral issues from the Anglo-American liberal academic tradition” (Hadley 2004).

The next American cultural belief, which Hadley believes is promulgated by TESOL, is that “expansion is safety”. Just as American-led invasions into Iraq and Afghanistan were “justified” by many Americans because the country’s national security was threatened, the expansion of TESOL is justified as it brings “enlightenment” to the “invaded” countries (Hadley 2004).

Finally, the American belief that “healthy competition stimulates progress” has, according to Hadley been spread by and is an integral part of TESOL. The promulgation of high-stakes ‘international’ examinations like Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS), in which students must achieve a certain level before they can “access higher education in centre countries” has lead to further academic “colonization”. This can be seen in the *Gulf University*’s focus on gaining international accreditation and in the use of “benchmark” examinations in the foundation course, both as an indicator of programme success and as entrance requirements for study in the faculties. I will discuss these aspects in more detail in the section on *Gulf University*.

All the beliefs mentioned above, which are spread as part of the “mission” of TESOL, can be described as “unethical” since they expect “conformity and conservatism” and are promulgated by “coercion” (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin 2003), and thus TESOL is perhaps rightly viewed with suspicion by many Muslims.

Equally unethical, however, would be the denial of English to students in the Arab world, as this would deny them access to all the knowledge that has been produced through the medium

of English. Thus, students, academics and TESOL practitioners are faced with what Janks (Janks 2004) refers to as the “access paradox”. On the one hand access to powerful “Englishes” maintains their power and results in more and more work produced, and the marginalisation of writers who are unable to comply with their standards. On the other hand, denying access leads not only to a lack of access to the knowledge produced in English, but also to the inability of the “peripheral” individuals/groups/ countries to spread their knowledge/ Discourse. Islamic TESOL practitioners and scholars have, therefore, begun to examine ways to address this dilemma.

Islam and Approaches to Teaching

American expansion of influence in recent years, as well as renewed Islamic nationalism has resulted in some scholars calling for an Islamic approach to teaching English. Even the strongest critics of TESOL acknowledge that for the time being the Arab world “needs English to communicate with the world” (Zughoul 2003) and it needs English for the acquisition of what Asraf (1996) calls “modern-day knowledge” or knowledge necessary for social, economic and technological development. This focus on English as a tool for acquiring specific knowledge rather than “communicative competence” is at odds with the communicative approach promulgated in most modern TESOL programmes and textbooks.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The communicative approach to teaching language, particularly English, which gained prominence in the 1980’s focuses on the acculturation of the learner into the target language culture and the attainment of “communicative competence” or the ability to communicate like an “ideal speaker-listener of the language in a homogeneous speech community” (Chomsky 1965). David Nunan (1991) lists five features of CLT:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

The “cultural” aspects of the communicative language approach are of particular concern to Muslim scholars since the “linking of classroom learning” with the outside environment and with the learners’ personal experience, the use of “authentic texts” from the target language and culture as well as the focus on the native-speaker (usually native-speaker from hegemonic cultures like Britain and the USA) as the ideal speaker of the language, appear to be reifying the native speaker as well as his/ her culture - and this links with Muslim fears about cultural and academic “colonization” as already discussed. This is especially true since as Hadley (2004) states, there is often discrimination against teachers who do not look or “sound” like Anglo-Americans, and sometimes even less qualified native speakers are hired in order to help the students achieve the ‘ideal’. On a personal note, I have often fumed to see TESOL jobs in Southern Africa advertised on the internet for any North American “no qualifications needed”, yet Southern Africa abounds with highly qualified English teachers with an understanding of local conditions. This imposition of the “centre” (the country which imposes the language) on the “periphery” (countries where the language is imposed as a second or foreign language) has resulted in the privileging of the native speakers, their Discourse(s) and methodologies (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin 2003). The predominance of Anglo-American and particularly North American teachers at the *Gulf University* foundation course unit will be discussed in greater detail later.

In order to oppose this Western “imperialism”, scholars have made several suggestions including the Islamization of English, a focus on specific content in the approach to teaching English and the notion of multiple literacies and discourse communities.

Islamizing English Teaching

Zughoul (2003) suggests that an Islamic approach to teaching English would stress the consolidation of mother-tongue teaching and a localized and learner-relevant content. This would solve issues like the Muslim learner “culture shock” from current “ELT materials” as described by Argungu (1996). According to Argungu, references to “alcoholism or drunkenness” (*sic*), “sexual perversion/ provocation, sensuality, pre-marital relationships”, “cigarettes and smoking”, “crime and violence”, “Christian imagery/ beliefs/ attitudes”, “Euro-neo-colonialism, imperialism and racial superiority”, “other pro-Western social habits”, “beliefs and attitudes relating to individualism, materialism and secularism” and “author/ reader socio-cultural distance” (*sic*) which abound in English language materials would offend Muslim learners and thus an “Islamized” curriculum would exclude any such references (Argungu 1996).

Aspects of “Islamization” can be seen in the *Gulf University* curriculum in the fact that Arabic is an integral part of the foundation course, content is censored by teachers to remove perceived cultural inappropriacies, and teachers attempt to create materials to suit the local

environment and learner -interest. However, the cultural make-up of the teaching staff as well as the recently reduced and changed role of Arabic in the curriculum would seem to go against the Islamic approach. In addition, a lack of cultural understanding by non-Muslim teachers can result in an over-censoring of content which is not in fact offensive to the majority of learners, resulting in bland materials with little interest to learners. McKay (2002) suggests that returning to traditional “teacher-centered grammar-based language teaching methods” would improve the situation as it would empower local teachers and suit the local educational cultures which focus on reading and writing. However, Hadley (2004) remarks that grammar-based teaching also imposes Western hegemonic discourse in that the native-speaker teacher becomes the “sole expert who controls the flow of information to the learners” and that this method is very authoritarian and does not permit variation from the “standard”, since grammar itself is a disciplining construct. In addition, this type of methodology would discourage speaking and thereby prevent Muslim learners from communicating in English and spreading the message of Islam. Also, national teachers do not necessarily favour teacher-centered methodologies (Libdeh & Picard 2006).

The “weaker” form of Islamization of English as described above is in contrast with others like Shafi (1983) and Al Zeera (1990) (cited in Asraf (1996)), who suggest entirely reconceptualizing the teaching of English into an Islamic framework. Asraf (1996) even suggests that it is the “duty” of Muslims to “desecularize” and “Islamize” modern-day knowledge in order to use it to the benefit of the Muslim “*ummah*” (Muslim community of faith). This would involve only teaching English vocabulary, grammar or discourse/ Discourse that is compatible with the Islamic faith and “excluding anti-religious and irreligious ideologies” ((Shafi 1983) cited in Asraf (1996). This would necessitate the re-training of teachers, or the hiring of only Muslim teachers, “the teaching of lexical items and Islamic concepts in context, rewriting syllabuses and textbooks, changing exam systems and comprehensive structural support” (Pennycook 1994).

The Islamization of English teaching faces opposition from two sources. The first is from “those whose interests are in favour of maintaining the links between English and a notion of internationalism (thus making claims as to its neutrality and the primacy of international intelligibility)” (Pennycook 1994). People opposing Islamization for these reasons would probably be forces from within the “centre” cultures and those who benefit from their power.

The second source of opposition is from “pragmatists” from within the Muslim academic community who claim, like Hare (1996), that it is impossible for students to function within the global economy and international university community without understanding the context of the texts which are mainly written by non-Muslims. In addition, they assert that academic language is not “decontextualised” as is suggested by writers such as Stubbs (1980) and Cummins and Swain (1986) (cited in Hare (1996)), but rather deeply embedded in the context of the discipline, the writer and the assumed reader. They feel that if the Muslim student is not made aware of the interplay of contexts, he/she will be unable to decipher the text. Thus Hare suggests that, rather than be protected from non-Islamic discourse, the students should follow the Islamic “injunction to “eschew the bad” (1996) but still be taught about it so that they can understand the context(s) of the texts they need to unpack in order to gain “modern-day knowledge”.

Specific Content Approach

Another “solution” to the imperialism of English discourse is the view that teachers should focus on teaching “content” rather than “academic culture”. This view links with Araf’s (1996) view that the sole purpose of learning English, besides spreading the Muslim faith, is to access “modern-day” knowledge. This would result in a focus on teaching the specific content and discipline although it does not, as discussed above, take into account the cultural aspects that are intrinsically part of each Discourse or discipline. A focus on reading and writing rather than speaking and the learning of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) rather than “General Purposes” seems indicated by this view. This reading/ writing focus is a definite characteristic of both the ESP and foundation course curricula at *GU* and of many foundation courses in general, as will be discussed in more detail later. There is also an emphasis on decontextualising language in the proposed changes to the ESP curriculum at *Gulf University* (AWC Curriculum Committee 2006), or rather decontextualising language from a discipline-specific language. However, this is not the focus that is suggested in the ‘Islamic’ approach since the foundation programme and ESP courses teach English and focus on acculturation to a general (Western) ‘academic culture’, as is suggested in the communicative language approach. The continuum of ESP and its implications for learning and teaching is discussed below.

The English for Special Purposes (ESP) Continuum

English for Special Purposes (ESP) experts Dudley-Evans and St John (Dudley-Evans & St John 1998) divide ESP into two main categories: English for Occupational Purposes and English for Academic Purposes. The first is focused on teaching the language and discourse of a particular field for practitioners already in that field, and the second teaches the language and discourse necessary for students studying that particular field.

ESP at *Gulf University* is clearly teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP), as the focus is on students studying in a number of fields. However, EAP can further be divided into English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) and English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP). “EGAP refers to the teaching of the skills and language that are common to all disciplines; ESAP refers to the teaching of the features that distinguish one discipline from others... EGAP isolates the skills such as reading textbooks and writing essays... ESAP integrates the skills work of EGAP with help for students in their actual subject tasks” (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998: 41). Theorists such as Benesch (1993; 1996) and Pennycook (1997) have suggested that there is room in the ESAP approach for developing both the linguistic and critical awareness of context and Allison (1996) suggests that ESAP delves far deeper than mere “pragmatism” which, he suggests, reinforces “conformity in thought and expression” to an understanding of the socially embedded nature of literacy practices which “take account of and change wider realities of power”. EGAP, on the other hand, by its focus on the “general” negates these realities. The GU/ESP1 courses at *Gulf University* changed in 2004 from predominantly ESAP courses to a single generic EGAP course. The implications of this change will be discussed later in detail. ESAP is said to help the student to acquire the “modern-day” knowledge required by his/ her field more quickly, while EGAP focuses on what are dubbed “general transferable” academic practices.

In my view, the issue of opposing Western imperialism in language and discourse is imperfectly addressed by both the “Islamizing English” and “Specific Content” approaches as the former does not take the necessity of understanding culture in order to use English effectively into account and the latter does not take the fact that culture is embedded in specific disciplines into account.

Multiple Literacies Approach

Hadley suggests a compromise position between the above-mentioned approaches, namely that teachers should “think globally and teach locally” (2004). This would imply the teacher highlighting the cultural aspects of the discipline, but applying them to the local context with local examples and comparisons with the local context. Hare (1996) suggests that “tolerating different cultures or different points of view, doesn’t mean accepting or practicing them” and that the focus should be on teaching students to “uncontextualise texts” which means “they have to disentangle the various threads of context and meaning which exist in any given text”. This process would involve the acquisition of a number of different identities and associated literacies, which the student can select from in order to access the world of the text. The academic literacies (plural) view is detailed in the methodology and literature study chapters of this research. Others like Benesch (1993), Pennycook (1997; 2001) and Mauranen (1993) argue that although academia should be more accommodating of different rhetorical styles, there is also the potential for neophytes from non-traditional backgrounds to subvert the discipline from within once they are accepted into the Discourse.

The choice of approaches to learning and teaching made by the educational institution of my research site arise out of the historical context of education in this country and the Gulf in general. This historical background is discussed below.

Education in the Gulf

As previously mentioned, some Muslim scholars fear that the introduction of English-medium courses and Western-influenced curricula will erode Muslim culture and religious values; however, education in general has always been valued in Islam. Al Jawad (1993) cites both the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah to show that Muslims are encouraged to read, write *and* think. In addition, he shows that foreign knowledge, and broader education is encouraged by the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), who adjured his followers to “search for knowledge though it be in China” (Jawad, 1993).

In this tradition, education has become a priority in the Arabian Gulf states (al-Misnad 1985; Yamani 2006). Up until the 1950's there had been no formal education system in the Gulf region and children attended school only at the "Kuttab" (a form of primary school) where they learnt "to read and memorize the Holy Qur'an" and "acquired basic knowledge of arithmetic" and students acquired basic numeracy and literacy only in the Arabic medium (Gulf News Reporter, 2004).

Although there had been some progression in the late 1950's and through the 1960's with, for example, the establishment of two boys and two girls' schools in Dubai by Sheikh Rashid Al Maktoum in 1959 and the establishment of the first exclusively girls' school in Abu Dhabi in 1967 (Sayed 2001), it was only in the 1970's that a "systematic approach to education" was instituted in the United Arab Emirates. Similarly, Saudi Arabia and Qatar only extended "modern" secondary education to all citizens in the 1970's (Yamani 2006).

In 1972, education was made free and compulsory up to primary level by law in the United Arab Emirates and by the 1974-1975 academic year there were already 148 schools serving 44,272 students (Gulf News Reporter 2004). Later, free high school education and finally free tertiary education were added the numbers of students attending higher education institutions rose incrementally. In the Sultanate of Oman, it took longer for the number of students in secondary and higher education to increase incrementally, with only twenty-two students attending higher education in Oman in the 1975-1976 academic year. However, the figures increased dramatically to over three thousand two hundred in the late 1980's (Eickelman 1992).

In the United Arab Emirates, 65% of students applying for further education are female (Gulf News Reporter 2004). In Saudi and Qatar female students, although restricted in career choice

and not often permitted to study abroad (Yamani 2006), have also shown great enthusiasm and dedication in their studies. The issue of the education of women is crucial to the context of this study, thus it is discussed in more detail below.

Education of Women in the Gulf

In the Holy Qur'an men and women are both encouraged equally to seek knowledge and life-long learning (*Sura 20, ayat 114 and Sura 39, ayat 9*). In addition, according to official government publications, the current Bahrain, UAE, Qatari and Omani constitutions grants women the "same legal status...access to education and the same right to practice professions as men" (Department of Culture 2006) which has resulted in a level of gender parity in educational levels for women in Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (Buchert 2002).

However, according to Soffan (1980) and Sayed (2001) reported in Adam (2003), a gradual erosion of women's rights has taken place in the Gulf since the time of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). A number of social and cultural factors have contributed to this phenomenon. On the one hand, pre-Islamic traditions like the view that "female behaviour is the source of family honour" (Adam, 2004) restrict female movement. On the other hand the high percentage of ex-patriates in some Gulf countries have doubly restricted Gulf women's movement since tradition forbids female contact with strangers outside the family circle and most ex-patriate workers are male. For example, out of an estimated 4.041 million people in the United Arab Emirates in 2004, 3.23 million were non-Emiratis (Gulf News Reporter 2005), of whom more than 60% were male. Similarly in 2001, 40% of the population in Bahrain consisted of ex-patriates, 63% of the population in Kuwait and 72% of the population in Qatar were ex-patriates (Tattolo 2003).

Despite the protections mentioned in the constitutions of Gulf countries which I have already mentioned, even government think tanks still describe government policies toward women, as "preserving the rights of women, and providing them with opportunities for income and employment that are *both suitable and in keeping with their traditional role*" " [my emphasis] (Academy for Educational Development/ CISCO 2006). These beliefs about the "inherent nature" of women and the roles deemed suitable for them, namely: homemakers, teachers or doctors to female patients, have resulted in as "male children receiving preferential treatment" (Adam, 2003) in many Gulf families. In addition, increased wealth and the subsequent increase in the use of housemaids to perform roles traditionally performed by Gulf women, such as caring for the home and children has resulted in Gulf women further "losing their value" in the eyes of Gulf men (Adam 2003).

In spite of the preferential treatment of men in the Gulf countries, women's rights in terms of equal education have been greatly protected. For example, the UAE is one of only fifteen countries in the world where "girls outnumber boys in the formal education system" (Ministry of Information 2004). In addition, in 2001 95.5% of Emirati female high school graduates went on to higher education as opposed to 75% of male graduates (Goudsouzian 2001). In order to redress this imbalance, in 2001 different entrance requirements for men and women were instituted with an entrance requirement for further education of 70% average in the high school certificate for female students and 60% for male students. This was foiled after a couple of semesters due to protests by female Emiratis and the intercession of Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak. Similarly, until the "imbalance" was "corrected", female students outnumbered males at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman and in the some sectors of the labour market such as medicine and science and education (Chatty 2000).

Equal educational opportunities for women were hard-won in the Gulf and often required the intercession of the ruling families. For example, because of the prevailing cultural attitudes towards the protection of women from unrelated males in the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed instituted gender-separate institutions of higher learning. The Higher Colleges consist

of twelve single-sex campuses, Zayed University caters only to female students and UAE University mainly teaches male and female students on separate campuses, although a few select courses are mixed. Adams (Adam 2003) relates how Sheikh Zayed had to intercede personally with Emirati fathers when UAE University opened in 1977 to convince them to allow their daughters to attend the university. His measures included personal telephone calls to fathers, the provision of covered buses, guarded residences and even an initial faculty for the female section of the university consisting only of women and elderly male lecturers. In Saudi Arabia, female students have gained access to higher education chiefly because of the intercession of members of the ruling family such as Crown Prince Abdullah and Prince Faisal (Chatty 2000). However, male and female students are strictly segregated and female students are even “protected” from male lecturers by means of video links between the students in one room and the male lecturer in another. In Oman and Bahrain, although students study together in the same lecture halls, traditions insist that they sit separately and like in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, rules protecting the safety and “honour” of female students at university are still very much a feature of most institutions in the Gulf. Since many families still require their daughters to comply with strict societal rules (Chami-Sather 2006), the universities do not permit female students to leave the campus without the written permission of their male guardians (*GU Hostel Rules* 2006). This of course impacts on educational, community service and social opportunities for female students outside of the university and is discussed in more detail in the literature study concerning developmental education and how academic literacy is constituted for female students in the Gulf.

Women in the Gulf are not only entering higher education in greater numbers than their male-counterparts, but they are also “outperforming males at every level of education” (Ministry of Information 2004; Yamani 2006). Unfortunately, a combination of patriarchal traditional views about the role of women in the family and society as well as some companies restricting the number of females employed in favour of males have resulted in women only comprising 14% of the labour force in Oman in 2003, despite comprising 58% of the university population. Similarly, 73% of Qatari women attend university, but only 13% work and only 14.1% of the United Arab Emirates labour force is female mainly employed in the public

sector, despite the high female enrollment at university (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam 2006). One reason why there are so many female as opposed to male students in Gulf countries could be that many male students study abroad, whereas female students are less likely to be permitted to do so by conservative parents. Another reason could be that, because of a preference for hiring men, many women delay working and study first to be in a stronger hiring position. Unfortunately, the figures show that even higher education does not necessarily lead to employment for women. Thus in many cases, the universities and colleges are training educated housewives.

Hopefully recent labour laws which prevent discrimination against women (Ministry of Information, 2006; Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam 2006) will improve the situation in the workplace, although changes will necessarily be slower in traditional families and unemployment and underemployment of educated women can also be seen as a world-wide trend. In the United Kingdom, for example, female graduates face many inequalities in the occupational world and they are far more likely than male graduates to accept non-graduate jobs (Booth, 1993; Chevalier 2000). Developing countries like South Africa reflect the situation in the Gulf, with female graduates exceeding male graduates, yet many remaining unemployed (Budlender 1999). However, this could be due to the fact that females tend to choose less technical fields, which have lower rewards. In the same way, women in the Gulf are often very limited in their career choices due to family and societal pressures and while at female students predominate at university in some Gulf countries, the figures at the Colleges of Technology are more equally distributed between male and female students. Men also predominate in the police and army, where lower education yields higher rewards. Few Gulf women attempt to gain employment in these institutions due to cultural expectations that they only hold jobs where they work in a female-only environment (e.g., as teachers in girls' schools or as doctors servicing female patients)(Chami-Sather 2006). A notable exception is in Oman where women were encouraged to take positions in most fields alongside men after the "palace coup" in the 1970's (Chatty 2000). Recently, however, there has been a trend in the Gulf towards women taking on other jobs, especially in the field of banking.

The education system in the Gulf has changed dramatically in the past thirty years; however, a number of criticisms are leveled against it.

Criticisms of the Gulf Educational System

Gulf countries have an extremely high rate of admission to higher education. For example, in the United Arab Emirates, in the 2001 – 2002 academic year 95% of female high school graduates and 80% of male high school graduates attained a place in higher education (Ministry of Information 2004) and countries like in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait are criticized for “duplication and under-utilization” of resources in higher education (Garrett & Farghaly 1987) possibly because of the segregation of genders at many institutions and the duplication of subjects and facilities in universities in close geographical proximity. Although participation in higher education is considerably higher in the Gulf than most other regions, this is part of an international trend towards increase in higher education which is discussed in more detail in the literature review. This trend is based on the “high skills thesis”, which assumes that for a country to become more economically viable in the new global work order focusing on the “reinvention” of goods and, thus, on the adding of value through “knowledge”(Castells 2000), its population should obtain high skills, through, among other things, higher education (Ashton & Green 1996; Brown & Lauder 2001) However, in the Gulf countries, like in many other countries worldwide, this increase in the student cohort has lead to the acceptance of students who are perceived to be “underprepared” to enter higher education. Criticism of the school system from lecturers and students within the higher education level are thus common. The Gulf school system, like that of many developing countries, is blamed for students lacking the reading habit and for their focus on memorizing and examinations rather than “critical” or “creative thinking”. Methodologies are described as “teacher-centred” rather than “learner-centred”, teachers are described as lacking innovation, students’ English levels are described as “low” and students’ are said to lack communication, study and technology skills (Saffarini 2005). Since most higher education institutions in the

Gulf region teach at least partly through the medium of English, the fact that some schools do not follow the Ministry of Education requirements to speak English in the English classroom, is regarded by many university lecturers to be a point of concern. School management has also been criticized for being too centralized and thus not allowing initiative from teachers and principals (Nowais 2004). All these so-called ‘deficiencies’ can result in poor performance at university. In order to ‘remediate’ these problems, most higher education institutions in the Gulf have foundation programmes focusing on these issues.

However, it is not only the schools that are called to account for poor student performance and lack of initiative. In the University examined in this research, lecturers in the faculties tend to blame the foundation lecturers for the students’ inability to function within the faculty (Bielenberg 2005; Nowais, 2004). In turn, foundation course English lecturers query whether the faculties realize the weak level of the students entering the foundation course and the amount of progress they have made since entering the foundation programme. In addition, rumours abound that many faculty members teach so-called English-medium subjects through the Arabic medium since they feel it is impossible to teach English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners of a lower intermediate level entirely through the medium of English. Finally, industry blames the entire system for its failure to produce a “competent” workforce (Aldred & Lees 2004). This “blame game” falls within a Discourse of global higher education, which with its focus on “managerialism, privatization and accountability”, uses business principles to judge higher education institutions and thus results in a frenzied attempt by this sector to prove its viability (Currie & Vidovich 1998; Polster & Newson 1998).

Changes in the Gulf Education System

A number of changes have been implemented in both the school and higher education systems in the Gulf. For example, in Bahrain the “Train 10,000” programme has changed the focus of higher education from theoretical to “technical and vocational”, linking education to the requirements of the job market (Garrett & Farghaly 1987). In Kuwait the Ministry of Education has also changed to a more technological and “practical” focus, with an emphasis on “the demands of the labour market” (Rassekh & Thomas 2001). In the Sultanate of Oman, Sultan Qaboos University (a totally government subsidized university) was until recently the only university in the country, but market forces of increased demand for university places and international pressures towards mass education have resulted in the development of private universities (Al-Lamki 2002) and a focus on providing the skills demanded by the “market”.

In the same way, primary and secondary education in Oman has reacted to “global trends” with a new focus on “information literacy” in the school curricula (Rassekh & Thomas 2001). In the United Arab Emirates, at the end of 2002 the Ministry of Education and Youth released its plan to switch from “instruction-orientated education to self-education” (Ministry of Information 2004), computer literacy is now promoted at high school and the learning of English is promoted from primary school level (Rassekh & Thomas 2001). Thus instruction in English, a focus on technology and the teaching of market-related skills along with increased privatization have become a focus in the Gulf school and university curricula in common with education systems around the world.

Assessment and standards are also seen as areas for reform in the Gulf. The media, discussion papers and curriculum documents abound with references to changing the focus of assessment from the testing of memorization to the testing of learning and thinking about learning (Rassekh & Thomas 2001; Nowais 2004; Reporter 2005). There is also constant reference to improving of standards to an ‘international’ level and make education more “productive-employment orientated” (al-Misnad 1985; Rassekh & Thomas 2001; Hoath & Za'za' 2005; Yamani 2006). These objectives also lie within international Discourses of higher education.

However, the difficulty lies of course in the fine balance between international and work-orientated standards and the needs and desires of the communities in Gulf countries.

In contrast to the “international demands” highlighted above, Gulf countries still try to retain local, especially Islamic, values in their education systems. For example, the Education Ministry in Saudi Arabia wants “Islamic values to permeate all aspects of students’ lives “without compromising the capabilities to acquire production-orientated skills” (Rassekh & Thomas 2001). In the United Arab Emirates the Minister of Higher Education wishes to promote an “advanced curriculum, which will allow students to study Islamic and Arab heritage” (Nowais 2004). The Emiratization programme in the United Arab Emirates has been particularly important within the UAE school system and by 2020 the ministry hopes to achieve a 90% Emiratization of teaching staff. Extensive training and up-grading of local teachers has also been undertaken in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Oman (Rassekh & Thomas 2001). With local teachers, social relevance of teaching is likely to be enhanced. However, with the new focus on English and ‘international’ standards and content, far more training is required of nationals who often have “a poor grasp of English” (Nowais 2004).

The need to improve the teachers’ own English has again impacted on the higher education system, resulting in more and more faculties teaching through the medium of English. In order to achieve standards and narrow the gap between the “current educational system and society’s expectations” , the education ministries in the Gulf have shifted the focus to a skills and outcomes-based approach. Initiatives to achieve these objectives include, for example, the “enhanced mathematics and integrated science” curricula, which were introduced into the first grade of all government schools in the United Arab Emirates in 2003/2004 (Khanjare 2003) and the focus on technology, especially information technology, in school curricula in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait (Rassekh & Thomas 2001). These changes aim at a more “holistic” learning experience.

More responsibility has also been placed on the teachers and community. For example, the “Vision 2020” strategy gives educational zones more autonomy in the United Arab Emirates (Ministry of Information 2004), and the education forums include “all stake-holders” in Bahrain (Rassekh & Thomas 2001). Higher education institutions have been encouraged to form partnerships with schools to better articulate their mutual needs and problems rather than disintegrate into the blame-game previously mentioned. Initiatives from the private sector are also encouraged in this new system. For example, industry donations and partnerships are now encouraged in the Sultanate of Oman (Al-Lamki 2002) and in the United Arab Emirates companies like Nakheel and Dubai Properties now donate to higher education institutions and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company’s (ADNOC) has created clear “terminal assessment criteria” describing the levels of English and specific outcomes they expect from employees entering each level of employment as an attempt to forge closer links between industry and education. Once again, although higher education at government universities remains free in most Gulf countries and revenue is obtained from government and now private sources, Gulf universities are following many of the business principles that also pertain to tendencies in the rest of the world (Polster & Newson 1998).

The issue of improving standards in education is linked not only to improved curricula, methodologies and community involvement, but also to the raising of entrance requirements for higher education.

Entrance Requirements for Higher Education

As I mentioned before, there was already debate about the requirements for students entering higher education in the United Arab Emirates in 2001. In 2001 male and female students were permitted to enter higher education if they achieved an average mark of 60% in their high school leaving examinations. This was swiftly increased to 70% for both male and female

students. As well as needing to obtain the required average, students write a placement test in English called the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment for Higher Education (CEPA). This test initially only tested English, but has recently been extended to test mathematics as well. As well as the CEPA, students also write internal placement tests for mathematics, Information Technology and Arabic and are placed in levels accordingly. The desire to improve 'standards', as well as the imposition of budgetary constraints (Gulf News Reporter 2005), has resulted in the adoption of stricter entrance requirements for students wishing to study degrees or higher diploma programmes in the United Arab Emirates. From the 2006 academic year, students need to achieve a 70% average in their General School Certificate (GSC) examination along with a minimum score of 150 on the English component of the CEPA examination (*ibid*; MOHE 2006). A CEPA score of 150 or more indicates a student has reached "an adequate elementary" level of English before entering the university. The CEPA has thus changed from a "placement" to a "placement *and* entrance examination" (MOHE 2006).

Entrance requirements in the Sultanate of Oman have always been stringent. Only 5% of high school graduates attend university at the fully state subsidized Sultan Qaboos University and competition is harsh. Places are allocated based on student performance in the general school certificate (Rassekh & Thomas 2001; Sultan Qaboos University 2006) and thereafter the students complete a foundation programme focusing on English language skills. However, the newly opened semi-private Sohar and Sur Universities have slightly lower entrance requirements with only a General Secondary Certificate required from Omani nationals. However, after completing a foundation programme, they are expected to obtain a 6.0 average for undergraduate studies or a 4.5 average for a diploma in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination before they are permitted to start with their courses (Sur University College 2002; Sultan Qaboos University 2006).

In Qatar, all national high school graduates who have an average of 70% can theoretically obtain entrance to Science, Education and Arts faculties and all high school graduates with an average of 75% can obtain entrance to the college of Engineering. However, places are allocated according to the “admission capacity” of the colleges with the highest scoring students being placed first (Qatar University 2006).

In Bahrain, students are admitted to the government run university if they have passed their senior secondary school diploma or equivalent with an average of 70% or higher. Then, depending on their scores in high school, are either exempted from the English orientation course, or are required to take this course for a semester (Bahrain University 2005). At the private universities, students are admitted if they pass the senior secondary school diploma, but have to sit an entrance exam to determine their English level and take a foundation course before entering the faculties (Bahrain University 2006).

In general, entrance requirements for universities in the Gulf have become stricter in recent years and the level required by students entering the faculties has similarly increased. This trend has also affected the university constituting the research site for this study, which I call “*Gulf University*” (GU).

Up until June 2006 students who were “false beginners” were catered for in the Fundamentals course, a “non-credit course that: promotes basic communication skills; introduces basic grammatical structures and a variety of common vocabulary; focuses on basic speaking and listening skills for exchanging familiar information; practices reading for common, factual

information; introduces sentence level writing; introduces basic learning strategies and independent study skills” (UGRU 2003).

However, following the general Gulf trend, from August 2006 students are only accepted if they have an “adequate elementary level of English” (Nahayan 2005; Nahayan 2006). This change in entrance requirements is likely to have a serious impact not only on staffing in the foundation course - the Fundamentals level required over 35 lecturers, - but also in terms of curriculum at each level in order to cater for a new, “stronger” cohort. The change will also impact on the school system, which will be required to produce “better” students to reach these new standards. There are also likely to be some problems resulting from a higher number of school leavers who cannot be accommodated in higher education, yet are not trained to enter the job market. The issue of unemployed youth is particularly pertinent in some Gulf states, where “actual unemployment numbers are estimated to be between 37,000 and 40,000” (Janardhan 2005) and where the higher education sector like in many other countries has been used as a “holding pen” for unemployed youth (Aronowitz, 2000: 13).

I will discuss *Gulf University* in more detail in the following section of my context chapter.

Gulf University

Like other universities in the Gulf, *Gulf University* developed rapidly from a small college housing the elite, to a large national university. Gulf University grew to accommodate 14 741 students and 700 faculty members by Autumn 2005 (IRPSU 2005; Bielenberg, 2005). The students study in nine faculties tabled below and mainly study undergraduate bachelor degrees, although there is also a professional teaching diploma course and graduate courses in

Environmental Sciences, Materials Science and Engineering, Petroleum Science and Engineering, remote Sensing and GIS, Water Resources, a Master of Engineering Management and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme (IRPSU 2005).

The *Gulf University* mission statement below reflects the focus on acquiring “modern-day” knowledge already discussed; however, the focus is on knowledge that also is relevant to the culture and norms of society. There is an emphasis on research and a striving for ‘quality’, which is reflected in the words:

Gulf University is the premier national university whose mission is to meet the educational and cultural needs of the...society by providing programmes and services of the highest quality. It contributes to the expansion of knowledge by conducting quality research and by developing and applying modern information technology. It plays a significant role in leading cultural, social and economic development in the country.

Gulf University Mission (1997)

However, as already discussed, industry is not yet satisfied with the calibre of student produced by the higher education institutions and this, among other factors, has contributed to a high number of graduates who cannot find jobs. Despite extensive programmes to favour nationals, there is a perception among employers that nationals do not have the competencies to perform the required jobs, lack the appropriate language (mostly English skills) and other skills, have insufficient or unsuitable qualifications and are not willing to perform jobs with a lower pay or status (Tanmia 2004). National jobseekers of whom 50% are graduates with either higher diplomas or degrees (Ministry of Information 2004) describe experiencing discrimination against local jobseekers and especially female jobseekers encounter problems in finding jobs that fits with their family responsibilities or cultural norms. For example, some female graduates do not wish to work with men. The head of the labour market studies at Tanmia, the national human resource development and employment authority, estimated that current actual unemployment figures among nationals could reach as high as 40,000

(Janardhan 2005). Although the university cannot militate against all the factors that lead to the a nearly 15% unemployment rate amongst nationals, it has in recent years made a number of far-reaching changes which can be summarized in terms of the *Gulf University Strategic Plan 1998-2007*. This plan includes the following elements:

1. Excellence in teaching and learning.
2. Reduction in student population.
3. More focus on research and graduate studies.
4. More emphasis on professional Faculties.
5. Continuation of accreditation and external evaluation
6. Concentrated use of IT.
7. Enhanced community service.

Gulf University Strategic Plan (1997)

To achieve this excellence in teaching and learning, *GU* like the other government-run educational facilities in the Gulf has recently changed its focus from quantity in recruiting students to quality with higher entrance requirements being implemented from September 2006. In addition, an attempt has been made to raise standards by seeking international accreditation. For example, the Education Faculty gained accreditation through the Centre for Quality Assurance in International education (CQAIE) in conjunction with the Washington-based National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in February 2005 for the period 2005 to 2010. The process of gaining accreditation resulted in a review of teaching curricula with the addition of subjects like Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Exploratory Educational Experiences, Learning Communities, School and Family, Teaching of Thinking Skills and The Capstone Course (Education Faculty 2006). This adjustment to the USA ‘international’ standard also resulted in a change of language of instruction from mainly Arabic to mainly English in this faculty. Other colleges like those of Engineering, Information Technology, Science and Business and Economics have long been taught through the medium

of English and the Business and Economics MBA programme is once again accredited through a USA body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International)(MBA 2005).

This emphasis on North American, often referred to as ‘international’ standards, and the following of the general trend towards globalization in higher education, are weighed against the focus in Gulf society on heritage referred to in the university’s core values: “*Gulf University* students, faculty and staff are proud of their heritage and culture, while they work hard to catch up with developments in the world, they preserve their heritage” (Nahayan 1997). The emphasis on “teaching students” rather than “content” (Nahayan 1997; Bielenberg 2005) and the focus on community service also attempt to balance local and international demands. In the same way, although the university wishes to “hire, motivate and reward superior faculty members”, it wishes to “double the number of National faculty members, while maintaining quality”.*Gulf University*, therefore, like Gulf society in general walks a tightrope between international/ American standards and demands and local needs and realities.

In this study I will focus on ongoing changes in the Humanities Faculty and the *Gulf University* foundation course, as the respondents in this study are all students who completed at least three semesters in the foundation course and at the time of the research were doing the ESP1 (English for Special Purposes) course and courses within the Humanities Faculty.

The Gulf University Foundation Course

The Foundation Course at *GU* was established initially with a remedial focus, since at the time many students were deemed unprepared to enter their majors, especially through an English medium of instruction. Thus they were provided with courses in English, Mathematics, Information Technology and Arab which would contribute to their degree: “Twenty-four credit hours of a student’s graduation total may be earned by either passing the sequence of courses...or successfully challenging out of any course(s)” (Education Faculty 2006). The programme has grown as now it serves more than 30% of the entire university population (Jacquith & Al-Khanbashi 2005).

Gulf University, like other universities in the region, follows the United States Higher Educational Model in that students go through a “readiness” phase in which their proficiency in English, Arabic, Mathematics and IT is improved (Carlson, Barise *et al.* 2005). The appropriateness of American standards and models has been discussed and will be discussed further in this research. This foundation phase must be completed before students can gain entry into their faculties, although in the past some students (mainly those in Arabic-medium courses) were permitted to enter the faculty prior to fulfilling this requirement (Bielenberg 2005). In addition, students can “challenge” themselves out of the foundation programme by achieving a high enough score in either the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). In 2005, 350 instructors worked in the foundation course and nearly 6 000 students were accommodated (Bielenberg, 2005)

The foundation course curriculum has changed dramatically in the past five years, partly because of the challenges set by the *Strategic Plan* and partly because of the influence of (North American) consultants. This is clear from the foundation programme organizational chart which shows the direct influence and high status of consultants – that is, those reporting directly to the Dean of the foundation programme (UGRU 2003). Prior to 2003, the four components/ subject areas which make up the programme functioned independently with the English, Arabic, Mathematics and Information Technology programmes each focusing on the

particular skills that the faculties perceived the students lacked. However, after recommendations by the aforementioned consultants, the unit changed from a “remedial” programme “teaching isolated skills in separate disciplines” to a “developmental” programme which would have a more “cross-disciplinary” approach (Bielenberg, 2005). The implications and meaning of these terms are discussed in more detail in the literature review. In the English programme, however, a new curriculum based on the draft Standards and Objectives document dated Spring 2001 was introduced as early as in January 2002 (UGRU 2003) and there is some debate whether it was ever completely a remedial programme as it always focused on thinking skills and learner training as well as vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing and speaking skills (Gillway 2005). The 2003 changes did, however, bring the disciplines closer together. In order to facilitate this cross-disciplinary fertilization, the inter-disciplinary curriculum competencies were devised (Gillway 2005).

The curriculum competencies include learner training which focuses on teaching students the “skills and dispositions to become life-long learners”, thinking skills which involves teaching creative as well as critical thinking skills, application of knowledge which relates to students recognizing “the relationships between different areas of knowledge” and connecting “theory with practice”, information literacy which involves the effective use of technology as well as all other sources of information, and finally, communication which involves the students communicating effectively in both speech and writing (UGRU 2003).

The four disciplines all reinforce each of the curriculum competencies; however, each discipline takes primary responsibility for specific competencies. For example, the Information Technology programme takes primary responsibility for information literacy, the English programme takes primary responsibility for communication and the Arabic programme takes primary responsibility for learner training. The changes in the curriculum are most evident in the IT and Arabic programmes. Prior to 2003, the Arabic course was focussed on teaching students Standard Arabic, whereas the programme now concentrates on teaching students study skills, thinking skills and information literacy through the medium of

Arabic (Gillway 2005). The issue of standard and Gulf Arabic is, however, yet another aspect which impacts on the students' level of literacy and academic literacy, even in their native tongue, since there is a distinct gap between the Arabic used in formal education (*fusha*) and "the dialect spoken at home, at the marketplace, and almost everywhere outside the school (and university) walls" (Maamouri 1999), which has resulted in a diglossia or switching of practices between the language variants. This is more or less successful depending on the individual student.

The IT syllabus initially focused on teaching programming and computer literacy skills. Then, in 2003/2004, the entire syllabus was based on the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL). As of 2004, the course has become task-based (focusing on the skills as tools not an end in themselves) and, like the other curricula in the Foundation programme incorporates the curriculum competencies. It is also now more academic than technical (Bielenberg Interview 2005). Other inter-disciplinary initiatives include the problem-based learning initiative (PBL), the corpus project and interdisciplinary peer observations (where teacher from the different disciplines observe each others' lessons) and the recently implemented "language implication project". In this project teachers from different disciplines try to identify and highlight English vocabulary and skills in the IT and Mathematics curricula, which give students problems (Bielenberg Interview 2005; Bielenberg 2005; Gillway 2005). The PBL and foundation programme corpus initiatives are described below.

Problem-based Learning (PBL) in the foundation programme

In the problem-based learning project students are given a "complex real-world problem" (Programme 2005). They have to work with a group to solve the problem and then present their solution to the class. There is no 'correct' answer, as the focus is rather on the development of skills and attitudes and their ability to support the decision that they present.

Students attend classes on alternate Wednesdays (six sessions per semester) and the course is led by Mathematics and IT teachers. Their marks for participation and product (which consists of either a poster or a pamphlet and a presentation) are 15% of their Mathematics grade although the course is independent of any particular programme. The students are also divided into classes by their Mathematics level (Level 1 or 2).

In the PBL Level 1 task for Autumn 2005, students are given a profile of a particular student. They need to select two suitable jobs for the student, create a leaflet describing the jobs and present them to the student taking his/ her strengths and weaknesses into consideration (Programme 2005). This task involves students researching the training, experience and skills necessary for the jobs as well as reading in detail about the student and analyzing the data. In the second PBL level (Autumn 2005) students must choose from three real-life problems which are linked to themes in the English curriculum. They must, for example, a) advise the university's Director of Planning on how to ease traffic, b) a patriotic investor on how to get a good return on his investment or c) the local municipality on how to improve public access to sports facilities in [a nearby city] (Programme 2005).

This project was piloted in the Spring 2005 for PBL2, and in the Autumn 2005 semester all Level 2 Mathematics students took part, while PBL1 was piloted. It appeared to be very successful and students and teachers enjoyed the project with some initial teacher reservations (Bielenberg Interview 2005; Bielenberg 2005; Gillway 2005; Gillway Interview 2006; Gillway 2006).

Corpus-based Project

In 2003 the foundation programme's curriculum committee set up a corpus of all the textbooks and teaching materials used in English Level 1, 2 and 3, IT 1 and 2, Basic Mathematics 1 and 2, and Advanced Mathematics. The project had several aims. Firstly, in terms of "face validity" in the choice of vocabulary for the English curriculum, the committee wished to show the students that the words were high frequency words in the English language in general as well as in their textbooks. Secondly, they wished to show the students that the words were important across the curriculum and therefore studying these words would benefit them in all their courses and finally they wished to expose the students to concordancing materials where they could examine the words before and after the token words and study the common collocations and collegations and functions of the words (Gillway Interview 2005). Concordancing activities based on the Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000) as well as the findings of the committee's corpus studies have been placed online for students to use, while the corpus is also available on the Academics Domain for lecturers and students to use. This corpus is used as part of the materials corpus in my research.

As I have mentioned before, the desire of *GU* to improve the quality of education and fulfill the requirements of industry is presented in a Discourse of conforming to "international standards" (Nahayan 1997) in terms of accreditation as well as the recent decision to raise entrance requirements changing the national placement examination into an entrance examination. In addition, they have embraced the concept of "benchmarking". This focus does not, of course, take into account the previously mentioned debates on whether 'international standards' are not just marketing Discourses for powerful countries and interests and whether education should be more in keeping with the local context. In the foundation programme benchmarking has been used in the English and Mathematics programmes and was planned for the IT programmes from 2006/2007.

Benchmarking in the foundation programme

The term “benchmarking” is usually used in the business world and can be described as “the process of determining who is the very best, who sets the standard, and what that standard is” (Reh 2006). Benchmarking is used at *GU* to measure the institution and its programmes against ‘international standards’. In the foundation programme, benchmarking not only tests the “effectiveness of programmes” (Jacquith & Al-Khanbashi 2005), but also is used to measure the progress of students and their readiness to enter the faculties. Four benchmark tests were selected and piloted: the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in the English programme, the International Computer Drivers Licence ICDL in the IT programme and the Descriptive Test of Mathematics Skills (DTMS) in the Mathematics programme. These tests were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes and first TOEFL and later IELTS became an exit standard for the students preparing to enter the faculties. These international tests, their efficacy as benchmark tests as well as their relation to the work in the foundation programme is discussed below.

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was at the time of the pilot in the *GU* foundation programme a paper-based multiple choice examination which tested listening comprehension, structure, written expression and reading comprehension via mostly multiple

choice questions and an additional test of written expression (ETS 2006). In the two pilot semesters (Autumn 2003 and Spring 2004), the students in level three of the programme were expected to achieve an overall score of 450 in TOEFL to exit the foundation programme and enter their faculties. This score roughly corresponds with a low intermediate level of English (Khalil & Jacquith 2005). The choice of this score as an exit level is in itself problematic, since most North American Universities require a score of over 500 and an upper-intermediate level of English on the TOEFL. Thus, the English of students entering the faculties at *GU* English was on a far lower level than that of foreign students entering North American universities at that stage, yet in the *GU* faculties North American textbooks are commonly used (Faculty Respondent 1 and 2).

The paper-based TOEFL has been criticized for focusing on “discrete knowledge about the forms of the English language” rather than on holistic academic skills (Cumming, Grant *et al.*, 2005: 1) and for testing skills which “were unrelated to real academic tasks performed by international students at North American universities” (Rogers 2004) for example, in the structure section of the test students were expected to find errors in sentences, a task which they were not likely to do in the university environment.

The North American focus, especially in the speaking section, where North American accents, dialects and even slang were a feature (ETS 2006), was also a concern for the foundation course administration. Although the university structure has changed to mirror that of a North American university, many of the lecturers in the foundation programme are North American (IRPSU 2005; Reynolds 2005) and some students intend to complete graduate studies at North American institutions, many lecturers felt that the foundation course should have a broader focus. One reason for this is there are lecturers from all over the world with a variety of accents teaching in the foundation programme and *GU* in general. Also, although the

official figures for faculty teaching staff only distinguish between nationals and ex-patriates with nationals comprising 28.7 % and ex-patriates 71%, observation suggests that the majority of lecturers teaching in the faculty are of Arab descent and, as discussed earlier, some academics feel that the focus in teaching English should be on academic skills or “modern-day knowledge” rather than on a specific type of English. It was also suggested that the TOEFL required extra “teaching to the exam” since it did not coincide with the materials and tests in the foundation programme English levels (Khalil & Jacquith 2005).

Therefore, after the pilot, it was decided to continue with the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as the benchmark and exit examination for the foundation course English programme from Autumn 2004.^{12 3}

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

The International English Language Testing System consists of a test in all four skills - reading, listening, writing and speaking (IELTS 2006). Reading and listening are tested in one

¹ In the pilot, only students who had registered in 2003 or later wrote the benchmark examination and were expected to score 450 or higher, as well as pass their English level three examinations, students who had entered the system before 2003 could exit the foundation programme if they just passed the level 3 English examinations.

² The form of TOEFL changed dramatically from September 2005 and it now tests writing, speaking and listening in a more integrated way so as to “somehow capture or recreate...the essence of language use” Bachman, L. (1990). Fundamental considerations in language testing. Oxford, Oxford University Press.(300), although the focus is still to prepare students for North American universities Cumming, A., L. Grant, et al. (2005). A Teacher-Verification Study of Speaking and Writing Prototype Tasks for a New TOEFL.(1).

³ The TOEFL is still used for the teaching assistants (TA's) who are prepared to do their graduate studies in the USA (the government-sponsored programme permits GU students to only study in the USA, not any other country).

paper, with a separate paper for writing and an interview for speaking. The listening and reading sections consist of a variety of short questions; while the writing section consists of two pieces of writing in the academic writing stream (which is the exam written by *GU* students): a description of information and ($\pm$ 150 words) and an essay presenting an argument or point of view. The speaking exam consists of a three-part interview, in which the student responds to questions on a familiar topic, talks about a prompt and finally discusses more abstract issues and concepts with the examiner. IELTS awards no pass or fail mark, and as a result all candidates are allocated overall band scores ranging from 1 (non-user of English) to 9 (expert user of English) for each of the four skills (IELTS Interpret the Results 2006). However, within the *GU* context students and administrators and even some lecturers frequently refer to students as “passing” or “failing” the IELTS exam, depending on whether the score is higher or lower than a 4.5 band score.

The *GU* foundation programme decided to select the benchmark of an overall 4.5 band score as a requirement for students exiting the foundation programme level three. They had to achieve this score in IELTS as well as passing their level three examinations. This can be seen as problematic since a 4.5 band score in IELTS means that the candidate lies between a *limited user* (scoring 4) who has “basic competence limited to familiar situations” and “has frequent problems in understanding and expression” and “is not able to use complex language” and a *modest user* (scoring 5) who “has partial command of the language” and “can handle basic communication in his/her own field” (IELTS 2006). Therefore, the standard of English proficiency required by exiting foundation course students is far lower than the overall band score of 6 (*competent user*) than required by most universities in the United Kingdom, Australia or New Zealand where the IELTS is commonly used as an entrance requirement. This is possibly a cause of faculty dissatisfaction with the level of foundation course students entering the faculties, since they expect students who can competently interpret data in English and write and speak in “fairly complex language”. The low benchmark was selected because it was seen as achievable and changes in the required score are envisioned as the level of students entering the institution improve due to higher entrance

requirements (Khalil & Jacquith 2005). Note: At the time of this research there was still a backlog of students who registered prior to 2003 who were not required to write IELTS.

Descriptive Test of Mathematics (DTMS)

The DTMS was developed by the Multiple Assessment Programmes and Services (MAPS) programme of the USA College Board to provide information about students' level of achievement of the basic competencies in Mathematics that are required for success in most USA colleges (Winona 2006). The questions are all multiple choice and students are given overall scores and scores for "clusters of competencies" like intermediate algebra skills and functions and graphs (calculus readiness). Unlike IELTS or TOEFL there is a pass or failure grade and when the test was piloted in 2003 most *GU* students achieved passing scores which would enable them to attend a college in the USA (Khalil & Jacquith 2005). There is obviously a disparity between the students Mathematics skills which mirror those of students preparing to enter college in the USA and their English skills which are well below those required for international students entering undergraduate courses in the USA. However, the test has been criticized for not testing critical thinking skills and for the fact that it did not align completely with the Mathematics curriculum at that time. The test was not adopted as an exit standard for *GU* students, but there is now a push towards examining other benchmark examinations such as the Procedural Knowledge test of International Mathematics and Science.

The International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL)

The International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) was seen as useful for the IT programme as it “demonstrates a person’s competence in computing knowledge and skills in accordance with international standards” (Foundation Course 2006). It consists of seven modules (Basic Concepts of Information Technology, Using the Computer and Managing Files, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Database, Presentation and Information and Communication) and candidates need to pass each module’s exam to be allowed to take the next one in series. Once they have completed all seven, they receive the International Computer Driving Licence certification. This was initially viewed as a useful benchmark examination since it is used in 140 countries as a benchmark of essential computing skills in the workplace as well as academic environment. This benchmark, therefore, has “face validity”, especially for companies seeking to hire graduates. Although the ICDL was not used as an exit standard, students were encouraged to take the exam which was paid for by the university. Most of the foundation course candidates who attempted the ICDL obtained the qualification (Khalil and Jacquith 2005). However, at that stage the *GU* foundation course information Technology syllabus was almost completely driven by the ICDL and teachers were effectively “teaching to the test” (Gillway Interview 2005). When the IT syllabus changed in 2004, the ICDL was not selected as an exiting exam for *GU* students. At the time of this research, the IT team was piloting a new task-based benchmark exam (ICT) which could become an exit examination down the line and students could still opt to take ICDL at the *Gulf University* ICDL test centre.

The foundation programme’s English division also uses other standards principally to describe the students’ level at each stage of their progress within the programme. These standards are not officially tested, but are used as descriptors of the students. By the end of level three, for example, students should be able in grammar to pass the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate Preliminary English Test and an exiting level 3 student should have achieved a Threshold Level (Council of Europe Common European Framework B1+) of the Association of Language Testers in Europe Level 2 (UGRU 2003). In listening, reading and writing he or she should achieve “an adequate intermediate proficiency”

(Canadian Language Benchmark 7) and in speaking a “developing intermediate proficiency” (Canadian Language Benchmark 6). In Autumn 2003 an additional level, Fundamentals, was added as it was felt that the three levels were not sufficient to get all the students up to the benchmarks described above or to IELTS band 4.5 or TOEFL 450. This situation once again changed after the implementation of 150 CEPA as an entrance requirement, which will effectively eliminate the need for the Fundamentals course. Up until June 2006, the courses have been as follows:

- Fundamentals of English (a beginner non-credit course) consisting of 280 hours. Students who enter this course have scored below 150 on CEPA.
- Level 1 (an elementary course with 2 credits). Students who enter this course have either passed Fundamentals or achieved between 150 and 160 on CEPA.
- Level 2 (a pre-intermediate course with 2 credits). Students who enter this course have scored between 160 and 170 on the CEPA.
- Level 3 (an intermediate course with 3 credits). Students who enter this course have scored between 170 and 180 on the CEPA.

(UGRU 2003; Bielenberg 2005)⁴

Students write internal Mathematics, IT and Arabic placement examinations and are placed in three different Mathematics levels, two IT levels and two Arabic levels. The higher number of

⁴ There is obviously a mismatch between the stated level at the end of level three (intermediate) and some of the benchmarks listed above (Threshold, IELTS 4.5 and TOEFL 450). However, these benchmarks are based on the achievements of an A student who would have achieved all the competencies required by the level. A large number of students scrape by with a D (60%) which means that they have achieved just over half of the competencies required for the level.

English levels required once again indicates that the students' level of English is a major hurdle impeding their entry to the faculties. Students who tested into the Fundamentals level were not permitted to take Mathematics or IT courses.

The characteristics of students and analysis of course sequence will be discussed below using data from two quantitative studies conducted at Gulf University Foundation programme.

Gulf University Students

The figures in this section of the context were obtained from two sources. The first was a study completed by the Professional Development Coordinator of the foundation programme in 2005 describing the characteristics of students entering *Gulf University* in Autumn 2004. He gained the data from two sources: the placement exam taken by 2829 high school graduates wishing to enter GU and a general Student Profile Survey of all incoming students (Bielenberg, 2005). The data was collected in order to understand the students' non-academic as well as academic context since the foundation programme is focused on "developmental" education as well as "remedial" aspects and wishes to ensure an "institutional fit" for students entering the university (Bielenberg, 2005). The second study was undertaken by the Assessment and Research Coordinator in January 2005 and describes the progression of different cohorts of students through the foundation course levels. Data from the Spring, Autumn and Summer terms of 2003-2004 was analyzed (Morrow, 2005). These two studies are of interest since they describe the characteristics and academic success of my respondents who were in ESP1 (therefore completed level 3 of the foundation course) in Spring 2005 or Autumn 2005.

Bielenberg (2005) describes the following characteristics of students entering *GU* (only those factors relevant for this study have been described:

- They are mainly female with an average percentage of 76% female and 24% male students over the five years from 1999 – 2004.
- They are predominantly nationals.
- The most commonly selected field of studies for female students was Humanities, followed by Sciences, Education Arts and Business and for men the most popular fields were Business and Economics, followed by Engineering, Shari’ah and Law.
- A high number of students (39%) indicated that their mothers had attended no school and 29% indicated that their fathers had attended no school.
- A vast majority (90%) indicated that their mothers had no experience of a university setting and 83% said the same about their fathers.
- Only 15% of respondents reported that they used a language other than Arabic regularly in their home.
- Approximately 200 students tested into the Fundamentals level, approximately 850 tested into level 1, over 1100 tested into level 2 and only a little over 300 tested into level 3. The majority of students, therefore, test into either level one or two at an adequate elementary level of English.

Bielenberg (2005) therefore concludes that as the vast majority of students are “first generation students”, they require acculturation into the university environment. In addition, he suggests that aspects of developmental education such as student-to-student and teacher-to-student interaction be addressed and that the University should develop into a “student-centred” learning community.

The 2005 figures quoted above closely resemble those in 2004 reported above. In 2003, 2,332 students entered the *GU* foundation course. Of these, 743 were placed in Fundamentals, 950 in level one, 1,122 in level two and 260 were placed in level three according to their CEPA scores (Morrow 2005). Morrow (Morrow 2005) reports that students entering *GU* for the first time generally found their first English course extremely easy (Fundamentals and level 3), relatively easy (Level 2) or moderately challenging (Level 1). He also notes that students who test into Level 3 are likely to exit quickly and students who achieve over 65% in Level 2 are likely to pass Level 3 after one attempt.

Students who are rising from other levels show varied performance. Those who received either A or B tended to do well in their next level, excepting those rising from Fundamentals (Morrow, 2005) (the poor future performance of Fundamentals students and the amount of resources needed to service these students is perhaps a reason for the higher entrance requirements which exclude these students from September 2006 entrance). Students whose final scores ranged from 60 to 69% were not likely to pass the next level. There were many students who achieved these low scores at each level in 2003: 65% of Level one, 20% of Level two and 11% of Level three students. This suggests, according to Morrow (2005), that they “were not adequately prepared by the earlier courses to properly benefit by their current course”. This builds on my point that although Level three is described as ‘an intermediate level’ course, not all the students who passed the course had an intermediate level of English proficiency at the time of this research. However, the degree of difficulty in the Level 3 curriculum and assessment tasks was being steadily increased.

Finally, Morrow’s study shows that first repeaters achieved a 57% pass rate overall and second repeaters a 79% pass rate. A large number of students who repeated for the second

time were in either level two or three and many of these were intending to study in the Humanities faculty (like the respondents in my study). The student respondents in my study fall into a number of different categories according to Morrow's study (2005) although most of them share the characteristics reported by Bielenberg (2005). I will discuss some relevant information about the ESP Humanities students below.

ESP Students

In the pilot of the Academic Writing Course (Autumn 2004), which consisted of only Humanities students, there was an 89% pass rate with less than 10% passing with an A and over 35% passing with a D and over 30% with a C. There were a high number of students who had spent five or more semesters in faculty without doing the ESP1 course (63%) and only 10% of students were in their first semester in the faculty. Of these students, 71% had enrolled at *GU* in 2001 or 2002 and therefore had been at the university for more than a year (Thomas 2004). Many of these students also went through the foundation course prior to curriculum change. I selected respondents from a possible thirty-two students from the two Humanities classes I taught that semester. Five respondents initially volunteered, three of whom followed up with second and/or third interviews. The students closely resembled those in the entire Humanities cohort that year with only one non-national, a student from Sri-Lanka in the class. Thirty-eight per cent had entered the university in Autumn of 2002 (two years prior to the ESP course they were taking) and only two students had entered the university in 2003 and had achieved 4.5 or more in the IELTS. Of the students, 22% were studying History as their major, 13% Geography, 22% Journalism or Mass Communication and 16% Islamic Studies. Nine per cent did not know what their major was, which reflected the fact that the new Humanities course has a general introduction component before students selected their majors (Thomas 2004). Students in the History and Islamic Studies programmes would previously have been accommodated in the English for Employment stream, and the remainder of the class would have studied in the English for Academic Purposes stream and

have taken a similar course to the new Academic Writing Course. A high percentage of students had repeated one or more levels: 13% had repeated level one, 22% had repeated level two, 28% had repeated level three and 16% were repeating ESP - although in two cases this was due to a change in major as this was before the implementation of the generic ESP course. None of my respondents had achieved an A in level three, 13% obtained a B, 47% a C and 40% a D (Picard 2004). My respondents' classes, therefore, resembled those in the full Autumn 2004 cohort (1.13% - A, 11.31% - B, 32.36% - C and 55.1% - D (Thomas 2004), although none of my students achieved an A in level 3. All but one of my thirty-one students passed, but the average grade was a D+ resembling the rest of the Autumn cohort (Oasis 2004).

In Spring 2005, students in most faculties excluding only Shari'ah/ Law took part in the generic Academic Writing Course. Based on a statistical analysis of 188 candidates, the median score was 74.3% and the mean score (average) was 73.8% (C) and 84% of all students passed (Statistical Analysis Picard: Spring 2005). The lowest pass rates were once again achieved by students who had achieved a D or lower in their level three examination, and those who entered the university prior to 2003 and/or had been in their faculties for more than four semesters (Thomas 2006). This is probably due to their not achieving all the level three objectives and/or being in faculties that do not teach in English for a long period of time and/or entering the university before 2003 thus not taking either the IELTS or TOEFL benchmark test and not having met the newly established exit criteria. The slightly lower pass rate than in the pilot could be due to the fact that the difficulty level of the examination was increased slightly from the pilot. At this stage less than 25% of Humanities students had written the IELTS or TOEFL benchmark.

There were thirty-five students in my two Humanities sections from which I drew respondents. Six volunteered to be respondents in the study, but only four completed two or more interviews. A high percentage (51.4%) of the students in my classes had entered the university in 2002 (more than two years before), 22.8% had entered in 2001 and two (5.7%) had entered in 1999. The number of students completing the IELTS had risen slightly to seven out of the 35 (20%). The average grade for the two classes together was 73.5% (C) and no students who completed the course failed (two students dropped out during the semester) (Oasis 2004).

Thus, Humanities students during the time of the study (September 2004 to June 2005) generally entered the ESP course with lower grades in level three, were more likely to have been in their faculty for more than two semesters and had mostly not completed the IELTS or TOEFL benchmark. It can be concluded, therefore, that the respondents in my research were generally on a lower proficiency level than is expected by the level three course description and benchmark band scores for entry to the course - although in most of them passed, they achieved an average D and average C grade in the first and second cohort respectively. In Autumn 2005 this situation changed dramatically, with over 80% of Humanities ESP students completing the IELTS and with a high general pass rate (over 90%) in the ESP1 course and the percentage of As for the ESP1 course in this faculty rose dramatically. However, this data will not be examined in my study as my focus is on weaker students acquiring academic English.

My individual respondents are discussed in later chapters of this study. The rapidly changing ESP1 curriculum has had an impact on the respondents' performance as well as the way in which they "construct" academic English. This is discussed below.

The ESP1 Curriculum

The ESP 1 (Academic Writing Course) first was piloted only with students studying in the Humanities faculty (Autumn 2004) and then with students in Humanities, Science, Education, Business and Economics, Food Systems, Engineering and IT, excluding only students in the Shari'ah and Law faculties. At that stage, there were a number of Shari'ah/Law students who had registered at the university prior to 2003 and had, therefore, not completed the IELTS. In addition, the Shari'ah/ Law students studied only through the medium of Arabic and had generally lower level three scores and were thus deemed weaker than most of the other faculties. All 2003 Shari'ah/ Law students had to wait till Autumn 2005 to join the generic ESP Academic Writing Course (AWC).

This ESP1 Academic Writing Course focused on the stages involved in reporting on research and students were required to carry out a research project involving the selection of a topic related to their college (ESP 2005). Students from the Business, IT, Humanities, Food Science and Education faculties developed and administered a survey questionnaire, compiled statistics and then wrote a research report based on the IMMRC (Introduction, Methods & Materials, Results, Conclusion) model. The model was later changed to IMRC (excluding materials) as this was deemed more suitable to a laboratory report than a survey report (Atkinson 2005). Students studying in the Engineering and Science faculties prepared a research outline based on authentic sources, prepared a reference list and wrote a research report based on the IMRC model. Both streams were also taught how to write a formal e-mail to a lecturer.

The course was adapted from the academic strand of the ESP Humanities course, which initially consisted of two streams, one for students who would use English in their academic courses and one for students who did not study through the medium of English, but would need English in their professional lives after university. This course was selected out of the perceived need in the faculties for students to practice more writing. In addition, curriculum designers also reported a perception amongst administrators that ESP was not appropriate for *GU* students as they “weren’t really strong enough to do ESP work” and that ESP teachers were “getting into areas of teaching content in [their] ESP courses which they were not qualified to handle” (Atkinson 2005; Gillway 2005; Stansfield 2005; Thomas 2006).

In addition, there was a movement to align ESP with the levels and thus change it to a generic EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes) course focusing on academic writing. This was in contrast with the previous ESP1 courses where ESP lead-teachers and the ESP coordinator had coordinated with each faculty in order to tailor-make a course. Raymond and Parks (2002) report how in their context English instructors teaching MBA students favoured genres that were not favoured by the MBA instructors, and that ESP teachers as non-specialists in fact rely on their perception of what the students need rather than an in-depth knowledge of the field. This is one of the arguments for an EGAP rather than an ESAP course. However, the converse is also true in that as a course becomes more generic, it can move further away from the needs of the students and faculty (see criticisms of the course later in this chapter).

The decision to devise a generic course perhaps also arose out of a “managerial” Discourse focusing on “resources, standardization and transparency” (Thomas 2006). Prior to the Academic Writing Course, the tailor-made ESP courses resulted in the need for eight or nine

“lead teachers” managing sixteen odd courses. All of these lead teachers only taught half of the usual classes as they were on “half-release” to accommodate their administrative duties. When the language in all the curricula was standardized, it was realized that these courses had many goals in common. It was thus felt that a pooling of resources would result in better standardization which had cost and accountability benefits since management could also “keep an eye” on the ESP teachers more effectively if the majority of them were working on the same course (Atkinson 2005; Thomas 2006).

The course new ESP1 involved practicing the skills required for each part of the report and then writing the report as a piece of “process writing”, thus the course was “genre-based” in that it focused on “how language is used and organized within a particular setting” and very specific “type of text” as well as being “task-based” since all the “language learning tasks are goal-orientated activities that require learners to achieve real outcomes” – that is a real survey or research report focusing on issues that are important to the learners (Cook 2003).

Cope and Kalantzis define genres as: “...conventional structures which have evolved as pragmatic schemes for making certain types of meaning and to achieve distinctive social goals, in specific settings, by particular linguistic means”(Cope & Kalantzis 1993). Within a genre-based approach the focus is on the need for teachers to provide access for the student to dominant discourses by teaching the forms of that discourse in relation to its meaning in a particular setting explicitly (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993)and students are viewed as apprentices who are inducted into the discipline through careful scaffolding in four stages including the modeling, guiding, practicing and finally independent writing of the genre (Cope & Kalantzis 1993). The genre-based approach has become particularly popular as a tool for English for Special Academic Purposes courses (Swales 1990; Dudley-Evans & St John 1998; Flowerdew and Peacock 2001; Hyland 2002)and English for Professional Purposes courses (Bhatia 1993; Flowerdew 1993; Dudley-Evans 1997)as it provides the teacher with a clear understanding of what kinds of discourses the students have to be able to understand and produce in speech and/ or writing and this is probably why it was chosen for this course where in each module

the students are given models, guided towards the language and structures used in those models, given controlled practice writing using the formulaic language and type of content and finally writing that part of their report or the e-mail independently.

However, the genre-based approach can be considered problematic in this context since only two genres (the formal e-mail and the survey/research report) are taught in what is supposedly a “general” academic writing course preparing students for academic writing in the faculties where a large variety of genres are used. In addition, genres differ, depending on the specific faculty and subject in which they are used in and it is difficult to isolate “generic” characteristics of genres. In the same way the “process writing” approach that the course in common with the *GU* foundation programme follows has been criticized for the fact that it does not take the “social and political effects of composing” into account (Bizell 1992).

The examination in the ESP AWC course at the time of this research consisted of short questions testing mainly the students’ knowledge of genre, formulaic language, vocabulary items and a few language and editing skills. It was not possible for the students to write an entire report during the examination and thus ironically an “academic writing course” was tested by reading and short answers. During the pilot of the course for Humanities students, teachers deemed the course suitable for the students’ level and need (Thomas 2004). Students were also enthusiastic with 68% rating the course as very useful or useful. Only 10% of the respondents rated the course at a four or five on the Leichhardt-scale. Students were asked to write comments about the project and course in general which were then coded into categories. The results are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below, reproduced from Thomas (Thomas 2004).

Q5. What did you find most valuable about the course?

Rank	Area	Responses
1	How to write questions/ questionnaire/ survey	54

2	How to write a project	45
3	Writing – developing writing skills	43
4	Good for university courses/ life	35
5	How to write formal email	29
6	How to write a report	22
7	Everything	13
8	Vocabulary	12
9	Speaking with others	10
10	Working with others	6

Figure 1: Value of the Course (Thomas 2004)

Q6. What did you find most valuable in the project work?

Rank	Area	Responses
1	How to write questions, make a questionnaire / survey	62
2	Learning for the future/ life/ think better/ work independently	37
3	Writing a project (steps)	33
4	Working collaboratively/ communicating with students, teacher	25
5	Writing a report	18
6	Results / Statistics	16

Figure 2: Value of the Project (Thomas 2004)

However, once the course was taught to students across the faculties in Spring 2005, there were a number of criticisms and complaints from teachers. They felt that the IM(M)RC model was too rigid, the course focused on too narrow a genre and that the students needed to be

taught more skills like paraphrasing and note-taking. In addition, they were concerned that there was not enough reading in the course book and felt that students needed to read more to process information and write about it. Also, it was felt that there needed to be a stronger syllabus highlighting the necessary language functions, vocabulary and grammar. Another issue was the change to a generic course which dismissed the specific needs of faculties and students within the faculties.

Some of the negative comments from teachers, however, can be ascribed to their desire to retain autonomy over their individual ESP courses and the loss of freedom that they experienced in the new centrally controlled course. Thomas (2006) reports strong teacher “resistance” to the implementation of the generic academic writing course and a spirit of sabotage amongst some staff members during the early stages of its implementation. The course remained popular with the Humanities respondents, although reportedly less so with especially the Science and Engineering students. Out of my thirty-three remaining students, twenty-two (66.6%) found the course extremely useful in their faculty courses, 24.2% found it useful, two students moderately useful, one not useful and one not useful at all. Twenty (60.6%) believed that the skills they learnt would be very useful in their future academic or professional life, 30.3% believed it would be useful, two students found it moderately useful and only one considered that the skills she learnt would not be useful at all (2005). The students also wrote a number of detailed comments which are examined in detail later in this study. Most of their positive comments related to the fact that the course was easy, related to their interests and that they enjoyed the step-by-step process of writing the projects. Of course student comments and evaluations are often related to personal factors and even comments often reflect a re-voicing of what they are told by the teacher as is discussed later in this thesis.

Thomas (Thomas 2004) as well as the course evaluations of my classes (2005) show that teachers are one of the most important factors which determine whether students “like” the course in this context. Therefore, it is important to examine the characteristics of the foundation course teachers.

Foundation Course Teachers

Although the student respondents were already in their faculties at the time of this research and were recorded administratively as faculty students, the teachers teaching ESP were deemed part of the foundation programme. In addition, the students have been exposed to foundation course teaching staff in their foundation course. Therefore, the characteristics of foundation course teaching staff can be generalized to include the ESP lecturers at *GU*. The data below is all from an Organizational Climate Survey conducted in March 2005 by the *GU* foundation programme Personnel Department as well as the University Statistical Year Book (2004 – 2005).

The data showed that the majority of foundation programme lecturers (68%) are male, between thirty-six and forty-five and of North American descent (45%; just over 20% are of European, mainly British descent, ex-patriate Arabs made up just 10% and nationals about 5%). Here my own position as an African (representing 3%) female younger than the average teaching age becomes pertinent. At each stage of the research, I am thus required to make my position clear since I am definitely “the other” not only in terms of my student respondents’ culture, but also the dominant culture of the foundation programme teaching staff. Although the majority of teachers are in the English communication programme (48%), the ESP component of teachers constitutes less than 10% of the faculty in the programme. As I have mentioned before, there is no available information as to the precise nationalities of the faculty teaching staff; however, nationals comprise almost a third of the faculty and observation suggests that the largest number of ex-patriate staff are of Arab descent, although possibly educated in the West. The number of Western lecturers is, however, increasing. In addition, male faculty members far outweigh females with figures of 71% and 28.7% respectively.

As all the respondents in the study are Humanities students, they are also influenced by developments in that faculty.

Humanities Faculty

The Humanities faculty was one of the first four colleges at *GU* when it opened in Autumn 1977 (Faculty 2006). In 2004 the College of Humanities and Social Sciences began with the implementation of a revised curriculum. Previously, students immediately started their subject courses after completing their freshman programme (foundation course). However, now the Humanities Faculty, like the Education Faculty include a ‘general education programme’ (Faculty of Humanities 2006) for the students’ first semester in the faculty. Therefore, their programme more closely resembles college education in the USA. The three central changes to the curriculum include the inter-disciplinary studies already mentioned, the introduction of applied work into the curriculum and the fact that the medium of instruction has changed to English in every course. The academic programmes are divided into divisions with “overlapping areas”. These are the Heritage and Culture division, the Society and Behaviour Division and the Government Policy and Urban Planning division. Each student takes four interdisciplinary core courses, eighteen hours of thematic application, two short courses about careers, an internship, a course in critical thinking and a capstone course (a senior-level course within each undergraduate major) (Faculty of Humanities 2006). Three of my respondents as new students in the Humanities faculty in 2004 or 2005 followed this new curriculum. The remaining three as senior students in the faculty continued with the old curriculum.

Another aspect of the university environment which affects the students is student life and student services. These have developed rapidly since 2003 and are still in the process of change (Caldwell 2005). These aspects are discussed in more detail later in the thesis.

Thus a number of societal contexts, more localized university-based contexts, and individual factors “bounce off each other at random” and influence the students, teachers and curriculum designers in this study. This chapter has been an attempt to describe just some of the “infinite possibilities” affecting this research. However, it would be impossible to describe all the contextual factors influencing the players. Thus context is also interwoven in the literature study and method of this research and is discussed further in those chapters. In addition, the Discourses that arise from the multiple contexts in this study are discussed in the body of this dissertation.

Multiplicity of Methods

The concept of literacy is ever-evolving and multiple. In the same way, the educational site of my research (*GU* foundation programme and ESP course) is evolving and multiple. Therefore, in order to examine how academic literacy is constructed at *Gulf University*, I require a methodology that is flexible and allows a number of different forms of data collection and data analysis and takes into consideration the mutable nature of literacy and students' response to this phenomenon. Because of its flexible nature and ability to probe different levels of reality, I have decided to locate my study within the orientation of *critical realism*.

According to Terreblanche and Durrheim (1999), researchers can define "the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology". Critical realism could be viewed as paradigmatically fraught, not only because it can be seen to encompass some aspects from more than one of the major research orientations (as I will discuss later), but also because there is some debate whether critical realism is an ontology or an epistemology and even whether there is any appropriate methodology for this approach.

However, I will argue that the critical realist approach is the most appropriate approach for this study because it can be extended to all three dimensions of research and takes into consideration the historic and changeable nature of the phenomenon under consideration.

To understand how critical realism manifests itself in the dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology and how it utilizes ideas from the three major research orientations (the positivist orientation, the interpretive orientation and the social constructionist orientation, yet is substantively in opposition to all three, I will first trace the development of Bhaskar's thesis. Then I will describe and answer some of the criticisms leveled at critical realism and show how it can manifest on all three dimensions. Next, I will

discuss how ideas from the research orientations are utilized and transformed. Finally, I will outline how the epistemology of Harvey's (2002) adaptation of Bhaskar's Transformational Model of Social Activity can translate into a repertoire of methodologies spanning a form of interpretative analysis, concordancing and critical discourse analysis within the context of a critical realist study of how academic English is constituted within *Gulf University*. In addition, I will show how Bhaskar's theory suggests a number of methodological steps, which complement the above methodologies.

The Development of Critical Realism

Transcendental Realism

Bhaskar's first movement is reflected in his "transcendental realist philosophy of science" (*A Realist Theory of Science*, 1975; 1978). Bhaskar developed this philosophy as a result of reactions against the positivist view of science.

The origin of positivism can be seen in the work of David Hume (1711 – 1776) who, with his distinction between "perception and "thought" divided all knowledge into either "relations of ideas" or "matters of fact". Hume claims that "relations of thought" are "discoverable by the operation of pure thought without dependence on what is anywhere in existence in the universe" (Nidditch 1975). However, Hume provides no framework for discovering this kind of knowledge. The latter, according to Hume are "contingent", their contradiction possible, thus it is necessary to test this perception using the senses and seeking causality (Nidditch 1975). Repeated experience of one type of event followed by another allows the observer to establish a connection (causality) between the two and discover the principles, which underlie this causality. This ahistorical/ deductivist theory of scientific structure is the basis of Hume's "science of human nature".

In the 20th century, Hume's theories were attacked from three directions.

Firstly, Karl Popper and his supporters criticized the assumption that deductivist arguments could provide conclusive support for conclusions. According to Popper, "falsibility", as opposed to "verifiability", is "the hallmark of science" (Popper 1972). From Popper's perspective, deductivism is impossible since perception first requires a theory to test and is, therefore, inductive by nature. However, "true science" is distinguished from "pseudo-science" in terms of "empirical falsibility and anti-essentialism" (Popper 1972). In other words, for Popper and his followers, true science seeks out theories which can be falsified by counter-evidence and which does not claim to describe essential or necessary truths (truths which must be true because the opposite is impossible). "Observation statements" thus prove themselves by their ability to withstand tests of their validity (Chalmers 1992). However, the fact that these statements are "fallible and their acceptance only tentative and open to revision" results in problems for the establishment of theories since the "observation statements that form the basis for falsification may themselves prove to be false in the light of later developments".

Thomas Kuhn on the other hand attacked positivism because of its ahistorical focus. Kuhn emphasizes the importance of historical considerations. He believes that periods of "normal science" are contrasted with periods of "scientific revolution". In the relatively stable periods paradigms consisting of problem domains, standard sets of problem-solving techniques, general principles and theories operate. If, however, a problem resists these techniques, it is recorded as an anomaly. Too many anomalies result in a crisis for a paradigm and revolution, which in turn is followed by a new paradigm with its own domains, techniques, principles and theories (Chalmers 1992). Kuhn also takes issue with the positivist focus on mere observation. He believes that persuasion and judgment are vital parts of the scientific process and formal criteria should not be decided on before reaching an understanding of objective knowledge.

Instead, he suggests examining theories of physical science with “simplicity, consistency, scope, accuracy and fertility” (Kuhn 1974).

Lastly, Wittgenstein and the other cohorts of the Vienna school focus on the “theory dependent and mutable character of facts in science” in that science by its very nature tends towards change and its nature depends on the theory/ theories that it relies on (Chalmers 1992).

The genesis of Wittgenstein’s theory is the work of Bertrand Russell who sought an “ideal language” that depicts the “true nature of the world” without being misled by the surface structures of language. Individual facts are linked to a number of different people, but can be combined into facts about the world itself and to be an effective, “ideal language”, language should be able to describe the separate and “molecular” nature of the world. In addition, Russell also believed that general facts (facts about "all" of something) were needed to complete the picture of the world (Kaplan 1970).

Wittgenstein extended Russell’s concept of logical analysis by describing a world composed of “facts pictured by thoughts, which are in turn expressed by the propositions of a logically structured language” (Kemerling 2002). In terms of this view, “atomic sentences” express the basic information which the speaker has gathered via sense experience, while logic and mathematics are tautologies in that they are true by their own definition. For Wittgenstein, therefore the world consists of “independent atomic facts — existing states of affairs — out of which larger facts are built”. Therefore, philosophy for Wittgenstein is focused not on discovering facts but in clarifying them and the verifiability principle (i.e. that to be meaningful a sentence needs to be verifiable by the five senses or a tautology of logic) reflects

his view of science. Both the Realist view that language and thought “agree with” reality and the Anti-Realist view that we are trapped in the “games” of language are incompatible with the Wittgensteinian view. He is concerned with “what can make sense” rather than with “what we can do or cannot do” (Schulte1992).

Wittgenstein believed that “facts” are clarified according to a process involving first the expression of thoughts in language, which create a “picture” of the thoughts and next by an analysis of thoughts and sentences to show their “true logical form” (Schulte1992). If thoughts cannot be analysed in this way, according to Wittgenstein, they cannot be discussed since for him language “consists of atomic and then larger-scale propositions that correspond to these facts by sharing the same logical form” and “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” (Wittgenstein cited in Hacker (2003)). However, despite his focus on what Hume would call “matters of fact” and the fact that Wittgenstein’s theories led to the members of the Vienna Circle formulating the principles of logical positivism which left no room for “relations of ideas” in its rigid focus on verifiability and empirical observation, Wittgenstein does, however, imply that the aspects which we must be “silent” about are in fact useful and important. In addition, the layering (stratification) of his theory as well as his focus on the possibility of change in “facts” provides a basis for the development of the mutable aspect of Critical Realism (Schulte 1992; Monk 2005).

Principally, for Hume you can know the “matters of fact” through science, which for Bhaskar is impossible. Instead, Bhaskar condenses some of the most important 20th century criticisms of positivism. From Popper he gleans anti-essentialism, from Kuhn the geo-historical and social dimension, while he develops Wittgenstein’s focus on categories and theories into his “domains of the real” (Hacker 2003).

Roy Bhaskar first described the concept of Transcendental Realism in *A Realist Theory of Science* (Bhaskar 1997). There he grapples with the “central paradox of science”. The fact that it is both “social product” produced by man, yet at the same time there are “objects of knowledge” which exist independent of “human activity”(Bhaskar 1997). Like Kant, Bhaskar is concerned with *a priori* knowledge, knowledge that is independent of experience. Kant took his “epistemological turn” in order to access this knowledge, asking “what a priori categories (must exist) for a coherent account of sense experience to be conceptually possible”, thus suggesting that for a scientific object to qualify as knowledge, it has to conform to the a priori categories of human knowledge. Bhaskar reversed Kant’s question in order to formulate his “ontological turn” and thus asks, “What must the structure of the world” look like in order for scientific knowledge to be possible (Bhaskar 1997). Thus, according to Bhaskar, scientific knowledge and its categories conform to the unchanging structures of the world. He further claims that scientific knowledge and praxis, if they include a cumulative penetration of the different levels of reality, which cannot be reduced to each other, allow scientists to identify *a priori* properties of material reality. Reality is stratified and each level is the product of the mechanisms inherent in the more basic strata grounding it, but the “emergent realities” on each level cannot be entirely reduced to the more basic structures. Also, the strata are hierarchically structured within a historically open system (Harvey 2002). Therefore, scientists should be more careful in defining what constitute valid scientific laws and rather consider tendencies and probable outcomes than definite empirically proven “facts”, avoiding Popper’s error of falsifying using tentative “observation statements”.

The socially constituted and individually constructed ontological views are also taken into consideration within the transcendental realist view (adding Kuhn’s concept of the geo-historical). Thus there is an elision of transitive (individual and social) and intransitive (natural) resulting in a “transcendental” philosophy.

Because the domain of the “real” is distinct from and greater than the domain of the “actual”, the transcendental philosophy of science provides open systems for experimentation and laws are analyzed as “transfactual” and “universal” within their range, but “neither actual nor empirical”. Theoretical explanations can, therefore, not only “explain or account”, but also “produce change” (Bhaskar 1997).

Critical Naturalism

In *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences* (Bhaskar, 1998), Bhaskar extends his view of science to the human sciences. Twentieth century social scientists have been split between positivist theorists who believe that it is possible to apply the methods of the natural sciences to the study of society and the interpretative tradition, which focuses on the individual and idiosyncratic. While the former is hyper-naturalistic and individualistic, the latter is anti-naturalistic, hermeneutic and focuses on collectivism and holism. Bhaskar takes a position of compromise; he believes that it is possible to speak of “laws of society and human behaviour”, unlike the hermeneutic tradition of viewing the phenomenon “in itself”. However, he further explains that the subject matter of the social sciences ensures that they take human agency and social institutions into account. He thus coins the term “critical naturalism”.

In order to take both individual and society into account, Bhaskar examines the two main positions in this regard which were posited before the event of critical realism: the position associated with Emile Durkheim, namely “society creates man”, and the position associated with Max Weber, namely “man creates society”. He criticizes the “Durkheimian Stereotype” because it underestimates the role of human agency or the individual in favour of a process of mutual reproduction, an element, which he describes as “reification”, while the “Weberian Stereotype” is slated for overestimating the freedoms of the individual within a society and thus committing the error of “voluntarism”. To merge the two positions, Bhaskar thus states

that society can socialize the individual if a “manifold of social relations is already in place” (Bhaskar 1998). These social relations are, of course, historically created. To answer the question in the title of his work: “The Possibility of Naturalism”, Bhaskar thus states that “naturalism” is possible, if three limits are placed on naturalistic explanations.

Naturalistic explanations are:

**activity dependent* (“social structures ...do not exist independently of the activities they govern”)

**concept dependent* (“social structures...do not exist independently of the agents’ conceptions of what they are doing in their activity”); and

**spatio-temporally dependent* (“social structures...may only be relatively enduring...may not be universal in the sense of the space-time invariant”)

(Bhaskar, 1998)

Thus, according to Bhaskar, social structures, an individual’s concept of his or her own activity and time and space all establish boundaries for naturalistic explanations. These limitations correspond with the three levels of the Transformational Model of Social Activity (TMSA) society, individual and historical context.

For a critical realist, society is both the pre-existing (transcendentally and causally) and necessary condition for intentional agency, but it also exists and persists only because of this intentional agency. So, at any given time, society is “pre-given” for individuals who “never create it, but only reproduce or transform it” (Archer 1998). For example in my study, Islam and Islamic concepts of scholarship are pre-given. In the same way, Western, specifically North American, views of academia and appropriate student behaviour are pre-given. The students and university community in general can reproduce or transform their understanding of themselves as students or scholars within these traditions, but all their actions or reactions

will be as a result of their reaction to this pre-given condition; thus contextual factors are of primary importance in this study. The evidence of the pre-given and suitable hypothesis to test with experience can be discerned as natural necessity *a posteriori*. Thus, to the answer the age-old question: “if a tree falls in a forest undiscerned, how do we know it really fell?” the critical realist would respond: we find the evidence of its existence *a posteriori*. The higher order structure is real and worthy of scientific investigation. So, although we do not reduce “what is” to “what we can know” (Bhaskar 1998), we can still investigate “what is” through “what we know” in open stratified systems keeping the *activity dependent*, *concept dependent* and *spatio-temporally dependent* ontology of the social sciences in mind.

Explanatory Critiques

The next development of Bhaskar’s thesis lies in his theory of explanatory critique which implies that “we may be able to discover values where beliefs prove to be incompatible with their own explanation” and that “a social science can study both ideas and what those ideas are about” (Bhaskar & Collier 1998). Bhaskar thus refutes “Hume’s Law” that the transition from factual to “evaluative statements” is “logically inadmissible”. However, according to Bhaskar you cannot separate social beliefs from the society in which they are found, thus facts do logically entail values. Roy Edgely in *Reason as Dialectic* states, “social science in criticizing other ideological social theories and ideas as deeply contradictory and so contradicting them, at the same time criticizes as contradictory and so contradicts the society in whose structure those inconsistent and conceptually muddled theories and ideas are realized” (Edgely 1998)

Bhaskar notes that although social theorists like Marx and Freud carefully avoided value judgments, both produced theories, which have practical ramifications. According to Bhaskar objective explanatory science need not be value neutral and an objective study can actually “discover” values that it did not assume beforehand (Edgely 1998). Thus, our agency results

in effect and when we attach meaning to objects we do so as “feeling organisms”. In addition, as well as being “sentient machines”, we are also “mobilizing ones”, “situated in a pre-formed, potentially public social world” which we reproduce and transform in the “course of our agency” (Edgely 1998).

Dialectic

In 1993 with the publication of *“Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom”*, Bhaskar’s philosophy developed its final, dialectical dimension. Different descriptors are developed for the components of the TMSA. “Society” becomes “Social Structure” and “Individual” is replaced by “Agency” (Harvey 2002). Agency is affected by society and affects society, as Bhaskar (1993) states, “society is thus both the condition and outcome of human agency”, thus both “enablement” and “constraint” link “social structure” and “human agency” in the TMSA. In addition, “human agency” reproduces or transforms existing social structures and in turn affects “social structure”.

The third limit on naturalistic explanations has in turn been transformed to “spatiotemporal rhythmic and geo-history”. According to Harvey (Harvey 2002), the TMSA evolves at this point into a more “scientific ontology” which can form the basis of a “sociological paradigm” as the incorporation of spatio-temporal rhythmic and geo-history create a “historically embodied individual”. The TMSA thus is altered to include two descriptions of the “individual”. The individual is firstly, a “product of Social Interactions” (focusing on society influencing the individual), and secondly, a “socially located autonomous agent” (focusing on both the relative autonomy of the individual within the society that he/she has been socialized in). The first “individual” is prepared biographically to become the second, after which society is affected by the individual and history and in its turn socializes and exercises “social control” (Bhaskar 1993; Harvey 2002).

Ontology or Epistemology?

Roy Bhaskar himself seeks “an ontology “that “cannot be reduced to epistemology”, since you “cannot reduce “what is” to “what you know” (Bhaskar, 1997). However, although Bhaskar is concerned chiefly with a description of the ontological, “how the natural world needs to be structured in order to make scientific discovery possible”, he does not completely neglect the epistemological dimension. Instead, Bhaskar’s view of the ontological that “being contains” knowledge, but it is “irreducible” to knowledge, “experience or any other human attribute or product”. Bhaskar (Bhaskar & Collier 1998) places limits on the epistemological. These include the fact that the absence of effective test situations requires explanatory, rather than predictive criteria for an assessment of theories.

Lilie Chouliaraki, on the other hand, questions Bhaskar’s “philosophical ontology” and asks, “If the real exists outside our knowledge of it, is philosophical discourse here not exercising its traditional privilege to produce knowledge from a standpoint of ‘nowhere’? Could critical realism not be a mutated form of metaphysics; that is, attempting to domesticate that which resists signification?”(Chouliaraki 2002). She believes that this type of “philosophical ontology is a form of, at least unnecessary, closure of the infinite”

Chouliaraki further argues that the “strong” version of the dialectic implied by Bhaskar’s philosophy ontologizes as “real” what is, ultimately, a product of human observation and knowledge—thus “forgetting (ironically, while it asserts) its rootedness in historical and social relations” (Chouliaraki 2002). Chouliaraki concedes that it is necessary to abstract certain principles from actual practice and agrees that there are existing “relations and processes outside our knowledge of them”; but she deems the relegation of such objects to the “domain of intransitivity” and their attribution as “ontologically real” as superfluous.

Instead, Chouliaraki prefers the ontology of post-structuralist feminists who do not fall prey to the “illusion” of “essentialism” (assuming that there is some “pure existence”) (2002). The strength of this type of feminism lies, according to Chouliaraki, in its ability to distinguish between “discourse and physical matter, signification and the body” and its view of social practice as differentiated “productive materialities”. The weakness of post-structuralist feminism, however, lies in its “idealism” or “illusion that all meaning is contingent on language and signification”. In addition, Chouliaraki claims that this type of feminism can be accused of “discursive bias” (2002). Thus, as an epistemology, it fails to take into account the fact that there is a certain “givenness” of the “materialities at play within a practice” both on the side of the practitioner and on the side of any researcher or observer.

Chouliaraki, therefore, posits a “combination of a constructionist ontology (that the social is constituted in articulations of meaning and power)” with a “realist epistemology” which provisionally accepts that when we learn about the social, certain immediate “materialities” present themselves as “given” and that an effective epistemology requires a “pragmatic” methodology which accepts that there is no “single scientific method” as well the “possibility of relative closure”(2002). A realist epistemology also implies that there are “distinct methodological strategies” which depend on “the nature of the inquiry” and this allows the researcher to get on with the work of scientific discovery without being bogged down in the relativism of constructivism.

Unlike Chouliaraki, I follow Harvey in believing that Critical Realism’s “philosophical ontology” is still compatible with examining social reality through the mediation of the *Transformational Model of Social Activity* and, in particular, the adaptations to this model made by Harvey (Harvey 2002). In addition, although Critical Realism does not “entail commitments to any substantive social or psychological theory” and essentially identifies “basic principles or scientific analysis”, indicating “what is involved in constructing explanatory theories and accounts” on an ontological dimension, it can translate the two

moments of “construction” into an epistemological dimension. On the one hand social activity is “construal” (it has “fallible ideas which inform it”) and, on the other hand, it involves “construction” (“in the sense of the material processes that follow from it”) (Fairclough, 2001:8) These two moments require different methodologies ranging from descriptive to constructionist.

I also believe that the limitations that Bhaskar places on naturalistic descriptions help to prevent the errors of “discursive bias” and “essentialism” which concern Chouliaraki. Since naturalistic descriptions are for Bhaskar *concept dependent* (not existing independently of the agents’ conceptions of them), the researcher is admonished on a methodological level to avoid “discursive bias” and ‘bracketing” his/ her own perceptions in the interpretative tradition, always aware that this is not entirely possible. Alternatively, the researcher can openly declare his/her bias in the social constructionist tradition. In the same way, as these descriptions are *spatio-temporally dependent* (only relatively enduring) the researcher avoids the crime of “essentialism” since these descriptions are not describing the “universal” but rather the “pre-formed” which can always be reproduced or transformed by individual and social agency.

Other criticisms of Critical Realism involve a comparison of the philosophy with others like Marxism. Some researchers, most notably Sayer (1981), Jessop (2001), Keat and Urry (1982) and Roy Bhaskar himself (1989; 1991), believe that Marx pursued a critical realist method and thus that even Marxist positioned ontology could be subsumed in the critical realist ontology. Others, however, like Gunn (1989), believe that Marxism does not need philosophy any more than sociology, politics and economics do as they present ideology in the guise of a scientific alternative to Marxism. Roberts (2001) adds the criticism that critical realists separate “method from system” and such a separation leads to a problematic dualist method of theorizing which is incompatible with a Marxist position. This study will not, however, attempt to marry the ontological positions of Marxism and Critical Realism since, while Marxist ideology and method are one and the same, method is “formally implicit” rather than “substantively explicit” in Bhaskar’s philosophy (Harvey 2002).

Rather, this study will follow the broad ontology of critical realism defined epistemologically by Harvey's (Harvey 2002) adaptation of Bhaskar's Transformational Model of Social Activity. It will use a repertoire of methodologies spanning a form of interpretative analysis and critical discourse analysis linked with the models of student writing in higher education adapted by Henning, Mamiane and PHEME (Henning, Mamiane *et al.* 2001) from Lea and Street's models of academic literacy (Lea & Street 1998) and will focus on how academic literacy is constructed for a group of individuals who operate within the context of one university in the Gulf.

Research Orientations

In some ways Critical Realism can be seen to encompass aspects from all three of the major research orientations: the positivist orientation, the interpretive orientation and the constructionist orientation, yet is in opposition to all three in that it is a philosophy concerned with the nature of the world rather than ontology concerned with the nature of knowledge.

Although critical realism does not view "external reality" as necessarily "stable" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999), it does recognize that there are certain "intransitive" mechanisms and objects. This reflects aspects of the positivist ontology. As Bhaskar and Lawson (Bhaskar & Lawson 1998) state, "Science is a social product, but the mechanisms it identifies operate prior to and independently of their discovery". On the other hand, while the research attempts to describe "the internal reality of [the] subjective experience" of students internalising academic English discourse and structures (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999), and I attempt to be "empathetic" (epistemologically) and the research focuses on interaction and interpretation (methodologically), there is still an awareness that the students are internalizing "discourse" which is "socially constructed" within the bounds of the curriculum and culture of the

university and Gulf culture in general, and I therefore use critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the main methodology in the repertoire of methodologies in the research. The research will examine the respondents' reactions to and interaction with both the "discourses" ("connected stretches of language that make sense" (Gee 2002)) and "Discourses" ("ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee 2002)) that operate at the institution in question. Thus, the research embraces aspects of both interpretive and constructionist orientations in terms of its epistemology. It also uses quantitative methods of data collection, which include "thick description" from the interpretative tradition and critical discourse analysis (CDA) from the social constructionist tradition as well as quantitative methods like the use of concordancing.

Epistemology and Methodology

The Transformational Model of Social Activity

As I have already mentioned above, Bhaskar's Transformational Model of Social Activity (TMSA) provides a useful epistemological framework for this study, including the frames of reference such as "agency" and "social structure" in constant interaction. Harvey, however, identifies an element lacking in the TMSA, a "social psychological specification for the communally-mediated dynamics immediately linking agency and society" (Harvey, 2002: 179). In order to achieve this aim, Harvey turns to the work of Georg Simmel and gives the TMSA "an enhanced capacity for investigating how human agency develops and functions within the interactional nexus of community settings" (Harvey, 2002: 184). Also, there are still "two moments of individual existence", but these are "biographically linked by Simmel's conjoint dialectic of self-cultivation and cultural appropriation". I find these adaptations of the Transformational Model of Social Activity particularly useful in translating the broad ontology of Critical Realism into an epistemology that can adequately describe the way in

which academic English is constituted at *Gulf University*. The diagram below (Figure 3) is a reproduction of the Harvey (Harvey, 2002) adaptation of the TMSA and it is followed by a description specific to this study, placing the different aspects of my research within the HTMSA (Harvey Transformational Model of Social activity).

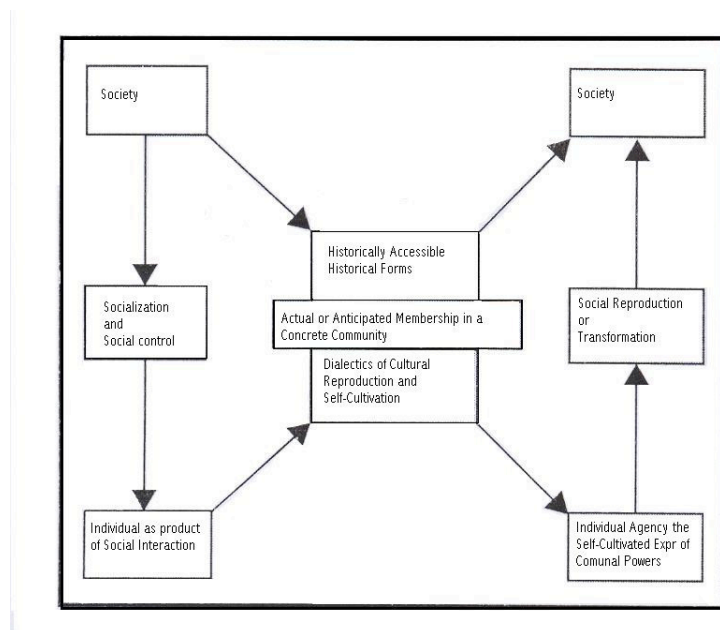


Figure 3: HTMSA (Harvey, 2002:184)

The central nexus of the model “the actual or anticipated membership in a concrete community” is my central topic of research: the construction of academic literacy as evidenced in the writing of individual students who are in the process of becoming part of a concrete community (*Gulf University*). The “historically accessible cultural forms” entail the curriculum and products of the curriculum (the materials and teaching that students are exposed to), while the “dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation” can be examined in terms of the respondents’ interaction in class along with that of their fellow students, as described in the researcher’s teaching journal and the descriptions of other teachers, as well as the respondents’ narrative and writing. The curriculum is affected by the “society” of the university and the Gulf culture(s) in general, but is in its turn affected by these

societies. In addition, the curriculum is strongly influenced by Western North American influences, which pervade both the school and higher education systems, as is described in the context chapter. Cultural reproduction and self-cultivation lead to “individual agency, the self-cultivated expression of communal powers” are expressed once again by what the students produce (their writing and utterances), and this in turn leading to social reproduction or transformation. Socialization and social control, in this case works dialectically as both students and teaching staff are socialized and controlled and develop as a result of “social interaction” in certain ways and then act either reproductively or in a self-cultivating manner and thus effect either social reproduction or transformation. The epistemological framework of the TMSA thus suggests the actual items requiring analysis as well as how we can learn about them.

Explanatory Criteria

In *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Bhaskar 1998) Bhaskar describes how his theory and epistemology can be translated into practical “explanatory” rather than “predictive criteria”. Firstly, the researcher should focus on describing “the significant features” of an issue or event. Then, she should seek retroduction to possible causes, elimination of alternatives and identification of the generative mechanism or causal structure at work. Next, when a complex event is resolved, it can be divided into components, followed by a redescription of these components, retroduction to the possible antecedents of the components, and finally a further elimination of alternative causes. At each stage of this process I believe that it is possible to merge several methodologies in order to provide a more holistic picture of the phenomenon examined, as well as helping to elevate the level of validity.

Design Type

Critical Realist Study

Bhaskar (1997), Touskas (1989) and others describe how the qualitative case study research design is particularly suitable for Critical Realism as, like Critical Realism, it focuses on process and attempts to understand deeper structures and “causal tendencies” rather than “cause and effect relations” (Christie, 1990). Thus the case study design type could be seen as a useful means to translate the critical realist ontology into an epistemology. However, the case study design differs from the design type implied by the epistemology of Harvey’s adaptation of the TMSA and the methodological steps implied by Bhaskar’s explanatory criteria in that case studies usually involve an “in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single instance” (Davey 1991), whereas this study is focused on a particular phenomenon (university literacy) and how it manifests in seven different “cases” (here the word denotes individual respondents or units of analysis rather than research design or method) as well as how it manifests in the curriculum documents, teaching and other factors in the broader university and social context in the Gulf.

Although the TMSA shows how context and individual are closely linked in the “dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation”, for purposes of analysis the methods used in this study separate context and individual in order to describe the interaction in more depth which is at odds with case study design, in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin 2002). In addition, although the data has been collected over a period of a year and tracks the development of each respondent over a two-year period, it cannot be seen as truly longitudinal in that it is not possible for the researcher to track and entirely describe the “fluid events” constituting the phenomenon (Yin 2002). This is chiefly due to the constantly evolving situation of how university literacy is constructed at the institution as well as the enormous scope of the phenomenon. In addition, rather than being present during the entire event of the respondents’ experience of academic literacy at *GU*, I probe the phenomenon, drawing data at different stages and on different layers of the phenomenon.

Instead, the methods of data collection and analysis described in the next section are used and each is evaluated in terms of Bhaskar's explanatory criteria.

Researchers like Guba and Lincoln (1994); Merriam (1988); Perry & Coote (1994); Perry *et al* (1997), and Tsoukas (1989) indicate that the Critical Realist worldview allows an actual social phenomenon to be “ascertained even though it is imperfect and probabilistically comprehensible” (Christie, Rowe *et al.*, 2000). However, Critical Realism not only requires a unique “triangulation” in which “a perception...is a window onto reality from which a picture of reality can be triangulated with other perceptions” (Perry, Alizadeh *et al.*, 1997) but also attempts to examine the unseen *a priori* reality which is the source of these perceptions. The epistemological model of the TMSA and the explanatory criteria are uniquely suited for this kind of triangulation because they assist the researcher in her process of uncovering each layer of the stratified ‘reality’.

A useful analogy suitable for describing the Critical Realist design type is that of the ‘snapshot’. Because it is never possible for the researcher to entirely describe the “fluid events” constituting academic literacy, she uses a number of strategies and methods to collect data, which become “static snapshots” of these events (Porter & Sullivan, 1997). The variety of methods implied by the design type, as well as the multiplicity of perspectives implied by Critical Realism result in a more complete ‘collage’ of ‘snapshots’ than other types of design or ways of viewing research. But perhaps the analogy of the ‘probe’ would be most accurate. The researcher uses a number of instruments (methods of data collection) to probe or launch a penetrating inquiry into the unfamiliar world of the *a priori* by examining its products using the varying perspectives and methods implied by the three Discourses, which construct university literacy (The Study Skills Discourse, The Academic Socialization Discourse and the Academic Literacies Discourse). Then, the products of each probe are plotted against the framework of the TMSA and the explanatory critique.

The process of carrying out methodologically sound case study research is usually initiated by the identification of prior theory through a literature review: In the same way, a critical realist study requires an extensive examination of literature in order to “describe the significant features of the issue or event” (Bhaskar 1998). Also, the literature study helps to more accurately describe the “actual or anticipated community” to which the respondents belong (Harvey 2002). So, although this critical realist study does not comply with all the characteristics common to the case study design, it followed some of the methodological steps involved in the case study design type.

In this research site, a literature review of the theory of academic literacy and developmental university programmes is necessary. As in the case study design, this review led to the initial identification of the research problem: the way in which the respondents’ academic English-related needs are constituted at *Gulf University*, focusing specifically on their writing needs. This research problem was then further refined through a pilot study (Robson 1993; Nair & Riege 1995). The pilot study helped to identify a particular sub-group of interest, namely students who had completed at least three semesters in the *GU* foundation programme since this group were truly learning “academic English right from the start” as their level of English was at a low elementary level at the beginning of their career in the developmental programme at the university. Both the literature review and the pilot study helped me to describe the significant features of the issue, namely that it was concerned with different views of academic literacy and developmental education in general, and helped me start to work out the possible causes of the phenomenon.

Research of multiple cases is useful to ensure a rigorous study, which allows triangulation of evidence (Herriott & Firestone 1983; Bonoma 1985; Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1994). I thus designed a *critical realist study*, which encompasses seven cases that in turn contribute to “the single and larger descriptive and analytical case” (Henning, Mamiane *et al.* 2001) as indicated in Figure 4 overleaf.

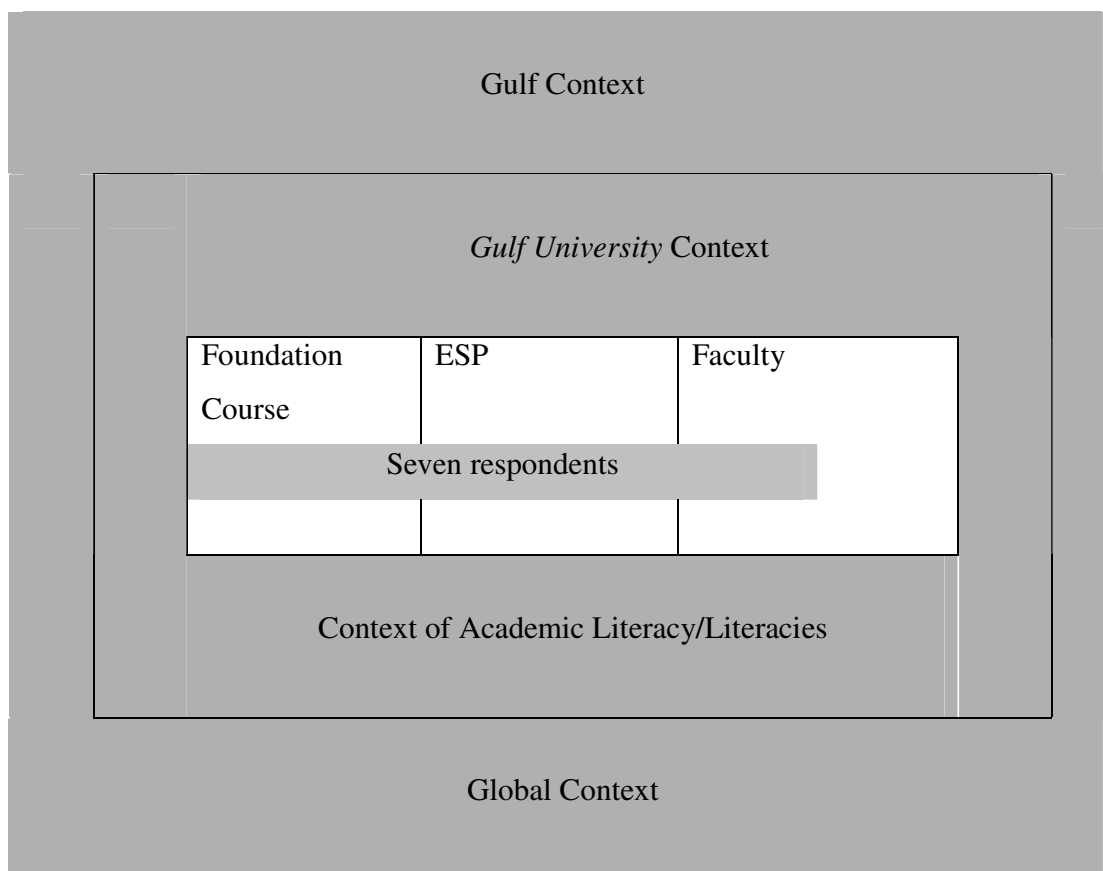


Figure 4: Representation of Critical Realist Study

Once again, I use the word “case” to denote “instance” rather design type or method. Like Henning *et al*, at the level of design logic the main unit of analysis is the students’ discourse and resulting Discourse in writing, but this study also includes the curriculum documents and the comments by teaching staff and curriculum designers as units of analysis. The emergent “scholarship” of the students, albeit on a far lower level than in Henning *et al*’s study, is also “traced via a variety of data collection and analysis methods to yield a *thick description* (as well as) ... a *thick explanation* (interpretation) of the data”. This study not only uses the interpretative tools of immersing, unpacking and associating, but also uses the tools of critical discourse analysis to identify both “discourses” and “Discourses” within the curriculum and the students’ narrative (Gee, 2002).

Method

The concept of academic literacies developed from the “new literacy studies” (Street 1984; Barton 1994; Baynham 1995) informs the practical methods of data collection and analysis in the study. According to Lea and Street (1998), educational research into student writing in higher education usually follows three main perspectives or models: “study skills”, “academic socialisation” and “academic literacies”. These models which I frame as Discourses which construct literacy are not mutually exclusive and cannot be viewed “in a simple linear time dimension, whereby one model supersedes or replaces the insights provided by the other”. Rather, Lea and Street propose that “each model successively encapsulates the other, so that the academic socialization perspective takes account of study skills, but includes them in the broader context of the acculturation processes ...and likewise the academic literacies view encapsulates the academic socialization model, building on the insights developed there as well as the study skills view. The academic literacies model, then, incorporates both the other models into a more encompassing understanding of the nature of student writing within institutional practices, power relations and identities” (1998).

In this study, following Lea and Street, I privilege the Academic Literacies Discourse. I examine to what extent the three Discourses which construct literacy inform the curriculum design and pedagogy at the *GU* programme and *Gulf University* in general and how these Discourses are manifested in the students’ writing and narratives. In order to access these Discourses, I first use the instruments and/or lens appropriate to the “study skills” Discourse to describe its features and then I critique the Discourse and data by re-examining it through the “lenses” of both the “academic socialization” and “academic literacies” Discourses. In the same way, I use an “academic socialization” lens to view some of the data and then re-evaluate it through the lens of the “academic literacies” Discourse. In the final part of the research, I evaluate the previous data along with the curriculum and student narratives and writing and attempt to bridge the micro and macro-level of analysis using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis.

“Study Skills” Discourse of Academic Literacy

The study skills Discourse assumes that student writing consists merely of “technical skills and instrumental atomized skills” such as grammar, spelling, essay structure and formulaic language (Henning, Mamiane *et al.* 2001). It suggests that the students suffer from some kind of “pathology” or deficit, which teachers need to remediate by focusing on “the basics”. This perspective of literacy can be critiqued since it subscribes to what Street (1984) calls the “autonomous model”, namely the belief that literacy has cognitive effects outside of its particular context and the uses to which it is put in a particular society. Thus, according to this view, literacy skills are automatically transferable. The view is also criticized for being “reductionist” since the complex phenomenon of literacy is reduced to “atomistic skills” and behaviours. Research undertaken through the lens of the “study skills” Discourse can be seen in my use of corpus linguistics to probe the respondents’ ability to reproduce lexis and linguistic patterns as well as my quantitative analysis of the students’ ‘global’ (i.e. not item or skill specific) writing development (Larsen-Freeman 1983).

Corpus Study

Corpus linguistics has had a significant effect on the field of applied linguistics over the past twenty years (Biber, Conrad *et al.* 1998; McCarthy 2001; O’Keeffe & Farr 2003). From their examination of large amounts of written and spoken texts, researchers have gleaned the authentic frequency of vocabulary items, typical use of grammatical patterns in particular collections of written and oral text and this has led to the creation of new dictionaries (as described by Fox (1998)) and grammars (see Biber *et al.* (1999) and Thornbury (2004)) as the language in textbooks was found often to be based on “faulty intuition about how people use language” (O’Keeffe & Farr 2003). Corpus studies have particularly been used to discover the use and frequency of formulaic language in corpora consisting of native speakers’ writing and

speech. This results from a “reoccurring theme” in the literature pointing to the fact that the appropriate use of “formulaic language” is “a key to “nativelike fluency” (Simpson & Mendis 2003). Although I have undertaken this part of the research in the spirit of the “study skills” view of academic literacy, formulaic language could also be examined in terms of the “academic literacies” perspective since the formulaic language shapes agency and in turn is shaped by agency. As well as dictionaries and grammars, these studies have had implications for teacher training raising awareness of authentic language and training teachers to make their students aware of collocation (the natural grouping of words) and colligation (naturally occurring grammatical patterns).

Another aspect of corpora studies involves the collection of student or second language writing and speech and examining its patterns and lexis either as a variety in itself (Biber, Conrad *et al.* 1998) or comparing it to native speakers or professional corpora (Flowerdew 2003).

In this study, both the data and the method of data collection benefit from corpus linguistics. The *GU* foundation programme makes use of corpus linguistics in its decisions on target lexis and grammatical and rhetorical structures and I use corpus linguistics in order to study the curriculum and its products (the materials) as well as the respondents’ reproduction or avoidance of these products as evidenced in their writing and narrative (interviews).

In order to examine these products, I make use of a number of tools:

- Updated Version of the General Service List (Bauman and Culligan 1995)
This list was initially published in 1953 and included 2000 words deemed of greatest general service to learners of English. This version was compiled in 1995 and consists of 2284 words ranked in frequency order.

- Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000)
This word list consists of 570 words and their inflected and derived forms, 3100 word-forms altogether which have a high coverage in academic texts irrespective of area or discipline. Coxhead compiled a corpus of 3.5 million words and calculated the frequency with which particular words occurred in her corpus of university textbooks and academic journals from the arts, commerce, law and natural science fields. A word had to occur at least 100 times in the whole academic corpus and had to appear frequently in each texts from each of the four fields. No General Service List words were included.
- The British National Corpus (BNC 2000)
This corpus is a 100- million word corpus compiled by a group of universities, publishers and the British government in the 1990's to represent spoken and written English in Britain at the end of the 20th century. It consists of 90 million written words from eight genres and 10 million words of spoken English from four social class groupings collected at 38 locations in the United Kingdom. It includes language from the classroom, court, board meetings and numerous other locations both formal and informal. The corpus also includes tools for retrieval of language samples and analysis of frequency of words, collocation and collocation.
- TEXTSTAT 25.0.0 (Hüning 2004)
This concordancing programme developed by an academic in the Netherlands allows the researcher to use any corpus and analyze the frequency of vocabulary items, typical grammatical and rhetorical patterns within that corpus.
- The foundation course corpus (Curriculum Committee 2004)
This corpus compiled by the *GU* foundation programme Curriculum Committee consists of all the texts used in the unit for the English, IT and mathematics foundation courses Level 1, 2 and 3. It consists of 600 000 words.
- AWC Corpus (AWC 2005)

This corpus consists of the textbook of the ESP Academic Writing Course as well as supplementary materials on the “Academic Writing Course Goldmine” ftp site for the course. It consists of 50 000 words.

- ESP Student Corpus (Studholme & Picard 2005)

This corpus consists of the writing of the seven respondents who are all ESP students studying in the Humanities faculty. It includes their reflective essays written at the end of each semester during their studies in the *GU* foundation programme (at least two reflective essays per student), their final writing sample written at the end of each semester (also at least two per student) as well as their survey projects written during the ESP Academic Writing course, their reflections at the end of the ESP writing course and their comments on the Blackboard Discussion Board throughout their semester in ESP as well as at least two interviews per respondents conducted during the course of this research. It also includes the research reports written by 55 additional ESP AWC students in the Humanities stream of the course. This corpus consists of 64 941 words.

- Mini-corpora for each individual respondent.

These consists of each respondents’ reflective essays written at the end of each semester during their studies in the foundation course, her final writing sample written at the end of each semester, as well as her survey projects written during the ESP Academic Writing course, her reflections at the end of the ESP writing course and her comments on the Blackboard Discussion Board throughout their semester in ESP as well as at least two interviews per respondents conducted over a five month period. These semi-structured interviews with the respondents include a number of open-ended questions regarding the differences between their English studies at school and at university and what they believe will be expected from them in their academic discipline and in their future careers. They are also asked about whether they believe the course fulfils their expected requirement and to assess their current skills according to what they believe is expected from them. The corpora are divided into sections according to the level the students were in when the texts were written or spoken in

order to examine “emerging scholarship” (Henning and Rensburg 2002). The mini-corpora are used in the second type of research undertaken in the spirit of the “study skills” view of literacy as well as in the “academic socialization” research. The length of the mini corpora varies depending on the respondent.

I first focus on lexis and collocation. I measure the frequency of lexical items on the Academic Word List and the General Service List from item number 1001 (thus avoiding the most common items which students should have covered at an elementary level) and compare them to the frequency of these items in the British National Corpus. I also noted the most frequent collocations of these items in the British National Corpus.

Then, I use TEXSTAT to compare the foundation programme corpus to these items on both word lists and their most common collocations. I exclude all words on these lists that did not appear in the foundation programme corpus, since I wish to know which words on these lists the students had been overtly exposed to. I repeat the same procedure using the AWC Corpus and noted the frequency of each word and its common collocations. Any word that does not occur in both corpora is excluded as my respondents have all completed the ESP Academic Writing Course, but some of them completed the foundation course before 2003 (when the materials changed dramatically), so I wish to ensure that only vocabulary that all students had been exposed to is examined.

Next, I use the TEXTSTAT concordancing tool to ascertain the frequency of each of these words on the two lists in the student corpus and their common collocations. The number of tokens of each word is noted.

Finally, I examine the lists comparing the frequency of occurrence of each word in the foundation course and ESP corpora compared to the ESP Student Corpus. A difference of 2 or

more tokens of each word between the materials corpuses and student corpus is considered significant.

I am aware that this study cannot be deemed entirely scientific as the nature of teaching materials and student corpus naturally differ, however, as the topics of the materials corpuses and the student corpus are similar including general themes like computers and technology, culture, sport, family, books and the media, there should be a natural overlap between the vocabulary the students are taught and their use of this vocabulary. In addition, there should be an overlap between the metalanguage used by students in their reflective essays and the metalanguage used for instruction in the texts. I have, however, attempted to exclude any items which; I think favour either the materials corpuses or student corpuses unduly. In addition, I made sure that all items were the same part of speech in both corpuses and that the lexical items had the same meaning in both corpuses. For example, the word “goal” was used in the sense of aim or purpose in a research report (the genre used for the longest piece of student writing in each corpus) rather than in a sporting sense in both corpora.

This linguistic focus is useful to factually ascertain the interface between the vocabulary and formulaic structures *taught* (as evidenced in the curriculum and corpora) and the formulaic structures and vocabulary item *used* by students as evidenced by their writing and vocabulary choice in the interviews.

This data is then re-examined focusing on how the reproduction of certain formulaic language contributes to the respondents’ acquisition of the related genres and Discourses. Here both the traditional view of genre as having both formal features and related social actions (“typified rhetorical action based on recurrent situations” (Miller 1984), which is related to the “academic socialization” construction of literacy as well as how genre is related to “ways of being in the world” or Discourses are taken into consideration.

“Global Writing Development”

This study also includes research into the development of so called “global writing skills”. This concept clearly complies with a Discourse constructing literacy as “study skills” in the most rigid “atomized” sense, since it suggests that global writing development can be evaluated quantitatively and focuses on fluency in terms of the presence or lack of errors, grammatical complexity in terms of number of clauses, lexical complexity in terms of the number of ‘sophisticated’ words and accuracy in terms of the number of errors (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998). None of these measures take construction of meaning, social or cultural appropriateness of the writing or the development of the writer’s voice or critical thinking into consideration and instead focus on “atomized skills”.

However, despite the obvious flaws mentioned above, I have chosen to wear this lens, albeit reluctantly, as this construction of literacy which Christie dubs “language as an instrument of communication” (1981) is prevalent in the foundation levels of *GU* foundation programme where it is assumed that if the students can hone the “instrument” (their grammar, spelling, punctuation etcetera), they will be able to communicate effectively. For example, level-three teachers report that their students are expected to internalize fifteen discrete grammar points and twenty-five words (with all their forms) per week. This construction of literacy will also be examined in terms of “academic socialization” since accuracy, fluency and complexity affect whether the respondents are either accepted as part of the academy due to the fact that their surface discourse reflects that of the target group or excluded from the Discourse due to their non-compliance with the surface features of the language. Finally, I examine whether improvements or lack of improvements in the respondents’ accuracy, fluency and complexity of writing actually result in their improved use of the language as a “resource” (Christie 1981) or whether, as Taylor *et al* (1988) state, modification of the “instrument” does not necessarily lead to modification and/or improvement in the communication of meaning (1988).

I first divide each respondent's mini corpus into sections, one for each academic level, which they have completed. Respondent two and four each repeated a level at some stage of their academic career, so in these cases they have separate sections, for example, level 3.1 and level 3.2 for the levels they repeated. I, then, analyze each section of each respondent's mini corpus according to the measures of fluency, grammatical complexity, lexical complexity and accuracy described by Wolfe-Qunitero *et al* in the book *Second Language Development in Writing* as the "most valid developmental measures" (1998). Finally, I place the results for each respondent in a table and compare their writing in terms of the measures at each level of their academic development. I also attempt to compare the respondents with each other.

Fluency is measured by ascertaining the ratio of words per T-unit (unit consisting of a main clause and any subordinate clauses) to the number of error-free words per T-unit (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.*, 1998). This error-free T-unit ratio was first used by Scott and Tucker (1974) to investigate the written English of Arab students and a further twelve studies have shown a significant correlation between error-free T-units and general proficiency. These studies suggest that a focus on "atomistic skills" can in some cases be revealing of overall academic literacy. One of the difficulties in measuring fluency in this way, however, is deciding on what is classified as an "error". In this regard, I follow Ishikawa (1995) who does not count punctuation errors except at the beginning, or end of sentences, disregarded spelling except if it involved grammatical errors and focused on "correctness" in terms of "vocabulary, grammar, and style".

Grammatical complexity is measured by counting the number of clauses per T-unit versus the number of T-units. This measure has also been used in a number of studies and, according to Quintero *et al* (1998) it does generally progress as the students' general proficiency increases. Once again the two types of complexity are measured for each respondent at each level of academic study in English.

Lexical complexity is measured by counting the number of words per T-unit as well as the number of ‘sophisticated’ words per T-unit. ‘sophisticated’ words refer to words that are not on a list of basic words. In this study, I once again make use of the Updated Version of the General Service List (Bauman and Culligan 1995) and work out the ratio of words in the written samples that do not occur in the first 1000 words of the General Service List to the total number of words. Of course, the selection of this list as a definitive list of ‘basic’ vocabulary can be problematic, as I will indicate later in this study. The measures are applied again to each respondent’s writing at each academic level.

Then, the accuracy ratio is calculated by dividing the number of error-free T-units per academic level by the number of T-units per academic level and applied to each section of the respondents’ mini-corpora.

Finally, the data is discussed in terms of how these quantitative measures relate to the expression of meaning and the student respondents’ compliance with the norms of the academy. I also include an analysis of whether an improvement in the “instrument” of each individual respondent has lead to an improved ability to use language as a “resource” for ‘switching practices’ and expressing their own academic voice.

Academic Socialization Perspective of Academic Literacy

The academic socialization construction of academic literacy as described by Lea and Street (1998) sees student writing as a “transparent medium of representation”, therefore implying that the students’ level of socialization and acclimatization to the academic environment is transparently evident in his/her writing. This narrow academic socialization construction focuses on the student’s orientation to learning and interpretation of learning tasks, thus it

emphasizes both “deep” and “surface” learning (Henning & Rensburg 2002) and students are viewed as more successful if they reflect the attitudes and behaviours representative of so-called deep learning. Institutions that subscribe to this Discourse of university literacy often provide writing support courses and study skills courses. These courses aim at apprenticing students into a “new culture”; however, they are critiqued for assuming that there is one academic “culture”. In addition, they do not take into account the institutional practices, change, or power and some believe that this view does not take the rhetorical features of writing into account. The narrow academic socialization construction of academic literacy coincides with elements of “socialization and social control” as well as “social reproduction” and “the individual as a product of social interaction” on the TMSA (Harvey, 2002). This view does not, however, recognize that there is individual agency at play or that the academic context is constantly changing and can be “transformed” by the respondents. Within this construction of literacy, the individual is powerless and colonized and must comply to succeed. Failure, inability or resistance will lead to exclusion.

Since the narrow academic socialization Discourse suggests that there is a direct relationship between ideas about the world, perceptions of the environment, approaches to learning and learning outcomes (Haggis 2003), research from this perspective sees writing and narratives as a way to examine learning outcomes and more general academic socialization. Thus, in this part of the research, I examine each individual mini student corpora for discourses relating to their compliance with genre-related norms as well as how their use of the “instrument” relates to social norms in the academy. I then relate these discourses to discourses in university documents including the UAU University mission statement, strategic plan, *GU* foundation programme Mission Statement, Core Values, Curriculum Competencies and the objectives for each level. I also examine the narratives of the four Humanities faculty lecturers in order to ascertain the rules of the “academy” to which the respondents’ are being apprenticed. I focus on the respondents’ comments in both interviews and writing on their experience of learning English and learning at the university in general, therefore, writing on other topics is disregarded at this stage of data analysis.

In addition, I analyze the respondents' academic socialization in terms of learner strategies (LS) based on an extensive quantitative study conducted at *GU* by the foundation programme Curriculum Committee in 2004 under the leadership of Rebecca Oxford. I use this research as part of my "academic socialization" lens since the Discourse of learning strategies is clearly manifested in the curriculum documents of *GU* foundation programme and there have been numerous "conscious raising" exercises around this issue at *GU* including sessions by Dr Oxford, research on students' learning strategies and action research teaching students about learning strategies and encouraging them to use a variety of these "strategies". However, this Discourse of learning strategies is problematic from an "academic literacies" perspective as it suggests that "strategies" can be clearly delineated and "picked up" consciously as part of the apprenticing process. An explication of the Discourse of learning strategies and its problems from the perspective of an "academic literacies" Discourse is given below.

"Learning Strategies"

Weinstein and Mayer (1986) define learning strategies broadly as "behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning" which are "intended to influence the learners' encoding process". Later Mayer (1988) more specifically defined learning strategies as "behaviours of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information". These early definitions from the educational literature reflect how the concept of learning strategies is constructed according to a Discourse, which subscribes to socializing or apprenticing students into a way of acting and even thinking. This concept has been applied to language learning and, by implication literacy, by ESL/ EFL theorists like Tarone (1983) who define language-learning strategies as "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language – to incorporate these into one's interlanguage competence". The notion of "competence", especially "communicative competence" is of course in itself problematic as is discussed later in this thesis, since it is based on a theoretical generic 'ideal' native speaker or academic who does not necessarily exist in reality. However,

the view of the 'ideal' fuels the ESL/EFL 'industry' and leads to its colonizing and commercial success. Thus research within the ESL/EFL field is notoriously uncritical.

Oxford (1989; 1992), building on work in her book for teachers Oxford (1990), suggests that, "...language learning strategies" are "specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills" (1992). While "steps" or "techniques" appear to refer to a Discourse constructing a "study skills" view of academic literacy, the word "behaviours" appears to focus more on the social. Thus the Discourse of learning strategies falls within the construction of academic literacy as "academic socialization". However, from an "academic literacies" perspective, all "behaviours", "steps" and even "techniques" are viewed as practices embedded in different discourse communities and result from particular values and attitudes and thus a more complex explanation of student acquisition of language and literacies is required.

Over time the emphasis seems to have shifted – away from the product of language learning strategies (linguistic or sociolinguistic competence), to their processes. This is once again a characteristic of a Discourse of narrow academic socialization since it focuses on the students' "orientation to learning and interpretation of the learning task" (Henning, Mamiane *et al.* 2001) by the use of strategies approved by the academy. However, there is a possibility that within the process of "awareness-creation" of students developing a greater level of language awareness and reflexivity.

White-Göttsche (White-Gottsche 2004) highlights some basic characteristics of language learner strategies from the literature:

- 1) LLS are learner generated, they are steps taken by language learners.
- 2) LLS enhance language learning and help develop language competence, as reflected in the learner's skills in listening, speaking reading, or writing the L2 or FL.

- 3) LLS may be visible (behaviours, steps, techniques, etc.) or unseen (thoughts, mental processes).
- 4) LLS involve information and memory (vocabulary, knowledge, grammar rules, etc.)

She further states that other “less uniformly accepted aspects of LLS include Oxford (1990) and Wenden and Rubin (1987), who note a desire for control and autonomy of learning on the part of the learner through LLS”. This final, “less uniformly accepted” view of language learning strategies shows a movement towards an “academic literacies” construction in that it shows the first inkling of learners having the power to switch practices and take part in creating the academy.

However, although the student can choose the relevant “strategy” that he/she wishes to employ, this Discourse still operates within a context of “strategies”, “behaviours” and especially “competence” defined by the powerful academy and expecting compliance by the students. Within this view, the neophyte becomes ‘literate’ through displaying the appropriate “skills”, “steps”, “behaviours” and even way of thought towards the “information” which comprises the language. The focus on how the learner processes and encodes information suggests that there is one “academic culture” and that if students use appropriate learning strategies, they will become effective language learners.

Discourses from student writing and narrative as well as the results of the learning strategies survey are compared to the discourses from the university documents and faculty lecturers’ narratives in order to ascertain the respondents’ “orientation toward learning” as “transparently” advocated by the academy (Henning & Rensburg 2002).

Student writing and narrative are not the experiences themselves and are socially and culturally constructed in order to create a shared understanding. But, if we see student writing

as a “transparent medium” as is suggested in the narrow academic socialization view of academic literacy, then our analysis will remain incomplete. We need to identify the Discourses, which can explain and account for the respondents’ “lived-in world” and in the end can also produce necessary change (Bhaskar 1997).

The analysis of qualitative data in general both textual and behavioural relies on an effective identification of what Neuman refers to as “themes” and I refer to as discourses in the data. This, according to Neuman (2000) rests on “four abilities:

- Recognizing patterns in the data (looking for repetition of discourses)
- Thinking in terms of systems and concepts (linking ideas together eg. Types of academic literacy)
- Having tacit knowledge or in-depth background knowledge (my own and other teachers’ experiences teaching the course accessed through the teaching diary and interviews)
- Possessing relevant information (prior positivist studies conducted at *GU*)

In addition, Neuman states that codes “have five parts: a one – to- three-word label or name, a definition with the main characteristic, a “flag” description of how to recognize the code in the data, any exclusions or qualification, and an example”.

In my research, I use three levels of coding: open coding (locating themes and assigning initial codes to “reduce the mass of data into categories”), axial coding (focusing on the actual data and assigning code labels for themes) and finally selective coding (scanning data and previous codes) (Neuman 2000). The coding stage of this process coincides with the description of “significant features of an issue/event” in terms of Bhaskar’s explanatory criteria (Bhaskar 1998). However, unlike Neuman, Bhaskar does not move directly from location of themes to ‘categories’, instead he suggests a process of seeking causality, “eliminating alternatives and identifying generative mechanisms” before dividing the data into components and further seeking antecedents and eliminating alternative causes. It these additional levels of coding

which allow me to move from the imperfect “academic socialization” ‘lens’ to gain a more complete picture of the phenomena from the “academic literacies” construction of academic literacy.

Comparing all the different types of data within my smaller cases (individual students) and larger phenomenon (the construction of academic English within the ESP Academic Writing Course and *GU* in general), I analyze the data using “analytic comparison”, I use both the “method of agreement” (looking at what is common across the data and then locating a common cause) as well as the “method of difference” (locating cases that are similar in many respects, but differ in a few crucial ways to reinforce the information from the positive data). This stage coincides with Bhaskar’s (1998) “retroduction to possible causes” and “elimination of possible alternatives”. Once identified and named in a similar fashion to interpretative analysis, these Discourses are examined in terms of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Academic Literacies View

The academic literacies (plural) view sees literacies as “social practices”. In this view, the literacies that students gain are seen as new “identities” or a “communicative repertoire” (Henning & Rensburg 2002). Notions like genre, field and discipline become important and institutions are not seen as monolithic, but rather as diverse sites of contested power and Discourse. Similarly “academic” Discourse is often at odds with Discourses outside the university. Teaching according to this view usually involves writing taught with the disciplines, although “generic language/ writing awareness courses” are also popular (). In addition, lecturers, programmes and institutors within the “academic literacies” Discourse would acknowledge the students’ Primary Discourses and would not privilege the university Discourses over these Primary Discourses. Student problems would be constructed as a result of a mismatch between their individual Primary Discourses, especially Islamic and Arab

Discourses and Western academia. Programmes with this view would aim at encouraging language awareness and the ability of students to switch “linguistic practices”. They would focus on deconstructing western academia from an Arab perspective to ascertain the social meaning behind discourse and make “disciplinary comparisons”.

As discourse analysis, particularly critical discourse analysis (CDA) recognises speech not as a direct representation of human experience, but as an explicit linguistic tool constructed and shaped by numerous social or ideological influences, it is the most suitable method to discover whether the academic literacies approach is evident in the learning and teaching environment at *Gulf University*. It also assists the researcher in uncovering the “causal structures” in the data, “dividing it into components” and redescribing its components” (Bhaskar 1998) and focuses on the important contextual aspects of the TMSA as well as the individuals “reproduction” or “self-cultivation” within the “concrete community” and historical situation of the research site. Thus, although critical discourse analysis and the interpretative analysis of data both analyse speech as well as written text for discourses, their reasons for analysing differ. Interpretative research focuses on revealing the truth *in* the narrative, while critical discourse analysis focuses on the truth *behind* the narrative.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis is often described as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (*van Dijk* 2001). Because of its focus on uncovering the reproduction and resistance of dominance and inequality, this particular type of discourse analysis is suited to the unpacking of the multiple layers that make up the phenomenon of academic literacy at my particular research site and is

an excellent mechanism to probe the “dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation” (Harvey 2002).

The respondents’ operate within a society and university environment, which abounds with inequality on a number of different levels. The student respondents are mainly female within a society where nationals are in a minority, the hegemonic discourse is North American, females generally have less political and social rights than men and although, the introduction of partial elections for the Federal National Council was announced on the 2nd of December 2005, at the time of data collection there was no form of Western-style democracy in this Gulf country.

However, on the other hand, as nationals they are more powerful than the mainly ex-patriate teaching staff in that they are citizens who are ensured free primary, secondary and tertiary education, a local bias in the workplace and a voice in public affairs through traditional forms of democracy like the “open majilis” or council in which nationals have access to their regional rulers (Ministry 2004). In addition, since nationals hold many senior administrative posts, this gives the students another opportunity to have their voice heard. The lecturing-staff are also at once powerful and powerless. The majority of the foundation course staff teaching the female students are male and North American or North American-educated (Reynolds 2005) and as such have access to one of the dominant Discourses at the university and as males in a male-dominated society have more power than the female students. Also, as lecturing staff, they have the traditional power of teacher over student and have an impact on the curriculum at the institution by means of committees and the number of middle management positions filled by former lecturers. However, they are powerless in that most of them are not Muslims and as such are excluded from another dominant Discourse at the institution: Islam. In addition, they are hired on three-year contracts and the temporary nature of their employment as well as the fact that major curriculum decisions are made on a senior management level prevents their having any real power in the institution. Lecturers in the faculties are in a slightly different position from foundation programme and ESP staff in that

the majority of them are currently Arab Muslims and they have slightly longer tenure and higher status as faculty. However, many of them are also ex-patriates with no real sense of long-term job security.

Critical discourse analysis is particularly pertinent in probing the interplay of Discourses (“saying/ writing-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations”) and agents in this complex research site and how they manifest themselves in discourses (“connected stretches of language that make sense”) because the method focuses on the crucial notion of context as well as encouraging a level of communication with other texts (“intertextuality”) not permitted in other methods (Gee 2002).

In addition, critical discourse analysis is useful in a situation like this where the researcher is part of the research context. As a lecturer within the Gulf University Foundation programme, my views of the phenomenon are necessarily slanted by my personal experiences of the phenomena. The open-endedness of CDA as well as the fact that CDA researchers are explicit about their own position and commitment (Fairclough 2001; Wodak 2001) helps to militate against this personal bias. Although explicitness of position is vital to this particular method of data collection and analysis, I make my position clear in all my methods of data collection and analysis.

Critical discourse analysis is particularly “compatible” with critical realism (Fairclough, Jessop et al. 2001: 1). Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer explain how “putting semiotic processes into context means locating them within their necessary dialectical relations with persons...- locating them within the practical engagement of embodied and socially organised persons with the material world” (Fairclough, Jessop et al. 2001: 2). They describe semiosis as both “meaningful and casually efficacious”. They also describe semiosis as “multifunctional, referential social-relational and expressive. Thus, in Habermasian terms... semiosis raises validity claims of truth, appropriateness and truthfulness/ sincerity” (Fairclough, Jessop et al.

2001: 8). In this research, the curriculum and university documents are the primary texts which are compared with the re-examined student narratives (reflected in interviews, questionnaires and texts) and narratives by foundation programme and ESP teachers and curriculum designers.

The texts of curriculum, university documents, student and teacher narratives are analyzed and re-analyzed within the analytical framework described by Meyer (2001) and based on Bhaskar's concept of "explanatory critique" (Bhaskar & Collier 1998; Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999):

1. Focus upon a social problem, which has a semiotic aspect (in this case the manifestation or absence of academic literacies in student writing, university course documents and teacher and curriculum designers' narratives).
2. Identify the obstacles to it being tackled, through analysis of
 - a. the network of practices it is located within
 - b. the relationship of semiosis to other elements within the particular practice(s) concerned
 - c. the discourse (the semiosis itself)
 - structural analysis: the order of discourse
 - interactional analysis
 - interdiscursive analysis
 - linguistic and semiotic analysis
3. Consider whether the social order (network of practices) in a sense 'needs' the problem.
4. Identify possible ways past the obstacles.
5. Reflect critically on the analysis.

(Meyer, 2001: 125)

The “social problem” of academic literacy or literacies is like most issues tackled by CDA “inherently contested and controversial”. It is also particularly complex in that the people whom the study seeks to “emancipate” (students and teachers) are both powerful and powerless (Meyer, 2001: 125).

In stage two, the researcher attempts a “diagnosis” of the problem. Here, I attempt to show how the structure of social life makes the problem “resistant to easy solution”. Here again, context is of vital importance, which is why the different layers of context are described in detail in the context chapter. The students respondents’ lack of academic background, the expatriate teachers, the student respondents’ lack of personal freedom as female nationals, the changing educational culture of the country and university as well as global educational trends and many other contextual elements all result in the problem being ‘resistant’ to ‘solution’. The ‘diagnosis’ of the problem involves a number of aspects: social practices and their influence on each other which would relate to contextual issues related above, how semiosis interacts with these social practices and discourse features.

Critical discourse analysis takes both the “structuring of orders of discourse” and “interactions” into account (Meyer, 2001: 126). The former can be related to the obstacles to solving the problem mentioned above and here the researcher focuses on the big “D” discourses as described by Gee (2002), while the latter relate to the “interdiscursive” analysis of the interaction in terms of “genres, discourses” and “styles” as well as linguistic analysis. These relate to what Gee (2002) calls small “d” discourses. Unlike the interpretative analysis of the data, which focuses in the interviews on what the respondents say, this type of analysis focuses on the interaction and both the respondents and the interviewers’ utterances are analyzed linguistically and from the perspective of genre analysis (Gee 2002).

The text of narratives and writing is searched for “namings” (Luke 1996) (following Mey 1985), which suggest the Discourses, and the genres within which these “namings” operate are

also examined to identify “cultural representations and social relations and identities” which they represent (Luke 1996).

In stage three of the analysis, I “establish through critique that the social order” at the university, in the UAE and globally inherently generates “problems” like that of lower level students acquiring academic literacy. Also, I show how this “need” contributes to the rationale for “radical social change” and I unpack the particular “relations of power and domination” at my research site (Meyer, 2001: 126).

In the fourth stage of this research, I move from “negative to positive critique” and highlight “unrealized possibilities for change” and finally, I “reflexively” examine my own critique analyze its bias and gauge its efficacy. At this stage, I once again query my analysis with my respondents and then with other teachers and students engaged in the ESP course and the foundation programme levels.

In this research, by employing a combination of methods including concordance, analysis of “global writing competence”, interpretative analysis and critical discourse analysis, I wish to reflect the dialectical relationships of the individual students as actual or anticipated members in the *Gulf University* academic English concrete community within society of the university and broader local and international academic society, interacting with “historically accessible cultural forms” and experiencing the “dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation” which leads to “individual agency, the self-cultivated expression of communal powers” and social reproduction or transformation (Harvey 2002).

Thus my multiplicity of methods is intended to reflect the multiplicity of Bhaskar’s ontological framework and epistemological guidelines as defined in the TMSA and Harvey’s

adaptation thereof, including methodologies associated with interpretative research as well as critical discourse analysis

Validity and Reliability

As in any study, which focuses on human interaction, issues of validity and reliability of the research will be raised. Geertz in his essay *Thick Description* describes the dilemma of the qualitative researcher: “Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is...to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion, both your own and that of others, that you are not quite getting it right” (Geertz 1973).

Unfortunately, a researcher can never assume that if he/she follows certain “methods” the study will automatically be valid. Instead, it is “relative” and “has to be assessed in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the research” (Maxwell 1996: 86). To create a “correct”, credible “description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” the researcher needs to constantly seek out “validity threats” rather than assume that research design will mitigate against these. I do, however, believe that the design of my study allows me to constantly evaluate threats to validity “during the research itself” to “make these alternative hypotheses” less credible (Maxwell 1996: 87 –88). Yin (1994) describes four critical tests, which confront the case study researcher:

- construct validity
- internal validity
- external validity
- reliability

I believe that construct validity which focuses on the establishment of operational measures for the concepts studied can be partly answered by the fact that there are a number of measures to examine the respondents' acquisition of academic English discourse and literacy, involving interpretative and critical discourse analysis measures as well as the quantitative measures of concordancing and ascertaining fluency, accuracy, lexical complexity and grammatical complexity.

Durrheim (1999: 77) cites Michell (1994) and Pawson (1989) to reflect the problematic nature of measurement itself since it is important to reflect upon "attributes and laws before measuring". Internal validity ("establishing a casual relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as opposed to spurious relationships" (Nunan 1995) is also vital in any study. In order to try to address this concern, the data is examined from a number of angles, the writing of the students both as a process and under exam-type conditions, the students' narrative about their insights into what they learned at school as opposed to university, what will be expected from them in university and after university in terms of English discourse, the variety of English they believe they are learning and what they believe they have internalized up to the particular point in their progress, as well as the perspective reflected in the curriculum and the creators and executors (teaching staff) of the curriculum as well as faculty who observe the students after they have completed the curriculum. The researcher will also engage in extensive description of possible alternative explanations for the phenomenon witnessed.

External validity (the establishment of whether the findings of the study can be generalized) can be established by the fact that, although the seven respondents have been selected from a limited number of possible students (only those of the 200+ students who have been tracked over the past four semesters who are taking the academic writing course) and are limited to individuals from those tracked who volunteered to take part in the study, the data is

triangulated by the researcher's teaching journal which attempts to reflect upon the development of all of the students in the two classes she teaches, not just the individuals who volunteered, as well as the discussions with other members of the teaching staff after data analysis which reflect the development of at least 16 other classes. Finally reliability (or the demonstration of how the study can be replicated with similar results) can be established by the fact the data will also be electronically recorded and transcribed in order that the reliability of the research can be "falsified" by later researchers.

Although design cannot entirely ensure validity, careful design "can avoid or at least reduce the criticisms directed at case study research for the lack of methodological rigor and possibility of bias" (Christie, Rowe *et al.* 2000: 15).

Maxwell (1996: 89 – 97) describes validity threats at every stage of qualitative research: description, interpretation and theory.

The great concern in describing data is to ensure that the data is complete and accurate. Silverman (1993: 144) suggests that a study is "complete" if new data and the analysis of new linguistic devices reveal no new findings. In order to achieve this sense of completeness, I have conducted extensive interviews with other teachers as well as students, which mostly have not been included in the research as they add no new data.

Also, as mentioned above, one of the ways to militate against errors in description is the attempt to create a "thick description" of data. However, certain behaviours in gathering the data also help or hinder the description. Wolcott (1990: 12 –134) states that the researcher should "talk little, listen a lot, record accurately, begin writing early, let readers see for themselves, report fully, be candid, seek feedback, try to achieve a balance and write accurately". Recording accurately also involves recording "completely" this means trying to

produce data that is “rich”. For example, in interviews the researcher should transcribe the entire interview “verbatim”, rather than just provide notes (Maxwell, 1996: 95), while giving the reader “access to the data themselves” allows them to see if the description is valid or not (Wolcott, 1990: 130). Carefully listening to the respondents or carefully reading the data as well as seeking feedback and from outside researchers and the respondents themselves (“member checks”) also assist in creating a more complete description. I have attempted to follow all these procedures in the recording of my data. However, as I constantly remind the reader in the analysis of my data, the social relationships between the researcher and the researched need to be made explicit as they will affect the data at every stage of the collection and analysis of the data.

Errors in interpretation can, at least partly, be avoided by using the “modus operandi” approach of seeking for “clues” whether or not an event took place and for as many possible other interpretations as possible as well as “discrepant evidence and negative cases”. In addition, at all stages of the research, I keep “the list of (possible) threats” “open” (Maxwell 1996).

Errors in theory result principally from “not collecting or paying attention to discrepant data, or not considering alternative explanations or understandings of the phenomena you are studying (Maxwell 1996: 90 - 91). Wodak’s triangulation focuses on the concept of context as a theoretical basis. She states that four levels of context should be taken into account in triangulating data:

- The immediate language – or text-internal co-text (I measure the language of student texts against the language of the curriculum, materials, teacher and curriculum designer narratives)
- The intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses (I examine and compare the different genres used by the student

respondents' and the teacher respondents as well as descriptions in the course documents)

- The extralinguistic (social) level which is called the “context of the situation” and explain by middle-range theories. (My context chapter is detailed in terms of context of learners, university, religion and academic discourse and, in the analysis of the data; I constantly refer to and measure data against the contextual).
- The broader socio-political and historical contexts (The broader contexts such as Western Academic Discourse and Globalization, Islamic Discourse and literacy are also discussed in the context chapter and data is also constantly measured against these “grand-theories”).

(Wodak 2001: 29)

Along with the specific behaviours already described which could assist in preventing these errors, attempting to avoid researcher bias as well as explaining possible bias is essential in establishing a valid theory. The influence of the researcher or “reactivity” is also a concern in theory establishment. However, as with researcher bias, it is impossible to entirely avoid and possible reactivity should rather be described and understood, than swept under the carpet. This kind of ‘integrity’ can only enhance validity.

Triangulation, the attempt to “support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least don’t contradict it” (Miles and Huberman 1984: 235), is yet another useful tool in attempting to create a more complete and accurate account. As I have already mentioned, the research design attempts to provide triangulation of data through including several sources of data as well as “investigator triangulation” as more than one researcher checks the interpretation of the data. “Methodological triangulation” is also implicit in the critical realist methodology as interpretative methods, critical discourse analysis as well as the use of concordancing and quantitative measures of global writing development are part of this study. However, the triangulation “strategy” does not necessarily ensure validity or indeed reliability, since one form of bias does not necessarily cancel out another form of bias

(Mathison 1988: 14 – 16). Mathison describes the varying outcomes of triangulation: convergence, inconsistency and contradiction and suggests that they all need to be “filtered through knowledge gleaned from the immediate data, the project/ programme context and understanding of the larger social world” (Mathison 1988: 16). Thus I also triangulated using Wodak’s four levels of context as a theoretical basis as described above.

Along with all the safeguards to validity and reliability which accompany the various practical methods I have used in the research, the *critical realist approach* itself has built in safeguards. A constant awareness of Bhaskar’s (1998) three limitations to naturalistic description; namely, that it is *activity dependent*, *concept dependent* and *spatio-temporally dependent*, ensures that I always acknowledge the “perspectival” nature of my ‘data’ and attempt to retain a “reflexive” and “transparent” position (Altheide & Johnson 1994).

Collection and analysis of data

As I have already mentioned, the collection of data attempts to encompass the three Discourses of university literacy based on the model by Henning *et al* (2001) and adapted from Lea and Street (1998). However, although the three perspectives of university literacy are in a sense separate and hierarchical (with a privileging of the academic literacies “highest” level of the stratified reality), each level is the product of the mechanisms inherent in the more basic strata (Bhaskar 1997), but cannot be reduced to the more basic structures.

Figure 5 below summarizes my methods of data collection and analysis in terms of the three constructions of academic literacy.

	Study Skills (Surface Language measured quantitatively)	Academic Socialization (Orientation to learning measured through a qualitative comparison of the views of the academy and the compliance of the respondents)	Academic Literacies (Contested discourse analyzed through Critical Discourse Analysis)
Data:	- Foundation Programme corpus (FPC) - AWC Corpus - British National Corpus (BNC) - General Service List (GSL) - Academic Word List (AWL) - Student corpus (ESPSC) - Individual Student corpora	- Semi-structured student interviews - Interviews conducted with four Humanities faculty members <i>GU</i> documents - Specific foundation programme documents - Learner strategy research - Motivation research	- Individual student corpora re-examined <i>GU</i> documents re-examined - Foundation programme documents re-examined - Interviews conducted with three curriculum designers and faculty
Analysis:	- Search FPC/AWC corpora for GSL words and AWL words - note frequency - Search BNC for AWL words note frequency - Create table of word frequency data - Divide each individual students corpus into levels - Compare global writing development	- Describe faculty views of students' orientation to learning - Describe the data from SIL research - Describe data from Motivation Research - Describe data from student surveys and Blackboard	- Examine student and other texts using CDA - Focus on problem - Identify obstacles - Examine social order - Consider ways past obstacles
Re-evaluation of data using other lenses	- Evaluate how data relates to acquisition of genres ("academic socialization"). - Evaluate how data relates to the use of language as a resource to enable respondents to "switch practices" ("academic literacies")	- Re-evaluate data in the description, coding and analysis phase by using Bhaskar's steps. - Highlight "causal structure", discover "reasons" and Discourses behind description	Critically reflect on my analysis

Figure 5: Literacy Discourses and Methods

In addition to the data outlined in the table above, I also make use of transcriptions of presentations outlining the Problem-Based Learning Project (PBL), the benchmark exams and a number of *GU* websites and local newspapers in the context chapter of my research. Context

is essentially part of the research as it is used to triangulate data and explicate data throughout the study.

As mentioned before, these multiple methods of data collection and analysis reflect the fact that research can only ever provide a “snapshots” or “probe” the layers of the phenomenon. However, on the level of ontology, epistemology, research design and methodology, issues of validity and even methods of data collection involve constant dialogue and dialectic between the individual, society and the historical context in Bhaskar’s Critical Realist view of the social sciences and this dialogue is reflected in the methodology of this study.

Strands of Literature

Literacy is a complex construct and concepts of what it entails are affected by cultural, linguistic, geographical and socio-economic diversity (Banda 2003) as well as the multiple complex modes and language and literacy codes that it constitutes (Cope & Kalantzis 2000). Thus, in this study, I prefer to refer to literacies (plural) rather than literacy as a singular unified concept. Similarly, literature relating to literacy, and university literacy in particular, consists of numerous strands that make up the pattern of the whole. In this study I will concentrate on just two intertwined strands of literature: literature related to literacy/ literacies and literature related to “Developmental Education”. These two strands of literature have developed within diverse contexts and in this chapter I will describe some of the contested Discourses related to the two concepts.

Defining Literacy

Most dictionaries define literacy as the ability to read and write- that is, the ability to understand and communicate written symbols. It is often divided hierarchically into basic literacy (the ability to recognize, decode and understand printed signs, symbols and words), proficient literacy (the ability to extend the ideas, make inferences, draw conclusions and make connections to personal experiences from the written texts) and (more controversially) advanced literacy which refers to “the ability to use language to solve problems and to extend cognitive development” (Klemp 1999: 1). This hierarchical analysis, however, appears too simplistic in the teaching of a second or foreign language since teachers report that their students are at different levels of literacy with different languages and even have some characteristics of more so-called “advanced” literacy features in their second language, along with some of the “less advanced” literacy characteristics (Boiarsky, 2003: 100-101; Klemp 1999). Thus, even from what I designate a “narrow academic socialization” view of literacy

(literacy as a fixed set of behaviours and attitudes which students must acquire in order to be literate), the view of a hierarchical development of literacy is unsatisfactory. Of course, even designating some literacy features as advanced and others less advanced is problematic, since literacies evolve in particular social contexts and it is these social contexts that cause some literacies to be privileged over others because of the power structures they are associated with (Gee 2002).

The definition of literacy has also evolved from a focus on just written symbols to include the ability to find, analyse, use and convey meaning to achieve a desired purpose using a wide variety of resources, including text, visual, audio, video and digital sources, and is constantly changing to reflect the continual changes in society (Harste 1994; Moll 1994; Cunningham, Many *et al.* 2000; Leu 2002). The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (Laboratory 2003) identifies eight “Digital Age” literacies: basic literacy, scientific literacy, economic literacy, technological literacy, visual literacy, information literacy, multicultural literacy, and global awareness. These literacies along with inventive thinking, effective communication and high productivity, are described as the precursors of academic success (university literacy). Others would describe aspects of inventive thinking such as critical and creative thinking and aspects of productivity and effective communication as yet more necessary literacies in the students’ repertoire (Harste 1994; Moll 1994; Cunningham, Many *et al.* 2000; Leu 2002).

Merely acknowledging the multiplicity of literacy is not enough. The complex nature of each of these literacies needs to be examined as well as the implications of internalising these multiple literacies and their effect on the lived-in-world of the practitioner/ neophyte also need to be considered. Literacy is thus seen as a deliberate connecting of linguistic knowledge and other bases of knowledge. In addition, it is not seen in “isolated bits of knowledge, but in

students' growing ability to use language and literacy in more and broader activities" (Moll, 1994: 202). However, the resulting "literate" view of the world is distinct from everyday knowledge because it focuses on "second order descriptions and experience of the world" (Boughey, 2000: 297).

The Power/Effects of Literacy

A number of positive claims have been made about the power of literacy. Goleblowski, for example, claims that literacy is the "major factor influencing the academic success of tertiary students" (1997). Gee reports even more dramatic and preposterous claims about the positive effects of literacy which suggest that it encourages rational and critical thinking, improves the quality of language use, encourages a questioning attitude and even results in democracy, economic development and a lower crime rate (2002: 22). But, as Gee indicates, these claims about the power of literacy fail to examine the close relationship between literacy practices and issues such as social class. Certain students are more successful than others because their literacy practices conform more closely to those of the academy and thus they can draw on the "cultural capital" that is more valued by the academy (Bourdieu & Passeron 1973). However, the socially embedded nature of literacy practices is rarely acknowledged and, instead, literacy is touted by politicians and the media as a solution to most of society's ills.

This reification of literacy; which suggests that it has effects on cognition and society outside of its specific context, is called the "literacy myth" by Gee (2002: 22 -32) and the "autonomous model of literacy" by Brian Street (1984). Gee goes on to report studies by Scribner and Cole and Fry which show that literacy does not necessarily mean that higher-order intellectual skills are activated and that these skills, usually associated with school and the language(s) spoken in schools do not last if they are not repeatedly used in daily life. In addition, studies show that literacy does not necessarily make a difference to inequality or economic development (Gee, 2002: 33 – 34). The high status of the practices and skills of

producing and understanding “autonomous” text has resulted in an elevation of the status of technical, acultural, asocial skills (Boughey, 2000: 297) with many neophytes experiencing alienation because of their exclusion from the culture that produced these texts and the fact that they do not use the “skills” once removed from the academic environment. Even the acquisition of the “skills” themselves is suspect since, for example, reading comprehension depends on the reader’s contextual knowledge of the text as well as on mere “sight-sound decoding skills”. The belief in benevolent, empowering literacy abstracted from the historical conditions in which it is created is thus a myth. Literacy in itself has “no effects or, at least, no predictable effects” (Gee, 2002: 42). Instead, to be truly empowering, literacy practices have to be embedded within an empowering historical and social reality and/ or encourage people to be “active questioners” of this reality.

Another result of the literacy myth is that the written text is seen as “authoritative and final” because it appears to be “explicit, clear, complete, closed, and self-sufficient, that is, unanswerable” (Gee, 2002: 22 – 32). Written language with which literacy is usually associated is also perceived as distinctly different from and even superior to spoken language. In 1826 Hazlitt summarized what he saw as the main differences between speaking and writing: He suggested that speaking was more informal than writing (“An orator can hardly get beyond commonplaces: if he does, he gets beyond his hearers”) and that speech was more repetitive, less complex (“There is no thought in them that implies a habit of deep and refined reflection more than we are accustomed ordinarily to find in people of education; there is no knowledge that does not lie within the reach of obvious and mechanical search”) and integrated than writing and more immediate (“The chief requisite for the one, then, appears to be quickness and facility of perception - for the other, patience of soul, and a power increasing with the difficulties it has to master”). Writing, on the other hand, is viewed as more detached than speaking (Hazlett 1946).

These perceptions of the differences between speaking and writing persist and are often reported on educational websites and in writing textbooks, despite research which has shown

that some written languages show more the characteristics of orality than literacy. For example, written Arabic, especially the Arabic of the Qur'an and other religious texts, makes use of constant repetition and moves from *sura* to *sura* in what Hazlitt would see as fragmented way. Although it is a written text, the Qur'an is usually recited and many Arabic literates cannot speak Arabic, yet are able to recite large portions of the Qur'an (Gee, 2002: 51). However, this lack of distinction between the written and spoken is not only an issue in oral societies; it also relates to the issue of the inappropriateness of so-called "general English" courses for students planning to undertake university studies through the medium of English that I discussed in the introduction to this thesis. I have observed that numerous "general English" textbooks such as the *Cutting Edge* and *Headway* series do not distinguish between traditional features of informal spoken language such as contractions and interjections and formal written language in university assignments where such forms are generally not favoured. Thus, the lack of explicitness in pedagogy leads to inappropriate use. Students are confused further because other writing in modern society has become more fragmented - for example new literacies involving the internet chat room and SMS phone communication. In addition, many oral cultures use rhythm and repetition in speaking, but the speech is also formal and detached, like the traditional view of writing (Gee, 2002: 53). This point is also illustrated by Gough (2000) in an analysis of the formality of oral Xhosa ceremonies in South Africa. It is thus better to study the characteristics of different literacies within their social practices in an explicit pedagogy rather than focus on writing versus speech (Gee, 2002: 54) and we should also not necessarily view speaking and writing as distinct, but rather as practices which vary in detachment, integration and use of features, according to the specific genre(s)/ discourse(s) and social situations.

University Literacy

ESL practitioners have often argued that there are "generic skills which students need in order to competently negotiate academic literacy". This has resulted in the creation of numerous English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) courses and textbooks (Baskin, Barker *et al.*,

1997: 68). However, like literacy, university literacy is a multidimensional and even socially contested term. Thus we should not only examine the different skills involved in this form of literacy and imagine that, if the student masters these, he/she will be literate rather, we should focus on the social environment of the university and how the complex skills and practices that constitute tertiary literacy are embedded in that unique environment (McLoughlin 1995; Baskin, Barker *et al.*, 1997: 38-39) since there are not only a number of diverse “skills” necessary in the mastery of tertiary literacy, but also a huge variety of academic environments requiring different genres and Discourses from their practitioners as illustrated by Lea and Street in their comparison of two seemingly related disciplines: history and anthropology (2000). Many researchers like Boiarsky (2003: 100 – 101) show an awareness of the multiple nature of literacy/literacies. However, these are usually focused on a predisposition towards knowledge and have a text focus. For example, Boiarsky lists some of the multiple literacies believed to make up tertiary literacy including rhetorical knowledge, using critical thinking, synthesizing sources, analyzing the purpose and audiences of texts, composing processes like multiple drafting or collaborating with other students, understanding the conventions (e.g. spelling and structure) and using different conventions for different situations. However, tertiary literacy is part of what Boughey (2000) calls an “intellectual tradition” rather than just a “cognitive ability” which is either innate or can be taught and thus it involves far more than these technical skills, it also involves a change of identity to become part of the university environment and intellectual tradition of the university.

Because the university environment is uniquely different from the home and school environment all students entering tertiary institutions, not just English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) students or students from poor backgrounds require apprenticing into this context (Geisler 1994). Baldauf (1997: 1) shows how tertiary literacy is needed by Aborigine students, foreign students, older students and *most* first year students in Australia. H.R Boylan shows how American college students including foreign, black, Hispanic and native speakers have needed assistance with university from the inception of higher education in that country (Boylan, 2001: 4). Literacy is thus important for the mainstream academic curriculum because it affects all students and is an integral part of

content, methodology and knowledge. Therefore, “it is not something that can be remediated in isolated “tool” sessions, but is integral to the teaching and learning of academic material within academic units”. Because the university “reifies” its discourses, students entering the university cannot become part of the university community until they are provided with socially embedded university literacy training (Noone & Cartwright, 1997: 235 – 236).

There are, however, still additional challenges for non-native speakers, especially those like the students in my study whose parents have not attended higher education institutions (Pearce & Borland, 1997: 250; Bielenberg 2005). These students have a particular need to learn the unfamiliar discourses of tertiary literacy as these discourses are markedly different from literacy practices in their home environment which focus on the reading/ recitation of religious material rather than Western academic practices. The vast difference in their home culture from the target university culture makes it more difficult for them to enter the “tribes and territories” of the university than, for example, upper-middle class Western students who have been apprenticed into many of the practices from their earliest childhood (Becher 1989; Becher & Trowler 2001).

In order for ESL students to enter the university culture and to be “visible” in the different academic communities, they have to write in English in the accepted style of academia following Anglo-American rhetorical patterns (Noone & Cartwright, 1997: 235 – 236; Goleblowski 1997) and they need to understand the Discourse of the university academic tradition as well as their own position within this construct. Thus, they experience tertiary literacy as an “ideological” construct rather than an “autonomous” one (Street 1984).

Tertiary/ Academic Literacy as an Ideology and Discourse

The way in which students code and decode text along with other media depends on how they view themselves in relation to the texts/ media and the environment within which the texts/ media is created (Boughey, 2000: 296). The construct of university literacy is in Marxist terms ideological, since it reflects the ideas of a dominant discourse or “set of possible statements about a given area”, in this case tertiary literacy, which “give expression to the meanings and values of an institution” (Kress, 1989: 7). At *Gulf University*, the Discourse(s) of Western, especially North American academia, serve to reproduce the hegemony. For example, the students are trained in the Western construct of academic literacy at *GU* those who wish to study further are sent to North American universities for their graduate studies and they return to reproduce the Anglo-American particular view of university literacy.

There is, however, a constant friction between this Discourse and the powerful Discourse of Islam and Arab culture. Gee (1990) shows how the concept of literacy has throughout history been defined by the elites who have socialized students into their Discourses (ways of acting and interacting as well as ways of using language). However, in the context of *GU*, as described in my context chapter, Anglo-American academic Discourse(s) and Islamic/Arab Discourse(s) both have powerful bases and collide resulting in “endless possibilities”. In this context, the Discourse(s) of the “elite” and even the “elite” are sometimes hard to identify. In addition, others such as Hare (1996) suggest that knowledge of the academy allows the neophyte to change the academy from within.

Literacy is what Gee (2002: 57) calls a Secondary Discourse (the ability to function in a Discourse community) which is distinct from the home or primary discourse. The students are literate in their primary Discourse (ability to function in the home environment) and this literacy provides the framework for the acquisition of other Discourses and/ or literacies later in life. University literacy is yet another Secondary Discourse. Because the students in this study’s experience of the Discourse(s) of tertiary literacy is very different from their Primary Discourse and even from their early literacy experiences in school, their problems are likely to be as a result of their “status as outsiders” to the academic discourses that constitute the

ideology of tertiary literacy, rather than just individual learning problems (Gee, 2002: 57; Boughey, 2000: 296). Street, Gee and others involved in the “New Literacy Studies” suggest that school or university literacy involves a “mastery over a secondary discourse” rather than a “neutral working tool” (Ndebele, 1987: 233) and that this mastery is gained by understanding the social practices that underlie the secondary discourse as well as acknowledging that literacies are plural and that university literacy can involve a number of genres and styles which change depending on the particular social context in which they occur (e.g., the research report necessary for Psychology is very different from that required in Chemistry).

The New Literacy Studies

The new literacy studies, first introduced by theorists like Street (1993) and Gee (1990) acknowledge, as mentioned above, the plural nature of literacy with different literacies forming part of different areas of social activity. However, new literacy theorists do not suggest an unthinking apprenticing of students into the hegemonic academy. Rather, they attempt to probe the “contradictions and silences within disciplinary discourses” (Kapp 2004). First, they break down the assumptions of the “autonomous model” of literacy that literacy practices are generic, neutral and transferable. Secondly, they show how literacies result from formal and informal power structures with some literacies more powerful than others and they show how literacies are historical constructs. In addition, they move away from deficit approaches to literacy or descriptions of “literate” and “illiterate”, since there are no “typical literacy outcomes” (Boughey 2000). Each of the socially embedded literacies has its own specific outcomes and neophytes can be totally proficient in one literacy and deficient in another. Finally, as Gee (2002) shows, although students are socialized towards an academy and appear to be acquiring the skills of the dominant Discourse type, this Discourse is not homogenous. The students need to recognize the competing identities within each academy and switch identity and practices when appropriate.

The new literacy studies also acknowledge the need for the “apprentice” academic to be empowered to find his/her own “voice” and “identity” among the competing “voices” and “identities” that constitute the academy. This view of literacy is, however, far from universal and many tertiary institutions worldwide still hold views that suggest that, if students would only internalize a few discrete skills, they would be able to successfully achieve their own and the academy’s literacy goals. Of course, since knowledge itself is “interested” (Pennycook 1989), it is in the interests of the “study skills” and English Language Teaching industries to maintain the *status quo* particularly in the Gulf where a dependence on foreign expertise has resulted in large numbers of jobs for ELT and study skills professionals.

Perspectives or Models of Literacy

Lea and Street (1998) show how research into student writing in higher education has fallen into three main perspectives or models and how these perspectives have had implications for teaching methods, curriculum and the assessment of both students and the success of programmes. They describe these perspectives as the “study skills”, “academic socialization” and “academic literacies” models respectively. The models cannot be viewed in a “linear time dimension, whereby one model supersedes or replaces the insights provided by the other” since various institutions and individuals follow the different perspectives at the same time. In addition, they are “not mutually exclusive”, since “each model successively encapsulates the other, so that the academic socialization perspective takes account of study skills, but includes them in the broader context of the acculturation processes...and likewise the academic literacies approach encapsulates the academic socialization model, building on the insights developed there as well as the study skills view” (1998: 2). In this study, I follow Lea and Street and take a “hierarchical view” of the three models, “privileging the “academic literacies” approach” (1998: 3) because of its broader perspective of the whole “institutional and epistemological context”.

The “Study Skills” Model

Lea and Street’s description of the “study skills” perspective of student writing shows an affinity with Street’s “autonomous” model of literacy and Baldauf’s “remediation mentality”, since it focuses on decontextualized “surface features” of language and does not make the “ways of being in the world” which underlie these competencies clear to the student. Also, it focuses on “fixing” what the students lack in terms of literacy skills as if their problems were a “kind of pathology” (Baldauf, 1997:4; Lea & Street 1998). Boughey (2000) follows Taylor (1988) by describing the view of teaching language implied by the study skills perspective as “teaching language as an instrument of communication”. This “neutral” view of language which suggests that if the teacher re-mediate errors in the instrument, the communication will be effective and the skills learnt can be transferred to other situations is belied by research such as that by Taylor (1988) which shows that modifying the “instrument”, for example correcting grammar errors in a student’s writing does not result in effective communication of meaning (Boughey, 2000: 299). Teaching the skills required by the academic discourse is clearly not enough since writing involves more than just atomized skills for presenting and analyzing knowledge (Noone & Cartwright, 1997: 238); it also necessitates an enculturation into the social context in which the skills and competencies are used.

The “Academic Socialization” Model

Lea and Street refer to the second perspective of student writing as the “academic socialization” model (1998). In this perspective, the student is acculturated into the appropriate way of learning and interpreting tasks within the academic environment. University or academic literacy includes technical skills such as referencing. However, this skill is pointless without an understanding of the social conventions of whom to cite and when to do so, as well as the cultural aspects of the appropriate methods of arguing and supporting an argument with references which are all part of the “cultural repertoire of the academy”

(Brodkey 1987; Noone & Cartwright 1997: 238). Also, the concept of referencing arises from a particular construction of knowledge which students need to understand before they can engage effectively with the practice. Thus, in order to acquire the skills required of the Secondary Discourse of tertiary literacy and subject-specific Discourses, the student requires apprenticing consisting of exposure to models and “supported interaction” with the masters of the Discourse (the lecturers/ practitioners) (Gee, 2002: 138; Tharp & Gallimore 1988; Newman, Griffin *et al.* 1989). There are however some dangers in this view of academic literacy. Baldauf (1997: 3-4) and Fiore and Elasser (1982) warn that neophytes from non-traditional backgrounds often feel like “strangers in a strange world” who either fail or must negate their own cultures which often conflict with the new cultures to succeed. Thus, they are “controlled by” the social context, rather than “in control of it”.

The view also implies that there is a specific way to “get it right” and that each discourse has a singular culture and fixed set of rules. This view of “cognitive authority” suggests that the student must conform or be doomed to failure and does not reflect the constantly evolving nature of social and academic practices (Frey 2002: 509; Noone & Cartwright 1997: 238). In addition, because academic socialization focuses on acquisition (which cannot be taught overtly, but rather by exposure to practices in “natural, meaningful and functional setting” (Gee 2002: 144) lecturers/ teachers who follow this perspective often do not teach their “disciplinary discourse explicitly (Baldauf 1997: 9) and thus the meaning behind these practices remain obscure to students who are perpetual “apprentices” but never “masters” of the Discourse(s). Pearce and Borland (1997) thus suggest that not only should the students accommodate and change in accordance with the academy, but also the academy should accommodate the student practitioner since complete acculturation carries with it the risk of negation of cultural identity, while incomplete acculturation results in cultural conflict and/ or failure on the part of the “apprentice”. As Gee (2002) suggests, acquisition requires sustained exposure to Discourses, but learning helps to make true understanding and critique of these Discourses possible. Other problems with the academic socialization perspectives include the assumption that the academy has a “homogeneous culture” and of its neglect of the possibility

of change along with an absence of a detailed analysis of the way in which power is manifested within institutions (Pearce & Borland 1997).

The “Academic Literacies” Model

In acknowledging the multiple and contested nature of tertiary literacy, Lea and Street’s (Lea 1998) “academic literacies” model of student writing follows the New Literacy Studies in considering the expectations about literacy of the university and the different disciplines, as well as in respect of the students’ resistance to institutional Discourse (“academic ways of knowing and writing”) (Reid & Mulligan 1997; Kramer-Dahl 2001). It focuses on teaching them how to choose and use the available semiotic and syntactic resources which are embedded in the social practices of the target Discourse’ to make meaning. At the same time, the academic literacies model suggests examining competing Discourse types in order to transform and reconstruct them (Baldauf 1997; Janks 2000).

A teacher/ lecturer in the academic literacies model assists students in understanding the sociopolitical underpinning of the different literacy Discourses and at the same time “critically engages and interrogates” his/her own “institutional practices of literacy and learning” (McLaren 1995: 18, cited in Baskin *et al* (1997: 67)). Students are expected to switch practices between one Discourse or academic setting and another and to select linguistic practices suitable for each of these from their “repertoire of linguistic practices” (Lea & Street 1998: 3). Noone and Cartwright (1997: 239) refer to this perspective of academic writing as the “Academic writing as critique” model which “sets out to reposition students as researchers of literacy practices, past and present, problematize classroom texts and respect, and explore the origin of student resistance” (Raymond & Parks 2002: 16). While the “academic

socialization” model of academic literacy coincides with Gee’s “acquisition principle”, the “academic literacies” perspective requires his “learning principle” (2002: 145). Because one cannot “critique one Discourse with another one...unless one has meta-level knowledge about both Discourses”, learning as well as acquisition is required and the teacher’s job in this perspective is to “focus attention” on competing Discourses (2002: 89) and to give the students the meta-tools to talk and write about them. This type of learning is essential since “teaching for acquisition alone leads to successful but colonized students” (Gee 2002: 145).

Instead of “colonizing” students into the academy, Gee suggests providing them with “mushfake [make do with something else when the real thing is not available] Discourse”, or “partial acquisition coupled with meta-knowledge and strategies to make do” (2002: 147). In this way, he suggests that they will be able to make choices and switch between the “multiple voices” that constitute the “formal system” of language(s) and literacies (2002: 69), yet not lose their own identities/ Discourses (Janks 2000).

Critical Literacy

Critical Literacy, as mentioned before, is seen as one of the multiple literacies necessary for students to survive in the tertiary environment. However, this type of literacy can be taught as yet another way in which students need to conform to the academy, or taught as an empowering tool of critiquing the academy. Boughey (2002: 301), for example, argues that some Discourses of “critical thinking” can be related to the construct of the “autonomous text” since it suggests that “words which construe the text ‘carry’ meaning” and that this meaning can be detected by using “logic”, thus denying that meaning is constructed by taking contextual as well as textual factors into account. However, university expectations of

students when they ask them to “critically analyze or evaluate” something can differ widely depending on their definition(s) of critical thinking (Farrell, James *et al.* 1997: 150).

Ennis (1996) cites Hagar and Kaye’s (1992) broad definition of critical thinking, stating that it involves “reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do”. Kurfiss states that “Critical thinking is an investigation whose purpose is to explore a situation, phenomenon, question or problem to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion about it that integrates all available information and that therefore can be convincingly justified”(1988: 2), while for Lankshear (1994) being critical requires that the student knows and values the “canon” in his/ her discipline first – “there is the requirement of knowing closely...that which is being evaluated” as well as “judging, comparing, or evaluating on the basis of careful analysis” (1988: 9). Critical thinking can be seen as reflective and reasonable with an emphasis on deciding what to do or believe (Ennis 1985). Ennis’ concept of critical thinking has three major parts: (1) problem-solving (based on interaction with social context) (2) reasoning (informed by background knowledge and previously acceptable conclusions) and resulting in inferences through induction, deduction, and value judging; and (3) deciding what to do or believe.

Ennis’s first two parts of the critical thinking process as well as the other definitions above could relate critical thinking and critical literacy to the “academic socialization” view of student writing. In this model, students are required to know their field and use the appropriate language structures as well as the appropriate “reasonable” thinking processes required by the academy. These thinking processes are often focused, as Boughey (2000: 301) reports, on the ability to formulate an “argument” which is based on an “autonomous” text. According to Ennis (1996), a critical thinker should also demonstrate some abilities and dispositions such as identifying the focus, analyzing arguments, asking questions of clarification, judging the credibility of a source and judging value judgments. According to Ennis, these dispositions define the critical spirit which motivates critical thinkers to apply critical thinking abilities to the thinking of others and to their own thinking. Such dispositions include trying to ensure

that beliefs are true and that decisions are justified and attempting to present a position honestly and clearly (1996). Part of the academic socialization process requires the neophyte to develop dispositions and make judgments; however, these judgments are prescribed by the academy and can result in a situation where the reader assumes that the text is “right” because his/ her relationship to the text has been programmed by a narrow academic socialization (Casanave 2002). For example, in apartheid South Africa, school children were socialized into the ‘scientific truth’ that certain people were inherently ‘inferior’ due to a belief in the primacy of text (based on their teachers and lecturers’ interpretations of Bible and racist ‘scientific’ textbooks) (Dubow 1995).

We can see another example of an uncritical acceptance of the critical thinking Discourse in Clerehan and Walker’s report on a university in Singapore that attempted to introduce a critical thinking curriculum. When in-depth interviews were conducted with students who attended the course, it became clear that students felt that while at school they had merely been taught “what to think”, and at university they were being taught “how” to think the “what” (Clerehan & Walker 2004). They were clearly not “in charge” of their own thinking which is seen by theorist like Paul (Paul & Elder 2001) as one of the characteristics of a critical thinker. Of course, no one is able to be totally “in charge” of their own thinking. What we think is a result of the dynamic process of social reproduction and transformation.

Ennis’s third step in the critical thinking process, the “decision” about “what to do or believe”, places true critical thinking/ literacy firmly as part of the “academic literacies” model. If the student is “in charge” of his/her thinking, a systematic monitoring of thought is necessary, but also Paul’s concept of critical thinking requires an ability to reason dialectically to determine when your point of view is at its weakest and when an opposing point of view is at its strongest. Prescribed reading is not enough to foster critical thinking and, as Clerehan and Walker (2004: 2) report, “immersion in the field” including non-prescribed texts is required. Critical thinkers are not unthinking consumers of the “tribes and territories” (Becher & Trowler 2001) of the academy rather they are willing to take up a position although they are

aware of their own biases, misconceptions, and prejudices, and are willing to critique them, as well as those of the academy (Paul & Elder 2001).

There is a long tradition in English second language teaching circles, based on theories like that of Cummins (Cummins 1981; Cummins 1984) which suggest that advanced literacies like critical literacy should not be taught to weaker students since the level of literacy required by Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is too high for them due to the fact that there are less non-verbal clues, academic language is abstract and cultural linguistic knowledge is needed to understand academic texts fully (Cummins 1981; Cummins 1984; Cummins 1989; Cummins 1997). Although others like Baker (1993) have shown this view to be “value-laden”, “imprecise” and over-simplified, Clerehan and Walker (2004: 2) report how even at a tertiary level many theorists in Singapore suggested that critical reading and writing practices be postponed to a later stage, after the “basics of academic writing have been learnt”. However, as mentioned before, research has shown that this decontextualized view of language which separates literacy from language is flawed since English second language students can acquire varying levels of proficiency in different academic literacies at the same time and lack, for example, a sound knowledge of English grammar, while being to think critically and creatively and express these thoughts in English, albeit with poor grammar or lacking the prescribed paragraph structure. Kramer-Dahl (2001) suggests that if we “adopt a “wait-for-critique approach, one runs the danger of putting off possibly forever the socialization into critical perspective”. Thus the academic literacies perspective offers a more comprehensive space for critical literacy than the academic socialization model.

Voice and Ownership in Academic Writing

Another concept which is often linked with the “academic literacies” perspective on student writing is that of “voice” and ownership in student writing. By “voice” I mean the clear expression of the writers own thoughts, opinions and beliefs in his/her writing (Murray 1984).

Al-Sa'adi and Arnold (2005) describe the following aspects as characteristic of academic "voice" in writing: the use of markers (*I, me, my, us, our*), use of examples from one's own experience/ life, use of indicators of beliefs (*I believe, I think, I know*), use of 'own words', use of emotive words, evidence of paraphrase and summary of ideas rather than copied or plagiarized text, evidence of personally composed definitions rather than direct quoting, use of own words for headings and subheadings, providing a structure (that is different from others), appropriate use of technical vocabulary, evidence of synthesis of different ideas, evidence of adoption of a position or making of a judgment, critical discussion of technical vocabulary, ideas, models and theories and research from the literature, and the use of novel metaphors, imagery, personification. However, despite believing that undergraduates and students with a low level of proficiency in English are able to express their academic 'voice' to some extent, I acknowledge that 'voice' is influenced by level of study or level of socialization into a particular Discourse. Thus undergraduate academic 'voice' will be different from Masters 'voice' just as a students' Doctoral 'voice' will be distinct from that of a Masters' student. Additionally, from a critical realist perspective, 'voice' is less simplistic than the views described above. Despite your level of study your 'voice' is never entirely your own, rather it arises out of the "dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation" (Harvey 2002).

Although paraphrase, appropriate referencing and some of the other characteristics listed above have always been a part of the expectations of the academy, traditionally academic writing has been far more impersonal than implied above. Hyland (2002: 1) shows how academic writing has usually been portrayed as an "impersonal discourse" which focuses on disguising the author and dealing directly with facts. Writing within this academy students are expected to "remove themselves from their texts" using features such as the passive voice, avoiding references to personal opinions and eliminating person pronouns (Arnaudet & Barrett 1984: 73). This impersonal Discourse makes it difficult for students to find their academic voice within the "textual structures, discursive processes and institutional practices of their new writing context" (Clerahan & Walker 2004: 2). Thus Hyland and other researchers such as Lillis suggest that students should be guided to an awareness of all the options that are offered by academic writing and in this way be exposed to the variations of

disciplinary conventions and the full spectrum of academic literacies within the disciplines (Lillis & Turner 2001; Hyland 2002).

Teaching methods to ensure academic literacy

The choice of learning activities and teaching methods can affect the acquisition of literacies. For example, as mentioned above, permitting the students to express their ‘voice’ in academic writing affects their immersion in the “tribes and territories” of academia. Cope and Kalantzis (1995: 7) suggest that the following four learning activities are necessary to ensure the acquisition of academic literacies: “situated practice”, “overt instruction”, cultural framing” and finally “transformed practice”. The first three activities are related to the “academic socialization” model since situated practice involves “an immersion in the appropriate discourse of the discipline”, overt instruction suggests an analytical exploration of the topic and cultural framing focuses on the social and cultural aspects of texts. With these activities the neophyte is gradually apprenticed into the culture of the academy. However, his/ her transformation from follower to practitioner requires the final activity, “transformed practice”, which is related to the “academic literacies” model since it is during this activity that the student puts the meanings into practice, transforms meaning and uses this “redesigned meaning” in “other contexts or cultural sites”.

There is considerable debate about the most appropriate teaching methodologies for English second language students in the process of acquiring academic literacies. Farell *et al* (1997: 152 – 153) note how modeling facilitates the four central learning activities of Cope and Kalantzis (1995), since “it draws students’ attention to the particular requirements of a discipline area and draws together knowledge and content. ... [T]he advantage of using models is that it allows the lecturer to demonstrate expectations and the process of argumentation in the academic context”. Others like Luke (1995) and Biggs (1999: 127) note how modeling should be accompanied by explicit teaching since “being aware of our

cognitive processes and exerting control over them” results in improved acquisition (Biggs, 1999: 127) and, as suggested by Gee (2002), this is necessary for “transformed practice” (Cope and Kalantzis 1995) to take place. Studies have shown that explicit teaching, along with modeling of metacognitive processes have resulted in students becoming aware of their own thinking and thus there have been improved literacy outcomes (Ziegler, Bain *et al.* 2006).

Because second language learners have often not been immersed from childhood in the culture of the Western academy which values these writing practices and view of writing, they necessarily lack the background information required by the inexplicit, naturalistic or process approaches usually used to teach academic Discourse to native speakers. Additionally, social class can play a part in the acquisition of university literacy since middle class students are often more likely to study at university than students of a lower social class due to the fact that the ways of thinking, talking, reading and writing valued in their primary Discourse(s) are more attuned to those of the academy (Boughey 2000). Thus researchers working in the genre approach to literacy like Cope, Kalantzis and Christie suggest an explicit approach will result in a more equitable teaching of literacies (Farrell, James *et al.* 1997).

Another issue in the teaching of academic literacies in the university environment is how to accommodate English as an additional language learners or learners from working class backgrounds in content classes with first language learners. In the Gulf region, although people have a high *per capita* income (Davis, Pitts *et al.* 2000) and thus the students at *GU* cannot be described as working class, they are predominantly first generation EAL students who are taught along with a few EAL students (either scholarship students from countries like Sri-Lanka or the children of academics at the university – mainly of Arabic background) who have had more exposure to Western academic Discourses (either through their parents or high school studies) than the local students. Some have noted, as already discussed, that all students require apprenticing into the Secondary Discourse of academia and specific disciplines. However, most acknowledge that there are additional challenges for second language learners, especially those who have had less exposure to Western academic Discourses and that they

need to be accommodated in some way. Pearce and Borland (1997) in their Australian study of lecturers' opinions on accommodating these students note that accommodating students in different classes with different expectations is not a popular option since it raises arguments about standards and can result in a backlash from other students. However, a focus on explicit pedagogy, clearer instructions, monitoring and counseling, as well as a giving more opportunity for drafting and more flexibility for students of all backgrounds is much more popular amongst content lecturers (Pearce & Borland 1997).

Institutional Practices Required to Ensure Academic Literacy

Tertiary institutions have to change along with their lecturing staff and curriculum in order to ensure students' acquisition of tertiary literacies. Baldauf (1997: 1 - 13) states that tertiary institutions need to develop "university-wide", "comprehensive language and literacy policies" which are "coordinated and systematic". Because the acquisition of university literacies is embedded in the culture of the institution, a critical examination the "whole cultural ambience" of the university is required. This issue relates to the concept/ Discourse of Developmental Education which is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Literacy and Culture

The culture of the student entering the academy is just as important as the culture of the academic institution in determining his/ her successful mastery of academic literacies within the academy.

Some like Reid (1997) and Ohmann (1976), fear that the students' home culture (Primary Discourse) will be subverted or even destroyed in their adaptation to the tertiary environment

(Secondary Discourse) since they not only have to give the teacher/lecturer “what she wants”, but they also have to succeed using the Discourse required by the lecturer (Ohmann, 1976: 142). Geisler (1994: 48) suggests that in forcing students to “abandon the resources of their home cultures in order to succeed in school and in the professions”, society is perpetuating inequalities. These inequalities are reflected in studies in the USA (e.g., (Bizell 1992; McCarthy 2001) which show how ESL university students feel that they are “outsiders” lacking the “right to speak” and that they have to change radically, acquire “a second skin” in order to survive. As already reported above, studies like the one by Kramer-Dahl (2001) show that even programmes designed to foster critical thinking or other academic literacies are often authoritarian and prescriptive.

On the other hand, some theorists, like Talib (1995) query whether students from non-Western backgrounds are capable of attaining advanced academic literacies at all since the school system in their countries values the “ability to provide arrays of facts, to memorize model answers together with the more practical knowledge of in which subjects to do so” (*Sunday Times*, 31 March 1996 cited in Talib (1995)) and they suggest that without an improvement in the students’ general ability in English they will be unable to internalize the complexities of academic literacies in the short period allowed at tertiary institutions. Thus they suggest at least a postponement of the teaching of more advanced academic literacies until the ‘basic’ academic skills have been acquired (this appears to be an adaptation of Cummins’s (1981) view that higher level CALP skills require a higher level of English proficiency). In addition, since much of the “essayist literacy” (Lillis and Turner 2001) expected in tertiary institutions is not valued in the students’ societies, they will have little motivation or opportunity to practice it after leaving the tertiary institution. Thus they suggest that students are rather given the tools (atomized skills like vocabulary and grammar) necessary to understand texts and they should focus on the acquisition of content.

This view described above, however, falls into the “study skills” view of academic literacy and once again suggests fallaciously that the text is “autonomous” and denies students access

to powerful forms of expression. Additionally, from Gee's (2002) perspective, since Discourse is related to identity, and university literacy is the way of functioning within academic Discourses, then students have to become another person, acquire another identity to be able to function in academic contexts at high levels. It is thus important for the teacher/ lecturer to unpack the identity that they will be assuming and to affirm the students' own identities. A fearful avoidance of the socializing aspects of academia which focuses merely on grammar or vocabulary will necessarily result in colonized students.

Thus English teachers at tertiary institutions face a dilemma: if they enforce the Discourse(s) of the academy, they contribute to its dominance and the marginalization of the students' culture. However, if they deny students access, they "perpetuate their marginalization in a society that continues to recognize the value and importance of these forms" (Janks 2003). Instead, since "literacy comes wrapped up" a number of cultural factors like "attitudes, values, norms and beliefs" (Gee 2002: 34-38), the teacher/ lecturer should use cultural conflicts in culture as a discussion point in the classroom, focusing the students' attention on differences and engaging with their "existing views of knowledge" (Gee 2002: 87 – 138). This does not require a high level of proficiency in English and the sooner the Discourse(s) of the academy are exposed to the student, the sooner he/ she will be able to "mushfake" according to the expectations of the academy (Gee 2002), yet will be in the position to "revise and criticize their school and university learning" while they are in the "process of experiencing it" (Kramer-Dahl 2001).

The Issue of Standards and Literacies

In recent years there has been an international phenomenon of complaints regarding the declining standards of students' literacy and communication skills at higher education institutions. On the one hand, academics in countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, USA and Canada complain that the capitalization of universities, and government cuts in

spending on these institutions, has led to institutions in those countries increasingly wooing foreign fee-paying students (Moodie 1988; Tudiver 1999; Winter & Sarros 2000; Devos 2003). On the other hand, the same institutions have felt pressure to take in an increasing number of school leavers from their own country and to broaden access to tertiary education from an elite towards “universal higher education” (Reddy 1998; Taylor 1998). In addition, there has been pressure to include more ethnic minorities and diverse students in the cohort, including those that “either educationally or socio-economically disadvantaged” (Higher Education Council 1992: 45). Allegations of a decline in standards have been conflated with the presence of these “new” international and “disadvantaged” students at tertiary institutions. Also, the commercial imperative for universities to retain foreign students because of the additional income they generate and to pass students more students in general because of funding tied to graduating students (Milne 2001) has resulted in a cynical “they pay so they pass” attitude towards standards (Pearce & Borland, 1997: 254). The “new” students are also referred as “under-prepared and underskilled” in what Noone and Cartwright (1997: 233) call a “discourse of deficit” and their tertiary literacy levels are frequently under attack (Jackson 1995). Even programmes designed to assist these students are blamed for the decline in academic work, although researchers in developmental education like Boylan (2001) and Barefoot (2000) show that rather than setting the standards (the role of faculties and admissions offices), developmental programmes help students to achieve the standards.

In South Africa, where the inequalities of Apartheid distorted student access to tertiary education, the imperative to include students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds is even stronger, especially since in 1998 70% of whites had access to tertiary education, but only 12% of blacks had the same access (Reddy 1998). Yet, issues of academic standards have been of concern in South Africa since the 1980s at the time when a limited number of black students were attending liberal English speaking universities and these universities attempted to provide the students with “academic support programmes” aimed at giving these students “equal opportunities” and “access” to the hegemonic discourses of the academy (Boughey 2005). The “discourse of deficit” became increasingly redundant as more and more black South Africans entered previously white institutions and academics realized that

“‘underpreparedness’ would eventually be a majority phenomenon”. Thus, there was a greater realization that literacy practices are not neutral events and that greater attention should be paid to changing the institutions themselves, rather than focusing on the “deficiencies” of individuals or groups of students.

In the Gulf, the concept of “universal higher education” has been accepted practice and access to all levels of education is viewed as a “right rather than a privilege” (Bahgat 1999). In the Gulf country of my study, student numbers have increased four-fold in the last ten years and currently over 95% of all female school leavers and 73% of male school leavers attend higher education institutions (Nicks-McCaleb 2005), yet the state higher education budget has been frozen for the past five years (Nicks-McCaleb 2005). Thus, despite a previous focus on catering to the needs of “under-prepared students” (Bielenberg & Khanbashi 2005), financial pressures have had the opposite effect on policies in Gulf to those in Western countries. Instead of admitting more students, *GU* intends to admit fewer “more able” students to the 2006/2007 cohort (Nahayan 2006).

Likewise, instead of a lowering of ‘standards’ as is bemoaned in other countries, they are in the process of implementing stricter admissions requirements and higher standards within the university faculties at *GU* (Nahayan 2006). In addition, there is an expectation that this increase in standards will remove the need for ‘remedial programmes’ at the University. This view does not examine the fact that like in South Africa, the majority of students come from backgrounds with little or no exposure to academic discourse (Bielenburg 2004) and does not critically examine the fact that “only certain types of text (and discourse) have currency and prominence within an institution” (Kress (1985) cited in James (1997)) and that in this case the Discourse(s) of the institution (with its predominantly foreign lecturers with educated backgrounds) is far removed from the students’ Primary Discourse(s). These new ‘standards’ also do not take into consideration the diversity of standards and expectations of the different faculties and even the variety of expectations of different lecturers of different nationalities and cultural and educational backgrounds. The Discourse of ‘remedial programmes’ can also

be contrasted with the Discourse of ‘developmental programmes’ which has gained currency within the University Foundation programme. Thus, as in the case of Australia, the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, South Africa and many others, issues of ‘standards’ should be examined in terms of the “particular historical, economic, cultural, social and political circumstances and power relations rather than through any characteristic of the student” (Noone & Cartwright 1997: 235 – 236).

If, as Gee (2002) suggests, teachers/ lecturers should produce “resistant, mushfaking” students, then the academy requires a critical examination of the ideologies that underpin their ‘standards’ or these and all non-traditional students will always be categorized as ‘deficient’ and academics will always feel threatened by institutional imperatives to admit, pass them - or, in the case of *GU*, suddenly start to fail them according to ill-defined notions of ‘standards’.

Assessing Literacies

As discussed above, standards are difficult to define thus it is often even more difficult to measure or assess students’ development of academic literacies (Baskin, Barker *et al.* 1997). In this research, for example, when I attempt to follow the “study skills” perspective of academic literacy by quantitatively measuring Fluency, Accuracy, Lexical Complexity and Grammatical Complexity in student writing, I am yet unable to get a true reflection quantitatively because this measuring does not give an indication of the internalization of the skills, the meaning of the text and voice and ownership in the writing. The “study skills” part of my research focuses only on vocabulary and ‘correctness’ and does not take into consideration those cognitive processes which are also an integral part of literacy (Bachman 1990). In addition, “scales and measures miss the fact that there is a distinction between literate capacities and literate habits” (Boiarsky 2003: 95). Thus skills displayed in one form of assessment are meaningless unless they are constantly activated and developed.

Another problem with assessment is that students perform unequally in the different literacies and do not always display their competency - for example, verbally “weak” students do not necessarily have weak written skills (Pearce & Borland 1997: 252). Rosie Wickert (1989) states that there is “no single measure” to ascertain whether someone is literate or not. However, Baskin *et al* (1997: 68 – 69) suggest that the only way to attempt to quantify and measure literacy skills is if we “critically interrogate the cultural markers of our own academic literacy” and use these to judge if the students are academically literate or not. This is of course problematic if, as in the case of most EAL teachers, they are not specialists in their students’ disciplines. This is why close contact between EAL teacher and faculty is necessary. Teachers thus examine the students’ organizational knowledge including grammatical and text organization, their pragmatic knowledge, including how they use the language to construct meaning and finally their discourse knowledge of how language reflects and is related to generic conventions to measure their students’ developing literacy, but also how they express their own voice and switch practices in their attempt to construct meaning. It is not possible to measure these practices in a singular testing event rather, the students’ practices and “literate habits” need to be observed over a period of time in a number of different situations.

Despite these difficulties, universities in Gulf countries, along with their counterparts all over the world, attempt to quantify literacy based on all encompassing tests such as the National Benchmark Test planned for South Africa in 2009 (HESA 2005). My concern is that these tests which are used both as benchmarks for existing qualifications and as entrance tests for students do not take all aspects of literacy into consideration nor do they acknowledge the evolving, socializing nature of literacy practices.

Student versus Lecturers’ Views of Student Literacy Problems

Since literacy/ literacies are difficult to measure, there is often a mismatch between what lecturers and students report are problematic literacy areas. Pearce and Borland (1997: 252 – 253) in their comprehensive study of students and lecturers’ opinions of content teaching within a faculty report that students are primarily concerned with the quantity and difficulty of texts and the lack of time in formal assessments, whereas lecturers are concerned that English second language students do not read enough, are not familiar with the course structure, require explicit instructions since they are unable to “pick things up on the grapevine”, make too many errors in work submitted for assessment and don’t read the questions properly. In addition, lecturers complained of a lack of precise language in laboratory reports and lack of critical analysis in essays and many commented upon the problem of “plagiarism”. Interestingly, the lecturers appear to designate these literacy issues as language issues.

Pearce and Borland further report that the issue of plagiarism can be problematic for students. This is because the exact definition of “plagiarism” and “collusion” within the academy is often “inconsistent and inadequately specified” (1997: 252 – 253). Not only does the issue of plagiarism relate to the relationship between students and academic authority which varies from culture to culture, but also different faculties and different lecturers within faculties permit varying levels of “collusion”. For example, some lecturers may permit students to work together on research and produce slightly different reports on that research, while others may label such activity as blatant collusion and/or plagiarism.

The mismatch between student and lecturers’ perceptions of student problems as well as the seemingly “arbitrary” and “confusing” definitions of plagiarism, suggest once again that tertiary institutions require explicit teaching methods in order to cater to the needs of especially non-English speaking and non-traditional students. In addition, while students are concerned chiefly with reading difficulties, lecturers appear to be more focused on their writing outcomes. Perhaps courses need to address the students’ concerns about the volume of reading, providing them with the tools to assimilate the vast quantities of materials required by the coursework as well as the ability to express the content using the appropriate discourse.

Issues surrounding the acquisition of tertiary literacy by non-traditional students (including English second language learners, foreign students and students from underprivileged backgrounds and/or working class backgrounds) are often addressed in terms of the Discourse of ‘Developmental Education’. This concept includes issues of tertiary literacy and culture, teaching methods, so-called critical literacy, academic voice and ownership as well as the issues of standards and assessment.

Developmental Education

The National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) gives the following definition of Developmental Education:

Developmental Education is a field of practice and research within higher education with a theoretical foundation in developmental psychology and learning theory. It promotes the cognitive and affective growth of all postsecondary learners, at all levels of the learning continuum. Developmental education is sensitive and responsive to individual differences and special needs among learners. Developmental education programmes and services commonly address academic preparedness, diagnostic assessment and placement, development of general and discipline-specific learning strategies, and affective barriers to learning.

NADE (Lundell & Higbee 2001)

This definition of developmental education has evolved from a number of previous practices concerned with providing academic support to “underprepared students” and has only recently taken a “social turn” and focussed holistically on students’ social as well as educational needs within the tertiary context. This change probably occurred, as suggested by Arendale (2005) because of increased participation of all categories of non-traditional students (poor, working class, mature students, EAL students etcetera), the awareness that they could soon be in the

majority, and an increased desire of students to understand the expectations of their fields. Even more recently, a focus on diversity of students' and diversity of practices has evolved at some institutions. The development of these Discourses of developmental education will be discussed below.

The History of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education

The concept or Discourse of 'Developmental Education' is specifically North American, while in most other parts of the world broader terms like 'Academic Development' and 'Learning Assistance' are used. In this section, I will focus specifically on 'Developmental Education' since this is the Discourse within which the *GU* foundation programme has been constructed.

Boylan (1997; 2001) suggests that learning assistance has always been a part of university/college life in the USA since there have always been "underprepared" students at these institutions. He, for example, shows how early admission requirements included a basic literacy in Latin and Greek in addition to English and thus most students required tutoring prior to attending university. He further shows that by 1889 80% of American colleges and universities had college preparatory programmes to assist "underprepared students" who constituted over half of the student cohort.

Informal tutoring and assistance to students were no doubt part of the programme in most Anglophile countries; however, unlike the USA, an awareness of the need for specific learning assistance to help students meet the demand of tertiary education did not truly manifest itself until the 1980s and the beginning of reforms demanding "universal tertiary education" in countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. "Corporate reforms" in education, including a lowering of government *per capita* expenditure on tertiary education also lead to the active recruitment of foreign students to make up the financial deficit. In

Australia, for example, the Dawkins reforms in education lead to a broader spectrum of Australians entering university as well as an increase in foreign fee-paying students and, consequently, an increase in the demand for programmes to assist them to meet the expectations of the academy (Milne 2001).

This change in the number and composition of students admitted to colleges and universities in Anglophile countries coincided with the relaxation of Apartheid policies at South African universities where limited numbers of black students were admitted to English-medium universities (Boughey 2005). The admission of these ‘new’ students in South Africa, like in the other countries mentioned, did not, however, change the expectations of the academy or the course structure which continued to follow the model “designed for a population of white, middle or upper-class males who constituted the vast majority of college students until the last two decades of this century” (Barefoot 2000: 3). In fact, in attempting to assist the “new” students, South African academics followed the individual “deficit” or “remediation” policy used in other Anglophile countries, and described student difficulties as arising out of problems of using English as a second language and sometimes the deprivation of their background (Boughey 2005).

In this “Academic Support phase” there is no questioning of the ‘rightness’ of academic practices within these institutions rather the focus is on providing additional programmes specifically for these non-traditional students in the form of “practical English courses”, extra tutorials, bridging or foundation courses, mentoring and student counseling (Boughey 2005). Although Boughey refers to this view as the “Academic Support phase”, she explains that many of the assumptions and practices underlying this view are still prevalent in a number of institutions and that the different “phases” of academic development often occur simultaneously (Boughey 2005, McKenna 2004). This is also the case in the USA, where “learning skills centres, full blown study skills courses, summer “bridge” programmes”, tutorials still serve “developmental” or “at risk students” as part of more comprehensive “developmental programmes” (Barefoot 2000: 8). These attempts in “academic support” could

be said to subscribe to the “study skills” view of academic literacy as well as the “academic socialization view” (Lea & Street 1998) since they attempt to teach the students atomized skills along with the academy’s prescribed ways of thinking and operating. These support programmes, however, are constantly at risk of closure since their “additional” nature makes them vulnerable to budgetary constraints or internal institutional politics, and they are often inadequately staffed (with temporary or poorly-qualified teachers), housed in poor facilities and their purpose is often ill defined (Barefoot 2000; Boylan 2001; Boylan 1997; Boughey 2005; Lundell 1999).

This distrust and misunderstanding of academic support programmes is reflected in the already mentioned desire by the previous *Gulf University* Chancellor to remove “remedial programmes” at the university. What this view does not consider is that, in the Gulf, like the USA, they would not be “able to enroll enough fully prepared students to keep their doors open or their faculty gainfully employed” if the 40% or more students who currently require academic support were no longer assisted and there would be even more complaints from the faculty about students’ levels of literacy (Boylan 2001: 5). In addition, Boylan (2001) points out the slow pace of school reform which, in the USA, despite “heroic efforts” and large amounts of funding has failed to significantly improve the calibre of students entering higher education possibly because of social and class inequalities. Thus it is unlikely that since school reforms in the Gulf were implemented (a mere two or three years ago), a significant improvement in the students’ levels of literacy will have been achieved.

The concept of ‘Developmental Education’

The concept of Developmental Education in the USA has evolved to mean more than just the aforementioned academic support programmes and now focuses on the tertiary literacy needs and academic socialization of all students with an interdisciplinary range of approaches and student services (Payne & Lyman 1996; Lundell & Higbee 2001). It is no longer a separate

adjunct programme for certain groups of students, but an integral part of the first year experience of students at community colleges and four-year colleges in the USA (Lundell & Collins 1999; Barefoot 2000), although there is a move in some states in the USA and in Canada to remove developmental programmes entirely to community colleges which is strongly resisted by proponents of equity (Boylan 2001; Brante, 2001; Skolnik 2004).

This “social” turn has resulted in a focus on the following objectives:

- increasing student-to student interaction
- increasing faculty-to-student interaction, especially out of class
- increasing student involvement and time on campus
- linking the curriculum and the co curriculum
- increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement; and
- assisting students who have insufficient academic preparation for college.

(Barefoot 2000: 4)

The assisting of “underprepared students” has thus moved from its central position as issues involved in all students’ socialization into the university “community of practice” to replace the Discourse(s) of “deficit” and “deprivation” implied by “underpreparedness”.

One criticism of developmental education is that, although it includes a more holistic focus on both cognitive and affective development of students and promotes an interdisciplinary range of approaches (Lundell & Collins 1999), it still uncritically accepts that the practices of the academy are correct ones and students are required to adapt to these practices. From a Discourse of “deficit”, there has been a movement amongst developmental practitioners towards describing their practice as bringing something “into being as if for the first time” (Tomlinson 1989: 7). But this description is in itself problematic since it assumes that “what is already “in being” is deficient” and that the student is viewed as “unfit” until he/she has been socialized. Thus, many of the assumptions underlying the concept of developmental education can be criticized in the same way as the “academic socialization” perspective on student

writing since, although rhetorically developmental education is meant to assist non-traditional students, its focus still remains on individual “deficit” and “remediation”, albeit into an academic community rather than just focusing on specific skills.

Another criticism of developmental education in the USA is its focus on practical issues and its under-theorized curricular practice (Lundell & Collins 1999). For example, the Guidelines for Evaluating the First Year Experience (2001) put out by the National Resource Centre for the Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition, focuses almost entirely on the logistics of staffing, curriculum, support networks for students, co-curricular activities and practical assistance for sub-groups of the student population, along with social problems that students might experience, such as problem drinking and racism. In addition, these programmes seem to focus almost entirely on the “first-year experience”.

The focus on the first-year experience in developmental education can be contrasted with the “Academic Development phase” in South Africa which meant that the university was seen as “a community of practice” into which the students needed to be apprenticed as an end-goal of tertiary education rather than prior to starting their courses (Boughey 2005). Thus academic development was “infused” as part of the mainstream university curriculum throughout a degree course. In practical terms an “infused approach” meant that “academic literacy” courses rather than English courses were given, support was given in the form of tutorials, writing centres, educational development officers, residence assistants and resources. Also, mainstream staff members as well as students were involved in decision making and evaluation of programmes.

As mentioned in the context chapter of this research, the *Gulf University* foundation programme intends to become the “Premier Developmental Education Programme” in the Gulf region and its acceptance of the Discourse of Developmental Education as defined in much of the North American literature has resulted in it measuring itself against many of the

guidelines mentioned in the National Resource Centre for The First Year Experience and Students in Transition documentation. Thus, for example, in terms of *formal curriculum* they have attempted to create a curriculum that includes “academic experience shared by and common to all first-year students” (this is also a component of the Humanities Faculty where, in addition to the general foundation courses, students are also taught foundation courses within the faculty), language across the curriculum and integrated technology skills (National Resource Centre for Students in Transition 2001; Bielenberg 2005; Caldwell 2005; Gillway 2005).

In terms of *faculty*, well-qualified teachers/ lecturers are hired for the *GU* foundation courses, although their working conditions and status are not equal to those of faculty lecturers. There is *academic advising* and tutorial assistance in the form of a peer tutorial centre, teacher-run tutorial services and academic advisors (Caldwell 2005). Unfortunately, these services are not necessarily continued within all the faculties. There is also assistance for diverse student groups, although the vast majority of students at *Gulf University* are nationals. International students as well as blind and hearing-impaired students have special foundation programme services which are extended to students in the faculties (Caldwell 2005). There are *multiple placement procedures* as well as a recent focus on *administration and leadership* at the institution (National Resource Centre for Students in Transition 2001) following the appointment of a director specifically responsible for Student Services within the foundation programme (Caldwell 2005). The development of *co-curricular activities*, *orientation procedures* and improvement of the facilities and ethos of the *hostels*, including the opening of a hostel designated specifically for first-year students has increased retention, motivation and attendance (all goals of developmental education programmes) amongst *GU* foundation course students (Caldwell 2005).

However, providing opportunities for a female student to play football or have the use of computer facilities at her hostel, although increasing her motivation for studying and making her feel more part of the university community, will not necessarily improve her ability to

negotiate the “tribes and territories of academia”(Becher 1989). In addition, the concentration on the first year experience, rather than the “infused” approach, results in the students being apprenticed into a general academic environment which bears little or no relation to the true specific environment they are exposed to in the faculties.

Institutional Development

Boughey (2005) identifies a third “phase” of academic support practices in South Africa - namely, the “institutional development phase”, where the focus is on “best practices” and, although support structures common to the “academic support” or “Academic development” phases are still found, they are part of a wider institutional focus on “quality”. In this model, rather like the “academic literacies” approach, the focus is on situated literacy thus it is important for the neophytes to be fully involved in their mainstream course in addition to receiving support and development. Boughey describes two ways of integrating mainstream and developmental courses: the “augmented course”, where normal tuition hours are increased and support and development forms part of the course in order to ensure teaching in context, and “half courses” in which courses are run over a longer period of time with more opportunities for support and development (Boughey 2006). This focus on the institution as a whole takes the “infused” concept to another level and links with the need for institution-wide literacy policies already discussed in this chapter.

Within the Developmental Education Discourse as widely practiced in the USA and within the *Gulf University* foundation programme at the time of this research, the focus appears to be on “linear, stage-oriented developmental schemes” (Lundell & Collins 1999: 9) focusing on the first-year experience, after which the students are expected to be fully apprenticed into the academic environment. The specific faculty-related literacy and socialization needs of the students are addressed to a greater or lesser extent by the generic ESP1 course, ESP2 and ESP3 courses in a few faculties and a variety of initiatives within individual faculties.

However, there appears to be no coordinated approach towards addressing the “more complicated picture of students’ backgrounds” and the role the diverse “institutional contexts play” in interactions between the vast majority of *GU* students who come from backgrounds with little exposure to Western academic conventions and these contexts. Gee refers to these students as “authentic beginners” (1999: 1) or “people who have come to learning sites of any sort without the sorts of early preparation, pre-alignment in terms of cultural values, and sociocultural resources that more advantaged learners at those sites have” and suggests that they require special assistance in acquiring this assembly of specialized Discourses throughout their university/ college careers. This view is also repeated by Lundell and Collins (1999). At the time of writing, however, major institutional reforms (like the introduction of general courses into the Humanities and Education Faculties along with the students’ majors) are in progress at *Gulf University*.

There is, however, also a need for a culturally based examination of student needs and an analysis of the pedagogical implications of these needs (Lundell & Collins 1999). Just as ‘Greek life’ and programmes regarding alcohol abuse and sexually transmitted diseases (National Resource Centre for Students in Transition 2001) may be deemed culturally inappropriate within the Muslim all-female environment at *Gulf University* women’s campus, so other aspects of academic socialization such as “interactional pedagogy” or even some co-curricular activities may appear inappropriate to these students.

Theorizing Developmental Education

A re-examination of the implications of developmental education reveals that if practitioners wish to truly support and develop students, they need to take the Primary Discourses of those students into account and create an environment within which they can comfortably acquire the multiple Secondary Discourses required by the different disciplines. In this way,

Secondary Discourses, like additional languages, can be acquired additively rather than subtractively (Cummins 2000).

Lundell and Collins (1999) following Gee's (1999) theory of Discourse suggest that the following features are necessary to create a successful Developmental Programme in tertiary education:

- **New Discourses in higher education must be organized in ways that will not promote conflict with their Primary and other extant Discourses.** Thus we allow “them to actively build on what they already know and feel as a bridge to acquisition of a new Discourse” (Gee 1999). References to ‘remedial programmes’ and a focus on student ‘deficit’ undermine their Primary Discourse and create resistance to the Secondary Discourse. Creating a bridge between the Primary and Secondary Discourses also enables students to switch practices as is required in the “academic literacies” perspective of literacy.
- **“Situated Practice” is the most effective way to ensure that “authentic beginners” or “latecomers” learn.** Thus time is needed within the specific context for neophytes to practice the skills and Discourses required. Short courses in generic academic preparation or language courses are not sufficient.
- **Developmental students need to acquire higher and lower skills simultaneously in the context of “meaningful practice”.** The principle of “automaticity” (Gee 1998:16) requires that the student engages in repetition of lower-order skills while the higher-order skills which provide meaningful context are also practiced. This suggests engagement with the mainstream curriculum rather than isolated preparatory/ foundation skills courses.
- **The principle of “functionality” requires that the student believes that she will be able to function within the Secondary Discourse(s) and will obtain something of value from it.** Thus, experience within the Discourse, although with much help of “mushfake Discourse” is part of the process of acquiring the Discourse (Gee 1998: 17). Thus developmental programmes should not be isolated from the tertiary institutions they serve.
- **“Scaffolding”, in which teachers/ lecturers provide explicit advice, modeling and supplemental instruction is essential to ensure that students develop the various academic literacies.**
- **“Meta-awareness” of prior knowledge is related to the “learning principle” since the acquisition of new Discourses is optimised if it assists learners in understanding what they already know in the Primary Discourse.** They also need to learn “critical framing” (Gee 1999) of competing Discourses in order to become aware of the limits and strengths of both the old and new Discourses and “switch practices “ when appropriate.

- **“Transformed practice” is finally needed to assist the “authentic beginners” or “latecomers” to critique and resist the Discourses so that they can be empowered within them and truly take their place as members of the academic community.**

A more theoretised approach towards Developmental Education acknowledges the value of previous useful characteristics of developmental programmes such as learning assistance, personal and academic counselling, academic advisement and remediation and support in coursework (National Resource Centre for Students in Transition 2001), but it also emphasizes the need to empower students within the specific Discourses of their faculties and subjects throughout their experience in tertiary education.

As previously mentioned, at the time of writing *GU* tends to focus on developmental education in the context of a first year or “University 101” course modelled on courses such as the one at the University of South Carolina (Townsend 1994). This first year course takes place within the foundation programme where students are taught English, Mathematics and Information Technology as well as an Arabic Study Skills course. The work of the foundation programme also extends into all faculties in the form of the English for Special Purposes Academic Writing Course and into some faculties in the form of ESP2 and ESP3 courses, as well as other foundation courses specific to certain faculties. This “University 101” course has been adapted since 2003 to meet a number of ideals; which are commonly referred to in the literature as important for students within a successful developmental programme.

I have related these ideals as expressed in the section on “Goals, Guidelines and Content” of the *GU* document entitled “Designing a Developmental First-Year Programme” (Bielenburg 2004) to the perceptions of academic literacy as described by Lea and Street (1998) in Figure 6 below, since my student respondents’ acquisition of academic literacies takes place within the Discourse of Developmental Education in the University 101 course and ESP and their experiences within the Faculty of Humanities. Some of the points are repeated since they relate to more than one view of academic literacy, just with a different focus since, for

example, certain “skills” in the “study skills” perspective become “practices” when viewed from a narrow “academic socialization” perspective because they arise from values in attitudes. In the same way, “practices” are seen as arising from multiple contested Discourses from the “academic literacies” perspective as opposed to arising from a singular homogenous academic culture as is presumed in the narrow academic socialization perspective (1998).

Surface skills	Academic socialization	Academic Literacies
• Develop a set of study skills • Use helping resources (practical skills) • Enhance reading comprehension • Become computer literate and take part in activities involving the e-mail and the internet.	• Adjust positively and assimilate into the university environment • Develop a set of adaptive study/ coping/ logical problem solving skills • Improve attitudes towards the learning/ teaching process and towards faculty members who are responsible for providing this process • Learn to understand professors’ teaching and presentation styles • Become involved in the total life of the university • Discover a mentor on campus • Learn about <i>GU</i>, its history, purposes, organization, rules and regulations, people, services, resources, and opportunities for student development. • Use helping resources (e.g. library) • Increase student commitment to a particular major and academic department	• Learn to balance freedom with a sense of responsibility = enhancing self-knowledge and self-confidence • Develop a set of critical thinking/ success skills • Make friends and develop a support group • Improve relations with faculty members • Reduce anxiety about written and oral communication • Apply the knowledge gained in other first-year courses (switching practices). • Develop personal goals for careers and academic majors and master the processes/ means of achieving these goals • Gain additional training/ practice/ knowledge in decision making/ goal setting/ planning/ time management and group/ team work. • Make career decisions • Develop respect for cultural diversity (the

	• Develop respect for cultural diversity • Develop academic integrity • Develop good citizenship and involvement	diversity of students even from different Emirates and difficulty of students adjusting) • Develop academic integrity • Develop good citizenship and involvement

Figure 6: Perspectives of Literacy and Developmental Issues at GU adapted from Bielenberg (2004)

Difficulties in Articulating the Developmental Education Vision

As well as the need for a theoretical analysis of the concept of developmental education and the fact that the result of this lack of clarity is the vulnerability of developmental programmes to the vagaries of political and financial decisions by administrators (Lundell & Collins 1999) which the *GU* foundation programme shares in common with developmental and student assistance programmes worldwide, the *GU* programme faces some unique challenges.

While developmental programmes in the USA are judged primarily on the effects on student retention, there is little or no focus on this aspect within *GU*. Rather the programme is often seen as a means to “weed out” the weaker students in order to redirect financial resources to “more able” students (Nahayan 2005). The programme quality is judged by feedback from benchmark examinations, faculty and industry rather than student retention.

A detailed evaluation of the programme also becomes difficult since it is in a constant state of flux with a rapid turnover of management due to mainly ex-patriate staff on short contracts. It is also difficult to build commitment to the vision of the programme (Nahayan 1997; National Resource Centre for Students in Transition 2001) despite frequent professional development

sessions, owing to the constant staff changes as well as a frequent change in focus. Therefore, within the programme and university, there are students complying with a variety of standards, depending on their year of entry to the institution. For example, students entering the university after 2003 require an IELTS 4.5 or TOEFL 450, but there is no such requirement for students before that year. There are also numerous other inequalities regarding GPA requirements and course requirements, such as the foundation course which is only a requirement for post-2003 students, and the use of English as a medium of instruction in the Humanities College, which only pertains to post-2003 students. The changes in entrance requirements from September 2006 are likely to result in further inequalities and differences in the level of students within classes. Nicks-McCaleb (2005: 328) claims that educational issues in the UAE are frequently addressed “in isolation and with a fragmented approach, rather than holistically”, which makes the realization of many of the goals of developmental education difficult to achieve and changes made to curricula and co-curricula activities are difficult to judge since, as Brian Caldwell argues, “transformation [in education] means change that is significant, systematic and sustained” (Caldwell 2003).

The vision of a developmental programme should be relevant to the culture, history and values of the students it serves (Boylan 1997; Barefoot 2000; Nahayan 2005). The *GU* core values relate to this characteristic in the statement “*GU* students, faculty and staff are proud of their heritage and culture. While they work hard to catch up with developments in the world they preserve their heritage” (Nahayan 1997); however, how this heritage and culture is valued in practice is not outlined clearly. The vast majority of teaching staff are ex-patriate and programmes appear to be built primarily on Western models, according to Western Discourses which are “highly valued, though not always popular” (Nicks-McCaleb 2005: 328). Nicks-McCaleb also suggests that the latest ideas and technology are often “embraced” uncritically and then abandoned “just as quickly and easily in favour of the next new fad or trend”. Thus, an examination of the programmes and their impact on or compatibility with the students’ Primary Discourse(s) can never be properly examined owing to this state of change. This is reflected in my research, which is an attempt to probe the phenomenon of specific students’

acquisition of university literacy/literacies at particular points during their period of study within the *Gulf University* foundation programme and ESP course, but cannot give a full picture of the phenomena at this institution due to its ever-changing face.

The targeting of non-traditional students is especially pertinent to the *Gulf University* Developmental Programme, since the majority of students (and all of my respondents) are female from non-academic backgrounds (Bielenberg 2005). However, there is an inequality in the provision of facilities in order to “increase the amount of time students spend on campus” and in “activities sanctioned by the institution”. For example, male students at *GU* have access to a well-equipped sport centre, playing fields and stadium for sport facilities, while female students have to make do with one concrete playing field. In addition, university rules at the time of this research prevent female students from leaving the campus without the permission of their male guardians (*GU Hostels Rules* 2006) and thus co-curricular activities off campus are difficult to organize, although efforts have been made to introduce in-house activities such as chess, games and a number of other “clubs”. Although women are in the majority, problems that women in particular suffer from are not specifically addressed by the university. For example, there is no provision for childcare at the university many students who are also mothers spend the academic week away from their children in the university hostel and only return on the weekends and attendance regulations stipulate that pregnant students receive only a month’s maternity leave. This makes academic success particularly challenging for the large number of married female students. These students rely on the sympathy of individual administrative and academic personnel for the scheduling of classes to suit their childcare arrangements as there is no policy to assist them.

The introduction of the first-year hostels (Caldwell 2005) fulfils the brief that developmental programmes should provide “targeted residential programmes”, although this further isolates

first-year students from the mainstream university which is deemed inappropriate by Lundell and Collins (1999).

Despite these major differences to developmental education programmes in the USA, *GU* grapples with a number of difficulties which it shares in common with programmes in that country. Like in the USA, there has been little success in “creating alliances with high schools and middle schools that would yield more college-bound students who are better prepared for the academic and social demands of higher education” (Barefoot, 2000). Since the majority of national students entering the university fall into the “developmental student” category and reform in education is notoriously slow (Boylan 2001), it is unlikely that there will be significant changes in the near future, although partnership programmes between the university and schools focussing on the entrance examination and curriculum issues have been set up (Gulf News Reporter 2005). The *GU* developmental programme in common with developmental programmes in the USA, is housed in marginal facilities (temporary classrooms on the women’s campus) and it suffers from problems related to low expectations (Barefoot, 2000: 9), especially with the pre-2003 students who are allowed to repeat *ad infinitum*.

Most of these measures for the success of a developmental programme focus on practical considerations, but do not address the true focus of a developmental programme - namely, the integration and empowerment of students within the multiple academic environments of the academy. While acknowledging essential differences in the specific disciplines and their Discourses within the academy, there is still a need for a coordinated institutional effort to focus on those literacies that they have in common and to provide the students with the full range of services required to master both specific and general academic literacies by involving them in situated practice.

Corpora and Challenging “Competence”

In the past twenty years or so, the analysis of large text corpora has become increasingly popular among linguists, applied linguists and ESL/EFL practitioners. ESL/EFL teachers use corpora in the selection of vocabulary items, collocation and collocation for their students to learn by examining large bodies of text spoken and written by native speakers like the *British National Corpus*, *American National Corpus*, *Australian Corpus of English* and others or corpora of academic English like the *Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* or the *British Academic Spoken English Corpus (BASE)*. Students are presented with multiple examples of a vocabulary item/items with the “node word/ phrase” in the centre of the line and seven or eight words on either side of the node word. They are then encouraged to look for reoccurring grammatical patterns (collocation) and tendencies of words to combine with other words (collocation). Thurstun and Candlin’s student workbook *Exploring Academic English* (1997) and the Gulf University foundation programme Concordance Website (UGRU 2006) are prime examples of this kind of material.

Linguists and applied linguists use the same corpora to detail the vocabulary, grammar, discourse and pragmatics of native speakers (Biber, Conrad *et al.* 1998; Stubbs 2001). This detailed description of the discourses of native speakers and academics can be useful as part of a “language awareness” programme as long as the context(s) from which the discourse(s) arose are detailed. However, the common classroom uses of corpora and concordancing can be seen as problematic from the “academic literacies” perspective, since at worst it can result in a mechanistic repetition of the pattern derived from the “model”, while at best it apprentices and colonizes students by teaching them the vocabulary valued by native speakers and/ or the academy. What is lacking in most cases; however, is any critical evaluation of the appropriateness or otherwise of the vocabulary, collocation and collocation used by native speakers and/ or the academy for non-native speakers and any awareness of the context of the non-native speakers. It is also assumed that since the material is derived from native speakers or academics, it is necessarily appropriate and offers the students “authentic language” which

they should emulate (as opposed to the “inauthentic” language of most English textbooks (O’Keeffe & Farr 2003). In addition, Widdowson (1998) warns that just because corpus data is “real”, it does not necessarily mean that it will bring “reality” into the classroom. Since this language is often decontextualised (reduced to a mere seven or eight words or more on either side of the node), it should not necessarily be used as a prescription for student language.

Another use of corpora in linguistics and applied linguistics as noted by Cobb (2003: 1) includes the comparison of native speaker corpora with non-native speaker learner corpora with the aim of putting “together a description of the stages learners go through as they move toward NS (native speaker) competence in these same areas”. The terms used to describe the value of student corpora reflects what Boughey (2000; 2002) refers to as a “discourse of deficit”. The native speaker or academic corpus reflects the ‘ideal’ and the sole purpose of describing student corpora lies in a description of their “deficit” or level of “competence” on their path to achieving this ‘ideal’.

In this study, although I first put on the lens of a “study skills” Discourse and compare the students’ use of vocabulary and collocation to the use of vocabulary items and collocation in a materials corpus and the British National Corpus and then describe the features, my focus is not on the “deficit” of the students, rather the effect or otherwise of the materials on them. I also compare the corpora to each other and in each case highlight the Discourses from which they arose, possible “causes” for the features and eliminate “alternatives” (Bhaskar 1998). I also examine the “academic socialization” involved in each of the corpora and how it relates to the specific genres taught and notions of “competence” and I seek for signs that the language has become a “resource” rather than just an instrument, that is, it provides a number of options from which the student can select, rather than just prescribing pre-formulated meaning. In this process, I attempt to uncover some of the deficiencies of each corpus as well as a few of the “gaps” and “silences” related to corpus linguistics in general (Mazzei 2003).

The British National Corpus and the Academic Word List and General Service List

I selected the updated *General Service List* created by John Bauman and Brent Culligan in 1995 (Bauman and Culligan 1995) and the Academic Word List by Averil Coxhead (2000) for comparison with the *British National Corpus* since the first “performance outcome” for each level of the *GU* foundation programme curriculum states that students are “required to recognize and attempt to use a specified subset of words from the General Service List ...(revised) and the Academic Word List known as vocabulary to learn (VTL)” (UGRU 2005). These lists of words are thus clearly delineated as part of the academic English Discourse at the *GU* foundation programme. I use the *British National Corpus* in this comparison because of its larger scope than other comparable corpora. This large native-speaker corpus is also used because the choice of high-stakes international examinations such as the IELTS at *GU* suggests that students are measured against the standard of an ideal native speaker at this institution, and thus I wanted to measure the students’ acquisition of vocabulary wearing the lens of the Discourses within the university before examining the silences and gaps in these Discourses.

The *General Service List* containing the lexical items deemed to have greatest “general service” in the use of English was first developed by West in 1953 and was based on a 5,000,000 word written corpus. The frequency of a word in the corpus was one of the considerations in the choice of General Service List (GSL) words, but factors like use of the word in different contexts were also considered. However, the fact that the GSL consists of purely written texts negates much of its claims to contain the items of “greatest general service” since spoken language is used more frequently than written language Thorndike (1924), Lorge and Chall (1963) and Nation (1990) also refer to methodological problems involved with the identification of words as opposed to their forms and derivatives. The *General Service List* (GSL) (West 1953) consisted of a set of 2,000 “head words” words each representing a “word family”. This first GSL was converted by Bauman and Culligan (1995)

into a list ranked in frequency order. In order to address methodological problems, they followed the steps outlined below:

- To determine which words to include as forms related to a headword, we used the standard set out in Bauer and Nation (1995). This article uses various criteria to group derived forms into word families. Related words are ranked into levels. Words related by levels 1 to 4 are grouped under a headword on this list, and the frequency numbers are added.
- To determine the frequency of words, we used the frequency numbers from the Brown Corpus (Francis and Kucera, 1982).

(Bauman 1996)

With these criteria, the *Revised General Service List* contains 2284 words. As mentioned above, this list can be viewed as flawed since it uses a written corpus to identify “general” vocabulary, but also because it suggests that the native speaker is the primary arbitrator of the language, which within the context of English (the most widely spoken second-language in the world, with far more second language users than first), becomes problematic following the World Englishes argument which suggests that instead of merely following the standard of American or British English users should be free to develop and use a form of English that reflects their lived-in reality (Kachru 1986; Kachru 1990; Yau 1991; Bhatt 1995; Bhatt 2001) and that alternatively, a “socioculturally neutral”, “simpler” form of global English should be developed (Yau 1991). The use of the General Service List by *GU* thus reflects a Discourse that privileges a particular powerful variety of English.

A further problem with the use of the *Revised General Service List* (RGSL) by the Gulf University Foundation programme and a plethora of other institutions as a definitive list of “general” English vocabulary is that it relies heavily on material collected 50 years ago by West, as well as the Brown Corpus of Standard American English (1961, 1971, 1979, 1982) which consists of only 500 text samples of some 2,000 words each representing 15 categories of American English texts. Although this corpus compiled by W Nelson Francis and Henry

Kucera was revolutionary as the first of the modern machine-readable corpora, it represents only a small part of North American English at a particular period of time and thus cannot be regarded as anything but dated and limited in scope. The Discourse behind the use of this list suggests that North American English represents “all” English. Thus, even the choice of this list of vocabulary can have implications on the way in which English teaching and learning is constituted at an institution. I focus only on vocabulary from item 1001 on this list.

The *Academic Word List* (AWL) was first published in *TESOL Quarterly* in 2000 (Coxhead 2000). It was developed by Averil Coxhead of Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand as a replacement for the *University Word List* by Xue and Nation (1984). Like the aforementioned *University List*, the *Academic Word List* is divided into 11 levels according to the frequency of use, range and uniformity of use across disciplines. In a 1998 unpublished MA dissertation, Coxhead outlines the procedures used to develop the list: A corpus of approximately 3,500,000 words of written academic text was used. This contained texts from four disciplines (arts, commerce, law and science) with each discipline made up of seven subject areas (1998). It is further noted that the “570 word families in the AWL account for approximately 10% of the total words (tokens) in the corpus described above. In contrast, the list covers only 1.4% of the total words in an equally-sized collection of fiction. This difference in coverage indicates that the list is predominantly academic in nature”.

The Academic Word List clearly arises out of the Discourse of English for General Academic Purposes and thus attempts to find commonalities across disciplines rather than seeing writing as embedded in discipline specific discourses (Henning & Rensburg 2002). Once again, the focus on the ‘ideal’, in this case, the academic community, can be viewed as problematic. Written texts are again used as the basis for highlighting general language, albeit general academic language. In addition, researchers in numerous countries have used this as a “definitive” list, yet there is no acknowledgement of the differences in academic communities from country to country or institution to institution, or of the contested nature of academic Discourse. This list could, however, be a useful tool to facilitate ‘language awareness’. In

uncovering the assumed ‘generic’, students can be made aware of exceptions as well as differences between their own Discourses and that of the academy as well as differences within the varied Discourses of the academy, and different institutions and faculties.

The *British National Corpus*, with its huge scope (100 million words across a wide variety of classes, accents and genres) can be described as relatively “representative of British English at the end of the twentieth century” (BNC 2000). However, although 10 million spoken words form part of the corpus, the majority (90 million) is once again based on written text. Like the previous two instruments, the British National Corpus is used worldwide often uncritically within the ESL/ EFL industry as if it represents “all” English as opposed to a particular brand of English at a particular period in time. Again, it is a useful tool for language awareness, but it is frequently used as yet another way of privileging the dominant varieties of English over the “peripheral” varieties (Kazmi 1997; Kazmi 2004) and of selling the need for the ESL/EFL “industry” to “improve” the language of people speaking less powerful varieties.

The trends below were identified in a comparison of the *British National Corpus* and the *Academic Word List* and are depicted in a table provided in *Appendix 1*.

All but eight Academic Word List items occurred at least 1 000 times in the British National Corpus. Three of these items, “economic” (BNC – 0, AWL – subset 1), “global” (BNC 659, AWL – subset 7) and “expansion” (BNC – 3, AWL – subset 5) interest me as they have become popular buzzwords in the media in recent years – “economic” and “global” because of the charge towards ‘globalization’ and opposition to this Discourse, and “expansion” because of opposition of the USA-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. If a British National Corpus were compiled today, I wonder if these words would reflect a higher frequency. The absence of the words “conclusion” (BNC – 0, AWL – subset 2) and “academic” (BNC – 2, AWL – subset 5) reflect the difference between Academic Discourse and the focus on textual structure (conclusion) and metalanguage (the naming of something as “academic”).

In general, the frequency and range of the word, as indicated by its appearance on the different graded sub-lists of the Academic Word List, coincided with its frequency on the British National Corpus.

However, words that had a relatively high frequency in the British National Corpus (above two thousand tokens), but were ranked far lower (on lists 8–11) on the Academic Word List, included some topic-specific vocabulary related to leisure activities such as “team” (BNC-18770 tokens, AWL – subset 9) and “drama” (BNC – 3512, AWL subset 8), vocabulary related to international events such as “military” (BNC - 11302 tokens, AWL – subset 9), “revolution” (BNC – 45699, AWL subset 9) and “nuclear” (BNC 8109, AWL subset 8), some words referring specifically to financial or economic matters such as “currency” (BNC 3505, AWL - subset 8), vocabulary referring to transport like “route” (BNC - 6072, AWL 9) and “vehicle” (BNC - 4171, AWL subset 8), and finally language referring to local politics and local public events such as “panel” (used here in the sense of a committee BNC – 3674, AWL – subset 10) and “exhibition” (BNC – 5382, AWL 8).

There were also some more imprecise adjectives and adverbs such as “eventually” (BNC – 88608, AWL - subset 8), “virtually” (BNC – 43338, AWL – subset 8), “odd” (BNC – 4312, AWL – subset 10) and “enormous” (BNC – 4051, AWL - subset 10), which indicated a far higher frequency on the British National Corpus as opposed to their ranking on the Academic Word List, and compound adjectives like “widespread” (BNC - 3224, AWL – subset 8) and “so-called” (BNC – 2644, AWL – subset 10) also occur frequently in the British National Corpus, while they have a lower ranking on the Academic Word List.

The lower ranking of specific topic-related vocabulary on the Academic Word List relative to the British National Corpus is probably related to two issues. Firstly, the extensive process undertaken by Coxhead to eliminate vocabulary that was not used across the four disciplines and the subject areas within each discipline (Coxhead 1998), and secondly the fact that a great deal of the formal written and spoken “texts” in the *British National Corpus* are extracts from regional and national newspapers, government meetings and radio shows (BNC 2000). While Coxhead’s *Discourse of English for General Academic Purposes* values vocabulary related to specific topics less highly (since topic-specific vocabulary is generally located within individual disciplines within the university academy), the BNC includes more of this type of vocabulary since specific topics like sport, entertainment, transport and politics are of particular interest in the *Discourse of the media*.

On the other hand, the data indicates that certain vocabulary is ranked far higher on the Academic Word List (group 1 – 3) than is indicated by its frequency count on the British National Corpus (below 2000 tokens). These appear to include vocabulary relating to intangible, cerebral processes such as “conceptual” (BNC - 1000, AWL - subset 1), “assumes” (BNC – 1004, AWL subset 1), “interpretations” (BNC – 10421, AWL – subset 1), “evaluate” (BNC - 1088, AWL – subset 2), “specify” (BNC - 1277, AWL - subset 3), “analysis” (BNC – 1286, AWL – subset 1), “analyze” (BNC – 1290, AWL – subset 1), “interpret” (BNC – 1311, AWL – subset 1), “assessing” (BNC – 1416, AWL – subset 1), “analyzed” (BNC – 1779, AWL – subset 1) and “conception” (BNC – 1825, AWL –subset 1). This possibly results from the historically constituted *Discourse of “the university”* as an institution of “higher learning” with its cerebral and theoretical rather than practical concrete focus. However, this traditional *Discourse* in which the university student focuses on theoretical studies and criticism of society is now often placed in opposition to the new global forces in education positioning universities as “servants” to a country’s economic needs of qualified personpower and research that caters to the demands of the market (Dearlove 1995; James and Mok 2003; Mok 2003). It is thus questionable whether Coxhead’s choice of academic vocabulary is necessarily a true reflection of the changing reality in higher education.

Meta-language relating to the organization of texts, selection or classification of information is also ranked higher on the *Academic Word List* than is suggested by its frequency in the *British National Corpus*. Words like “conclusion” (BNC - 0, AWL – subset 2), “occurrence” (BNC - 15, AWL subset 1), “restrict” (BNC - 1106, AWL – subset 2), “constituted” (BNC - 1141, AWL – subset 1), “context” (BNC - 1191, AWL – subset 1), “consist” (BNC - 1229, AWL – subset 1), “specify” (BNC - 1277, AWL subset 3), “occurring” (BNC - 10, AWL subset 1), “consisted” (BNC - 1314, AWL subset 1), “specification” (BNC - 1323, AWL subset 1), and “exclude” (BNC - 1324, AWL subset 1) fall into this category. The relative predominance of this type of vocabulary on the *Academic Word List* relates to the “intellectual tradition” (Boughey, 2006) of the university which values certain literacies such as synthesizing sources, analyzing the purpose and audiences of texts and composing processes (Boiarsky, 2003:100 – 101) more than in other discourses such as the media, popular fiction, school essays, letters, memoranda, radio programmes, meetings and informal conversations which are represented along with a the relatively few academic texts in the *British National Corpus* (BNC 2000).

A comparison of the *British National Corpus* and *General Service List* is shown in the table in *Appendix 2*. All words on the GSL occurred at least once in the BNC; however, beyond that, it is impossible to identify any clear trends. I do not distinguish in this analysis between the earlier or latter parts of the GSL, since all the words are supposedly items which are of “greatest general service” to users of English.

One could nostalgically long for the universe of the General Service List where rabbits (BNC – 980, GSL, 1987), cooks (BNC - 118, GSL - 1113) and women in stockings (BNC - 453, GSL - 2200) and headdresses (BNC – 51, GSL – 2266) were still common, people were concerned with their modesty (BNC – 283, GSL 2231) and still greeted (BNC 536, GSL 1597) each other and homemade (BNC – 94, GSL – 2206) items were appreciated. Alternatively, one could favourably compare the universe of the British National Corpus to

that of the General Service List by citing that oppressive terminology like “civilize” (BNC - 14, GSL - 1225), “conqueror” (BNC 176, 2248) and “colony” (BNC - 1112, GSL - 1232) are no longer common, or note the cultural differences reflected in the use of words like “sore” (BNC 854, GSL, 2006), which is often used in the Brown Corpus in the sense of an attitude towards someone or something, rather than in the sense of “painful”, and the archaic “hurrah” (BNC – 34, GSL 2244). However, any comparison and attempt to make generalizations out of this data would be spurious since it is impossible to compare the universes out of which the two instruments arose; all that can be said is that they reflect some of the English vocabulary used in two very different contexts. Thus as suggested by my critical realist

It is also not possible to claim that the British National Corpus represents the English prevalent in the United Kingdom today since language is constantly evolving and is extremely specific to context and the universe of Britain in the 1990s is worlds away from that of Britain today and that of Britain next year. Although the creators of the British National Corpus attempted to include a large variety of genres, accents and classes in their collection of “text”, it is not possible to say that it fully represented the use of English even at the time of its collection, while the *Brown Corpus* and its product, the *General Service List*, as I have already pointed out, are deeply flawed.

Yet, as the Gulf University foundation programme, like many other ESL/ EFL institutions has selected the General Service List and Academic Word List as instruments to select useful vocabulary for students to learn, it is useful to examine the frequency and use of the items on the list in the materials used to teach the students, and the frequency and use of these items in material written by students within the institution.

The Academic Word List and General Service List versus the FPC/AWC Corpus

As noted in my methodology chapter, I used the *GU* Foundation Programme Corpus (FPC) (Curriculum Committee 2004) which consists of all the texts used in the GU foundation programme for the English, Information Technology and Mathematics foundation courses Level 1, 2 and 3 (a total of about 600 000 words) along with the *Academic Writing Corpus* (AWC 2005) which consists of the textbook of the ESP Academic Writing Course as well as supplementary materials on the internal *Academic Goldmine* ftp site for the course – 50 000 words). However, although the total word count of the FPC/AWC corpus is over 650 000 words, I only examined word tokens that appeared in both components of the corpora, noting their frequency within the entire corpus. Items that did not appear in both corpora are marked as zero (0) tokens. I took this step as some of my respondents were not exposed to the entire corpus as they joined *Gulf University* before the major changes to the curriculum in 2003, or did not complete all the levels, but all of the respondents completed the ESP Academic Writing Course.

The Foundation Programme Corpus (FPC) is used by the *GU* foundation programme in the creation of vocabulary materials and to make students and teachers aware of “language across the curriculum” issues. For example, on the *GU* foundation programme Concordance Website (UGRU 2006) items are “tagged” according to the level and course they appear in – for example, Basic Math 1 – while the Academic Writing Course part of the corpora has been used internally for the creation of vocabulary materials teaching collocation in formulaic expressions by a few teachers.

This combined corpus is problematic as a research instrument on several levels. Firstly, it is an extremely small corpus. Some theorists, such as Fillmore *et al* (Fillmore, Ide *et al.* 1998) in their call for a “representative” American National Corpus which is “broad”, “large” and “balanced”, suggest that to be useful in scientific study of language, a corpus should be around 100 million words, like the British National Corpus and many others cite the “magic” one million words as necessary for effective corpus study. Others like Friedbichler and

Friedrich (1997) suggest that there are no “hard and fast rules about the size of a corpus”, but that a corpus of between 500 000 and 5 million words, depending on the field, shows “ample evidence in 95% of language queries”. Bowker and Pearson (2002: 48) suggest that even a few thousand words could be useful in uncovering “Language for Specific Purposes” within specific genres and contexts. This part of the study is very limited in scope, namely probing whether the limited vocabulary selected by the *GU* foundation programme (however flawed the selection process) is used in the materials (both during the foundation course and during the ESP Academic Writing Course) and then is reproduced by the students in their writing and narratives. Therefore, I believe the small corpus is to a degree justified.

A second problem with the FPC/AWC Corpus is the fact that it limits its selection of vocabulary items to items that appear in both corpora, thus does not take into consideration many items which the student respondents may use because of their exposure to them in the foundation course; I will highlight this aspect in the data. A final difficulty with this instrument is that it is limited only to the published materials used in each course (either printed or electronically published). It does not take the plethora of materials created by individual teachers into consideration and the daily verbal communication in class or listening material that students are exposed to into account. This is yet another general problem involved in corpus studies where the selection of materials for a corpus is often driven by practical considerations such as time, obtaining permission to tape, copyright and constantly changing curricula and materials. This corpus does not, therefore, represent the full range of English vocabulary that students are exposed to in the foundation programme. The experiences of students differ depending on the teachers they are taught by, the semester they attend a particular class, the level of coordinators at that particular time and a variety of other factors including their exposure to English outside of the classroom. This corpus merely represents the textbooks each student possesses and specific items can only be analyzed for their frequency and occurrence within these materials.

A few general trends can be noted in a comparison of the two lists and the FPC/AWC Corpus:

Only 102 General Service List Words are found in both the Academic Writing Course and foundation course components of the corpus. In contrast, 187 *Academic Word List* words appear in both components of the corpora. This suggests that “general academic vocabulary” is privileged over “general use” vocabulary, especially within the ESP Academic Writing Course and foundation course in general. It could also suggest that the *General Service List* does not provide the vocabulary that is of “greatest general service” within the materials available to the *GU* foundation programme. It could also merely be an indication of the sparseness of material that students are exposed to in the ESP (AWC) component of the corpus and/or the limited topics and subject areas that are covered in the English, Mathematics and IT components of the foundation course.

Most of the *Academic Word List* vocabulary items that occur in both components of the FPC/AWC Corpus are items with a high frequency on the *British National Corpus* (over 1 000 tokens) and a high rating on the Academic Word List (Subset 1 – 5). Some notable exceptions include “team”, with a frequency of three tokens in the FPC/AWC Corpus and 18 770 on the British National Corpus, yet it is only found on Subset 9 on the Academic Word List, as well as “eventually” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 8860, AWL – subset 8), “chemical” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 4451, AWL – subset 8), “channel” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 4345, AWL – subset 7), “vision” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 4104, AWL – subset 9), “paragraph” (UGR/AWC – 25, BNC – 2613, AWL – subset 8) “topic” (UGR/AWC – 77, BNC – 2416, AWL – subset 7), “grade” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 2289, AWL – subset 7), “format” (UGR/AWC – 16, BNC – 2283, AWL – subset 9), “definition” (UGR/AWC – 2, BNC – 2194, AWL – subset 7), “publication” (UGR/AWC – 2, BNC – 1982, AWL – subset 7), “chart” (UGR/AWC – 10, BNC – 1695, AWL – subset 8), “colleague” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 1612, AWL – subset 10), “definite” (UGR/AWC – 7, BNC – 1557, AWL – subset 4), “passive” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 1428, AWL – subset 9), “thesis” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 1233, AWL – subset 7), and “highlight” (UGR/AWC – 1, BNC – 1189, AWL – subset 8). These items appear in the limited intersection of the two components of the FPC/AWC Corpus, yet

are not rated within the first five most wide-ranging and frequently used Academic Word List subsets according to Coxhead (2000).

Some of the words like “team”, “channel” (referring to television channels and the French/British Channel Tunnel) and publication could be described as relating to topics of more general interest and could fall into the category of “light academic reading” (Curriculum Committee 2006), which students are exposed to in the *GU* foundation programme, rather than the more specifically academic vocabulary reflected by Coxhead’s list. Other items such as “colleague”, “vision” (used in the sense of a “mission” or future goal) refer to the world of work, reflecting the themes that are common in the FPC/AWC corpora, but less common across academic disciplines and, therefore, have a lower ranking on the *Academic Word List*. Items like “grade”, “format”, “definition”, “passive” (used to describe verb structure) and “highlight” (used as a verb, using a marker to show which words are important) refer to classroom tasks and meta-language which are more commonly used in the school environment or the ESL/EFL teaching environment than in the general university environment where the focus is possibly more on content than skills and grammatical structures, thus the ranking for these items is lower on the *Academic Word List*. Finally, the words “topic” and “chart”, which also are lower ranked on the AWL than on the *British National Corpus* or in the FPC/AWC corpora are used frequently in the business and political environments (reflected in the BNC) and are also used in the specific genre of the survey report which the students are taught in the Academic Writing Course, yet are possibly used less frequently if the variety of academic genres that are sourced in the *Academic Word List* are taken into consideration.

The FPC/AWC Corpus versus the ESP Student Corpus

From the “study skills” perspective, it is important to ascertain whether students have the necessary skills to function in an academic environment. In this case, I am examining whether they have acquired or learnt the vocabulary items which the foundation programme deems

useful. These items are presumably embedded in the materials that are presented to the students during their studies in the foundation programme and ESP1 AWC course. Therefore, this research involves an analysis of the effect of a materials corpus on student writing and a comparison of the FPC/AWC Corpus with the ESP Student Corpus (ESPSC) which consists of a number of portfolio items from each of the seven respondents gathered over the period of their studies in the *GU* foundation programme and ESP1 course as well as survey reports from a number of other students.

These two corpora are compared using items 1001 to 2270 on the updated *General Service List* (Bauman and Culligan 1995) and the items on the Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000) as points of reference. As discussed earlier, these lists are far from all-encompassing and many items will appear in both corpora which are not covered by either of the lists above. Just as the FPC/AWC Corpus is problematic since it only reflects only the materials in officially published textbooks, which is a fraction of the language which the students have been exposed to during their period of study in the *GU* foundation programme and in the ESP Academic Writing Course, and this material is truncated even further by the fact that not all the students completed the entire course, only lexical items which occur in both parts of the corpora are taken into consideration, limiting the 650 000 word corpus to a mere 50 000 from which to derive items (although frequency is measured within the entire corpus). The relatively small size of the corpus suggests that there may be problems in obtaining statistically verifiable data. However, as mentioned above, some researchers have suggested that only a relatively small corpus is required to search for language for specific purposes. Since the genre that the students are exposed to in the Academic Writing Course component of the corpus is limited to a specific version of the survey report, the language structures that the students are exposed to are necessarily also extremely limited. Thus, I follow Bowker and Pearson (2002) in using a limited corpus to search for limited lexical items.

The *ESP Student Corpus* (Picard & Studholme 2005) is similarly limited, consisting of only 64 941 words. The corpus consists of the writing and narratives of the eight respondents who

at the time of the study were all *GU* ESP students, their reflective essays at the end of each completed English level in the *GU* foundation course, their final writing sample at the end of each semester as well as their survey projects written in the ESP Academic Writing Course, their written reflections at the end of the ESP AWC, their Blackboard Discussion Board comments throughout the semester and the transcription of at least two interviews per respondent conducted during the course of this research. It also includes survey projects written by 58 additional ESP AWC students in the Humanities stream of the course.

The *ESP Student Corpus* is problematic in several ways. Firstly, it is once again predominantly written, although the transcription of the respondents' interviews form part of the corpus and other materials such as discussion-board writing is included which like other "computer mediated discourse" can move from "spoken-like" informality to spoken or written-like formality (Herring 2004). Consequently, written material is used to represent students' use of English when their predominant use of the language would be in the classroom. However, as mentioned before, there is some spoken and potentially "spoken-like" material in the corpus and as the respondents are completing an Academic Writing Course, the primary focus is on their written protocols.

A second potential problem lies in the fact that only a small part of the ESP Student Corpus focuses on student materials written during the foundation phase of their studies at *GU* (Levels 1,2 and 3), with the vast majority of material from survey projects written during the ESP Academic Writing Course, while on the other hand the largest part of the FPC/AWC Corpus (600 000 words) consists of the textbooks of Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the foundation course with only a comparatively small part of the corpus (50 000 words) representing the ESP Academic Writing Course. However, since the students have mostly progressed through the levels and been exposed to most of the materials in the foundation component of the corpus, theoretically at least, their survey projects should not only be a product of the extremely limited material they are exposed to in the Academic Writing Course, but also the fuller experience of the foundation programme. In addition, as only items from the GSL and

AWL which appear in both components of the FPC/AWC Corpus are taken into account in this study, this part of the research could be described as a comparison between the 64 941 words of the ESP Student Corpus and the 50 000 words of the AWC Component of the FPC/AWC Corpus (although the entire corpus is taken into account in terms of frequency).

Finally, the content of the ESP Student Corpus can be seen to be problematic in comparison to the FPC/AWC Corpus. While on the one hand the FPC/AWC Corpus consists of textbooks and materials focused on teaching students certain skills, the ESP Student Corpus consists of students' reflections on their learning and the course, as well as their written survey projects based on independent research on a topic of their choice. Thus, it is impossible to entirely control the requirement that the topics covered are comparable. Despite this problem, I have attempted to select student projects for the corpus that reflect the materials and topics covered in the UGR/AWC Corpus. Projects which addressed themes such as computers, technology, culture, sport, family, books and the media were thus selected to harmonize with the topics in the FPC/AWC Corpus. Also, the nature of the reflective tasks in the ESP Student Corpus mirror the meta-language used in the FPC/AWC Corpus, although the more specific "teaching language" – for example, references to grammatical terminology and tasks which the students should perform – will be highlighted in the results. Thus, even though the process of selection of materials for materials or student corpora is fraught with difficulties, I believe it is possible to identify some general trends when comparing the lexical items in the two corpora.

Only 48 *General Service List* words of the 102 that occurred in the both parts of the FPC/AWC Corpus occurred at least once in the *ESP Student Corpus*. An additional word, "brain", which occurred on the FPC/AWC Corpus appeared as part of the compound word "brainstormed" in the ESPSC. Of the 187 of the *Academic Word List* items which occurred in both components of the FPC/AWC Corpora, 115 of these are repeated in the ESPSC at least once. Thus, there was a 47.058% reappearance of GSL lexical items from the FPC/AWC Corpus in the ESPSC, as opposed to a 61.497% reappearance of AWL items. Although this predominance of Academic Vocabulary in the ESP Student Corpus can probably be ascribed

to the nature of the tasks, as well as encouragement by teachers to use academic vocabulary, it does call into question assumptions by ESL practitioners and theorists that lower-level students are unable to understand and use academic terminology. The use of vocabulary thus appears to relate to the task and the vocabulary needed for the task, rather than the perceived level of the students. This suggests that, at least, it is possible to teach some academic vocabulary “right from the start”.

Another general trend is of course the fact that a larger variety of words from both lists is used in the materials corpus as opposed to the *ESP Student Corpus*. This reflects the fact that the student corpus consists of a limited number of tasks (survey project, Blackboard discussion, reflective essays and interviews). Each of these tasks and their associated genres have their own formulaic expressions and repertoire of language, thus limiting language choices in the student corpus more than in the materials corpus which covers three fields of study and a larger variety of topics, although the items must appear in both components of the corpus, and the AWC part of the corpus is extremely limited in scope. However, as teaching material it contains many meta-language terms which students will not need to use in their tasks such as “prompt” (FPC/AWC 1; SC 0) on the *General Service List*, referring to the question “prompt” given, and “range” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 0), “chapter” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 0), “features” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 0) and “context” (FPC/AWC 2, ESPSC 0) on the *Academic Word List*. Other items which are not included in the student corpus, but are used in the materials corpus often refer to specific topics, specific tasks or, in the case of the AWC component of the materials corpus, specific experiments conducted. Thus words like “energy” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 0), “function” (FPC/AWC 3, ESPSC 0) on the *Academic Word List* and “egg” (FPC/AWC 2, ESPSC 0), “sink” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 0), “bowl” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 0), referring to a receptacle, and “wrist” (FPC/AWC 4, ESPSC 0) on the *General Service List*, which appear in the materials corpus, do not appear in the student corpus.

Another opposing general trend reveals that although fewer words from both lists are used in the *ESP Student Corpus* than the FPC/AWC Corpus, some words are used in far greater

frequency in the student corpus than in the materials corpus. In terms of the *General Service List* items, these words fall into two categories: Items which reflect the formulaic language related to the tasks in the student corpus (for example, writing about the results in a survey project) and items which refer to popular topics among the respondents in the student corpus.

The first category includes items like “narrow” (FPC/AWC 4, ESPSC 31) in the sense of “I narrowed my focus”, “mistake” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 31), “collect” (FPC/AWC 7, ESPSC 52) used in the sense of “I collected the questionnaires” or “I collected my data”, “sheet” (FPC/AWC 16, ESPSC 23) in the sense of “worksheet” or “statistics sheet”, “female” (FPC/AWC 3, ESPSC 72) in the sense of “female respondents”, “male” (FPC/AWC 5, ESPSC 14) in the sense of “male respondents”, “calculated” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 34) in the sense of “I calculated statistics” or “I calculated the percentages” and “spelling” (FPC/AWC 3, ESPSC 11). These items also usually occur within formulaic “chunks” of language with the vocabulary items surrounding each token in the corpus almost identical.

The second category of General Service List items which are more common in the student corpus than the materials corpus relate to topics which the students favour in their writing. The most popular by far of these is anything relating to computers. Topics and consequently vocabulary relating to food, traditions, employment, and car accidents are also more popular in the student corpus than in the materials corpus. Perhaps this is because of genuine interest in these topics. For example, as a developing country, there is a constant emphasis on technology and the use of computers is often seen as a panacea of all ills, especially in terms of educational reform. In addition, the high number of road traffic accidents in the UAE makes car accidents a topical issue. However, these topics can also be viewed as non-controversial and thus encouraged by teachers and chosen by students who wish to “toe the line”, despite the fact that the choice of topic is supposedly entirely up to the students. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the chapter concerning the development of “academic voice” and academic literacies.

The abovementioned categories are duplicated with the words on the Academic Word List with items like “research” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 122), “data” (FPC/AWC 8, ESPSC 54), “design”(FPC/AWC 9, ESPSC 89) in the sense of “I designed a survey questionnaire/ research/ an experiment”, “specific” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 18), “majority” (FPC/AWC 5, ESPSC 116) in the sense of “the majority of respondents”, “method” (FPC/AWC 13, ESPSC 35), “survey” (FPC/AWC 31, ESPSC 159) and many more reflecting the genres contained in the student corpus, particularly the survey project genre. Also, items like “job” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 52), “computer” (FPC/AWC 28, ESPSC 89), “site” (FPC/AWC 8, ESPSC 57) in the sense of “web site” or in two cases “historical site”, “transport” (FPC/AWC 2, ESPSC 17) “tradition” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 29) and others reflect the students’ topics of choice or their teachers’ topics of choice.

One of the most noteworthy trends when comparing the FPC/AWC Corpus and the *ESP Student Corpus* is that words are used more frequently in the student corpus if they are repeated frequently in the material corpus. This is reflected in items like “correct” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 16), “mail” (FPC/AWC 48, ESPSC 16) which mainly refers to e-mail, “formal” (FPC/AWC 28, ESPSC 13), “calculate” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 34) on the *General Service List* and items like “major” (FPC/AWC 6, ESPSC 33), “computer” (FPC/AWC 28, ESPSC 89), “conclusion” (FPC/AWC 22, ESPSC 89), “survey” (FPC/AWC 9, ESPSC 89) and “topic” (FPC/AWC 77, ESPSC 36) on the *Academic Word List*.

Despite the fact that the occurrence of *Academic Word List* words is far higher than *General Service List* items, the respondents appear to be less inclined to use meta-language no matter whether the words are “academic” or “general”. Vocabulary use can thus be seen as related to task rather than the perceived level of the students. Thus, in teaching academic English vocabulary to lower level students, it could be useful to focus on tasks in which students can clearly understand the meaning and context of the words rather than designating tasks as “academic” or “general”.

The students appear to have problems with metalanguage no matter whether the words are “academic” or “general”. This is reflected in items on the *General Service List* like “description” (FPC/AWC 15, ESPSC 0), “completion” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 0), “suggestion” (FPC/AWC 11, ESPSC 0) and “intend” (FPC/AWC 5, ESPSC 0) and on the *Academic Word List* like “appropriate” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 10), “academic” (FPC/AWC 11, ESPSC 0), “trend” (FPC/AWC 7, ESPSC 0), “format” (FPC/AWC 16, ESPSC 0), etcetera.

On the other hand, it appears that the respondents prefer to use words that they encounter tangibly more frequently. For example, words that relate to tangible tasks which they perform in the classroom. Items like “major” (FPC/AWC 6, ESPSC 33), “computer” (FPC/AWC 28, ESPSC 89) and “goals” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 6), referring to aim or purpose on the *Academic Word List* fall into this category, as well as verbs like “select” (FPC/AWC 3, ESPSC 13) and “design”(FPC/AWC 9, ESPSC 89) and “narrow” (FPC/AWC 4, ESPSC 30), “print” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 6), “collect” (FPC/AWC 7, ESPSC 52), “correct” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 16) and “spell”(FPC/AWC 3, ESPSC 11) on the *General Service List*. A prime example of the emphasis on concrete tasks related to the genre of their writing occurs with the token “brain”. This word occurs only three times in the FPC/AWC Corpus, yet as a compound verb “brainstormed” it occurs eight times in the student corpus.

Finally, the student respondents appear to avoid more formal words if they already know a more colloquial expression for the word. For example the word “mistake” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 31) as opposed to “error” (FPC/AWC 2, ESPSC 0) on the *Academic Word List* or “job” (FPC/AWC 14, ESPSC 52) and “profession” (FPC/AWC 1, ESPSC 3) which are both on the *Academic Word List*.

The data indicates that the respondents are able to reproduce the limited “academic” and “general” lexical items they are exposed to in the materials corpus at a high frequency in their writing. It also suggests that, in the reproduction of lexical items, respondents privilege items that are:

- Academic
- Concrete
- Repeated frequently in the corpus
- Related to a favored topic
- Not a new term for an already named concept

Also, most notably, these items are usually reproduced in prefabricated sequences or patterns (Granger 1988; Flowerdew 2003) also called, lexical “chunks” (Ellis 1996) or lexical “bundles” (Biber & Conrad 2001; Biber 2004; Biber, Conrad *et al.* 2004) which can be almost identical from respondent to respondent, but, as noted above, the process of corpora compilation and item selection is deeply problematic, not only in this study, but in most corpora studies. In addition, the “discrete skill” of reproducing the appropriate academic vocabulary on cue does not necessarily mean the acquisition of academic literacy. Thus this chapter is just the beginning of this study’s investigation of the construction of academic English at *Gulf University*. However, by donning the lens of the “study skills” Discourse of academic literacy and accepting, albeit with severe reservations, the tools used at *Gulf University* to measure students’ vocabulary skills and teach these skills (the *General Service List*, *Academic Word List* and concordancing software), we are able to examine one aspect of the students’ development of academic literacy as well as how it is constructed at this institution. Also, by accepting (with even greater reservations) the view that there is some ‘ideal’ native-speaker which students should emulate (reflected in the use of the *British National Corpus*), we are further able to probe the construction of academic literacy at *Gulf University* as well as one aspect of the students’ discourse competence.

Devolving and Dissolving “Developmental” Measures

The possibility of measuring writing development

The notion of ascertaining students’ writing proficiency according to quantitative measures assumes that the sample(s) of writing examined involve what Wolfe-Quintero *et al* dub “an act of communication” (1998). This view lies within the Discourse of “language as an instrument of communication” (Christie 1981; Christie 1985) which implies that the students are reflecting their own meanings in their writing. Since much of what we write is a result of our socialization, rather than individual agency, this view is clearly problematic. As Basil Bernstein showed in the 1950s, “speech forms [respond] to two types of social control, one through positioning and one through individualizing”. Thus, the students respondents are, albeit sometimes imperfectly, “speaking”, the “expectations” of the academy rather than their “own words” (Charap 2000). However, as measurable “atomized skills” can indicate compliance with the rules of the academy, an analysis of the students’ “development” towards this compliance could be useful from a “study skills” perspective. Thus in this chapter I analyze the student respondents’ writing development quantitatively. Their individual corpora are divided up into developmental levels (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and ESP1) and their writing at each level is examined according to quantitative “developmental measures”.

Wolfe-Quintero *et al* distinguish between “proficiency measures” and “developmental” measures (1998: 1-3). The term “proficiency measures” is often linked with the concept of “benchmarks” or preformed “proficiency standards” (WIDA Consortium 2005) where students’ are measured according to already described “measurable achievement objectives” for each level. “Developmental measures”, on the other hand, measure the student’s development against his/ her previous performance or against students in the same cohort. One of the reasons for examining “developmental” rather than “proficiency measures” is because, as noted by Perkins (1983), developmental measures do not always coincide with

proficiency rating scales. Thus, for example, a students' writing as measured in terms of a test such as the IELTS (International Language Testing System) which measures students holistically in terms of their "proficiency" as compared to an 'ideal' native speaker would not necessarily have a corresponding level of "accuracy", "fluency" and "complexity" as measured quantitatively or in terms of the student's class or level at a particular institution.

It must be noted, however, that although researchers, for example Jenkins (2006) have criticised IELTS for its focus on powerful Englishes, others like Taylor (1992) claim that there is less focus on native-speaker proficiency as a gauge nowadays. However, I concur with Jenkins since words like "appropriate" and "accurate" in the IELTS band descriptors (IELTS 2006) cause the reader to wonder "appropriate" for whom, "accurate" against what measure? These terms imply that the native-speaker is seen as a measure against which candidates are judged. This is emphasized by the fact that all examiners must be native-speakers or have achieved an overall band score of 9.0 (Expert User) in the IELTS exam themselves. Thus proficiency measures are often based on the native speaker and thus cannot always fairly measure the second language user who may have their own variety of English (Jenkins 2006). Additionally, proficiency tests like the IELTS Academic Stream Test also assess the candidate's command of a particular (generic 'academic') Discourse and associated discourse. Many native speakers do not have command of this discourse so once again the terms "accurate" and "proficient" become meaningless in proficiency tests. However, a students' 'development' within a particular discourse/ Discourse could arguably be charted.

Also, the tools used in "developmental measures" cannot always be equated with those used in "proficiency measures" since measures such as "mean-length of utterance (MLU)" which have successfully been used to gauge the level of language development in native speakers, as reported by Larsen-Freeman and Strom (1977), are not always effective to measure the proficiency of adults learning a second language, who, while possessing the cognitive maturity to produce lengthy utterances in their own language, may lack the linguistic knowledge in the second language to produce comprehensible lengthy utterances. Another

problem is that quantitative measures do not take the amount of input given to students and the terminology, styles and Discourses valued at a particular institution into account. All these aspects can affect the perceived proficiency of a student. Thus researchers have turned to so-called “developmental” measures to ascertain how each individual student progresses towards greater proficiency according to certain quantitative measures.

These measures of fluency, accuracy and lexical complexity are based on three “intuitive assumptions”; namely that a student’s writing will become more fluent, more accurate and more grammatically and lexically complex as his/her writing develops (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998). However, a students’ writing “development” is not necessarily linear and can be influenced by a number of contextual factors. Charlene Polio therefore suggests that, rather than measuring proficiency, studies of writing development are useful in examining learner’s “interlanguage under different conditions”, the effects of tests or testing on learner “development” and finally the effect of “pedagogy” on writing “development” (1997). Thus instead of measuring a student against a perceived level or “proficiency”, developmental measures can be used to compare the student against him/herself under different conditions or, alternatively, to compare students who are at the same supposed level of proficiency.

From my perspective, “developmental measures” are still problematic, since they still fall within the Discourse of “language as an instrument of communication” and do not necessarily acknowledge the affect of acquisition of Discourse(s) or even the effect of different types of writing on fluency, accuracy and complexity. From the academic literacies perspective, a student will be perceived as more “proficient” in writing within a particular Discourse as he/she internalizes that Discourse. However, the student will once again be less proficient when he/she writes within a new Discourse.

Thus although I temporarily take on the “study skills” lens and examine “developmental measures”, I do not attempt to measure the students’ proficiency in this study, but rather the

effect of context such as task, prevailing discourses and Discourses at *Gulf University* and conditions under which the writing is produced on the students' "development" as measured quantitatively. In addition, I highlight the problems with each of the quantitative measures and try to suggest reasons for the data and anomalies in the data.

Data for each of my respondents was gathered from their writing portfolio. Within the *GU* foundation programme, each student maintains a portfolio of her writing; which is added to as she progresses from level to level. It is meant to serve as a record of the students' development and as a teaching tool for teachers to identify the students' problems. My respondents were chosen from a number of students randomly selected for portfolio tracking by the writing coordinator (their portfolios for each semester were collected and retained for future research). Most of the items in the portfolio are the result of so-called 'process writing' (revised and refined as a result of peer collaboration) and involve a large amount of vocabulary and content input from the teacher. Thus it is difficult to distinguish between the 'fluency' of the individual student and that of her peers. In this study, I therefore only use those items in the foundation course section of the portfolio (Level 1 to 3) that were written under 'test-like' conditions – namely their initial and final writing samples and their final reflections at the end of each level, which are written in the form of a 'letter' to their future teacher.

It must be noted, however, that, although no teacher input is given with regard to the initial and final samples at each level, the fact that they are written about the same topic and focus on the genres that are taught at that particular level implies that the final sample is affected by the process writing method. Also, some respondents' 'letters' reflect a disproportionate amount of teacher input in the form of questions that should be answered in the letters. For example, respondent four's Level 2 letter, which is mainly based on a number of questions. I have reconstructed some of these questions from my reading of the students' writing and 'Guided Reflection' notes (Lefort 2005) given to the students by many teachers in the programme below:

Question: How has your writing changed from the beginning of the semester until now? Use examples to explain your answer.

Answer: My writing has changed a lot from the beginning of the semester for examples, my grammar has improved... (Student Respondent 1)

Answer: In this semester my writing changed a lot. I see myself improving in many things. For example ... (Student Respondent 6)

Question: What kind of activities did you enjoy most during the semester?

Answer: I kind of activities enjoy most this semester the comparison and the information transfer (Student Respondent 3).

Question: What is your favorite piece of writing in your portfolio?

Answer: I favourite piece of writing in my portfolio the time order (past tense) (Student Respondent 7)

This kind of input skews the developmental ratios for certain respondents, since they appear to be more fluent or accurate or have a more sophisticated vocabulary as a result of the prefabricated sequences of language that they are fed by their teachers in the questions. On the other hand, the students' linguistic limitations are often highlighted when they attempt to construct statements in direct response to the questions and make numerous grammatical errors.

In terms of the English for Special Purposes section of their portfolios, I include their reflections on the Blackboard Discussion Board and their survey projects. Each stage of my respondents' survey projects was completed in class under 'test-like' conditions; however, they were taught the conventions of the genre as class work and I corrected their first draft using a correction key. The effect of these varying conditions will be examined in my discussion of the data.

Defining and Dissecting Fluency

Wolfe-Quintero *et al* (1998) relate fluency to the ease with which language is produced. Ease or levels of “comfort” are, however, difficult to define. They thus cite a number of studies which highlight issues of rate and length of output (Lennon 1990), production of meaning (Foster & Skehan 1996) and “automaticity” or the production of prefabricated sequences or ‘chunks’ of language (Ellis 1996) in order to ascertain fluency. The study by Lennon (Lennon 1990) also highlights the value of analyzing “disfluency” as opposed to fluency. Finally, Wolfe-Quintero *et al* suggest that ratio measures (measures which examine, for example, the relation of “correct” clauses/ T-units to the total number of words) best reflect development in fluency since longitudinal studies that, for example, merely counted the number of words such as Larsen-Freeman (1983) and Ishikawa (1995), did not show a noticeable difference in fluency (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998). They propose the ratio of word count to error-free T-unit as one of the effective measures of fluency (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998) and it is this measure that I adopt in this study. A T-unit is defined as a unit containing a main and any subordinate clauses (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998). An example of the calculation of T-units in is given in *Appendix 3* where the division of T-units is indicated with a slash / and I make use of the guidelines for counting T-units suggested by Polio (Polio 1997) and noted in my *Appendix 4*.

As the fluency ratio is determined by dividing the number of words by the number of error-free T-Units, the lower the ratio the more fluent the respondent is likely to be. The table overleaf (Figure 7) indicates the fluency ratios of respondents 1 to 7 in my study. Respondent 2 repeated Level 3, while Respondent 4 repeated Level 4 (ESP).

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level 1		33.1		42.2	16.1		71
Level 2	163	48	85.6	113.6	44.5	93.5	34.8
Level 3.1	65.6	42	127.6	89	38.5	28.7	51.3
Level 3.2		41.2					
Level 4.1	21.2	12	27.7	14.4	18.3	15.6	34.5
Level 4.2				18			

Table 1: Fluency ratios of Respondents 1 to 7

It appears that the individual respondents' writing does not necessarily become more "fluent" as they progress in the *GU* foundation course. For example, the fluency measures of Respondent 1, three, four and five worsen from their first to their second level in the course, while Respondent 7's fluency decreases from her second to third level taken. This could be as a result of the increasing difficulty of the task. For example, the fluency measures of Respondent 2, 3, 4 and 5 worsen from their first to their second level in the course, while Respondent 7's fluency decreases from her second to third level taken. This could be as a result of the increasing difficulty of the task. While in Level 1 the respondents are merely required to describe a day in the past, and in Level 2 they are required to give their opinion on an issue (for example the viability of trains in the [the Gulf] or the effect of computer technology), in Level 3 they are required to show the extent to which they agree or disagree with a point of view. In addition, the level of difficulty in the task can result in less automaticity or pre-fabricated language structures available in their language repertoire to express their required meaning. This also indicates that fluency in writing is directly influenced by genres, since the complexity of the genre influences the "fluency" of writing, thus suggesting that writing involves more than mere language proficiency.

The use of prefabricated structures can also often create an illusion of fluency; which is dispelled by a closer examination of the text. For example, Respondent 5 appears to show a marked improvement in fluency from level one to two, yet a closer examination of her 'letter'

to her 'future teacher' shows a meaningless parroting of phrases that have little relation to the task. For example:

I want to tell you a few things about my writing in level 2. / My name is Fatmah. / My hometown is Fujairah. / My major is Islamic Studies. / I want to be a teacher in the future./”

There is, however, a marked improvement in the fluency measurement of all respondents in the fourth (ESP) level. One reason for this could be the pre-fabricated nature of the survey report genre, as taught in the ESP AWC course. The respondents are taught a number of lexical “chunks”, as part of the course which can be easily recalled and used correctly in context. Another possible reason is that the process of self-correction in the second draft of the document also corrects many of the problems that may cause disfluency.

However, the large difference in word length between the initial samples of each of the respondents suggests that there is far more room for error in the final samples, than in their predecessors, yet far fewer errors are made. For example, respondent six's initial sample (Level 2) consists of only 374 words, yet shows a fluency ratio of 93.5, while her level four fluency ratio is markedly better at 15.6. One explanation for this is that the survey-writing task in the ESP Academic Writing Course requires the students to write about content based on research. They conduct a survey on a field-related topic of their choice, analyze data and write about their data. Thus they have real things to say, while the tasks in the foundation levels reflect the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) in that they do not test “English for Academic Purposes” (namely, test the genres used in university courses that usually require content and/or research to accomplish), but rather “English through Academic Contexts” (the type of topics and issues that students might reflect upon in an academic context without recourse to content or research) (Fulcher 1999). In the foundation course they are also asked to speculate upon topics that they are not necessarily interested in, while the ESP course is based on a student choice of topic from within their field of study. They

therefore naturally have far more to say and can express themselves more fluently as a result of their prior knowledge, interest in and research of the topic since they are drawing on context.

Ascertaining Accuracy

While acknowledging that accuracy cannot reflect important areas such as coherence and content in writing, Polio suggests that an examination of accuracy under different conditions can assist in an understanding of the cognitive processes of second-language production and in the creation of an appropriate pedagogy (1997). Foster and Skehan (1996) define accuracy as “freedom from error”. However, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, what constitutes an error must be clearly designated to ensure better intra- and inter-rater reliability (Polio, 1997). Polio describes a number of different measures of accuracy including “holistic scales”, error-free T-unit ratios and the counting of the number of errors (1997). She considers the use of holistic scales problematic as the studies are difficult to replicate and there are problems of rater reliability. Similarly, there are serious rater reliability issues in terms of the other two types of measures as a result of raters disagreeing on “nativelike usage”. However, I believe that a more detailed analysis of what constitutes error as suggested by Ishikawa (1995) or Polio (1997) can eliminate many intra- and inter-rater discrepancies. In this study, I make use of the “Guidelines for T-units ... Word Counts and Errors” as outlined in Polio (1997). An adaptation of her *Appendix C* is reproduced in *Appendix 4* of this thesis. Of course, this kind of study does not critically examine the notion of “nativelike” usage as the standard, and as such can be seen as perpetuating the tyranny of “standard English” and the exclusion of those who do not conform to it and in fact when I tested my own rater reliability with other English teachers there were many disputes even when we all followed Polio’s guidelines.

In this study I make use of the error-free T-unit ratio first used by Scott and Tucker (1974) which examines the ratio of error-free T-units in relation to the total number of T-units in a

piece of writing. This “ratio” is meant to show a student’s overall accuracy at a particular stage in his/her development as it indicates both the absence of errors (accuracy) and the length of the piece of writing. Therefore, it takes into consideration longer, more complex pieces of writing which may contain more errors than shorter, less complex pieces. However, from an academic literacies perspective, this measure does not consider that shorter pieces of writing can be extremely complex, thus affecting accuracy or that genre can affect accuracy. This measure is criticized by Bardovi-Harlig (1989) as it does not show how the errors are distributed and the categories or severity of the errors. Thus a comparatively minor error (such as agreement of subject and verb) is weighed equally with a more severe error such as writing a sentence without a finite verb. This issue is addressed by Gaies (1980) with a hierarchical description of errors and by Zugboul (1991) with a categorization of errors into types. Although these measures are indeed useful and provide a more detailed picture for error analysis, for the purpose of this study, I was interested in a more ‘global’ picture of the frequency of error and thus restricted myself to the more simplistic measure. In addition, the ‘severity’ of errors is affected by the genre in which the students are writing. For example, in the e-mail or letter genres it is quite acceptable to use phrases such as “looking forward to seeing you”, which might be described as lacking a finite verb. However, as I am engaging the “study skills” lens in this part of the study, I assume that ‘accuracy’ can be quantified and ‘development’ charted over time.

As the students’ ‘accuracy’ is determined by dividing the number of error-free T-units by the number of T-units, the higher the ratio or the closer it is to 1 (indicating that the number of error-free T-units is equal to the number of T-units), the more ‘accurate’ the writing is deemed to be. The accuracy ratio of the seven respondents in my study at each level is indicated in the table (Figure 8) overleaf.

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level 1		0.26		0.22	0.57		0.18
Level 2	0.055	0.23	0.15	0.10	0.24	0.17	0.25
Level 3.1	0.20	0.25	0.094	0.17	0.31	0.48	0.24
Level 3.2		0.35					
Level 4.1	0.63	0.89	0.05	0.81	0.77	0.72	0.46
Level 4.2				0.66			

Table 2: Accuracy ratios of Respondents 1 to 7

This data seems to indicate that the “intuitive” assumption upon which accuracy ratios are based (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998), namely that a students’ accuracy improves as she progresses in proficiency or level, is plausible since all the respondents, excepting Respondent 3, showed a marked improvement in accuracy from the first level (either Level 1 or 2) to the final level (ESP/ Level 4).

However, there was once again fluctuation between the accuracy ratios in consecutive levels. While Respondent 1 (0.055; 0.20; 0.63) and Respondent 6 (0.17; 0.48; 0.72) appeared to steadily improve in their level of accuracy, Respondent 3’s accuracy level plummeted from 0.15 to 0.094 between Level 2 and Level 3 and although it climbed again to 0.05 in Level 4, it never again reached its former ratio. Respondents 2,3,4,5 and 7, also all indicated lower accuracy ratios when moving between levels. Once again, this could be as a result of an increased difficulty in the level of task and increased complexity in what they are attempting to express. If we compare, for example, what Respondent 3 is expressing in her timed writing in Level 2 (a paragraph on the value of computers in modern life) with the complexities she is addressing in Level 4 (a report on students’ opinions about English as medium of instruction), we can see that although her accuracy ratio in *Sample A* from her Level 2 paragraph (0.2) is higher than her accuracy ratio in *Sample B* from her survey report in the ESP course (0), she is expressing views of far greater complexity in *Sample B* (errors are indicated by underlining and ^ for missing words).

Sample A:

Computers are very important in life./ Some people say nobody can stay without them./ For example, the people in the past, when they went to finish some work, they had many problems to finish it because they worked by themselves/ and they take ^ long time to finish the work or ^ find some information about something./ But now, when the computer coming, life has become very easy because the computer helps the people to finish the work in a short time and finish many pieces of work not only one./

Sample B:

The aim of this study was to find out students opinion about using the English language instead of the Arabic language as medium of instruction./ In order to do, this I conducted a survey of twenty respondents./ The majority of respondents said that our Islamic religion is in Arabic and also ^ Qur'an ^^/ ^ using English which is not ^ Islamic language maybe will affect society negatively./ I think that ^ is right for the university to do this and ^ students chose the wrong way to learn this language./ I predict that in the future the student will change this opinion and be able to choose English faculties because the schools now will change their language policies to English./ Therefore, I recommend that the media ought to tell people about advantages of learning other language, as the prophet Mohammad tells us to do./ Also the school should encourage the students to should learn other languages as their second language./ On the another side, they should still keep their first language and not forget it./

Thus except if exactly the same task is given at each level, it is very difficult to isolate and accurately measure accuracy as one component in a student's 'global development' and accuracy can be seen as "activity dependent" in Bhaskar's terms, since a more complex task can impact negatively on the students' accuracy ratio. In addition, even if the task is controlled and exactly the same task is given at each level, the complexity of what the student is attempting to express can also influence her accuracy, since she might have different ideas on the same topic on different occasions. Teacher expectations can likewise influence accuracy. If the teacher rewards accuracy above complexity of expression, the student may limit her expression in order to attain that accuracy as is reflected in *Sample C* and *Sample D* taken from Respondent 2's mini-corpus, during her first time and second time in Level 3 respectively. Errors, as described by Polio (1997), are indicated by underlining or by ^ for

missing word or words. As Polio suggests, I do not count “register errors related to lexical choices” (1997: 14), although from an academic socialization perspective or academic literacies perspective these would constitute grave “errors” of genre.

Sample C:

Dear new teacher/

I am one of the level 3 students./ I will tell you now about level 3 writing/ and what I know from level 3./ It is nice to write a paragraph or essay but you have to have some rule to do that./ All essay must include^ introduction, body and conclusion./ From level 3 writing I know about some skills./ Before I write many mistake in grammar, spelling and ^ order ^ the paragraph./ But know I did well./ First in level 2 I hat writing class/ but know I like writing class because now I have a very nice teacher who explain all thing./ I hope to be very good in writing./ writing help us in our studing in university./ I hope you understand my view./

Sample B:

Dear ESP teacher,/

How are you?/ I am fine./I will tell you about the improvement in my writing./ I saw the differences between my writing at the start of the course and at the end of it./ I am in Level 3 and I think I have made some improvements in my writing./ Firstly, I have made many changes in how to organize the paragraph in the essay and how to write the essay in ^ order (introduction, body, conclusion)./ Second, and the most important improvement in my writing is how to explain or discuss ideas./ Thirdly, learning the writing process which are choosing ideas, making plan, writing draft 1, writing draft 2 and writing ^ final draft./ Fourthly, I know the different kinds of activities we practice in our class like comparing, essay and line graphs./ Fifthly, I improve my grammar a lot and how to choose the verb (in past, present)./ Sixthly, in the future I will be able to write what my teacher requires us to write about./ In conclusion, I hope you like my improvement in writing which will help me to write good essays and reports./

While *Sample C* from Level 3.1 of Respondent 2 shows an accuracy ratio of 0.35 (overall level accuracy ratio 0.25), *Sample B* from Level 3.2 of the same respondent shows an accuracy ratio of 0.5 (overall level accuracy ratio 0.35). This appears to be a dramatic increase in the accuracy ratio of the same task from semester to semester in the same level, indicating that the students’ ratio has improved markedly. However, a closer reading of *Sample B* reveals that this respondent is merely mechanistically listing the tasks she has completed over the

semester, very likely copying down spelling and syntax from the tasks themselves in her portfolio. There is no reflection of her experiences in the course, whereas in her first time in the level there is some, albeit limited expression of her personal feelings about the course and what she has learned. It appears that to increase accuracy, are encouraged to remove their “voice” completely from the text. This reflects one of the dangers of an excessive focus on accuracy in marking of writing and perhaps is one of the reasons why more holistic scales are often preferred.

Leaving Lexical Complexity

Like the measures above, there has been increasing debate on which of the variety of different available measures of lexical complexity are the most appropriate and even whether it is possible to reliably measure lexical complexity at all. In Wolfe-Quintero *et al* (1998) and again in Malvern (2004), the issues of variety and sophistication of vocabulary items are raised as important considerations in the measurement of lexical complexity. While lexical-density measures (ascertaining the number of lexical words and dividing it by the total number of words) did not show a marked difference between native speakers and second language learners as shown in the studies by Linnarud (1986), Hyltenstam (1988), Nihalani (1981) and Enger (1995) (All cited in (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998), studies in which so-called ‘sophisticated’ words in student texts were measured against lexical words or the total number of words appeared to be more related to student development as shown in Linnarud (1986) (cited in(Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998) and Laufer (1994).

In this study, I therefore, follow Laufer in attempting to analyze lexical complexity in terms of lexical sophistication and whether a word occurs on a basic 1000 word frequency list. In my corpus study, I used the *General Service List* (Bauman & Culligan 1995), focusing on the words from 1001. In this part of the research, I once again use the GSL, but instead focus on the first 1000 words, which are deemed to be more ‘basic’. I particularly use this list, despite

its deficiencies which I have already noted in the previous chapter (its focus on one variety of English, the limited scale of the corpus from which it was drawn and the fact that it is outdated), because it is used in the *Gulf University* foundation programme as a standard of basic vocabulary which students are expected to know. It is, however, also worth noting that the *Academic Word List* (Coxhead 2000) is also used as source of vocabulary for students at each level in the *GU* foundation programme and thus many of the words in the early subsets of this list may be deemed as ‘basic’ by students and teachers in the unit.

Because of these and other problems in determining what ‘basic’ vocabulary is and what is not, Malvern (2004) suggests that alternative approaches, which evaluate lexical diversity in terms of word classes and morphological development, are more useful. However, since in this study, I am viewing the data through the Discourse of “study skills”, namely that student writing should comply with an external standard of the ‘ideal’ native speaker who uses more than the ‘basic’ vocabulary as determined by the *General Service List*, I utilize this measure of lexical sophistication, despite its obvious deficiencies. In addition, although lexical density by itself has been found insufficient, I feel that it is important to reflect the difference in length of the tasks at each level within the foundation programme and ESP course. Therefore, I combine the measures into a ratio of total number of sophisticated lexical words divided by the total number of words in each level (SLW/W). The results for each respondent at each level are summarized in the table (Figure 9) below.

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level 1		0.045		0.028	0.023		0.045
Level 2	0.033	0.033	0.015	0.041	0.042	0.072	0.047
Level 3.1	0.035	0.047	0.015	0.020	0.024	0.094	0.019
Level 3.2		0.019					
Level 4.1	0.043	0.010	0.035	0.036	0.029	0.059	0.020
Level 4.2				0.072			

Table 3: Lexical Complexity ratios of Respondents 1 to 7

Once again, the closer the ratio is to one, the better the lexical complexity. Interestingly, only respondent one shows a steady climb in the lexical complexity of her writing. Respondent 3 also shows an improvement in the final level as opposed to her first two levels where lexical complexity remains steady. Respondent 4 does show a higher level of lexical complexity in the ESP level (0.072) than in the preceding levels, but there is fluctuation in her development of lexical complexity in the earlier levels. All the other respondents (Respondents 2, 5, 6 and 7) at some point in the earlier levels show a higher lexical complexity than in the final ESP level, while Respondents 2 and 6 have the lowest lexical complexity in the final ESP level.

This data could indicate various possibilities. Firstly, if the measure is assumed to be effective, a number of task-related factors could affect the lexical complexity ratio. The far greater length of the tasks in the final level could result in a larger number of words in the text as opposed to sophisticated lexical words when compared with the earlier texts.

The fact that student could source vocabulary from the questions in the tasks in Levels 1 to 3 and that some teachers provided support materials for the reflection task could result in a disproportionate amount vocabulary being given to students, whereas in the final level (ESP) students chose their own topics and thus had proportionately less prefabricated ‘chunks’ to rely on, especially when taking the relative lengths of the texts into consideration. Therefore, in the first three levels, words which appear in the question (for example, “technology”, “educated”, “skills”) cannot truly be counted as sophisticated words acquired by the students.

In addition, the nature of the task can affect the use of sophisticated lexis. For example, the reflection task necessitated a great deal of “meta-language”, which would affect the ratio of sophisticated lexical words to words in the texts. As the students are explicitly taught these terms that do not appear on the GSL (for example: “grammar”, “topics”, “paragraph”, “punctuation”), these words have in some cases become ‘basic’ words in the students’ vocabulary.

Secondly, if the flawed nature of the measure is taken into consideration, the arbitrary division of words into ‘basic’ and ‘sophisticated’ categories could result in a skewed picture of the development of lexical complexity in the respondents. Instead, a detailed study of the materials corpus and frequency of lexical items within the corpus could be useful to highlight which words are particularly deemed as ‘basic’ within this specific context. Then student texts could be measured against this list and marked as ‘sophisticated’ or ‘basic’. This corpus would also have to be far larger and more comprehensive than the current materials corpus since, as discussed in the previous chapter, it currently does not reflect much of what goes on in the classroom, especially in terms of meta-language. Also, in order to provide more reliable data in terms of lexical complexity, there is a need to control the amount of teacher-input and to limit the rubrics for the essay questions in order to prevent a predominance of lexis copied from the teacher-materials or rubric.

Gating Grammatical Complexity

Foster and Skehan (1996) suggest that grammatical complexity in writing increases as the student develops linguistically and that this complexity is reflected in longer sentences and greater variety in sentence or clause patterns. I find this ‘intuitive’ analysis of student writing development particularly troubling since it does not take into account the different grammatical requirements of writing genres/ styles or the Discourses within which these genres are located. Additionally, certain systemicists have noted that grammatical complexity in speaking can actually decrease rather than increase when in more formal and academic contexts (Michaels & Collins 1984). According to Foster and Skehan’s view, traditional scientific writing in which there should not be a significant separation of subject and verb, thus implying a shorter sentence structure (Gopen & Swan 1990) would be viewed as inferior to writing in the field of Humanities or Education which is generally more discursive. This is clearly not the case. However, since the *Gulf University* makes use of so-called ‘holistic’

scales in marking student writing which like the IELTS test, focus on grammatical complexity or “range” (IELTS 2006) (for example, the presence of longer sentences with subordinate clauses) to indicate increasing language development, it is useful to ascertain whether there is an increased grammatical complexity as individual students progress through the levels in the *Gulf University* foundation course.

In this study, I make use of the ratio of total number of clauses divided by the number of T-units; which was first used by Hunt (1965) (cited in Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* 1998) since a number of studies have suggested that this measure has a relationship to the “linear” development of student writing, although I believe that nature of task can be a powerful factor affecting this ratio. The results of this part of the study for each respondent are indicated in the table (Figure 10) below.

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level 1		1.08		1.31	1.32		1.66
Level 2	1.0	1.3	1.44	1.37	1.39	1.34	1.22
Level 3.1	1.06	1.16	1.24	1.44	1.60	0.74	1.57
Level 3.2		1.51					
Level 4.1	1.39	1.4	1.54	1.47	1.63	1.47	1.64
Level 4.2				1.23			

Table 4: Grammatical Complexity ratios Respondents 1 - 7

Once again, the table reflects mixed results. Although two of the respondents show a linear progression through the levels (Respondent 1, Respondent 5) and Respondent 3 does achieve the highest grammatical complexity in the final level, Respondent 2, Respondent 4, Respondent 6 and Respondent 7 show a lower ratio in the final level than in the subsequent level(s).

I believe that these results are partly as a result of genre. The more ‘scientific’ style of the research report (the main item in Level 4 (ESP)) lends itself to shorter T-units, while the more discursive nature of the essays result in longer T-units. Additionally, there is no expectation in the measure for the clauses to be grammatically correct. Thus for example, in *Sample E* from one of Respondent 7’s essays in Level 3, the grammatical complexity ratio is 2.09, while the ratio for *Sample F* is 1.5. *Sample E* appears to have greater grammatical complexity, yet a closer look reveals that this sample is riddled with grammatical, especially syntactical errors, thus the ratio is not a true reflection of its grammatical complexity. In addition, although the respondent in *Sample F* makes use of some ‘choppy’ sentences, which could be stylistically improved, the length of her sentences appears to be generally appropriate for the genre in which she is writing.

Sample E:

I believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends./ In this essay I will write about my opinion./ There are many reasons such as: family and friends are know and/ they have agood advice/. The most important reason, family and friends are know a lot of things in life maybe I don’t know./ The family has knowledge about life because they live along time and see different things about life./

Another reason, they have a good advice the family and /friends have a good advice to me because they love me and/ they give me a good things and advice to learn about life./ The family and friends happen for them some problem in life and know about it and/ when the problem happen for me, they give me some advices about this problem./ In summary, I think this way is best to learn about life./ I want to all people listen to family and firend when they give some advice because this advice maybe need in life./

Sample F:

In 2003 *Gulf University* decided to change its language of instruction from Arabic to English for all 2003 students and those who come after them./ I conducted an interview with Dr XXXX to find out why the university changed its policy/. She told me that a lot of students who graduate from our college don’t have a job/. Also, to get jobs they need two important things, namely: English and IT./ Therefore, English is very important for the students./ However, 2003 students at *GU* have different

opinions about English as a language of instruction./ Some of those students agree with the new plan/ and some of them disagree with it/.

Those two groups of students will be affected by the change differently/. Thus, I conducted a survey to find out the students' opinions and reasons for their politics/. I collected information from Humanities and Human Sciences College students./

Therefore, as with lexical complexity, it is not possible to get a clear picture of an individual's development of grammatical complexity without strict controls of task genre. Some researchers suggest focusing on type of clause such as the number of passive clauses per sentence/ T-unit (Kameen (1979) cited in Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki *et al.* (1998)), while others claim that the ratio of independent clauses to total clauses provides a more accurate picture of grammatical complexity (Bardovi-Harlig & Bofman 1989). However, none of these measures take account of the fact that, although the respondent may use structures such as passives or subordinate clauses, sometimes as a result of the question rubric or other source material, they are not necessarily used in a meaningful way.

Meaningless or Meaningful Measures?

Any attempts to quantify, dissect or pinpoint "development" will always be problematic since it is not possible to take the full context within which the lexical complexity, grammatical complexity, accuracy or so-called fluency develops into account. Although a researcher can try to control genre and/ or task type, the length of time allocated to the task and try to obtain the sample under test-like conditions, it is not possible to control the class atmosphere, the learners' attitude towards that particular class or teacher and the expectations the teacher has set up in other tasks (for example, an expectation of accuracy). It is also not possible to control the socialization of the rater, his/her views of what constitutes accuracy or even what constitutes a clause or T-unit.

This is possibly one of the reasons why, although student portfolios have been ‘tracked’ for over three years by the *Gulf University* foundation course writing coordinator, the data has never previously been used for research. Is measurement of “global writing development” therefore meaningless? I believe that this is not entirely the case.

This exercise is useful in that it reflects some of the conflicting Discourses prevalent in this context and the ESL/EFL context in general. Although issues of academic socialization are deemed important, as reflected by the ‘developmental’ nature of the programme, many teachers are still focused on the development of “atomized skills” and are concerned that “the students still can’t write a proper sentence”. While ‘process writing’ is still a dominant Discourse, there is still a strong focus on product and ‘test-like’ conditions and a strong desire to quantify student development, possibly as a part of the global movement towards quality control and accountability in higher education (James & Mok 2003).

This study also has value in that it reflects the effect of task-type and/or genre on development. This suggests that ‘the real’ in terms of student writing development is both “concept dependent” and “activity dependent”. Both fluency and accuracy show a marked improvement when student writers write about content, rather than merely give a general opinion or reflect on an issue. This reflects one of the strongest arguments for teaching lower level students English for Special Academic Purposes rather than merely general English or generic English through Academic Contexts (Fulcher 1999). Although the survey report writing course has many inadequacies, as will be discussed later, in assembling and writing about data, the students are able to produce meaningful texts and thereby dramatically improve their accuracy and fluency. Although grammatical and lexical complexity did not improve at a similar rate, more careful designation of ‘sophisticated’ and ‘basic’ language could result in results that indicate the true picture of lexical complexity more clearly and new measures that take grammatical correctness as well as number of clause or type of clause into account should be developed to provide a more accurate picture of the development of grammatical complexity.

Socializing Strategies on Entering the Academy

Engaging the Socialization Lens

Bartholomae (1985) and other social theorists in the 1970's and 1980's conceptualized a broad view of academic socialization in relation to students' acquisition of university literacy. In his article "Inventing the university", Bartholomae describes how the academy or university is a notion, which is constantly invented and reinvented by those who participate in its practices, rather than an actuality. Instead of being acculturated into a monolithic academy, students are apprenticed into the process of "invention". This view of academic socialization coincides with the "academic literacies" view which acknowledges the students' multiple contexts, diversity within the academy, the fact that academic literacy is a process rather than a product and the fact that even mature academics have to constantly relearn and be re-socialized into different academic situations (Haggis 2003). However, Bartholomae's stance was viewed as radical at the time in the face of the dominant 'skills' lobby. Also, in modern educational practice, the common view of academic socialization within the university establishment is far more rigid than originally conceived by Bartholomae.

In general, academic socialization is viewed as a process where students are socialized, orientated and even colonized to interpret and learn tasks within the new culture of academia (Lea & Street 1998). This culture is viewed as relatively uniform, thus generic approaches are promulgated. In addition, the learner is constructed as "passively amenable to reconstruction...through the moulding processes at university" (Haggis 2003). Lea and Street (1998) thus describe the prevalent view of academic socialization that, although focusing on practices rather than merely de-contextualised "skills", conceives the academy and the socialization required from the perspective of hegemonic forces within the academy. It does not acknowledge the perspectives of the students or even the diversity of views and practices

within the academy itself and, therefore, pathologizes students “errors” or divergence from prescribed practices (Boughey 2002; Haggis 2003).

In fact, current views of academic socialization follow an “autonomous model of literacy” (Street 1984) in that, although they consider contextual factors of the hegemonic notion of a university, they do not consider the context of the students and or varying contexts within academia. In addition, these views on academic socialization suggest that academic success depends on individual effort or at least the individual’s use of “deep” rather than “surface” learning approaches (Henning, Mamiane *et al.* 2000; Haggis 2003), thus they favour the view that personal “agency” has more effect over behaviour than “structure” and that the individual should choose to comply with the commonly accepted views of more experienced individuals in the homogenous academy (Hay & Wincott 1998).

Academic socialization from this narrow socialization perspective thus assumes a direct relationship between the way students think about learning (*conceptualising*), approach learning (either with a *surface approach* (memorising) or with a *deep approach* (abstracting, understanding and developing as a person) which in turn are linked to their *perception of the learning environment* and finally their *learning outcomes* (Haggis 2003). Although this view suggests that the ideal, “deep learning” involves development of the person, this development is not on the individual’s or even the group’s terms. The student is expected to ‘understand’ in the way the hegemony expects them to understand and ‘develop’ in the way prescribed by the hegemony. Research within this view of academic socialization and university literacy assumes that it is possible to examine the success or otherwise of students’ academic socialization by looking for a mismatch between the academy’s view of socialization and the students learning outcomes. However, this view assumes firstly that there is a clear relationship between the four aspects of learning (conceptualization, approaches to learning, perceptions of learning environment and learning outcomes) and secondly that there is one academy that can clearly be discerned and finally that pedagogy within this academy can definitely influence student learning outcomes. Additionally, this view of academic

socialization assumes that the hegemonic academic Discourse (usually white, male, Western) is necessarily correct in its way of thinking and being and that the student needs to change to fit into the academy rather than the academy changing to fit the student.

The view of academic socialization and perspective on university literacy described above manifests in a variety of ways in the *GU* foundation programme curriculum, pedagogy and research conducted within the programme. The foundation programme itself is designated a “developmental programme” (Bielenburg 2004). This term reflects a Discourse rooted in the liberal-Humanist tradition, which focuses on benefiting individual students who are perceived to be “underprepared” for university due to a lack of exposure to academic culture in their ethnic or socio-economic group (McCabe & Day 1998) and thus has a benevolent aim. So-called ‘developmental programmes’ initially concentrated on remediation of skills in the core subjects of English and Mathematics, however, have more recently focused on developing the students’ academic and social practices within the university context and include curricular and co curricular activities aimed at “increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement” (Barefoot 2000).

The value of these developmental programmes as traditionally conceived in countries such as the USA, in countries like South Africa or in the Gulf region is questionable. This is because most students in South Africa and the Gulf and indeed many lecturers in the Gulf could be described as ‘underprepared’ for the traditional academy due to the different literacy practices in their home culture as opposed to those valued in the traditional Western academy. Additionally, the focus in developmental programmes on the “1st year experience” and the learning of “generic academic skills” (McCabe & Day 1998) suggests erroneously that once these students have been “inducted” into the “(homogenous) culture of the university (through study skills training, preparatory courses etc), they will be able to use the “skills” they have learnt for the rest of their university education” (Haggis 2003). Thus although developmental education has taken a “social turn” (Barefoot 2000), it and other Discourses within the academic socialization perspective sometimes veer more towards the “study skills” view of

academic literacy than an academic literacies view, which would value the experiences and diversity of the students rather than pointing out their deficit from the point of the view of the hegemony. Developmental education and other academic socialization Discourses are also particularly problematic within the Gulf context since, as described in my context chapter, there is a constant tension between the rival meta-Discourses of Arab/ Islamic culture and USA/Westernization (often conflated with Internationalization) and both Discourses and their adherents are sometimes powerful and powerless within the Gulf context in general and the *GU* context in particular.

Pedagogy within the *GU* foundation programme complies with the academic socialization perspective of literacy as described by Lea and Street (1998). For example, there is a focus within the English writing curriculum on so-called 'process writing'. Originating with the *Bay Area Writers Project* in 1974/ 1975, this approach towards teaching writing suggests the teaching of writing as "a process rather than a product" and the use of peer feedback in the writing and editing process (Thomas 1979). Thus, it focuses on the orientating or socializing of learners towards the task of writing. However, this approach can hold some dangers, as outlined in the previous chapter, where teacher cues and assistance in the writing 'process' sometimes resulted in the respondents meaninglessly repeating the input material. Also, the 'process writing' method does not take cognizance of the fact that the writing process consists of a set of practices which are particular to specific social groups who understand the purpose of writing in different ways. Process writing can result in a 'process' of mechanistic correction based on the monolithic view of literacy as atomized skills, privileging one set of literacy practices over the plethora of literacies involved in creation of any text. Thus there can never be a generic process. The 'process writing' method, especially as practiced within the *GU* foundation course - without particular content or social context, becomes mechanistic focusing on mere writing without any particular content or context. Process writing becomes mere re-drafting and rewriting based on language errors as perceived by the teacher and/or the students' peers instead of a process of invention and reinvention of knowledge constructs.

The emphasis on so-called ‘learner strategy’ training (Oxford 1990) in the foundation course curriculum is another example of pedagogy within the academic socialization perspective at *GU*. The implication of Oxford’s Discourse is that, if students are made aware of their learning strategies and are trained to make use of other learning strategies by “aligned teaching” (Biggs 1999), these “deep approaches” will lead to “engagers” (Haggis 2003). Unfortunately, as Haggis indicates, this is a conflation of relatively fixed cognitive styles with changeable strategies. Also, strategies, which might be associated with “surface approaches” (for example memorization), do not necessarily mean less successful or engaged learners (2003).

The pedagogies described above assume that if the learning environment (pedagogy) is appropriate and the students’ perception of the learning environment, conceptualization and approaches comply with that of the monolithic academy or at least he/she is “amenable to molding in this direction” (Haggis 2003) as a result of personal qualities such as motivation, he/she will be a “good student” and have good outcomes. Therefore, there has been a flurry of research activity (mostly unpublished) and professional development activities within the foundation programme to discover whether students are ‘good learners’ in terms of their motivation and use of learning strategies and even *action research* to determine whether there has been an increase in the use of certain learning strategies after explicit instruction (Gillway 2003; Bodwell, Humphreys *et al.* 2004; Niles and Ourghi 2004; White-Gottsche 2004).

In this chapter, I first examine evidence of the academic socialization ‘lens’ in the curriculum documents and in the perceptions of ESP teachers and Humanities’ Faculty as reflected in interviews. Then employing the academic socialization lens myself, I examine data gained from an electronic Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) survey of students and teachers conducted in 2003 within the foundation programme as well as other smaller studies focusing specifically on reading and listening strategies and motivation. All of the student respondents in my study took part in these surveys while they were in the foundation course. I also examine my respondents’ course surveys, writing and comments in the interviews

assuming that their writing and narratives are a transparent medium of representation and that I can obtain evidence of their academic socialization by examining these artifacts. Finally, I unpack the Discourses reflected in the curriculum, student, ESP teacher and faculty discourse.

Orientation towards Learning

The new English curriculum which was introduced in the *GU* foundation programme in January 2002 clearly falls within the narrower academic socialization view of literacy with a focus on “knowledge, skills and dispositions”(UGRU 2003) and with its emphasis on both “surface” (knowledge and skills) and “deep” (dispositions) learning (Henning, Mamiane *et al.* 2001). The introduction to the curriculum admonishes that the outcomes in the learning areas of “grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, speaking, learner training and thinking skills” should “not be seen in isolation” since “learners need knowledge of what to do, repeated practice to allow for the development of the skill of how to do it, as well as a positive disposition toward what they are doing, based on a belief in the validity of the goal and the possibility of success” (UGRU 2003). There is also mention of the importance of co curricular activities such as clubs, the use of the independent learning centre and so on. However, although, for example, the vocabulary taught in the curriculum is described as appropriate for the “academic environment”, this academic environment is not defined. There appears to be an assumption that it is a homogenous and universally agreed-upon context, rather than contested and multiple contexts.

From the Academic Literacies perspective (which I privilege in this thesis) the implied neutrality of this “knowledge of what to do” as designated in the curriculum suggests that, as in Clerehan and Walker’s report on students in Singapore, students are being taught “how to think” as well as “what to think” (2004). Although a real attempt is made to socialize students into the academy within a “facilitative”, developmental program with “opportunities for practice, extra input, feedback and support” as well as “Independent Learning Centres,

Tutorial Centres, CALL, clubs” and so on (UGRU 2005), there is no recognition that a unified academy may not exist or if it does, there is no questioning as to its appropriateness or otherwise for these particular students.

The notion of “learner training” mentioned above permeates the curriculum with the belief that students can be trained or conditioned into outcomes such as “recording information effectively for own future use”, meeting “project deadlines” or analyzing “tasks independently or collaboratively” (UGRU 2005). What is concerning from an Academic Literacies perspective is that these “processes” of “learning or acquisition” along with the learners’ “social and emotional adaptation to the new language and culture” (Oxford 1990) appear to occur in a vacuum with no analysis of the socio-historical origins of the processes, language or culture and academic environment. This is problematic from a critical realist ontology since ‘the real’, in this case academic socialization, is always influenced. Additionally, the students are expected to be “self-directed” and both learn consciously and acquire knowledge unconsciously, yet the Discourse(s) behind the knowledge are not examined thus, from my perspective, true academic socialization cannot occur.

“Thinking skills” which includes both “critical” and “creative” thinking are described as part of the curriculum competencies (UGRU 2005). However, the actual tasks involved appear to reflect a colonized view of academic socialization with tasks such as transferring information from one format to another and organizing notes in different formats which appear to involve very little creative thinking and more of the type of prescriptive “critical thinking” we have already discussed. The kind of “problem-solving” involved in the English foundation course curriculum appears to be supporting or refuting opinions given in amorphous “light academic texts” or writing essays following a generic structure for academic essays with topics such as: “The [Gulf] needs trains. To what extent do you agree with this statement” (Level 2 Essay Topic 2004). These types of texts do not, of course, relate to any identifiable academic tasks

and the focus on these type of essays calls into question the nature of the academy into which these students are being apprenticed.

The type of “thinking skills” described above are in contrast with the new Mathematics and IT Problem-Based Learning Project where students are given the opportunity to truly think of creative solutions to real-life problems with no correct or incorrect answers (Programme 2005). However, there are problems in the PBL pedagogy as put into practice at *GU* in that, although it encourages some aspects of academic socialization through “collaboration” and group activity (Moursund 2005), the lack of explicitness in expectations (for example expectations regarding acknowledgment of sources) and the fact that the PBL learner interacts mainly with his/her peers, preclude engagement with the academy/ academies at *Gulf University*.

In the same way, the curriculum claims that students are acculturated into the information literacy practices of the university. For example, the practice of avoiding “cheating and plagiarism” (UGRU 2003) are referred to in the conceptual framework, yet most of the actual tasks that students must perform do not involve referral to sources of information except in the form of answering comprehension style questions, transferring visual or other information into new formats or finding information in texts all of which, by their very nature, result in plagiarism or inappropriate citation of sources.

Although the ESP Academic Writing Course involves some more detailed genre analysis, the examples below evidence the type of questions I have just mentioned which are prevalent throughout the foundation course levels. However, questions D and E of Example 2 do evidence the beginning of genre analysis. Example 3, from materials used for Level 2 students, shows the typical “comprehension” type of question used in the foundation course,

while Example 4 shows the “information transfer” type of writing task used in the foundation course (Level 2 and Level 3) to ‘train’ students for the first writing question in the IELTS examination.

Example 1 (Academic Goldmine 2006)

Language Focus: What an e-mail looks like

1. Read these e-mails and answer the questions. Underline the sentence in the e-mail which tells you the answer.

- a. Which e-mail gives a meeting time? _____
- b. Which asks for more information? _____
- c. Which gives good news? _____
- d. Which is an apology? _____

A.

From: 200101010@uaeu.ac.ae
To: thomasson@uaeu.ac.ae
Subject: Sorry

Dear Teacher:

My name is Sameera Abdulla - Sec. 51. I am sorry I missed our appointment yesterday because I was sick, and could not come to University. Could you please give me a time for next week?

Looking forward to meeting you.

Sameera Abdulla

B.

From: 200105015@uaeu.ac.ae

To: anderson@uaeu.ac.ae

Subject: Unclear

Dear Miss Jane:

My name is Amal Saad - Sec. 53. I am writing because this morning in class I did not understand when the project is due, and I could not ask in front of the other students.

Please tell me when I should have my project ready. Will you need all my work or just the report?

I apologise for the inconvenience.

Amal Saad

Example 2 (Curriculum Committee 2006)

7.

Evaluating Introductions

Read the 2 Introductions and answer the questions by putting A or B.

6 points

- A. Which Introduction gives the writer's opinion about food? _____
- B. Which Introduction talks about the situation in the past? _____
- C. Which Introduction includes information about the Method? _____
- D. Which Introduction has correct punctuation? _____
- E. Which Introduction is better? _____

Introduction A

This report is about healthy eating habits. In the past, most people did not worry about the food they ate. They only became concerned if they became fat, or did not get enough food. However, over the past 20 years more and more research has shown that even slim people can become very unhealthy if they are not careful about what they eat. Everyone needs to know about what foods they should eat to stay healthy. This report will describe a survey into what

people know about the different foods their bodies need to stay healthy.

Introduction B

This report is about healthy eating habits there are many people who eat unhealthy food I like to eat chocolates and ice cream but I think this is ok.

We wrote a questionnaire and asked a lot of people about food. I liked the results because all the people agreed with me I asked questions like ‘why do you like chocolates’ and ‘do you like eating ice cream every day’ and other questions.

In my opinion, it is very important everyone knows about food and I hope people will eat the same food that I like.

Example 3 (Knighting 2000)

The main idea of a paragraph is what all the sentences are about. Read the paragraph and ask, “What’s your point?” That will help you zero in on the main idea.

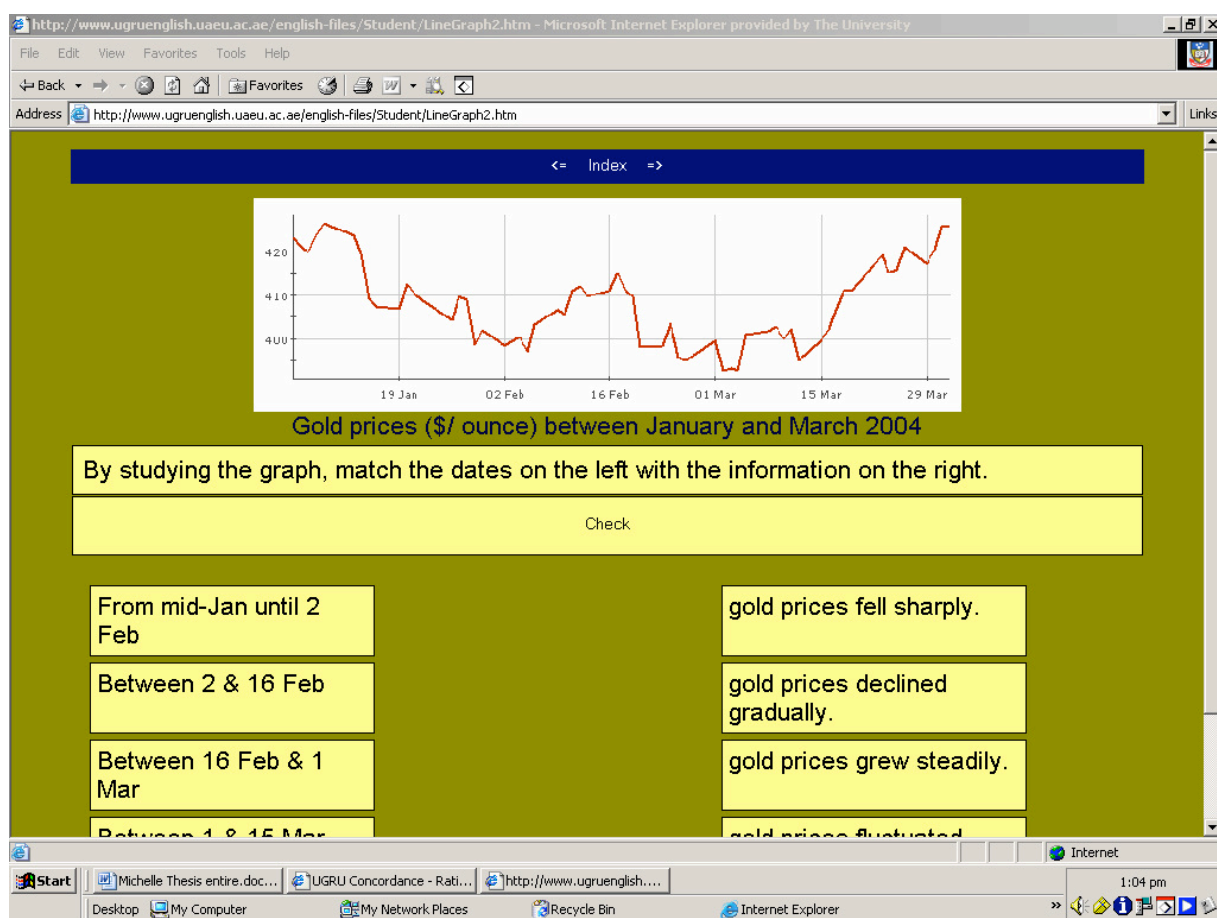
Read each paragraph carefully. Choose the best answer to the questions that follow.

1. Juan loves to play games. His favorite game is chess because it requires a great deal of thought. Juan also likes to play less demanding board games that are based mostly on luck. He prefers Monopoly because it requires luck and skill. If he’s alone, Juan likes to play action video games as long as they aren’t too violent.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

- a. Juan dislikes violence.
- b. Juan likes to think.
- c. Juan enjoys Monopoly.
- d. Juan enjoys playing games.

Example 4 (Wright 2006)



The curriculum documents, also assume that the concept of information literacy and its associated practices is universally accepted as suggested by the following “skills and dispositions” deemed “necessary to become information literate” (UGRU 2005):

- recognising the need for information;
 - accessing information;
 - evaluating, and analyzing that information for its accuracy and relevance; and
 - using it effectively and ethically.
- (UGRU 2005)

There is no discussion of the context(s) within which information arises, how Discourses influence the access, evaluation and analysis of information or how what is viewed as “effective” or “ethical” is affected by the Discourse(s) of the university and specific disciplines. Also, in the curriculum and other documents at *GU*, like those of many Western universities, the assumption is that writing is “transparent” and “autonomous” (Lillis and Turner 2001). There is no understanding that Discourses such as ‘plagiarism’ and ‘cheating’ are socially and historically constructed and that students need to understand and support the assumptions underlying these Discourses before they can be socialized to comply with their rules (Ashworth, Bannister *et al.* 1997; Lea & Street 1998; Lillis & Turner 2001).

This is particularly troubling since the information literacy practices related to the Primary Discourse of most students and many lecturers at *GU* are very different from those that the Western hegemonic academy claims to support. For example, word for word recitation of religious texts is seen as a sign of respect, rather than ‘plagiarism’ or lack of original thought within Islamic culture, although there is debate whether this practice is acceptable for other types of texts (Amanullah 2006). Also, some Islamic scholars (including the Hanafī scholars, imam al-Qarafi of the classical period and the more modern Taqi al-Din al-Nabahani) even view the ownership and acceptance of money for text (which is seen as a repository of knowledge) as unacceptable to Islam, since it is ‘forbidden’ to conceal knowledge. There is, however, debate concerning copyright and plagiarism within Islam and other classical jurists,

including Shafi'is, Malikis, Hanbalis and later Hanafis, and most modern jurists support the author's right to protect his/ her text and receive compensation for it, viewing the quotation of text without citation as dishonest. In the same way as most Western universities, however, *GU* does not openly encourage debate or discussion on issues such as plagiarism and students are merely provided with a list of rules such as those in the *GU Academic Honesty Policy document* (University Senate 2004) and there is no explication of the academic culture, value and Discourses that underpin the policies.

Despite the fact that many of the materials evidence a "study skills" orientation towards academic literacy, the curriculum competencies for writing as seen in the foundation course English Conceptual Framework appear to suggest a more genre-based approach or at least an understanding that different academic texts are "structured in particular ways" and that there are a variety of text-types within different communities of practice which need to be made explicit (Clerehan & Moodie 1997). This reflects the contested nature of the academy, even within the foundation programme with the materials, conceptual framework, curriculum etcetera influenced by the large, diverse and ever-changing parade of ex-patriate lecturers and administrators at *GU*.

There are varied conceptions of the genre-based approach. It can fall within the limited academic socialization lens as described in this chapter, or the broader academic literacies type of socialization, since it includes "staged, goal-orientated purposeful" activities within a specific target culture (Martin 1984) or "moves" which the writer makes in different genres within a community where he/she "shares a common purpose" (Swales 1990) as well as a more "plural" (Paltridge 2004) view where there are multiple identities as well as multiple genres and it places emphasis on multiple contexts in the same way as the academic literacies perspective. However, the number of actual genres or text-types that appear in the writing component at *GU* at least is extremely limited with only journal writing, generic 'essays' and

‘information transfer’ (writing about information given in line graphs or bar charts) mentioned explicitly in the foundation course (Fundamentals, Level 1,2,3) conceptual framework or syllabi and only e-mail writing and survey report writing/ research report writing mentioned in the ESP1 (generic ESP Academic Writing Course) syllabus (UGRU 2005). There is no reference made to multiple identities or differences in academic culture(s) or any detailed description of a variety of academic context(s) in any of the foundation programme curriculum documents, although the following words in the *GU* University *Strategic Plan* on the surface seem to indicate an understanding of the multiple genres and identities of academia and the need to “switch practice” and move between these genres:

The *GU* curriculum aims to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. *GU* adopts the concept of interdisciplinary work wherever possible.

(Nahayan 1997)

This, however, reflects an extremely limited switching of practices related to the flexible workforce required by the so-called “information economy” (Castells 2000: 1). *GU*, like many other higher education institutions worldwide aims to provide a workforce able to “transcend disciplinary boundaries” and switch practices in order to comply with the needs of industry rather than any desire to transform the Discourses or practices of higher education as evidenced by the desire to “scrutinize the curricula in line of internationally accepted criteria to ensure that our graduates will meet the calibre sought by industry” and to “develop a strategy to seek non-governmental funds to support research and graduate programs”. As already discussed, it also appears that the Discourses of genre and process writing within genres are very limited within the *GU* University foundation programme.

In terms of vocabulary, the *GU* foundation programme aims to both expose students to specific vocabulary items including “the 2, 000 most frequent words in the English language as well as the 570 general academic words on the Academic Word List” as well as raise awareness of “vocabulary learning strategies” (UGRU 2005). The vocabulary items selected as “most frequent” and “general academic words” are, as discussed previously, problematic in that they do not necessarily represent the most frequently used vocabulary items in modern use. In addition, because fields within faculties are becoming more and more specialized, the study of “generic” academic vocabulary may be of little practical use. Although the use of “generic” academic vocabulary might suggest a desire to practice interdisciplinarity, it does not acknowledge the fact that true interdisciplinary work requires an in-depth knowledge of the practices, genres and contexts of each field rather than just decontextualized vocabulary items. The quotation below from the *GU* Concordancing website reflects this decontextualization, suggesting that the only context that students require is the knowledge that lexical items appear in their textbooks.

It is not expected that students or teachers will wish to find the source of any example {my italics}; nevertheless, text references are provided in each concordance table thus increasing face validity by concretely connecting the examples to their textbook sources. Students sometimes feel that the only reason to learn vocabulary is to pass an English test, but when they encounter the words repeatedly in Maths and ICT courses as well, they start to realize their value in the broader sense.

(Cambrensis 2006)

In general, the *GU* foundation course curriculum documents and materials follow the narrow academic socialization perspective described by Lea and Street (1998). They appear to assume that there is a unified academy that students should be apprenticed into and that, if they individually follow the appropriate strategies with the appropriate “disposition” or attitude, they will be successful in their studies. Thus as in the model described by Haggis (2003), there is an assumption that appropriate conceptualization of the university programme and learning materials, the “right” approach to learning (using critical and creative thinking and

information literacy “skills”) the appropriate perception of the learning environment (fostered by co-curricular activities) will lead to effective learning outcomes with students acculturated into a homogenous university “culture”. However, as I have already suggested above, the academic socialization Discourse as evidenced in these documents is deeply flawed.

The ‘Academy’ Comments

From the narrow academic socialization perspective, students’ acculturation into the academy and academic success can be measured against the expectations of academics within the academy. Therefore, in order to examine the students’ academic socialization into the ‘academy’, I interviewed four faculty members from the Humanities Faculty at *Gulf University* (the faculty within which all my respondents studied). One of these respondents is from the United States of America, one from Germany, while the third and fourth respondents are nationals who completed their PhD studies in the USA.

In general, the four faculty members were not satisfied with the students’ socialization within their perceived academy. They highlighted several concerns with the students’ socialization, which they perceived as resulting from ‘deficiencies’ in the foundation course and follow up ESP1 Academic Writing Course. As mentioned in the context chapter, the foundation programme lecturers in their turn tend to blame the school system, which in turn blames the parents and the students’ background. Thus this narrow academic socialization model of literacy also implies that student literacy problems arise because of individual and social ‘deficit’.

Firstly, the Humanities Faculty members felt that the students lacked the ability to read the large amount of text required in the faculty as evidenced by the following:

They have to read so much ... there are so many readings in the curriculum... we never get through them all ... (Faculty Respondent 1),

I have to pick and choose what I teach them and we spend all our time in class reading and explaining what the words mean to the students...why can't you just focus on reading skills (Faculty Respondent 2).

Two of the reasons they give for this perceived inability is the large amount of specialized vocabulary within the texts and a perceived lack of 'reading skills' as already evidenced above. These aspects are reflected in the following:

We have so much terminology to teach the students ... it is exactly like a college course in the USA, nothing is changed for this environment ... so all I do is teach them words all day (Faculty Respondent 3),

They just read the material ... but don't understand anything ... the main idea passes them by it is just words... I don't know, I passed TOEFL and all my college courses ... they need to learn those reading skills (Faculty Respondent 4).

The two quotations above ironically examine the 'cause' of and 'solution' for the students' 'problems' from within different Discourses. Faculty Respondent 3 suggests that a lack of faculty-specific (ESAP) vocabulary teaching could assist students in their reading, while Faculty Respondent 4 views the problem as arising from a lack of generic 'reading skills'.

The faculty respondents also suggest that problems with reading result in problems with writing in terms of paraphrasing and synthesizing and plagiarism as suggested by the following:

All I see is cut and paste in assignments, they can't read...so they can't write...they just copy everything directly from internet sources (Faculty Respondent 1),

The students don't seem to be able to express ... use their own words ... if they read something ... they just copy chunks of it down ... only if they do assignments without text... from their own experience... then you see something (Faculty Respondent 2),

I just see a list of quotations ... or copied text ...without quotations ... they can't put the text together and support an idea ... it is all about reading ... they don't understand the words ... so they copy (Faculty Respondent 3).

Because of these perceived problems with reading and, therefore, with writing, three of the faculty respondents suggest “sheltered reading courses” designed in collaboration with faculty would be of greater use than the more generic foundation course and generic ESP Academic Writing Course as evidenced in the following:

We just don't have the time to get through all the materials ... that should be the job for ESP. We give you the core materials and you help the students to understand the vocabulary and work through the texts... we really need a sheltered reading course (Faculty Respondent 1),

That is really the aim of this general humanities course ... to give the students the basic terminology and develop their reading and critical thinking skills ... but we have too many materials I just ignore most of them really ... it needs to be step for step ...the reading as they are learning the information (Faculty Respondent 2),

We need an ESP course which is a partnership ... you have just writing ... but the reading is the biggest problem ... it is the basis ... we need to solve this problem in a team (Faculty Respondent 3),

They don't have the vocabulary and we don't have the time to teach them! I have to explain every single word. They need English courses where they just sit and read the material they need for our courses ... I am not an English teacher, I am here to teach content (Faculty Respondent 4).

The respondents' suggestion of "sheltered reading courses" within the faculty appears to comply with the broader academic socialization perspective in that it seems to acknowledge the embedded nature of literacy/ literacies within the faculty. However, the majority of their Discourse appears to be a deficit Discourse, focusing on the reading or writing 'skills' which the students lack with words like "problem", and "they don't have" constantly repeated. The focus in the respondents' narrative appears to be on the mechanics of reading within their faculty (specific lexical items, terminology or generic paraphrasing or synthesizing skills) rather than on the ways of knowing and Discourses behind these ways of knowing within the faculty. However, their desire for a "team" approach suggests the beginning of a broader academic socialization Discourse. The issue is of course whether this "team" will undertake a detailed analysis of the genres and Discourses of the discipline, or whether the ESP teacher will merely be expected to "fix" the students' English, so that the faculty member will be permitted to continue their 'important' job of teaching 'content'. I fear that it will be the latter, unless a joint understanding of the nature of literacy within a particular discipline and the roles of the Faculty and language support lecturers can be negotiated. Faculty Respondent 2's description of his role in the general humanities course suggests that this new initiative may go some of the way towards a more embedded approach. However, he and the other faculty members still appear to be struggling with the vast amount of American college (Faculty Respondent 3) materials.

One Humanities Faculty member noted that the ESP Academic Writing Course produced writing of a better quality than that commonly produced within the Humanities Faculty and that this was possibly a result of the "sheltered writing process" which the students underwent in the ESP AWC course, but she bemoaned that the AWC only focused on one genre (the survey report) which was not necessarily a primary focus in her field as evidenced in the following:

They do write very good survey reports ... much more structured than before I gave my students a survey assignment and I could not believe it ... then they told me that they did it in the ESP...step by step ...so they know ... but they use this language all the time now ... you know, “One interesting result shows that...” and they are not talking about results ... maybe they are describing something an individual said ... or people did ... like I sent them to observe a wedding and describe characteristics and they were talking of results! There are so many types of writing in our course... but only the survey report ... this is not enough ... and just writing...(Faculty Respondent 3).

She also complained that because of their extended exposure to the survey report genre, the students inappropriately made use of features of that genre when writing in other genres, as seen in the quotation above. From the academic socialization perspective, which I use and unpack in this chapter, the students have not been ‘orientated’ towards the appropriate genres. However, from an academic literacies perspective, the cause of this ‘error’ lies rather the fact that the survey report genre is taught as a generic model, decontextualized from its usual context of particular forms of research or knowing than because of a deficiency in the students’ ability to transfer skills. The generic approach can be seen in the reduction of the survey report genre to a very simplified model as revealed in the following extracts from the course book (Curriculum Committee 2005):

Example 5:

1. Look at the questions in this questionnaire. Circle all the main verbs you find in each question. Underline the subjects in each question. Look at your results and answer the following questions.

- a. Are all the questions written in the same way?
- b. How many kinds of questions are there?
- c. How are they different?

Language Focus: Writing Questions

You will need to know how to write 3 different kinds of questions to complete your *questionnaire* [*my italics*],

Example 6:

<i>A good conclusion should</i> [my italics]	<i>A good conclusion should not</i> [my italics]:
• Stress the importance of the thesis statement • Give the report a sense of completeness • Leave a final impression on the reader • Echo the introduction • Look to the future	• Introduce new points or ideas • Change your point of view • Reword your introduction • Apologise • Offer a friendly greeting, e.g. Have a nice day!

The implication of materials like these is that questions in a survey always look the same way and that a “good conclusion” in a survey report is always structured in the same way. Additionally, the examples in the book had a limited number of questions (usually six) and the example survey reports surveyed only ten respondents. This is also reflected in some of the instructions in the separate Project Pack like, “You will need to interview 10 people for your survey” (Curriculum Committee 2005). It was left up to the individual teachers to contextualize, discuss the implications of sample size and the Discourses related to the survey genre. The following comments from the summary of an Academic Writing Teachers meeting (ESP Teachers 2005) reflect that the ESP lecturers are equally dissatisfied with the limited genres as the faculty respondents. They also mention the lack of situated practice (“authentic texts”) and the fabricated appearance of the generic course as evidenced in the following extracts from the summary:

Book

- Book encourages padding of report.
- Need for real world email samples 6 Qs and 10 respondents is a minimum not a requirement
- Not enough reading. Need to reading to process information and then write about it

Project

- More models needed – example on page 17/18 not a good one (too short) – on-line/ in book/ in Goldmine/ ILC etc
- Give pattern of sentences for intro, method, results etc. More flexible and less formulaic

Survey

- 6 Qs and 10 respondents is a minimum not a requirement
- What is a good/ bad survey needs to be further defined

Research

- More practice in evaluating authentic sites.
- Develop supplemental readings to answer/ refine research qs

(ESP Teachers 2005)

In the summary above, the ESP lecturers reflect a desire for a more ‘situated practice’ with words like “authentic sites” and their desire for less “formulaic” examples. However, sadly, the ‘problem’ of a limited, generic survey report as the main task in an ESP course was addressed by the planning of a new, even more generic course where students would be expected to “display appropriate levels of formality, understanding of shared knowledge, and stylistic appropriacy”, “use appropriate rhetorical modes e.g. description, evaluation, argumentation, comparison, classification etc”, “use appropriate vocabulary, appropriate content level for audience (“insider knowledge”)” (Curriculum Committee 2006) based on their experience of ‘light academic readings’ and general examples. Thus it is likely that without recognition of the embedded nature of literacy, the faculty members “problems” with the students writing will continue.

Finally, all four Humanities Faculty members complained about the students’ orientation towards the creation of knowledge in their field. They suggested that the students did not substantiate their claims to knowledge as suggested by:

They just make sweeping unsubstantiated statements ... they don’t know how to work with content (Faculty Interview 1).

They also complained about the students citation skills as suggested by:

...they just copy chunks of it down (Faculty Respondent 3) and;

I just see a list of quotations ... or copied text ...without quotations
(Faculty Respondent 2)

This, they suggested, was as a result of a lack of exposure to content in general and appropriate strategies for dealing with content in academic writing as seen in the following:

I think the problem is no one taught them ... taught us how to work with information ... we just learnt to memorize at school and repeat what the teacher or the book said ... it is so hard for the students ... even me when I went to the USA ... people are arguing, discussing issues ... I am just quiet ... projects are so important for that ... to learn what is facts, information ...how to use other people's words (Faculty Respondent 3),

We need to teach about how to get information ... how to work with information ... cite appropriately (Faculty Respondent 2),

Their Discourse thus still reflects a narrow academic socialization perspective which articulates the “aims and values” of the hegemony within higher education (Haggis 2003). From this perspective, there is one clear ‘appropriate’ way to work with text which students need to acquire. A broader academic literacies Discourse would instead see problems such as plagiarism from the perspective of the students who are experiencing the process of acculturation and focus on how an embedded explicit pedagogy could remedy the situation. Plagiarism, for example, could be as the result of a deeper “lack of shared understanding between students and teachers regarding the nature” of citation within the Discourse (Hounsell (1987) cited in Haggis (2003)) as well as problems of expression, rather than just the lack of practical citation “skills”(Pennycook 1994; Pennycook 1996). Thus an academic literacies perspective would agree that strategies for working with content are important to

help students to become part of the academy. However, from this perspective, literacy practices are “complex, contested, specific, and, above all, contextualised” (Haggis 2003). Thus the pedagogy and content needs to be explicit and specific to the faculty/ department/ subject. Rather than attempting to create generic English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) courses, an academic literacies approach would suggest pedagogical approaches such as concurrent enrolment of students in “linked language and discipline-specific content courses” and a close collaboration between language and content instructors (Song 2006). This type of pedagogy requires a commitment from both the English/ language support staff and faculty within the disciplines to explicate the features of the Discourse (Haggis 2003). In addition, the academic literacies perspective suggests that this explication process needs to be constantly repeated within different contexts and at different levels of study as discourses/ Discourses are complex and contested and even experienced academics are in a continual learning process (Haggis 2003). Thus the view that students can be academically socialized within a generic once-off course and that the Academic Writing Course or students are lacking because they are not appropriately ‘orientated’ towards their faculty because of this is flawed. Although there are many problems with the course, the whole context within which it operates is problematic, rather than merely the pedagogy within the course.

The four faculty members reflect the narrow academic socialization/generic academic English Discourse in their belief that there are general behaviours and attitudes common to all university environments and that these should be adopted by the students. This is indicated by statements such as the following:

They should know how to reference properly...this is a university after all...”
(Respondent 1) and;

There is no analysis of information ...what do they think they are doing here? (Faculty Respondent 4)

However, despite believing that their perception of the academy was the correct one, the four faculty respondents admitted that not all members of their faculty or department supported their views:

They just stand up there and lecture and then set the students multiple choice tests...there is no interaction or debate in the class (Faculty Respondent 2),

Some lecturers believe that it is about memorization of content...they are very hostile to the new ideas in the faculty (Faculty Respondent 1).

Interestingly, the faculty members that my respondents “pathologize” (Haggis 2003) in this way are non-local Arab lecturers. It appears, therefore, that my respondents construct not only the students, but also many of their colleagues as ‘deficient’. This reflects the colliding contexts and Discourses of my context chapter with the four respondents constructing themselves as the ‘academy’ (representing a monolithic Western hegemonic academy) and constructing many of their colleagues as ‘the other’ (representing Islam/ Arabic traditional scholarship).

My four faculty respondents were all new to the faculty at the time of the interviews and were part of the new inter-disciplinary ‘Freshman’ Humanities Programme” with its focus on ‘critical thinking’, applied work and English as a medium of instruction. Two of them were team-teaching courses with Arab colleagues who they were supposed to introduce to “more collaborative, interactive teaching methods” (Faculty Respondent 2). Thus, these new faculty members and the academic Discourse they represent are constructed within the faculty as a vehicle for changing the supposed “peripheral” Discourse and practices within the faculty to those of the “centre”/ hegemonic Western academy (Kazmi 1997).

This construction has ramifications within the faculty. For example, although I attempted to make contact with faculty members of Arab descent (other than nationals), because of the focus within the department on their 're-education', the constant monitoring of their teaching methods and the new use of English as a medium of instruction, there was understandably a hostility towards research about the Humanities Faculty, especially research conducted by Western ex-patriates. Thus in a sense, they are being socialized, often unwillingly, into a monolithic academy in the same way as the students. Interestingly enough, local lecturers were keen to participate in the research. However, it must be noted that it is the practice for all national faculty members to be sent to complete their Masters and PhD degrees in the United States of America and thus they have often been thoroughly acculturated into the Western/American academy. Their reactions on return to the Gulf as lecturers vary. Some show an in-depth understanding of the problems of identity that academic socialisation into the Western academy causes for local students and a desire to create an alternative/ negotiated academy as suggested by the following:

I really understand what they are going through ... for me it was so strange ... I was still me ... in the USA ... but operating in such a different way. It is like ... you need to take some of those bits and use them here ... but there are some things I want to keep ... even in my academic life ... about being [a local] ... you know it is very lonely there ... here you always have family ... people like to talk ... but we don't like to argue and sometimes we need more debate ... (Faculty Respondent 3).

On the other hand some local faculty members bluntly accept the perceived rules of the academy and have difficulty understanding why the students find it difficult to comply:

I managed to learn English, pass my TOEFL...write academic essays and get my PhD... what is wrong with these students...they are just lazy!(Faculty Respondent 4)

The Discourse of the monolithic academy into which students and lecturers should be socialized, along with a lack of discussion on views of academia, as well as the

marginalization of previous views of faculty regarding academia, could be seen as problematic since it creates division within the faculty as well as problems of identity for students and even local lecturers. Some of them articulate these problems as seen in the following:

I came back from the US and I did not know where I belonged...who I was and how I should think about the world (Faculty Respondent 3).

Others, however, suggest that there are certain approaches to learning, attitudes and dispositions; which are universal to tertiary literacy (Willing 1988) and that students should be acculturated into these strategies and behaviours. These interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts have, I believe, resulted from a narrow view of academic socialization. The methodology of taking on this lens has once again highlighted the mismatch between the values, expectations and purposes of academics; and the values, behaviours and outcomes of their students and even their colleagues. However, the identification of this mismatch immediately “raises questions about the place and nature of such purposes and values in the current mass system, revealing as it does an arguably ‘elite’ set of assumptions about student purpose and motivation” (Haggis 2003). Therefore, I believe, my methodology of unpacking the Discourses revealed by the faculty members’ discourse/ Discourse is useful.

Stultifying Strategies

The theoretical basis for much of the foundation programme English curriculum which underpins the attitudes of many academics and their views on ‘orientation towards learning’ lies in the concepts of “language learning strategies” and “cognitive styles” introduced by theorists such as Rubin (1975; 1987; Rubin & Thompson 1994), Pearson (1988) and Oxford (1989; 1990; 1992; 1996; Oxford & Green 1995). This Discourse also reflects the narrow academic socialization lens since it suggests that learning and acquisition particularly in terms of language learning and acquisition depends on the ability of the learners to make use of so-

called learning strategies (LS). Thus according to this Discourse, if they conceptualize appropriately, approach appropriately (using “deep” learning strategies), experience the university environment appropriately (receive effective learning strategy training), they will necessarily achieve appropriate outcomes (Haggis 2003). Once again, the focus is on teaching generic skills since research such as the study conducted by Willing (1988) suggests that the biographical variables of students do not necessarily influence the use of particular learning strategies. Learning strategy research assumes that effective application of these so-called neutral orientations to learning can enable students of any background to succeed in the university or any other learning environment. This research is also focused on defining “the good learner” (Nunan 1995) since, if the strategies that these learners use can be identified, other learners can emulate them and, presumably, become “good learners” themselves. Of course this type of research was conducted using respondents with similar understandings of what learning and literacy entails. The problem with the Discourses of ‘learning strategies’ or ‘learner training’ is that they do not take the socially embedded nature of both learning and acquisition into account and assume that success is based purely upon the actions and dispositions of the individual and that an individual can plan, consciously manipulate and move towards a literacy and/or language goal (Oxford 1990).

This Discourse of narrow academic socialization focusing on individual agency and individual responsibility for learning resulted in a study by the foundation programme Curriculum Committee in October 2003 in which 1928 students in the foundation programme were given an electronic version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version 7 developed by Rebecca Oxford (1989) and requested to report on their use of fifty strategies of language learning according to a frequency scale of one to five (never to always) (Gillway 2003). These strategies are divided into six categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, management and supervision of learning, affective and social (Oxford 1989). The use of this type of “self-report” on strategy use is meant to form part of a three-step process. First, students complete the questionnaire and become aware of their own use of strategies, thereafter teachers can evaluate which strategies students require assistance in and

introduce “strategy training” and finally, post-training questionnaires can evaluate the success of the strategy training (Oxford 1990).

The SILL was used by the foundation programme Curriculum Committee as a type of ‘diagnostic tool’ in order to ascertain which areas of learner training required more emphasis in the foundation programme English Curriculum. In order to get a more “comprehensive picture” of strategy use within the English Communication Department of *GU*, an adapted version of the SILL was given to 114 English instructors and they were required to comment on their perception of the usefulness of the same fifty strategies as well as their satisfaction with their students’ use of the strategies. Thus focus is once again placed on the instructors’ view of academic socialization and the academy which was viewed as potentially more accurate than the students’ view, thus again privileging the hegemonic Discourse. Scores were divided as per Oxford’s recommendation (1990) according to low, medium and high use or low, medium and high usefulness or satisfaction with use in the teachers’ questionnaires (Gillway 2003).

The following findings were reported: the teachers indicated that they believed that cognitive, meta-cognitive and compensation strategies were all very useful, while social, memory and affective strategies were perceived as only moderately useful. However, in terms of their satisfaction of student use of these strategies, they indicated satisfaction with student use of compensation, meta-cognitive, social and cognitive strategies, but low satisfaction of memory and affective strategies (Gillway 2003). Compensation strategies include making guesses and using approximations and meta-cognitive strategies include becoming aware of mistakes or planning a schedule. Social strategies include asking native speakers to correct their English and trying to learn about their culture and cognitive strategies involve strategies like practising English and using words in different ways. Memory strategies include connecting words to images and using English words in a sentence, while affective strategies include trying to relax while speaking English and writing down their feelings in a language-learning diary (Bodwell, Humphreys *et al.* 2004). The emphasis of the teachers on the high usefulness or

importance of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies suggests a focus on the academic socialisation of students into the required ways of thinking and thinking about thinking in the academy. However, there is less concern about the students' feelings and social orientation towards the learning environment with some teachers viewing these aspects as "fluff" (Bielenberg Interview 2005).

Students on the other hand, reported high or medium use of all strategies. However, memory and affective strategies were ranked lowest. The Fundamentals level of student showed a higher mean use of all the categories of learning strategy which Gillway suggests is as a result of the emphasis on learning strategies in this level. Also, male students showed a slightly higher mean use of social strategies than female students which is suggested is as a result of norms in Emerati society which prohibit female students from socialising outside the home and thus prevent them from communicating with English speakers (2003). I find it interesting that, although the curriculum documents represent these strategies as "a bag of tricks" which students can acquire, the analysis of the student and teacher responses by Gillway indicates an awareness of the socially embedded nature of strategy acquisition.

From an analysis of the use of individual strategies, Gillway concludes that the teachers' negative views on the usefulness of certain memory and affective strategies affected their use by students. In addition, she suggests that certain strategies, which are given low satisfaction by teachers but high importance such as "I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts" and "I practice English with other students" are a concern as they relate to curriculum objectives, which have obviously not been met. Although she admits that students report higher frequency of use in order to "please the teacher" and thus there is a concern as to the validity of the data, she suggests that "the rank order" can be viewed as significant (2003).

The data was thus used to highlight perceived deficiencies in the teaching of curriculum objectives and in the students' socialization within the foundation programme academy and

steps were taken to remediate the situation. These included awareness raising among teachers with a series of workshops conducted by Rebecca Oxford herself at *GU* in early 2004, materials development by each level to improve 'learner strategy training', a curriculum audit conducted by the Curriculum Committee in order to ascertain whether all the learning strategies were adequately covered by the curriculum objectives and further classroom based research focusing on particular learning strategies in specific skill-areas was initiated (Gillway 2003).

Two classroom-based 'action research' studies followed the strategy awareness programme within the foundation programme. The first, conducted by Bodwell *et al* (2004) focused on reading strategies as described in Rebecca Oxford's "task-based strategy checklist for reading", since reading strategies were highlighted as areas of concern in the SILL conducted in 2003. They reflected that the process of asking students about their use of reading strategies, followed by teaching of those strategies that they reported as using least, resulted in a general increase in the use of reading strategies. Similarly, a study by White-Götsche, which focussed on listening strategies, indicated a heightened awareness of strategy use following the action-research cycle. However, in this second study, the use of some strategies actually decreased while the use of others increased. This, White-Götsche suggests, is a result of the students' conscious selection of those strategies that best suited their needs and learning styles (2004).

Although the focus on learning strategies and on making students aware of their own learning process is indeed useful in orientating students towards learning and can even assist in their understanding of the processes that underpin the construction of knowledge in different fields, it is concerning that there is no acknowledgement of the socio-historical nature of learning environments and even particular strategies employed within those environments. For example, social strategies such as "I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk", "I ask for help from English speakers" or "I try to learn the culture of English speakers", which are seen as characteristic of "good" language learners are, as suggested by Gillway, extremely

difficult for local female students to put into practice since they only have limited contact with a few native English speakers on campus (their teachers in the foundation programme) and rarely if ever socialize outside their own family group. In addition, I acknowledge that strategies can indeed be transferred between educational contexts. For example, “I ask for help from English speakers” which designated a language learning strategy could be transferred into a post-graduate context and become, for example, “I ask for help from my supervisor about research methods”. However, the pedagogy behind the teaching of learning strategies and action research to “improve” the use of certain strategies, namely that the individual neophyte must comply with the rules, expectations and “dispositions” of the academy by following certain strategies, is deeply troubling since it situates the learner as a ‘deficient’. This is in contrast with the original theoretical basis of learning styles and strategies; which implied an acceptance of different ways of learning and indeed suggested that pedagogy should accommodate these different styles and strategies (Nunan 1995). Thus in a sense, learning strategies have been colonized by the dominant narrow academic socialization Discourse(s) prevalent at *Gulf University* and universities in general.

Motivation Matters

In October 2003, the *GU* foundation programme Curriculum Committee also conducted an in-house motivation questionnaire of 1869 students.

Research on student motivation often forms part of the same body of research as learning strategies focusing on how the individual can become a ‘good’ learner and thus also reflects a narrow academic socialization Discourse. The so-called “self-regulated learner” (Pintrich 1999) is affected by motivational factors such as “goal orientation” (Ames 1992) and thus the “motivated” learner is often seen as synonymous with the “good learner”. Motivation research also often relates to studies such as the one conducted by Gardner and Lambert in 1972, which suggested that the “successful learner” of a second language must willingly adopt various

aspects of the target linguistic and cultural group, thus he/ she must have “integrative” rather than “instrumental” motivation (Gardner and Lambert 1972). Once again the onus is placed on the student to adapt and become totally colonized or risk failure and exclusion. However, more recent research, such as that by Meacham *et al* (2003) suggests that institutional reform to accommodate diversity (the students’ Primary and Secondary Discourses) is likely to positively impact on students’ perceptions of their own classroom experiences, and that these positive perceptions are the most important factor in students’ motivation rather than a student’s willingness to submit to the academy.

The study on motivation conducted at *GU* by Niles and Ourghi (2004) was unfortunately quickly buried as a result of the startling results. First, the study suggested that the most motivated learners within *Gulf University* foundation programme were foreign students. This was of extreme concern to the university management since the university was primarily established to serve national students and local society. Secondly, the most motivated and thus, by implication, most successful students were those whose parents had tertiary qualifications. This was also troubling since the majority of *GU* students were 1st generation students (Bielenberg 2005; Morrow 2005). Finally, the research suggested that students who had specific career plans after completion of their studies were generally more motivated.

This research suggests to me one of the problems with research conducted from the narrow academic socialisation perspective, since it generally does not take into account the context, which causes the motivation or lack of motivation and focuses rather on ‘deficit’. The national students are not necessarily deficient in motivation to learn, rather their lack of motivation within the *GU* context compared to the international students from educated families probably arises from the mismatch between the Discourses favoured by the institution and their home Discourses, whereas the international students (many of whom are the children of university lecturers) come from a more “literate” home “culture” than the more “orate” local students (Boughey 2000). In addition, Pierce (1995) describes how issues of “investment” and “identity” have a more significant effect than mere “motivation”. If

becoming acculturated into the academy is complementary to the students' developing 'identity', it is more likely that he/ she will appear motivated. Thus for me, the research emphasizes the importance of an "explicit pedagogy" (Pennycook, 2001) explicating the differences between the home and university Discourses; and for the importance of the university foundation programme, general institutional reform and on-going researcher education as a bridge between these Discourses.

Similarly, the generic academic focus within the English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) foundation and even ESP1 Academic Writing Course delays a focus on a particular content area or field of interest, thus lowering motivation for all but the most goal-orientated learners who are aware of their future career path before entering the University. Since the local students entering the University are primarily seventeen year old high school graduates who are 1st generation students and in fact, in the case of the female students, probably the first female in their family to contemplate working, it is unlikely that they will have a career path identified.

Thus for many students the general academic nature of the UGRU foundation course must appear unfocussed and sometimes even pointless. Even the minimal content/ field specific focus that is suggested by the students' ability to choose a topic within their academic field in the ESP Academic Writing Survey Reports, increased motivation as is discussed in the following section. Likewise, reports from the Problem-Based Learning pilot where they were actively involved with content suggested a markedly high level of motivation and active participation by students (Bielenberg Interview 2005, Gillway Interview 2005). Institutional moves such as the increase of career guidance within the foundation programme and the University as a whole (Caldwell 2005) are also likely to improve student motivation.

Students Socialised?

The narrow academic socialization lens would suggest that the students' orientation towards learning and their perception of the learning environment can be measured. Therefore, my research using this lens also includes data from the ESP Academic Writing Course Evaluation student surveys. Like the reported high use of learning strategies in the SILL survey, the student evaluations of the ESP Academic Writing Course are generally equally positive with over 90% of respondents reporting that the course was useful to them (thus supposedly, they are appropriately orientated towards the learning environment). However, as I will suggest in the following chapter, because of revoicing of teaching Discourse, the students will often reflect what they believe the lecturers 'want' them to say. However, from a narrow academic socialization perspective the students reflected particular enthusiasm about the development of their general writing ability and their acquisition of learner independence and other skills, which they believe will help them in their future careers and university studies. These aspects are suggested by following representative comments from the ESP AWC Course Evaluations which students completed anonymously:

I find write the survey is most valuable because this help me in my major Geography;

I find most how to write project and learn more vocabulary to help in the work;

The research many ideas because maybe I need in future;

The writing every time because when we can write and learn the spelling English and when every writing it is make easy;

This help me practice the English and writing;

I like planning the research report because I learning how to write and organize my writing; and

I can write research now ... I can order my writing.

They particularly report that they enjoy the apprenticing aspect of the course (learning “step-by-step”) (Thomas 2004). This data is interesting when contrasted with the less enthusiastic response from the Humanities lecturers.

In the light of the narrow academic socialisation view of academic literacy, I feel that the most useful gain in the ESP Academic Writing Course is that it ‘orientates’ students towards a new way of knowledge construction, namely that they can assemble data and construct knowledge as opposed to merely recite or repeat it. This is reflected in the quotations below:

I feel I can change things... and I learn how can I can write many true words
(Respondent 6, 2005)

I learn many things like how I start to be researcher and how I can write important information”.
(Respondent 3: 2005)

Result. Because it teaches us how to linked the result and the reason. So we use our thinking in explaining the result (Anonymous)

I like the report because it put all information about my society (Anonymous)

Although the nature of the academy and the contested nature of the academy is not sufficiently explicated, and although the students are not conversant with the variety of genres, styles and Discourses that constitute their particular fields, this first movement towards an understanding of the nature of scholarship must be considered an asset.

However, as “the university” is not pre-formulated, and is merely a “notion” requiring constant reinvention (Bartholomae 1985), academic writing courses and other forms of university literacy/ researcher education need to be on-going and embedded within disciplines and their Discourses. Students need to take part actively in the invention and reinvention of “the university” or they will always remain outsiders on the periphery of academia.

Divining Dangerous Discourses

Re-Designating the “I”

In the preceding chapters of this thesis, I have thus far adopted the lens of the “studies skills” and narrow “academic socialization” perspectives respectively. I have also made use of methods, which are in keeping with the epistemologies underlying these views of literacy; thus both reflecting the plural nature of literacy/ literacies as well as translating the multiple perspectives indicated by the Critical Realist “philosophy”/ ontology into an epistemology and research design. For example, I used concordancing and a direct comparison between vocabulary taught and vocabulary learnt as well as the comparison of individual students’ writing at different stages using quantitative measures. In both cases, I wanted to ascertain if they had responded to the pedagogy directly in the behaviouristic fashion implied by the epistemology underlying the “study skills” view of literacy. Similarly, I used a comparison between the aims of the academy (reflected in curriculum documents and interviews) and the perspectives of the student respondents (reflected in surveys and their writing), assuming that there was a direct relationship between “conceptions, perceptions, approaches and learning outcomes” (Haggis 2003). This method, arises from a more “constructivist” epistemology (Lea & Street 1998) which views “reality”, as constructed by individuals, as a result of their personal experiences and interaction with society and thus sees their writing and narratives as a “transparent medium of representation” .

While describing evidence of pedagogies related to these lenses at *GU*, and detailing the findings of my research undertaken using methods appropriate to these lenses, I have also unpacked what I feel are the problems with engaging the “study skills” or narrow “academic socialization” lenses and described some of the Discourses that these lenses represent. Although I have stated openly throughout the thesis that I am comparing the other two

perspectives of university literacy with the “academic literacies” lens; which I privilege, I have not openly declared my own position and commitment as is expected by a more critical ontology and epistemology (Fairclough 2001). Therefore, as I am finally openly engaging the academic literacies lens in this chapter, which is grounded in a more social constructionist epistemology and since I am using the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA), it is important that I am explicit at this stage about who the “I” in this part of the research is and where “I” stand in relationship to the data.

This explicitness is important in the Critical Realist “philosophy”/ ontology, within which this study operates, since ‘the real’ can only be distinguished by examining its products (Bhaskar 1997), which operate within the “dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation” (Harvey 2002). I need to explicate the “I” in this research, since my interpretation of the Discourses operating at *GU* is influenced by how I myself reproduce and self-cultivate Discourses related to university literacy.

As I have already suggested, I am not part of either of the major colliding contexts/ Discourses I detail in my context chapter. I was, at the time of my data collection, a lecturer at *Gulf University* teaching within the English Communication Programme of the foundation programme. Thus I could be described as part of the academy at this institution. However, the University foundation programme lecturers, although designated “lecturers”, in common with academic “support” lecturers around the world, do not have the status of academics (Boughey 2005) as indicated by their pay rate, teaching load and expectations regarding publishing (they are expected to take part in professional development activities, not necessarily research). This is despite the fact that some of the foundation programme lecturers have completed their PhDs in common with faculty lecturers. On the other hand, as an ESP lecturer without a base or even a desk in the foundation programme, working with students in the faculties and

communicating to a certain degree with faculty lecturers, I could not be truly designated as “belonging” to the University foundation programme. Similarly, personal factors exclude me from both groupings within the academy. The majority of foundation programme lecturers are male, North American and over forty (Reynolds 2005), while I am female, South African and under forty. Faculty were at the time predominantly male, and of Arab descent (GU 2004), once again different from me.

On a deeper level, my secondary academic Discourse was initially constructed at a time of cataclysmic social change in South Africa, where I identified with the political and social struggle for freedom. I am thus constructed within a Secondary Discourse, which arose from resistance to the social, economic and even academic norms of the time and thus, the idea of a homogenous academy is an anathema to me. However, most of my colleagues at *GU* were socialized in contexts where the academy was taken for granted. This is either because they lived in stable democracies (in the case of the Western ex-patriates), where assumptions about academia have developed and ossified over generations, or because (in the case of many Arab lecturers) they were socialized within authoritarian systems with a strong religious (Islamic) base and research suggests that people with strong religious feelings and/ or people who are socialized within extremely religious systems are more likely to be politically conservative (Tessler 2002) and, by implication, therefore, possibly more conservative in their academic and other Discourses as well.

Added to these factors, the majority of both Arab and Western ex-patriate lecturers are motivated by extrinsic factors such as salary and job security (Shaw, Badri *et al.* 1995). Grateful to be receiving salaries which far exceed those in their home countries, most Arab ex-patriates are unwilling and even fearful to ‘rock the boat’ or question the way in which the academy is constructed at *GU*, since the sponsorship system means that if their contract is not

renewed, they are required to leave the country for six months before applying for another university post. Ex-patriate lecturers are also, in general, more conservative in their attitudes, since they need to walk the fine line between their designated role (in the case of Western ex-patriates as ‘reformers’) and expectations that they conform to the “norms and the versions of human relationships” prevalent in the host society (Li 1999). In terms of this aspect I am also different from most of my colleagues in that I choose to work in the Gulf because I was academically interested in the context, rather than because of financial necessity. However, because of my position as a lecturer, albeit an unconventional one, my understanding of the Discourses at work within *GU* will necessarily be different from those of the students due to my relative position of power. Also, since I am working on a PhD within the Western academic tradition, I have also internalized certain conventions and Discourses that would be different from my students.

For all these reasons, although I try to identify the various *truths* “in” and “behind” the narratives of my respondents (Fairclough 2001), these *truths* can only be my version of the *truths*; which is likely to be distinctly different from the *truths* identified by local students, local lecturers and Western or Arab ex-patriate lecturers. Also, *truth/ reality* is constrained and maintained by the relative permanence of “social practice” as manifested in language which also produces and can thus transform social structures (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Additionally, so-called ‘truths’ are, as described by Luke following Foucault, a result of the systematic shaping power of Discourse and they lead to “taken for granted definitions and categories by which governments rule and monitor their populations and by which members of communities define themselves and others” (Luke 1996). Thus it is necessary to examine how the *truths/ realities* are created (*truth* behind the discourse), the way in which the subjects “use texts to make sense of their world and construct social actions and relations” (Luke 1996) (*truth* in the narrative) and how I influence these constructions of *truth/ reality*. By inserting and explicating the “I”, I thus hope to avoid criticisms that Critical Discourse Analysis is “unprincipled” since it attempts to achieve social justice without sufficient “reflexivity” (Widdowson 1998; Pennycook 2001; Henderson 2005). By taking on the academic literacies

lens and attempting to unpack the identities and Discourses; which constitute university literacy at *GU* and by recognizing the contested nature of the academy with a constant awareness of my own position within this academy, I believe I am able to probe the ‘layers’ of this phenomenon and uncover some of the problems and inequalities that lie beneath.

The method of Critical Discourse Analysis is, as indicated by Fairclough *et al* (2001), particularly compatible with my ontological and epistemological framework of Critical Realism, since it examines the “discursive event” of each student narrative/ text simultaneously as “a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice” (Henderson 2005) and thus reveals the “dialectics of cultural reproduction and transformation” (Harvey 2002). Using the tools of CDA, from my position as an outsider to the majority Discourses, I am also able to divine, highlight and even speculate on dangerous Discourses, namely Discourses that *GU* administration and lecturing staff are loath to discuss.

Engaging the Academic Literacies Lens

The academic literacies lens is compatible with the philosophy of Critical Realism in that it recognizes the changing dialectical, contested relationship of identities (plural) within the academy and the social world that supports and maintains the fields, disciplines and faculties of the academy. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a practical method or “conceptual tool” (Henderson (2005) following Weiss & Wodak (2003)) is also particularly compatible with Critical Realism since it unpacks the three different levels of text as described by Luke (1996). Firstly, how the text reflects individual agency; however, this individual agency does not exist in a vacuum, it is socially constructed and represents “the self-cultivated expression of

communal powers” (Harvey 2002). Secondly, how texts portray the ‘truths’ or assumptions prevalent in the society, reflecting “socialization and social control” (Harvey 2002) and finally, the way in which texts “position and construct individuals making available various meanings, ideas and versions of the world” (Luke 1996), thus reflecting the “dialectics of cultural reproduction and self-cultivation” of both individual and society (Harvey 2002).

The texts of student narratives and writing constitute the “historically accessible historical form” (Harvey 2002) which I use as my unit of analysis in this part of the study. I will also contrast the Discourses I uncover and/ or unpack with Discourses previously uncovered in the earlier chapters. I first focus on the social ‘problem’ of academic literacy/ literacies, then identify the “obstacles” to solving the problem by identifying the Discourses that underlie the problem. Next, I consider how “necessary” the problem is to the social network it maintains and transforms, try to find solutions for the obstacles and finally critically reflect on my analysis, once again re-examining my role in the analysis and the ‘problem’ itself.

Divining the Discourses

The respondents’ acquisition and/or learning of the literacy/ literacies necessary to operate within the university environment has been identified in the previous chapter and in the context chapter as a ‘problem’. Research has suggested that there is a mismatch between the primary and secondary Discourses of many of the students and the university Discourses (Gee 1990) and that this has resulted in poor academic performance (Bielenberg 2005; Morrow 2005). Additionally, the academy, as reflected by the faculty respondents, appears to find the students’ performance ‘deficient’ and blames this on a number of factors including the *GU*

foundation course and ESP Academic Writing Courses, their education at school, and personal factors such as ‘motivation’ and ineffective use of ‘learning strategies’. I have argued thus far, that this ‘problem’ lies deeper than merely a lack of “study skills” or individual lack of “academic socialization” in the narrow sense. Instead, I suggest that the ‘problem’ of university literacy for these respondents results from the construction of the academy within universities in general and within *Gulf University* in particular. However, as I have already described as I am a partial outsider to the Discourse(s) that construct university literacy at *GU* I can only ‘divine’ (attempt to detect, sometimes even surmise) the full implications of this construction.

To diagnose or detect the Discourses that underlie the ‘problem’ of inadequate socialization (in both the narrow and the broader sense of the word) of my respondents at *GU*, I first focus on the little “d” discourses of linguistic analysis and genre analysis (Gee 2002). I seek “namings” or “glossifications” (Luke (1996) following Mey (1985)), which identify the Discourses. I also examine the “genres” or “momentarily stabilized forms of social action” (Luke 1996) within which the “namings” operate and then attempt to divine the “cultural representations and social relations and identities” (big “D” Discourses) as “articulated through” these texts (Luke 1996).

“Writing is Important”

The first Discourse that is repeatedly ‘named’ in my respondents’ texts relates to the “literacy myth” as described by Gee (2002). The concept, which Gee and others describe as the “literacy myth” (Graff 1979; Street 1995), is based on the “Great Divide” theory, which suggests that there is a clear distinction between spoken and written language (Olsen 1977).

While spoken language draws from extra-linguistic factors and is, therefore, by its very nature imprecise, written language draws from linguistic units and thus is more precise and conveys meaning “better” than written text (Olsen 1977; Snyder 1990).

Because of this perceived ability to convey meaning, which is reflected in my student respondents’ Discourse, literacy and specifically the act of writing academic texts, is given phenomenal powers. Firstly, it is believed to result in future academic success at university as evidenced in the following statements which suggest student revoicing of teacher and/ or institutional Discourse.

I hope that my writing is the most important one for my education and future life (Student Respondent 1);

I want to tell you so many things about my writing. At first, I feel writing is very important because it helps the student very much (Student Respondent 6).

The acquisition of specific skills, such as writing summaries, is even linked to comprehension as evidenced by:

Writing summary it will be useful in our study because we can use it to understand the important thing (Student Respondent 3).

Secondly, they attribute to literacy the power to influence their success in their future career and life in general with statements like:

Finally, writing is getting much improvement in education and lifetime (Student Respondent 1);

But university writing when you take it, it helps you for life and your life in business for your work (Student Respondent 5).

Literacy and the act of writing is also linked with the ability to give “voice” to the individual and group perspective in statements like:

Sometimes the student has many things to say but she can’t so she can say it by writing (Student Respondent 6) and;

They must learn...so they can give our perspective and not just complain about international laws (Student Respondent 5).

The implication of this Discourse is that the respondents’ perceive writing and its product (texts) as having effects on society and thought processes outside of its specific context, a strong “autonomous text” position. The ‘importance’ of writing is stressed throughout the respondents’ narratives and is particularly noticeable in their portfolios in each of the “reflections”. So much so that the repetition of the words “writing”, “important” and their

dialectical relationship to “future”, and “success” becomes monotonous and even ridiculous in some of the narratives with statements like, for example:

Also, writing makes the greatest people in the world (Student Respondent 1).

As suggested above, this Discourse probably arises out of a revoicing of the Discourses supported by their lecturers or the institution in general. For example, the Discourse of the “autonomous text” is indicated by suggestions in the Communication Curriculum Competencies that students should be able to *express “themselves [my italics]: accurately and coherently to different audiences”* through writing. It could also possibly arise from a conflation of the *GU Mission* to contribute “to the expansion of knowledge” and play “a significant role in leading cultural, social and economic development in the country” with activities like writing within the University.

There are also a variety of practices and contextual influences within the *GU* foundation programme context which support the “literacy myth”. Firstly, the Islamic emphasis on the ‘word’ of Allah as embodied in the Holy Qur’an, gives the written (and thereafter ‘recited’) text powerful symbolism. Traditional Islamic thought views the Qur’an and other religious texts as carrying a “fixed and memorisable” *truth* (Eickelman 1992). Thus, “even where texts are not present” (in the case of Muslims who cannot read), “they behave as if they are” (Eickelman 1992). In fact, because most of the respondents are first generation students, the written word gains even more symbolic power as a means of acquiring the *truths* embodied in the Qur’an and other religious texts previously denied to the respondents’ family and community. Modern Islamic scholars extend the power of the written word beyond

exclusively religious texts and many believe, like the leader of the Muslim Brothers in Sudan, that “Because all knowledge is divine and religious, a chemist, an engineer, an economist, (and) a jurist are all ulama (religious scholars)” (Piscatori (1986:19) cited in (Eickelman 1992)). Thus, not only is the power of the traditional religious scholar weakened (Eickelman 1992), but also the university student gains “cultural capital” (Bourdieu & Passeron 1973) within his/her community as a scholar with the insights into both the religious and secular world. It is, therefore, understandable that the respondents ascribe such symbolic power to the written word.

The production of written texts is also given tremendous symbolic significance within traditional Islamic societies. Horvatic (1994) describes how for example Muslims in the Southern Philippines write down their religious knowledge in a *kitab* (Islamic text) before dying and that this text is revered as a direct communication from Allah. This thesis has already described some of the complexity of the view of text in traditional Islam. For example, although text, both religious and secular, is seen as a revelation from Allah and thus the production or recitation of text confers power on its producer or reader, text is not necessarily viewed as belonging to the producer (Amanullah 2006). Rather, it belongs to all “the faithful” who seek knowledge. Plagiarism and other citation practices usually viewed as inappropriate within the Western academy can therefore possibly result within this context.

Similarly, the context of the *GU* foundation programme and the writing course in particular, can also lead to a combination of a reified text/ production of text and views that certain ideas about writing must be repeated in every text of the ‘reflection’ genre. The constant emphasis on the written word in the programme ascribes significance to written forms of expression above spoken forms since oral skills are viewed as merely a means to “interact with students

and teachers in a university context” (UGRU 2003), or a conduit for asking about and giving information.

Additionally, the ‘process writing’ methodology, as practiced within this institution, provides the student with detailed prompts that can be viewed as constructing the student to write within the genre or as directing/ colonizing the content of their writing. A prompt like “which of the following skills was the most useful for you this semester?” (Teacher’s Prompt Sheet Writing Level 2) implies that one of the so-called “skills” was useful and directs the student towards revoicing and showing their allegiance to the academy with statements like, “writing is the most important one for my education and future life” (Student Respondent 1).

On the other hand, as suggested by Eickelman (1992), enculturation into even the most authoritarian systems allows and even results in dissent or contestation. Perhaps, this is because once they have “spoken through another’s code” (Bartholomae 1985), and truly understand the Discourse, university students are able to position themselves in relation to the Discourse. This is the view suggested by the academic literacies view on literacy/ literacies (Lea & Street 1998) and its associated pedagogy described by the New London Group (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996). Teaching within a multiliteracies pedagogy is presumed to result in a kind of “polyphony – an awareness of and pleasure in the various competing discourses that make up their own” (Harris 1989) or the ability to “mushfake” (pretend to belong to the academy/ Discourse). This sense of contestation is evident in Student Respondent 6’s comment that students “have many things to say”, but “can’t” except in the form of writing. This suggests a Discourse of writing as a form of personal expression, which gives “voice” to the student when other forums are denied.

Student Respondent 5 shows a broader sense of dissent and an awareness of the social in her use of the possessive pronoun “our” to describe the “perspective” she wishes to give “voice” to in the following statement:

Also, I suggest that law students in the [Gulf] should learn about international law so that they can give them [in America] our perspective and not just complain about international law...I love this way writing by ourselves it gives us confidence

(Student Respondent 5)

She places herself in opposition to the students who “just complain about international laws” with the use of the subject pronoun “they”. These comments were written in her ESP Academic Writing Course research report. Although, as I have described in previous chapters, the predominant literacy/ literacies Discourses at *Gulf University* appear to that of the “study skills” and narrow “academic socialization”, a critical discourse analysis of student narratives reveals the contested nature of university literacy at *Gulf University*. When the respondents are able to engage more deeply with content, choosing their own topics and analysing real data in the Academic Writing Course survey report, or engage in a less structured conversation in the interviews, they reveal an ability to juxtapose “discourses/ styles and approaches” and “engage meta-cognitively” and “critically” (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996) rather than merely being colonized into a “correct” way of creating texts. This aspect is revealed in the extracts from student projects below where the student respondents reflect on why they and/or their respondents ‘think’ (meta-cognitive analysis) in certain ways and switch between the views they associate with their home Discourses and those they associate with the University Discourses.

A majority of all respondent said that they are happily married. However, they say the main reasons for the problems in marriage between husband and wife are illiteracy and communication. Therefore I recommend that if any people think about marriage, they should understand what marriage is and they should know how to communicate together. In addition, parents should chose husbands carefully for their daughters and then if Allah wills it, their marriages will be happier in the future.
(Student Respondent 7)

The majority of respondents (60%) admit they throw litter on the ground, whereas 40% say they do not litter. This is a high percent that say they litter because people do not often admit when they do something wrong.
(Student Respondent 4)

In the past, people used the moon and stars to move or navigate from one place to another and there was a few building and few places that people knew about outside their immediate environment. However, nowadays there are many building and many places that people here know about by watching the television or other media. This encourages them to go to these places. However, some people say that there are not enough good maps of the [Gulf] and, therefore, they use a Global Positioning System. Most of the lecturers at [Gulf] University are foreigners who don't know the roads and they need a reliable way of navigating, so that they can visit the interesting tourist destinations.
(Student Respondent 6)

50% of my respondents think that learning English will change society because our Islamic religion and also they prefer Arabic because the Quran is in Arabic. This is because most houses in the [Gulf] are Muslim and they always try to teach children the disadvantages of learning other languages which may affect their language.
(Student Respondent 3)

With the words “if Allah is wills it”, Student Respondent 7 moves out of the genre of the survey report, which would expect a prediction in this part of the report, as reflected by the following statement in the Academic Writing Course ESP1 course book:

What Do Conclusions Do?

A conclusion brings your report to an end. It may contain any one or more of the following:

- The topic or aims of the report
- How the information in the report was gathered
- A statement of the main findings of your report
- A recommendation
- A question or a call for help
- A suggestion for further research
- A prediction

(Curriculum Committee 2005)

In later exercises, this statement is followed up with recommended language features related to each of these functions and “prediction” is linked with the use of “will” and the infinitive. However, in terms of Respondent 7’s Primary Discourse, you can never predict anything, since Allah determines all events, thus she “switches” Discourses as she deems appropriate. Similarly, Student Respondent 3, switches between referring to her respondents as “they” and referring to Islam as “our religion”.

However, in order to allow these students to obtain access to the “evolving language of work, power, and community” and to encourage “the critical engagement necessary for them to design their social futures and achieve success” (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996: 1), it will be important to clearly articulate a pedagogy of multiliteracies beyond the choice of a broad topic related to their field (suggesting a hint of “situated practice” (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996) and the ability to give a personal or community opinion. How this “personal opinion” is shaped

needs to be examined in an effective pedagogy of multiliteracies. There also needs to be an explicit analysis of the multiple Discourses that constitute the discipline(s) that the students wish to negotiate and how they coincide with conflict with their primary and secondary Discourses. This could help the students to make sense of their personal agency (“the self-cultivated expression of communal powers” (Harvey 2002)) within the cacophony of voices that make up their contested academy. The respondents’ confusion and/ or difficulty in establishing a personal position is reflected in some of the other Discourses identified below.

“The teacher play a vital role”

The Discourse of narrow “academic socialization” is clearly articulated in the narratives and writing of my seven student respondents. This is particularly evident in their descriptions of the role of the “teacher” and his/her role in orientating the student towards learning and assisting the student to interpret the task (Lea & Street 1998). The most emphasis is placed on his/her role in promoting motivation to study and even interest in the course materials. Statements like the following abound:

As I see it, my writing teacher is the reason for my most important improvement in writing this semester (Student Respondent 1) and;

The teacher play a vital role for the student to love writing (Student Respondent 2)

The Discourse of “deep learning” characteristic of the narrow “academic socialization” Discourse is also seen in the Student Respondent 7’s statement:

She also teaches us deeply...so that she is the best teacher for my writing courses this semester (Student Respondent 7).

The strong version of the master/apprentice Discourse as described by Morgan (2000) is evidenced, with the “teacher’s voice given primacy” over the student’s voice or any other conflicting Discourses in statements like:

Sixth, in the future I will be able to write *what my teacher requires us* [my italics] to write about (Student Respondent 2).

It is not important to understand how the Discourses of the field are constructed, only the teacher or lecturer’s version of those Discourses. The students appear to have internalized a Discourse of complete agreement with the “master”/ teacher, possibly because most assessment practices at university are not focussed on hearing the students’ “voices” except to ascertain for assessment purposes “how consonant or discordant they are with that of the teacher” (Morgan 2000). Interestingly, the respondents in each successive ‘reflection’ appear to feel the need to align themselves with the current teacher. For example, Student Respondent 1 states in level two that:

As I see it, my writing teacher is the reason for my most important improvement in writing this semester (Student Respondent 1).

Yet, in level three the same student says:

First in level 2 I hate writing class but now I like writing because I have a very nice teacher who explain all thing (Student Respondent 1).

This contradiction perhaps lies in the relationship of the ‘reflection’ task to the course timetable. Students usually complete the ‘reflection’ task at the end of a semester just before the final examination. The task is a final opportunity for the student to show their alliance to the teacher before they are assessed. Thus a desperate tone enters the narrative with sycophantic remarks like:

I promise you to do well in writing in the future and I will complete learning writing paragraphs (Student Respondent 4),

I hope you like my improvements in writing which will help me to write good essays and reports (Student Respondent 2) and;

Finally, I think all students like ESP class and like your way in teach (Student Respondent 7).

Far from encouraging the students to reflect on their progress and to self-assess, the students appear to view the portfolio as a tool to forge alliances with the teacher and, perhaps, be judged more leniently as all statements are directly aimed at the teacher as audience for the 'reflection'. Reflections for the ESP Academic Writing Course follow the same pattern and this pattern is repeated even in the interviews when the respondents are asked to give their opinions on the teaching in the ESP course. For example:

Teachers...good ...but I frightened...even in ESP first time...but you slowly teacher I understand (Student Respondent 4).

However, when the same student is asked how she would change the ESP course, if she were responsible for it, she complains that she does not understand most of the work because the language level of the teacher is too high and "Normal English is what I understand". Thus the relationship of the discourse (in this case interviews or 'reflections') to other elements within the context (Meyer 2001) influences the outcomes of the Discourse.

The position of the researcher as both lecturer and researcher in this study also affects the Discourse and becomes an obstacle to tackling the problem. As I am both lecturer and researcher, the perceived role of the teacher as the 'master' and the student as 'apprentice' who must please the 'master' in all things leads to a desire to give "good information" that will please the researcher as evidenced in the following Blackboard Discussion Board communication:

I want to apologize about today because I can't give you more information about your questions. But the second time I will try to give you good information (Student Respondent 3).

“My writing has considerably changed than in the past”

Another example of where the respondents have internalized a Discourse, which they believe will show their alliance to the academy (in the form of their foundation course or ESP lecturers), is their emphasis on the Discourse of positive change. This Discourse coincides with one of predominant American “cultural beliefs” spread by TESOL identified by Hadley (Hadley 2004) - namely: “progress through practical improvement”. This Discourse, which has been imported to the Gulf as well as other countries like, for example, South Africa manifests itself in programmes like the “Upward Bound” programme in the USA (and South Africa) where high school students are orientated towards individual practical improvement and increased personal expectations (Myers & Schirm 1999; Hansen, Africa *et al.* 2005) and the Discourse of Developmental Education in the Gulf which has already been discussed in this thesis.

Especially when referring to the school as opposed to the university environment, the respondents constantly reiterate the positive improvements in the university environment. Even when their initial opinion may be different, this is quickly changed if there is a perception that the lecturer/ researcher ‘wants’ a different answer. For example Student Respondent 1 and Respondent 3 when initially asked in their first interview about any differences between the pedagogy at school and in the foundation programme say:

No...I think it is all the same (Student Respondent 1) and;

But in [the foundation programme] not good...not really different (Student Respondent 3).

However, when I remain silent waiting for them to elaborate, they quickly interpret this as meaning that I am not satisfied with their answer and they change it to:

Mmmm, [the foundation programme]? We understand more than in school because the way of learning is not the same ... (Student Respondent 1).

Student Respondent 3 catalogues a number of positive differences including:

Ahhh...English in the school its easy and you don't take a lot of vocabulary to use it...but here when I come to university...I see English different from the school and;

Learning in school...I was see it is so bad...so bad...because when we start studying English at university for us it is big...there is many more words we don't know it.

(Student Respondent 3)

Additionally, Student Respondent 3's previous statement suggests that school is viewed as a preparation for university and that the school is deficient in this regard. This Discourse of pathologizing of the school system is also reflected in the local press and the blame-game of faculty-foundation programme lecturers-teachers as described in my context chapter. A constant dichotomy is created between the school and the university with adjectives like "different", "not the same" repetitively used to indicate the differences to the symbolic states of "university" and "school". Teachers, the quality of English spoken, pedagogy, facilities and learning culture at school are described as "easy", "bad", "poor" "boring" as opposed to the same elements at university which are described as "formal", "organized", "real English" and "good" by all of the respondents.

Most interesting for me are the comments by Respondents 5 and 6 who later qualify their blanket acceptance of the improvement of university over school in their second and third interview respectively by saying:

I think it is a little good than the school"; and

Ummm...I think they are a little bit different...it is the same way because actually in my [country] there is a method of giving the students the lesson is the same as here in the university (Student Respondent 6)

Student Respondent 6 goes on to say that they actually have more collaborative teaching methods at school in her country than in the foundation programme and the university in general, but that from her observations of *GU* students, university methods are different and

better than what they have experienced at school. Student Respondent 6 completed her education in another Gulf country and then married a local and thus joined *Gulf University* for her university studies in 2003. Her observations are interesting in that she constantly dichotomises herself and the rest of the (local) students and herself and the students who studied prior to 2003 who she describes as “weak in English”, but like the other respondents expresses allegiance to the teachers and the positions she perceives they support, namely “critical thinking”, which she describes as “the strategy of thinking”, and a “communicative” pedagogy which she described as including group work and diary writing.

The communicative approach and its emphasis on expressing personal experiences (Nunan 1991) is also valued by other respondents with Student Respondent 3 contrasting the ‘bad’ strategy of memorizing emphasized at school with the ‘good’ strategy of writing what they think:

But in university...no...we didn’t...we must always try to write what we think about (Student Respondent 3).

However, she quickly qualifies the “what we think about” with the words “what the teacher tells us to write...not memorize”, showing an awareness of the fact that the personal expression of this “communicative approach” is strictly limited by the rules of the “teacher”/ academy.

“[The foundation programme] and School.... I think it is all the same...different”

Various factors influence the Discourse, which describes the university as different (read better) than school. Firstly, practical arrangements such as the amount of time spent on English at school, the division of the subject into ‘skills’ and the amount of work is seen as different or better at university with statements like:

Changed because the school...only finish the two o’clock and go to the home (Student Respondent 2) and;

Grammar in school only grammar vocab only one book...but in university grammar alone book...reading alone book...listening alone book different (Student Respondent 5).

The skills compartmentalization of the curriculum at university is seen as “good” and coinciding with a “deeper learning” than at school. Once again, the “narrow socialization” Discourse is emphasized.

The respondents’ texts also reflect the Discourse of ‘academic’ English as opposed to ‘general’ English. This academic English learnt at university is described as more useful for future studies than the “general” English learnt at school as well as more formal and structured, for example:

Grammar...and write and...the words different and many vocab ... normal only the speaking not grammar ... (Student Respondent 2).

The value ascribed to ‘academic English’ over ‘general English’ is linked with the Discourse of deficit the respondents take up with regards to their mainly Arabic high school teachers. The respondents’ acceptance of this Discourse can partially be ascribed to an internalization of the “panoptic order” in which all things Western/ American are viewed as central and, therefore, powerful and desirable and all things Arab as “peripheral” and thus less desirable (Kazmi 1997) and partially to my presence as lecturer/ researcher (and thus supposedly representative of ‘the central’). Another possible factor could be the fact that the teaching profession and even Ministry of Education is dominated by other Arabs, especially Egyptians (Findlow 2001), while the Minister of Education and local media (Ministry 2004: Saffarini 2005;GU 1997) sharply criticize the school system and promulgate the replacement of expatriate teachers with nationals (Reporter 2005). These factors affect their status as teachers, especially when the dismissal of foreign school teachers is contrasted with the continued employment of Western expatriates in the *Gulf University* foundation programme and their increased employment in the rest of the university.

On a personal note, when I was teaching in the foundation programme levels, I generally did not tell students that I was South African because, after I informed my class of the fact one semester, I received the following comment in one of my teacher evaluations: “I do not understand my teacher because she is from Africa”, thus suggesting that only the “central” is acceptable, even with regards to teachers. However, when I was teaching in the ESP Academic Writing Course, my position as relative outsider to Western society appeared to

allow the students greater freedom of expression and despite attempting to present a neutral position, students voiced many anti-American and anti-Western sentiments.

In general, Arab school teachers are pathologized, especially in terms of their ability to teach English in statements like:

And school...uh...Egyptian teacher...not English...no understand English (Student Respondent 2),

but in school all the class its Arabic class not English just the vocabulary it will be in English (Student Respondent 5).

Their methods are also unfavourably contrasted with those of the university foundation programme. School is described as “easy”, with limited resources, while the university foundation programme is praised for the available resources and amount of work covered. These aspects can be seen in statements like:

It was different because the school the English was very easy...not the grammar and the project...the research...only subject and read (Student Respondent 1),

Different in the school and university...in the school only the book...no library and use dictionary (Student Respondent 2),

Ahhh...English in the school its easy and you don't take a lot of vocabulary to use it (Student Respondent 3),

Um only she use a board and speaking a lot of time (Student Respondent 3),

In school it is a poor poor English because we just take the main ideas of anything...we just take little vocabulary and little grammars its not help us in our life or jobs or something (Student Respondent 5).

The teachers at school are also criticized for their teaching methods, especially when teaching writing. They make statements about the teaching of writing at school like:

idea...write the idea...the teacher gave idea (Student Respondent 2),

Yes...uh...the teacher give us a summary of paragraph...and...ah...sometimes she tell us to take some sentence from the book which I understand it and make a paragraph (Student Respondent 3) and,

the teachers always write a paragraph and they tell me to...alize it...only (read memorize?) (Student Respondent 3)

These statements are contrasted with remarks like:

But in university...no...we didn't...we must always try to write what we think about (Student Respondent 5) and;

My writing in university I feel I take the real English here...I know I take it steps one, two and three...for the third level...and now I take it for ESP (Student Respondent 6).

The students appear to have internalized the narrow “academic socialization” Discourses in that they are aware that in this new Discourse you must not memorize, but somehow come up with your “own” ideas, thus supporting university anti-plagiarism policies (*GU* 2004) and that the process of learning and writing is systematic. They also appear to have internalized a Discourse of deficit regarding their initial academic socialization at school.

“[The foundation programme] ...different ESP”

In keeping with the Discourse of positive change and perhaps the desire to show alliance to the current teacher, most of the respondents unfavourably contrast the *GU* foundation course with the ESP Academic Writing Course and take up a Discourse of ESP different (read better) than the foundation course. However, interestingly, when comparing the two courses, they focus mainly on what they do themselves, as opposed to their statements when comparing the school and foundation programme environments where they focussed on the facilities or the teachers. This Discourse of difference and independence manifests in the following perceptions of the ESP course versus the foundation course levels: Firstly, they highlight the emphasis on research in the ESP Writing Course with statements like:

I like this ESP class because...I...it interesting subject in report...writing report...very interesting for me...also when you ask some questions I think about the questions very interesting (Student Respondent 1),

No...ESP...I will try to get information from the newspaper, magazine...what I see in television...what I read in the internet...like this in [the foundation programme] the

teacher always ask you...get the information from your head...in ESP get information from books or something else...research (Student Respondent 3),

Different...no interesting...because it is grammar and vocabulary only...same as school...now in ESP I am very interesting because project have an opinion and cos my study Islamic studies and lay I have a study and making project...it is very ok (Student Respondent 5).

The statement by Student Respondent 5 above also highlights the second major criticism against the foundation programme course - namely, that it is too similar to the work they did at school (which, as I have already indicated, is characterized by using a Discourse of deficit). This criticism is repeated by Student Respondent 6:

Until now...nothing from [the foundation programme] helped me...but in ESP I think yes...it help me in my specialize but from [the foundation programme] I nothing from [the foundation programme] is help me now (Student Respondent 6).

This similarity between the work done at school and the work in the foundation programme appears related to the fact that the ESP course is taught at the same time as the faculty courses and the fact that the work is more related in terms of skills and content to the faculty courses as seen in the following:

so I think the [the foundation programme] is not helping me now a lot...as much as ESP has this skills when we are taking the courses that requires this skills...so I think it will help us more than if we remember the ones that we take it in the [the foundation programme] (Student Respondent 6) and;

In English [the foundation programme] no information...just write from my head. In ESP...I write real information (Student Respondent 5).

These statements about the importance of “real” content and the connection between their work in the faculty and the ESP course suggests a Discourse of ‘situated practice’ which complies with the “academic literacies” Discourse and related pedagogies as described by the New London Group (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996). This reflects the contested nature of the academy at *GU* where different literacy Discourses compete for the allegiance of students and teachers.

“ESP...there are very very little words”

Despite the mainly favourable comparison of the ESP Academic Writing Course with the foundation programme, the student interviews and comments on the Blackboard Discussion Board reveal some discordant Discourses. The main critical Discourse is that the ESP Academic Writing Course is “too easy”. There are, however, conflicting views on this issue. Student Respondent 1 and Student Respondent 6 suggest that the ESP Academic Writing Course is too easy and, therefore, not appropriate for students at university. This is suggested by statements like:

[W]e think we want more words...because there are very very little words (Student Respondent 1) and;

ESP now...I think it is so easy...a student in university should learn higher than this level...because after in the college he will face a lot of English a lot of courses that offer in English...so I think maybe this course...this ESP course will not help us a lot then...because it is easy for us....I think that we should learn new things...new vocab...new grammar rules (Student Respondent 6).

These two statements also reveal an alliance to other prevailing Discourses at *Gulf University* and in many universities in general, namely that students by studying discrete “study skills” such as vocabulary and grammar, students will become ‘ready’ for university study. It also reflects a Discourse of progressive change and improvement and the belief that this improvement of level should be written into the course and curricula structure. These Discourses, however, do not take into account the internal socializing processes that take place as part of the act of research and research writing, or the fact that the level of writing and challenge is determined by the topic and content the student herself expresses. However, Student Respondent 1 and Student Respondent 6 dichotomize themselves as more in keeping with the hegemonic academy when compared with the rest of the respondents. They are 2003 students who have been taught “at a higher level” in [the foundation programme] and are studying their faculty courses through an English medium of instruction with accompanying courses such as “critical thinking” as opposed to pre-2003 students, who they believe are weaker in English, have studied a lower-level foundation course and are studying faculty courses through an Arabic medium of instruction. Thus, they see themselves as part of the “real” university as opposed to “the other”. This is shown in statements like:

[M]aybe for the students 2002, 2001, 2000 they think that ESP is difficult for them because they major in some specialization that are teaching them...I mean learning in Arabic...they find ESP is difficult for them...because the [the foundation programme] was easy for them...so now the ESP is difficult for them...but 2003, 2004 they think that ESP is more easier because they get in the [the foundation programme] difficult

work or difficult materials to study...so I think for us...as a 2003 and 2004 students I think that we have to take ESP more difficult as a step...we learn the [the foundation programme] difficult level...I mean the higher level...so the ESP should be higher than the [the foundation programme] ...not less or in the same level...so the student can improve...not be in the same level...I think it is better to make a separation. Because...actually in fact...our class it has a mixture of 2000 2002 students...this students they don't know much English (Student Respondent 6).

These two students clearly indicate their allegiance to what they perceive as a monolithic academy with standards that require compliance. In order to be fully prepared for this perceived academy, socialization into all its accompanying genres is required. The ESP Academic Writing Course is also found deficient by these two respondents in this regard and they suggest that, although the survey report is useful in their faculty, they want the course to cover more genres. This aspect is revealed in statements like:

For example, the survey, I will specialize in Applied Linguistics and ah...maybe I will make a survey...I have to know this condition before I make it...Also I will write ah...important results (Student Respondent 6),

I think ah ha...about writing reports...maybe they want ah, ah ask us write very big report (Student Respondent 1),

Maybe I write other things like increase how to write research...from books research...it is also important for the students to write it... (Student Respondent 6) and;

I write the project on observation of centre...this is very difficult...I need the English for that (Student Respondent 1).

The other respondents also refer to the ESP Academic Writing Course as easy, but here it is described as a positive, manageable characteristic of the course with statements like:

I like, I think that the class this week was very good and very easy because I learned how to make questions and give many report (Student Respondent 2) and;

ESP it is nice and easy because we learn step-by-step (Student Respondent 4).

Additionally, Student Respondents 2,3,4,5 and 7 also find the ESP Academic Writing Course too limited, but they express allegiance to the world of work rather than to the university academy. This links with the instrumental Discourse reflected by industry worldwide where the university is seen as purely a conduit for a trained, flexible workforce. As mentioned in my context chapter, this Discourse is particular prevalent in the petroleum industry in the Gulf who have established detailed “terminal assessment criteria” for each level of employment and expect the university system to directly address these criteria in their “training” of students (Aldred & Lees 2004). Rather than different genres, these students want to focus on other more job-related skills or content in their ESP course as is reflected in the following:

“Maybe if I have a job in the school...of course I need English in another job...I go to work in the bank or [the telecommunications company]...I use with customers. I think

speaking in the ESP course maybe...maybe I see another person from America ...I speak with them” more” (Student Respondent 3),

“Yeah...I want to learn many words...and vocab money...business...but now I get a job...I need English...maybe work in a bank or for [the telecommunications company] I need English for the job to talk to the customers...like that....not for study” (Student Respondent 4) and;

“I say...for life ... for work ...for help us in our life...maybe we will go shopping or travelling” (Student Respondent 5).

Both groups of students thus express a Discourse of “socialization” in the narrow sense, but the former students focus on “academic socialization” while the latter focus on workplace “socialization”.

“We have opinion...not give opinion...why?”

Despite reflecting a narrow socialization Discourse in much of their narrative, all the respondents praise the ESP Academic Writing Course because it allows them to express their ‘voice’. This ‘voice’, however, is ‘not static’, but rather as described by Hirst *et al*, following Bakhtin (1981), it is “culturally, institutionally and historically shaped and involved in a continuous process of transformation as [they] are appropriated to serve a variety of

intentions” (Hirst, Henderson *et al.* 2004). These “intentions” vary from respondent to respondent. Some see their “voice” as a “tool” for expressing the personal and for exploring personal identity in their studies. This is expressed in statements like:

“I want to know more about me...in what I study” and “study and write bes (only)...opinion mashe (nothing/ none)...we have opinion...not give opinion why?” (Student Respondent 1)

Others see ‘voice’ in academic writing as a vehicle for expressing an Islamic identity:

“Insha’allah [God Willing] I must go to America because I have to change opinions about Islam...ok for me...I am free...and me not afraid I am sure for myself and my opinion...I show in my writing and what I say” (Student Respondent 5).

There is also a strong realization of conflicting Discourses in the students’ narratives and writing where they sometimes find themselves positioned within the academy, but opposing their classmates or families and sometimes in opposition to the academy or parts of the academy. This is seen in statements like:

“I think there are many courses in the university that are in an old fashion...not in the new fashion...for example we have some courses that just we have to memory and study...and then come and write what we have studied and what we have memory...so I think that if there are courses that makes the students to think...make the students to create something new...is better for students” (Student Respondent 6)

In the statement above Student Respondent 6, like the faculty respondents, positions herself with the “new”/ Western academy against the “old”/ Arabic academy. In the following statement, the respondent places herself in opposition to her student colleagues who she believes are incorrectly interpreting Islam and expresses a similar Discourse to those of the Islamic scholars in my context chapter - namely that English should be learned “in the right way” as a tool for obtaining knowledge or spreading Islam, while reflecting a Discourse of Islam as a religion of “knowledge and science” (Faruqi 2005). She states:

“But I try to tell them that...it is learn about other languages....Prophet Mohammed [Peace be Upon Him – In Arabic] tell us to learn about other languages...and Islam encourages us to learn about other languages and science...but in the right way...don’t try to learn another language in the wrong way” (Student Respondent 3).

While most of the respondents appear to experience conflicting Discourses (‘Colliding Contexts’) some of which will be discussed later in this chapter, others appear to be able to “switch practices” and/ or ‘voices’ and negotiate between these Discourses as is reflected in Student Respondent 5’s narrative:

Our Holy Qur'an we must read it without the book that we must get...I like ESP and [the foundation programme] ...I like thinking...I can give many opinions and reasons and results...but in Islamic Studies, I must not think, only memorize. I am good at thinking, but my memory is so bad...I don't get a good mark in Islamic Studies...but it is important because it is Allah's knowledge....knowledge about Allah and English and my other courses is man's knowledge and I can think about it and give my opinion. Change the place with man...but with Allah...don't change.

(Student Respondent 5)

Although Student Respondent 5 has internalized Discourses of 'critical thinking' and individual 'voice' with regards her content subjects and ESP Academic Writing Course and foundation course, she views knowledge in Islamic Studies as fixed and expresses allegiance to a joint Islamic identity. This ability to switch between cultures and 'voices', bending them to "different intentions" (Hirst, Henderson *et al.* 2004) reflects an emerging Discourse related to the "academic literacies" perspective of university literacy and its related pedagogy. However, there is also awareness in the narratives that these Discourses are not equally powerful or influential and there is even resistance to certain Discourses.

"Nowadays they say we are living in a global society"

I have already briefly discussed how the Discourse of globalization has become a common Discourse within the international university community. The Discourse of 'globalization' with regards to university education suggests that there is "an inevitable convergence of human activities" and that to cater to the demands of the global society, universities have to become "global" with policies of "decentralization, privatisation and marketization" (Mok

2003). Thus instead of serving as a critic of society, universities have changed to be servants of the global society catering to the need for qualified manpower and research according to the demands of the market . This Discourse also suggests ‘international’ standards, which need to be adhered to.

The Discourse of ‘globalization’ is common in universities in the West, Far East and Africa and has become prevalent in the Gulf region. However, as described in my context chapter, the Discourse of ‘globalization’/ ‘internationalization’ has become conflated with Western, especially North American, standards, norms and practices. At *GU* and in the Gulf in general, ‘globalization’ has become associated with two main Discourses: the Discourse of ‘standards’ and the Discourse of ‘modern knowledge’. These Discourses are revealed in these extracts from the *Gulf University* website:

Through accreditation and external evaluation, [*GU*] will ensure quality in all of its activities. The University will focus more on research, graduate studies, and its professional schools. The use of modern information technology will be instrumental throughout (Nahayan 1997),

[*GU*] is very keen to meet international standards in the academic degrees it offers. In recognition of its excellence in curricular quality, the Bachelor Degree in Medicine and Surgery was granted recognition status by the General Medical Council (GMC) of the United Kingdom in 1994. In 1999, the College of Engineering was granted equivalency by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). The College of Business and Economics is expected to acquire accreditation by The International Association for Management Education (AACSB) during the academic year 1999/2000. The University is now taking the necessary steps to meet all the requirements necessary for the accreditation of the professional degrees offered by the College of Education and some professional majors offered by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. All other non-professional academic programmes undergo periodic external evaluation by international experts to ensure that they meet international standards (Nahayan 1997) and,

To complement these efforts for attaining world-class standards, the University is also improving the quality of its student and administrative services. In the past several months, the university has created a foundation that supports the transformation of the work culture to be customer-focused through teamwork, innovation, receptiveness, and efficiency. Beginning with a major reorganization the university has revised, and continues to re-evaluate, its by-laws, policies, and procedures so the workforce is responsive and effective to its stakeholders. The many recent, and future, endeavours of [*Gulf University*] help us retain our position as a pioneer of higher education in the [Gulf], while maintaining societal values and long withstanding principles to meet governments and societies' expectations (Al-Dhahiri 2005).

The Discourse of 'standards' is defined by how local standards measure up with external accreditation bodies in the United States of America or United Kingdom with little acknowledgment of the need for truly international or 'global' curricular or standards, which are "interculturally responsive" (MacKinnon & Manathunga 2003) and acknowledge the contested 'colliding contexts' of the university environment. Additionally, the university is measured according to its responsiveness to 'society' in the form of big business.

The Discourse of international standards is also specifically seen within the foundation communication programme in the form of the IELTS, which determines whether students are permitted to enter the faculties or not. The respondents who have "passed" the IELTS (gained the prerequisite scores to enter their faculties), in general, have embraced the exams as a sign of their success, or socialization into the university context as seen in the following:

Also...exams TEOFL and IELTS is very good exams of English
(Student Respondent 1),

Before I think when I come to [the foundation programme] ...I think that they make English difficult...and they don't want any student to pass...and the want to go out from university...but when I finish level 3 and IELTS...I think that is benefit too benefit for me (Student Respondent 3),

We don't have homeworks in school....no real exams that you make challenge with your friends (Student Respondent 5) and;

Yes...it is different from us...as 2003 we get a TOEFL and some of us we get an IELTS...so there is more balance between us (Student Respondent 6).

These statements contrast with those who were not required to pass the exam like the following students who state:

IELTS too difficult exam...no understand...not needed for my faculty (Student Respondent 7) and;

No like exam...different the university work (Student Respondent 2).

Despite the 'international' focus in the form of external accreditation, the *Gulf University Strategic Plan* describes developing "students' deep understanding and appreciation of the Arab and Islamic culture" and enhancing "pride in their heritage" as one of the university's principle goals (Nahayan 1997). There is, however, little or no discussion on how this "Arab and Islamic" culture or "pride in their heritage" will be enhanced against the pressures of

‘globalization’ Discourse(s). Additionally, the dynamic nature of culture and religion are not necessarily taken into consideration in the official *GU* Discourses.

The *Strategic Plan* also mentions the role of the university as a “melting pot for nationals from various parts of the union” (Nahayan 1997) and by implication the world. The more dialogic and plural “melting pot” Discourse as well as the ‘globalization’ Discourse appear to have been enthusiastically embraced by most of my respondents who talk of positive intercultural exchange at university as in the following:

At university I can get all of the experience from [other areas] and different countries and when I speak to them, I can remember like their cultures and think about this order (Student Respondent 1),

At school I know other [regions]...but at university I know...I learn...my Egyptian teacher I learn from her life...how to cook...um...her at university there are students from Sri Lanka...for example...student in India talk another language...I learn (Student Respondent 3),

However, nowadays they say we are living in a global society, so it is also important for people to know about international law (Student Respondent 5),

Sometimes I communicate with my neighbour in class...we usually speak about life issues or something like that...with girls from different [regions] ...sometimes I speak about politics...also about the subjects (Student Respondent 6) and;

I think that it is good for the students to study in English and that this will help them in the future in many ways. I predict that our university will be one of the best international universities in the world if it continues with English

(Student Respondent 6).

There is, however, also a sense of conflict reflected in some of the narratives and written comments. First, there is a conflict between the home culture and that of the university:

Changes the culture...children now...no culture same my father and mother...I've changed...because miss the internet...and the communication...different the past (Student Respondent 1).

Second, there is a conflict between students who adhere to traditions and those who don't:

Maybe some students...me no...yes they are changing in dress and behaviour...not [local] ...not all students...no...no change...I don't think anything in the world can change me (Student Respondent 5),

Also, the majority of students choose their faculty because it teaches in Arabic. I think that they learn most of their subjects at school is in Arabic and don't want to learn subjects in English. I predict that in the future the student will change this opinion and be able to choose English faculties because the school will change their language policies to English (Student Respondent 3) and;

I know many students want ... Arabic language...not always try to speak English...it is not right...always try to keep our culture (Student Respondent 3).

There is thus a constant dichotomy between the perceived inevitability of change to an English-medium/ Western style/ “globalized” university and the desire to hold on to an Arab/ Muslim/ Gulf tradition and “English” and “Arabic” become “glossifications” for the conflicting Discourses they represent. Some of the students reflect a direct Discourse of resistance to perceived “colonization” by the hegemonic powerful Discourse(s) at the university and in the world in general. This is seen in an awareness of how power creates hegemony:

One reason is that the American-dominated media tells everyone that terrorism is a serious problem, so they believe it (Student Respondent 5).

Resistance is also seen in their awareness of how power designates the “central and the “peripheral” (Kazmi 1997) as reflected in statements like:

British and America...they are the high countries and we must do what they like...I no like (Student Respondent 5).

However, much as the respondents attempt to hold on to the “Arab/ Muslim/local” identity, there is an awareness that even family views are changing as reflected in:

Teacher...my family in the past...about me...no want go in the GU in the past...but now different opinion...different is smart...in the work miss...work, um...my family...no work...no university...no school for women...now important (Student Respondent 1) and;

My father he change he say...go and learn to drive...get a job...before only marry (Student Respondent 7).

Needing and Needling the problem

The ‘problem’ of students’ acquisition of academic literacies consists, as described in this chapter, of a number of conflicting Discourses. On the one hand, there is a push towards a ‘global’ Western style university with ‘international standards’, on the other hand, a desire to retain Arab/Muslim identity. The respondents are torn between these major Discourses and the accompanying Discourses related to university literacy. However, in a sense, the social order at *GU* and in the Gulf in general ‘needs’ the problem to continue operating effectively (Meyer 2001). There is a worldwide push towards “mass education” and, therefore research on issues of equity and the impact of student life on the cognitive, social and psychological development of students, especially in their 1st year of study (McInnis 2001) and *Gulf University* reflects this push in their adoption of the “developmental programme” approach in the foundation programme. However, this country of my study has already achieved a far higher rate of participation in higher education than most countries in the world with 95.5% of female graduates and 75% of male graduates attending higher education institutions in 2001 (Goudsouzian 2001) and the emphasis now is on discouraging rather than encouraging such widespread participation as suggested by the following comments by the *GU* Chancellor:

[GU] will continue to be the country's flagship institution of higher education. It will accept only students who are motivated to excel and are able to meet the requirements of advanced curricula that are set at international standards (Nahayan 1997).

The use of IELTS as an entrance exam for the faculties, use of English as a medium of instruction and Discourses of 'globalization', 'internationalism' and 'international standards' are all used as tools to discourage this widespread participation. Thus, in a sense, the University 'needs' the Discourses of the academy to be obscure for a large number of students and it 'needs' the problem of low achieving students as evidenced by this statement from one of my respondents:

Before I think when I come to [the foundation programme] ...I think that they make English difficult...and they don't want any student to pass...and the want to go out from university (Student Respondent 3).

Tougher entrance requirements and high 'standards' are ways of restricting participation in higher education (and the excessive costs to the country of such widespread participation), while retaining the image of equity and access for all nationals to higher education. Putting the emphasis on the individual and his/ her "motivation to excel", allows the University to remove all students who lack this 'motivation' and save costs. Thus the university and Gulf society also 'needs' Discourses of 'deficit' such as the "study skills" and narrow "academic socialization"

Discourses since they again place the onus on the individual student to comply with the study skills required as suggested in the following:

[W]rite a good essay without mistakes...if we learn how to write a good essay without mistakes it will be fine for us to join any course after that (Student Respondent 6)

The students also appear to have internalized this Discourse of individual responsibility in terms of their responsibility to “show the appropriate skills and dispositions” (UGRU 2005) and motivation which would enable their socialization (read colonization) into the academy as evidenced by the following:

I know one friend she is in [the foundation programme] and she ah...she have four subjects and she don't come to class and I advise her...why you waste your time to study in [the foundation programme]? You have to finish in the [the foundation programme] (Student Respondent 7).

The implication is that if they have a motivated ‘disposition’, they will be successful. This precludes the necessity of critically examining the social and political conditions from which the students’ university literacy “problems” develop and even the *GU* foundation programme and other “remedial programmes” will become unnecessary as suggested by Nahayan in 2005 (Nahayan 2005). This ‘liberal’ Discourse which suggests that success is dependent on motivation, privileges agency and dismisses the structures of society which underlie agency. Thus education support programmes, like other well-meant educational programmes such as “multiculturalism”, require a self-reflexivity or they run the risk of being “dismissed as

ineffective”(Hoffman 1996; Payne & Lyman 1996; Lundell & Higbee 2001) even by administrators within their own institutions.

This negative rhetoric surrounding the Discourse of student support (dubbed “remedial” programmes) is in contrast to the university’s commitment in the *Strategic Plan* to “establish a programme to identify low achieving students and provide them with the necessary academic support” (GU 1997) and the prevailing “developmental programme” Discourse within the foundation programme. Thus again showing the conflicting Discourses within the *GU* context.

The Discourse of ‘international standards’ and expectations that lecturers should comply with these is also “needed” to retain a sense of unity and common purpose among the diverse expatriate and national lecturers. If there is only one academic culture, there is no need for conflict between faculty members of different cultures or students from different regions as indicated by the following:

GU students, staff and faculty are committed to their work. All strive to achieve the University goals and are expected to work hard to maintain the integrity of the University in all their actions (*GU* 1997).

However, this Discourse does not take into account the diversity within any academic community and the potential discord from unequal power relations where the Western hegemonic academy is privileged.

Despite all appearances of attempting to ‘acculturate’ students into a Western academy, *Gulf University* still emphasizes Arab Muslim heritage. Again, the university ‘needs’ the problem of the students’ lack of full acculturation into the Western academy. For example, if students are not fully acculturated into critical thinking in the broader sense, they will not question a social order characterized by a limited rights and opportunities for women as suggested by the following statements:

I like English...research...but married the man...no study...no words (Student Respondent 2),

I only work as teacher...bes [only]...not other job...man in other job (Student Respondent 7)

Elbadawi also suggests that Gulf society is characterized by “democracy deficit”(Elbadawi 2004), and the potential for religious polarization and extremism which would become problematic if students were fully acculturated into Western Discourses. These polarizing factors are mitigated by a number of other factors in the “network of practices” (Meyer 2001) existing in Gulf society. For example, “democracy deficit” in Western terms is contrasted with the “majilis” where the ordinary national has direct access to the leader and the form of government by “consensus” and “distributive” economy peculiar to Gulf countries (Findlow 2001). Despite conservative attitudes towards women, local women have greater access to higher education and greater job opportunities than ever before (Adams 2003) and a unifying Islamic Studies curriculum at both school and university which emphasizes a moderate, state-approved form of Islam (Findlow 2001) has mitigated against most radical elements. However, *Gulf University* like the rest of the country walks a fine line between the dichotomies of “local/ global, indigenous/ imported, traditional/modern and idealist/ pragmatic” (Findlow 2001). In order to retain this balance, they ‘need’ to retain the ‘problem’

of academic literacy ‘deficit’. Fostering student ability to “switch practices” and unpack the power structures behind Discourses is dangerous in this sensitive context. Here, as a comparative outsider to these “colliding contexts”, I am able to detect some of the dangerous Discourses and needle away at possible ‘needs’ or reasons why the problems persist. The following short vignette from my own experience highlights the careful balancing act conducted by teachers/ lecturers and administrators at *GU*, especially the ex-patriate ones:

The last semester before I left the country (January to June 2006), I experienced a potentially explosive situation. At the end of September 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad, which inflamed the Muslim world, and protests and boycotts of Danish products in Muslim countries followed. In January, one of my ESP Academic Writing students, who was studying Politics, decided to do her survey project on Muslim female students’ reactions to and perceptions of the Danish cartoons and their aftermath. I mentioned this to my ESP coordinator who immediately told me that I should forbid her to write on this topic. I relayed the news to the student. She was outraged and assumed that the reason for the ban was that the ESP coordinator supported the publishing of the cartoons and was anti-Islamic. The actual reason for the ban was to avoid offending Islamic sensibilities with anything that could be perceived as supportive of the cartoons. The student threatened that she would report the coordinator for anti-Islamic behaviour, if I refused to allow her to continue. In the end, to avoid any further conflict and at risk of official censure (the coordinator had told me I risked being fired if I allowed her to do the project), I permitted her to continue with the project.

The student’s completed project was highly critical of the cartoons and Western views of Islam, which she considered as the reason for the publishing of the cartoons. She also criticized Muslims’ hypocrisy for boycotting Danish products, but not French products, although French newspapers also published the cartoons. This hypocrisy she put down to expediency because the largest supermarket chain in the country is French owned. What I found interesting about this project is the thinking processes it involved for the student. For example, she found that:

The majority of my respondents believe that the Danish and French governments should control their newspapers better.

(Student Respondent X – not part of main research data)

The project genre involved giving results and then thinking of reasons for the results and reasons behind the results. When challenged on why governments are responsible for newspapers, she had to examine both why Western governments do not feel responsible for their newspapers and why people in Islamic countries believe governments are responsible for their newspapers. Issues such as freedom of the press and separation of state and media were raised and discussed in class. The student also had to indicate which opinions reflected her opinions, which were the views of the respondents and which reflected her interpretations of Western views. All this increased her ability to indicate ownership of ideas, a key academic skill encouraged by most universities as indicated in the following:

A reason most of the respondents feel Western countries should control their media better is that my respondents are all female Muslims and in Islamic countries the government controls the media. However, Western governments like the Danish don't think it is their responsibility because they believe in "freedom of the press". I believe that there is good freedom and bad freedom. So, the newspapers should write what they like, but not insults the religion of any group.

(Student Respondent X – not part of main research data)

The genre of the survey report thus forced the student to critically examine why people think in a certain way and how society operates.

In contrast, the reaction of the coordinator and the constant self-censorship that is common at *GU* (for example, the foundation programme and ESP lecturers are instructed to ‘black out’ any references ‘forbidden’ subjects such as alcohol, extra-marital relationships, politics or homosexuality before giving out student textbooks) arise from a desire to comply with the laws of the country and university and thus retain their jobs, but also perhaps from a lack of understanding and dialogue about what is or is not permitted in Islam and by the country’s constitution and a desire to obscure or hide the way society operates. For example, although Level 3 English Communication lecturers were instructed to black out references to homosexuality in a textbook, students reportedly laughed when they worked out what had been blacked out and reported that they had learnt about homosexuality in Biology class in high school. This, as suggested by Findlow (2001) reflects the tensions between “on the one hand, not wanting to present anything that conflicts with the tenets of Islam, and on the other hand needing to acquaint students with everything so that they can (help their country) compete in the global market – an issue of ideals versus pragmatics”. Thus the Islamic Discourse of Islamic which desires the “Islamization” of knowledge, conflicts with the Discourse of Westernization/ “pragmatics”.

In fields such as Humanities and within the *GU* foundation course and ESP Academic Writing Course, there is obviously a feeling that it is possible to stick to ‘safe’ topics without compromising ‘modern’/ technological advancement and the university authorities can walk the fine line between these conflicting Discourses. However, if students veer into dangerous/ controversial topics, this fine balance may be disturbed, so the ‘problem’ of a “deficit” of what Paul and Elder (2001) designate “thinking about thinking” is “needed” to retain this balance.

The Discourse of modernity and advancement resonates throughout the *Gulf University* website in statements like the following:

The use of modern information technology will be instrumental throughout (Nahayan 1997),

[GU] identifies challenges and opportunities presented by evolving human needs, new research methods and technologies, and promptly assembles the talent and resources needed to exploit them (Nahayan 1997) and,

Since Information Technology (IT) infrastructure has become a necessity for every modern progressive society, [GU] has wasted no time in adopting the latest technology to build a complete integrated IT infrastructure. It has integrated all aspects of IT services with those of the academy. Faculty, staff and students can utilize electronic services through Internet, Intranet, messaging services, specialized IT labs, online training, course information on the Web (Nahayan 2006)).

However, the Discourses of modernity and advancement are always coupled with Information Technology, equipment and instrumental scientific research. There is no examination of the attitudes to information or Discourses within which ‘modernity’ or scientific advancement and research flourishes. Instead, the University takes Asraf’s view that the sole purpose of learning English is to access “modern-day knowledge” and that “modern day knowledge” can be divorced from the contexts/ Discourses from which it developed (Asraf 1996).

The ESP Academic Writing Course, which was taught at the time of this research, thus has the potential for unleashing ‘dangerous’ Discourses. This is possibly one of the reasons for the decision to phase it out in the 2006/2007 academic year. Faculty embedded ESP courses prior to 2004 were unpopular because they were perceived as intruding upon the territory of the subject lecturer by the university administration (Atkinson 2005) and the ESP Academic Writing Course was created as a ‘generic’ solution to the ‘problem’ of accommodating students from all the faculties. Students from the Engineering and Science faculties worked on ‘research reports’ in which they summarised and paraphrased information from secondary sources on topics of their own choice, while students from the rest of the faculties, including my Humanities respondents, wrote “survey reports” on a topic of their choice. Both courses integrated process writing and genre analysis to apprentice students into the genre through a series of examples and practice activities, followed by production of a part of the report, thus following a academic socialization” model. The planned ESP Academic Writing Course to be phased in from September 2006; would remain “generic” with students reading generic “light academic texts” and completing a number of activities to practice “generic” atomistic “skills” (Curriculum Committee 2006). A focus on text-based activities and carefully selected “light academic texts will probably prevent the “dangers” of personal choice in topic or uncontrolled “thinking about thinking”. But, according to my view, will prevent the development of true enquiry and the ability to “invent” the university (Bartholomae 1985).

Of course, as I suggested earlier in this chapter, I have divined these dangerous Discourses and needled away at the ‘needs’ behind them from my perspective, the perspective of an outsider. A detailed Critical Discourse Analysis conducted by locals and even by other expatriates, be they Arab or Western, would be useful to reveal other Discourses and even to contradict my analysis. But, in terms of my Critical Realist philosophy and epistemology, I can only examine the artifacts of reality as I find them within the dialectics of my socially and individually created “reality”. In the Critical Discourse Analysis method, I am now required to

“identify possible ways past the obstacles” of solving these “problems” and “reflect critically on the analysis” (Meyer 2001), I will undertake these aspects of the analytical framework in the conclusion of my thesis.

Supposing a Stratification

Geologists examining layers of rocks assume by the Law of Superposition that the oldest strata occur at the base of the sequence (Hamblin, 1978: 115). In the same way, this study makes assumptions about “what is” through “what we know” (Bhaskar 1997). However, rather than describing consequences or outcomes which “cannot be successfully predicted”, I attempt to uncover and explain some of the “mechanisms, social structures, powers and relations that causally govern the flux of events” (Brown, Fleetwood *et al.* 2001).

This process of uncovering and explaining follows the steps as outlined by Bhaskar in his *explanatory critique* (Bhaskar 1998). Firstly, I describe the features observed from “historically accessible forms” (curriculum documents, student writing, student narratives, teacher/ faculty narratives, curriculum designer/ administrator narratives, university websites) (Harvey 2002) using different research tools (corpus study, developmental measures, interpretative analysis and critical discourse analysis). Next, I attempt retroduction of possible causes and identification of generative mechanisms by relating the descriptions to the multiple contexts underlying teacher/faculty/ student/ administrator, and even my own, construction of university literacy/ literacies. Then the features are resolved into components/ Discourses which are re-described, retroduced to possible antecedents and once again scrutinized for alternative causes as they are examined from a different lens.

In order to re-describe, retroduce and reexamine as many alternative causes as possible, I will now summarize the major Discourses unpacked in this thesis, try to suggest “ways past” the ‘problems’ they suggest and critically reflect on both the appropriateness of the construction of academic literacy/ literacies at *Gulf University* and my analysis of that construction.

Deficiency Discourse

The student respondents' university literacy is repeatedly described as 'deficient' and compared to a native 'standard'. This can be seen in the choice of vocabulary lists selected from native speaker corpora, the measurement of student literacy against international high stakes examinations such as TOEFL and IELTS, the 'benchmarking' of programmes against so-called international quality assurance measures, the descriptions of teachers, faculty members and even the respondents themselves of their poor general level of English, writing skills, motivation and research skills as well as the deficiency Discourse implied by administrators, the curriculum design (reflected in the perceived need for a foundation course) and industry.

There are several possible "generative mechanisms" behind this Discourse. Firstly, English as a Second or English as a Foreign Language generally falls within a "study skills" or "narrow academic socialization" Discourse and in many countries students and even lecturers who are not native-speakers of English are forced to undergo extensive "training" not only in terms of study skills such as grammar, essay structure and citation, but also in how to think in compliance with the academy. This view assumes that there is one hegemonic academy, rather than multiple, contested academies and literacies. Secondly, the 'deficit' Discourse assumes that this hegemonic academy is and should be organized according to Western, especially North American norms.

I am aware that my personal history may have led to my construction of this "fallible" Discourse (Fairclough 2001). My own resistance to imposed standards and domination by the hegemony may result in an inappropriate link between an event and "something other than the event" (Brown, Fleetwood *et al.* 2001). However, the constant repetition of the need for improved standards by *Gulf University* administration (Nahayan 1997; Al-Dhahiri 2005; Nahayan 2005), the local media (Hoath & Za'za' 2005; Reporter 2005) and faculty lecturers

(Faculty Respondents 1 – 4, *Socializing Strategies*), implies dissatisfaction with the students' preparedness to enter the academy.

Additionally, there is an international focus on “accountability, quality assurance, league tables and performance indicators” (Ramsden 2003) which has resulted in an increased scrutiny of drop out rates, pass rates and research output in comparison with money spent which is likely to categorize both lecturers and students as “deficient”, especially if the students or lecturers' home and Secondary Discourses do not include practices valued by the hegemony (Broadfoot; Ramsden 2003). The choice of so-called international benchmarks such as examinations and accreditation boards from “centre” (Hadley 2004) countries (mainly the USA and UK) implies that the perceived hegemony is Western/ Anglo-American.

The ‘deficit’ Discourse can also be perceived in the resistance to it that is shown by students, lecturers and even administrators/ curriculum designers. Curriculum designers positively assert that the foundation programme is “developmental not remedial” (Bielenburg 2004; Gillway 2005), student respondents complain of not being permitted to express their views, “we have opinion...not give opinion why?” (Student Respondent 1: 294) and of the primacy of “high countries” (Student Respondent 5: 304), while lecturers who are part of the hegemony criticize those outside of it (Faculty Respondent 1, Faculty Respondent 2: 243 - 245) and lecturers who are not part of the hegemony observe a hostile silence.

Thus despite my own situatedness and fallibility, I am able to identify certain “material processes” from the “fallible ideas which inform” them (Brown, Fleetwood *et al.* 2001) and attempt to find “ways past” the “deficit” Discourse and the problems it causes in the construction of university literacy at *GU*.

The Discourse of a homogenous academy lies at the heart of the ‘deficit’ Discourse at *GU*, other institutions in the Gulf and institutions worldwide where students from non-traditional backgrounds are entering English-medium universities or lecturers from non-traditional backgrounds are working. This Discourse silences dissenting opinion with lecturers afraid to examine their own practice in case they are “caught out” speaking Arabic or not teaching the appropriate “approaches to learning”, or through a “panopticon” effect, it causes the “subjects [to] assume responsibility for the constraints of power” (Kazmi 2004). For example, the local lecturers pathologize students as “lazy” if they are unable to achieve the required “standards” (Faculty Respondent 4, *The Academy Comments*) or the students insist that studying English and complying with ‘global’ standards will result in the “best” university and successful students (Student Respondent 1, Student Respondent 2, Student Respondent 6, *Orientation to Learning*).

The “way past” the homogenous academy Discourse and resulting ‘deficit Discourse’ lies, I believe, in first accepting the multiple and contested nature of university literacy. Because regions, countries, universities, departments, faculties, departments, subjects, individual lecturers and students are all different and construct literacy in different ways, it is important not to construct academic socialization narrowly as an enculturation into a fixed academy with fixed rules and practices, but rather as an enculturation into the process of constructing or “inventing” and “reinventing” the university and university literacy for each specific situation (Bartholomae 1985).

For students to be empowered in this invention process, I posit that academic acculturation needs to involve “situated practice”, “overt instruction”, “critical framing” and “transformed practice” (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996). Situated practice involves “immersion in experience and the utilization of available discourses”, thus precluding generic academic literacy courses,

since this immersion requires experience of “authentic” vocabulary, modality, information structures, coherence relations etcetera . Overt instruction involves consciously and systematically teaching the “metalanguages and Design elements” for each learning environment. However, merely following these two aspects of acculturation can still result in socialized, but colonized students. Critical framing of content and structures in relation to “social and cultural context of particular Designs of meaning” and transformed practice where the student re-creates a Discourse for their own “real purposes” or combines or switches practices in the same or other contexts (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996; Lea & Stierer 2000) is necessary.

In order to achieve this pedagogy described by the New London Group as a “pedagogy of multiliteracies” (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996), more research is needed into the specific “Designs of meaning” favoured by specific regions, countries, faculties, departments, subjects, lecturers and individual students so that the differences between them can be viewed as a “productive resource” rather than a cause for shame . For example, instead of assuming and teaching generic vocabulary of greatest “general use” or generic “academic vocabulary” based on research in Western countries, corpus research is needed to discover the vocabulary used in the multi-lingual, multi-cultural Gulf university context and the context of specific faculties and departments. In order to facilitate this type of research, institutions need to embrace “diversity” and “pluralism” along with “managerialism” and “market forces” (Currie & Vidovich 1998). Removing the fear of punishment for difference will encourage lecturers to research their own practices, explicate these for their students along with allowing other researchers/ lecturers to access to their classes and materials.

For example, although exercises based on internal foundation programme or ESP corpora, “General Service List” and “Academic Word List” allow students to see the value of certain

vocabulary items or ‘chunks’ of language within the programme itself, I believe they are inappropriate by themselves, since these activities do not allow them access to the Discourses, genres, styles, vocabulary items of the faculties, departments and subjects that the foundation programme or ESP course are ostensibly preparing them for. A *Gulf University* corpus and mini corpora for each faculty and the teaching of vocabulary items derived from these corpora would provide a more authentic picture of the vocabulary and grammar(s) required in each faculty and assist in the creation of materials that would better prepare the students for these specific contexts.

Research into “global writing development” would also be useful in order to ascertain whether an individual student’s writing has developed over a period of time and the collection of student portfolios in the *GU* foundation course is a useful step in this direction. However, in order to more accurately measure this development, the amount of teacher and peer input needs to be strictly controlled in order to avoid a meaningless repetition of source information. Also, corpus research could assist in determining which lexical items are common and which ‘sophisticated’ within this particular context, thus enabling a more accurate assessment of a student’s lexical development. In addition, instead of merely assessing students’ development in terms of content-less, generic, “light academic” topics in the foundation course, student writing about discipline-specific topics within faculties could be assessed not only for development in terms of grammar, lexis or fluency, but also for development of the rhetorical structures or research conventions favoured by a particular discipline. This would require a completely different form of ‘academic support’ and/or ‘developmental education’ which I will posit later in this chapter.

Principally, with the global focus on efficiency, competition and accountability, especially in contexts like the Gulf or South Africa where there are numerous ‘non-traditional students’ to

accommodate, there is a danger that institutions succumb to the appeal of a “scientific-atomistic approach to language” and literacy since it “nicely fits an economic/ political decision-making model” (Rose 1985). Also, this view keeps the peddlers of ‘skills’ and the ‘ESL industry’ in their jobs, so they have a vested interest in promoting the model. However, this atomistic “study skills” approach to either pedagogy or research results in a ‘deficit’ Discourse that pathologizes students and lecturers and inevitably results in division and dissent.

Research concerning the academic socialization required by specific faculties, disciplines or subjects within the Gulf context would also be useful. However, this research should be descriptive rather than prescriptive since a comparison of the views of the academy and the “approaches” of students (Haggis 2003) can also result in a ‘deficit’ Discourse. Rather, research should examine and describe the approaches/ Discourses/ genres favoured by different students/ lecturers/ faculties/ disciplines/ universities and examine the causalities that underlie these approaches so that these can be made explicit to students.

In terms of pedagogy, a genre-based approach which gives context to the skills, behaviours and dispositions required by different disciplines appears to be most suitable. Research indicates that content-based instruction contextualized in terms of genres is more effective in socializing students (as recorded by university retention rates, test pass rates and graduation rates) than more generic courses (Benesch 1993; Benesch 1996; Song 2006). My study suggests that even a modicum of specificity in the choice of field or topic for a survey project in the ESP Academic Writing Course along with a structured genre-based curriculum can result in an improved mastery of aspects of the target genre (such as vocabulary - *Corpora and Challenging Competence* and improved fluency and accuracy in writing – *Devolving and Dissolving Developmental Measures*) and an increased interest and motivation on the part of

the student (*Socializing Strategies (Motivational Matters)*). Bax (2006) describes how the introduction of a genre-based pedagogy increases “context sensitivity”, impacts positively on skills teaching and assessment and “meshes” effectively with “local expectations” even when it is applied to a generic “general English syllabus”. However, as mentioned above, “critical framing” and “transformed practice” are required for true academic socialization.

This study also indicates that the genres favoured by lecturers vary greatly from faculty to faculty and even from academic subject to subject (Faculty Respondent 1, Faculty Respondent 2, Student Respondent 1, Student Respondent 6 (*Socializing Strategies, Dangerous Discourses*)). Detailed ethnographic research is required in order to understand the discourses/ genres/ Discourses prevalent in different faculties/ departments and individual subjects and, thereafter, an appropriate curriculum and pedagogy based on this research should be devised.

The current *GU* curriculum, like the curricula in many university foundation programmes worldwide, emphasizes so-called generic academic ‘skills’ and does not take the socially embedded nature of knowledge and ‘skills’ into account. If the conventions of the different discipline-embedded text-types, genres, styles, discourses and Discourses are fully explicated, students are likely to progress more in terms of their academic socialization in general and even in terms of their practical writing ‘skills’ as indicated by the marked improvement in fluency of students in the Academic Writing Course after an in-depth, scaffolded exposure to a particular genre (*Defining and Dissecting Fluency*). This conclusion is confirmed by many other studies (Cope & Kalantzis 1993; Flowerdew 1993; Paltridge & Flowerdew 2002; Song 2006) which indicate increased student performance and motivation after explicit genre-based instruction.

An alternative pedagogical ‘twist’ on genre-based instruction, which combines elements of an academic literacies/ multiliteracies pedagogy, is the ‘ethnography of writing’ pedagogy

(Grabe & Kaplan 1996; Paltridge & Flowerdew 2002; Paltridge 2004). In this pedagogy students are empowered to conduct their own ethnographic research into the specific language features/ genres/ styles/ discourses/ Discourses of their field. The way this pedagogy has and can be realised in different contexts is discussed later in this chapter.

Cultural Reproduction/ Self Cultivation

The construct of university literacy at *Gulf University* is also directly affected, and appropriately so, by national and Islamic Discourses which are reflected in the mission statement and goals of the university as well as the narratives of some of the student respondents who show an ability or desire to “keep their culture” (Student Respondent 3) and a resistance to colonization: “no one will change me” (Student Respondent 5). However, there is little or no discussion on how these Discourses are or should be realized in the curricula and pedagogy.

In the vignette in the previous chapter (*Dangerous Discourses*), I describe how misunderstandings can develop between Islamic students and non-Islamic faculty/ teachers when there are no clear guidelines or open discussion on how to negotiate the contested Western and Arabic/ Islamic Discourses. For example, while faculty and staff are reminded in the *New Employees Guide* that “many will find...a country of contrasts between the modern and the traditional” and abjured to respect “unwritten dress codes” and “Muslim Ramadan practices” (HR 2006), there is little or no analysis on how the negotiation between these “contrasts” plays itself out or how “respect” for Islam should play out in an academic context.

I would agree that existing *GU* curriculum activities such as the Problem-Based Learning projects in the foundation course and the Survey Projects in the ESP Academic Writing Course are appropriate opportunities for students and lecturers to negotiate between Discourses. This negotiation process has already been set in motion for some students within the existing foundation course and ESP Academic Writing Course framework as evidenced by Student Respondent 5's navigation between her twin identities of "Islamic studies" and the foundation programme/ESP with the former requiring memorization of "Allah's knowledge" and the latter giving opinions about "man's knowledge". This is also evident in her desire to "go to America" and "change opinions" (Student Respondent 5). However, these activities require a more discipline-specific focus as well as open debate and negotiation of identity to become truly meaningful. Issues such as appropriate pedagogy (communicative, content-based or Islamic), censorship and self-censorship by lecturers and the degree to which Western/Anglo-American culture affects or should affect curriculum need to be discussed.

Additionally, current *GU* policies fail to acknowledge that, just as the university is constantly reinvented, both Western academic culture and Arabic/Islamic culture is constantly changing and being reinvented by its participants. The student respondents in this study reflect how even previously accepted "set in stone" parental rules and attitudes have changed. For example, it is now acceptable for women to study, work outside the home and drive while these were previously taboo (Student Respondent 1, Student Respondent 4). Similarly, Western Anglo-American university culture is constantly evolving with paradigm shifts in research and changing academic identities.

In order to chart the dynamic, evolving identities of students, faculty members within disciplines at *GU* and other similar institutions, research from a critical perspective is necessary. In this research, I have been able to describe just a few of the 'dangerous' Discourses that I have discerned from my perspective as a relative outsider to the colliding contexts constituting the construction of university literacy/literacies at *GU*. However, critical discourse analysis undertaken from other 'insider' perspectives would provide a more textured

description of this complex phenomenon and I believe, unpack even more ‘dangerous’, but potentially revolutionary Discourses. Of course, any such studies would also be slanted by the fact that most of the people with the capacity to do them (i.e. PhDs) will have been socialized into the dominant western academy because of their training in the USA. On the other hand, I believe that one of the strengths of Critical Discourse Analysis lies in its acceptance of the incomplete, biased nature of any analysis and the fact that researchers using its tools are forced to reflect upon and openly state their own biases and construction. Similarly, although ‘the real’ or ‘truth’ about the complexity of the construction of university literacy at *GU* is elusive, I believe that each ‘layer’ of my research adds another ‘layer’ of understanding which can only be furthered by other researchers and perspectives.

Developmental/EGAP or ESAP/Other?

My discussion in this chapter thus far has circled around issues of culture and construction. However, issues of course design and pedagogy have only been briefly touched upon. Therefore, in this section I will discuss some of my observations regarding the ‘appropriateness’ of the current *GU* course design, curriculum and pedagogy. I have described in the preceding chapters how the *GU* foundation programme and subsequent ESP Academic Writing Course can be described as “Developmental” and “English for General Academic Purposes”.

The courses are “developmental” in that the *GU* foundation programme focuses on both the “cognitive and affective growth” of its learners (Casazza 1999). English, Mathematics and Information Technology content and skills are supplemented by study and research skills in Arabic (Gillway 2005) and students are “socialized” into the academy during their first year in the foundation programme through a detailed induction programme, peer mentoring, social activities and clubs (Caldwell 2005). The programme can also be viewed as “developmental” as it is part of the tradition of providing “support” for and accommodating non-traditional and

diverse student cohorts (Casazza 1999). The support and accommodation aspects of developmental education can be perceived, for example, in the *GU* initiation of a Special Needs Department to provide special needs students with “a comfortable meeting area” and “specialized equipment for students with visual handicaps” (Activities 2005) as well as the accommodation for blind and deaf students in teaching, materials and assessment (Caldwell 2005). The general *GU* cohort, who are mainly non-traditional students (the first in their families to attend university) (Bielenberg 2005; Morrow 2005), are accommodated and supported with the provision of English communication, Information Technology and Mathematics courses which all involve “learner training”, as well as “study and research skills” in the Arabic course (Gillway 2005). They are also provided with support outside of class time in the form of an Independent Learning Centre, Peer Tutoring Centre and individual tutoring sessions with foundation programme lecturers (Caldwell 2005).

In this thesis I have described how the programme design, curriculum and pedagogy at *GU* is greatly influenced by Western/Anglo-American Discourses and how this is a natural result of the dominant influence of the West, particularly the USA, on the world media and economy and, therefore, university education world wide. The dominant influence of America on the curriculum design and teaching at *GU* in particular can also be ascribed to the precarious political position of Gulf countries which rely on USA military assistance, as well as the high numbers of North American faculty and staff at this particular institution. Like other university education Discourses, the Discourse of developmental education has been transplanted to a certain extent uncritically from the USA to the Gulf context and, therefore, the general understanding of developmental education at *GU* “remains focused on [the] under-theorized curricular practice[s]” commonly accepted in many universities in the USA and elsewhere which make developmental programmes and teaching staff vulnerable to the “whim of every legislator or academic vice-president who questions the value of our practice” (Lundell & Collins 1999).

The lack of understanding about the varied definitions and understandings of developmental education (even in the USA) has resulted in many at *GU* regarding it as synonymous with a first year foundation or “academic preparatory programme” (Arendale 2005) and a number of discrete induction or social activities involved at making the first year student feel like “an insider” in university community. This perception that an induction process and effective foundation programme makes you ‘belong’ for once and all to the academy is even shared by my student respondents who have undergone the ‘new’ foundation course (Student Respondent 1, Student Respondent 6) and contrast their own “thinking skills”, “English” and ability to conduct research unfavourably with that of their colleagues who completed the course before 2003. The uncritical acceptance of a narrowly defined developmental education has also resulted in even the *GU* Chancellor conflating developmental education with “remedial programmes” which, after the introduction of “higher standards”, tougher entrance requirements and better instruction at high school will become unnecessary (Nahayan 1997).

Developmental education in the USA and elsewhere developed out of a dual need to provide access to university education in order to supply the needs of industry (“high skills thesis”) and give students their democratic “rights” (Casazza 1999) and the desire of the academy to preserve ‘standards’ and ensure “outsiders” (non-traditional students) are socialized into the practices privileged by the academy. Research charting the changing conceptions or “glossifications” of developmental education describe a number of phases, perceptions and institutional practices encompassed by this term. At different times, countries and in different institutions developmental education has involved academic preparatory programs/ foundation programmes linking between school and university, ‘remedial’ programmes targeting “underprepared” or “disadvantaged” students, “holistic” programmes aimed at normative socializing of students, learning assistance outside of regular classes, the “infused” model with learning support or language support staff working with faculty and even broad institutional audits and changes in course structure in the form of “access programs” and “extended programmes” (Boughey 2005; Arendale 2005; O'Regan 2005).

In the same way, the need for developmental education in the Gulf developed out of pressures from industry to provide a highly skilled workforce, the pressures of ‘globalization’ resulting in the need to study through the medium of English, political pressure to provide mass higher education to nationals and complaints from faculty about the students’ perceived inability to comprehend material and complete the required tasks to a suitable standard. Thus developmental education is probably an appropriate and necessary part of the construction of university literacy at *GU*. However, faculty, student and administration’s understanding of the range of practices that constitute developmental education need to be extended.

I believe that the “way past” the problem of effective student enculturation into the academy at *GU* and other institutions lies in understanding the ideological potential of developmental education. If, like Lundell and Collins (Lundell & Collins 1999) we follow Gee’s (1998) Discourse theory, we can develop an appropriate programme design, curriculum and pedagogy. Since non-traditional students (“authentic beginners”) and in fact *all* students entering the new university culture(s) require programmes, curricula and pedagogy that does not conflict with their “primary and other extant Discourses”, all courses and material, not only those in the foundation programme should “build on what they already know”. Thus student-centered pedagogies are vital. However, there is a danger in assuming that learning and teaching styles favoured by Western countries are necessarily the most student-centered. Debate is necessary among lecturers and between lecturers and students to find the best suite of student-centered practices to suit a particular discipline, subject, student group or even individual student as well as the local social and religious context.

Gee’s “situated practice” suggests that meaningful practice within specific contexts is necessary (Lundell & Collins 1999). Therefore, English for general academic purposes (EGAP) courses are inappropriate as they do not allow students the opportunity to meaningfully engage within a “community of practice”. EGAP courses also affect Gee’s principle of “automaticity” since, as students require “repeated practice in meaningful contexts” (Lundell & Collins 1999), the delay in allowing students to engage within their

chosen community of practice will hamper their acquisition of the necessary discourses and Discourses. My respondents', therefore, showed improved "global development", acquisition of the target lexis, heightened motivation and the ability to critically examine their own Discourses when involved in the meaningful, albeit still partially decontextualized Academic Writing Course survey project because the familiar content allowed them "a low affective filter" and their participation in a meaningful research activity allowed them repeated practice and the ability to acquire "automaticity", resulting in an enthusiastic embracing of the practice of "research" (Student Respondent 1, Student Respondent 2, Student Respondent 5, Student Respondent 7, *Orientation to Learning*). If this limited specificity could have such marked effects, an infused English for Specific Academic Purposes course could potentially have even more dramatic results.

Gee's principle of "meta-awareness" which Lundell and Collins relate to "scaffolding" or the process of building upon that which is already known also relates to learning within a meaningful context and the valuing of the students' primary and other Discourses (Lundell & Collins 1999). Islamic and Gulf Discourses need to be valued and made an integral part of the learning environment. This is not possible if American materials and curricula are uncritically accepted. However, Gee's principle of "critical framing" suggests that the students' primary Discourses also require examination so that students and lecturers can "identify conflicts between the old and new Discourses- that [they]"frame" one within the other in order to see both critically" (Lundell & Collins 1999). Thus they can create new composite identities, or "switch practices" in order to take part in a more empowered "transformed practice".

The problem for *GU* like other universities is to find a workable model in which Gee's principles and a pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996) can be realized. My research has suggested that the practical, especially cost, implications of English for Special Academic Purposes programmes with close contact between faculty and support staff at *GU* have resulted in an English for General Academic Purposes curriculum extending even into the so-called English for Special Purposes (ESP) course. Additionally, despite the fact that

there have always been developmental or underprepared students requiring extra support, even in the USA, and that there is likely to always be this need (Boylan 1995; Boylan 1997), the high costs of foundation programmes make them an easy target for cost-cutting administrators. Therefore, I believe a combination of “institutional development” and “infused model” (Boughey 2005), along with a change in mindset is necessary instead of the current EGAP foundation course.

If we acknowledge that all students and even academics are “developmental students” (Casazza 1999) in the process of inventing and reinventing the university and disciplines within the university, we can provide a range of facilities and courses to accommodate our varied needs. Options involving institutional development such as an “augmented course” taken over an extended period of time in which “support and development is then *built in* to the teaching of the course so that it occurs in context” (Boughey 2005) should be made available to all students in addition to support such as tutorials, help for special needs and socializing activities. English for Special Academic Purposes courses with close contact between faculty and support staff can form part of “augmented courses” and are possible even for students of low proficiency in English. As a Shari’ah/ Law professor once said to me, “You can teach them about *court* and *judge* instead of *room* and *man*”. However, devising an appropriate ESAP course can be tricky due to institutional pressures and there is still a danger that this kind of course can develop into mere a ‘skills’ teaching.

As Discourses/ genres and discourses differ radically even within faculties and disciplines, it is difficult to design English for Special Purposes Courses that can cater for all the possibilities within each faculty or discipline. Also, costs dictate that most universities cannot provide specific ESAP courses for each subject or even discipline. Therefore, students are generally grouped in faculties for their ESP courses. In addition, as “outsiders” to the specific Discourses in each faculty/ discipline the English teacher can only ever obtain limited knowledge of the numerous fields he/she must accommodate and are often castigated for interfering with subject knowledge that they can not fully comprehend (Atkinson 2005).

A variety of ESAP options are possible. One possibility is the creation of a dedicated ESAP curriculum for each faculty which is run at the same time as faculty courses in an extended programme. The ESAP component can be more concentrated in the first semester of study as is customary in several institutions in Bahrain (Bahrain 2005; Bahrain 2006), but I believe that it is important for English and other academic support to be infused throughout a degree programme (Boughey 2005) and even post-graduate work since we are all constantly developing academic Discourses. Research education is another important part of university literacy and, therefore, content-based infused ESAP courses should involve scaffolded research projects utilizing the genres and styles agreed upon by faculty and support staff (Madany, Ali *et al.* 1988).

Another option to overcome practical difficulties in ESAP courses is to have team-taught tutorials involving faculty and language support staff working together to integrate Discourse knowledge and English communication as suggested by Bretag *et al.* once again including scaffolded research projects (2002). Unfortunately, even successful team-taught ESAP programmes like the Fundamentals of Engineering (ESP 2) Course at *GU* have been dropped, probably due to the fact that they are labour-intensive and costly.

A final possible solution to the problem of providing suitable ESAP courses is the model used by the Integrated Bridging Programme at Adelaide University for post-graduate international students where students are taught how to complete an “ethnography” of their field examining the Discourses including the rhetorical and language features favoured by their specific discipline or research area (Cargill 1996; Cargill, Cadman *et al.* 2001; Paltridge 2004). They work on the actual tasks required for their individual stage of candidature with optional grammar/self-editing and presentation courses (Cargill 1996; Cargill, Cadman *et al.* 2001).

This model could be adapted for undergraduate students where they can engage in the actual reading and tasks required by their faculties using the tools of genre analysis and engaging in “critical framing” (Cazden, Cope *et al.* 1996) to contextualize and contrast the various practices of their disciplines within a faculty-based ESAP course. Of course, for undergraduate students or non-traditional students specific language and study skills will be more central to the programme than for post-graduate students, but should be integrated within a broader examination of Discourse. However, in order to achieve a broader academic socialization and “transformed practice” with a collaborative “invention of the university”, close contact between faculty and ESAP support staff involving at least joint grading of papers or seminars and consultation regarding Discourse conventions is required. As Cadman (2000) reflects on the Integrated Bridging Programme, “the challenge to learn is on both sides. Valid 'transcultural' education requires that the values of Western academic tradition be critiqued through the perceptions and experiences of” the students involved. I suggest that even students with a low proficiency in English can be taught how to conduct an “ethnography of writing” (Paltridge 2004) in their specific field using tools such as personal field related corpora, genre-analysis or even critical discourse analysis involving them along with their lecturers and support staff in a critical interrogation and possibly even reinvention of the Discourses that construct their discipline and the university in general. This kind of exploration of Discourse is particularly suitable for ESAP courses since as Gatehouse states, ESL/ ESAP courses by their very nature involve “self-directed study and research tasks” (2001).

Attempting a “Core” Contribution

Like a geologist drills through the layers of rock and obtains a core sample and then attempts to describe the geological past of a region based on the stratified layers he/she can perceive, I have probed various aspects of the construction of university literacy at a specific university in the Gulf. Like the geologist, I attempt to generalize the information I obtain from my core samples to a larger region, in my case, other universities in the Gulf and even, in some

respects, universities more broadly. However, if I had probed elsewhere, just a metre to the left or right, perhaps my “core sample” would be completely different since the construction of academic literacy is a vast and complex phenomenon.

Also, unlike the stratified rocks, changes are rapid and the “reality” of human phenomenon is only “relatively” enduring (Bhaskar 1998). Thus I cannot speak of absolute “truth” or “fact” in this research only of “tendencies”. The insights which I have gained from this research are only valid for at the time of the research (“spatio-temporally dependent”), in situations where similar activities or programmes exist (“activity dependent”) and when the participants experience and express these events in a similar way (“concept dependent”) and, naturally, my conception of the Discourse that construct university literacy at *GU* also colours the analysis.

Despite these limitations on my analysis, I believe my core contribution in this thesis is my translation of Bhaskar’s *critical realist* ontology, and Harvey’s epistemological adaptation of it into practical methods for analysing complex constructions. This is particularly important when describing the construction of university literacy in the Gulf region, since research in this region often is uncritical or narrowly political favouring one of the colliding Discourses I describe in this study.

I have attempted in this study to answer the following questions:

- *How is the need for “academic English” and university literacy constituted at Gulf University?*
- *How do students experience this “constitution”?*
- *How appropriate is the constitution of academic English and university literacy at Gulf University?*

To answer how the *need* for academic English and university literacy is constituted at *Gulf University*, I have examined the Discourses that surround academic English and university literacy in the Gulf region and in universities in general and result in this *need*. I have unpacked Discourses such as English for Academic Purposes (including English for General Academic Purposes and English for Special Academic Purposes), Discourses surrounding the different views of literacy such as the “study skills”, narrow “academic socialization” and “academic literacies” perspectives (including “critical thinking”, “skills”, “motivation”, learning strategies” and many others) and Discourses surrounding the cultural, social and religious “colliding [cultural] contexts” the students are exposed to (including Westernization/ Globalization/ TESOL and Islamization/ Gulf Culture).

To answer how students *experience* this need for academic English and university literacy, I have tried to unpack Discourses in the students’ writing and narratives, always acknowledging that Discourses are constructed within a social context and that the “individual [or group] moment” is constructed by both “self-cultivation” and “as product of social interaction” (Harvey 2002), thus attempting to uncover the “generative mechanisms” behind their Discourses (Bhaskar 1998).

Finally, in attempting to determine the *appropriateness* of the construction of academic English and university literacy at *Gulf University*, I have suggested that although much of the Discourse stated in the University documents appears to reflect an appropriate construction and many of the lecturers and administrators at *GU* appear to desire an inclusive academy which respects diversity, *GU*, like most universities, requires an more detailed understanding of the complex nature of academic literacies and a more appropriate pedagogy of multi-literacies along with institutional reform in order to facilitate greater inclusiveness and a respect of the students’ Primary and other Discourses.

It would be impossible for me to encompass the complexity of the construction of academic English and university literacy at *Gulf University* or any other institution. However, in attempting to answer my research questions, I believe I have problematized the claims made by “skills” and narrow academic “socialization” approaches and charted some of the possible ways to facilitate an explicit pedagogy of inclusion, multi-literacies and appropriate institutional reform to accommodate this pedagogy.

Appendix 1

BNC Frequency/AWL Subset/ Frequency in FPC/AWC Corpus/ Frequency in ESPSC/ Word

BNC	AWL	FPC/AWC	Student Corpus	Word
34869	1	2	2	Area
28707	1	6	33 (major – field of study)	Major
27022	1	3	5	Available
26951	1	0	0	Labour
26688	1	1	122	Research
25813	1	1	7	Policy
24161	1	5	0	Period
22892	2	0	0	Community
22475	1	1	6	Process
22209	4	14	52	Job
20511	6	0	0	Fee
20287	2	3	0	Range
19660	1	0	0	Involved
18926	1	0	5	Individual
18770	9	3	0	Team
18731	1	0	5	Section
18295	1	1	16 (similarities/ similar)	Similar
18244	1	1	0	Authority
18062	1	8	54	Data
16353	1	0	14	Issue
16334	1	0	4 (require/ requires)	Require(d)

16020	1	0	0	Approach
15401	2	6	16 (final draft/ final reason)	Final
15133	4	41	46	Project
14578	2	1	0	Chapter
14359	4	0	0	Despite
14245	4	0	0	Series
13733	2	28	89	Computer
13703	1	0	3 (infrastructure 1)	Structure
12981	1	2	4 (all illegal)	Legal
12930	1	1	4	Environment
12850	2	9	89 (all designed a survey/ questionnaire/ research)	Design
12815	1	0	0	Theory
12582	2	1	0	Finally
12191	2	3	6	Normal
12183	1	0	1	Issues
12109	5	0	0	Prime
12091	5	1	0	Energy
12072	2	5	1	Previous
12063	3	0	0	Scheme
11988	1	7	16	Significant
11984	1	0	0	Income
11917	7	0	0	Couple
11882	1	0	0	Contract
11816	1	1	2	Establish(ed)

11708	3	4	17	Technology
11436	2	14	10 (appropriately 2)	Appropriate
11302	9	0	0	Military
11234	1	1	18	Specific
11119	2	0	0	Potential
10959	4	1	3	Profession
10810	4	0	2	Access
10767	1	1	12	Benefit
10661	5	1	6	Contact
10660	3	1	1	Published
10529	5	1	2	Style
10478	5	1	2	Aware
10448	2	0	0	Commission
10437	1	1	10	Economy
10244	3	1	1	Circumstance
10221	3	1	1	Ensure
9874	2	1	1	Region
9831	1	5	116 (the majority of)	Majority
9773	2	8	57 (websites or a few historical sites)	Site
9467	3	1	0	Considerable
9444	3	1	8 (as an adjective)	Physical
9383	2	1	1 (complex sentence)	Complex
9357	2	0	0	Primary
9196	4	1	8 (status of/ high status)	Status

9037	3	0	3 (for instance)	Instance
9021	3	2	1	Task
8966	1	13	35	Method
8950	1	9	10 (source/ resource – 4)	Source
8860	8	1	0	Eventually
8850	1	2	13	Methods
8848	7	0	1 (first aid)	Aid
8843	7	9	4	Equipment
8718	2	1	0	Features
8692	1	1	2	Created
8687	1	0	0	Sector
8668	1	1	0	Factors
8602	1	3	0	Function
8582	3	1	0	Alternative
8496	6	2	17 (transportation 2)	Transport
8493	2	2	32	Culture
8482	1	2	0	Context
8335	2	1	5	Positive
8305	4	0	0	Obvious
8194	3	0	0	Sex
8125	4	0	0	Annual
8109	8	0	0	Nuclear
8104	2	31	159 (all related to survey projects)	Survey
8069	5	0	1 (conversion)	Version

7906	7	3	56 (media like TV and media like in paint)	Media
7902	2	4	4 (all topic is relevant)	Relevant
7867	2	0	0	Achieved
7767	8	1	1 (surplus)	Plus
7731	4	1	0	Overall
7702	1	1	4	Benefits
7594	4	0	0	Grant
7557	2	10	1	Text
7470	1	1	4 (financial/ financially)	Finance
7388	2	0	2 (impact of car hitting another)	Impact
7341	5	1	0	Image
7285	4	1	0	Debate
7207	5	0	0	Network
7192	2	1	3	Aspects
7045	6	0	0	Nevertheless
6908	2	3	6	Transfer
6836	1	1	4	Require
6835	4	0	0	Domestic
6737	3	1	0	Technical
6731	5	1	6	Challenge
6715	2	4	0	Achieve
6692	1	2	0	Assessment
6672	4	1	0	Internal

6580	1	1	9	Sources
6559	3	0	0	Initial
6556	7	0	0	Release
6544	3	0	0	Proportion
6541	4	4	1	Contrast
6392	3	0	0	Fund
6343	1	3	0	Concept
6329	2	0	0	Elements
6291	2	0	0	Construction
6218	1	0	0	Factor
6203	2	0	0	Feature
6169	5	7	27 (all comparing high and low percentage results)	Whereas
6161	6	1	0	Display
6098	2	1	1	Strategy
6072	9	0	0	Route
6019	1	1	0	Requirements
5984	4	0	0	Output
5923	2	2	7	Affected
5913	4	1	6 (all goal of project/ goal of research)	Goal
5902	4	1	2	Attitude
5895	7	2	0	File
5882	3	1	1	Sufficient
5861	5	0	1	Conflict

5860	1	1	1	Defined
5858	2	21	62 (focus point/ focus of research)	Focus
5802	5	5	0	Capacity
5716	5	0	3	Mental
5694	1	0	0	Issued
5646	1	0	0	Principles
5542	1	2	0	Occur
5529	2	0	0	Element
5495	5	0	0	Liberal
5475	6	0	0	Brief
5395	1	1	0	Processes
5393	2	0	0	Maintain
5392	4	5	11 (all answer option(s))	Option
5382	8	0	6	Exhibition
5371	3	1	0	Emphasis
5360	1	1	0	Occurred
5357	2	0	1	Seek
5332	2	0	0	Institute
5327	6	0	0	Estate
5320	3	0	0	Volume
5285	1	0	0	Functions
5258	3	3	0	Document
5255	4	0	0	Code
5250	1	1	4	Requires

5246	3	0	1	Comment
5235	3	1	6	Link
5216	4	0	0	Apparent
5214	1	1	1	Establish
5106	1	0	0	Principle
5063	3	0	0	Constant
5032	7	1	10	Adult(s)
5015	6	1	0	Minimum
4996	2	1	29 (traditional(ly) 4)	Tradition
4960	3	0	0	Partner
4952	1	2	5	Identify
4947	2	9	21	Affect
4910	5	0	2	External
4908	3	1	0	Minor
4904	6	1	3	Ministry
4874	1	0	0	Estimated
4857	5	0	0	Generation
4844	4	1	0	Principal
4824	6	0	0	Capable
4820	4	1	2	Stress
4795	5	0	1	Welfare
4782	6	0	2 (videotape, the tape)	Tape
4765	4	0	1 (priority)	Prior
4746	5	1	0	Enable

4684	4	0	0	Hence
4680	5	5	0	Decline
4648	4	11	1	Phase
4640	6	0	0	Index
4607	1	0	0	Sections
4604	8	0	0	Via
4599	5	2	1	Objective
4590	3	0	0	Technique
4569	9	0	0	Revolution
4559	3	0	0	Corporate
4549	2	0	0	Obtain
4548	2	0	0	Secure
4535	7	0	0	Somewhat
4521	1	0	0	Contracts
4488	8	0	0	Contemporary
4484	5	0	1 (fundamentals course)	Fundamental
4465	1	0	1	Structures
4461	1	0	0	Similarly
4451	7	1	3	Chemical
4449	1	0	0	Factory
4433	2	0	0	Purchase
4415	5	0	0	Equivalent
4402	8	0	1	Crucial
4383	4	0	0	Subsequent

4372	4	1	7 (to sum up 4, sums of money 3)	Sum
4357	1	0	0	Indicated
4345	7	1	2 (television channels)	Channel
4333	8	0	0	Virtually
4325	5	0	0	Notion
4312	6	4	0	Author
4312	10	0	0	Odd
4307	7	0	0	Unique
4305	2	1	0	Assistance
4301	1	0	0	Interpretation
4256	1	0	0	Assumed
4246	1	0	0	Proceedings
4239	6	1	3	Expert(s)
4236	2	3	13 (all selected sample/ respondents/ participants)	Selected
4229	2	1	1	Aspect
4209	3	0	0	Sequence
4172	1	1	0	Significantly
4171	8	1	0	Vehicle
4169	1	3	1	Involve
4154	1	1	0	Involvement
4118	5	1	4 (all diver's licence)	Licence
4104	9	1	0	Vision
4097	1	3	3	Indicate

4093	1	0	0	Involves
4090	2	0	0	Distinction
4052	1	1	0	Assume
4051	10	0	0	Enormous
4037	9	0	0	Behalf
4004	8	0	0	Radical
4001	3	0	0	Shift
3998	2	0	0	Acquired
3979	1	0	0	Periods
3929	1	0	0	Establishment
3921	3	1	0	Criteria
3889	3	0	0	Framework
3888	7	0	0	Voluntary
3870	6	0	0	Attached
3817	6	1	0	Overseas
3817	8	4	0	Dramatic
3809	4	2	0	Error
3794	9	0	0	Temporary
3722	1	1	1	Specifically
3720	7	0	0	Foundation
3718	2	2	0	Item
3691	7	0	0	Decade
3674	10	0	0	Panel
3671	3	0	0	Outcome

3651	1	0	0	Processing
3645	6	0	0	Federal
3623	5	1	0	Clause
3586	2	0	0	Assistant
3586	2	6	21	Computers
3583	7	0	0	Comprehensive
3551	3	0	0	Consent
3535	4	0	0	Adequate
3512	8	0	0	Drama
3505	8	0	0	Currency
3468	1	1	0	Respond
3455	4	0	0	Regime
3446	6	0	0	Input
3439	3	0	0	Philosophy
3439	7	0	0	Survive
3426	6	0	0	Scope
3423	4	0	0	Parallel
3415	6	0	0	Intelligence
3410	9	1	4 (2 medium of instruction/ 2 size)	Medium
3397	1	0	0	Derived
3389	8	0	0	Visual
3388	5	0	0	Stable
3383	7	0	0	Classic
3378	7	1	1	Priority

3362	3	0	0	Core
3328	1	0	0	Database
3323	2	0	0	Category
3282	1	1	0	Occurs
3258	1	0	0	Approaches
3224	8	0	1	Widespread
3223	1	1	0	Requirement
3213	4	0	0	Cycle
3193	4	16	57 (all calculated statistics/ statistics sheet/ record)	Statistics
3170	2	0	1	Injured
3170	10	0	0	Convinced
3160	2	0	0	Distinct
3143	4	0	0	Promote
3119	8	0	0	Prospect
3117	3	1	0	Register
3089	2	0	0	Concluded
3075	1	5	0	Consistent
3073	2	0	0	Achievement
3032	5	0	0	Perspective
3020	4	1	0	Concentrate
2992	1	0	0	Vary
2991	5	1	0	Draft
2919	7	0	0	Contrary
2918	1	9	0	Percent

2916	4	0	0	Mechanism
2887	6	3	0	Accurate
2883	6	0	0	Furthermore
2874	6	0	0	Bond
2854	5	7	0	Ratio
2850	5	0	0	Precise
2843	7	0	0	Visible
2838	9	0	0	Device
2837	4	3	0	Summary
2826	4	0	0	Approximately
2821	1	0	0	Approached
2804	1	0	0	Percentage
2793	2	0	0	Designs
2764	7	0	0	Isolated
2748	1	0	0	Distributed
2746	3	0	0	Dominated
2727	1	0	0	Roles
2719	7	4	0	Mode
2707	8	0	0	Inevitable
2691	9	0	0	Founded
2680	3	0	0	Remove
2671	1	0	0	Export
2661	1	0	0	Assess
2652	1	0	0	Concepts

2649	4	0	0	Integrated
2646	5	0	0	Expose
2644	10	0	0	So-called
2643	3	1	0	Contribute
2641	1	0	0	Estimate
2634	1	1	0	Formula
2632	5	0	0	Targets
2618	3	0	0	Component
2618	8	0	0	Theme
2613	8	25	0	Paragraph
2612	2	0	0	Resource
2612	5	7	0	Trend
2602	6	0	0	Reveal
2596	5	0	0	Psychology
2589	7	0	0	Confirm
2564	1	0	0	Evident
2549	1	0	0	Consists
2526	10	0	0	Collapse
2523	4	0	0	Retain
2512	2	0	0	Assist
2512	2	0	0	Constructed
2499	1	0	0	Estimates
2499	3	0	0	Located
2496	3	0	0	Layer

2490	1	0	0	Researchers
2480	8	0	0	Schedule
2475	8	0	0	Thereby
2475	8	0	0	Uniform
2471	9	0	0	Devote
2462	7	0	0	Ultimate
2416	7	77	36	Topic
2401	2	0	0	Perceive
2398	1	0	0	Define
2393	7	0	0	Sole
2385	6	0	0	Flexible
2378	9	0	0	Confined
2378	9	0	0	Manual
2372	3	1	0	Demonstrate
2355	2	5	0	Journal
2336	4	1	0	Investigation
2335	5	0	0	Transition
2328	9	0	0	Suspended
2318	1	0	0	Indicates
2317	4	0	0	Ethnic
2311	7	0	0	Reverse
2310	8	0	0	Guidelines
2296	8	0	0	Intense
2295	6	0	0	Rational

2289	7	1	0	Grade
2285	1	0	0	Sectors
2285	2	0	0	Consumers
2285	3	0	0	Interaction
2283	9	16	0	Format
2275	8	0	0	Random
2271	3	1	0	Valid
2264	1	0	0	Exports
2238	5	0	0	Logic
2218	9	0	0	Mutual
2211	1	0	0	Assessed
2198	5	0	0	Monitor
2194	7	2	0	Definition
2194	7	0	0	Deny
2171	7	0	0	Phenomenon
2156	6	0	0	Abstract
2148	7	0	0	Identical
2145	1	0	0	Consists of
2139	6	0	0	Trace
2139	9	0	0	Assured
2138	9	0	0	Bulk
2132	2	0	0	Distinctively
2121	1	0	0	Responded
2111	1	0	0	Interpreted

2109	1	0	0	Proceed
2084	1	0	0	Establishing
2067	7	0	0	Ideology
2032	4	0	0	Emerge
2025	3	0	0	Justify
2020	4	1	0	Label
1996	5	0	0	Generate
1989	2	0	0	Acquire
1982	6	0	0	Recover
1982	7	2	0	Publication
1960	1	0	0	Functional
1959	2	0	0	Chapters
1954	6	0	0	Gender
1951	10	0	0	Straightforward
1950	10	0	0	Whereby
1944	8	0	0	Inspection
1934	5	0	0	Pursue
1926	9	0	0	Controversy
1924	5	2	0	Alter
1896	1	0	0	Approaching
1883	4	0	0	Impose
1880	6	0	0	Allocated
1879	2	0	0	Designer
1873	9	0	0	Mature

1870	6	0	0	Explicit
1856	6	0	0	Lecture
1838	5	0	0	Substitute
1832	9	0	0	Duration
1825	1	0	0	Conception
1822	2	0	0	Focused
1779	1	0	0	Analysed
1769	9	0	0	Preliminary
1768	1	0	0	Varying
1754	5	0	0	Symbol
1747	5	0	0	Expand
1743	4	0	0	Resolve
1737	2	0	0	Complexity
1735	2	0	0	Affecting
1735	4	0	0	Undertake
1731	7	0	0	Dynamic
1729	9	0	0	Relax
1720	2	0	0	Participate
1718	6	0	0	Incidence
1712	6	0	0	Transformation
1709	2	0	0	Residence
1695	8	1	0	Chart
1670	10	0	0	Encounter
1661	6	0	0	Domain

1659	7	0	0	Hierarchy
1648	8	0	0	Restore
1633	4	0	0	Hypothesis
1624	1	0	0	Consistently
1623	2	0	0	Cultures
1623	10	0	0	Adjacent
1612	10	1	0	Colleague
1609	1	0	0	Factories
1608	9	0	0	Anticipated
1606	8	0	0	Detected
1605	1	0	0	Constitute
1601	4	0	0	Dimension
1587	7	0	0	Equipped
1585	10	0	0	Depressed
1583	10	0	0	Forthcoming
1577	1	0	0	Identifying
1575	4	0	0	Attributed
1572	2	0	0	Invest
1564	3	0	0	Illustrate
1564	6	0	0	Neutral
1557	7	4	0	Definite
1551	8	0	0	Revised
1547	4	0	0	Implement
1524	5	0	0	Reject

1518	3	0	0	Correspondence
1513	6	0	0	Aggregate
1506	4	0	0	Communicate
1493	2	0	0	Achievements
1492	7	0	0	Empirical
1487	1	0	0	Processor
1485	1	0	0	Proceeds
1468	10	0	0	Integrity
1465	7	0	0	Adapted
1464	6	0	0	Cited
1461	7	0	0	Quote
1460	2	0	0	Commissioner
1459	3	0	0	Imply
1459	7	0	0	Extract
1457	1	0	0	Incomes
1456	6	0	0	Acknowledge
1449	2	0	0	Conclude
1444	5	0	0	Margin
1436	2	0	0	Commissioned
1431	1	0	0	Environments
1428	1	0	0	Structured
1428	9	1	0	Passive
1426	1	0	0	Evidently
1425	7	0	0	Successor

1423	9	0	0	Supplement
1416	1	0	0	Assessing
1415	2	0	0	Affects
1412	6	0	0	Enhance
1407	9	0	0	Rigid
1406	9	0	0	Insight
1401	2	0	0	Construct
1397	8	0	0	Bias
1388	10	0	0	Inclined
1379	10	0	0	Albeit
1376	9	0	0	Minimal
1375	5	0	0	Academy
1367	8	0	0	Induced
1366	6	0	0	Interval
1355	9	0	0	Intermediate
1344	4	0	0	Predict
1341	4	0	0	Commit
1338	5	0	0	Enforcement
1326	2	0	0	Affection
1324	3	0	0	Exclude
1323	1	0	0	Specification
1314	1	0	0	Consisted
1311	1	0	0	Interpret
1311	6	0	0	Diverse

1308	8	0	0	Reinforce
1302	9	0	0	Inherent
1300	6	0	0	Incentive
1297	10	0	0	Nonetheless
1290	1	0	0	Analyse
1286	1	3	0	Analysis
1280	1	0	0	Occurring
1277	3	0	0	Specify
1277	5	0	0	Evolved
1275	8	0	0	Exploitation
1261	1	0	0	Consisting
1252	3	2	0	React
1252	8	0	0	Tense
1245	5	0	0	Revenues
1240	8	0	0	Predominant
1236	10	0	0	Assembled
1233	7	1	0	Thesis
1229	1	0	0	Consist
1225	5	0	0	Sustain
1225	7	0	0	Submit
1223	7	0	0	Convert
1216	9	0	0	Integral
1214	6	0	0	Assigned
1212	9	0	0	Sphere

1211	5	0	0	Compound
1203	6	0	0	Initiated
1196	2	0	0	Creditors
1191	1	0	0	Contexts
1191	10	0	0	Conceived
1189	8	1	0	Highlight
1183	4	1	0	Conference
1180	8	0	0	Exploit
1179	5	0	0	Consult
1177	10	0	0	Likewise
1168	5	0	0	Entity
1167	6	4	0	Instructed
1157	9	0	0	Compatible
1150	8	0	0	Implicit
1141	1	0	0	Constituted
1133	2	0	0	Assisted
1132	1	0	0	Legally
1126	9	0	0	Ethical
1122	8	0	0	Offset
1120	4	0	0	Parameters
1117	1	0	0	Responding
1115	1	0	0	Assessments
1115	3	1	0	Maximum
1109	9	0	0	Restraint

1106	2	3	0	Restrict
1105	7	0	0	Eliminate
1104	5	5	0	Medical
1104	6	0	0	Incorporate
1094	5	0	0	Amended
1089	1	0	0	Individually
1088	2	0	0	Evaluate
1085	9	0	0	Portion
1084	1	0	0	Respondents
1082	8	0	0	Practitioner
1080	5	0	0	Adjust
1080	9	0	0	Coherent
1066	1	0	0	Occurrence
1066	10	0	0	Pose
1059	8	0	0	Clarify
1050	6	0	0	Exceed
1044	6	0	0	Edited
1042	1	0	0	Interpretations
1033	1	0	0	Databases
1033	7	0	0	Transmitted
1031	9	0	0	Protocol
1029	4	0	0	Occupy
1027	1	0	0	Proceeded
1020	8	0	0	Eventual

1015	9	0	0	Cease
1014	10	0	0	Reluctance
1013	1	0	0	Constitutes
1011	7	0	0	Inserted
1009	5	0	0	Facilitate
1004	1	0	0	Assumes
1000	1	0	0	Conceptual
1000	6	0	0	Motives
692	7	1	0	Comprise
659	7	4	0	Global
115	8	3	0	Evidence
3	5	1	0	Expansion
2	5	11	0	Academic
1	4	3	0	Communication
	1	2	0	Economic
	2	22	19	Conclusion

Appendix 2

General Service List Number and Word on GSL/ BNC Frequency/ FPC/AWC Corpus Frequency/ ESPSC Frequency

GSL	BNC	FPC/AWC	ESPSC
1001 94 tear	1120	0	0
1002 94 tire	159	1	2
1003 94 expression	7226	0	0
1004 93 exception	2900	0	0
1005 93 application	10256	0	0
1006 93 belong	2043	0	0
1007 93 rich	6705	0	0
1008 93 failure	7687	0	0
1009 93 struggle	433	0	0
1010 93 instrument	2601	0	0
1011 93 variety	8656	3	1
1012 93 narrow	4835	4	9
1013 theatre	5767	0	0
1014 92 collection	7744	0	0
1015 92 rain	6253	0	0
1016 92 review	9593	0	0
1017 92 preserve	1683	0	0
1018 92 leadership	4739	0	0
1019 91 clay	1583	0	0
1020 91 daughter	9171	0	0
1021 91 fellow	4342	0	0
1022 91 swing	1900	0	0
1023 91 thank	11713	0	0
1024 90 library	8082	0	0
1025 90 fat	4432	0	0
1026 90 reserve	2653	0	0
1027 89 tour	6423	0	0
1028 89 nice	12756	0	0
1029 89 warn	1104	0	0
1030 89 ring	6758	0	0
1031 89 bitter	2428	0	0
1032 89 chair	7395	0	0
1033 89 yesterday	19344	0	0
1034 89 scientific	5799	0	0
1035 88 flower	2297	0	0
1036 88 wheel	2488	0	0
1037 88 solution	6795	0	0
1038 88 aim	6394	5	15
1039 88 gather	1501	2	12
1040 88 invite	1211	0	0

1041 88 moreover	4229	2	1
1042 88 fresh	6614	0	1
1043 88 forest	7137	0	0
1044 87 winter	7143	0	0
1045 87 box	8625	10	0
1046 87 belief	5056	0	0
1047 87 ordinary	6805	2	0
1048 87 impossible	6828	2	1
1049 87 print	3098	1	3
1050 87 gray	1091	0	0
1051 87 taste	3983	1	3
1052 87 lip	1469	0	0
1053 87 speech	7710	2	0
1054 87 reference	8223	2	0
1055 86 stain	484	0	0
1056 86 connection	4996	0	0
1057 86 otherwise	8649	0	0
1058 86 stretch	2469	0	0
1059 86 knife	2589	0	0
1060 86 village	11009	2	0
1061 86 blow	3127	0	0
1062 85 mistake	3736	1	3
1063 85 sweet	3477	0	0
1064 85 shout	1398	0	0
1065 85 divide	1744	3	2
1066 85 guard	2964	0	0
1067 85 worse	6927	1	0
1068 85 exchange	8714	0	0
1069 85 rare	4567	0	0
1070 84 commercial	8025	0	0
1071 84 request	4434	1	0
1072 84 appoint	1032	4	0
1073 84 agent	4292	0	0
1074 83 dependence	1263	0	0
1075 83 bird	3869	0	0
1076 83 wild	5401	0	0
1077 83 motion	4572	0	0
1078 83 guess	2949	1	0
1079 83 neighbour	1731	0	0
1080 82 seed	1624	0	0
1081 82 fashion	4568	0	0
1082 82 loan	3812	0	0
1083 82 correct	6684	14	4
1084 81 plain	4039	0	0
1085 81 mail	3367	48	0
1086 81 retire	1082	0	0

1087 81 opposite	5812	2	0
1088 81 prefer	3644	2	1
1089 81 safe	6671	2	0
1090 81 evil	2773	0	0
1091 81 double	7765	0	0
1092 81 wood	7172	1	1
1093 80 empty	5379	0	0
1094 80 baby	8607	0	0
1095 80 advise	2021	0	0
1096 80 content	5999	0	0
1097 80 sport	4517	3	3
1098 80 lift	4167	0	0
1099 80 literary	3312	0	0
1100 80 curious	2098	0	0
1101 80 tie	2806	0	0
1102 80 flat	8158	3	0
1103 80 message	6763	2	0
1104 80 neck	5243	0	0
1105 79 hate	2960	0	2
1106 79 dirt	963	0	1
1107 79 delight	1911	0	0
1108 79 trust	9991	0	0
1109 79 nobody	5840	0	1
1110 79 valley	4613	0	0
1111 79 tool	2180	0	0
1112 78 presence	7848	0	0
1113 78 cook	3808	0	3
1114 78 railroad	118	0	0
1115 78 minister	23940	0	0
1116 78 coffee	6286	0	1
1117 78 brush	1923	0	2
1118 78 beside	5383	0	0
1119 78 collect	2767	7	14
1120 77 guide	5887	0	0
1121 77 luck	3026	0	0
1122 77 profit	5884	0	0
1123 77 lord	16094	0	0
1124 77 everybody	5879	0	1
1125 77 prison	6135	0	1
1126 77 cloud	2117	0	0
1127 77 slave	885	0	0
1128 77 chairman	11433	0	0
1129 76 soil	4144	0	0
1130 76 distinguish	1967	0	0
1131 76 introduce	3457	0	1
1132 76 urge	1311	0	0
1133 76 blind	3055	0	0

1134 75 arise	3268	0	0
1135 75 upper	5328	0	0
1136 75 curve	2552	0	0
1137 75 membership	5255	0	0
1138 75 key	12367	0	0
1139 75 entertain	644	0	0
1140 75 soul	2909	0	0
1141 75 neighbourhood	1445	0	0
1142 74 friendly	3951	0	0
1143 74 pair	5936	4	0
1144 74 stone	7864	0	0
1145 74 lean	1204	0	0
1146 74 protect	5047	0	0
1147 74 advertise	503	0	0
1148 74 mystery	2206	0	0
1149 73 welcome	6369	0	0
1150 73 knee	1981	0	0
1151 73 jump	2449	0	0
1152 73 snake	729	0	0
1153 73 stream	2815	0	0
1154 73 avenue	1568	0	0
1155 73 brown	8383	0	0
1156 73 disease	8858	5	1
1157 73 hat	2902	0	0
1158 73 excellent	6620	0	0
1159 72 formal	6332	28	0
1160 72 snow	3466	0	0
1161 72 sheet	4114	16	0
1162 72 somehow	4225	0	0
1163 72 unity	2796	0	0
1164 72 sky	4723	0	0
1165 72 rough	3424	1	2
1166 72 smooth	3063	0	0
1167 72 weather	5675	0	1
1168 72 steady	2794	3	0
1169 72 threaten	885	0	0
1170 72 depth	2990	0	0
1171 71 oppose	857	0	0
1172 71 deliver	2112	0	0
1173 71 ancient	4910	0	0
1174 71 pray	1427	0	0
1175 71 adopt	2459	0	0
1176 71 birth	5124	0	1
1177 71 appearance	5298	0	1
1178 71 universe	2512	0	0
1179 71 busy	4879	0	2
1180 71 hurry	1650	0	1

1181 71 coast	4612	0	0
1182 71 forth	2203	0	0
1183 70 smell	3513	0	1
1184 70 furnish	219	0	0
1185 70 female	7846	3	2
1186 70 hide	NS	0	0
1187 70 wire	2176	0	1
1188 70 proposal	NS	0	0
1189 70 ought	0	2	1
1190 70 victory	NS	0	0
1191 69 quarter	NS	0	0
1192 69 engine	4833	4	13
1193 69 customer	NS	0	1
1194 69 waste	NS	0	1
1195 69 fool	NS	0	0
1196 69 intend	2026	5	0
1197 69 intention	NS	0	0
1198 69 desk	4073	3	0
1199 69 politics	NS	0	3
1200 69 passage	NS	0	0
1201 69 lawyer	NS	0	3
1202 68 root	NS	0	0
1203 68 climb	NS	0	0
1204 68 metal	NS	0	0
1205 68 gradual	NS	1	0
1206 68 hunt	NS	0	0
1207 68 protection	NS	0	0
1208 68 satisfy	NS	0	0
1209 68 roof	NS	0	0
1210 68 branch	NS	0	0
1211 68 pleasure	NS	0	0
1212 68 witness	NS	0	1
1213 68 loose	NS	0	0
1214 67 nose	NS	0	0
1215 67 mine	NS	0	0
1216 67 band	NS	0	0
1217 67 aside	NS	0	0
1218 67 risk	11732	0	0
1219 67 tomorrow	NS	0	1
1220 67 remind	NS	0	0
1221 67 ear	NS	0	0
1222 67 fish	NS	0	2
1223 67 shore	NS	0	0
1224 66 operator	NS	0	0
1225 66 civilize	NS	0	0
1226 66 being	87698	7	0
1227 66 silent	NS	0	2

1228 66 screen	NS	0	1
1229 66 bind	NS	0	0
1230 66 earn	NS	0	2
1231 66 pack	NS	0	0
1232 66 colony	NS	0	0
1233 66 besides	NS	0	0
1234 66 slip	NS	0	0
1235 66 cousin	NS	0	1
1236 66 scale	7545	1	0
1237 66 relief	NS	0	0
1238 66 explore	NS	0	0
1239 66 stem	NS	0	0
1240 65 brain	NS	3	8
1241 65 musician	NS	0	0
1242 65 defend	NS	0	0
1243 65 bend	NS	0	0
1244 65 somebody	NS	0	0
1245 65 shadow	NS	0	0
1246 64 mix	NS	0	0
1247 64 smoke	3829	21	10
1248 64 description	5036	15	0
1249 64 fruit	NS	0	1
1250 64 guilt	NS	0	0
1251 64 yield	NS	0	0
1252 64 sensitive	NS	0	0
1253 64 salt	NS	0	0
1254 64 pale	NS	0	0
1255 64 sweep	NS	0	0
1256 64 completion	2468	14	0
1257 64 throat	2986	0	0
1258 64 agriculture	NS	0	1
1259 64 admire	NS	0	0
1260 63 gentle	NS	0	0
1261 63 dozen	NS	0	0
1262 63 particle	NS	0	0
1263 63 pleasant	NS	0	0
1264 63 bay	NS	0	0
1265 63 cup	NS	0	0
1266 63 competition	NS	0	2
1267 63 moon	NS	0	1
1268 63 terrible	NS	0	1
1269 63 strip	NS	0	0
1270 63 mechanic	NS	0	0
1271 63 shock	NS	0	0
1272 63 conversation	5169	2	0
1273 63 angle	2438	1	0
1274 62 tall	NS	0	0

1275 62 plenty	4776	2	0
1276 62 star	6549	6	1
1277 62 yellow	NS	0	0
1278 62 sick	NS	0	1
1279 62 thorough	NS	0	0
1280 62 absolute	NS	0	0
1281 62 succeed	NS	0	0
1282 61 surround	NS	0	0
1283 61 proud	NS	0	0
1284 61 dear	NS	0	0
1285 61 card	5642	3	0
1286 61 lake	NS	0	0
1287 61 breath	NS	0	0
1288 61 afraid	NS	0	0
1289 61 silence	NS	0	0
1290 61 onto	6047	4	0
1291 60 shoe	1127	0	0
1292 60 somewhere	6649	1	0
1293 60 chain	3672	0	0
1294 60 slide	1604	0	0
1295 60 copy	5828	2	0
1296 60 machinery	NS	0	0
1297 60 wake	NS	0	0
1298 60 severe	NS	0	0
1299 60 pocket	NS	0	0
1300 60 bone	NS	0	0
1301 59 honest	NS	0	0
1302 59 freeze	NS	0	0
1303 59 dictionary	NS	0	0
1304 59 calm	NS	0	0
1305 59 swim	NS	0	0
1306 59 ice	NS	0	0
1307 59 male	10779	5	8
1308 59 skin	NS	0	0
1309 59 crack	NS	0	0
1310 59 rush	NS	0	0
1311 59 wet	NS	0	0
1312 58 meat	NS	0	0
1313 58 commerce	NS	0	0
1314 58 joint	NS	0	0
1315 58 gift	NS	0	0
1316 58 host	NS	0	0
1317 58 suspect	NS	0	0
1318 58 path	NS	0	0
1319 58 uncle	NS	0	0
1320 58 afford	NS	0	0
1321 58 instant	NS	0	0

1322 58 satisfactory	NS	0	0
1323 58 height	NS	0	0
1324 58 track	NS	0	0
1325 58 confidence	NS	0	0
1326 58 grass	NS	0	0
1327 57 suggestion	3041	11	0
1328 57 favourite	NS	0	0
1329 57 breakfast	NS	0	0
1330 57 apart	NS	0	0
1331 57 chest	NS	0	0
1332 57 entrance	NS	0	0
1333 57 march	NS	0	0
1334 57 sink	1807	1	0
1335 57 northern	10848	0	0
1336 57 iron	NS	0	0
1337 57 alive	NS	0	0
1338 57 ill	NS	0	0
1339 57 bag	NS	0	0
1340 57 disturb	NS	0	0
1341 57 native	NS	0	0
1342 57 bedroom	NS	0	0
1343 57 violent	NS	0	0
1344 57 beneath	NS	0	0
1345 57 pause	NS	0	0
1346 57 tough	NS	0	0
1347 56 substance	2158	1	0
1348 56 threat	NS	0	0
1349 56 charm	NS	0	0
1350 56 absence	NS	0	0
1351 56 factory	NS	0	0
1352 56 spite	NS	0	0
1353 56 meal	NS	0	0
1354 56 universal	NS	0	0
1355 56 accident	6300	1	15
1356 56 highway	NS	0	0
1357 56 sentence	NS	0	0
1358 56 liberty	NS	0	0
1359 55 wise	NS	0	0
1360 55 noise	4409	1	1
1361 55 discovery	NS	0	0
1362 55 tube	NS	0	0
1363 55 flash	NS	0	0
1364 55 twist	NS	0	0
1365 55 fence	NS	0	0
1366 55 childhood	2764	3	0
1367 55 joy	NS	0	0
1368 55 sister	NS	0	0

1369 54 sad	NS	0	0
1370 54 efficiency	NS	0	0
1371 54 disappear	NS	0	0
1372 54 defeat	NS	0	0
1373 54 extensive	NS	0	0
1374 54 rent	NS	0	0
1375 54 comparison	NS	0	0
1376 54 possess	NS	0	0
1377 54 grace	NS	0	0
1378 54 flesh	NS	0	0
1379 54 liquid	NS	0	0
1380 54 scientist	NS	0	0
1381 54 ease	NS	0	0
1382 53 heaven	NS	0	0
1383 53 milk	NS	0	0
1384 53 sympathy	NS	0	0
1386 53 restaurant	3425	3	4
1387 53 frequency	NS	0	0
1388 53 angry	NS	0	0
1389 53 shade	NS	0	0
1390 53 accuse	NS	0	0
1391 53 necessity	NS	0	0
1392 53 knock	NS	0	0
1393 53 loud	NS	0	0
1394 53 permanent	NS	0	0
1395 53 row	NS	0	0
1396 53 lovely	NS	0	0
1397 53 confuse	NS	0	0
1398 52 gold	NS	0	0
1399 52 frighten	NS	0	0
1400 52 solve	NS	0	0
1401 52 grave	NS	0	0
1402 52 salary	NS	0	0
1403 52 photograph	2595	1	0
1404 52 advice	NS	0	0
1405 52 abroad	NS	0	0
1406 51 wound	NS	0	0
1407 51 virtue	NS	0	0
1408 51 dare	NS	0	0
1409 51 queen	NS	0	0
1410 51 extra	9399	1	1
1411 51 attract	NS	0	0
1412 50 numerous	NS	0	0
1413 50 pink	NS	0	0
1414 50 gate	NS	0	0
1415 50 expensive	NS	0	0
1416 50 shut	NS	0	0

1417 50 chicken	NS	0	0
1418 50 forgive	NS	0	0
1419 50 holy	NS	0	8
1420 50 wooden	NS	0	0
1421 49 prompt	816	1	0
1422 49 crime	NS	0	0
1423 49 sorry	10767	3	1
1424 49 republic	NS	0	0
1425 49 anger	NS	0	0
1426 49 visitor	2108	5	0
1427 49 pile	NS	0	0
1428 49 violence	NS	0	0
1429 49 steel	NS	0	0
1430 49 wing	NS	0	0
1431 49 stair	NS	0	0
1432 49 partner	NS	0	0
1433 49 delay	NS	0	0
1434 49 gentleman	NS	0	0
1435 48 pour	NS	0	0
1436 48 confusion	NS	0	0
1437 48 damage	8301	1	4
1438 48 kick	NS	0	0
1439 48 safety	8523	0	0
1440 48 burst	NS	0	0
1441 48 network	NS	0	0
1442 48 resistance	NS	0	0
1443 48 screw	NS	0	0
1444 48 pride	NS	0	0
1445 48 till	NS	0	0
1446 47 hire	NS	0	0
1447 47 verb	NS	0	0
1448 47 preach	NS	0	0
1449 47 clerk	NS	0	0
1450 47 everywhere	NS	0	0
1451 47 anyway	NS	0	0
1452 47 fan	1704	1	0
1453 47 connect	NS	0	0
1454 47 egg	2436	2	0
1455 47 efficient	NS	0	0
1456 47 grain	NS	0	0
1457 46 calculate	1031 calculated 2630	14/ 3	34/11
1458 46 drag	NS	0	0
1459 46 opposition	NS	0	0
1460 46 worship	NS	0	0
1461 46 arrest	NS	0	0
1462 46 discipline	NS	0	0
1463 46 string	NS	0	0

1464 46 harbour	NS	0	0
1465 46 camera NS	0	0	0
1466 46 mechanism	NS	0	0
1467 46 cow	NS	0	0
1468 46 grand	NS	0	0
1469 46 funny	NS	0	0
1470 46 insurance	NS	0	0
1471 46 reduction	NS	0	0
1472 46 strict	NS	0	0
1473 46 lesson	NS	0	0
1474 46 tight	NS	0	0
1475 45 sand	NS	0	0
1476 45 plate	NS	0	0
1477 45 qualify	NS	0	0
1478 45 elsewhere	NS	0	0
1479 45 mad	NS	0	0
1480 45 interference	NS	0	0
1481 45 pupil	NS	0	0
1482 45 fold	933	1	0
1483 45 royal	14636	0	0
1484 45 valuable	NS	0	0
1485 45 whisper	NS	0	0
1486 45 anybody	4763	1	0
1487 45 hurt	NS	0	0
1488 45 excess	NS	0	0
1489 44 quantity	NS	0	0
1490 44 fun	4996	1	2
1491 44 mud	NS	0	0
1492 44 extension	NS	0	0
1493 44 recognition	NS	0	0
1494 44 kiss	NS	0	0
1495 44 crop	NS	0	0
1496 44 sail	NS	0	0
1497 44 attractive	NS	0	0
1498 44 habit	2194	4	0
1499 44 relieve	NS	0	0
1500 44 wisdom	NS	0	0
1501 44 persuade	NS	0	0
1502 43 certainty	NS	0	0
1503 43 cloth	1907	2	0
1504 43 eager	NS	0	0
1505 43 deserve	NS	0	0
1506 43 sympathetic	NS	0	0
1507 43 cure	NS	0	0
1508 43 trap	NS	0	0
1509 43 puzzle	NS	0	0
1510 43 powder	NS	0	0

1511 43 raw	NS	0	0
1512 43 mankind	NS	0	0
1513 43 glad	NS	0	0
1514 43 blame	NS	0	0
1515 43 whenever	3047	1	0
1516 43 anxiety	NS	0	0
1517 42 bus	NS	0	0
1518 42 tremble	NS	0	0
1519 42 sacred	NS	0	0
1520 42 fortunate	NS	0	0
1521 42 glory	NS	0	0
1522 42 golden	NS	0	0
1523 42 neat	NS	0	0
1524 42 weekend	NS	0	0
1525 42 treasury	NS	0	0
1526 42 overcome	NS	0	0
1527 42 cat	NS	0	0
1528 42 sacrifice	NS	0	0
1529 42 complain	NS	0	0
1530 42 elect	NS	0	0
1531 41 roar	NS	0	0
1532 41 sake	NS	0	0
1533 41 temple	NS	0	0
1534 41 self	3608/ myself 11996/ yourself 10329	3	4
1535 41 compete	NS	0	0
1536 41 nurse	NS	0	0
1537 41 stuff	NS	0	0
1538 41 stomach	NS	0	0
1539 41 peculiar	NS	0	0
1540 41 repair	NS	0	0
1541 41 storm	NS	0	0
1542 41 ton	NS	0	0
1543 41 desert	NS	0	0
1544 41 allowance	NS	0	0
1545 41 servant	NS	0	3
1546 41 hunger	NS	0	0
1547 41 conscience	NS	0	0
1548 41 bread	NS	0	0
1549 41 crash	NS	0	0
1550 40 tip	NS	0	0
1551 40 strengthen	NS	0	0
1552 40 proof	NS	0	0
1553 40 generous	NS	0	0
1554 40 sir	NS	0	0
1555 40 tonight	NS	0	0
1556 40 whip	NS	0	0
1557 40 tongue	NS	0	0

1558 40 mill	NS	0	0
1559 40 merchant	NS	0	0
1560 40 coal	NS	0	0
1561 40 ruin	NS	0	0
1562 40 introduction	NS	0	0
1563 40 courage	NS	0	0
1564 40 actor	NS	0	0
1565 40 belt	NS	0	0
1566 39 stir	NS	0	0
1567 39 package	NS	0	0
1568 39 punish	NS	0	0
1569 39 reflection	NS	0	0
1570 39 breathe	1068	1	0
1571 39 anywhere	NS	0	0
1572 39 amuse	NS	0	0
1573 39 dull	NS	0	0
1574 39 fate	NS	0	0
1575 39 net	6654/ internet 93	75	63
1576 39 fellowship	NS	0	0
1577 39 fault	NS	0	0
1578 39 furniture	NS	0	0
1579 39 beam	NS	0	0
1580 39 pencil	NS	0	0
1581 39 border	NS	0	0
1582 39 disappoint	NS	0	0
1583 38 flame	NS	0	0
1584 38 joke	NS	0	0
1585 38 bless	NS	0	0
1586 38 corn	NS	0	0
1587 38 shell	NS	0	0
1588 38 tempt	NS	0	0
1589 38 supper	NS	0	0
1590 38 destruction	NS	0	0
1591 38 dive	NS	0	0
1592 38 anxious	NS	0	0
1593 38 shine	NS	0	0
1594 38 cheap	NS	0	0
1595 38 dish	NS	0	0
1596 38 distant	2772	1	0
1597 38 greet	536	2	0
1598 37 flood	NS	0	0
1599 37 excuse	NS	0	0
1600 37 insect	NS	0	0
1601 37 ocean	NS	0	0
1602 37 ceremony	NS	0	0
1603 37 decrease	1201	6	0
1604 37 prize	NS	0	0

1605 37 harm	NS	0	0
1606 37 insure	NS	0	0
1607 37 verse	NS	0	0
1608 37 pot	NS	0	0
1609 37 sincere	NS	0	0
1610 36 cotton	NS	0	0
1611 36 leaf	NS	0	0
1612 36 rub	NS	0	0
1613 36 medicine	NS	0	0
1614 36 stroke	NS	0	0
1615 36 bite	1251	1	0
1616 36 lung	NS	0	0
1617 36 lonely	NS	0	0
1618 36 admission	NS	0	0
1619 36 stupid	NS	0	0
1620 36 scratch	NS	0	0
1621 36 composition	NS	0	0
1622 36 broadcast	NS	0	0
1623 36 drum	NS	0	0
1624 36 resist	NS	0	0
1625 36 neglect	NS	0	0
1626 35 absent	NS	0	0
1627 35 passenger	NS	0	0
1628 35 adventure	NS	0	0
1629 35 beg	NS	0	0
1630 35 pipe	NS	0	0
1631 35 beard	NS	0	0
1632 35 bold	NS	0	0
1633 35 meanwhile	NS	0	0
1634 35 devil	NS	0	0
1635 35 cheer	NS	0	0
1636 35 nut	NS	0	0
1637 35 split	NS	0	0
1638 35 melt	NS	0	0
1639 35 swear	NS	0	0
1640 35 sugar	NS	0	0
1641 35 bury	NS	0	0
1642 35 wipe	NS	0	0
1643 35 faint	NS	0	0
1644 35 creature	NS	0	0
1645 35 tail	NS	0	0
1646 35 wealth	NS	0	0
1647 34 earnest	NS	0	0
1648 34 translate	NS	0	0
1649 34 suspicion	NS	0	0
1650 34 noble	NS	0	0
1651 34 inquiry	NS	0	0

1652 34 journey	NS	0	0
1653 34 hesitate	NS	0	0
1654 34 extraordinary	NS	0	0
1655 34 borrow	NS	0	0
1656 34 owe	NS	0	0
1657 34 funeral	NS	0	0
1658 34 ambition	NS	0	0
1659 34 mixture	NS	0	0
1660 34 slope	NS	0	0
1661 34 criminal	NS	0	0
1662 34 seldom	NS	0	0
1663 34 map	NS	0	0
1664 34 spin	916	1	0
1665 34 praise	NS	0	0
1666 34 spare	NS	0	0
1667 33 plough	NS	0	0
1668 33 telegraph	NS	0	0
1669 33 barrel	NS	0	0
1670 33 straighten	NS	0	0
1671 33 scarce	NS	0	0
1672 33 lunch	NS	0	0
1673 33 slavery	NS	0	0
1674 33 creep	NS	0	0
1675 33 sweat	NS	0	0
1676 33 gay	NS	0	0
1677 33 stiff	NS	0	0
1678 33 brave	NS	0	0
1679 33 seize	NS	0	0
1680 33 convenient	NS	0	0
1681 33 horizon	NS	0	0
1682 33 moderate	NS	0	0
1683 33 complicate	NS	0	0
1684 33 dig	NS	0	0
1685 33 curse	NS	0	0
1686 33 weigh	653	1	2
1687 33 priest	NS	0	0
1688 33 excessive	NS	0	0
1689 33 quarrel	NS	0	0
1690 32 widow	NS	0	0
1691 32 modest	NS	0	0
1692 32 dine	NS	0	0
1693 32 politician	NS	0	0
1694 32 custom	NS	0	0
1695 32 educate	NS	0	0
1696 32 salesman	NS	0	0
1697 32 nail	NS	0	0
1698 32 tap	NS	0	0

1699 32 eastern	NS	0	0
1700 32 possession	NS	0	0
1701 32 satisfaction	NS	0	0
1702 32 behave	NS	0	0
1703 32 mercy	NS	0	0
1704 31 scatter	NS	0	0
1705 31 objection	NS	0	0
1706 31 silver	NS	0	0
1707 31 tent	NS	0	1
1708 31 saddle	NS	0	0
1709 31 wrap	NS	0	0
1710 31 nest	NS	0	0
1711 31 grind	NS	0	0
1712 31 spell	2264/ spelling 1078	3	11
1713 31 plaster	NS	0	0
1714 31 arch	NS	0	0
1715 31 swell	NS	0	0
1716 31 friendship	NS	0	0
1717 31 bath	NS	0	0
1718 30 bundle	NS	0	0
1719 30 grateful	NS	0	0
1720 30 crown	NS	0	0
1721 30 boundary	NS	0	0
1722 30 nowhere	NS	0	0
1723 30 asleep	NS	0	0
1724 30 clock	NS	0	0
1725 30 boil	NS	0	0
1726 30 altogether	NS	0	0
1727 30 lend	NS	0	0
1728 30 holiday	7632	16	1
1729 30 precious	NS	0	0
1730 30 wander	NS	0	0
1731 30 ugly	NS	0	0
1732 30 reputation	NS	0	0
1733 30 ticket	1681	0	1
1734 30 pretend	NS	0	0
1735 30 dismiss	NS	0	0
1736 30 delicate	NS	1	0
1737 29 despair	NS	0	0
1738 29 awake	NS	0	0
1739 29 tea	NS	0	0
1740 29 false	NS	0	0
1741 29 fortune	NS	0	0
1742 29 cap	NS	0	0
1743 29 thread	NS	0	0
1744 29 haste	NS	0	0
1745 29 bare	NS	0	0

1746 29 shirt	NS	0	0
1747 29 bargain	NS	0	0
1748 28 leather	NS	0	0
1749 28 rail	NS	0	0
1750 28 butter	NS	0	0
1751 28 dot	NS	0	0
1752 28 inquire	NS	0	0
1753 28 warmth	NS	0	0
1754 28 decisive	NS	0	0
1755 28 vessel	NS	0	0
1756 28 pity	NS	0	0
1757 28 steam	NS	0	0
1758 28 pin	NS	0	0
1759 28 bound	NS	0	0
1760 28 companion	NS	0	0
1761 28 toe	NS	0	0
1762 28 reward	NS	0	0
1763 28 forbid	NS	0	1
1764 28 wherever	NS	0	0
1765 28 tower	NS	0	0
1766 27 bathe	NS	0	0
1767 27 lodge	NS	0	0
1768 27 swallow	NS	0	0
1769 27 multiply	542	1	0
1770 27 bow	NS	0	0
1771 27 kingdom	NS	0	0
1772 27 garage	NS	0	2
1773 27 permission	NS	0	0
1774 27 pump	NS	0	0
1775 27 prevention	NS	0	0
1776 27 urgent	NS	0	0
1777 27 aunt	NS	0	0
1778 27 zero	NS	0	0
1779 27 idle	NS	0	0
1780 27 fever	NS	0	0
1781 27 christmas	NS	0	0
1782 27 regret	NS	0	0
1783 26 jaw	NS	0	0
1784 26 soap	NS	0	0
1785 26 pronounce	NS	0	0
1786 26 empire	NS	0	0
1787 26 bowl	2364	4	0
1788 26 outline	1844	2	1
1789 26 organ	NS	0	0
1790 26 imitation	NS	0	0
1791 26 caution	NS	0	0
1792 26 mineral	NS	0	0

1793 26 disagree	736	2	1
1794 26 blade	NS	0	0
1795 26 trick	NS	0	0
1796 26 treasure	NS	0	0
1797 26 immense	NS	0	0
1798 25 convenience	NS	0	0
1799 25 disapprove	NS	0	0
1800 25 destructive	NS	0	0
1801 25 fork	NS	0	0
1802 25 noon	NS	0	0
1803 25 ownership	NS	0	0
1804 25 tune	NS	0	0
1805 25 polish	NS	0	0
1806 25 poison	NS	0	0
1807 25 shame	NS	0	0
1808 25 loyalty	NS	0	0
1809 25 cottage	NS	0	0
1810 25 astonish	NS	0	0
1811 25 shave	NS	0	0
1812 25 feather	NS	0	0
1813 25 sauce	NS	0	0
1814 25 lid	NS	0	0
1815 25 debt	NS	0	0
1816 25 fade	NS	0	0
1817 25 confess	NS	0	0
1818 25 classification	NS	0	0
1819 24 descend	NS	0	0
1820 24 cape	NS	0	0
1821 24 mild	NS	0	0
1822 24 clever	NS	0	0
1823 24 envelope	NS	0	0
1824 24 invention	NS	0	0
1825 24 sheep	NS	0	0
1826 24 splendid	NS	0	0
1827 24 stamp	NS	0	0
1828 24 float	910	2	0
1829 24 brick	NS	0	0
1830 24 rice	NS	0	4
1831 24 businessman	NS	0	0
1832 24 backward	NS	0	0
1833 24 qualification	NS	0	0
1834 24 artificial	NS	0	0
1835 24 attraction	NS	0	0
1836 24 lamp	NS	0	0
1837 24 curl	NS	0	0
1838 23 shower	NS	0	0
1839 23 elder	NS	0	0

1840 23 bunch	NS	0	0
1841 23 bell	NS	0	0
1842 23 steer	NS	0	0
1843 23 flavour	NS	0	0
1844 23 spit	NS	0	0
1845 23 rob	NS	0	0
1846 23 cream	NS	0	0
1847 23 interrupt	NS	0	0
1848 23 pen	NS	0	0
1849 23 weave	NS	0	0
1850 23 orange	NS	0	0
1851 23 rescue	NS	0	0
1852 23 crush	NS	0	0
1853 23 humble	NS	0	0
1854 23 fancy	NS	0	0
1855 23 decay	NS	0	0
1856 23 polite	NS	0	0
1857 23 tribe	NS	0	0
1858 22 bleed	NS	0	0
1859 22 coin	NS	0	0
1860 22 fond	NS	0	0
1861 22 autumn	NS	0	0
1862 22 classify	NS	0	0
1863 22 omit	NS	0	0
1864 22 loyal	NS	0	0
1865 22 needle	NS	0	0
1866 22 lessen	NS	0	0
1867 22 complaint	NS	0	0
1868 22 pad	NS	0	0
1869 22 steep	1564	8	0
1870 22 skirt	NS	0	0
1871 22 curtain	NS	0	0
1872 22 calculation	1072	1	0
1873 22 laughter	NS	0	0
1874 22 solemn	NS	0	0
1875 22 grease	NS	0	0
1876 22 interfere	NS	0	0
1877 22 explode	NS	0	0
1878 22 fasten	NS	0	0
1879 21 flag	NS	0	0
1880 21 resign	NS	0	0
1881 21 postpone	NS	0	0
1882 21 patience	NS	0	0
1883 21 boast	NS	0	0
1884 21 rope	NS	0	0
1885 21 envy	NS	0	0
1886 21 airplane	NS	0	0

1887 21 rid	NS	0	0
1888 21 shield	NS	0	0
1889 21 veil	NS	0	0
1890 21 kneel	NS	0	0
1891 21 tray	NS	0	0
1892 21 explosive	NS	0	0
1893 21 brass	NS	0	0
1894 21 taxi	1787	2	0
1895 21 wax	NS	0	0
1896 21 duck	NS	0	0
1897 21 button	1629	1	0
1898 21 invent	NS	0	0
1899 20 remedy	NS	0	0
1900 20 bush	NS	0	0
1901 20 thunder	NS	0	0
1902 20 weaken	NS	0	0
1903 20 poverty	NS	0	0
1904 20 scrape	NS	0	0
1905 20 arrow	NS	0	0
1906 20 tender	NS	0	0
1907 20 cruel	NS	0	0
1908 20 soften	NS	0	0
1909 20 mouse	1856 (difference in meaning)	1	0
1910 20 hay	NS	0	0
1911 20 anyhow	NS	0	0
1912 20 alike	NS	0	0
1913 20 circular	NS	0	0
1914 20 juice	NS	0	0
1915 20 shelf	NS	0	0
1916 20 bake	NS	0	0
1917 20 hatred	NS	0	0
1918 20 cautious	NS	0	0
1919 19 basket	NS	0	0
1920 19 wreck	NS	0	0
1921 19 width	NS	0	0
1922 19 confident	NS	0	0
1923 19 log	NS	0	0
1924 19 heap	NS	0	0
1925 19 suck	NS	0	0
1926 19 ladder	NS	0	0
1927 19 gap	3368		
1928 19 obey	NS	0	0
1929 19 hut	NS	0	0
1930 19 axe	NS	0	0
1931 19 translation	NS	0	0
1932 19 collar	NS	0	0
1933 19 delivery	NS	0	0

1934 19 reproduce	NS	0	0
1935 19 confession	NS	0	0
1936 19 pan	NS	0	0
1937 19 prejudice	NS	0	0
1938 19 voyage	NS	0	0
1939 19 tobacco	1466	1	0
1940 18 simplicity	NS	0	0
1941 18 paste	NS	0	0
1942 18 cake	NS	0	0
1943 18 elephant	NS	0	0
1944 18 ribbon	NS	0	0
1945 18 harvest	NS	0	0
1946 18 ashamed	NS	0	0
1947 18 cave	NS	0	0
1948 18 customary	NS	0	0
1949 18 thief	NS	0	0
1950 18 damp	NS	0	0
1951 18 sew	NS	0	0
1952 18 rust	NS	0	0
1953 18 separation	NS	0	0
1954 18 waiter	NS	0	0
1955 18 pet	NS	0	0
1956 18 straw	NS	0	0
1957 18 upset	NS	0	0
1958 18 towel	NS	0	0
1959 18 refresh	NS	0	0
1960 17 essence	NS	0	0
1961 17 fur	NS	0	0
1962 17 ambitious	NS	0	0
1963 17 defendant	NS	0	0
1964 17 daylight	NS	0	0
1965 17 dip	NS	0	0
1966 17 suspicious	NS	0	0
1967 17 imaginary	NS	0	0
1968 17 ash	NS	0	0
1969 17 carriage	NS	0	0
1970 17 educator	NS	0	0
1971 17 saw	25168 (majority past tense see)	1	7
1972 17 stove	NS	0	0
1973 17 rubber	NS	0	0
1974 17 rug	NS	0	0
1975 17 misery	NS	0	0
1976 17 awkward	NS	0	0
1977 17 rival	2553	1	0
1978 16 roast	NS	0	0
1979 16 deed	NS	0	0
1980 16 preference	NS	0	0

1981 16 explosion	NS	0	0
1982 16 theatrical	NS	0	0
1983 16 cultivate	NS	0	0
1984 16 collector	NS	0	0
1985 16 miserable	NS	0	0
1986 16 wrist	980	4	0
1987 16 rabbit	NS	0	0
1988 16 accustom	NS	0	0
1989 16 tide	NS	0	0
1990 16 insult	NS	0	0
1991 16 thumb	NS	0	0
1992 16 lump	NS	0	0
1993 16 annoy	NS	0	0
1994 16 toy	NS	0	0
1995 16 heal	NS	0	0
1996 16 shallow	NS	0	0
1997 16 repetition	NS	0	0
1998 16 soup	NS	0	0
1999 15 whistle	NS	0	0
2000 15 scenery	754	0	0
2001 15 apple	2608	0	0
2002 15 offence	9	0	0
2003 15 cork	886	0	0
2004 15 ripe	616	0	0
2005 15 temper	1204	0	0
2006 15 sore	854	0	0
2007 15 pinch	NS	0	0
2008 15 diamond	NS	0	0
2009 15 razor	NS	0	0
2010 15 imaginative	NS	0	0
2011 15 hook	NS	0	0
2012 15 copper	NS	0	0
2013 15 landlord	NS	0	0
2014 14 influential	NS	0	0
2015 14 rot	NS	0	0
2016 14 hollow	NS	0	0
2017 14 enclose	NS	0	0
2018 14 harden	NS	0	0
2019 14 wicked	NS	0	0
2020 14 stiffen	NS	0	0
2021 14 silk	NS	0	0
2022 14 upright	NS	0	0
2023 14 selfish	NS	0	0
2024 14 stripe	NS	0	0
2025 14 pig	NS	0	0
2026 14 inward	NS	0	0
2027 14 excellence	NS	0	0

2028 14 rake	NS	0	0
2029 14 purple	NS	0	0
2030 14 hasten	NS	0	0
2031 14 shorten	NS	0	0
2032 14 applause	NS	0	0
2033 14 ache	NS	0	0
2034 14 apology	NS	0	0
2035 14 knot	NS	0	0
2036 14 nephew	NS	0	0
2037 14 cushion	NS	0	0
2038 14 drown	NS	0	0
2039 14 nursery	NS	0	0
2040 14 pint	NS	0	0
2041 14 fierce	NS	0	0
2042 13 imitate	NS	0	0
2043 13 aloud	NS	0	0
2044 13 gaiety	NS	0	0
2045 13 robbery	NS	0	0
2046 13 tighten	NS	0	0
2047 13 perfection	NS	0	0
2048 13 scorn	NS	0	0
2049 13 whoever	NS	0	0
2050 13 trunk	NS	0	0
2051 13 wool	NS	0	0
2052 13 sailor	NS	0	1
2053 13 competitor	NS	0	0
2054 13 moonlight	NS	0	0
2055 13 deer	NS	0	0
2056 13 bean	NS	0	0
2057 13 everyday	NS	0	0
2058 13 drawer	NS	0	0
2059 13 disregard	NS	0	0
2060 12 nowadays	NS	0	3
2061 12 patriotic	NS	0	0
2062 12 tin	NS	0	0
2063 12 penny	NS	0	0
2064 12 cage	NS	0	0
2065 12 pardon	NS	0	0
2066 12 lately	NS	0	0
2067 12 offend	NS	0	0
2068 12 coarse	NS	0	0
2069 12 spoil	NS	0	0
2070 12 horizontal	NS	0	0
2071 12 sting	NS	0	0
2072 12 ditch	NS	0	0
2073 12 librarian	NS	0	0
2074 12 meantime	NS	0	0

2075 12 cough	NS	0	0
2076 12 deaf	NS	0	0
2077 12 sword	NS	0	0
2078 12 messenger	NS	0	0
2079 12 vain	NS	0	0
2080 12 castle	NS	0	0
2081 12 elastic	NS	0	0
2082 12 comb	NS	0	0
2083 12 rod	NS	0	0
2084 11 widen	NS	0	0
2085 11 sorrow	NS	0	0
2086 11 inventor	NS	0	0
2087 11 cliff	NS	0	0
2088 11 umbrella	NS	0	0
2089 11 interruption	NS	0	0
2090 11 merry	NS	0	0
2091 11 gallon	NS	0	0
2092 11 conquest	NS	0	0
2093 11 headache	NS	0	0
2094 11 tailor	NS	0	0
2095 11 bucket	NS	0	0
2096 11 scent	NS	0	0
2097 11 signature	NS	0	0
2098 11 cart	NS	0	0
2099 11 darken	NS	0	0
2100 11 sometime	NS	0	0
2101 11 applaud	NS	0	0
2102 11 underneath	NS	0	0
2103 11 hello	NS	0	0
2104 11 pretence	NS	0	0
2105 11 descent	NS	0	0
2106 11 conquer	NS	0	0
2107 11 framework	NS	0	0
2108 11 confidential	NS	0	0
2109 11 adoption	NS	0	0
2110 11 disgust	NS	0	0
2111 11 waist	NS	0	0
2112 11 momentary	NS	0	0
2113 11 receipt	NS	0	0
2114 10 pearl	NS	0	0
2115 10 ray	NS	0	0
2116 10 lazy	NS	0	0
2117 10 limb	NS	0	0
2118 10 grammatical	NS	0	0
2119 10 beast	NS	0	0
2120 10 monkey	NS	0	0
2121 10 jewel	NS	0	0

2122 10 persuasion	NS	0	0
2123 10 obedience	NS	0	0
2124 10 sock	NS	0	0
2125 10 vowel	NS	0	0
2126 10 hammer	NS	0	0
2127 10 inn	NS	0	0
2128 10 chimney	NS	0	0
2129 10 dissatisfaction	NS	0	0
2130 10 annoyance	NS	0	0
2131 10 ornament	NS	0	0
2132 10 honesty	NS	0	0
2133 10 outward	NS	0	0
2134 10 sharpen	NS	0	0
2135 10 handkerchief	NS	0	0
2136 9 greed	NS	0	0
2137 9 heavenly	NS	0	0
2138 9 thirst	NS	0	0
2139 9 niece	NS	0	0
2140 9 spill	NS	0	0
2141 9 loaf	NS	0	0
2142 9 wheat	NS	0	0
2143 9 worm	NS	0	0
2144 9 secrecy	NS	0	0
2145 9 rude	NS	0	0
2146 9 heighten	NS	0	0
2147 9 flatten	NS	0	0
2148 9 loosen	NS	0	0
2149 9 cheese	NS	0	0
2150 9 rivalry	NS	0	0
2151 9 royalty	NS	0	0
2152 9 discontent	NS	0	0
2153 9 complication	NS	0	0
2154 9 fright	NS	0	0
2155 9 indoor	NS	0	0
2156 9 flour	NS	0	0
2157 9 actress	NS	0	0
2158 8 congratulation	NS	0	0
2159 8 ounce	NS	0	0
2160 8 fry	NS	0	0
2161 8 everlasting	NS	0	0
2162 8 goat	NS	0	0
2163 8 ink	NS	0	0
2164 8 disappearance	NS	0	0
2165 8 reproduction	NS	0	0
2166 8 thicken	NS	0	0
2167 8 avoidance	NS	0	0
2168 8 spoon	NS	0	0

2169 8 strap	NS	0	0
2170 8 deceive	NS	0	0
2171 7 lengthen	NS	0	0
2172 7 revenge	NS	0	0
2173 7 correction	NS	0	0
2174 7 descendant	NS	0	0
2175 7 hesitation	NS	0	0
2176 7 spade	NS	0	0
2177 7 basin	NS	0	0
2178 7 weed	NS	0	0
2179 7 omission	NS	0	0
2180 7 old-fashioned	NS	0	2
2181 7 bicycle	NS	0	2
2182 7 breadth	NS	0	0
2183 7 photography	NS	0	0
2184 7 coward	NS	0	0
2185 7 mat	NS	0	0
2186 7 rejoice	NS	0	0
2187 7 cheat	NS	0	0
2188 7 congratulate	NS	0	0
2189 7 discomfort	NS	0	0
2190 7 enclosure	NS	0	0
2191 7 attentive	NS	0	0
2192 7 paw	NS	0	0
2193 6 overflow	NS	0	0
2194 6 dissatisfy	NS	0	0
2195 6 multiplication	NS	0	0
2196 6 whichever	NS	0	0
2197 6 tidy	NS	0	0
2198 6 bribe	NS	0	0
2199 6 mend	NS	0	0
2200 6 stocking	NS	0	0
2201 6 feast	NS	0	0
2202 6 nuisance	NS	0	0
2203 6 thorn	NS	0	0
2204 6 tame	NS	0	0
2205 5 inclusive	NS	0	0
2206 5 homemade	NS	0	0
2207 5 handwriting	NS	0	0
2208 5 chalk	NS	0	0
2209 5 sour	NS	0	0
2210 5 slippery	NS	0	0
2211 5 procession	NS	0	0
2212 5 ripen	NS	0	0
2213 5 jealous	NS	0	1
2214 5 jealousy	NS	0	0
2215 5 liar	NS	0	0

2216 5 homecoming	NS	0	0
2217 5 barber	NS	0	0
2218 5 whiten	NS	0	0
2219 5 berry	NS	0	0
2220 5 lighten	NS	0	0
2221 5 pigeon	NS	0	0
2222 5 hinder	NS	0	0
2223 4 bravery	NS	0	0
2224 4 baggage	NS	0	0
2225 4 noun	NS	0	0
2226 4 amongst	NS	0	0
2227 4 grammar	NS	1	17
2228 4 cultivation	NS	0	0
2229 4 companionship	NS	0	0
2230 4 rubbish	NS	0	5
2231 4 modesty	NS	0	0
2232 4 woollen	NS	0	0
2233 4 deepen	NS	0	0
2234 4 pastry	NS	0	0
2235 4 cupboard	NS	0	0
2236 4 quart	NS	0	0
2237 4 canal	NS	0	0
2238 4 notebook	NS	2	3
2239 4 deceit	NS	0	0
2240 3 parcel	NS	0	0
2241 3 brighten	NS	0	0
2242 3 moderation	NS	0	0
2243 3 punctual	NS	0	0
2244 3 hurrah	NS	0	0
2245 3 lipstick	NS	0	0
2246 3 uppermost	NS	0	0
2247 3 fatten	NS	0	0
2248 3 conqueror	NS	0	0
2249 2 hindrance	NS	0	0
2250 2 cowardice	NS	0	0
2251 2 obedient	NS	0	0
2252 2 saucer	NS	0	0
2253 2 madden	NS	0	0
2254 2 scold	NS	0	0
2255 2 weekday	NS	0	0
2256 2 rotten	NS	0	1
2257 2 disrespect	NS	0	0
2258 1 widower	NS	0	0
2259 1 deafen	NS	0	0
2260 1 donkey	NS	0	1
2261 1 businesslike	NS	0	0
2262 1 motherhood	NS	0	0

2263 1 sadden	NS	0	0
2264 1 handshake	NS	0	0
2265 1 calculator	NS	0	2
2266 1 headdress	NS	0	0
2267 1 scissors	425	0	0
2268 1 translator	215	0	0
2269 1 possessor	92	0	0
2270 1 shilling	371	0	0
2271 1 redder	24	0	0
2272 1 motherly	72	0	0
2273 0 whose	19374	0	0
2274 0 cultivator	25	0	0
2275 0 whom	12596	0	0
2276 0 homework	807	0	0
2277 0 electrician	176	0	0
2278 0 oar	78	0	0
2279 0 bribery	232	0	0
2280 0 sweeten	59	0	0
2281 0 sow	323	0	0
2282 0 pronunciation	563	0	0
2283 0 beak	9130	0	0
2284 0 plural	386	0	0

* NS = Not Significant (lower than 1000 tokens on the BNC and/or not of interest in this study)

Appendix 3

Extract showing Division of T-Units (Indicated with /)

2.1.

I think computer is very important to student at the university./ In the past nothing computer enough bird and write paper buy hand and person/ but now the world is different and also the since different./ The system of the computer helpe the person.
/The computer help the student in the university or in school. /The computer help us to learn another language, /also help us to meet another people from another country.

2.2.

Computers are very important in life./ Some people say nobody can stay without them./ For example, the people in the past, when they went to finish some work, they had many problems to finish it because they worked by themselves/ and they take long time to finish the work or find some information about something./ But now, when the computer coming, life has become very easy because the computer helps the people to finish the work in a short time and finish many pieces of work not only one./

The people can found the information about any think in the short time./ The life they will change in our future because every way they will work buy computer like schooles, compenes and hospital./ In the future everybody they will have a computer to fished her work, or to make shopping in computer/ and they will do everything they need it by computer./ Because every all thing the computer are very important in the life./

2.3.

Hello, my name is XXX. / Sometimes I enjoy writing. / This semester, my teacher writing is better because I learned my mistake. / I leaned about process writing to write many points and then choose the best one to write. / Writing summary it will be useful in our study because we can use it to understand the important thing./ In the writing class, summary is easier for me./ Writing a paragraph was difficult./ Next semester, I would like to improve my writing paragraph./ There isn't any part of the writing class because I think its all important. /

Appendix 4

Adapted from Appendix C: Guidelines for T-Units, Clauses, Word Counts and Errors (Polio 1997)

T-Units

- A) A T-Unit is defined as an independent clause and all its dependent clauses.
- B) Count run-on sentences and comma splices as two T-units with an error in the first T-unit.
- C) For sentence fragments, if the verb is missing, count the sentence as one T-Unit with an error.
- D) If a subordinate clause is standing alone, attach it to the preceding or following sentence and count it as one T-unit with an error.
- E) Count T-units in parenthesis as individual T-Units

Error Guidelines

- a) Do not count spelling errors [unless they involve a word form error]
- b) Be conservative about counting comma errors
- c) Base tense/ reference errors on preceding discourse; do not look at the sentence in isolation.
- d) Don't count British [or American] usages as errors
- e) Be lenient about article errors from translations of proper nouns
- f) Don't count errors in capitalization [except for the beginning of a sentence]
- g) Do not count register errors related to lexical choices
- h) [Do not count full-stop errors, except at the end of sentences]

Word Count

- a) Count contractions as one word whether correct or not
- b) Count numbers as one word
- c) Count proper nouns in English and other languages as they are written
- d) Do not count hyphenated words as single words (e.g. well-written – two words)
- e) Count words as they are written even if they are incorrect

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