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**Investigating Students' Experiences of Learning English
as a Second Language at the University of Sindh,
Jamshoro, Pakistan**

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**Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
School of Education, University of Sussex**

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

A-level	Advanced Levels
AKU	Agha Khan University
ALT	Approaches to Learning and Teaching
CoP	Community of Practice
CSP	Civil Services of Pakistan
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ELT	English language teaching
ELTR	English Language Teaching Reforms
ESL	English as Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
GDP	Gross domestic product
GOP	Government of Pakistan
HEC	Higher Education Commission
HSCE	Higher Secondary Certificate Examination
IBA	Institute of Business Administration
IELL	Institute of English Language and Literature
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IGCSE	International Examinations at International General Certificate of Secondary Education
IT	Information & Technology
JSKM	Jeay Sindh Tahreek Movement
LUMHS	Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences
MQM	Mutahida Qaumi Movement
MUET	Mehran University of Engineering and Technology
NCE	National Committee on English
QEC	Quality Enhancement Cell
R-SPQ-2F	Revised Two-factor Study Process Questionnaire
SALUK	Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur
SAU	Sindh Agriculture University
UoSJP	University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan

Pakistani Rupee (PRs) is converted into British Pound (£) according to the UKFOREX, exchange rates i.e., £1 = PRs. 153, dated 23rd September 2012.

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Irfan Ahmed

Doctor of Philosophy

**Investigating Students' Experiences of Learning English as Second
Language at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan**

Thesis Summary

The recent emphasis on the importance of English language teaching and learning in public universities in Pakistan has resulted in the introduction of a new English as Second Language (ESL) programme including revised teaching approaches, content and assessment. However, to date, no rigorous and independent evaluation of this new programme has been undertaken particularly with respect to students' learning and experiences. This thesis seeks to address this gap by examining the effects of the new ESL programme on students' learning experiences, as well as teachers' perspectives and the broader institutional context.

The study uses a qualitative case study approach basing its findings on the responses of purposively sampled students (n=17) and teachers (n=7) from the Institution of English Literature and Linguistics (IELL), University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan (UoSJP). Semi-structured interviews, observations and document review were used as the main tools to collect a wide variety of data.

The analysis of the data was informed by different theories including Symbolic Interactionism, Community of Practice, and Bourdieusian notions of habitus, field and capital. These theories offered an approach which bridges the structure and agency divide in understanding students' learning experiences. The study employed the concepts of institutional influences to examine the impact of UoSJP's policies and practices on the teaching and learning of the ESL programme. The concept of community, which is understood as the community of the ESL classroom, is used to examine the interactions of students-students and students-teachers. The notion of identity was used to examine the interaction of students' gender, rurality, ethnicity and previous learning experiences with different aspects of the ESL programme.

In relation to institutional influences, the study found that UoSJP's institutional policies and practices are shaped by its position in the field of higher education, and in turn, these influences shape teaching and learning in the ESL programme. Specifically, UoSJP defines its capital as higher education for all, which in practice translates as admitting students who have been rejected by other universities and/or cannot afford private universities' high fees. In order to meet the language needs of disadvantaged students from non-elite English and vernacular medium schools, UoSJP offers the ESL programme. This initiative aims to improve students' English language skills in their first two years, and to fulfil requirements set by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). However, the university's treatment of the ESL programme significantly impacts on teaching and learning in terms of its policies and practices, in relation to faculty hiring, teacher training, relationship between the administration and ESL teachers, number of students in ESL classrooms, assessment criteria, ESL quality assurance, and learning support resources like up-to-date libraries.

In relation to the community of ESL classroom, the study found that participation plays an important part in defining students' roles and their relationship with teachers and peers in the classroom. Teachers' pedagogic strategies and large classes were found to be influential factors affecting students' participation in the classroom. It was found that teachers use different pedagogic strategies, which define them as facilitators or knowledge transmitters accordingly. The facilitators allow students' full participation in the classroom by listening to their opinions, respecting their arguments, appreciating their feedback, acknowledging their contributions to the class, and demonstrating empathy to their problems. When in class with these teachers, students feel encouraged, confident and motivated to participate in the classroom. By contrast, the knowledge transmitters prefer monologue lectures when teaching ESL, and strongly discourage students' participation. Students are usually not allowed to ask questions or express their concerns to these teachers. In their presence, students revealed that they lacked confidence, and felt discouraged and demotivated from participating in the classroom. Moreover, in the context of large classes only students sitting on the front-benches are given opportunities of participation, while those at the back of the classroom are considered to be educationally weak, inactive, therefore ignored in interactive activities. The treatment of these students by teachers and students at the front of the class alike limits their participation in the classroom.

In relation to identities, the study found that students frequently foreground their gender identities, rural-ethnic identities and identities as medical or engineering students in interaction with different aspects of the ESL programme. Some aspects of ESL textbooks including units which depict stereotypical gender roles conflict with female students' gender identities; units which are based on exclusively Western, urban contexts conflict with students' rural-ethnic identities, and units that are based on graph-comprehension conflict with students' identities as medical students. While others aspects of ESL textbooks particularly those units that are constructed on experiences and activities which are exclusively associated with men in Pakistan such as driving complement female students' gender identities; and those units which are set in a village, and focus on the culture and life of villages complement students rural-ethnic identities. Moreover, it was found that female students struggled in maintaining their role as ESL learners in comparison with their gender roles as sister and daughter.

This thesis provides new insights into students' learning experiences and ESL in higher education. It also contributes to and enhances the literature on higher education in Pakistan. Furthermore, it enables policy-makers to reflect upon their policies, as well as provides suggestions to the UoSJP and its teachers.

Chapter One: Introduction

As English has become a global language, its importance in higher education has increased significantly. In order to meet the demands of globalisation, national governments often prioritise the development of English language teaching and learning in higher education, and the government of Pakistan is no exception. Among the many initiatives of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC), the new English as Second Language (ESL) programme, introduced for all public sector universities in 2006, remains the most prominent. This initiative was introduced following the research findings of the National Committee on English (NCE), which highlighted the poor state of English language teaching and learning in public sector universities.

The new ESL programme sought to address students' language weaknesses, and to provide teachers with sustainable ways of tackling students' language problems. Following this, four major multi-disciplinary universities including the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan (UoSJP) adopted the new ESL programme. The programme has now been running for six years in these universities; however, no rigorous evaluation has yet been carried out in order to examine the effects of the programme on students' learning from their own perspective.

This thesis seeks to address this lack of evaluation by examining the effects of the new ESL programme on students' learning experiences, with a focus on their perspectives as well as teachers' perspectives and the broader institutional context. A qualitative case study approach is used in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the programme by observing and interviewing purposively-sampled students (n=17) and teachers (n=7) from the Institution of English Literature and Linguistics (IELL), UoSJP. The study analyses students' learning experiences in the ESL programme, and is informed by Symbolic Interactionism, Community of Practice, and Bourdieusian notions of habitus, field and capital. These diverse theoretical perspectives, combined with methodological rigor, offer rich insights into students, teachers and the institutional context of the ESL programme.

1.1. Aim of the Research

The aim of the study is to explore the effects of the ESL programme on students' learning experiences in higher education. In order to do this, the study investigates how students from diverse gender, region, ethnicity and educational backgrounds interact with various aspects of

the ESL programme. It also examines how students interact with peers and teachers in ESL classrooms; how these interactions are influenced by the institution; and how these interactions affect their learning experiences.

While the importance of traditional approaches to investigating students' learning experiences in ESL programmes is acknowledged, a sociological approach is adopted in this study. Traditional approaches include the analysis of assessment methods (Genesse and Upshur 1996; O'Malley and Pierce 1996; Brown 2004), teachers' pedagogical approaches (Hughes 2003; Bunts-Anderson 2004), students' learning approaches (Ming 2004; Lucas and Rojo-Laurilla 2008; Xiu-juan 2008; Zhenhong and Zhin 2009; Noor 2010), and conventional curriculum analysis (Jahanbakhsh 1996). By contrast, the sociological approach adopted in this study uses a 'structure and agent' perspective to examine students' learning experiences through concepts of 'identity', 'community' and 'structural (institutional) influences'.

The study uses the concept of identity in relation to students and teachers in the ESL context, community in order to analyse student-student and student-teacher interactions in ESL classes; and institutional influences to examine the impact of UoSJP's policies and practices on the teaching and learning of the ESL programme. This method of evaluation allows new dimensions of the ESL programme and students' learning experiences to be explored. Using Symbolic Interactionism, Community of Practice, and Bourdieusian notions of habitus, field and capital, this study aims to discover aspects of students' learning experiences in the ESL programme which are otherwise ignored in traditional curriculum analysis. In order to achieve this, the structural and agentic forces that shape student-teacher interactions in the ESL programme are viewed as interlinked.

This study therefore provides an original contribution to knowledge in the following ways:

1. By providing a theoretical framework for the future analysis of students' learning experiences in different educational contexts (see Chapter 3);
2. By contributing to literature on ESL and students' learning in higher education;
3. By contributing to literature on ESL teaching and learning in Pakistan.

1.2. Background and Rationale

English has dominated the official discourse in Pakistan as in other developing countries as the language of development since its independence from British India. Since the 1990s, the *Education for All* discourse and the increased use of English in the global market have contributed a universalistic dimension to the teaching and learning of English in Pakistan. In official planning and policy documents, English is commonly portrayed as a passport to success, associated with social mobility, and seen as key to national progress. Since national progress and prosperity are linked with the expansion of higher education (Wood 2007), the government of Pakistan places a strong emphasis on the development of English language teaching and learning in this sector (Shamim 2010).

According to the most recent policy document (i.e., Ministry of Education 2007), the Pakistani government aims to produce communicatively competent English speakers in order to meet the demands and challenges of the higher education, as well as the local and global job markets in a rapidly evolving world. This is reflected by the large budget allocated by the HEC for the research, planning and implementation of English language teaching reforms in the country (Shamim 2010). Subsequently, the HEC established the NCE in 2003 to assess the teaching and learning situation in higher education.

The NCE's findings suggested a general sense of dissatisfaction with the existing level of graduates' English proficiency in public sector universities. The findings also revealed that the majority of teachers do not have formal qualifications or training in English language teaching, and that syllabi are outdated. Assessment practices were also found to be inadequate; students are given minimal opportunities to develop academic literacy since teaching and learning focuses on good performance in examinations, which are in turn exclusively based on content knowledge. Additionally, a low level of oral and written feedback on assigned written work was found.

The NCE's findings also suggested that learners in the higher income bracket (upper third of the population) consistently out-performed learners in the lower income bracket (lower two-thirds of the population) in the English. The positive correlation of high family income with students' higher levels of proficiency in English was attributed to their earlier education in private English medium schools compared to students in the lower income bracket, who had largely studied in vernacular medium schools (Khalique 2007; Rassool and Mansoor 2009).

These findings indicated the urgent need for developing relevant and high quality English language programmes for learners in public sector universities, in order to enable them to compete with other students (Rahman 1999, 2001; Mansoor 1996, 2003; Mansoor et al. 2005; Shamim 2010). In order to achieve this aim, the HEC introduced a new ESL programme which was specifically designed for general multi-disciplinary public sector universities. The HEC strongly recommended that all public sector universities adopt this programme. Four major public sector universities, including UoSJP, introduced the programme in 2006.

The purpose of the programme is to improve students' English language skills, in order to ensure that students can cope with the demands of higher education, with specific objectives focusing on strengthening students' writing, reading, speaking, listening and grammar skills. More general objectives include building students' confidence by providing them with opportunity to interact in the classrooms, and making their language learning experience enjoyable and productive. Although the programme was introduced six years ago, no evaluation has yet been carried out by the HEC or by independent researchers; the current study represents the first attempt to evaluate the new ESL programme at UoSJP. The focus of the study is to understand the programme from students' perspectives, and it is therefore guided by the following overarching research question:

How do students experience learning in the ESL programme in higher education?

This question is further divided into following three sub-questions (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of this sub-division):

1. How do institutional influences shape students' learning in the ESL programme?
2. How do students interact with teachers and peers in the community of ESL classroom?
3. How do students' identities and previous learning interact with the ESL programme?

There are three rationales guiding this study. Firstly, the government has introduced a policy to improve the English language teaching and learning in higher education, and it is therefore important to review it to examine its strengths and weaknesses. As an HEC-funded PhD scholar, it seems logical for my research to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the HEC's policies and initiatives. This thesis therefore enables policy-makers to reflect upon their policies, as well as provides suggestions to the UoSJP and its teachers.

Secondly, the issues related to ESL education in higher education have largely been neglected by mainstream research in Pakistan. Moreover, minimal published research has contributed to an understanding of students' experiences of ESL learning in higher education of Pakistan. Existing research in this area has used quantitative research strategies, and has approached the issue at a national level (Rahman 1999, 2001; Mansoor 2003; Shamim 2010), which failed to offer an in-depth understanding of students' learning experiences. By contrast, this study uses a qualitative case study approach, involving purposively-sampled students from diverse backgrounds, in order to evaluate the ESL programme from their perspectives. The findings therefore provide new insights into students' learning experiences and ESL in higher education. The thesis also contributes to and enhances the literature on higher education in Pakistan.

The final rationale for conducting this study is motivated by personal reasons. My experience as a student and an English language teacher at UoSJP provides a unique opportunity to reflect upon the research context. In this study, I position myself as an 'ex-insider'. On one hand, I have gained experience of both learning as an English language student and teaching as an ESL teacher. Consequently, I am familiar with both the research participants and the research context; having shared the social world of participants, insights and sensitivity to things both said and unsaid are potentially available to me (Hockey 1993: 119).

On the other hand, however, as a researcher I have adopted an ontological and epistemological stance which allowed me to retain an observer's eye for analysis and explanation, while also observing and understanding the issues from participants' perspectives. This gave me an advantage in understanding the issues in a thorough but unbiased way (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion).

As a teacher, I had always wanted to contribute to the profession of teaching, and this study enabled me to attempt this as a researcher. The practice of classroom teachers conducting research is also supported by the notion of Teacher Training Agency (Powell and Tod 2004). This research not only contributes to knowledge, and therefore to policy and practice, but is also a reflection of

[the researcher's] noble intentions which are underpinned by a moral concern with making a worthwhile contribution. That is really important [...] because there are many personal costs involved in doing research and, if you are going to put up with them, then it is very important to feel you are making a contribution that matters.

(Pollard 2005:2)

1.3. Overview of Methodology

This study adopts a case study approach, drawing data from documentary material, in-depth semi-structured interviews and observations. A thorough review of printed and electronic documents related to the ESL programme, published by the UoSJP and the HEC, was conducted. This review particularly focused on documents which state the aims and objectives of the ESL programme, while textbooks (i.e. Howe et al 2006; Eastwood 2006) were also analysed.

Seventeen students from the Institute of English Literature and Linguistics (IELL) were selected for the study using purposive sampling. These students were selected from 200 students who responded to a questionnaire focusing on demographic information. The selection of these seventeen students takes into account gender, region, ethnicity, and family backgrounds. Students study on the ESL programme in their first two years (equivalent of four semesters) of undergraduate study. Half of the selected students were in their second year (the fourth semester), and the remaining half were in their third year (the sixth semester) at the time of fieldwork (September 2010 to March 2011). Students from these semesters were selected in order to analyse experiences in all four semesters. Additionally, seven teachers of different genders, age, and experience were interviewed, all of whom were involved in teaching the ESL programme in different semesters. Interviews with teachers and students were open-ended and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. All interviews were conducted in regional languages (i.e. Urdu and Sindhi), audio-recorded, translated, and transcribed.

To corroborate interview data, observations were also carried out. The aim was to discover the nature of social reality by understanding agents' perceptions, understandings, or interpretations of the social world. This was done by participating both actively (i.e., conducting classes and being involved in class activities) and passively (i.e., sitting in classes, randomly observing the groups of students, and participating in teachers' informal meetings) with the groups of students and teachers (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion).

1.4. Structure of Thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters. This chapter has outlined the research rationale, the overarching research question, the research methodology and the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 introduces the context of the study, and begins with a brief outline of the geographical, historical and economic context of Pakistan. This is followed by a discussion of general educational policies in Pakistan, and a more specific examination of English language teaching policies at different levels of education. After this, the University of Sindh is introduced, with a particular focus on its students, and its political and social contexts. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the aims and objectives of the ESL programme analysed in this study.

Chapter 3 reviews the relevant literature in the field of ESL in higher education. The chapter reviews different research perspectives which have been used to analyse students' ESL learning experiences in different contexts. In particular, the Approaches to Learning and Teaching perspective and Activity theory are reviewed, and their limitations considered. After this, the sociological concepts of identity, community and institutional influences are discussed. Identity is conceptualised in relation to gender, ethnicity, rurality and previous learning experiences; community is conceptualised and discussed in relation to the teachers' pedagogic strategies and work space and its relation to the ESL programme; and institutional influences are conceptualised in relation to the ESL programme. The chapter concludes by outlining the key research questions guiding the study.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology of this study. This begins with a discussion of my epistemological and ontological position, and also includes: a consideration of my methodological orientation; the choice of case study as the research strategy; my positionality in the process of data collection; choice of data collection tools; the validity and reliability of these tools; strategies of data analysis; and the sampling approach. The chapter ends with a discussion of ethical issues related to the methodological approach, and a consideration of the study's limitations.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, the empirical findings are presented, responding to each of the three research questions. Chapter 5 is an analysis of the institutional influences affecting teaching and learning in the ESL programme; Chapter 6 examines teachers' pedagogic strategies and class size in relation to student-student and student-teacher interactions in the community of

the ESL classroom; and Chapter 7 investigates students' gender identities, rural-ethnic identities, and identities constructed due to students' previous learning experiences in interactions with different aspects of the ESL programme.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by summarising and highlighting the main findings of the study, and offers suggestions to researchers, policy makers, and teachers based on these findings. It ends with reflections on the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted, and on the research process as a whole.

Chapter Two: Context of the study

This chapter introduces the education system of Pakistan, with a particular focus on English language teaching. The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the history, geography and economy of Pakistan, national education policies and, more specifically, English language teaching policies. It continues with a review of English language teaching at various stages of education in Pakistan. After this UoSJP, the university focused on in this study, is introduced, with a focus on its students and the political influences shaping the institution. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the ESL programme, and its aims and objectives.

2.1. Pakistan: an introduction

Pakistan, officially known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is located in South Asia. The southern coastline stretches 1,046km along the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman, while it is bordered by Afghanistan and Iran in the west, India in the east, and China in the far northeast. Pakistan has a population of 170 million residing in four provinces: Punjab (55.6%), Sindh (23%), Baluchistan (7.4%), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly called the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), (13.4%), and the capital Islamabad (0.6%) (World Bank 2009). Moreover, Pakistan has the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with a population of 3.18 million (Census 1998). According to the published report of the last census (1998), 67.5% of the population lived in rural areas. Only Sindh province had roughly equal rural and urban populations (51.2% and 48.8% respectively).

Pakistan shares disputed territories with Afghanistan and India. Afghanistan disputes the legitimacy of its border with Pakistan. Likewise, Pakistan and India are in dispute over the territories of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947. Jammu and Kashmir are divided between Pakistan and India by the *Line of Control*, a UN-monitored border (Library of Congress 2005).

Figure 1. Map of Pakistan



Source: http://www.welt-atlas.de/map_of_pakistan_5-758 [accessed on 2nd May 2012]

Pakistan was created after the division of British India in 1947. It was found on the basis of *two-nation theory*, which argued that the primary identity of Indian Muslims is defined by religion, rather than their language or ethnicity. Following this theory, Indian Hindus and Muslims are seen as two distinct nationalities, regardless of ethnic or other commonalities (Hoodbhoy and Nayyar in Durrani 2008). As a result, the majority of Pakistan's population is Muslim. Around 96.3% of Pakistanis are Muslim (of whom approximately 95% are Sunni and 5% Shia); 3.7% are non-Muslims, which is made up of 1.6% Christians, 1.6% Hindus, and 0.3% belonging to other religions (Library of Congress 2005).

Pakistan is a plural society in ethnic and linguistic terms. Although each of the four provinces is considered to represent a major ethnic group, the mapping of provinces and principal ethnic groups is far from universal (Haqqani 2003). Each ethnic group is primarily concentrated in its home province; Sindhis in Sindh, Balouhis in Balochistan, Punjabis in Punjab, Pakhtuns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and most Mohajirs (also known as Urdu speakers

are migrants from India during the partition of British India) residing in urban Sindh. Pukhtuns and Punjabis, however, are found throughout Pakistan (Cohen 2005). Language is considered to be an important marker of ethnicity in the country. According to the 1998 census, Punjabis constitute 54.6%, Pakhtuns 15.42%, Sindhis 14.1%, Urdu speakers 7.57%, Balochs 3.57%, and others 4.66% (Government of Pakistan 1998).

Since independence in 1947, the economic growth rates of the country have been impressive but also have fluctuated significantly. These fluctuations have occurred mainly as a result of successive government policies and practices (c.f. Andrus and Mohammed 1958). However, shifts in international aid and foreign capital flows have influenced economic growth by affecting changes in government spending and budget deficits. The economy suffered significantly during the 1990s, but recovered in 2002-2004 following a shift in government policies; support for the 'war on terror' led to the resumption of international lending. According to World Bank data, in 2003, Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) was \$68.6 billion, gross national income (GNI) per capita was \$430, and purchasing parity power (PPP) per capita was \$2,060.

Pakistan's education system scores poorly on educational achievement indicators. According to the Ministry of Education (2002) the overall literacy rate is 49%, (61.3 % male, 36.8% female). Independent sources place the overall literacy rate at 45.7%, (59.8% male, 30.6% female) (Library of Congress 2005). The education system of Pakistan is divided into five levels: primary (grades one to five); middle (grades six to eight); matriculation (grades nine and ten, culminating in the Secondary School Certificate); intermediate (grades eleven and twelve, culminating in the Higher Secondary School Certificate); and university, leading to graduate and advanced degrees. The education system is comprised of 157,158 primary schools (including 27,000 religious madrassas), 30,418 middle-level schools, 16,590 secondary schools, 1,604 higher secondary schools, 747 secondary technical/vocational institutions, 677 degree colleges, 144 universities (64 public and 80 private), and 24 teacher training institutes (Bano 2007a; UNESCO 2010).

The country's overall enrolment rate for those aged 5 to 24 is 36% (41.2% males and 30.4% females) (Library of Congress 2005). According to the Federal Bureau of Statistics (2008) about gross 63% of Pakistanis enrolled in primary and middle levels, 44% in matriculation and intermediate levels, and 4.7% in the institutions of higher education in 2008. The literacy

and enrolment rate tend to be higher in urban areas. According to UNESCO (2010) only 45% females are literate compared to 69% males in Pakistan.

2.2. Education policy in Pakistan

A number of government policy documents have sought to address educational needs over time. The education policy document (Ministry of Education 2007) analysed in this study is the one on the bases of which the latest published education policy (Ministry of Education 2009) was made, highlights the shortcomings of previous policies, and draws attention to the unacceptable educational conditions in the country. Notably, the policy argues that the existing education system has failed to address the need of large groups of children and adults. For example, there is a large out-of-school population among children; this is made up of children who never go to school, those who start school but drop out, and those who continue in school but are ill-equipped for higher education.

Although previous government policies have acknowledged these challenges, repeated failures to address these shortcomings have created a credibility gap. The latest policy affirms the government's renewed commitment to Education for All under the Dakar Framework of Action (2000), and to ensure the provision of quality education. To this end, the government committed to an investment of 4% of GDP to the education sector, and promised to increase this to 6% in 2015. The latest policy defines quality education in terms of high standards of curriculum, assessment, teachers, and teaching environment (Ministry of Education 2007, 2009).

Equity has been considered as a key factor in improving the quality of education in the latest government policy. Three areas have been considered in relation to equity: gender segregation, geographic disparities (e.g. urban vs. rural areas), and economic disparities. The policy acknowledges the poor state of women's education in the country; according to Ministry of Women's Development, female illiteracy stands at approximately 37%, and while 73.6% have completed primary education, only 19% have completed education up to matriculation (X class), 8% have completed intermediate, and 6.4% have attained universities (5% have attained Bachelor's degrees and 1.4% Masters degrees) (Ministry of Education 2007, 2009).

Economic productivity, security and socio-cultural factors are given as explanations for the poor state of female education in Pakistan. In order to address this, the latest policy

recommends free elementary education for girls; hiring and training teachers with a focus on reducing gender gaps; providing additional resources for provinces with wide gender gaps; and encouraging research to collect and analyse gender disaggregated data in order to inform policy.

The latest policy also acknowledges the dramatic difference between education services in rural and urban areas, which serve to further widen the gap between urban elites and the comparatively marginalised rural population. The policy also addresses the disparities within urban slums and more elite areas, and identifies low quality education in public sector schools in both rural and urban slum areas. Ghost schools, unqualified teachers, and a curriculum which is poorly adapted for rural areas are highlighted as some of the main reasons for these disparities; the policy calls for urgent, incentive-based interventions to improve the quality of education service delivery in disadvantaged areas.

Additionally, the latest policy highlights the widely-known phenomenon of children from wealthy families attending private schools, and children from poorer families attending public schools, which lends an almost apartheid-esque character to the education sector. The current education system reinforces socio-economic class divisions. Poverty forms the key barrier to accessing quality education, and is simultaneously fuelled by the poor quality education accessed by economically disadvantaged children. In order to tackle this situation, the latest policy recommends increased political and financial support for schools in rural and other neglected areas; additionally, it declares that local governments must provide scholarships, stipends and loans to students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Ministry of Education 2007, 2009).

2.3. Higher education policies in Pakistan

The latest policy (Ministry of Education 2007, 2009) also emphasises the importance of higher education for the socio-economic development of the country. Meeting the needs of a growing population and fulfilling economic demands have long been goals of the higher education sector in Pakistan. However, a lack of political will and available funds have produced a small, low-performing higher education sector. Other factors have significantly affected the quality of university education, including the poor quality of secondary level education, students' limited English language skills, and the unstable socio-political environment of universities. At the beginning of the twentieth century, only 2.9% of the

university age population (17-23 years old; approx. 21 million people) in Pakistan had access to university education. According to the latest data collected in 2007, enrolment in public higher education institutions is approximately 30% per year, which is equivalent to enrolment in private sector universities.

The formation of Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2002 was a significant moment in the development of higher education sector. The HEC gained a high level of political support and substantial budgetary allocations to initiate an extensive reform process. To improve access, the HEC focused on physical infrastructure development as well as the development of technological infrastructure; the latter was seen as particularly important to facilitate modern approaches such as distance education methodologies. To raise participation in higher education, the HEC has also focused on quality improvement in faculty, research and learning environments, curricula, governance, assessment, accreditation of institutions, and industrial linkages. Equity issues have been approached chiefly through the provision of need-based scholarships for marginalized groups.

18% of the education budget (constituted as 4% GDP) was allocated for higher education in order to finance specific programmes, disciplines and areas established by the HEC in order to achieve these aims. Additionally, these initiatives were identified as priority national programmes, and a particular emphasis was placed on development human resource capacities to meet national requirements. For example, based on its population, Pakistan is said to require over half a million qualified engineers; total enrolment at engineering universities stands at currently 26,000 (Ministry of Education 2007, 2009). Engineering universities have therefore been identified as a priority for improvement, and one billion rupees (£6.82 million) has been reserved for the development and improvement of standards for all engineering universities in the country. Investments are also being made in software and in obtaining licenses for design software; other initiatives include the establishment of new universities, linking professional universities with industry, introducing e-books for universities, and launching English language reform projects.

2.4. English Language Teaching policies in Pakistan

English has become the language of international research, trade, commerce and communication, and policies in Pakistan acknowledge its indispensable role in education.

English language is therefore a compulsory subject from the Class 1 in public primary schools, and is also the medium instruction for science and mathematics in secondary and middle school, for science and technology at intermediate level, and for all subjects at university level.

However, a chronological review of policies related to English suggests inconsistencies between policies and practice. For example, according to Article 251 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan:

(1) The National Language of Pakistan is Urdu and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.

(2) Subject to Clause (1) the English Language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.

However, this date came and went, as had many other dates before it, and English remains as firmly entrenched in the corridors of power in Pakistan as it was in 1947. This is largely due to the value placed upon English by elites in the country, who choose English over Urdu in the name of efficiency and modernization (Rahman 1996, 1999). The privileged position of English can be explained by several factors: Rahman (2006), for example, characterises the Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP) as *an anglicised body of men* who were greatly influenced by British tradition. Additionally, Cohen (1994: 162) suggests that

The officers of armed forces were also anglicised [...] it was the British generation that dominated the Pakistani army till 1971.

Rahman (1996) further argues that the elites of Pakistan have continued to privilege English in order to differentiate themselves from the masses; as a class-marker, English-medium education allows elites to maintain a competitive edge in the national and international job market in comparison to those who have attended Urdu-medium or traditional Madrassa education.

According to Rahman (1999), Pakistan's initial stated policy was supportive of Urdu, and also aimed to create a low-cost, subordinate bureaucracy as vernacular education is less expensive than English-medium education (see Table 1). The ruling *anglicised elite* in post-independence Pakistan invested in a parallel system of elitist schooling, which was defined

by the use of English-medium to teach all subjects (excluding Urdu). This, in turn, created a new generation who had a direct stake in privileging English.

The armed forces also created cadet colleges from the 1950s onwards, which were supported financially by the State, and run in the same manner as elite British public schools. In the 1960s, students from ordinary schools, who largely came from vernacular-medium schools, protested against these bastions of privilege; the government accordingly appointed a commission to investigate their grievances. The report of this commission agreed that elite schools violated the constitutional assurance that ‘all citizens are equal before law’ (Paragraph 15 under Right No. VI of the 1962 Constitution).

However, the Commission was also convinced that these schools would produce candidates well-suited for positions in the military and the civilian sectors of the country’s services (GOP 1966: 18, in Rahman 1996). The system therefore saw minimal reform, and in modern-day Pakistan, these elite schools are firmly entrenched in the education system. Although they are primarily financed by income from tuition fees, the government continues to provide land and generous financial support in order to build large campuses for these schools (see Table 1).

Table 1. Difference in costs in major types of educational institutions

Schools	Average cost per student per year	Sponsor (s)	Cost to the State
State run English medium cadet/public schools	PRs.90,061 [£ 588.63] (tuitions and all facilities)	Parents + State (average of 6 cadet colleges and 1 public schools)	PRs. 14,171 [£92.62] (average of 5 cadet colleges)
Elite English medium Schools	PRs. 96,000 [£627.45] for ‘A’ level; PRs. 36,000 [£ 235.29] for other levels (only tuition)	Parents	None
Vernacular medium schools	PRs. 2264.50 [£14.79] (only tuition)	State	PRs. 2264.5 [£14.79]
Madrassas	PRs. 5,714 [£37.34] (includes boarding and lodging)	Philanthropists + religious organisations	Minimal – subsidies on computers, books etc. in some madrassas

Source: Rahman 1999.

Inconsistencies in previous higher education language policies are also evident when reviewing various education commissions set up by different governments (Mansoor 2003). Since independence in 1947, all relevant policies and reports of education commissions and committees (1957-1998) have promoted an official language policy of maintaining English as the medium of instruction in higher education. However, this policy has been presented as an interim arrangement; the long-term language policy in all reports of educational policies, education commissions and committees has been to introduce Urdu as the official medium of instruction in higher education as soon as teaching materials have been developed in the national language.

Although Urdu was declared as the official medium of instruction for public schooling (Class 1-12) soon after independence, the period assigned to the transfer from English medium to Urdu medium in higher education has varied from fifteen years (Sharif Commission 1959) to between five and seven years (University Grants Commission 1982). In spite of the endorsement of this policy by every regime, students, teachers, parents and other education stakeholders have generally observed that the problems regarding learners' language difficulties in English have not been adequately addressed. Additionally, it has been noted that sufficient, quality Urdu materials for higher education have not been developed (Mansoor 2003). The most recent educational reports, the Report of the Education Sector Reforms (2001) and the Task Force on Higher Education (2002) set up by former president General Musharraf, have failed to address the issue of language policy in higher education.

2.5. English Language Teaching at different educational levels in Pakistan

2.5.1. English in Schools

Schooling in Pakistan is divided on the basis of medium of instruction, i.e. English-medium schools, vernacular-medium schools, and Madrassas. The following sections involve a detailed discussion of these schools, with a focus on their implications for English language teaching.

The English-medium schools

As mentioned earlier, English-medium schools fall into one of three categories in Pakistan: state-supported elite public schools, private elite schools, and non-elite private schools.

Among the state-supported elite public schools, the great public schools, the federal government model schools, and the armed forces schools are most prominent. These schools offer affordable, quality education exclusively to children of government employees and army personnel. Other parents are required to pay much higher fees in order to register their children at these schools. For example, in the Fauji Foundation — a military-controlled school in Rawalpindi — following rates per month are charged for army personnel: PRs.150 (£0.98) for retired army non-commissioned ranks; PRs.310 (£2.02) for retired officers; PRs. 260 (£1.69) for serving non-commissioned ranks; PRs. 450 (£2.94) for serving officers. By contrast, civilians are charged PRs.1000 (£6.53) per month from class 6 to 10. Elite private English-medium schools similarly provide quality education exclusively for children from affluent families. The tuition fees at these schools range from between PRs. 1,500 (£9.80) to over PRs. 7,000 (£45.75) per month. High admission fees are also charged, ranging from PRs. 15, 000 (£98.03) to PRs. 50,000 (£326.79).

All subjects at state-supported and private elite English medium schools are taught in English, which is also used as the language of communication within and outside the classroom. High standard syllabi are followed in these schools; rather than using books produced by the Pakistani Textbook Boards, private elite schools use English-medium books and courses which lead to the Cambridge International Examinations at International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate of Education at Ordinary (O-level) or Advanced Levels (A-level). Some of these books, originally produced for Western schools, are reprinted for a Pakistani school context with minor changes (e.g. names, attire of individuals). Evidently, these texts socialise students into an English-speaking, Western culture, and the focus remains on developing students' ability to use English accurately and appropriately.

Although state-supported elite schools follow the examination system of Pakistan, their textbooks are of a similar quality to those used in private elite schools. Moreover, these schools are able to hire well-qualified teachers by offering very attractive salary packages. Most of the teachers in these schools are confident English-speakers (i.e., they speak English at home, with friends and at work), so they speak in English to their students both inside and outside the classroom.

Rehman (1996) has referred to non-elite private schools as *so-called English medium schools*; although these schools claim to teach most subjects in English, their teachers are usually neither English-medium school graduates, nor qualified to teach English (Rehman 2001). The low salaries offered by non-elite private schools tend to attract teachers who are not sufficiently qualified to work elsewhere, and who may have been educated in similarly poor-quality non-elite private schools. These schools have been set up in order to meet the demand for English-medium education from the middle and lower classes, with fees ranging from PRs. 500 (£3.26) to PRs. 1500 (£9.8) per month. Although this is far higher than the average state vernacular school (which offer free education), the fees are significantly lower than elite private English-medium schools.

Vernacular-medium schools

A 1982 report (in Naqvi 1999), evaluating English teaching in 20 vernacular- (Urdu) medium high schools in Lahore, found extremely poor English language skills among students. According to the report, students could not speak or understand spoken English, nor could they read English for pleasure or write creatively using the language; their skills were limited to reading their lessons and simple sentences. The report also found disparities between schools in cities and schools in villages and small towns, with students in urban areas demonstrating better English language skills (Naqvi 1999). More recently, Khalique (2007) has argued that in most vernacular medium schools, English is viewed as an alien, intimidating language, with teachers' lack of ability and confidence resulting in students developing minimal (if any) English language skills.

Madrassas

The Madrassa system constitutes 30% of the total non-profit institutions that operates in parallel to the formal education system, and provides Islamic education based mainly upon the Holy Quran and the Hadith (teachings of the prophet Muhammad, *peace be upon him*) (Bano 2007b). Enrolment is free of charge and most Madrassas provide free room and board as well. *Maktabas*, Madrassa primary schools, are usually attached to mosques, and provide basic Islamic education which focuses on the reading and memorization of the Quran. Secondary school Madrassas provide advanced instruction in Islamic education. In an attempt to improve the integration of the Islamic and formal education systems, contemporary

subjects such as English, mathematics, general science and computer science have recently been introduced into the Madrassa curriculum (Ahmad 2004). Madrassas are largely autonomous and have their own administrative system, although they do receive grants from the central government. There are several official bodies that regulate the Madrassas and award certificates. Urdu and Arabic are the languages of instruction in the Madrassas.

According to Malik (1996) the Madrassas were intended to conserve the traditional Islamic world view. In the 1980s, however, it was alleged that Madrassas in both Pakistan and Afghanistan received significant financial support from the United States (Weaver 1995). European governments, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states all reportedly viewed these schools as recruiting grounds for anti-Soviet mujahedin fighters (Blanchard 2007). Madrassas, particularly those located on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, were used to produce an army of young people to fight against Soviets in Afghanistan in the name of religion. This generation, unaware that they were indirectly fighting for Western interests, were taught to hate English and all other languages and concepts associated with the Western world, which they were told is the greatest enemy of Islam. In other words, English became a symbol of non-/anti- Muslim identity, and was therefore viewed with hostility (Malik 1996; Amin 1998).

2.5.2. English in universities

As discussed earlier, English is the medium of instruction in all universities in Pakistan. Private and public sector universities all offer a variety of English language programmes; private universities usually offer specialised English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programmes. In some private universities, pre-sessional English courses are taught exclusively. By contrast, public sector universities tend to offer ESL programmes which are taught parallel with other subjects to provide students with basic English language skills. As students from unprivileged classes— who have studied in non-elite English-medium or vernacular-medium schools (as noted above)— join public sector universities (Rahman 1999; Mansoor 2003), it is considered important to offer ESL programmes in order to enhance their English language skills. This is so that they are able to cope with the demands of higher education; the stated aims of these programmes include to

develop [students'] ability to communicate effectively, enable [them] to read effectively and independently any intermediate level text, make [their] experience of

learning English more meaningful and enjoyable, enable [them] to use grammar and language structure in context

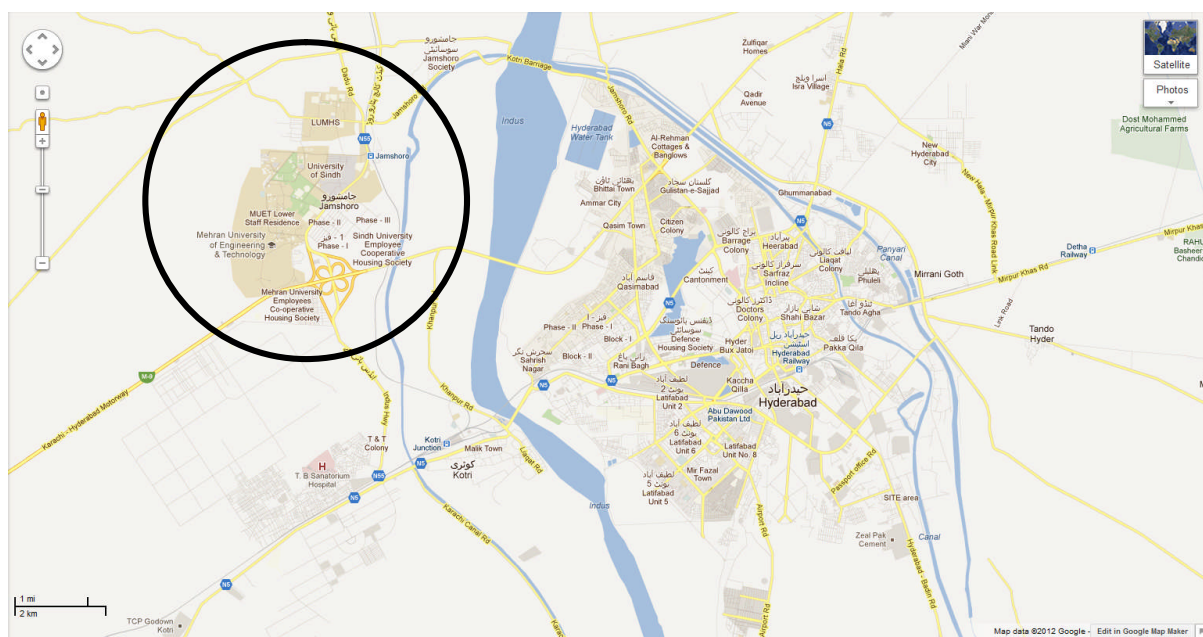
(Curriculum for English 2008: 16).

It is compulsory at most public sector universities for all newly enrolled students to take the ESL programme which, in most cases, runs parallel with other major subjects at Bachelor and Masters levels.

2.6. University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan (UoSJP)

UoSJP was established in 1947, and is the second oldest university in Pakistan. The main campus of the university is located at Jamshoro, about 15 kilometres from Hyderabad on the western bank of the River Indus (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Location of UoSJP



Source: www.map.google.co.uk [accessed on 2nd May 2012]

The university accommodates approximately 19,000 students in 43 teaching institutes/centres/departments functioning under six academic faculties: Natural Sciences, Arts, Islamic Studies, Law, Commerce and Business Administration, Pharmacy, and Education. The Faculty of Natural Sciences is the largest, with 22 departments and 7,852 students, followed by the Faculty of Social Sciences with 17 departments and 4,467 students. Likewise, the Faculty of Arts has seven departments with 1,400 students, the Faculty of

Commerce and Business Administration has two departments with 2,582 students, the Faculties of Islamic Studies has three departments with 305 students, and the Faculties of Pharmacy, Education and Law each have one department with 887, 1,354, and 39 students respectively (see Appendix IV for details). Moreover, four Law Colleges and 74 Degree and Post-Graduate Colleges (including 16 Private Colleges) are affiliated to the university. According to University's official website, around 70,000 regular students are enrolled in affiliated colleges.

2.6.1. Students at UoSJP

UoSJP accommodates a diverse range of students from all over Pakistan. However, the majority of the students are from nearby Hyderabad and from rural areas of interior Sindh. Generally, these students can be divided into three categories based on their region of origin (i.e., urban or rural areas), their ethnicity (i.e., Sindhis or Urdu speakers) and their choice of the university (i.e. UoSJP or another university as their first choice).

Students from urban and rural areas

District quotas are used to promote access to the university for candidates for rural areas (see Appendix V). These quotas largely govern the distribution of candidates in every department, institute and faculty at UoSJP; for example, there are 41 available places on the BA English Literature and Language, of which 26 are reserved for candidates from rural areas and 15 for candidates from urban areas. There is also a higher ratio of rural students compared to urban students in other departments across the university. The district quotas mean that a majority of students who enrol at UoSJP every year are from rural areas, while those who enrol from urban areas are mainly from Hyderabad and municipalities of other major districts.

Students of different ethnicities (Sindhi and Urdu speakers)

The majority of students enrolled at UoSJP are either Sindhis or Urdu speakers; although the university does not collect data on students' ethnicity, personal experience and observation would suggest that Sindhis constitute the largest ethnic group in most of the university departments. Another means of gaining an insight into the proportion of students from different ethnic backgrounds is to analyse the district quota aspect of the admission process. According to the 1998 census, approximately 93% of the rural population of Sindh is made up of Sindhis, in comparison to 1.62% of Urdu speakers (see Appendix VI). Excluding the

urban regions of Hyderabad (see Appendix VI), urban areas of Sindh (as defined by UoSJP's seat allocation policy – see Appendix V) are also dominated by Sindhis. Given the proportion of rural vs. urban students enrolled in the university discussed above, this suggests that the majority of students at UoSJP are from a Sindhi background (Rind 2008).

Students on their choice of university

Although there are no official statistics on students' choice of admission at UoSJP, there is a general assumption that significant proportion of students join UoSJP after being rejected from the nearby medical university (Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences, LUMHS) or engineering university (Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, MUET). For example, one teacher who participated in this study (TM7) described these students in the following manner:

We have a vast variety [diversity] of students here. First, we have those who are not able to find any place in medical, engineering or any other professional fields; they rush back to Sindh University, because university is a kind of solace, a rescue for these leftover students [...]

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

Sixteen out of the seventeen students interviewed for this study had been rejected from various medical universities prior to enrolling at UoSJP, while one had been rejected from an engineering university. Additionally, findings from a small-scale study conducted at the Faculty of Pharmacy, UoSJP for my Masters dissertation in 2008 also suggested that the majority of students enrolled in this faculty had also joined after being rejected from medical universities.

More specifically, the 2008 study revealed that, out of 349 students, 70% had enrolled at UoSJP after being rejected from medical universities, 21% joined UoSJP 'by chance', and only 9% joined UoSJP as their first-choice university. One explanation for the UoSJP's unpopularity as a first-choice university may be related to its low position in national university rankings. It is 28th out of 64 universities in the HEC general ranking, and 9th out of 24 multi-disciplinary universities in the country.

2.6.2. UoSJP as a political space

UoSJP operates in a highly politicised environment. This sub-section offers an insight into some of the key political events which shaped Sindh as a province as well as its higher education institutions, particularly UoSJP.

There are 49 higher education institutions in Sindh, of which three are public sector, multi-disciplinary universities (UoSJP, Karachi University, and Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur [SALUK]). Students from all over the Sindh enrol in these three universities; as mentioned above, many of these students have previously been rejected from medical or engineering colleges, or they are unable to attend private universities due to financial or academic reasons. Admissions to all of these public universities are based on a quota system similar to UoSJP's, with a specific number of places reserved for applicants from different districts of Sindh.

While this quota is seen to provide opportunities to students from all over the province, it also fuels inequalities based on ethnicities at public universities. The organisation of the system has led to particular ethnic groups becoming dominant at the different universities. For example, Karachi University reserves the maximum number of places for students from predominantly Mohajir districts of Karachi, SALUK reserves the maximum number of places for students from northern areas of Sindh, which are highly populated by Sindhi speakers, and UoSJP reserves the maximum number of seats for applicants from Sindhi-dominated districts in southern Sindh and Hyderabad. These universities have therefore become dominated by particular ethnic groups, to the exclusion of students from other ethnic backgrounds (Rahman 1999). The antagonism between Urdu speakers and Sindhis in these institutions can be understood from a historical perspective, and in particular, in relation to political tensions originating in Sindh after the partition of British India in 1947.

Sindh witnessed the emergence of the Sindhi Nationalist Movement in 1967, which had been inspired by the Bangali Language Movement of 1952 (initiated by the students of University of Dhaka) and Bangali Nationalist Movement. These two movements had led to the partition of East Pakistan into the independent state of Bangladesh in 1971 (Choudhury 1972), and inspired by these movements, nationalists in Sindh started the Sindhi Nationalist Movement. This movement was primarily established in opposition to the 'One Unit' policy, which entailed the imposition of Urdu as national and official language by the central government,

and as a reaction to a significant population of Urdu speakers settling in Karachi and Hyderabad, the two major cities in the Sindh (Jaffrelot 2002:22).

The movement was secular and heavily influenced by leftist Marxist ideology, with members referred to as comrades. In 1972, the movement was strengthened through the establishment of a formal political party, Jeay Sindh, which aimed to liberate Sindh from Pakistan and to create an independent state, Sindhuedesh. The party was later renamed Jeay Sindh Tahreek Movement (JSKM) by militant groups mostly made up of students from universities such as UoSJP and Sindh Agriculture University (SAU). In fact, the current leaders of JSKM were originally studied at these universities, and started their political activities while still students. The movement was widely known at these universities, and gained high levels of support from students at that time; however, involvement in the movement was restricted to Sindhi speakers. Urdu speakers were viewed unfavourably, and therefore rarely enrolled in these universities.

The Sindhi Nationalist Movement reached its peak during the dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq (1978-1988). Although Zia-ul-Haq banned all students' organisations in 1984, JSKM strongly resisted the military regime, and gained significant support. In response, the military regime promoted the militant party formed by a small group of Urdu speakers, the Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), aiming to combat opposition to the regime by dividing it along ethnic lines. During this period, MQM emerged as a highly disciplined political party, and in the 1988 election, it won almost all the Sindh Provincial Assembly seats in Karachi—the largest city of Sindh.

However, once in power, allegedly MQM politics was marked by opportunism and a failure to address popular social agendas. By 1991, MQM had, in partnership with the Sindh provincial government, unleashed a reign of terror in Karachi and Hyderabad (Fazila-Yacoobali and Jan 1996). JSKM and other Sindhi nationalist parties resisted the MQM's activities; this sparked ethnic violence in the major cities of Sindh, and resulted with many people killed on both sides. The clashes also resulted in the division of the cities of Hyderabad and Karachi into Sindhi and Urdu speaking areas. Hospitals, schools, colleges and universities were also divided accordingly; Sindhis would not receive treatment at a hospital in an Urdu speaking area, and vice versa.

UoSJP is located in Jamshoro, which is predominantly a Sindhi area. Consequently, only Sindhis enrolled at the university, and in 1990s, it was unthinkable for an Urdu speaker to join UoSJP. However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, tensions between the ethnic groups eased, resulting in increased access to UoSJP for Urdu speakers. Currently, a notable proportion of the UoSJP student population is made up of Urdu speakers. However, lingering tensions between the two ethnic groups are still evident in students' attitudes and every day practices, who are divided along ethnic lines within and beyond the classroom.

The emergence of comrade culture—dirty student politics— at UoSJP has been a notable outcome of its political past. In political science, comrade is associated with left-wing political orientation. However, it has a rather different manifestation and inflection in the context of UoSJP. Historically, the 'comrades' of JSKM and their political activities were widely supported by Sindhi students in 1990s, as these comrades were fighting against the military regime and resisting MQM. However, a new generation of comrades indulged in unethical, even criminal activities due to their strength and authority (Butt 2011; Paracha 2010).

Over time, other well-known political parties introduced their student equivalents at UoSJP, and the student members of these political parties similarly adopted the 'dirty politics' of existing comrades. The focus of comrades and student politics at UoSJP has therefore become centred on opportunism and the pursuit of power. Notably, this form of student politics has had an impact on teaching and learning at the university. For example, one of the student participants in my study (SM4) was a former member of one of the student parties. Before joining the Institute of English Literature and Linguistics (IELL), this student had studied at the Faculty of Pharmacy for two years, where he became deeply involved in political activities. For him, being a comrade meant adopting an identity which gave him power, prestige and access. In the following comment, SM4 outlines some of the reasons students are motivated to get involved with politics at university:

[...] the reasons of this comradeship are that students have some interests. For example, they can easily get marks, and can easily move in the university. Being a comrade fulfils their all needs, like if they go to canteen nobody will ask them for money. They can live comfortably at hostels by dominating other students. Sometimes, they take extortion money from other students. If they like something they snatch it, and the other students cannot even complain because they cannot fight with them. If other students have to live and study at university, they have to submit before comrades. So these are some of the interests which make a student a comrade.

(Interview with TM4 on 27.11.10)

The agendas of political parties clash with those of the university, and unsurprisingly, these political activities result in students' poor attendance to classes. In order to maintain the party's position at the university, and their own position within the party, student members are expected to regularly march on campus, chanting loud (usually discriminatory) slogans, brandishing their weapons, and occasionally firing these weapons into the air. Additionally, comrades frequently boycott students' university education, forcibly preventing students from attending classes, stopping buses from entering the campus, and damaging university property. Evidently, these activities are highly disruptive to the teaching and learning processes at the university.

2.7. ESL programme at UoSJP

Until the end of 2006, English as second language was taught under the title of English Compulsory in the first four semesters of all BA/BSc programmes at UoSJP. The course was based on English literature including: literary essays, poems, short novels, and Shakespearean plays. As a student, I observed that teachers used literature to teach language via traditional teaching methods. For example, they mostly adopted an examination-oriented approach, focusing on topics which would be examined. The examination and assessment system itself was poor, with the same questions repeated every year, and examinations did not specifically assess any particular aspects of English language learning. This approach towards English language teaching meant that students lacked the interest and motivation to attend classes regularly, or to take part in any discussion or activities during lessons (although these rarely occurred).

Following HEC's recommendations, UoSJP adopted the new ESL programme in 2006. The ESL programme is divided into four courses: 300, 301, 400, and 401. Students take these courses in their first two years (equivalent of four semesters) of undergraduate study. These courses are taught as compulsory, but have been designated as a minor in the curriculum. Consequently, they have fewer credit points and teaching hours, with classes taught twice a week. An average of 22 classes enables the ESL courses to be taught in one semester.

The courses are based on two books - *English for Undergraduates* by D. H. Howe, T. A. Kirkpatrick and D. L. Kirkpatrick (2006) and *Oxford Practice Grammar* by John Eastwood (2006). The former book is used by teachers in the class, whereas the later one is used as practice book. The programme claims that it focuses on all aspects of the English language, namely listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. According to the recent HEC report on the Curriculum for English (2008:15-16), the specific objectives of the ESL programme are as follows: to develop students' ability to understand and use English to express ideas and opinions related to their real life experiences inside and outside the classroom; to give reasons justifying their views; to understand and use signal markers; to extract information and make notes from lectures; and to ask and answer relevant questions to seek information, and clarification. The general objectives of ESL programme include: integrating the class as a whole without any gender, race or ethnic bias by encouraging the communication among students of different backgrounds and giving them equal opportunity to interact in the class; boosting students' confidence by ensuring their participation in the class; and making their learning experiences enjoyable by giving them maximum opportunities for classroom interaction.

The HEC-recommended methodology to fulfil these objectives requires teachers to apply variety of techniques including guided silent reading and communication tasks. It is also recommended that teachers should adopt 'a process approach' to teach writing skills with a focus on composing, editing and revising drafts both individually and with peer and tutor support (Curriculum for English 2008:16). These recommendations mean that the advised teaching methodology is a significant departure from previous approaches to ESL higher education programmes in Pakistan.

2.8. Summary

The new ESL programme introduced by the HEC aims to improve English language teaching and learning at public higher education institutions in Pakistan. It was hoped that the ESL programme would improve upon earlier courses by developing students' English language skills, and bringing diverse students together by providing them with opportunities to interact with each other and with teachers in the classroom.

UoSJP was one of the public sector universities to introduce the new ESL programme. As UoSJP attracts diverse students of different gender, ethnicity, regions and educational

backgrounds, it was expected that the new programme would benefit the university with its interactive courses. However, although the new ESL programme was introduced six years ago, it is yet to be evaluated, and this study is motivated by the need to evaluate the programme from students' perspectives. The following chapter attempts to develop a theoretical framework which facilitates data analysis so that the ESL programme's impact on students' learning experiences can be evaluated.

Chapter Three: ESL Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on ESL in higher education, and provides three important perspectives in this thesis. Firstly, it offers an insight into the different research traditions, perspectives and concepts which have been used to analyse teaching and learning in ESL in higher education. Secondly, the chapter narrates the story of my research journey to find the appropriate research perspectives to understand students' ESL learning experiences in higher education. Finally, the insights offered by the chapter support the formulation of research questions which guide this study.

The chapter begins with a discussion on the Approaches to Learning and Teaching (ALT) perspective, which has widely been used to analyse students' ESL learning experiences in higher education. My research journey began by adopting this perspective.

3.1. The Approaches to Learning and Teaching Perspective

The ALT perspective has its foundation in the qualitative research tradition of Marton and Säljö's (1976) Phenomenography, which was later used to develop quantitative questionnaires by Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) and Biggs (1987). The analysis of students' learning experiences in ESL programmes in higher education has been heavily influenced by this perspective (White 1999; Gabillon 2002; Bunts-Anderson 2004; Ming 2004; Hauck and Hurd 2005; Xiu-juan 2008; Lucas and Rojo-Laurilla 2008; Zhenhong and Zhin 2009; Noor 2010).

ALT emerged as a reaction to traditional, behaviouristic approaches to learning second languages such as B. F. Skinner's Stimulus-Response Theory and Robert Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Ashwin 2009). From a behaviouristic perspective, language is perceived as a system of *habits*, and second language learning proceeds by producing a *response* to a *stimulus* and receiving either positive or negative *reinforcement*. In other words, second language learning consists of learners imitating what they hear and developing habits in the second language by regularly practising it.

According to this view, the learners are thought to relate what they know in their first language to what they recognise in the second language. *Positive transfer* occurs as a result of similarities between the first language and second language, with habits developed in the first language easily transferring to the second language. On the other hand, *negative transfer* is

caused by differences between the first language and the second language, with errors occurring due to the use of habits developed in the first language in learning second language. The focus of teaching is therefore based on areas in which the first and second language differs, since these areas are the most challenging for learners.

This approach is known as Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado 1957), which does not pay attention to individual differences or changes that might occur in learning styles (Richardson 1987). Little effort was made to research how the process of understanding takes place, or to explain the more sophisticated and complex learning which must occur for language to be acquired. Instead, emphasis was placed on attempts to quantify behavioural responses (Wittrock 1992). Second language learning was seen as mechanistic, and attention was focused on higher cognitive processes (Cowman 1998:900).

By the late 1960s, cognitive psychology began to examine how individual learners receive and process information (Richardson 1987). In contrast to behaviourist theory, which suggests that humans react to outside conditions and stimuli, cognitive psychologists suggested that learners internalise their environment by processing information from the outside world. In the cognitive view, second language learners are thought to creatively use their skills of cognition in order to understand the second language on their own. Learners observe a pattern and construct their own rules accordingly, and then go back and change the rules if required. In this approach to second language acquisition, learners benefit from their mistakes because they are playing an active role in the second language learning process, and learning first-hand how the language works (Biggs and Telfer 1987; Dart 1998).

Phenomenography

Within cognitive psychology, Marton and Säljö (1976) strongly reacted against the behaviouristic notion of the fixity of learning with their phenomenographic approach. Marton and Booth (1997:208) have concisely defined phenomenography as ‘a change in someone’s capability for experiencing something in certain ways’. The phenomenographic view of learning developed as a reaction to earlier psychological research methods, which were seen as failing to provide insights into the way students ‘[...] experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them’ (Marton 1986:31). Consequently, the phenomenographic perspective rejects a quantitative view of

learning as too ‘detached’ (Entwistle 1984:13). Learners and learning are instead seen from a qualitative view, and likened to changing individual perspectives about the world or a *second order perspective* (Case 2000). This is differentiated from most perspectives used in traditional research, which are based in the perspective of the researchers.

Phenomenography focuses on learners’ experiences of phenomena (learning) in higher education. Three dimensions of learners’ experiences are emphasised in phenomenography: learners’ conceptions about learning, learners’ motivation, and learners’ approaches to learning. These three dimensions, when positive, should be related to optimum learning outcomes (Marton and Säljö 1976, 1984). The phenomenographic research of Marton and Säljö (1976) also introduced the distinction between *deep* and *surface approaches to learning*, and Pask (1976) identified *holistic* and *serialist learning strategies*.

These concepts came from naturalistic experiments using phenomenography, in which students were required to learn complex material under controlled conditions. For example, in Marton and Säljö’s study, learners were asked to read an academic article and answer questions about it afterwards. These instructions left the specific demands of the task somewhat ambiguous. The learners’ descriptions of how they went about studying suggested differences in *levels of processing*. However, the deep learning process was found to be associated with an *intention* — to understand— while surface learning was accompanied by an intention to reproduce. The coexistence of intention and process suggested that the categories might better be described as *approaches to learning* (Marton and Säljö 1976), and implied differing ways of interpreting the requirements of the task as it was presented within a specific learning context.

A number of studies have used phenomenography as a theoretical framework to understand different dimensions of ESL teaching and learning in a diverse range of contexts. For example, Gabillon (2002) used the phenomenographic approach to understand French students’ beliefs regarding second language and its impact on their learning experiences. White (1999) similarly used phenomenography to understand the expectations, shifts in expectations and emergent beliefs of Japanese and Spanish students who were learning ESL using a self-instructed distance programme. Zhenhong and Zhin (2009) used the phenomenographic approach to investigate the learners’ conception of online ESL education

in higher education in China, while Noor (2010) adopted this approach to explore the reading approaches of ESL learners' reading an academic expository text at University of Kebangsaan Malaysia. Bunts-Anderson (2004) also used a phenomenographic approach to understand ESL teachers teaching conceptions and to understand how teachers' conceptions effect the teaching-learning interactions in the classroom.

Phenomenographic investigation importantly moves away from the assumption that students' learning is a stable personality characteristic. Additionally, the studies described above all emphasise the choices made by students in selecting approaches to their learning task, and indicated that the way in which students learn is a result of their interpretation of the learning context. The basic principle behind phenomenographic research is therefore that

...learning should be seen as a qualitative change in a person's way of seeing, experiencing, understanding, conceptualising something in the real world

(Marton and Ramsden 1988:271).

Learning approaches adopted by students can be taken as an indicator of whether or not meaningful learning has occurred (Kember *et al.* 1997). Although phenomenographic research is more descriptive than prescriptive, the research approach and its findings have shown that the learning approaches the learners adopt are related to their perception of different variables that constitute an educational programme (Ramsden 1992; Watkins 2001).

Limitations of Phenomenography

Marton (1994) has further defined phenomenography as an

...empirical study of the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which various phenomena in, and aspects of, the world around us are experienced, conceptualised, understood, perceived and apprehended. [...] These differing experiences, understandings, and so forth are characterised in terms of categories of description, logically related to each other, and forming hierarchies in relation to given criteria. Such an ordered set of categories of description is called the outcome space of the phenomenon or concept in question

(Marton 1994:424).

The product of phenomenographic research is therefore a set of descriptive categories whereby understandings of a particular concept, event, and so on, are logically and hierarchically linked in order to establish a typology. In other words, the goal of phenomenographic research is to achieve an *outcome space* that contains all

conceptualisations of a relevant concept in a structured format. Greasley and Ashworth (2007) have criticised the contradictions inherent in phenomenography. On the one hand, researchers recognise the need to focus on the students' experiences reflected on and discussed by the students themselves; on the other hand, the outcome space is the researchers' construction; the researchers understand students' accounts of their learning as falling into a number of categories (deep/surface), which few (if any) students would devise themselves.

Moreover, Ashworth and Lucas (2000) and Richardson (2000) point out the lack of detail available on the actual, engaged process of phenomenographic research. They argue that, while there is considerable literature on the outcome of phenomenographic research, little attention is paid to the actual process of this form of research. Entwistle (1997), who developed his works on phenomenographic findings, has expressed similar reservations.

Some qualitative research, claiming to be phenomenographic, has been conducted without the necessary rigour, either in design or analysis. One of the reasons for that, however, may be the lack of precise descriptions of what is necessarily involved in phenomenography. The practical details of the research procedures used in identifying categories were not explained sufficiently fully in the early publications to allow other researchers to ensure the quality of their own methods. And still the path from interviews through inference to categories can be difficult to follow, leaving the findings unconvincing. It is thus quite a challenge for researchers coming fresh to the field to see, and utilise effectively, the crucial strengths of the approach

(Entwistle 1997: 128).

Development of Phenomenographic findings via Quantitative Learning Inventories

Following the phenomenographic research carried out by Marton and Säljö (1976) and Pask (1976), Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) and Biggs (1987) adopted a quantitative approach to their studies, and introduced learning inventories in order to assess distinctions between different learning approaches. The main function of these inventories is to operationalize the various constructs which have emerged from qualitative insights from phenomenography, and to generate quantitative scores on specific dimensions or scales which can show the different aspects of learning (Richardson 2000; Coffield *et al.* 2004).

Biggs' (1987) *Study Processes Questionnaire (SPQ)*, which was later revised and became known as the *Revised Two-factor Study Processes Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F)* (Biggs *et al.* 2001), is an example of these inventories. Entwistle and Ramsden's (1983) *Approaches to Studying Inventory (ASI)* is another, and these inventories, particularly Biggs' SPQ and R-

SPQ-2F, have been used in various contexts with students of different nationalities, including Pakistani students (Siddiqui 2006).

In the context of ESL, a number of researchers have used these learning inventories to analyse students' learning approaches to different dimensions of ESL. For example, Xiu-juan (2008) used Biggs' R-SPQ-2F to explore the influence of project-based learning on the deep approach of learning among ESL learners. Likewise, Lucas and Rojo-Laurilla (2008) used R-SPQ-2F to explore Filipino college freshmen's approaches to learning in relation to a lack of motivation in learning ESL and related experiences in using English outside the language classroom. Ming (2004) used Entwistle and Ramsden's ASI to understand Malaysian students' motivation to learn ESL in the institutions of higher education.

The research carried out using these quantitative learning inventories focuses on students' perceptions of different variables, such as: teaching, assessment, workload, time to study, clarity and aims of syllabus/task, work space, learning resources, and interaction with peers and teachers. The findings conclude that students' perceptions of these variables significantly influence their learning experiences (Ramsden 1987, 1984, 1979; Beattie *et al.* 1997; Witkins and Biggs 2001; Entwistle *et al.* 2002; Matthews 2003). The findings further suggest that, when students perceive these variables positively, they are more likely to attempt to develop an understanding of course material (deep approach to learning) rather than simply reproducing knowledge for the sake of assessment (a surface approach to learning).

It is worth noting that the ALT perspective— and specifically the phenomenographic approach— has emerged in response to earlier psychological methods of research, which did not provide insights into how students 'experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in the world around them' (Marton 1986:31). From the ALT perspective, importance is placed on the students (the agents), and the ways in which they process or change knowledge.

The present study initially began by adopting an ALT perspective, in which the focus was to explore students' learning experiences in the ESL programme by analysing their learning approaches. One of the motivating factors for adopting this perspective was the value placed upon ALT in higher education research, and the fact that researchers studying ESL contexts had found this approach particularly useful (e.g. Ming 2004; Xiu-juan 2008; Lucas and Rojo-

Laurilla 2008). However, it is important to consider the limitations of the ALT perspective. Although this approach places an emphasis on students' perceptions, it does not move beyond these insights to consider the ways in which students' perspectives, perceptions, conceptualisation and comprehension of different variables in educational settings are also structured and shaped by contextual factors.

An important critique of ALT is therefore based on its removal of the individual learner from his/her rich, complex and multiple contexts (Mann 2001; Haggis 2003; Case 2008; Ashwin 2009). The learner is instead constructed as passively shaped by past experience, and passively amenable to reconstruction as a deep learner through a new set of moulding processes which occur within the university: the learner, according to ALT, is 'a human being without agency' (Haggis 2003:95). There is little acknowledgement that learners are also people who may have any number of reasons to reject institutional agendas. Learners may be resistant or unable to engage with assumptions of higher education, for example due to a sense of alienation (Mann 2001), perceived risk or personal cost, or conflicting philosophical or cultural perspectives (Case 2008).

In the new higher education, the learner may be a person who is experiencing tremendous difficulty in the face of unexplained norms and values; he or she may not know, for example, that facts are seen by many lecturers as the vehicle for the more abstract forms of conceptualisation that are expected, but not modelled or defined. In addition, he or she may be exhausted from part-time work or parenting, distracted by family or financial problems, or lacking the fundamental confidence, self-esteem or health to engage in the ways that are assumed to be both desirable and possible

(Haggis 2003:96).

However, in spite of its many limitations, one of the main contributions of the ALT perspective, particularly phenomenographic research, it foregrounds the concept of variability in learning a second language. Unlike the past behaviouristic approaches to ESL learners, which perceive ESL learning as a mechanically fixed process, ALT and phenomenography foreground ESL learners as individuals who have multiple ways of constructing their understanding of ESL and approaches to their learning.

This study therefore draws this important notion of variability from the ALT perspective. However, ALT is not adopted as a theoretical framework in its entirety for two main reasons. Firstly, the quantitative learning inventories approach conflicts with my interpretivist epistemological stance and qualitative methodological orientation. As the quantitative

learning inventories approach is based on questionnaires, there is little or no room for individual interpretation. The aim of the present study is to gain a holistic account of students' experiences from their perspective and within their context, which cannot be done using questionnaires alone. Mitchell (1994) and Richardson (2000) have also questioned the psychometric validity of questionnaires such as Bigg's SPQ, R-SPQ-2F, and some versions of the Entwistle's ASI. More importantly, Mitchell (1994) raises the issue that survey instruments do not actually measure conceptions, but instead only measure the way in which students respond to questionnaires: 'they are not sampling learners' behaviour, but learners' impressions' (p. 8). Although Interpretivists place an important emphasis on learners' impressions, learning inventories are not primarily intended to offer an insight into this.

Similarly, the phenomenographic research approach aims to reveal students' relationship with, or experiences of, different phenomena in an educational setting. The different ways in which phenomena under investigation are experienced or understood are highlighted by this perspective, while social and contextual issues are relegated to the background. Using this approach, I may gain insights into the different variables that interact to create learning experiences in ESL. However, I may risk losing sight of the bigger picture, or the social and contextual factors which shape these variables and students' learning experiences.

To address this issue, and to understand students' learning experiences in the ESL programme from a structure and agent perspective, I sought a theoretical framework that would incorporate the theory of variability from ALT into a more context-specific approach. In order to do this, I adopted *Activity Theory* as a sensitising theory that would sharpen my understanding that individuals practice their agency, but not in context of their own making. Activity theory accepts students' learning variability, and facilitates the analysis of their learning experiences from their perspectives, and in their own context. The following section briefly introduces Engeström's (1987) Activity theory. After this, I discuss recent studies which have used Activity theory in order to understand teaching and learning in educational programmes in general, and ESL programmes in particular. Finally, the theory's relevance as an important step in finalising the theoretical framework to understand students' learning experiences in the current study is discussed.

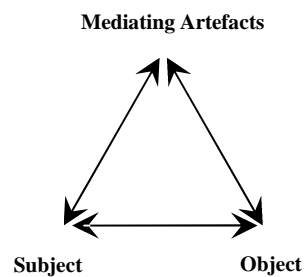
3.2. Activity Theory

Activity theory was developed from the work of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky's triangular model of 'a complex, mediated act' (Vygotsky 1978:40) was fundamental in illustrating the relationship between the human agent and objects of their environment, as mediated by cultural means, tools and signs. As the model in Figure 3 depicts, the mediation process is two-way (represented by two-sided arrows); human beings actively shape the forces which are active in shaping them, and this process

...lies at the heart of the many attempts to develop our understanding of the possibilities for interventions in processes of human learning and development

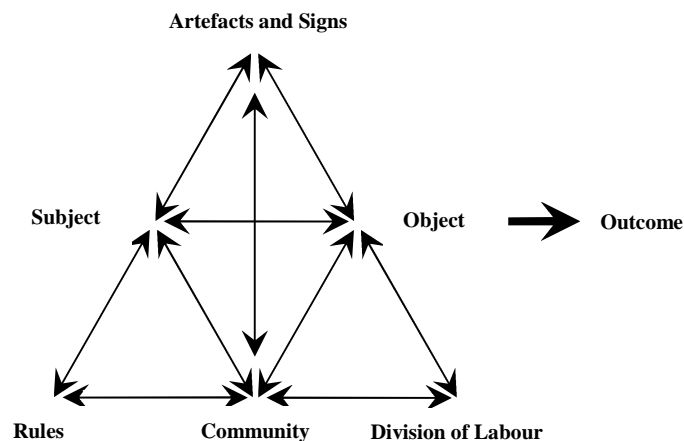
(Daniels 2004:121).

Figure 3. Vygotsky's triangular model of a complex, mediated act



Leont'ev (1981) developed a second generation of Vygotsky's model, which distinguished between individual action and collective activity. Leont'ev viewed the activity system as incorporating three hierarchical processes, driven by different individual or communal motives. These ideas were further developed by Engeström (1987), illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Engeström's model of activity system



(Source: Engeström 1987:78)

Within the Activity theory approach, learning and other human activities are understood as integrated into a larger system, or an activity. An activity is a theoretical entity, discerned, described and used by the researchers to consider the socially-based nature of human activity. The interacting constituents of an activity continuously develop into new forms which together create an activity. Used in this way, Activity theory serves as a clarifying and descriptive tool rather than a strongly predictive theory (Nardi 1996), and does not prescribe any particular way of understanding learning or a fixed ontology (Berglund 2002, 2004; Havnes 2002).

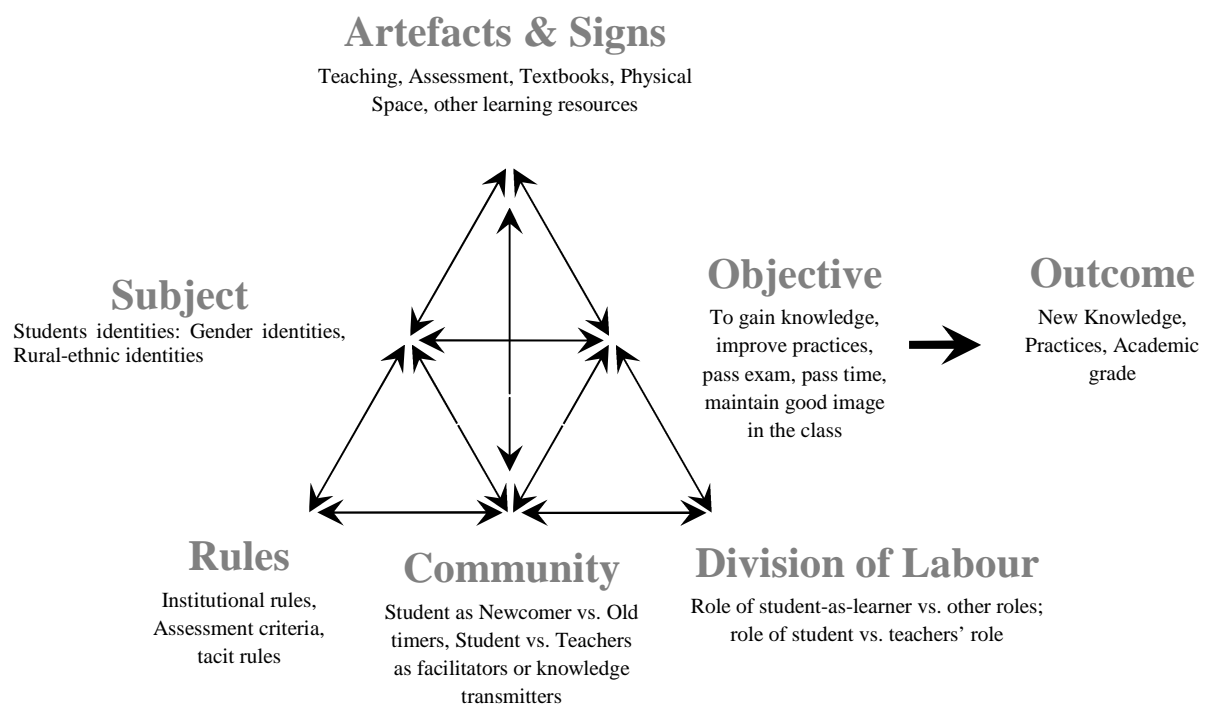
A number of researchers have used Activity theory in order to understand ESL teaching and learning in different contexts, and a review of the literature suggests it proved useful as a theoretical approach. For example, using the written protocols of ESL learners, Roebuck (2000) used Activity theory to analyse the ways in which students carrying out written tasks in groups. Phillips (2006) used Activity theory to understand the impact of his teaching of ESL in an examination of Webquests. Based on the responses of four students, he found the theoretical framework of Activity theory helpful in order to understand his own teaching practices, new ways to design or redesign the course, and ways to encourage collaborative learning among students. Likewise, McCafferty (2002) used Activity theory to demonstrate how gestures enable the language learner and teacher to facilitate communication, and to utilize elements of the setting and each other in order to transform their interactions. These transformations included the invention of new tools and practices, new problem-solving activities and the establishment of new social groundings.

Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) have also used Activity theory to document the way in which learning strategies of different language learners are largely determined by their histories, which in turn influence their motives and goals for language learning. They argued that teachers cannot assume that all learners are there for the same reasons, and that learning is about mediated participation within a community of learners. This mediation fundamentally involves the ways language learners negotiate their multiple identities between two or more languages. Based on their findings, Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) asserted that activity is a

distributed process that must take into account individual learners and the countless agencies which have an effect on individuals' lives.

Ashwin (2009) proposes the use of Activity theory as an analytical tool to analyse relations and identify contradictions within an educational programme, in order to see how these relations and contradictions support or undermine students' learning and teachers' teaching experiences. His analysis focuses on understanding the interaction of students and teachers within an educational programme from a structure-agent perspective. Ashwin (2009) maintains that generating the structure of an activity system (whether for learning or teaching) is an empirical matter, which means that the researcher must discover different variables through research and use Activity theory for further analysis. My generic model of students' learning activity in the ESL programme at UoSJP, based on preliminary findings, can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Conceptualising students' learning activity in ESL programme using Activity theory



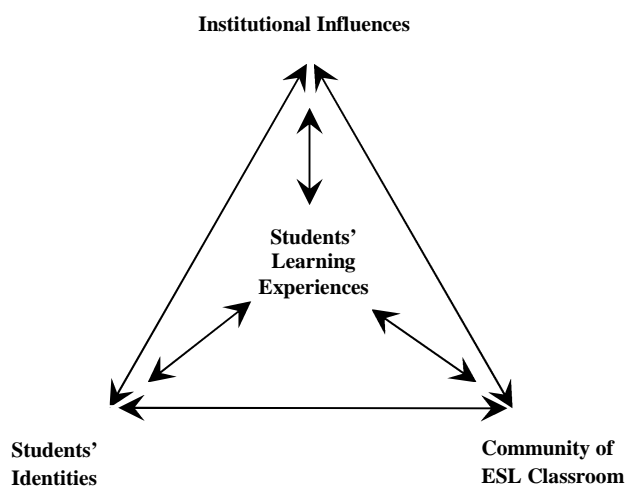
This model includes elements of Activity theory reinterpreted for my own understanding. These elements include the reinterpretation of the 'subject' as student identities; 'artefacts' as teaching, assessment, textbooks, physical space and other learning resources; the 'object' as

gaining knowledge, improving practices, passing exam, passing time, and maintaining good image in the classroom; ‘rules’ as institutional rules, assessment criteria, and tacit rules; ‘community’ as peers and teachers; and ‘division of labour’ as students as learners vs. other roles, and students as learners vs. the teachers’ role.

After placing these variables in different nodes, the initial analysis highlights the importance of the sociological constructs of identity and community. Moreover, each node of Activity theory is the product of another Activity theory (Engeström 1987), which suggests that each node in the Figure 5 is shaped by structural influences (or the institutional influences in this case). I decided to use these three concepts (identity, community and institutional influences) for further analysis. This focus was chosen largely due to the fact that it would not be possible to consider all the elements represented in Figure 5 by analysing them individually. Moreover, this individual approach to analysis would represent a return to traditional ways of analysing assessment (Genesse and Upshur 1996; O'Malley and Pierce 1996; Brown 2004), teaching (Hughes 2003; Bunts-Anderson 2004), and syllabus (Jahanbakhsh 1996).

As mentioned earlier, while the contribution of these traditional analytical approaches to assessment, teaching and syllabus are acknowledged, a structure-agency perspective is adopted in this thesis in order to examine students’ learning experiences from a sociological approach. Therefore, I focused on the notions of identity, community and institutional influences in this study (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Conceptualising students’ learning experiences using identity, community and institutional influences.



In summary, Activity theory in this study serves as one of the steps of my research journey. Like Phenomenography and Biggs' R-SPQ-2F, Activity theory helped me in developing my theoretical understandings of how students' experiences second language learning in higher education and how these experiences can be analysed. It helped me in identifying different factors that affect students' learning experiences and provided me with the options of identity, community and institutional influences as important perspectives that I decided to use in analysing students' learning experiences.

3.3. Conceptualising Identity

In the present study, the notion of identity is understood in terms of the extent to which it is shaped by structure, but also the extent to which agents can exercise choice and agency in constructing identity. Identity is also used to refer to multiple, contradictory and contested understandings of self in relation to agencies. For the purpose of this study, three categories of identities (gender, rural-ethnic and identities related to previous learning) are considered. These categories are further explained in relation to ESL in the following sections. Before this, relevant literature which has contributed to my conceptualisation of identity is reviewed in this section.

Several researchers have asserted that in almost all ESL teaching situations, teachers and researchers do not simply deal with language, or with learners and their cognitive and affective characteristics, but also take into account the relational aspects of ESL learning (Arnold 1999; Jackson 2008; Parkinson and Crouch 2011). Arnold (1999:18) argues that ESL learning and use is a transactional process, which he defines as an act of reaching out beyond the self to others. As such, it is intimately connected with learner's emotional self. The way in which individuals consider *who they are* is significantly formed by their social identity, or

...that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] membership in a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership

(Tajfeld 1978:63).

A social perspective on ESL highlights the fact that learners are not anchored to a fixed state, but are conditioned by social forces which affect their sense of self (Arnold 1999). This conceptualisation of the self begins with an assumption that there is a reciprocal relationship

between the self and society (Stryker 1980). Stets and Burke (2005:128) elaborate this concept further:

...the Self influences society through the actions of individuals thereby creating groups, organizations, networks, and institutions. And, reciprocally, society influences the self through its shared language and meanings that enable a person to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction, and reflect upon oneself as an object

Based on this understanding that the self emerges in and is reflective of society, Brewer (2001) argues that a social understanding of the self means that the society in which the self is acting must also be understood. Moreover, the idea that the self is always acting in a social context in which other selves exist must be taken into consideration.

A review of the literature suggests that the concept of self and identity has been adopted in numerous ways in the social sciences. For example, according to the traditional symbolic interactionist perspective, known as the *situational approach* to self and society, society is viewed as constantly in the process of being created through the interpretations and definitions of actors in particular situations (Blumer 1969). Individuals identify the factors which need to be considered for themselves, act on the basis of these identifications, and attempt to fit their lines of action with others in particular situations to accomplish their goals. From this perspective, it is assumed that individuals can freely define situations, which means that society is always thought to be in a state of flux with no real organization or structure (Stets and Burke 2005:129). By contrast, the *structural approach* does not see society as tentatively shaped (Stryker 1980), but assumes that society is stable and durable, as reflected in the 'patterned regularities that characterize most human action' (Stryker 1980: 65). These contradictory approaches nevertheless share the notion that identity is embedded in social interactions; while the former perspective overemphasises individual agency, the latter questions individuals' capacity to make choices.

There are researchers who suggest a third way, acknowledging the deterministic features of structure but also leaving room for individual choice. For example, Giddens (1991) has suggested that even in the most extreme life conditions, space for individual choice remains. Cultural anthropologist Mathews (in Block 2007: 865) has similarly argued that identities are not innate personality traits, but assumed and worked out by individuals. Identities are constructed in a 'cultural supermarket', which is not free from social constraints, and individuals face these constraints in different ways.

There are social structures within which individuals exist (be these state governments, peer groups, or educational systems) that limit the availability of choice to individuals. [...] there are individuals living within social structures that do not allow them to make as many choices (e.g., societies where the roles of men and women are circumscribed by tradition)

(Mathews, in Block 2007:865).

Giddens' (1991) and Mathews' contribution to this discussion is that although identity is conditioned by social interaction and social structures, it simultaneously conditions social interaction and social structures. In short, it is constitutive of and constituted by the social environment. These authors reject the notion that structure can fully determine behaviour and thought, but at the same time, they do not portray identity as simply a matter of individual agency.

Individuals do not carve out an identity from the inside out or from the outside in, as it were; rather, their environments impose constraints whilst they act on those environments, continuously altering and recreating them

(Block 2007:866).

This approach to self has given various dimensions to the concept of identity; as multiple, complex, conflicting, and relational. Stets and Burke (2005:134) define these dimensions of identity in following terms:

- i. *Identity is multiple*: As the self emerges in social interaction within the context of a complex, organized and differentiated society, it has been argued that the self must also be complex, organized and differentiated, in line with the idea that *self reflects society* (Stryker 1980). This idea is rooted in James' (1980) notion that there are as many different selves as there are different positions in society, and so different groups who respond to the self. This is where identity enters into the notion of the *overall self*. The overall self is organized into multiple parts (identities), each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure. One has an identity, an 'internalized positional designation' (Stryker 1980:60), for each of the different positions or role relationships one holds in society. Therefore, the self as son is an identity, as is the self as colleague, friend, and any of the other numerous possibilities corresponding to the various roles one may play. These identities can be the meanings one has as a group member, as a role-holder, or as a person.
- ii. *Multiple identities (conflict and enhancement)*: Individuals' multiple identities can create the basis for internal and social struggle over which is their true identity. Multiple

identities within an individual can therefore conflict with each other, or experienced as being in tension and opposition to each other (Benet-Martinez et al. 2002; Settles 2004; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005). The theoretical developments relating to identity have converged around two main ways in which people experience multiple identities: (1) conflicting identities, in which identities oppose and compete with each other (Goode 1960; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005), and (2) enhancing identities, in which identities facilitate and complement each other (Thoits 1983; Brook et al. 2008).

A number of researchers have demonstrated the conflicts of multiple identities in different ways. For example, Verkuyten and Pouliasi (2006) found that immigrants experience a conflict between their ethnic and national identities. Similarly, Settles (2004) discovered that people experience conflict between role identities (e.g. work and family) when they feel they cannot meet multiple role requirements in terms of time, behaviour and/or resources. A number of studies have also explored the concept of *identity enhancement* (Edwards and Rothbard 2000; Ruderman et al. 2002). For example, Ruderman et al (2002) found positive interdependencies between work and family identities for professional women, noting that these identities can enable them to be both better professionals and better parents. For Edwards and Rothbard (2000), identity enhancement includes situations in which an individual finds that his/her identities are in agreement or complement with one another. Identity enhancement therefore arises when an individual feels his/her identities are complementary or synergistic, and allow him/her to fulfil diverse identity-based expectations.

- iii. *Identity is relational*: The majority of interactions take place between individuals who occupy positions (statuses) in groups or organizations in society. Interaction therefore does not take place between *whole* people, but between aspects of themselves in relation to their roles and memberships to particular groups or organisations – or between particular identities. When talking to his/her partner, an individual will adopt their spouse identity; when talking to his/her students, an individual will adopt their teacher identity. The assumption underlying these examples is that any identity is always related to a corresponding counter-identity (Stets and Burke 2005)

Based on this assumption, claiming an identity in an interaction also entails an alternative identity being claimed in response. The teacher identity is therefore played out in relation

to the student identity, and so on. In each of these cases, certain topics are more or less likely to be discussed depending on their relevance to the identity being adopted in a given situation. There are also various styles of interaction which are more or less appropriate in different situations for different identities; these modalities are usually easily negotiated and with little reflection.

Identity clearly exists in many forms, reflecting many ways in which people connect to other groups and social categories, e.g. age, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity and so on (Deaux 2001; Block 2007). Research from a social practice perspective conceptualises these categories as socially determined. For example, in language and gender studies, the concept of biological sex has been challenged by poststructuralist approaches which perceive gender as multi-layered, graded and grounded in social interaction and activity (Cameron and Kulic 2003; Cameron 2005). Deaux (2001) argues that it is unhelpful to view gender as a single social category. Instead, the concept of *gendered identities* recognizes the multiple identities which may be influenced by one's gender. Occupations (e.g. nurse, teacher, student) and relationships (e.g. wife, sister, mother) often have gendered implications; similarly, an individual's identity as a woman may differ radically depending on whether she views herself as a feminist (political identity) or as a more traditional woman.

Adopting the notion of gendered identities therefore enables an acknowledgement of the idea that multiple identities are shaped by gender, and that social identities can intersect and overlap with one another. This concept is known as *intersectionality*, and discussions have often focused on the intersections of race and gender, exploring what it means, for example, to be a black female as opposed to being a black male or a white female. Deaux (2001) argues that gender does not necessarily carry the same meanings for members of different ethnic groups. Similarly, ethnicity may be experienced differently for women as compared to men. However, advocates of intersectionality also suggest that it is not possible to clearly distinguish between experiences related to race and those related to gender. These identities are instead viewed as inextricably bound together in individuals' lives.

As discussed earlier, this study focuses on three categories of identity: gender, rural-ethnic and identities related to previous learning. These categories are conceptualised in relation to language and identity in the following sections.

3.3.1. Gender identities

In their comprehensive review on gender and language, Pavlenka and Piller (2008) highlight various studies which have linked gender with different aspects of second language teaching and learning. They argue that the earlier research of Lakoff (1975), Thorne and Henley (1975), and Maltz and Borker (1982) conceptualised language and gender according to notions of *difference*, *dominance* and *deficit*. *Difference* views women-as-a-group and men-as-a-group as speakers of difference *genderlects*, developed through socialization in same-gender peer-groups, while *dominance* views women-as-a-group as linguistically oppressed and dominated by men-as-a-group. Meanwhile, *deficit* refers to the phenomenon by which women were seen as inferior language users and oftentimes as the muted group who speaks a powerless language.

However, these notions have been criticised by postmodernists such as Cameron (1992) and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) for their essentialist assumptions about men and women as homogeneous categories, their lack of attention to the role of context and power relations, and their insensitivity to the ethnic, racial, social and cultural diversity which mediates gendered behaviours, performances and outcomes in educational contexts (Pavlenka and Piller 2008:58). Cameron (1992, 2005) and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) conceptualise identity as a socially constructed and vibrant system of power relations and varied practices, rather than as inherent property of particular individuals, which, according to Pavlenka and Piller (2008:58), means that

...women and men are no longer seen as uniform natural categories where all members have common behavioural traits. Rather, these labels function as discursive categories imposed by society on individuals through a variety of gendering practices and accompanying ideologies about normative ways of being men and women. It is these practices and ways in which individuals adopt or resist them

Following this approach, gender is further categorized according to age, race, class, and sexuality in order to understand how particular groups of people are privileged or marginalized (Cameron 2005).

A number of studies have adopted this approach in order to understand the connections between gender and different aspects of second language teaching and learning. Several studies have revealed how gender practices mediate immigrants' access to educational and interactional opportunities (Warriner 2004; Kouritzin 2000; Goldstein 1995 Peirce 2000;

Peirce *et al.* 1993). *Gatekeeping practices* (including lack of day care for children, inconvenient locations, no driving skills/permission to drive, inconvenient timings of the classes, interaction with opposite sex) were the commonly cited factors which hindered or prevented women's participation in second language classes. For example, Goldstein (1995) found that these gatekeeping practices prevent young women from being in the same classroom as men; Kouritzin (2000) argued that some immigrant communities require family care be given exclusively by female members; and Peirce *et al.* (1993) discovered that some women could not go to ESL classes because their husbands did not want their wives to become more educated than themselves.

Other studies have attempted to understand how gender ideologies and practices shape female learners' desires, investment and actions in terms of second language learning. For example, Sunderland's (2000) findings suggest that in some contexts, female learners were more inclined to study second language than male learners, and outperformed them, while Kobayashi's (2002) study suggested that marginalized young Japanese women are more interested than men in studying second languages in order to increase their limited choice of employment opportunities. These women see second language learning as means of empowerment, and as a means of taking adopting a critical perspective on their lives and society.

Some studies focus on understanding how gender shapes interactions in the classroom, seeking to identify those participants who speak out in class, those who remain silent, and explanatory factors behind these differing behaviours. For example, Miller (2003) suggests that female learners from ethnic or racial minorities are most likely to be rendered invisible or inaudible within the classroom. In his study of immigrant students in an Australian school, Miller (2003) found that blonde, fair-skinned Bosnian girls were easily accepted by the teachers and peers, and perceived as competent speakers of English. By contrast, Chinese girls who had enrolled at the same time were often excluded from social interactions and positioned as incompetent.

Julé (2004) has also highlighted the importance of teachers' assumptions about learners from different cultures. In her study of a Canadian classroom, she found that a middle-class white female Canadian teacher firmly believed that Punjabi culture placed female students in particular at a disadvantage, and that these students had to be 'saved' from this. These studies

highlight the fact that in some contexts, female students are ignored or marginalised in the classroom interactions not simply as a result of their gender, but also due to their race, ethnicity, or their membership of a minority group.

Several studies have explored how gender has been represented in second language programmes (Siegal and Okamoto 1996; Poulou 1997; Rifkin 1998; Shardakova and Pavlenko 2004). Language textbook stereotypes which place men in the public domain and women in the home continued well into 1980s; the situation improved in most Western countries in the 1990s, with the development of non-sexist guidelines for educational materials. However, recent reviews of ESL and EFL texts published around world reveal that many foreign and second language textbooks continue to reproduce gender biases (Pavlenka and Piller 2008:64).

To summarize, gender identities can be viewed as socially constructed, as society imposes specific gendered practices relating to being a man or being a woman. All over the world, these gendered practices discriminate against certain groups, and limit their access to (among other things) education and employment. Within the context of ESL teaching and learning, gender discrimination may be evident in gender representation in textbooks, and/or in women's limited ability to participate in activities within and beyond the classroom. As discussed above, gender ideologies drive women's desire to learn ESL, in order to increase their employment opportunities and to empower them.

These factors indicate the importance of gender-related issues in the ESL teaching and learning process to the current study. They also suggest that course designers and policy makers alike should bear gender-related issues in mind while new syllabi, teaching approaches and broader policies are being developed. Similarly, the factors explored in this section suggest that researchers and evaluators should consider gender as a key variable in understanding learners' experiences and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of any ESL programme.

3.3.2. Rural-ethnic identities

Arnold et al (2007) maintain that a key obstacle to developing policy for rural schools is the definition of 'rural' itself. It has been defined in reference to a set of characteristics, including lower socioeconomic status, lower educational levels, higher proportions of indigenous

people, specific occupational health and safety risks, a relatively close relationship with nature, specific cultural attitudes, poor access to services and smaller population centres. Waldorf (2007) argues that being *rural* as opposed to *urban* is an attribute easily attached to individuals who have limited access to resources, of lower economic status, and who are poorly educated.

A number of studies link the concept of rurality with identity. These studies have used different dimensions, including discourses of *rurality* to construct new rural identities (Halfacree et al. 2002; Svendsen 2002; Svendsen 2004), gender and rural identity (Shorthall and Byrne 2009), and cultural heritage and rural identities (Ching and Creed 1997). The notion of rurality has been used differently in all of these studies. In fact, these studies suggest that rurality is a context-specific notion, which has different meanings to agents in various contexts. Similarly, rural identities constructed in various contexts have different connotations for agents as well. For example, in Denmark, villages in rural areas have been seen as places where ideal societies can be established, and rural people feel proud of their rural identities (Svendsen 2004). Likewise, Shorthall and Byrne (2009) characterise rural Ireland as a context in which women have greater power and authority than elsewhere.

However, in the context of Pakistan (and particularly in the Sindh), rurality and village life are associated with poverty (Baulch 2002), poor education (Sawada and Lokshin 1999; The Daily Observer 2009), and a lack of facilities and resources (Freeman 1982). More importantly, rurality is characterised by the class divisions of the feudal landlord vs. the agricultural labourers (Naimullah 2003). The feudal system has prevailed in the Sindh for centuries (Herring 1979), and has two key characteristics. Firstly, agricultural labourers bind themselves to Zamidars (feudal lords) in order to receive a loan for a limited period; until that period is complete (and often even beyond this), these labourers are treated as bonded serfs. Secondly, Zamidars block any external interventions which could improve the labourers' quality of life, or help them to escape or challenge the Zamidars' authority. The education system in the province is the most notable victim of this, as the Zamidars have blocked any attempts to improve the quality of education provision in the rural villages of the Sindh (Qazi 2004). Being rural in the Sindh is therefore characterised by a low socio-economic status, being poorly educated, oppressed and lacking confidence.

Rurality in the Sindh is also tied to ethnicity. Most of the rural villages of Sindh are populated by Sindhis (Census 1998), and there are very few multi-ethnic villages as geographic communities usually share the same language (Tropman et al. 2000). These aspects of rurality in the Sindh are all highly pertinent to the current study; as they not only highlight factors which may motivate students to access higher education and study English, but may also negatively affect their participation in the classroom (see Chapter 7.2 for details).

3.3.3. Previous learning experiences and identities

Different disciplines require students to adopt different learning approaches (Becher 1994), and with these learning approaches, students develop specific learning experiences (Middendorf and Pace 2004). Students' identities as learners are said to become consolidated over time within specific disciplinary settings of a field of knowledge (Ashwin 2009); it is therefore unsurprising if they under-perform in activities and exercises within a new field of knowledge. In the present study, there is a focus on students' comprehension of graphs, charts, diagrams and maps (hereafter 'graphs' will be used to refer to all of these terms), and I will argue that students in this study under-perform in graph comprehension activities due to their previous learning experiences and fields of knowledge. For example, when students interact with graph comprehension activities in ESL textbooks, students construct identities based on their previous fields of knowledge (e.g. medicine or engineering), which may hinder their learning abilities. This section reviews literature on graph comprehension on ESL programmes in relation to learners' previous learning experiences, their identities in relation to different disciplines, and the ways in which these two areas are relevant to this study.

Research into the use of graphs in ESL has emerged relatively recently (Katz et al. 2004; Xi 2005; Yu et al 2007). These studies have stressed the important relationship between graph comprehension and learner characteristics, such as learners' field of knowledge (e.g. whether they have studied sciences or arts), and their previous graphic knowledge (whether they have studied in fields of knowledge such as mathematics, statistics and commerce, which promote the use of graphs). Several models of graph comprehension have been proposed in the field of cognitive psychology (e.g. Kintsch 1988; Carpenter and Shah 1998; Freedman and Shah 2002; Peebles and Cheng 2003; Shah et al. 2005), and these models have been used by many second language researchers to analyse learners' graph comprehension.

For example, in their study of graph comprehension in the International English Language Testing System's (IELTS) academic writing task, Yu et al (2007) use Carpenter and Shah's (1998) Knowledge-Based model. According to this model, graph comprehension is influenced not only by the display characteristics of a graph (Lewandowsky and Spence 1989; Shah and Carpenter 1995; Shah et al. 1999), but also by the learner's field of knowledge (Curcio 1987), graphical literacy skills, explanatory and other scientific reasoning skills e.g. spatial reasoning (Feeney et al. 2004; Trickett and Trafton 2006; Stewart et al. 2008). This emphasis on learner characteristics in graph comprehension is also supported by empirical evidence. For example, Carpenter and Shah (1998:97) noted that

...individual differences in graphic knowledge should play as large a role in the comprehension process as does variation in the properties of the graph itself.

Similarly, Friel et al (2001) found learner characteristics, including prior knowledge or bias of the graphic information, as a crucial factor affecting graph comprehension. Xi (2005) also found that learners' previous familiarity with graphs affected their oral reproduction of graphical information. Finally, Aberg et al (2006) found that learners' graphic knowledge had the strongest correlation with strong mathematics / science achievements.

All these studies emphasise that learners' graph comprehension is significantly influenced by their previous learning experiences and their field of knowledge. Ashwin (2009) argues that students develop these learning experiences over time within the disciplinary settings of their field of knowledge. Each field of knowledge requires a different way of learning, which subsequently exposes learners to particular knowledge patterns (Middendorf and Pace 2004). Knowledge patterns may be unique to certain fields of knowledge, and 'can impact on the development of [students] as learners' (Ashwin 2009:79).

Becher (1994) categorised the academic disciplines into four broad intellectual categories: 'hard pure', 'soft pure', 'hard applied', and 'soft applied' disciplines. Becher suggested that a hard pure discipline, such as physics or chemistry, involves a *cumulative* and *atomistic* knowledge which involves the learning of specific facts, principles, and concepts. Soft pure disciplines, such as history and anthropology, involve a *holistic* and *reiterative* knowledge, which requires learning to be focused predominantly on the understanding and interpreting of ideas, and establishing a coherent argument. Examples of hard applied disciplines include computing and engineering, and involve *purposive* and *pragmatic* knowledge. Soft applied

disciplines including education and ESL are also considered purposive and pragmatic; however, these disciplines involve the application of inferred knowledge.

However, Smith and Miller (2005) have criticised this approach, and have argued that Becher's (1994) model does not take into account the possibility that disciplines may vary along his continuum depending on the area of focus within that discipline. As Dressen-Hammouda (2007:233) has argued, the most important aspect of these debates is the idea that a learner's mastery of a particular field of knowledge is a complex process, which involves learning relevant 'discoursal' forms as well as a wide range of specialist knowledge patterns. These knowledge patterns are acquired as a student's identity is developed in relation to a particular field of knowledge. This identity is reinforced over time, and significantly affects learning experiences. For example, Ivanic (1998) argues that

...knowing how to reproduce written academic norms is not an issue of literacy as much as it is one of identity, where students struggle as writers because they are also struggling to learn the beliefs and practices of their disciplines

(in Hammouda 2007:233)

Overall, then, students are seen to develop particular learning experiences and construct identities within the disciplinary settings of a field of knowledge. Within the context of this study, students had spent two and a half years studying biology or maths as specialised subjects before joining the IELL of UoSJP. At the intermediate level (the A-level equivalent in Pakistan), students had chosen biology or maths as their major subjects in order to join medical or engineering universities respectively. This involved studying these subjects for two years at school level, and six months in private institutions in preparation for the medical or engineering university's pre-entry test. During this period, students will have inevitably developed certain learning experiences which are specific to these subjects.

In this study, it was observed that students recall their previous learning experiences while interacting with ESL exercises which are based on graph comprehension, and in these interactions, they foreground identities of being 'medical' or 'engineering' students. The focus of the current study is to understand these interactions, and the implications of these interactions for their learning experiences.

3.4. Conceptualising Community

Learners construct different identities, which are socially, culturally, politically and historically situated, within ESL classrooms. For example, ESL classrooms at UoSJP are viewed as important sites in which learners acquire English language skills in a formal or instructional setting, and in which teachers support students to gain particular linguistic and academic competencies. In order to acquire these competencies, students' participation in classroom activities is seen as essential (Morita 2004; Hirst 2007; Barnawi 2009).

Classroom participation implies that students are engaged actors on socio-cognitive planes, where cognitive and social properties are reciprocally connected and essential to solve given problems. Socio-cognitive interactions are inevitably more complicated in a classroom made up of linguistically and culturally diverse students (Hirst 2007). Morita (2004: 573) points out that 'understanding how these students participate in their new academic communities and acquire academic discourses in their second language has become critical'. The crucial importance of acquiring academic discourses on ESL programmes requires in-depth analysis; however, for this analysis to take place, the notion of community within an ESL classroom must first be conceptualised.

The notion of community, as with the concept of identity, has been defined in many different ways; however, early conceptualisations of community were predominantly structuralist. For example, Ferdinand Tönnies, a German sociologist, defined community as *Gemeinschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* is a social configuration in which individuals are as oriented to the wider association as they are to their own self-interest. Individuals are regulated by common beliefs about appropriate behaviour, the responsibility of members of the association to each other, and to the association at large. Associations are therefore marked by a *unity of will* (Haris 2001). Moreover, *Gemeinschaft* community involves ascribed status, i.e., individuals are given a status by birth. For example, the child of a farmer will assume their parent's status until death.

Reacting against this structuralist conceptualisation of community, a number of researchers (including Cohen 2001) developed an approach which views individuals as symbolically constructing communities. Lave and Wenger (1991) are also among the cognitive anthropologists who developed Community of Practice (CoP), an approach which considers both structure and agency when conceptualising community. Like Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft*,

individuals in Lave and Wenger's CoP are oriented to the larger association as much as to their own self-interest, but unlike *Gemeinschaft*, individuals develop themselves personally and professionally through the processes of sharing information and experiences with the group.

Wenger explains CoP in the following terms:

...communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly

(cited in Toohey 2000:1).

Wenger et al (2002) maintain that CoPs exist everywhere, and people belong to them in numerous contexts, whether at work, at school, at home, or through their hobbies. Each CoP has a core where power exists, and the power of knowledge which prevails within that CoP. People become core members of some CoPs by being involved in their practices over an extended period of time, thus gaining more power. But these people may belong to other CoPs more peripherally, and often try to move towards the core in order to access power. Smith (2009) maintains that a CoP involves much more than the technical knowledge or skill associated with undertaking some task. Members are involved in sets of relationships over time, and communities develop around things which matter to people. The fact that members are organised around a particular area of knowledge and / or activity gives them a sense of joint enterprise and identity. For a CoP to function, it needs to generate and appropriate a shared repertoire of ideas, commitments and memories. It also needs to develop various resources such as tools, documents, routines, vocabulary and symbols that in some way carry the accumulated knowledge of the community (Lave and Wenger 1991).

Describing Lave and Wenger's conceptualisation of learning, Hank (1991:41) has noted that,

...rather than looking to learning as the acquisition of certain forms of knowledge, Lave and Wenger have tried to place it in social relationships — situations of co-participation. [...] Rather than asking what kind of cognitive processes and conceptual structures are involved, they ask what kinds of social engagements provide the proper context for learning to take place.

Learners are therefore not seen to acquire structures or models through which they understand the world, but rather they participate in frameworks which are structured. Learning involves participation in a CoP; in this sense, participation

refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities

(Wenger 1999:4).

A number of researchers have used CoP in the context of ESL. For example, Morita (2004) used CoP to explore socialization experiences related to academic discourse on an ESL programme in a Canadian university. The study examined the ways in which ESL learners negotiated their participation and membership in their new ESL classroom communities, and particularly in open-ended class discussions. Using a case study approach, Morita (2004) illustrated that students faced major challenges in negotiating competence, identities, and power relations, a negotiation which was required in order for students to participate and be recognized as legitimate and competent members of their ESL classroom communities. Morita (2004) also found that students attempted to shape their own learning and participation by exercising personal agency and actively negotiating their positionalities, which were locally constructed in a given classroom.

Barnawi (2009) similarly used CoP to explore Saudi students' English language learning experiences at a North American university. According to Barnawi (2009), membership in a CoP situated in an English-medium academic classroom always alters as *newcomers* (students who have no or minimal experience of attending English medium schools and have no access to the *power* associated with English language skills) interact with *old-timers* (students who have been to English-medium schools, and already have the access to the power associated with English language skills). This interaction involves language learning and socialization, whereby competency and membership are required in order to participate in the discourse community (Lave and Wenger 1991; Morita 2004). Here the process of participation— *legitimate peripheral participation*— has significant implications for the membership in the discourse community.

Wenger (2000) argues that the notions of 'peripherality' and 'legitimacy' are vital as both notions facilitate newcomers' actual participation in the classroom in order to help them move to the centre of the community, which in turns enables them to access greater power. Peripherality provides 'an opening, a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement' (Lave and Wenger 1991: 37). This idea suggests that

individuals can be members of the CoP in various ways, and their roles and positions in the community are subject to change over place and time.

Meanwhile, legitimacy affects the way in which individuals gain access to particular CoPs (Barnawi 2009). Newcomers must be given a sufficient sense of legitimacy in order to be seen as viable potential members. Wenger (1998:101) argues that

only with legitimacy can all their inevitable tumbling and violations become opportunities for learning rather than cause for dismissal, neglect, or exclusion.

Legitimacy therefore also plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process, as it facilitates access to power. The higher the level of legitimacy granted to learners in a certain classroom setting, the more they will be able to negotiate and construct their identities in the CoP (Toohey 2000).

Teachers play a vital role in the CoP, as they act as power holders and are able to grant any level of legitimacy to learners. This usually depends on the roles teachers play in the classrooms. A number of studies have been carried out in order to understand teachers' perceptions of teaching and their roles in the classrooms (e.g. Samuelowicz and Bain 1992; Prosser et al 1994; Kember and Kwan 2002). Although different classifications are used in each study, they all conceptualise teaching at a spectrum, with teaching as 'helping students develop conceptions' at one end, and teaching as 'transmitting the concept of syllabus/teachers' knowledge' at the other (Prosser *et al.* 1994: 223-25). Teachers in the former category perform the role of *facilitators* or *collaborators*, working together with students to construct new knowledge and understanding of various concepts. This approach leads in to classes which are student-centred. By contrast, teachers in the latter category perform the role of *knowledge transmitters*. This involves simply passing linguistic knowledge on to students, and it is assumed that if students learn all the vocabulary and grammar delivered by teachers, they will learn the language. This approach leads to classes which are teacher-centred; teachers are the experts, and control everything that happens.

Christiansen (2010) has used CoP to examine different pedagogic strategies that teachers use to shape students' learning experiences in higher secondary schools. She concluded that, with their different pedagogic strategies, teachers can create classroom communities of practice, in which students become practitioners of content, by investing time and passionate interest in their subject. During this time, teachers can act as facilitators, ensuring equal access and

inclusion to all students. A successful facilitator of a classroom community of practice will *scaffold*, providing explicit instruction as they model and then coach students to do activities themselves. After students begin to master basic skill sets, the role of the teacher recedes to provide mentoring and supporting choice on the part of the student. This gradually allows the student to migrate into more central, generative roles within the CoP. Providing choice and giving power are highly effective practices to motivate and engage students in the content area.

However, there are numbers of issues that significantly affect teachers' pedagogic strategies and their role as facilitator in a classroom community of practice. In her study of learner-centred education in developing countries, Schweisfurth (2011:425) argues that:

The practical barriers [in creating learner-centred education] are daunting when teacher capacity is limited, when teachers themselves have not experienced it personally, and where classroom resources are low and pupil: teacher ratios are high.

Among other issues, high ratio of student: teacher in the classroom / large class(es) is one of the most significant factor that affect teachers' pedagogic strategies and the dimension of the classroom community of practice (Bligh 1972; McKeachie 1986; MacGregor et al. 2000; Cuseo 2007). McKeachie (1986: 181) argues that

[Class] size and [teaching] method are almost inextricably intertwined. Thus, the research on class size and that on lecture vs. discussion overlap. Large classes are most likely to use lecture methods and less likely to use discussion than small classes.

Carbone and Greenberg (1998) found that students identified a lack of interaction with teachers as the factor they are least satisfied with in a large class. Teachers expressed similar frustrations; following interviews with more than 300 teachers at five different colleges in USA, Ratcliff (1992: 65) concluded that 'the sheer size of lecture classes often militated against direct interaction with most students'. Kuh et al. (1991: 362) similarly reported that, in large class settings, a 'compact of disengagement' exists between faculty members and students, conveying a mutual message: 'you leave me alone, and I will leave you alone'. Cuseo (2007: 10) suggested that in large classes,

[...] a vast majority of students in class go through the entire term without experiencing a single interactive episode with the teachers, whether it be person-to-person verbal exchange inside the classroom or a written exchange of ideas outside

the classroom [e.g., receiving written feedback from the instructor on returned exams]

Even when willing to give high level of legitimacy to students, teachers fail to do so due to their inability to interact with all students in a large class. Given that participation in the form of student-student and student-teacher interaction plays a vital role in second language learning experiences, class size therefore becomes a crucial factor in classroom community of practices (Cuseo 2007; Christiansen 2010).

The current study uses the CoP to conceptualise the ESL classroom from students' perspective. This means that the focus is on how students understand the community of ESL classroom; how they define the role of teachers in the community; how teachers' pedagogic strategies enhance or limit students' opportunities to participate, and therefore increase or decrease their legitimacy in the community; how large classes affect student-student and student-teacher interactions, and how these interactions affect students' participation and legitimacy in the community.

3.5. Institutional Influences and ESL

As observed earlier, students' learning experiences in the ESL programme are influenced by numerous variables (i.e., teaching, examination, syllabus, physical space and so on). However, these variables are not free from structural influences. In the context of the current study, *structure* refers to the *institution* (i.e. UoSJP), and *structural influences* are conceptualised as *institutional influences* on the ESL programme. These institutional influences are highlighted by analysing the position of UoSJP in the field of higher education of Pakistan, the university's policies and practices, and the impact of these policies on ESL teachers' teaching approaches, examination criteria, the physical space (i.e., the classroom) as well as other variables.

A number of studies have examined the institutional (i.e., universities and other institutes of higher education) influences on the teaching and learning in higher education in general (Barratt-Pugh 2007; Ashwin 2009) and on ESL programmes in particular (Gao 2005; Flowerdew and Miller 2008; Kelly 2010). Some studies have focussed on analysing the relationships between specific variables within the institution, and the impact of these relationships on learning and teaching. These studies refer to institutional influences as *institutional culture*. For example, Marginson (2008) discovered a link between institutional

culture and the position of institution in the field of higher education. Exploring the global field of higher education and drawing on Bourdieu (1993), Marginson divides the field of institutions of higher education along two axes. The first axis is a continuum from elite research universities to commercial vocational education, and the second axis is continuum based on the institution's focus on global or local markets.

Within the field of higher education, different institutions develop their own cultures which are strongly influenced by their positions in the field, and which highly influence the teaching and learning within these institutions. Kezar (2006) found that the *size* of a university can be an important institutional influence that greatly impacts the way in which students engage with a programme. Similarly, Gibbs and Dunbar-Goddett (2007) established a link between *assessment* and institutional culture, arguing that different approaches to assessment on different programmes are related to institutional culture. Jones et al (1999) discussed the relationship between the *use of English* and institutional culture, noting that there were few differences in the quality of English that produced in two different institutional cultures; however, the ways in which it was produced did differ.

Another relationship has been established by Crozier *et al.* (2008), between *entry requirement* for students and institutional culture. Using Bourdieu's (1990:56) notion of 'habitus', they argue that the implicit understanding of institutions influences who can be 'legitimate' students within particular programme within particular university. Henkel (2000) has discussed the relationship between *teachers' identities* and institutional culture, describing differences in her examination of academic identities in different universities. Likewise, other studies have analysed the impact of students on institutional cultures. These studies suggest that, for a number of reasons, students of different social classes tend to attend different types of higher education institutions (Ashworth 2004; Brennan and Naidoo 2008; Crozier *et al.* 2008), which also effect the institutional cultures.

Ashwin (2009) has conducted research integrating all of the above-mentioned variables, and linking it within institutional culture. Ashwin (2009) used a Bourdieusian structural approach to conceptualise the influence of macro-structure (i.e. the influence of higher education on the policies of a university; the influence of university policies on its departments; the influence of departments on the structure of the programmes offered) on the micro-structure (i.e. the interaction between students and teachers) in higher education. He suggests that using the

Bourdieuian notions of habitus, field and capital, it is possible to consider the position of different institutions in the field of higher education, and how these positions impact on their *institutional habitus*. This notion of institutional habitus was borrowed from the works of McDonough (1997) and Reay (1998). McDonough (1997) develops the concept of institutional habitus as a link between institutions and the wider socio-economic context, and it is this link which, she argues, differentiates institutional habitus from institutional culture. She argues that the formation of institutional habitus constitutes a complex mixture of agency and structure, and could be understood as the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organisation (McDonough 1997).

McDonough (1997) further claims that institutional habitus is established over time and develops its own history. It is, therefore, capable of change, but by dint of its collective nature, institutional habitus is less fluid than individual habitus (Bourdieu 1993: 78 describes it as 'a power of adaptation'). McDonough (1997) argues that institutional habitus is developed in relation to each institution's position in the field of higher education. Each institution has a form of capital (economic, cultural, and social capital, which take on different forms of symbolic capital) which are developed or maintained in the field of higher education. The ways in which institutions attempt to develop or maintain their capital inform notions of what is 'reasonable'. In her study of how schools in the United States influence their students' choice of college, McDonough (1997) argues that institutional habitus informs an institution's sense of its students expected identities, the courses they will offer, and which progression routes constitute reasonable uses of the capital developed by students.

Ashwin (2009) argues that institutional habitus can be articulated in different forms of expression, which constitute institutional settings for the development of students as learners. These forms of expression include: the selection criteria for entry to a university and onto a programme within university; the particular form of the programme offered by institutions; institutional teaching and learning quality regimes, which include the general standards of institution; teaching standards; examinations criteria; curriculum; and the quality of learning space (i.e. the size of classrooms, the quality of libraries or laboratories, etc.). All these forms of expression determine the ways in which institutions perceive the role of students. Some institutions perceive students as 'consumers' (Naidoo and Jamieson 2006), while others adopt approaches to develop 'independent learners' (Smith 2007). Ashwin (2009) argues that institutional settings do not act in a deterministic way, but instead, different students can

respond to the same institutional setting in different ways, depending on the relationship between students' identities as learners and their other personal identities.

This review indicates the importance of institutional influences on teaching and learning in higher education institutions. It suggests that an institution's position in the field of higher education plays a vital role in developing its policies and practices. These policies and practices influence the entry requirements for students to gain access to universities and on programmes within these universities; teaching approaches; examinations criteria; the use and production of language; and other aspects that affect teaching and learning in higher education. The current study therefore analyses these important influences on the policy and practice of the ESL programme, in order to thoroughly examine students' learning experiences in the ESL programme.

3.6. Summary and Research Questions

The ESL teaching and learning in higher education have been examined in various ways. Many of these ways have been based in the psychological tradition of research, known as the Approaches to Learning and Teaching (ALT) perspective. The ALT perspective is based in the phenomenographic research traditions of Marton and Säljö (1976), which was further developed by Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) and Biggs (1987) using quantitative learning inventories. A number of researchers have also used the ALT perspective in order to understand teaching and learning in the context of ESL (Goodfellow 1999; White 1999; Gabillon 2002; Ming 2004; Bunts-Anderson 2004; Carroli 2008; Xiu-juan 2008; Lucas and Rojo-Laurilla 2008; Felix 2009; Zhenhong and Zhin 2009; Noor 2010).

Initially, I intended to adopt the ALT perspective as the main theoretical framework for the present study. The ALT perspective has been importantly critiqued for its individualistic approach to understanding students' learning in ESL; nevertheless, unlike previous behaviouristic and neurological approaches to understanding ESL teaching and learning, the phenomenographic research tradition has tried to consider issues relating to context. These contextual issues are only covered to a very limited extent in phenomenographic research, but this research tradition can be credited with moving from a notion of fixity to the notion of variability in ESL learning. I therefore aimed to locate myself within this theory of variability in learning, but at the same time sought to use this notion of variability within a more context-specific understanding of ESL teaching and learning. In particular, I was interested in

understanding how certain variables impact upon ESL teaching and learning from students' perspective. I therefore needed to find a theory which could explain the different variables affecting teaching and learning in the context of ESL.

To this end, I found Engeström's (1987) Activity theory to be a sophisticated tool for the analysis of individuals' experiences of learning from their perspective and within their own context. Moreover, a number of researchers have also found Activity theory to be a useful framework for understanding ESL teaching and learning (e.g. Roebuck 2000; Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001; Gallego and Cole 2001; McCafferty 2002; Phillips 2006). I therefore used an Activity theory framework to generate a model of students' learning activity in the ESL programme by identifying different variables. This model highlighted important factors such as students' identities, the community within the ESL classroom, and institutional influences on different variables that shape students' learning experiences.

However, Activity theory does not offer conceptual insights into the notions of identity, community and institutional influences. My use of Activity theory in the current study has therefore been limited to explaining variables in students' learning experiences; it has not been adopted as an overarching theoretical framework for my thesis. In fact, it is used as one of the research steps in my research journey of finding appropriate perspectives to understanding students' learning experiences. Nevertheless, my brief interactions with Activity theory were useful in enabling me to finally decide to focus upon the use of identity, community and institutional influences for further analysis (see Figure 6). This theory also allowed me to identify variables such as gender, ethnicity, rurality, previous learning, physical space, and teachers' role.

Based on these variables, I decided to use the concept of identity in relation to students and teachers in ESL context; the concept of community to examine interactions in the field space of ESL, and the concept of institutional influences in order to understand how the policies and practice of ESL are shaped by UoSJP's position in the field of higher education. As I intended to understand students' learning experiences in the ESL programme from a structure and agent perspective, I conceptualised identity, community and institutional influences using theories, such as Symbolic Interactionism, Community of Practice, and Bourdieusian notions of habitus, field and capital, which have defined these concepts using this structure and agent perspective.

Following this approach, my overarching research question — **how do students experience learning in the ESL programme in higher education?** — is answered using the following sub-questions.

1. How do institutional influences shape teaching and learning in the ESL programme?
2. How do students interact with teachers and peers in the community of ESL classroom?
 - 2.1. How do teachers' pedagogic strategies affect teacher-student interaction in the community of ESL classroom?
 - 2.2. How does large class affect student-teacher and student-student interactions in the community of ESL classroom?
3. How do students' identities and previous learning interact with the ESL programme?
 - 3.1. How do students' gender identities interact with the ESL programme?
 - 3.2. How do students' rural-ethnic identities interact with the ESL programme?
 - 3.3. How does students' previous learning interact with the ESL programme?

Each of these questions is addressed in the findings chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7 respectively). Before the findings of the study are discussed, however, the following chapter outlines the methodology adopted in order to answer these research questions.

Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter reviews the methodological approach used in this study. The chapter starts with a discussion on the epistemological and ontological stance that informs this study. Case study as a research strategy and its link to the methodological orientation of this study is then discussed. The chapter then outlines the different data collection tools employed, the sampling strategy, the approach to data analysis, the validity and reliability, and ethical issues. Finally, the limitations of the study are considered.

4.1. Epistemological and Ontological Stance

In order to understand students' learning experiences in the ESL programme in question, it is crucial to first interrogate my own assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the world, and how, as a researcher, I express or interpret reality. This process of interrogation began with questions including 'what is knowledge?', and 'how is it acquired?'; seeking answers to these questions led to a discovery of *epistemology*. Heylighen (1993) asserts that epistemology essentially attempts to answer basic questions such as, 'what distinguishes true (adequate) knowledge from false (inadequate) knowledge?'

In the context of research, such questions translate into issues of scientific methodology: how can one develop theories or models that are better than competing theories? My primary focus in this study is not to develop a theory or model, but to select theory/ies or model/s which support a holistic account of students' learning experiences from their perspectives, and within their context. This approach can be seen in my experience of moving from ALT to Activity theory, and then to the sociological constructs of identity, community and institutional influences (as discussed in Chapter 3). The departure from ALT was influenced by the approach's detachment of the individual from his/her context; from my perspective, knowledge of students' learning experiences is inadequate when not understood within its specific context. This approach defines my epistemological position as Interpretivist, due to my underpinning assumption that

all human actions are meaningful and have to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. In order to make the sense of the social world, the researcher needs to understand the meanings that form and are formed by interactive social behaviour

(Scott and Usher 1996:18).

However, I acknowledge the fact that interactive social behaviours are also formed within social structures.

As an interpretivist, I believe that in order to understand an individual's behaviour, attempts should be made to view the world from that individual's viewpoint. However, any individual's viewpoint is inevitably shaped by their particular context. The researcher must obtain access to the individuals' context in order to interpret their reality from their point of view, and within an interpretive framework, the researcher attempts to make sense of what he/she is researching. Bryman (2008) labels this process *double hermeneutic*; through the process of social research, both the subject (the researcher) and the object (other participants in the study) of the research share the position of interpreter or sense seeker. This means that a researcher must understand how participants view their reality, but also make sense of what s/he makes out of participants' reality and how s/he defines his/her findings in the light of existing literature. As Bryman (2008:14) asserts,

...when social scientists adopt an interpretivist stance, they are not simply laying bare how members of a social group interpret the world around them. The social scientists will almost certainly be aiming to place the interpretations that have been elicited into a social scientific frame. There is a double interpretation going on: the researchers are providing an interpretation of others' interpretation. Indeed, there is a third level of interpretations going on, because the researchers' interpretations have to be further interpreted in terms of the concepts, theories, and literature of the discipline.

Bryman (2008) maintains that the questions of social ontology cannot be detached from issues related to conducting social research. He argues that ontological assumptions and commitments feed into the formulation of research questions and the way in which research is carried out. Following an interpretivist approach, *constructivism* forms the basis of the ontological position from which I approach reality, as well as the ontological assumptions which have guided the formulation of my research questions in this study. Unlike objectivism, which argues that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors, constructivism asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction, but are also in a constant state of revision, and therefore produce multiple and amendable realities (Fry et al. 2009). This approach is therefore particularly appropriate for this study, which seeks to understand the *how* and *why* of students' learning experiences in the ESL programme.

4.2. Methodological Orientation

The current study is conducted from a qualitative methodological orientation, for two key reasons. Firstly, a qualitative approach complements my ontological and epistemological stance; as an interpretivist, I have to understand participants' reality from their point of view, which is made possible with a qualitative research approach. Following constructivist ontological assumptions, students are viewed as constructing their own realities, which are in turn shaped by social structures. According to these assumptions, these students' realities will be best understood by talking to and observing them, in order to gain an insight in their understandings of the world and the world in which they construct their realities. A qualitative research approach would enable this to be achieved, as it facilitates in-depth analysis of phenomena.

Secondly, students' learning experiences in an ESL programme have never been studied from a structure and agent perspective within the context of Pakistan. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim, a qualitative research approach can be a better way to understand phenomena which are little known about.

Overall, a qualitative approach is particularly appropriate when researcher determines that quantitative measures cannot adequately describe or interpret a situation (Bryman 2008). The aim of the current study is to understand students' learning experiences from their perspective and within their own context, which is only possible if the researcher talks to the individuals, understands their opinion, observes their situations, and interprets their interpretations. This can only be done by qualitative methodological approach. The ability more fully describe a phenomenon using qualitative data is an important consideration from both the researcher's perspective, and the reader's perspective, as Lincoln and Guba (1985:120) have observed:

If you want people to understand better than they otherwise might, provide them information in the form in which they usually experience it.

Qualitative research reports are typically rich with detail and insights into participants' experiences of the world, and may also be 'epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience and [...] thus more meaningful' (Stake 1978:5).

Different researchers use a variety of strategies in the process of qualitative inquiry. The current study uses case study as a research strategy in order to analyse students' learning

experiences in ESL programme. The following section discusses the use of case studies as a research strategy in more detail, and the way in which it is used in the current study.

4.3. Case Study as a research strategy

According to Yin (2009), case study research is a comprehensive research strategy for understanding complex issues or objects, and for extending previously unexplored research areas as well as strengthening existing research. The unit of analysis can vary from an individual to an institution or a corporation, and case studies involve the detailed, contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. Case strategies are therefore

the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.[...] [This] method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events

(Yin 2003: 1).

Case studies provide a systematic way of examining events, collecting data, analysing information and reporting results. Consequently, the researcher is able to gain a sharpened understanding of how and why events in question happen as they usually do, and important areas for greater focus in future research. Sturman (1994:61) suggests that

while the techniques used in the investigation may be varied, [...] the distinguishing feature of the case study is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not simply a loose collection of traits. As a consequence of this belief, case study researchers hold that to understand a case, to explain why things happen as they do, and to generalise or predict from a single example requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge.

In the current study, the unit of analysis (the case) is the ESL programme, which has been analysed through the diverse students’ perspectives. However, the voices of other stakeholders (teachers and administrators) are also included, and other sources of information beyond students are also considered.

Stake (1995) emphasizes that the number and type of case study depends on the purpose of the inquiry. An *instrumental case study* is used to provide initial insights into an issue; an *intrinsic case study* is undertaken to gain a deeper understanding of the case; and a *collective case study* involves the study of a number of cases, carried out in order to inquire into a

particular phenomenon. The current study uses an intrinsic case study design, which extends to 17 students (see Table 2), and in which students' voices are focused upon in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the ESL programme.

Yin (2009:5) categorises three forms of case study: *exploratory*, *descriptive*, and *explanatory*. He defines these in the following manner:

- *Exploratory case study*: 'aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent (not necessarily case) study'.
- *Descriptive case study*: 'presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context'.
- *Explanatory case study*: 'presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships— explaining which causes produced which effects'.

The current study does not deal with any cause-effect relationships among variables, nor does it test any hypotheses. Instead, the focus of the current study is to understand and describe students' learning experiences from their perspectives and within their own context; the descriptive case study approach is therefore adopted. This approach offers the flexibility of using different sources for data collection, data analysis and the ways of narrating the reports, and it also complements my use of intrinsic case study to provide insight into students' learning experiences.

Jensen and Rodgers (2001:237) propose a typology of case studies that include the following:

- *Snapshot case studies*: Detailed study of one research entity at one point in time.
- *Longitudinal case studies*: Quantitative and/or qualitative study of one research entity at multiple points of time.
- *Pre-post case studies*: Study of one research entity at two points of time separated by a critical event.
- *Patchwork case studies*: A set of multiple case studies of the same research entity, using snapshot, longitudinal, and/or pre-post designs.
- *Comparative case studies*: A set of multiple case studies of multiple research entities for the purpose of cross-unit comparison.

Being an intrinsically descriptive case study, the current study adopts the snapshot approach in order to study multiple students in the ESL programme. The nature of the current study

would ideally involve the detailed analysis of multiple students; however, time and funding restraints meant that only one period of fieldwork was possible, which thus reduced the scope of the study. These limitations also affected the sampling strategy (see section 4.6), which focuses only on students in their fourth semester and sixth semesters of their undergraduate studies. The fourth semester is the last semester in which the ESL programme is taken, and students of sixth semester had already completed the ESL programme. Sampling several students in these semesters therefore allowed students' learning experiences in the ESL programme to be analysed as a whole.

Overall, the chosen approach to case study research importantly offers access to a holistic view of students' learning experiences, and also sheds light on key issues. The use of pre-post case studies (i.e., studying case studies at the beginning and the end of the ESL programme), or longitudinal case studies (i.e., following cases throughout the ESL programme), or comparative case study (i.e., comparing learning experiences of students in ESL Programme across different universities) could have provided equally interesting insights; however, as mentioned above, time and funding restraints meant that these approaches to case study research could not be adopted. The current design is therefore more feasible than other approaches given the practical research context, and moreover, offers important insights into students' learning experiences and suggests new possibilities for future research.

4.4. Positionality

My positionality (insider vs. outsider) within this research had important implications for the study as a whole. I am familiar with the context of English language learning at UoSJP both from the perspective as a learner and an ESL teacher (having taught at the university from 2005 to 2007); I therefore position myself as an ex-insider (Jahanbakhsh 1996) within this study. The position of ex-insider is advantageous for research in many ways, offering a unique perspective and pre-existing understanding of both the individuals and the context being studied. As Sechutz (1976: 108) has noted,

The insider researcher has, as a member of the in-group, access to its past and present histories. S/he is a party to the nuances and idioms within their shared language; the hierarchical position of members within the group is clearly defined.

As an (ex-)insider researcher, I share research participants' social world, which meant that disorientation or culture shocks were not an issue:

The expectation is that the context will be understood and appreciated in a way not open to an outsider researcher. Insights and sensitivity to things both said and unsaid and to the culture(s) operating at the time of the research - all these are potentially available to the insider researcher

(Hockey 1993:119).

My position as an (ex-)insider researcher also enabled me to develop 'enhanced rapport' with respondents (Hockey 1993:119). Students and teachers alike seemed willing to share often intimate life details, and this may have been due to a perception that I was empathetic to their experiences (as a former student and teacher at their university). Finally, teachers' and administrators' support for the study was arguably a reflection of my known, insider status; I was freely granted access to lessons and to students, and could also easily involve teachers (my former colleagues) in my research.

However, there are challenges associated with an insider researcher position. For example, Hockey (1993) cautions against presumptions that an insider researcher's partial knowledge reflects the full picture of the research context, and also warns against 'over-familiarity' and 'taken-for-granted assumptions'. Admittedly, I did undertake this research with many presumptions about the context, teachers, learners and their learning processes. Crucially, I assumed that I already knew and understood the research context, and in particular, the challenges learners' faced; I therefore initially intended to work on an intervention to address these challenges.

These initial assumptions meant that my research was initially adopted from a strongly behaviourist position; however, learning more about epistemological and ontological issues within research led me to revise my position. As discussed in Chapter 3, my research strategy was eventually firmly grounded in a constructivist approach. Rather than assuming prior knowledge of students and their learning experiences, I moved to conceptualise students as constructing their own realities, and sought to understand these constructed realities from their perspectives. This new starting point also led me to reconsider my methodology; interrogating the assumptions of my insider research positionality was therefore essential to the development of the study as a whole.

Positioning myself as an insider also raised the issue of power relations, especially when administering questionnaires and conducting interviews with students who often viewed me

primarily as a teacher. In these situations, Bryman (2008) has argued that respondents usually anticipate what the researcher wants to hear in their answers, rather than expressing their honest views. As far as possible, I attempted to avoid this outcome by creating a friendly atmosphere so that respondents felt at ease, and also assured them of anonymity and confidentiality. My researcher positionality is considered in relation to other aspects of methodology in the following sections.

4.5. Data Collection

In order to analyse students' learning experiences in the ESL programme, data were collected using documentary review, observation and interviews. The following sections discuss these tools in more detail, with a particular focus on how they enabled the collection of the data required to answer my research questions.

4.5.1. Documentary Review

Bowen (2009) defines documentary review as a systematic examination of documents (including syllabi, assignments, lecture notes, course evaluation results, and institutional policies) in order to identify instructional aims, needs and challenges and describe an institutional activity. It is a means of data collection by reviewing existing documents, whether internal to a programme or institution (e.g. records of ESL programme components implemented in UoSJP) or external (e.g. records of evaluations, training programmes, HEC policies affecting the ESL programme). However, Bowen (2009) emphasises that analysis should involve a critical examination, rather than a mere description, of the documents.

In the context of the current study, documentary review includes all the documents which offer an insight into UoSJP as an institution in terms of its position in the field of higher education, its policies and practices, and the effects of its policies and practices on students' learning experiences in the ESL programme. I therefore analysed documents related to the following areas: the field of higher education in Pakistan; the practices and policies of HEC on education in general and on the English language programme in higher education in particular; the position of UoSJP in the field of higher education; and the policies and practices of UoSJP regarding the ESL programme.

Scott (1990) has noted that access to internal documents which are not in the public domain can be limited. However, documents reviewed for the current study are all open to the public, and as most of the documents are available online, no difficulty was faced in accessing them.

The current study uses document review as a support tool to collection data for three main reasons:

(1) *Understanding the official position of the institution*: Reviewing official documents provided an insight into the official position of the institution, and further enabled me to understand the contradictions between this official position and actual practices of the institution. This in turn allowed me to reflect upon institutional policies that are in tension with its official position, and the implications of these inconsistencies for students' learning experiences.

(2) *Determining whether programme implementation reflects programme plans*: Identifying differences between official policy and actual implementation in the ESL programme through documentary review evidently has important implications. These insights highlight contradictions between explicit rules and actual practices, and once again allow the impact of these contradictions on students' learning experiences to be considered.

(3) *Supporting the development of other data collection tools*: The review of existing documents not only offers a better understanding of the ESL programme and the institutional context, but also supports the identification and formulation of questions for interview guides. The documentary review carried out in this study was particularly useful for the interview guide used with teachers.

4.5.2. Observation

As a research method, observation allows data collection on issues which cannot otherwise be collected through questionnaires or interviews (Bryman 2008). It is a particularly suitable method of data collection when research participants are uncomfortable or unwilling to answer questions about a particular subject. For example, many people feel uncomfortable when asked about racial prejudice, and self-reports may not provide the most honest reflections. A researcher may therefore choose to observe interactions of participants from different racial backgrounds; in this case, observations are likely to offer more accurate data.

Sensitive social issues therefore are better suited for observational research (Brown 2004). Moreover, observations provide a useful opportunity to learn more about the context in which the study is conducted; Jorgenson (2002) has noted that understanding a context through observations is crucial before designing and conducting questionnaires or interviews.

While I subscribe to the view that it is important to talk to students in order to understand their realities, I also acknowledge that students may not be able to express their views about many aspects and issues within an interview context for numerous reasons. This meant that it was particularly important to observe students and their worlds; however, these observations were evidently subjective. This adds a further issue for consideration, namely the ability to witness first-hand the behaviours and activities described by participants in interviews. This was achieved through active and non-participant observations with students and teachers in the research context. Active participation involved conducting classes and taking part in the class activities, while examples of non-participant observations include sitting in classrooms, observing student groups and being present during teachers' informal meetings. Through these different forms of participation, I aimed to observe and experience the research context as a participant, while still acting as an observer focused on understanding, analysis and explanation.

This approach was faced by a number of challenges. For example, my presence during lessons initially made students self-conscious, and their behaviour unsurprisingly altered in reaction to my scrutiny. However, their sense of unease was addressed by talking to the students frequently after lessons, and altering my seating patterns (i.e. sitting with different groups of students rather than at the back of the classroom).

Observations were carried out for two main reasons in this study: in order to understand the context of ESL classes; and to understand and explore sensitive issues which participants were uncomfortable to discuss in interviews. Through observations, I therefore focused on understanding:

- Interactions between ESL teachers and administrators
- Interactions between ESL teachers and students of different genders, regions and ethnicities in the classroom
- Interactions between students of different genders, regions and ethnicities.

Various approaches to the observation process were adopted at different stages of fieldwork. Fieldwork was begun by carrying out general observations of IELL, and its library. Also three other libraries of Faculty of Pharmacy, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), and Information & Technology (IT) department were observed. The purpose was to see the number of ESL related books in these libraries and whether students use these books or not. In particular, ESL lessons in IELL were observed through non-participant observations, which was useful for two reasons. Firstly, non-participant observations offered a fresh perspective on the context; although I had formerly been an ESL student and teacher, observing classroom interactions in this way provided a new way of considering ESL teaching and learning patterns. Secondly, this approach allowed me to make contact with students. As mentioned earlier, students were initially uncomfortable in my presence in the classes, but by familiarizing myself with the students, I managed to make students feel more comfortable and open. I established contacts with students during this process, who began to view me as a friend rather than a teacher, and this supported the development of mutual trust with students. Their later willingness to respond to questionnaires and to volunteer for interviews reflected this increased rapport and trust.

Later observations focused on issues which had been raised during interviews. Snapshot observations were conducted intermittently, after approximately every third interview with students and teachers. These snapshot observations focussed primarily on issues which students and teachers had raised during their interviews, and in turn contributed to the development of interview guides for subsequent interviews.

4.5.3. Interviews

Bryman (2008) has noted that interviews are probably the most widely-employed qualitative research method, and offer deep insights into how respondents view the world. ‘Qualitative interviews’ include unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Bryman 2008:436). Unstructured interviews closely resemble everyday conversations (Burgess 1984), in which the researcher at most uses a brief set of prompts covering a certain range of topics. This approach was not suitable for the current study; although the fluidity of unstructured interviews can be an advantage, researchers have little control over the interview process. The totally unstructured nature of these interviews may lead to the discussion being diverted from the main themes of the research; particularly in the context of time and financial restraints, this can be impractical.

By contrast, the semi-structured interviews were considered to be much more suitable for this study. Through the use of an interview guide, the researcher can ensure that the maximum amount of relevant information can be covered within limited time; however, the semi-structured format of the interview means that respondents are also given the freedom to respond in a way that may raise previously unanticipated topics and questions. Semi-structured interviews are therefore a valuable means of understanding how research participants view the world, which is vital for this study.

Interview guides for student interviews (see Appendix II) included a list of fairly specific topics related to students' perspectives on the UoSJP; their motivations for studying in the ESL programme; their perceptions of ESL teachers, as well as the assessment, syllabus, workload, work space, and other learning resources; their interactions with teachers and peers in ESL classrooms; and their perception of themselves, their peers and their teachers. Interviewees had a great deal of freedom in terms of formulating their answers, and questions did not rigidly follow the order and form of the interview guide. The guide was finalised after pilot interviews with two students; the first was a student from Saudi Arabia who was doing a pre-session English language course at the University of Sussex, UK, and the second was a student from Pakistan in his third year of a Bachelors of Commerce at UoSJP. Once in the field, each interview was transcribed immediately after it had been conducted. This strategy supported the identification of important issues raised by the respondent, and based on this initial analysis, questions in the guide were added, removed or altered for subsequent interviews. Every interview therefore followed a slightly altered interview guide, and this approach meant that a variety of data were collected from different respondents.

The interview guide for teachers (see Appendix III) included questions which related to: teachers' understandings of teaching in general; their perceptions of ESL teaching at UoSJP; their views on the ESL programme, and its examinations criteria, syllabus, workload, class size, and group activities; their relations with students of different genders, ethnicities, and educational backgrounds; and their relations with university administrators. This guide was finalised after pilot interview with a fellow doctoral student at the School of Education, University of Sussex, who had previously taught English language at UoSJP.

Piloting the interview guides proved highly useful, as the initial interview guides were based around many theoretical, technical terms and expressions from literature which respondents

in pilot interviews struggled to understand. Consequently, a lot of the interview time was lost through the explanation of these terms and expressions, leaving minimal time to listen to and record participants' responses. These terms and expressions were therefore replaced with more common words and phrases in the interview guide developed for fieldwork; additionally, most of the questions were rephrased and reordered in order to improve the flow of conversation. All three pilot interviews were partially transcribed, translated (the interview with the Pakistani student was conducted in Sindhi) and analysed, which helped to identify emerging themes.

Students' interviews lasted 48 minutes on average, (see Table 2) and teachers' interviews lasted 44 minutes on average (see Table 3). All student and teacher interviews were conducted at IELL, UoSJP; teachers were interviewed in their own IELL offices, and a former colleague kindly offered the use of his office for student interviews.

Students were asked to provide contact details and dates for availability in the questionnaires (in Appendix I) if they were interested in volunteering for an interview. Teachers were also requested to suggest times and dates for their interviews. The interview process began with students; after interviewing two students, one teacher was interviewed. Although this pattern was not strictly followed throughout the research process, the approach helped to access teachers' perspectives on issues raised by students in their interviews, and vice versa. This meant that a dialogue of sorts could be established between students' and teachers' perspectives during the transcription and analysis process.

Several challenges arose when conducting interviews with students in particular. Firstly, most of the students were initially uncomfortable with the idea of audio-recording the conversation. As a qualitative researcher, I was not only interested in what respondents say, but also the ways in which they express themselves (e.g. tone, pauses, facial expressions) Audio-recording interviews was therefore important in order to fully include non-verbal data in the analysis, as it provided a complete account of the exchanges within the interview setting. Moreover, intense concentration is required of the researcher within an interview context in order to listen to participants' answers, follow up on interesting points, to prompt when necessary, to highlight inconsistencies in responses and so on. The added distraction of keeping accurate notes on this process can be avoided by recording the interview, and so I

managed to convince and reassure students that the recording would only be used for research purposes, and their identities would remain anonymous.

A second challenge was conducting one-to-one interviews with female participants. In Pakistan, it is culturally unacceptable for men and women who are not related to be left alone in private. I addressed this problem in two ways; firstly, I conducted collective interviews with two or more female participants at a time, and secondly, when interviews with lone female participants were conducted, the door and windows of the office were kept open. This was successful in the end that female participants appeared comfortable, but the interview process was also disrupted as the office used for interviews was located near busy corridors. Disturbance was therefore unavoidable; additionally, a steady stream of students came to the office looking for the lecturer who had given up his office space for my interviews. Interviews were therefore stopped and re-started numerous times, which negatively affected the flow of the conversation. The quality of the recording was also affected, leading to difficulties during the transcription process.

In addition to these challenges when carrying out student interviews, almost all the teachers were initially reluctant to participate in interviews. However, as an ex-insider I was able to access these teachers off-campus; before asking them to participate in interviews, I was therefore able to meet many of the teachers informally. These informal meetings allowed me to develop rapport with the teachers, talking about my experiences as a PhD student in the UK, and the purposes and objectives of my research. Once I had familiarized myself with teachers in this way, I felt more confident when asking them to participate in interviews. For more senior teachers who I could not meet informally, I prepared a brief outline of my research, a letter requesting them to participate in an interview, and a consent form signed by myself, with assurances that their identities and responses would remain anonymous. During the interview process with teachers, I found (contrary to my expectations) that recently-appointed female teachers participated enthusiastically and openly. Overall, it seemed that newer teachers were more comfortable than senior teachers to talk about issues related to ESL.

4.6. Sampling

A sample is a finite part of a population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster 2003). In social research, it can be defined as a set of people

(respondents) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey or an in-depth investigation. Yin (2009) argues that the concept of sampling is quite rare in case studies, as cases are selected specifically due to the researcher's interest or due to their *uniqueness* or *typicality*. However, in the current study, a specific sampling approach was crucial as I aimed to identify multiple cases of diverse characteristics from a target population. These multiple cases are not unique, but they are typical in the sense that they represent different characteristics including gender, ethnicity, region, and educational and family background. This selection aims to analyse the learning experiences of diverse students in the ESL programme, in order to maximise the variety of responses in the final report.

Purposive sampling was therefore applied to access the target population in the current study. The general population of interest to the study includes all the students and teachers in the ESL programme at UoSJP. However, the target population for the purposes of this study included seven ESL teachers of different genders, varying ages and levels of experience, and seventeen students in their fourth and sixth semesters from the Institution of English Literature and Language (IELL). IELL was selected due to my status as an ex-insider in the faculty, which allowed easier access to lessons, students and teachers.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, students take the ESL programme in their first two years (equivalent of four semesters) as undergraduates, and so students from the fourth semester (who are in the final semester of the ESL course) and sixth semester (who have completed the ESL courses) were selected so that experiences in all four semesters could be analysed. Questionnaires were administered to these students, with the purpose of selecting diverse cases for an in-depth investigation. Questionnaires sought information on students' age, gender, ethnicity, family, educational background, and their academic grades on the ESL and other courses (see Appendix I). The data from questionnaires, particularly students' grades, were verified using their result reports.

On average, 110 students enrol in the ESL programme at IELL every year. In the first phase of the data collection, around 200 students from the fourth and sixth semesters were requested to voluntarily respond to questionnaires. With the consent of class teachers, I distributed questionnaires among students in the classrooms, and asked them to fill in the questionnaires. After analysing students' responses, purposive sampling was used to select 30 students to participate in the in-depth stages of research.

These 30 students were selected on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, region, educational and family backgrounds, and their grades in the ESL courses. However, only 20 students appeared for the interviews, and from this group, only 17 students' interviews were fully transcribed and used for analyses (see Table 2 for more information on these students). Table 2 also outlines: student codes (e.g. S = *Student*, M/F = *Male* or *Female*); the length of the usable interview information (in minutes); students' academic year (second or third year); gender; their previous major (e.g. medicine (Med) or engineering (Eng)); age; ethnicity; region (incl. the name of the area, plus rural (R) or urban (U)); family education; the kind of school they attended (e.g. elite English medium schools (EEM), non-elite English medium schools (NEE) or vernacular medium schools (VM)). Information is also included on students' average overall results (from three semesters for second year students, and four semesters for third year students); their overall average results in the ESL courses; whether they were employed; and if so, the nature of their occupation, and number of hours worked per day.

This information enabled a focus on particular aspects of the respondents' identities, and a consideration of the ways in which these factors affect their learning experiences. The sampling approach adopted in this study aimed to consider a selection of cases which would lead to findings with potentially wider resonance beyond the specific research context. The seventeen cases were selected in terms of various characteristics in order to include maximum variation (Flyvbjerg 2006), and to 'cover some of the main dimensions of suspected heterogeneity in the population' (Hammersley 1992: 90), to which the findings can be transferred.

Table 2. Questionnaire data showing students' personal information

	Codes	Length of interview	Year	Gender	Previous study group	Age	Ethnicity	Region	Family Education	Schooling	Med of instruction	Overall results (%)	Results in ESL (%)	Work	Hours per day	Type of Work
01	SF1	63m	3 rd	f	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Badin(R)	Father: Undergraduate Mother: Matriculation Elder brother: Graduate Younger brothers: In school	NEE	Eng	76	72	No	-	-
02	SF2	66m	3 rd	f	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Hyderabad(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Graduate Younger brothers: Undergraduate	NEE	Eng	79	81	Yes	2	Teaching
03	SM3	55m	3 rd	m	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Moro(R)	Father: Undergraduate Mother: Uneducated	VM	Sindhi	70	71	Yes	2	Teaching
04	SM4		3 rd	m	Med	23-25	Sindhi	Jacobabad (R)	Father: Undergraduate Elder brother: Undergraduate Mother: Uneducated	VM	Sindhi	60	63	Yes	2	Teaching
05	SM5	59 m	2 nd	m	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Dadu (R)	Father: Matriculation Two Elder brothers: Undergraduate Mother: Uneducated	VM	Sindhi	72	72	No	-	-
06	SF6	23m	2 nd	f	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Hyderabad(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Undergraduate	EEM	Eng	74	72	Yes	3	Teaching
07	SF7		2 nd	f	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Hyderabad(U)	Father: Graduate Elder brothers: Graduate Elder Sister: Graduate Mother: Undergraduate	EEM	Eng	76	70	Yes	3	Teaching
08	SF8	39m	2 nd	f	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Larkana(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Intermediate	NEE	Eng	72	69	No	-	-
09	SF9		2 nd	f	Med	18-23	Baloch	Larkana(R)	Father: Matriculation Mather: Uneducated Elder brother: Undergraduate	VM	Sindhi	70	69	Yes	3	Teaching

	Codes	Length of interview	Year	Gender	Previous study group	Age	Ethnicity	Region	Family Education	Schooling	Med of instruction	Overall results (%)	Results in ESL (%)	Work	Hours per day	Type of Work
10	SF10	46m	3 rd	f	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Larkana(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Undergraduate Younger brothers and sisters : In school	EEM	Eng	72	65	No	-	-
11	SF11	70m	3 rd	f	Med	18-23	Urdu	Hyderabad(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Intermediate Elder Sister: Graduate	EEM	Eng	65	64	No	-	-
12	SF12		3 rd	f	Med	18-23	Urdu	Hyderabad(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Undergraduate Elder brother: Graduate Younger Sister and brother: In school	NEE	Eng	72	72	No	-	-
13	SF13		3 rd	f	Med	18-23	Urdu	Hyderabad(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Graduate	NEE	Eng	75	73	No	-	-
14	SF14		3 rd	f	Med	18-23	Urdu	Hyderabad(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Intermediate Younger brother and sister: undergraduate	NEE	Eng	73	75	No	-	-
15	SM15	24m	2 nd	m	Med	18-23	Punjabi	Lahoro(U)	Father: Graduate Mather: Intermediate Younger brothers and sisters: In school	VM	Sindhi	71	74	Yes	6	Marketing and sales representative of books
16	SM16	39m	3 rd	m	Med	18-23	Sindhi	Mithi(R)	Father: Uneducated Mather: Uneducated Younger brother : In school	VM	Sindhi	70	76	No	-	-
17	SM17	51m	2 nd	m	Eng	18-23	Sindhi	Dadu(R)	Father: Undergraduate Mather: Intermediate Three Elder brothers: Graduate	VM	Sindhi	74	81	Yes	5	Teaching

There are approximately 31 teachers in the IELL who can teach ESL courses. In this study, teachers with over eight years' teaching experience are referred to as *senior* (n = 9), those with one to four years' experience are referred to as *junior* (n = 12) and those who have less than one year of teaching experience are referred to as *novice* (n=10). It was observed that mainly novice teachers taught ESL courses in IELL and other departments of UoSJP. This may be explained by novice teachers' lack of prior teaching experiences (inferred from data analysis detailed in Chapter 5); it is therefore possible that before going on to teach major courses, ESL classes provide an opportunity to practice and improve their teaching skills. ESL may be used in this way as it is a minor course, and progress reports from the course are not sent to Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) for evaluation (see Chapter 5 for detailed discussion).

The reasons behind the allocation of novice teachers to the ESL programme are not the focus of the current study, but it is nevertheless important to consider how students perceive these teachers' pedagogic strategies to teaching and their general attitudes, and how students view these teachers in the community of the ESL classroom.

It is also important to note that classroom observations were only carried out in novice teachers' lessons as a result of issues relating to access. Eight novice teachers' classes were observed, but only four were interviewed (TF1, TF2, TF2, and TM4). Similarly, it was not possible to observe junior teachers' lessons as their timetabled lessons conflicted with other research activities, but interviews were eventually carried out with two junior teachers (TM5 and TF6). Only one senior teacher (TM7) was interviewed. A total of four female and three male teachers were therefore interviewed, of different ages and with varying levels of teaching experience (see Table 3). All 31 teachers on the ESL programme, including the seven involved in this study, were Sindhi speakers.

Table 3. Teachers interviewed for the study

Code	Length of Interview	Gender	Age	Qualification	From	Teaching experience	Teaching status	Minimum Teaching Hours per week
TF1	42 m	F	25-27	M.A English Literature	UoSJP	Less than one year	Research Associate	15-20
TF2	42 m	F	25-27	M.A English Literature	UoSJP	Less than one year	Research Associate	15-20
TF3	57 m	F	25-27	M.A English Literature	UoSJP	Less than one year	Research Associate	15-20
TM4	41 m	M	25-27	M.A English Literature	UoSJP	Less than one year	Research Associate	15-20
TM5	50 m	M	30-35	M.A English Literature	UoSJP	Four years	Lecturer	15-20
TF6	30 m	F	30-35	M.A English Literature	UoSJP	Four years	Lecturer	15-20
TM7	43 m	M	40-45	PhD English Literature	UoSJP	Fifteen years	Assistant Professor	15-20

Overall, the data collection tools adopted enabled the collection of data relevant to the research questions guiding the study. Although several challenges arose as a result of the data collection tools adopted, as discussed above, various strategies were used to overcome these difficulties. The purposive sampling strategy enabled a variety of students to be selected for data collection, representing different genders, ethnicities, and educational and family backgrounds. The teachers selected for the study similarly represented different genders, ages and levels of teaching experiences. The following section outlines the different strategies adopted for data analysis.

4.7. Data Analysis

Questionnaires were analysed manually, and MS Excel was used to compile the data. Since the questionnaires were only used in order to identify the cases for further in-depth research, no statistical analysis was required. Findings from questionnaires have been partially presented in Table 2 (see above), and references to the questionnaire data are made

throughout the finding chapters in terms of students' ethnicity, rurality, and their educational and family background.

Documents were analysed by reading, re-reading and identifying the patterns, which were further organised into themes. These themes were then identified in order to be analysed from an Activity theory perspective. As mentioned earlier, documentary analysis mainly contributed to identifying institutional influences on the ESL programme.

Most of the interviews with students were conducted in Urdu or Sindh (the two most commonly used languages at UoSJP) in order to put respondents at ease, and to improve their level of understanding during interviews. This approach meant that interviewees could respond to the questions freely, without any language barriers. Selected interviews were translated and transcribed for further analysis. After this, data were compressed, categorized, and organised into themes prior to the process of interpreting and extracting meaning (Bryman 2008). As the interviews were semi-structured, the questions were written in order to emphasise certain themes. This approach helped to code and organize the data by identifying significant themes and patterns and relating them to the research questions.

4.7.1. Translating the data

Conducting interviews in Sindhi and Urdu and presenting findings in English meant that certain language-related issues had to be addressed. Birbili (2000) has discussed several potential issues related to the use of different languages for data collection and the presentation of findings. For example, the researcher has to make a number of translation-related decisions, which may have a direct impact on the validity of their research and the way in which it is reported. Birbili (2000) further suggests that the quality of the translation depends on a number of factors; when the researcher also acts as translator, the quality of the translation is influenced by the factors including the researcher's knowledge of the language and the culture of the people under study, and the researcher's fluency in the presentation language. My position as an insider was helpful here, in terms of identifying contextual and cultural aspects of participants' responses, as well as the languages in which they responded. Translations from Urdu and Sindhi to English were therefore informed by this awareness of respondents' context, culture and language.

Temple (1997) has argued that one of the major difficulties encountered when conducting research in one language and presenting it in another is the question of conceptual

equivalence or the comparability of meaning. He has argued that, during translation, even an apparently innocuous, familiar term for which there is a direct lexical equivalent may carry emotional connotations in one language that may not occur in another. In this situation, Temple (1997: 610) therefore argues that an emphasis should be placed on 'obtaining conceptual equivalence without concern for lexical comparability'. I believe that my position as an insider also meant that I was able to address this challenge; the process of gaining comparability of meanings was facilitated by my proficient understanding of Urdu, Sindhi and English, as well as my 'intimate' knowledge of the study context and culture (Frey 1970). These linguistic and cultural factors are essential if the full implications of certain terms for participants are to be understood, and if the cultural connotations of particular words are made explicit to readers of the research.

An essential question before translating interviews therefore related to how exactly I would approach translation. Wolcott (1994) maintains that this decision is central, as research reports usually present participants' responses as direct quotations, with little indication of the translation process. Direct quotations are evidently an important tool when presenting participants' views, reflecting issues they have prioritised and the way in which they have expressed these issues. A choice between 'literal' or 'free' translation was therefore required. A literal translation (e.g. translating data word-by-word) could be seen as more fully representing what participants have said, and give readers a sense of the 'foreignness' for the response.

However, this literal approach can hamper the readability of the text, which can in turn disengage the reader from the text and, importantly, inhibit their ability to follow 'what's going on' (Honig 1997:17). At the same time, researchers who decide to go for the more elegant option of free translation must bear in mind the implications of creating quotations that read well, and how far they move from participants' original meaning. In this study, I decided to adopt a mixed approach which aimed to maintain the naturality of quotations, but to simultaneously ensure that they were 'readable' in the final report. Following this approach, I felt comfortable using direct quotations from participants to support my arguments in the findings chapters.

Brislin et al (1973: 46) have also suggested that 'consultation' with other people during the translation process can be an important technique for eliminating translation-related problems:

Consultation with other people involves discussions about the use and meaning of words identified as problematic with people who are bilingual or having a number of people sitting around a table jointly making decisions about the best terms to use.

Using this technique, I consulted participants by showing them the translations of their interview transcripts. Although I did not receive many suggestions from students, teachers offered more contributions, which significantly enhanced my understanding of the different Sindhi terms and expressions and my English translations of them. Moreover, several fellow doctoral students at various universities in the UK were also consulted regarding translation.

4.8. Reliability and Validity

Bassey (1999:77) has argued that while reliability and validity are vital in surveys and experiments, they are not particularly relevant concepts in case study research. Analysis *reliability* is the extent to which findings can be replicated, given the same circumstances, and *validity* is related to the accuracy of research findings. Validity can be analysed in a number of ways; internal validity is concerned with cause-and-effect relationships, while external validity is concerned with the extent to which these cause-and-effect relationships can be generalised to other contexts.

However, these concepts are problematic in case study research (Lincoln and Guba 1985). A case study is, by nature, the study of a singularity chosen primarily based on the researcher's interests. This means case studies are typical in terms of empirically demonstrability, and so the question of external validity is not relevant. Theory-seeking case studies may involve fuzzy cause-and-effect relationships, which support an examination of internal validity; however, the current study involves descriptive study, and so cause-and-effect relationships are not considered.

As an alternative to reliability and validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the concept of *trustworthiness* for case studies. Verifying the trustworthiness of the current study occurred at five stages of the research. Firstly, during data collection, prolonged engagement with the data source had to be ensured. In other words, this meant I had to spend a sufficient amount of time on a particular case in order to be fully immersed in its issues, to build the trust of respondents, and to avoid misleading them. This was achieved by spending an extended period of time in the field, during which I talked to and observed participants within and beyond the classroom, and also engaged them in in-depth discussions regarding the research focus.

Secondly, I had to ensure that the raw data had been adequately checked with my sources. This involved checking interview transcriptions with each interviewee, in order to provide respondents with the opportunity to clarify their responses. Following assurances that their responses would remain anonymous, most of the students in this study were satisfied with their transcripts. However, several teachers chose to alter some of their responses.

A third check for trustworthiness in my study involved sufficient triangulation of the raw data; in order to identify significant features of the case, I combined data which had been collected from different sources and which had been collected using different methods of inquiry. The analytical statements made to illuminate these significant features are therefore more credible due to the use of multiple sources and research methods (see section 4.7.1 for a more detailed discussion of triangulation).

Fourthly, my academic supervisors and colleagues offered critical perspectives and challenges at all stages of my research, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) have labelled ‘peer debriefing’. Accessing peers’ critical perspectives in this way is a crucial means of ensuring that the research processes and outcomes are being constantly interrogated.

Finally, during the writing stage, I had to ensure that the research account provided was sufficiently detailed in order to encourage the reader’s confidence in my findings. It was also particularly important to have an adequate ‘audit trail’ in my case records; ideally, systematic record-keeping throughout the research process means that an auditor could check the research stage-by-stage to certify that the conclusions are justified.

4.8.1. Triangulation

As mentioned above, triangulation plays an important role in the credibility of a research study, and can be achieved through *data triangulation*, *theoretical triangulation*, and *methodological triangulation* (Denzin 1970). In the current study, data triangulation carried out by collecting data from a variety of participants; as well as students of different genders, ethnicities, regional and educational backgrounds, teachers and administrators were also involved in the study.

Theoretical triangulation was achieved through the use of more than one theoretical perspective to interpret data. As discussed in Chapter 3, an ALT perspective, Activity theory and the sociological concepts of identity, community and institutional influences all informed

the study. Finally, methodological triangulation was ensured by using more than several research tools: questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentary review. These three approaches to triangulation were adopted in order to lend maximum credibility to the final research report.

4.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues arise at variety of stages in social research. They cannot be ignored as they relate directly to the integrity of a piece of research (Roberts 2005). Discussions about the ethics of social research lead to considerations of the role of values within the research process, such as:

How should we treat the people on whom we conduct research? And are there activities in which we should or should not engage in our relations with them?

(Bryman 2008: 113).

Professional associations such as the British Sociological Association (BSA) and the Social Research Association (SRA) have formulated codes of ethics for social research. Ethical principles in social research are much-discussed, and often revolve around similar sets of issues; Diener and Crandall (1978) have usefully categorized these issues into three broad types.

The first set of issues relates to whether research places participants at risk of any *harm*. Here, harm can include psychological harm, harm to participants' development, a loss of self-esteem, stress, and inducing research participants to perform reprehensible acts. The BSA *Statement of Ethical Practices* (2002:122) also encourages researchers to

...anticipate, and to guard against consequences for research participants which can be predicted to be harmful and to consider carefully the possibility that the research experience may be a disturbing one.

The issues relating to harm are addressed in this study by maintaining the confidentiality of participants and their records, i.e. participants' identities and responses have been anonymised to ensure confidentiality. Moreover, students' unfavourable opinions of teachers were not revealed to the teachers in question. Although this may have generated interesting data (by providing an opportunity for teachers to respond to criticisms), it was decided that disclosing these opinions may have negatively affected teachers' self-esteem.

A second issue relating ethics in social research relates to the informed consent of respondents for participation in the study. The concept of informed consent includes the requirement that, even if people know they are being asked to participate in research, they must be fully informed about the research process. This was ensured in the current study by informing the participants both orally and in writing the purpose of this research. Participants then indicated whether they wanted to take part in the study by accepting or refusing to fill in the questionnaire (Appendix I). The questionnaire included a consent form with two sections; in the first section, I assured participants that their identities and responses would be kept anonymous and that the data would only be used for the purpose of this research. I also signed and dated this section to indicate the authenticity of my claims. The second section of consent form requires participants to sign if they are satisfied with the first section, and if they are willing to complete the questionnaire. At the end of questionnaire, participants were asked if they would like to participate in an interview. Participants were given the opportunity to participate by providing their contact details, or to refuse by leaving this section blank.

Finally, a set of ethical issues relate to the invasion of privacy in research. The BSA Statement (2002:122) suggests this in the following statement:

...covert methods violate the principles of informed consent and may invade the privacy of those being studied.

Bryman (2008) maintains that the research participant does not surrender the right to privacy by providing informed consent. During this study, I therefore ensured that participants' informed consent was not taken advantage of. For example, all interview transcripts were returned to participants in case they wished to retract any statements from use in the final research.

Overall, the conduct of this study has carefully considered avoiding these ethical transgressions. This study can therefore be said to have abided by the general code of ethics in the *Statement of Ethical Practices* (2002), and has been further guided by the University of Sussex Research Code of Ethics. All participants were well-informed about the purpose of the research before their involvement, which remained entirely voluntary. All participants were assured that their identities and responses would remain anonymous and would only be used in the current study. Participants' informed consent was ensured through the provision

of oral and written information on the research process and signed assurances of confidentiality and anonymity along with a consent form. Great care was taken during data collection and presentation to avoid any harm to the participants. Finally, the cultural context, and in particular, norms relating to acceptable interactions between men and women, were respected during one-to-one interviews with female participants.

4.10. Limitations of the Study

There are number of limitations of the case study approach as a research strategy. The case study approach has been defined as an in-depth investigation of single or multiple cases that enables the researcher to access a holistic view of the phenomenon under study. It is generally accepted that case study findings cannot be generalized to a population beyond cases similar to those studied (Yin 2009); however, by adopting a purposive sampling strategy in the current study, I have tried to include a diverse sample which could contribute to the wider relevance of the research findings. Following this approach, the study provides a detailed analysis of various factors which affect students ESL learning experiences. The factors considered in relation to students' learning experiences in this study could also form the basis of future quantitative research with a larger sample of students.

There are also limitations to be considered in relation to the snapshot case study approach. As discussed earlier, snapshot or cross-sectional case studies focus on cases at a particular point in time. Unlike longitudinal case studies, in which researchers engage in repeated observations of cases, snapshot case studies attempt to collect all relevant data in a limited period of time. There is therefore always a danger that the researcher may fail to fully understand the research context. However, I attempted to avoid this situation by using multiple sources for data collection. Moreover, a fairly extended period of time was spent in the field with participants (i.e. six months), and I sought repeated information and confirmation on key issues from various participants, in order to ensure that I reported them accurately in the final report.

4.11. Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology of this study, including my epistemological and ontological position, and my adoption of the qualitative research approach in light of my interpretivist and constructivist assumptions. My decision to use a case study approach to the research was also considered, followed by a discussion of my researcher positionality. The

implications of my position as an ex-insider were considered in relation to my choice and use of data collection tools (documentary review, interviews and observation), and these in turn were discussed in light of my epistemological stance and methodological orientation.

The chapter also considered my approach to data analysis. As interviews were conducted in regional languages, issues relating to translation were also importantly discussed. The chapter then outlined the sampling strategy, and the characteristics of participants. The chapter concluded with a consideration of ethical issues and the limitations of the study.

Overall, the adopted methodology was arguably successful in offering a complete picture of students' learning experiences in the ESL programme at UoSJP. These findings are presented in the following three chapters; the next chapter focuses on the analysis of the institutional influences on teaching and learning in the ESL programme.

Chapter Five: Institutional influences on the ESL programme

This chapter analyses institutional influences on the ESL programme, in relation to the students' learning experiences. The chapter begins with an outline of the field of higher education in Pakistan, followed by a discussion of the increasing demand of ESL in higher education; the position of UoSJP in the field of higher education; and the way in which this influences the ESL programme. These influences are analysed by examining the university's entry requirements for students; the introduction of ESL as a support programme; class sizes; teaching; relations between ESL teachers and administrators; assessment; the quality enhancement cell (QEC); and other learning resources.

5.1. Field of Higher Education in Pakistan

As section 3.7 of chapter 3 argued, each institution of higher education operates with a field of higher education. To understand the position of these institutions, it is important to first understand the field itself. In this study, higher education in Pakistan is conceptualised as a field in which different institutions play their part. These institutions aim to position themselves according to their capital (whether economic, social or symbolic), with different policies and practices within the field. Additionally, institutions define higher education in various ways, with each emphasising the particular form(s) of capital they excel in, and suggesting that this is the most important in the field.

The higher education of Pakistan has been institutionalised into the HEC (Higher Education Commission) by the Government of Pakistan and as a government-influence institution; the HEC defines the rules of the game, and ensures that universities abide by these rules. However, in practice, higher education institutions in Pakistan only follow HEC's recommendations to a limited extent, and primarily act in order to safeguard their capital. For example, although the HEC sets the general criteria for quality assurance in higher education institutions, universities interpret these criteria according to their resources and limitations (Memon et al. 2010).

The HEC's recommendations include the hiring of qualified faculty members, and the promotion of research and regular publication of research. However, some universities follow these recommendations less rigorously than others. For example, elite universities such as the Agha Khan University (AKU) (the top-ranking university in Pakistan) or Quaid-i-Azam

University (ranked sixth in Pakistan) focus on the production of quality graduates, and therefore have a palpable interest in hiring high-quality faculty members, conducting and publishing research, and so on.

By contrast, multi-disciplinary universities such as UoSJP (ranked 28th among Pakistan's universities) focus on producing the maximum number of graduating students, and so accommodate the vast majority of applicants. Little interest is shown in hiring quality teachers, or in research, publications etc. (see section 5.4 for detailed discussion). These universities' definitions of higher education reflect their attempts to assert their superior position in the field. For example, AKU asserts that the aim of higher education is to produce high quality graduates following principles of 'quality, access, impact and relevance' (AKU 2011a). However, only those who can afford this higher education can access it. By contrast, UoSJP promotes a model of accessible higher education which is 'for everyone' (UoSJP 2011a) (see section 5.3 for detailed discussion).

5.2. English Language Teaching Programmes in Higher Education

Almost all universities in Pakistan offer various English language programmes. Elite universities such as AKU offer professional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programmes for their students, as well as specialised English language programmes for teachers. These programmes aim to promote advanced English language skills among learners (AKU 2011b). Other universities, including UoSJP, have introduced the ESL programme in order to improve students' basic English language skills. The aims of these ESL programmes are two-fold. Firstly, due to UoSJP's relatively open admissions policies, the majority of applications with weak educational and English backgrounds get admission (see section 5.3 for detailed discussion). The programme therefore aims to improve students' basic English language skills so that they can follow the English-medium teaching and textbooks on their university courses. Secondly, major public sector multi-disciplinary universities are now required by the HEC to provide ESL programmes; the introduction of ESL at UoSJP was therefore in compliance with these requirements.

The HEC has played an active role in enhancing the quality of English language teaching and learning in public sector universities. As discussed in Chapter 1, the HEC formed the National

Committee on English (NCE) in 2003 in order to assess the situation of English language teaching in public sector universities. The NCE recommended the following:

English support programmes should be set up in institutions and universities where they do not exist, [...] develop text-books and materials catering local needs and culture, update testing and assessment procedures, strengthen research, and set up on-line and computer assisted language learning programmes in English teaching

(HEC 2011).

In response, the HEC launched the first exclusive language-based project in Pakistan, English Language Teaching Reforms (ELTR, July 2004) in order to

bring qualitative improvement in English language teaching and learning in order to build capacity for effective and sustainable development of English Language Teachers in higher education in Pakistan

(HEC 2011).

The HEC has further acknowledged that it is imperative to enhance the quality of English language teaching community through strategic training programmes' in order to achieve qualitative improvement in the higher education sector (HEC 2011). English language programmes were therefore made compulsory in all undergraduate programmes at public universities. In the first phase of the ELTR, a number of English language teaching courses, workshops, seminars, national and international conferences were organised; new and revised courses were also introduced. In response to the fact that the majority of English teachers in higher education had 'only a Masters in English Literature' and 'no formal training in English language teaching' (HEC 2011), the second phase of ELTR included a number of English language training sessions for English language teachers, with priority given to teachers at public sector universities.

5.3. UoSJP's position in the field of higher education

UoSJP is currently 28th in the general HEC rankings, and ninth out of the 24 multi-disciplinary universities in Pakistan. As discussed in Chapter 2, the majority of UoSJP's students come from interior Sindh and Hyderabad. UoSJP is located between Liaquat University of Medicine & Health Sciences (LUMHS) and Mehran University of Engineering & Technology (MUET). These universities are both well-known professional institutions in the Sindh, and the majority of UoSJP students have been rejected by these two universities, with UoSJP positioned as their second-choice university (Rind 2008).

Both LUMHS and MUET focus on the production of ‘independent professional learners’ (Smith 2007), and so applicants must meet strict entry requirements to gain admission to these universities. For example, in order to qualify for the LUMHS pre-entry test, candidates must have scored a minimum of 60% in their Higher Secondary Certificate Examination (HSCE), and at least 55% for the MUET pre-entry test. In-depth knowledge of subjects including Biology, Maths, Physics, Chemistry and English is also required for students to compete in these pre-entry tests. If candidates fail to secure admission in their first attempt, they must re-sit their HSCE Part 1 or Part 2 examinations in order to be eligible for re-taking the MUET and LUMHS pre-entry test. The admission procedure is highly competitive, with a large number of students applying for a limited number of seats every year. In 2008, 6,024 candidates sat the MUET pre-entry test; 975 (16%) were offered places. Similarly, 4,451 candidates took the LUMHS pre-entry test in 2008, and 451 (10%) were offered admission.

In addition to these demanding academic requirements for applicants, a considerable degree of financial security is required. Students who gain admission on merit to LUMHS can expect to pay around PRs. 200,000 (£1,307.18) in fees for five years, while students who are self-funding will pay around PRs. 2,100,000 (£13,725.49) for fees over the same period. At MUET, fees for students who gain admission with merit are approx. PRs. 200,000 (£1,307.18) for four years, and PRs. 500,000 (£3,267.97) for self-funded students. These figures evidently do not include accommodation and other living costs. In short, admission to these universities is restricted to students who are with strong academic and financially secure backgrounds, and students with lower educational abilities and / or limited financial resources are excluded.

By contrast, UoSJP accommodates students from many disadvantaged groups. In 2010, 8,376 candidates sat the UoSJP pre-entry test, and 3,686 (44%) were successful, on the Jamshoro campus alone. According to official [university] 2010 statistics, there were approximately 19,000 students enrolled at UoSJP’s Jamshoro Campus; 70,000 full time students enrolled in affiliated colleges; and 30,000 distant learners appearing privately for annual examinations from various affiliated colleges. In 2010, the university therefore provided education and conducted examinations for over 122,000 students on its various campuses including those at Mirpurkhas and Badin, and figures for subsequent years are comparable. Moreover, fees range from PRs. 6, 000 (£39.21) to PRs. 10,000 (£65.35) (according to the discipline) per annum for students admitted on merit, and up to PRs. 70,000 (£457.51) for the whole course

if they gain self-funded admission. Two teachers participating in this study offered the following descriptions of UoSJP and its students:

We have a vast variety [diversity] of students here. First, we have those who are not able to find any place in medical, engineering or any other professional fields; they rush back to Sindh University, because university is a kind of solace, a rescue for these leftover students [...] Then, we have the students mostly from village side whose [educational and financial] background is not good. Most of them are here in the search of Bachelor or Masters Degrees so that they can be able to get good jobs that are based upon graduation or post-graduation. But when look at their [educational] background; it is not satisfactory, [...] Most of the students, especially from village side are disappointing in their [educational] backgrounds

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

It's a good university, but basically it is for the students of [educationally and financially] lower background, ... because most of the students come from backward (unprivileged) areas. They easily fit in here. Otherwise they don't get good platform (for higher education) anywhere else. May be because of the entry problems, or may be because of their family problems, so this is a good platform for them [...] But again we have (educationally) good students as well, and they mostly go to good departments, like IBM, Pharmacy, IT. You know our Sindh University has different departments with different standards, so different students with different backgrounds go into different departments. Means everybody has some chance here

(Interview with TF2 on 06.10. 2010)

The teachers present UoSJP as an institution which offers opportunities to everybody, from students rejected from other universities (described as 'leftover' students by TM7) to underprivileged students. Students who have been rejected from other universities are said to find 'solace' in UoSJP (TM7), while underprivileged students view the university as a platform to gain degrees which improve their social status (TF2).

Leftover students who have been rejected from medical and engineering universities join UoSJP largely because re-sitting university pre-tests significantly reduces their chances of admission. Not only do candidates have to re-take their HSCE exams and secure a minimum of 60% in HSCE exams, but ten marks are deducted from their cumulative score at intermediate level if they are taking the pre-test for the second time. Their ability to compete with first-time candidates is therefore considerably diminished. Additionally, many students described the pressure they faced from parents in order to join a university rather than re-applying to the entry test of medical or engineering universities. The following quotations are from students described as 'leftover' by TM7:

After rejection from medical university, my father forced me to join this university, particularly English department. The job opportunities for girls are there if you get degree from this department

(Interview with SF8 on 22.10.10)

My first option was medical, and when I was rejected, that [UoSJP] was the last option, and it is because of my parents... because they say “you have to go, you have to study something, so its best [option] rather than repeating [HSCE and pre-entry test preparation] to waste your time”

(Interview with SF10 on 27.10.10)

SF11: I didn't choose Sindh University, but my father wants me to join it...

SF12: I didn't want to come here too, but I didn't have any other choice. Because my aunt has strongly recommend me to join English department, and my cousin has done her MBA from here as well so I came here

SF13: I was rejected from medical, so because of my destiny I came here

SF14: I also didn't have any intention to come here, but like all others I came here accidentally

(Interview with SF11, SF12, SF13, and SF14 on 02.11.10)

Students from underprivileged areas, and particularly from rural areas, join UoSJP due to poor educational backgrounds and limited financial resources. Having attended vernacular-medium schools, these students' competency in subjects such as Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and English is limited (Rahman 1999; Khalique 2007). Additionally, these students are from poor families, and so cannot afford the fees charged by professional medical, engineering and other high-ranking multi-disciplinary universities in Karachi and other major cities. However, due to the district quota, these students have the opportunity to gain admission to UoSJP. The quota maximises their chances of admission to UoSJP, as they only have to compete with students from the same district (see Appendix V). UoSJP is therefore a viable higher education option for students from underprivileged areas, as the following quotations confirm:

SM3: As far as I am concerned, I am from poor family, and I am not in a position to go to a good university. That was the reason that I was compelled to come to Sindh University. If my family could have afforded then I would have gone to a good university [...]

SM4: Same here Sir, I belong to lower middle class, so financially I was forced to join Sindh University. My family didn't have money to get me into Medical University, and my father is working in this university, so he asked me to join this university

(Interview with SM3 and SM4 on 30.10.10)

There are many reasons, particularly financial reasons. I couldn't go to medical university, so Sindh University was the only option for the people of interior Sindh to get education. There are no seats for Sindhi students in Karachi University [...] and you know that it is very expensive to live there too, so it was the only option for me

(Interview with SM5 on 12.10.10)

In light of the above discussion, it can be inferred that UoSJP legitimises its position in the field of higher education based on capital related to 'higher education for all'. By contrast, elite universities which focus on producing professional doctors or engineers have a more selective approach to higher education, with opportunities only available to students with particular academic and financial backgrounds. While UoSJP's inclusive approach to admissions is clearly a positive source of capital, there are also challenges associated with this approach. The following section considers some of these limitations and challenges by analysing various dimensions of UoSJP, with a particular focus on the ESL programme.

5.4. Institutional influences of UoSJP on the ESL programme

The institutional influences of UoSJP are analysed in this section by examining the university's entry requirements for students; the introduction of ESL as a support programme; class sizes; relations between ESL teachers and administrators; assessment; the QEC (quality enhancement cell); and other learning resources. The following discussion considers how the university's capital (higher education for all) is embedded in these components, with particular reference to the ESL programme.

5.4.1. University's Entry Requirements

Since UoSJP attracts students from disadvantaged groups, their entry is facilitated by lowering the entry requirements in three ways. Firstly, students with HSCE scores as low as 45% are eligible to take the university's pre-entry test compared to minimum 60% for medical universities. Secondly, the pre-entry test has been made significantly less challenging than those at the nearby medical and engineering universities (Smith 1995). And finally, district and other special quotas provide the weakest candidates with access to some of the university's best departments. This admission policy affects the ESL programme in several ways, including class sizes (section 5.4.3), teaching quality (section 5.4.4), and assessment quality (see section 5.4.6).

5.4.2. Offering ESL as a support programme

As mentioned above, many candidates are accepted at UoSJP with minimal consideration of their educational background. Many candidates therefore lack the basic skills required to cope with the demands of higher education. Most of them have limited English language skills, as highlighted by TM7:

[...] we have the students mostly from village sides whose [educational and financial] background is not good. [...] when we look at their [educational] backgrounds; it is not satisfactory, especially when we are concerned with English language [skills]. If we see our education system, we can see that if not from 1st class [grade], then at least from 6th class [grade] everybody learn English language. So right from 6th to Intermediate, they spend 7 years [in learning English]. But when we look at these students from the point of view of proficiency in English, we get very much disappointed [...]

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

SM4 is a student from a rural area, and who gained admission to the IELL through the district quota. He defines his educational and English background in the following manner:

The problem is that I have a background of being a ‘villager’, where the concept of proper education is rare. You go to school once in a month. There was no English teaching in the schools. And you know that schools at villages teach in Sindhi. So, whatever I have learned about English before coming to university is the result of my own efforts, my own self study of grammar books [...]

(Interview with SM4 on 30.10.10)

In response to the limited English language skills of the majority of students, and particularly those from rural areas, the introduction of a supportive English language course seems logical. However, as mentioned earlier, this was not the only motivation for the introduction of English language courses at UoSJP; the initiative was also undertaken due to HEC requirements. The English language course was introduced as *English Compulsory* in 1990s, and was taught parallel to other subjects. The course was based on English literature, and taught in the traditional grammar-translation method. In 2006, this course was revised, and became a new interactive ESL programme which aimed to meet students’ needs as well as the newly-introduced HEC requirements (Curriculum for English 2008). The following quotation is TM5’s response to a question about the purpose of introducing the new ESL programme, and any problems associated with its implementation at UoSJP:

See the majority of students come here are from rural areas, and have weak [English language] background. [...] In many cases, I have observed that the students come

from rural areas have rich ideas. But the problem is that these students are unable to express these ideas orally. Ex-Vice Chancellor realised this problem and he thought that the weakness of these students who cannot speak, write, or read, they should be given help in the form of this course. The previous course was called compulsory English, but it was literature based. The language in that course was equal to nothing. So he introduced new course that is language based, and above all it is skilled based. There are drawbacks as well, but the course is good. But then the classes! Though the classes were divided into two groups, still these are large. This is the biggest difficulty we teachers face. Class that have 70 or 80 students is still very large

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

5.4.3. Large Class Sizes

As discussed above, UoSJP's capital is based in granting entry to large number of candidates in spite of limited university resources. It is therefore unsurprising that there is a high number of students per classroom and low number of teachers per students. However, an excessively high number of students per classroom, e.g. 150 to 200 can be seen to reflect the university's interests which are driven by profit, rather than the quality of education in relation to ESL programme specifically. Any interactive programmes, such as the ESL programme, are inevitably ineffective in such settings (Loo 2007). Large class sizes therefore form a barrier to a sense of community developing among students, while interactions between students and teachers are severely restricted. These limitations also notably affect teachers' pedagogic strategies and their perceived role in the community (See chapter 6 for elaborated discussion). TM7 described his concern about the effectiveness of the ESL programme in light of the large classes:

One of the major difficulties that have been there for ages is the large sizes of class. It has been said that the ideal size of the class should be 25 to 40, but we have to take the classes where two hundred students are sitting under one roof. So that is the first problem that a teacher cannot pay attention to individual students. It is not possible in one class, not even in the whole month, so taking feedback is also a problem. As I told you that we have adopted this new syllabus of English [ESL programme], so I think that this [ESL programme] itself is a much help in this regards. Unlike the old English Compulsory course, it [new ESL programme] is activity based, and very interactive [...] But again the problem is that, as I said that it's interactive and communicative, which means that a teacher has to interact with every student in the class, which is impossible because we are teaching two hundred students in the same class, so how a teacher can interact with all of them in fifty minute class. It is always those a few students, who are already very intelligent and interested, and they always dominate the class; they put other students behind; they are always willing and prompt to raise their hands to respond to the teachers. So it is only a few students who by their own are benefiting from this programme. But the other students, the majority of the students, ideally speaking, are not getting any

advantages of this programme, which I think is very much befitting to our demands and needs only if we have small class sizes

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

5.4.4. Teaching

In relation to the ESL programme the university tends to hire new teachers with limited consideration of their previous teaching experience; the only criteria for permanent faculty members are that they must have a first-class postgraduate degree, and they must succeed in their job interview. Temporary teachers (who are hired to teach exclusively on the ESL programme) are only required to have a second-class postgraduate degree and to pass a walk-in interview (UoSJP 2011b). Once they have passed their job interviews, applicants (temporary and permanent faculty alike) begin teaching as soon as they have been appointed, with no induction or teacher training beforehand. TM5 describes the issues below:

I have four year teaching experience, but I still think I need training. See a new teacher before getting into the class, must have some training. He/she should have some skills that are necessary for teaching, but [university's] administration doesn't realise it. They just send us in the classes after appointments, and they think that we are perfect teachers and we just go into the class and start teaching perfectly. It is not like that, they should arrange training for teachers. I think there should be particular training to teach English language and then there should be a general training to be a good teacher. It is not only happening here [IELL], if you go to any department of the university, you will find no such teachers' training have been organised. See there are many teachers who don't know the modern methods of teaching, so they are stuck with the old traditional way of teaching

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

When asked about the university administration's lack of attention to teacher training, TM5 gave the following response:

May be they don't want to spend money. They think it's not important. And most probably they don't want to spare us for a day. If there will be any training, then who will take classes? They want us to work like machines from the beginning. If there will be training then who will teach in the classes, because they don't have the substitutes. See, there are some good training organised by independent bodies and other organisations, and you know I was selected for one as well, but they didn't allow me, because who will take my classes then?' *[smiles ironically]*

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

This quotation from TM5 indicates that the university does not organise any training, nor does it allow faculty members to attend training provided by external organisations, including the HEC. This is largely due to the high teacher-student ratio; there are 31 faculty members (both permanent and temporary) at the IELL who are responsible for teaching ESL courses to

almost 8,000 first and second year students across all university departments, an average teacher-student ratio of 1:258. Additionally, permanent faculty members also teach major subjects (i.e., those related to literature and linguistics) to the IELL students in morning and evening sessions. Since teachers' timetables are already tightly packed, there is little time to devote to training sessions. These teachers are therefore required to conduct regular classes with whatever skills and resources they have available to them. According to TM5,

the system of university in this connection is very passive. They want us to be good teachers, they want us to be regular, but they never give us the facilities. We ask them, and we keep asking them, we keep writing letters to them for overhead projectors, this multimedia thing, computers in the classes, but there is no response from them. On the other hand, they say that you have to enhance the standard of English language among students; on the contrary we see that they are doing nothing. Verbally they agree to help, but if we miss one class, and they come to know, they become very angry. But they themselves don't realise that what they are doing with education

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

Novice teachers are expected to regularly teach large classes, with limited or no facilities, and to simultaneously fulfil the HEC and university's aim of enhancing the standards of English language among students. Under these circumstances, teachers resort to teaching methods outlined by TM7 below (see Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion).

[...] the tools that we call the AV [audio-visual] aids that are used in language classes, we almost have nothing, no technological support. We only got black board; in few cases we now got white boards and the markers. So we are still living in the old system, where they say 'chalk, talk and walk'. So this has been our methodology

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

5.4.5. Relations between ESL teachers and the administration

The ESL courses are kept as minor in the curriculum of the university, and these are treated accordingly. Notably, fewer credit hours per week are devoted to the ESL courses, with only two 50-minute classes assigned for ESL courses per week. TM7 unsurprisingly described the task of teaching language skills effectively to a class of 200 students in fifty minutes as 'next to impossible'. Adding to these difficulties, the timetabling of ESL courses creates further logistical problems for teachers. TM5 described it in following words:

I have to teach [ESL courses] in other departments. So sometimes I go by my motorbike and sometimes I have to walk. So, sometimes I have to leave the class 10 minutes earlier or reach in the next class 10 minutes late. [...] Let me tell you that the time of the first class that is always English class in most of the departments is

9am. And the students and teachers buses arrive in the campus sometimes at 9:15 or 9:20am. But administration forces us to reach in the classes at 9 sharp. If teachers' buses are arriving at 9:15 how come we reach in the classes on time? You know I personally went to the Dean, and told him that the teachers and students buses come late, but he doesn't care. See, they just give us the time table and don't care about how teachers reach and when they reach [on the campus]

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

UoSJP does provide transport for students and teachers; the arrangements are fairly sophisticated, and cover distances of up to 40km away from the Jamshoro campus. However, in practice, the management of transportation is largely ineffective, which leads to buses carrying students and teachers arriving late on the campus.

In light of this erratic transport service, most teachers prefer not to have classes timetabled for the first period. However, the Deans of Faculties, responsible for managing timetables, tend to schedule ESL courses in this first period. This reflects the subject's low prioritisation in comparison to major subjects, and means that ESL teachers using university transport invariably arrive late for their classes. It is important to note that the majority of ESL teachers are unable to afford personal modes of transport, and so are reliant on the university transport services; temporary teachers are paid PRs. 400 (£2.61) per hour, earning an average of PRs. 10,000 (£65.35) per month, while junior permanent teachers earn PRs. 24,000 (£153.86) per month.

Ultimately, the logistical issues which teachers face mean that a 50-minute ESL lesson soon becomes a 40-minute lesson; since at least ten minutes are required to record students' attendance in a large class, lesson time soon drops to no more than 30 minutes. Similar problems arise when ESL teachers must travel between departments in order to teach successive classes, as TM7 observed:

Yes there are back to back classes, so one of the two classes has to lose some time. [...] It is a difficult thing to keep this fact in mind, because time tables are made by the Deans of Faculties, and Deans are responsible of maintaining all the departments of their Faculty. But it can be done, but I think that nobody has ever concerned about these five-ten minutes that students will lose. And I think it's again because of the lack of communication between teachers and administration at faculty level

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

This quotation highlights the lack of communication between ESL teachers and the university administration, which suggests an antagonistic relationship. None of the university administrative staff were willing to discuss this issue with me, and so this relationship is

characterised from teachers' responses and my own observations. For example, TM7 further asserted that

to me, they [university's administration] seem very much unconcerned with what we are teaching, what our syllabus, our course outline, our timing, and our class ratio is. They don't seem to be interested in these things. If they are interested, they are interested in admitting more and more students, and sending them to us to teach, no matter what ever their number is, and then they say it's all our job to accommodate them in our prevailing facilities, which I think are not even sufficient to teach the half number of students. So there is no check and balance as the part of these people that they must be concerned with academic things

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

When asked about the effects of this communication gap between teachers and the university administration on his teaching, TM7 gave the following response:

It does make difference to our teaching. I am still stuck with my first point of large classes. So tell me who will solve this problem of large classes? First they [university's administration] have to provide us more teachers. Now this is not the job of our [IELL] director. He cannot provide us more teachers, he can only request in writing to them, but it is again these administration people who have the power to create more seats and recruit new people. Then, they have to provide us some more space [class rooms], like some more rooms should be there and they must be well equipped with AV aids. It's only then the results would be better. But if they are only concerned to throw the bulk of students to our department and leave us to handle all these students without any facility, then it does affect our teaching and the results won't be desirable.

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

5.4.6. Assessment

The university's capital – higher education for all – is also reflected in its assessment criteria. Since the university has an inclusive admissions policy, average assessment standards are perhaps unsurprising, as this ensures that students from poor educational backgrounds and lacking general academic skills can still gain degrees. This approach also has implications for ESL assessment, which is based on (1) their attendance in the classes [10 marks], (2) a final presentation/assignment [10 marks], and (3) a final unseen paper based examination [80 marks]. In following discussion, these assessment methods are considered in more detail, and it is argued that the ESL assessment criteria reflect the university's overall attitude towards the ESL programme.

1. As discussed in the previous section, the low prioritisation of the ESL programme adversely affects the quality of teaching (see Chapter 6 for detailed discussion). In turn, this leads to students' lack of motivation to attend classes (see Chapter 7 for detailed discussion).

Assigning marks based on attendance is therefore one of several strategies to encourage students to attend classes, and one which has been largely successful in maintaining attendance rates. However, attendance alone does not guarantee learning, as TM5 observed:

One thing I have noticed that students treat English [ESL] courses as a burden on them and their only purpose is to pass this course. They don't consider these classes as important, so they just come in the class for time pass or for attendance [...]

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

2. In order to encourage students' participation in classes and to develop their confidence, they are required to give assessed ten-minute presentations (10 marks) at least once a semester. As mentioned in Chapter 2, 26 ESL classes are conducted on average per semester; it is therefore hardly feasible for 200 students to each give ten-minute presentations every semester. This poorly-conceived approach to assessment suggests that the university's language policy, which promotes students' participation in ESL classes, conflicts with its admission policy, which promotes the entry of large number of students.

Once the impracticality of the presentation-as-assignment in large classes was acknowledged by the university, an alternative assignment was suggested. If teachers are unable to hear presentations from all the students, they can instead set students a 2,000 word written assignment. These assignments have become particular common among ESL teachers in light of their large class sizes and limited contact time per semester. However, teachers remain overwhelmed by their workload, and so feedback on these assignments is rarely provided for students:

As I said earlier, teachers come, they deliver lectures, we listen and they leave. Exams are taken, results are announced, 50 to 59 marks out of hundred are given, we get happy and the end. So, there are hardly any class activities. Teachers say 'this is your assignment, do it at home, give it back at this date, and you will get marks'. We don't get any feedback. We just need to copy certain things from books and submit to the teachers, and we cannot even get those papers back for feedback. We cannot even see how much marks we got on these assignments

(Interview with SM16 on 09.11.2010)

3. At the end of every semester, students must sit a written examination. The paper includes multiple choice questions (MCQs), filling in blanks, writing summaries and essays, and responding to open-ended questions. TM7 reflected fairly favourably on this written examination:

Well again the things are not ideal there. But if we compare our system with the one that was there some ten years ago, we are well placed, well trained, and the format of paper has also improved. Because now it is self-explanatory, it doesn't only rely on memory skills of students. But students are asked to do things looking at the paper there and then. Unlike past, there are no chances of cheating [copying] there anymore. So there are some positive things, but still things can be further improved

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

However, other teachers expressed concerns that, in contrast to the aims of the assessment in the course outline, which emphasises that four English language skills should be assessed (listening, speaking, writing, reading), this examination only assesses writing skills:

We have to assess the four skills in this course, right? But simply we are assessing one. We are simply assessing their writing skills. It's ok but what about the other three skills. They [university's administration] are not doing anything about it

(Interview with TF1 on 29.09.10)

I am not happy, because it is still in written form, and we only test their writing skills. We don't assess their other skills, as we don't have equipment. There should be some AV aids that we can use to assess their different skills

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

Although both TF1 and TM5 indicate an interest and a willingness to innovate their assessment methods, they maintain that university's administration does not support them in this. TM5 further highlights challenges to new assessment methods arising from a lack of facilities:

Sometimes we think to do that [introduce new assessment methods] but again the lack of facilities! If I have to carry on the examination the way I told you [assessing through activities in the class], then I have to get some stuff photocopied that I have to pay by my own, and that I can't do it from my salary. See, we don't even have a photocopy machine, and you know if we have to get prints of question paper, we have to buy our own papers. Only printer is available in the department. So how could we do that?

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

Moreover, TM5 argues that even with all the required facilities, he would not be able to assign grades to students' assignments. As the university follows a universal examination and grading policy, it does not allow individual teachers to assign marks on classroom activities. He argues that not assigning marks affect the motivation of students to take these assessments. TM5 further notes that teachers' workload and responsibilities mean that it is not feasible for them to actively promote the case for innovative assessment methods to the university

administration; when teachers have attempted to introduce new initiatives, the administration remains unsupportive:

No, I don't think so that they will permit us, because they follow uniformity in their policy regarding exams. If I do it, they will notice it and will ask me why I did that. So, we need permission from them. Actually the overall policy is like that. You know we should give them policies, but we are not that much active that we suggest them some innovation. [...] We believe that they won't listen to us, and it will take year for them to listen to us. We keep sending them reminders again and again but in the end when the response comes, it is mostly negative, and if it is positive, then they ask us to give more details. So they keep us busy in these things

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

In summary, UoSJP's assessment policy seems to focus on encouraging class attendance and participation, and the university's approach to assessment does seem to have improved over time. However, the assessment policy at UoSJP seems to be failing to achieve desired results, chiefly because the policy is more suited to small class sizes (e.g. the end-of-semester presentation / assignment). Although the quality of the written exam has improved over time, it continues to assess reading and writing skills alone. Listening skills are excluded from assessment criteria largely due to a lack of AV aides in classrooms. Finally, no support is provided to teachers seeking to introduce interactive assessment methods. In order to maintain a uniform assessment system across the university, the administration appears to penalise teachers who do not follow the prescribed pattern.

5.4.7. Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC)

In line with HEC's quality assurance policy, UoSJP established the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) in 2006. The official, overarching aim of the QEC is to 'develop the programme of activities to institutionalize a quality culture in higher education and commitment to continuous quality improvements' (UoSJP 2011c), while one of the specific objectives is 'to review the quality standards and the quality of teaching and learning in each subject area' (UoSJP 2011c). However, in practice, TM7 noted that QEC is limited to 'paperwork'. When asked about how QEC deals with issues specifically related to the ESL programme, TM7 gave the following response:

Well, it is just paperwork there [QEC]. We haven't so far got any feedback or suggestion from them. For last four-five years we have been filling forms and sending them reports on whatever we are doing in the classes as well as addressing our concerns. But we haven't heard anything from them whether we are going right

or wrong; whether they would like us to add certain things or to remove certain things. So, no such words came from them. I don't know what good they are for!

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

Similarly, the following quotation from TM5 describes his opinion on the HEC's promotion of ESL programmes, and the implementation of their policies through the QEC:

It is important only in paperwork. Everything, whether you are doing it or not, your paperwork should be proper that they will send to HEC and tell them that everything is going well. And this Quality Enhancement Cell [QEC] that has been introduced is only for paperwork. They just send us certain paper that we have to fill and send them back. That's it. It's about what subjects we are teaching, the topics, number of lectures and so on. [...] Yes, they ask us to give them the information about English courses, but we only send them the information of major classes. They never bother to ask us why we are not sending them the information of English courses and never have we bothered to do it. See this paper work take time, and we already have very busy schedule, so we complaint to our director that whether we should do these paper work or we take classes. Filling one STR [student teacher's report], takes more than two hours. So if we keep on filling these things, then we cannot teach properly, as you know we already have a lot of burden of classes and other activities

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

These quotations reflect that the standard of ESL programme is apparently so low that the teachers do not 'bother' to send their progress reports to the QEC; moreover, this oversight has not been noticed by the quality assurance body. In spite of official policy statements, then, it seems that the university has minimal interest in the quality of the ESL programme. As mentioned earlier, the designation of the ESL courses as minor introduced to satisfy HEC criteria has meant that it does not receive adequate support from the university on many levels. Teachers' performance is one of these negatively affected areas, as teachers do not devote an adequate amount of their time to the programme, and invest minimal effort in improving its quality.

5.4.8. Learning Resources

Libraries can play an important role in supporting and enhancing students' experiences of second language learning (Parkes 2006). However, the state of various department libraries at UoSJP reflects the poor state of the ESL programme. During fieldwork, I visited libraries in the IELL, Faculty of Pharmacy, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), and Information & Technology (IT) department. In the IELL library, three books related to English language learning (i.e. High School English Grammar & Composition by Wren & Martin (2010); English Grammar in Use by Raymond Murphy (1994); and Practical English Usage by

Michael Swan (2002)) were found. No similar books were found in any of the other libraries visited, in spite of the fact that all these departments offer ESL courses. Institutional influences are therefore also negatively affecting the way in which students can learn; in this case, the lack of ESL books in department libraries means that students are unable to reinforce their learning through personal reading. Officially, the IELL has provided a further reading list (along with the objectives and a detailed outline of the ESL programme) as part of a Self-Assessment Report for the QEC. Clearly, students are unable to access these books through the department library, and moreover, certain books on the reading list (e.g. Emery (1999) *English Fundamentals Generative Grammar*; Christopherson and Sandved (1969) *An Advanced English Grammar*; Turton (1995) *ABC of Common Grammatical Errors*) are not easily available anywhere in Pakistan.

5.5. Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which UoSJP's institutional policies and practices are shaped by its position in the field of higher education, and in turn, how these institutional influences shape teaching and learning on the ESL programme. It considered how UoSJP operates within the field of higher education in comparison to other universities of Pakistan, and revealed that UoSJP defines its capital, higher education for all, by offering admission to students who have been rejected by other universities and/or cannot afford private universities' high fees. This approach evidently provides disadvantaged groups with access to higher education. However, it has also reduced the quality of education offered by the university, which has mainly occurred as a result of the university's attempt to accommodate a large number of students with limited resources. This is partly reflected by the large class sizes (150 to 200) across the university.

In order to meet the language needs of disadvantaged students from non-elite English and vernacular-medium schools, UoSJP offers the ESL programme. This initiative aimed both to improve students' English language skills in their first two years, and to fulfil requirements set by the HEC. However, the university's treatment of the ESL programme significantly affect teaching and learning in the ESL programmes, in terms of its policies and practices, in relation to faculty hiring, teacher training, the relationship between the administration and ESL teachers, the number of students in ESL classes, the assessment criteria, ESL quality assurance, and learning support resources including libraries.

The university's policies and practices importantly influence students' motivation to study in the ESL programme, as well as their participation in classes, their relationships with teachers, and their examination performance. Teachers' relationships with the university administration, their teaching approaches and performance, their attitudes towards students and their perceptions of the programme quality are all similarly affected. The following chapter focuses on findings related to institutional influences on interactions between students and those between students and teachers in the community of the ESL classroom.

Chapter Six: Students' interactions with teachers and peers in the community of ESL classroom

This chapter analyses students' interactions in the community of the ESL classroom, with a focus on understanding how students interact with teachers and peers. Insights into the community of the ESL classroom are mainly gained from students' perspectives, but teachers' perspectives are also considered. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section focuses on teachers' pedagogic strategies which enhance or limit students' opportunities to participate in the classroom, and how these strategies increase or decrease students' legitimacy in the community. The second section focuses on how large class sizes affect student-student and student-teacher interactions, and how students' participation and legitimacy in the community is affected by this.

6.1. Teachers' pedagogic strategies and their interaction with students in the community of ESL classroom

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the majority of ESL teachers can be described as novice, as they have no previous teaching experience and have not received any training. I have focused exclusively on analysing these teachers' pedagogic strategies in this section for two reasons. Firstly, it was found that the ESL courses were only taught by novice teachers, and so these were the only teachers referred to by students in their interviews. Secondly, as mentioned in Chapter 4, I was only able to carry out classroom observations of these teachers during the fieldwork period due to time constraints and issues relating to access.

The analysis of the data collected from students, teachers and classroom observations suggest that, although the novice teachers are inexperienced, have not received teacher training, and operate within the same restraints (e.g. large classes, limited class time, lack of AV aids), pedagogic strategies differ significantly between these novice teachers. It is mainly because some of these novice teachers acknowledge the fact that they are not well trained as teachers. At the same time they also realise the fact that they are not expert in the field of ESL as their last degree was in English Literature. Therefore, they consider ESL classroom as opportunity to improve their teaching skills; at the same time learn new things from students. Therefore, they use pedagogic strategies which allow students maximum opportunities to participate in, and so give students a high level of legitimacy in the community of the ESL classroom. I refer to these novice teachers as *facilitators* in the further discussion.

By contrast, other novice teachers, although they realise the fact that they are not trained teachers and experts in ESL, focus on maintaining their authority as teachers in the classroom. They believe that they can only maintain their authority in the classroom if students do not challenge their knowledge and position. Therefore, they choose those strategies which limit students' participation in classroom, thereby reducing their status from full participants to peripheral participants in the community of the ESL classroom. I refer to these novice teachers as *knowledge transmitters* in the further discussion.

It was also found that facilitators and knowledge transmitters have different aims for the ESL programme. According to students, facilitators aim to 'learn' and 'improve [their] teaching practices' when they teach ESL courses, and while knowledge transmitters adopt a more didactic approach thus aim to 'teach only' and 'maintain their authority as teachers in the classes' (SF2, SM4, SF14, SM17).

For facilitator, teaching is viewed as a learning experience in which they understand students' different responses to their teaching strategies, and improve their teaching practices to facilitate students' learning. These teachers view classes as an opportunity to both teach students and to learn from them, as expressed by TF1:

Teaching is more like a learning experience [...] We are actually putting ourselves in the position of students [...] where we are not actually telling them, but learning something about them

(Interview with TF1 on 29.09.10)

These teachers therefore consider ESL classes as an opportunity to improve their teaching and class management skills. TM5 has been teaching for four years, but also described his approach to teaching as a process:

When I was newly appointed, I took my first class [without any experience] and it was not good, because it was my first experience of teaching [...] we can get confidence with the passage of time, slowly and gradually and we learn [teaching] techniques with the passage of time, and we slowly understand the nature of students, how they want to learn, how we can teach them [...] All this knowledge comes when we give more opportunities to students to talk, to share their ideas, to give us feedback on how we teach [...]

(Interview with TM5 on 29.10.10)

With this approach, these teachers allow students to participate as much as possible, in order to hear their opinions, to learn from their knowledge and to gain feedback on teaching strategies. They frequently interact with students, and respect their opinions:

[...] for [novice] teachers like me it necessary to [frequently] interact with students, because they [students] are accustomed with modern [teaching] methods that they have experienced in schools if they studied in good [private elite English medium] schools [...] Although I have [subject] knowledge, I still want that students should talk so that I learn new knowledge from them. So, I am there in the class not only to teach but also to learn from students [...]

(Interview with TM4 on 29.10.2012)

Students reacted positively to teachers who follow this approach, explaining that they felt comfortable and confident in their classes. As SM17 notes, students perceive the facilitators as a part of a community in the ESL classroom in which everybody interacts with each other in order to gain new knowledge of English language:

Though all these [novice] teachers are in the process of learning, but some act in a way that make me feel comfortable in their presence [...] I have found that some of these teachers come in the [ESL] class for the sake of learning like us. [...] they appreciate us if we share something new in the class. They appreciate if we ask them questions. Even if they don't know anything they say that "Ok I have noted that, and I will confirm it, and I will tell you again tomorrow" [...] it is like we all are students and we all are learning together.

(Interview with SM17 on 17.11.10)

Facilitator teachers demonstrate a flexible approach to discussions with students in ESL classes, acknowledging the fact that the students are up-to-date with new English language knowledge acquired via the internet and other forms of technology. This acknowledgement motivates them to adopt flexible attitudes in their teaching. Unlike traditional, authoritarian teachers (Harber and Davies 1998:98), facilitators display a willingness to listen to students, and appreciate it when students share new knowledge in the class. Although some teachers feel disappointed for their lack of familiarity with this knowledge, they nevertheless remain positive and encourage students to introduce new knowledge to the class:

I give positive expressions when students share some new facts that I don't know [...] Ofcourse I would be little disappointed with myself because as a teachers I should have known these facts. But I show my happy surprise for the sake of students so that they remain encouraged and keep bringing new knowledge in the class. [...] I ask them that they should bring references so that we can share it with all. [...] they feel good and encouraged [...]

(Interview with TF2 on 05.11.10)

Although this approach appreciates students who share new knowledge with the class, it only legitimises the membership of a few highly active students, and can demotivate other students (Soureshjani and Riahipour 2012). As legitimate membership in the community of the ESL classroom requires constant participation (Morita 2004; Hirst 2007; Barnawi 2009), active students frequently participate in classes in order to maintain their legitimacy in the community.

I have to [regularly] talk [participate in activities] in the class so that they [students and teachers] should know that I am an intelligent student. You know that if you stop talking then you will lose your image as intelligent student [...]

(Interview with SF1 on 23.09.10)

This usually has negative effects on students who do not participate, either because they lack confidence or because they miss opportunities. These students therefore feel less important as members in the community. TF2 admits that frequently praising a few particular students may lead to other students feeling insignificant in comparison. She therefore frequently communicates with quieter students:

[...] there are other students who feel as if they are let down and only that one student knows the most. So this situation is problematic, but I personally try my best to keep things in balance. Like one day there was a nice assignment of a student that I have showed to the whole class and at the same time I told them 'don't feel that you cannot do that, you can do better than that'. So, I have to make such comments which bring a kind of harmony among students

(Interview with TF2 on 05.11.10)

TF2's approach therefore motivates more students to work hard and explore new aspects of the subject, using alternative learning resources including the internet. Students work hard in order to participate and share their knowledge in the class, and so earn teachers' praise and approval:

[...] Madam X and sir Y do that [praise students]. They always get very happy when someone tells the class a new thing [related to English language]. They also appreciate that student a lot. [...] they are not like others who get angry if you tell them new thing. Like they ignore you and sometimes mock at you, so... but they (X and Y) are very nice. I personally didn't say something new in the class yet, but I always try that I should bring something new in the class so that they also appreciate me. Sometimes, I also prepare for the topic before going in their classes [...] I use our [course] books mostly, but sometimes I use internet as well. You know you can get good examples there [...]

(Interview with SF10 on 27.10.10)

Moreover, it was found that facilitators were more alert and sympathetic to students' potential problems, as their own experiences as students were still fresh in the memories. TM4 highlighted this aspect of his ESL teaching experience in the following account. When interacting with Kabutar (Pseudonym), a male student from a rural background, TM4 was reminded of his own experiences of university as a student from a rural area. Kabutar reminded TM4 of his younger self, and so through pedagogic strategies such as appreciation, encouragement and active acknowledgement of Kabutar's talent in the class, TM4 gave the student legitimacy and reinforced his membership in the community.

[...] you know I am from Sindhi [vernacular] medium school of my village, so when I came here [as a student] in the first year, I was quite shocked to see students participating, and talking and asking questions in the classes. They have no fear at all [...]. In the primary and secondary schools of villages you always have a fear of teachers. You are always required to remain silent or say what they want you to say. But there [at university] it was no such fear among students [...] I wanted to perform, participate and raise questions in the classes, but with this background I couldn't. But it happened with me only for two years. After the second year, I started participating. Like I kept asking myself what is difference between those who are participating and me? They are human being like me. I knew English but I could not speak properly, and it happened with practice [...]. So I think that you can change yourself even if you are from backward [rural] areas or from Sindhi medium schools. [...] In the first semester, I didn't realise that there are certain students who have the talent but they don't participate. But when exams were conducted and I checked copies, I found a copy of a student that was extra ordinary. I read his name and you know his name was a typical village name Kabutar. The next day, I went into the class and asked 'who is Kabutar?' He raised his hand, and you know he dressed like a villager, and was sitting at one corner. In fact, I never noticed him before. But then I called him on the [teachers'] dice [desk] and told him in front of the whole class that he wrote exceptionally well, and told him that he was very intelligent. I praised him and tell him that he should talk in the class and feel free to say whatever he likes. And you know then he started participating in the class [...] I see myself in him, because when I appear in exams I always do well, but I couldn't speak in the class. So, I always try to encourage such students.

(Interview with TM4 on 27.11.10)

Naturally, Kabutar was extremely grateful to TM4, appreciating his patience, encouragement and attention in the class. SM3's description of TM4 confirmed the teacher's supportive attitude towards students who shared his background:

Yes, there are some teachers like teacher X who appreciate students like us [villagers]. Actually we need more attention. I told you before that our schooling is not good, so we don't have confidence to participate in the classes, but if someone [teacher] pushes us and appreciates our work, or gives us chance to talk then that

person always has a lot of respect in our eyes. We feel good in the classes of these teachers, and always work hard

(Interview with SM3 on 30.10.10)

Overall, facilitators use pedagogic strategies which encourage interactions with students. They do this by allowing students to participate as fully as possible, by listening to their opinions, weighing their arguments, and respecting their feedback. By acting as facilitators in the class, these teachers work together with students to construct new shared knowledge and understandings of ESL. Students feel comfortable, confident, encouraged and motivated in facilitators' classes, which, according to Arnold and Brown (1999), are the basic features of a good second language learner.

By contrast, knowledge transmitters are usually more concerned with establishing their credibility and maintaining their authority in the classroom. These teachers believe that admitting or showing any kind of weakness would undermine their credibility and authority in the classes, and therefore use pedagogic strategies which are more likely to conceal their shortcomings. This is primarily achieved by discouraging interactions of any kind in the classroom; asking questions is therefore discouraged, and any student who violates this implicit rule is victimised. Knowledge transmitters appear to feel that their credibility as teachers is being challenged when students question their arguments or point out their mistakes, or when they are unable to answer students' questions. In order to maintain their authority, they therefore adopt approaches which ensure that their classroom is teacher-centred; namely, the teacher talks, the students listen, and are expected to obediently write down everything the teacher says.

Knowledge transmitters' lack of experience and poor subject knowledge significantly contribute to their sense of insecurity, which results in their negative attitudes towards students. This phenomenon was highlighted by many ESL and EFL non-native teachers from all over the world during an online discussion at ELTchat.com, '*Non-native English speakers and their insecurities about teaching a language*' (ELT chat 2011). The insecurity most commonly expressed by ESL teachers in this online discussion was the fear of being confronted by their students in the class. These teachers shared their experiences of feeling challenged when students ask difficult questions, or point out pronunciation, grammatical, or factual mistakes.

However, none of the teachers involved in the online discussion mentioned how they react in these situations. In the present study, it was found that knowledge transmitters commonly react aggressively to students who challenge them; unsurprisingly, this demotivates students and decreases their desire to participate in the class. SM17 described the way in which students feel uncomfortable and lacking confidence in knowledge transmitters' classes, which Arnold and Brown (1999) describe these feelings as key barriers to learning a second language:

In this semester, we have got some [novice] teachers who don't make us feel comfortable in the class. They want us to remain statue in the class, and they think that we shouldn't even be given opportunity to move, and if somebody [students] speaks he [she] gets criticised. These teachers don't give us chance to ask questions [...] if we ask them questions they feel uncomfortable [...] they feel that we are making fun of them

(Interview with SM17 on 17.11.10)

Although students primarily ask questions due to their own confusion or curiosity, knowledge transmitters seemed to perceive questions as a challenge to their personal authority in the classroom. This sense of insecurity means that even casual conversations of students in the classrooms are viewed as potentially threatening, as SM17 noted:

There is, I would say, some kind of sense of complexity in these teachers. When we talk to each other, these teachers think that we are talking about them, about their teaching style or about their mistakes. So they have this complexity problem; and they get emotional and angry if they see us talking to eachother in the classrooms

(Interview with SM17 on 17.11.10)

The knowledge transmitters mostly adopt a defensive approach in their teaching, which means that they avoid admitting to making mistakes in the class, and feel insulted if any students highlight them. In order to avoid acknowledging their mistakes, knowledge transmitters attempt to justify their incorrect answers. These attempts seem fairly futile, however, as students notice these strategies and identify them as part of knowledge transmitters' efforts to establish and maintain their credibility in the class. Moreover, students perceive these strategies as a failure on the part of knowledge transmitters who underestimate students' own knowledge and understanding:

[...] If you ask some of them [novice teachers] a question and if they don't know the answer, they make their own answers. They think that students are ignorant and will accept any answer. But if some student points out their wrong answers, they don't accept their mistake and feel insulted. [...] I think these teachers are trying to make

their place [in the department] and show us that they know a lot more than us. But we can see what they know and how much they know

(Interview with SM4 on 27.10.2010)

When knowledge transmitters adopt this approach in the classroom, clashes between them and students occur. In particular, students who persistently argue when they disagree with knowledge transmitters find themselves in trouble. Knowledge transmitters first try to ignore these students; if they persist, the knowledge transmitters become aggressive and shout at them. Consequently, students feel degraded and lose the confidence to participate in future. The following quotations from SF8, SF9 and SF6 illustrate this:

SF8: Madam A was very aggressive whenever one of our classfellows asked her some questions in the class. [...] She insulted him once because he asked many questions. Although he was a very intelligent student, the teacher's aggressive attitude made him quiet forever. We never saw him asking any question again

SF9: ... If these teachers don't know answers they should simply say that they don't know it, or they would tell us after confirming the answers. Instead they get angry at us and silent us forever!

(Interview with SF8 and SF9 on 22.10.10)

[...] at times, I can see that some teachers are explaining certain things inappropriately. I feel like I should tell them about it. But if I would try to tell them that they are wrong in their description then they would simply get angry and insult me

(Interview with SF6 on 18.10.10)

This defensive approach to teaching does not enable students to progress from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation in the community of ESL classroom. Instead, knowledge transmitters demote old-timers of the student community to a peripheral level. These old-timers are students who studied English in elite English medium schools and private language institutes, and who usually participate fully in ESL classes. However, their participation is curbed significantly in light of teachers' aggressive attitudes. SM17 described an incident which demonstrated how students can lose their motivation, interest and confidence due to the attitudes of knowledge transmitters. His account also indicated the way in which students move from full participation to the peripheral level, and so lose their legitimacy in the community of ESL classroom:

There was a student who used to ask questions from teacher A but the response of teacher was not very good. She just ignored him.[...] Sometimes he was insulted in the class.[...] Initially he was a good speaker in our class, but slowly and gradually

he was pushed away and then he stopped talking in the class.[...] this attitude of teacher impacted him a lot and everybody noticed it [...]

(Interview with SM17 on 17.11.10)

Students are not only insulted and ignored in the classroom as a result of knowledge transmitters' negative attitudes; if they continue to challenge their authority, they can allegedly even be punished through their exams:

[...] at times I find myself in a position to tell to these [novice] teachers something that I feel they don't know. At times they like it and encourage me, but some teachers really get upset, [...]. The result of this is shown in the examination. My results drop low. [...] I learned that you should never challenge some teacher at university. [...] Yes, if they are wrong, I mean one should have this capability to accept mistakes, one shouldn't be egoist like you are teacher, you are at a right position, you know things better. If a student is trying to tell you something additional, or something you are not right at, so a teacher should be flexible in a way that they should accept it. But some teachers usually do not accept this. They think that they have been insulted, and they deduct marks!

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.10)

Knowledge transmitters may attempt to increase their authority and credibility through harsh classroom strategies, but their students are evidently not convinced. Instead, students lose respect for these teachers; they continue to attend the classes since ESL courses are compulsory, but lose their interest and motivation to learn the courses. Nevertheless, since teachers assign their grades for the course, students must comply with their teaching and learning approaches in order to attain the required grades. Within the ESL classroom of a knowledge transmitter, a legitimate member of the community is viewed as a student who acts according to the teacher's interests, as SF2 reflected:

[...] I am a mouthy student, so some teachers ignore me. That's why I think I am not that close to them. I know some students who are closer to these teachers and get good marks [...] they are intelligent but they are diplomat [...] I mean that they try to go as teachers want. [...] I mean... see I cannot ignore if any teacher commit a mistake. And if I point them out they get angry. They do not like students who challenge their authority

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.10)

Knowledge transmitters' strategies therefore create a classroom context in which the concept of community is distorted, participation is discouraged, interactions restricted, and the communication gap both among students and between teachers and students is widened.

6.2 Effects of large classes on student-student and student-teacher interactions in the community of ESL classroom

As discussed in Chapter 3, large classes significantly influence teachers' pedagogic strategies, and determine teachers' role as facilitator or knowledge transmitter in the community of ESL classroom (Bligh 1972; McKeachie 1986; MacGregor et al. 2000; Cuseo 2007). This section focuses on how teachers — whether facilitators or knowledge transmitters — interact with students in relation to large classes, and how these interactions affect students' participation and legitimacy in the community.

Several ESL classes are taught in the lecture hall of the Faculty of Pharmacy at UoSJP, and the following description offers an insight into what a large ESL class means at this particular university. The lecture hall is about 1507 sq. ft., with 27 long wooden benches fixed in nine rows (with three benches in each row). Each bench is ideally designed to accommodate four students, but usually seats five. The lecture hall is used by 130 first-year ESL students, who fill the seats up to the last rows (which are around 40 ft. away from the teacher's desk). The hall has eight windows, and ten very noisy electrical fans. There is also an old sound system in the hall, but teachers rarely use this as it is unreliable (Rind 2008). The following quotation from SF2 offers her perspective on teachers' attitudes and students' experiences in this learning environment:

I have studied English in small classes [in school] where every student gets opportunity to talk to teachers. Teachers can focus on every student, and manage the whole class. But when it comes to larger classes [in the university], it is like a big hall you are sitting in. If there is no mic [microphone] you cannot hear the teacher if you are sitting at back, and there is this communication problem [...]. He/[she] [teacher] never asks anybody that if they [students] understand or not; but in schools teachers ask us or sometimes if students make faces they [teachers] understand that students have some problem. They ask students if they [students] have some problem. But at university, nobody cares. Teachers come [in the class], deliver lecture and they leave. They don't ask if anybody understand anything or not. Nobody cares; and this is because the class is very large and they cannot focus on each and every student

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.10)

TM7 offered the experience of teaching and learning in large ESL classes from a teacher's perspective:

One of the major difficulties that have been there for ages is the large size of classes. It has been said that the ideal size of a language class should be 25 to 40, but we have to take the classes where two hundred students are sitting under one roof. So that is the first problem that a teacher cannot pay attention to individual students [...] Unlike the old English compulsory course, it [new ESL programme] is activity based, and very interactive. But again the problem is that, as I said that it [the new ESL programme] is interactive and communicative, which means that a teacher has to interact with every student in the class, which is impossible because we are teaching two hundred students in the same class, so how a teacher can interact with all of them in fifty minutes class. It is always those a few students, who are already very intelligent and interested, and they always dominate the class; they put other students behind; they are always willing and prompt to raise their hands to respond to the teachers [...]

(Interview with TM7 on 16.11.10)

In these large classes, the students who participate are those who are willing to and prompt in responding to the teacher's questions. In order to demonstrate this willingness and promptness, students must sit as close as possible to the teacher, i.e. on the front benches. The physical structure of the lecture hall and the unavailability of a sophisticated sound system in these classes mean that it is difficult for teachers and students to interact with each other. Teachers therefore only interact with students who sit closer to their desk, which means that these are the students who are most able to participate fully in classes. Since participation is linked with legitimacy, it is only these students who are seen as legitimate members in the community of ESL classroom.

SF1 was one of the students who only discovered the importance of sitting on the front benches in order to be a legitimate member of the class during her ESL classes at UoSJP. In her previous experiences of schooling, she revealed that her seating position had never corresponded to the level of attention she gained from teachers. In the ESL class of 150 students at UoSJP, however, the situation is different. Teachers already see her as an active, intelligent student who is willing to answer teachers' questions and is ready to participate in activities, and so she does occasionally sit on the back-benches in the hall.

However, SF1 feels that if she sits on backbenches permanently, she will lose her credibility as a good student, and so lose her legitimacy in the community. She therefore views sitting on the front-benches frequently as a high priority; while she accepts that it is important her classmates should also have opportunities to sit on the front benches, she argues that it is their choice if they do this or not. For her, it is a 'matter of competition', and she can only compete

if she maintains her position as a legitimate member of the community who participates fully in the class.

In spite of the many problems of large ESL classes, as mentioned in the previous section, some teachers, mostly facilitators, do try to interact with all the students and to allow them to participate in class. Even when this interaction is in the form of asking questions and gaining feedback on the topics they teach, it is still challenging for teachers to interact with all students in the given time. These teachers therefore also end up focusing on the students who are prepared to participate and answer questions:

If you got 100, 150, or 200 students in your class, then the class will be dominated always by those who already know much and ready to answer. Teachers will always be happy when he [she] gets positive feedback from students, so he [she] will always go to those students which he [she] thinks will provide him [her] the right answers

(Interview with TM4 on 27.11.10)

Teachers largely use seating patterns in order to ascertain which students are prepared to answer questions, and assume that students on the back-benches are not interested in the subject. TF1 revealed her assumption that students sit on the back-benches because they are unwilling to participate:

There is general impression that those students who don't want to talk [participate in the classes], sit at back. They do that on purpose

(Interview with TF1 on 29.09.10)

Several teachers expressed fairly harsh attitudes towards students who sit on the back-benches. TF2 suggested that some teachers frequently single out these students and ask them rhetorical questions, often out of frustration, and mostly to embarrass these students:

As a teacher, I have to keep eye on every student, particularly to those who are at back and not talking. So, I point them out, so that they should be forced to focus. Sometimes, if I am in bad mood and frowning at them, then ... uh... then they would have bad impression [of teacher]. They would feel insulted, harassed...

(Interview with TF2 on 06.10.2010)

Teachers tend to address students on the back-benches aggressively, which can alienate them and make them feel excluded from the ESL community. These students are also mostly blamed for any disruptions during the lessons:

I think backbenchers are more highlighted (in negative way) by teachers. And who ever so sit at the back will have to face this attitude. Like if I come late and don't get seat at front, and have to sit at the back in the large hall, then I and all those who sit with me will be considered responsible for any disturbance in the class. Teachers mostly scold backbenchers, point them out, make them stand and ask them 'what I was teaching?' and so on in these situations

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.10)

Students who sit on the front-benches view themselves as legitimate members of ESL community, which is confirmed by teachers' attitudes towards them, because these students have come to the class to acquire knowledge. By contrast, both students on the front-benches and teachers believe that students on the back-benches come to classes for fun. Students feel that sitting on the front-benches requires boldness and willingness to participate in class; when these students sit on the back-benches, they feel 'dark and blocked' (SF14). SF11 discussed her experiences of sitting on both the back- and front-benches in the ESL class:

There is a huge difference. When I sit at the back, I can't focus [on lectures], because I get disturbed by all that talking and gossiping. It is a kind of fun, but then you lose [concentration] as well. But sitting on the front seats means you are in the eyes of teacher; you have to be attentive, and of course you work hard to answer teachers' questions and participate in the class [...]

(Interview with SF11 on 02.11.2010)

SF2 similarly understood the importance of sitting on the front seats in the large ESL classes. She believed that sitting on the front-benches will maintain her positive image in the eyes of teachers, and that she would gain more opportunities to participate in the classes:

Teachers think that those who are sitting on the front benches are more interested [in studies], and they are more intelligent, and want to understand more. And those who sit at the back just want to talk [with each other on non academic topics]

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.10)

Students like SF2, who want to maintain their legitimacy in the community of ESL class, therefore always aim to sit on the front-benches so that they are able to fully participate in the lesson. It was observed that students always competed to sit on the front-benches, often arriving at the lecture hall early in order to reserve these seats.

SF2: We have particular trend that whoever so come first in the class, reserve as many front seats as they can for their friends. So, those who come later will mostly have arguments on this issue.

R: So you are saying that even those who sit on the back benches try to get front seats?

SF2: Yes, because it make difference. So everybody in the class always try to sit on these front seats.

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.2010)

To summarize, ESL classes are not only large in terms of numbers of students, but also in terms of the physical infrastructure of the lecture halls in which they take place. In these large classes, teachers are confronted with problems including limited time, a lengthy syllabus, a lack of AV aids, and poorly-motivated students. Given these constraints, some teachers focus exclusively on maintaining their authority in the classroom; however, others do try to encourage at least some degree of student participation. It was observed that almost all teachers focussed on students who responded to their questions promptly and were willing to participate in the classes. These students are therefore viewed as legitimate members of the ESL community, while the rest are ignored and are seen as unwilling students. In order to participate fully and therefore be viewed as a legitimate member of the ESL community, students therefore prioritised sitting on the front-benches (as close to the teacher's desk as possible).

6.3. Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which students' learning experiences in the ESL programme are shaped by their interactions with teachers and peers in the community of ESL classroom. The findings discussed here have also revealed students' perceptions of teachers' attitudes and teaching approaches, the different pedagogic strategies deployed by teachers, and the effect of these different pedagogic strategies on students' participation and legitimacy in the community of the ESL classroom. Some teachers were found to play the role of facilitator or collaborator in the classroom, allowing students to participate fully in classes, listening to their opinions, respecting their arguments, as well as appreciating students' feedback on their teaching, acknowledging students' contributions to classes, and demonstrating empathy to students' problems. When in class with these teachers, students feel encouraged, confident and motivated to participate in the community of ESL classroom.

By contrast, other teachers work as knowledge transmitters in the classroom. These teachers prefer monologue lectures when teaching ESL, and strongly discourage students' participation. Students are usually not allowed to ask questions or express their concerns to these teachers. In their presence, students revealed that they lacked confidence, and felt discouraged and demotivated from participating in the community of the ESL classroom.

However, it was also found that all teachers, facilitators and knowledge transmitters, shared the common strategy of focusing on the students who sit at the front of the class for any interactive exercises or when seeking feedback. In the context of the large ESL class, students sitting on the front-benches are viewed as willing and motivated, while those at the back of the classroom are considered to be educationally weak, inactive, unwilling, and demotivated. The treatment of these students by teachers and students at the front of the class alike limits their participation and de-legitimises them in the community of the ESL classroom. The next chapter will further consider students' participation and legitimacy in the community of the ESL classroom, by analysing the ways in which their various identities interact with different aspects of the ESL programme.

Chapter Seven: Students' identities, previous learning experiences and the ESL programme

This chapter explores students' learning experiences in the ESL programme by analysing the way in which their various identities and previous leaning interact with different aspects of ESL programme. In particular, the chapter focuses on understanding how students foreground gender identities, rural-ethnic identities and identities constructed as a result of their previous leaning (i.e. as medical or engineering students) when interacting with the ESL programme. Additionally, the chapter consider how these identities affect their participation and membership in the community of the ESL classroom, and the impact of these identities on their learning experiences in the ESL programme.

The chapter is divided into four sections, with the first section analysing how students' gender identities interact with ESL textbooks, and how students' roles as learners interact with their other gender roles. The second section examines the interaction between students' rural-ethnic identities and different aspects of the ESL programme. The third section explores students' interaction with graph-based exercises in the ESL text books, and how their identities as medical or engineering students affect this. The final section discusses the interrelation of different identities, before a brief summary of the findings discussed in the whole chapter.

7. 1. Gender identities and students' learning experiences in the ESL programme

This section examines the way in which students' gender identities interact with ESL textbooks, with their roles as learners, and the impact of these interactions on their learning experiences in the ESL programme.

Female students participating in this study perceive higher education as an opportunity to contest the identities imposed upon them by society. Therefore, they always try to participate in all the educational activities in the university. These students also revealed that studying English is an important part of their university life, with the ESL programme appearing to offer them an opportunity to build their confidence through the *power* of English. Moreover, female students use English to interact with the rest of the class and to prove that they are not simply defined by expected roles:

Men think that we are only there to work in houses. But we can do more than that. We can study more effectively and be an important part in building our society [...] Studying at a university requires motivation, confidence to face people, and [English language] skills to understand the course contents. We [female students] are very much motivated to study because we know that it will change our lives. But to get confidence and skills we have to study English. This very idea motivates me to put more efforts in studying English [...]

(Interview with SF9 on 22.10.10)

The ESL textbooks used at the university are designed ‘to build the confidence of the students’ by giving them the ‘opportunity to learn language and practise it in the class’ (Howe et al. 2006: iv). To generate discussions among students, the textbooks suggest a number of activities based on pictures and images, with the aim of ‘engag[ing] the students in meaningful communicative use of language’ and ‘mak[ing] [their] experience of English language teaching and learning more interesting’ (Howe et al. 2006: iv).

However, it was observed that several exercises included on images which distressed female students, and made their English learning experiences unpleasant. For example, one picture depicted men studying, watching the business news on TV and operating computers; women are seen cleaning, ironing and cooking. These images reflect the typically male-dominated society and the pervasive socio-cultural norms in Pakistan, and in their depiction of women as subordinate to men, are clearly discriminatory (Rouse 2002; Zahra 2005; Delavande and Zafar 2011).

The exercise accompanying this picture ostensibly aims to generate discussion among the students and ‘to improve their speaking skills’ (Howe et al. 2006: iv), and the teacher therefore instructed students to examine the picture and then talk about it. Before long, the male students in the class began defending the representation of male roles in the picture as fair and realistic in the context of Pakistani society, with a few female students vocally contested the representation of women as discriminatory and talked about the need to challenge social norms that confine women to the home. However, male students dominated the discussion; the few vocal female students stopped participating in the discussion when male students cited religious sources to legitimate their claims, while the female students who had remained silent appeared uncomfortable during the exchanges. SF1 discussed this incident angrily, expressing her discomfort with such pictures which generate discussions in which male students are able to display their power:

I was unable to say anything, though I wanted to say a lot. But they [male students] were so confident and aggressive in their arguments that I lost my confidence to say anything. In fact, I felt fear and remained silent all the time. There were only two girls who were facing them all, but they [girls] also stopped arguing when they gave religious references

(Interview with SF1 on 23.09.10)

As a result of these dynamics, female students in the ESL class start losing interest in the topic as learners, and feel degraded as women. While they may have joined the class with the aim of ‘improving [their] English speaking skills’, female students are eventually only concerned with passing time until the class is over. These findings are consistent with those of Amna (2009:426); in her study of identity and curriculum at primary education in Pakistan, she argued that

the system that the government provides over education is another fact which contributes to women’s illiteracy. The government of Pakistan provided policies on the textbooks that show the preference [for] men over women, the emphasis was, and still remains, on the male figure, the skills he needs to be successful in the society [...] The textbooks picture a boy or man as a powerful, strong, and one who dominates every field of life, whereas the books depict a girl or a woman submissive, timid and one who is confined to the house and children.

One of the intended outcomes of the activity discussed above was to ‘bridge the gap’ between male and female students by encouraging them to interact with each other through discussion (Howe et al. 2006: iv). Interactive activities like this may help to increase interactions between students from different backgrounds and integrate the class as a whole (González-Lloret 2003); however, this was not the case in the ESL class observed at UoSJP. Male students’ dominance over female students in the discussion clearly exacerbated the communication gap between them. Moreover, the (male) teacher reacted in a notably passive way to the situation; appearing not to recognise the female students’ distress, he failed to intervene in the discussion.

Some chapters in the ESL textbook (i.e. Howe et al. 2006) are based on experiences and activities which are exclusively associated with men in Pakistan, such as driving. Although women are not legally banned from driving (as in Saudi Arabia), and women in wealthy areas of Karachi are seen driving cars, driving is culturally viewed as a male activity. It is particularly rare for women to drive in cities in Sindh such as Hyderabad, Sukkur, or Larkana,

and it is extremely unlikely that even women from wealthy backgrounds would drive in rural areas of Sindh.

Accordingly, female students in this study had been discouraged from driving, and therefore had no knowledge of traffic signals, road signs, and so on. Female students including SF1, SF2, and SF10 viewed driving as an act which would give them the freedom of mobility and facilitate their future professional and domestic life, and the kind of independence they had never enjoyed due to their dependence on male family members for mobility. SF1 and SF2 noted that their brothers completely opposed the idea of women driving, arguing that the family's honour would be negatively affected if their sisters were seen driving around. Meanwhile, SF10's family asserted that it would be unsafe for her to drive on the basis that women are exposed to exploitation when they travel in this way.

In light of this lack of exposure to driving and road awareness, female students' interest in one of the ESL units, 'A traffic nightmare' (Howe et al. 2006:3) was particularly notable. The unit included conversations, exercises, and drills related to driving skills, traffic signals, and road signs. SF2 noted that this unit provided a unique opportunity for her to learn about the meaning of particular road signs, and found the chapter a useful means of acquiring basic information about driving as well as improving her English language skills. This interest also encouraged her to use other resources to further support her knowledge, understanding and English language skills:

[...] I always wondered why he [her brother] changes speed suddenly on the highway and what those particular road signs mean. If I asked him, you know how they [men] react. But this chapter was very informative. I know a lot more about it now, and I did search about other road signs and rules from the net as well. Now it will be easy for me to drive if I ever get opportunity

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.10)

SF1 similarly reflected on her enjoyment of this particular unit:

I did every exercise of this chapter. I really enjoyed it a lot and found the information very helpful...

(Interview with SF1 on 23.09.10)

In this case, female students' gender identities clearly interacted positively with their identities as learners; their desire to learn about a topic previous restricted to them encouraged them to put more effort into their language learning. Unlike the previous activity

based around discussion of gender roles, this unit therefore successfully made female students' English language learning experience more pleasant and interactive, and supported their ability to gain new knowledge and understanding.

However, female students' enjoyment of this particular chapter seems fleeting in comparison to their wider experiences of balancing their gender identities and their identities as students. In particular, female students' gender identities in relation to their families and their expected household duties can conflict with their roles as university students. In Pakistan, women are expected to carry out all domestic tasks, including cooking, washing and cleaning; it is unlikely that male members of the family will carry out these tasks if there is a woman in the family. It is even more unlikely that a woman will receive support or help with household responsibilities when she is required to devote most of her time to her university course.

SF1 discussed her struggle to fulfil her roles as a daughter of a disabled father, and as the only sister of seven brothers. Along with her mother, SF1 is expected to carry out all the domestic work in the house, including making tea and preparing dinner for eight every night, washing the family's clothes at the weekend, cleaning the house twice a week and numerous other tasks. Describing her daily routine, she revealed that she leaves home for university at 7:30am, returns at 4pm, and after a short nap, makes and serves tea for her family. Around 7pm, she prepares dinner, and after everyone has eaten and she has cleared away the dishes, she finally has time to study.

It is important to note that SF1 was highly motivated to join university, which she believes will enable her to 'stand on [her] own feet' rather than depending on her future husband, as her mother has had to. SF1 is the first female member in her family, and third member overall, to be admitted to university. Perhaps unsurprisingly, she faced resistance from her brothers when she expressed an interest in joining university, as they argued that she was needed at home to take care of their father and to help their mother. SF1 was only able to join the university once she had convinced her brothers that her domestic responsibilities would not suffer; however, this commitment to household work means that she is left with minimal time to study and demonstrate her progress at university. As she has over six hours of class time (made up of five fifty minute classes) every day for six days a week, she also has a limited amount of time that she can use for extra study on campus.

With such a tight schedule at home and at university, SF1 devotes the maximum time to the subjects she views as most important. In particular, she prioritises major subjects over minors; since major subjects carry more marks and credit points, good marks in major subjects means good grades overall. As discussed earlier, the ESL courses are taught as a minor. This means that, even though SF1 considers ESL very important in order to ‘improve [her] language skills... [and]... gain confidence’, her heavy workload does not allow her to prioritise her ESL work. She therefore only studies ESL topics which might be examined, or which might be discussed in the class; consequently, she has only focused on Howe et al (2006), which is used in the class by teachers, and has never used Eastwood (2006) since it is never used in the class. During some semesters, SF1 has completely neglected her ESL work due to extra responsibilities at home and at the university.

In light of the pressures faced by female students like SF1, at home in addition to the pressures of university work, their engagement in the ESL programme can be reduced to the bare minimum in order to pass examinations. SF1’s experiences suggest that the designation of the ESL courses as minor (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5), when combined with conflicts between students’ gender identities and their identities as students, can further compound the de-prioritisation of the subject by (female) students.

7. 2. Rural-ethnic identities and students’ learning experiences in the ESL programme

This section examines the interaction of students’ rural-ethnic identities with different aspects of the ESL programme including textbooks and classroom interactions with teacher and peer, and the effects of these interactions on their learning experiences. In particular, this analysis aims to understand how students’ rural-ethnic identities limit their participation and affect their membership in the community of the ESL classroom.

As discussed in Chapter 3, a rural-ethnic identity in the context of Sindh usually denotes a villager who lacks confidence and is oppressed, poorly educated, and of lower social status. Contrary to these assumed characteristics, however, several students from rural villages participating in this study demonstrated considerable motivation when studying in the ESL programme. Learning English is a particular priority of these students, as it is an educational accomplishment which can distinguish them from uneducated people in rural areas, and moreover, can prepare them to participate in urban society. These aspirations lead to a high

level of interest and hard work from these students in the ESL programme at UoSJP. However, in spite of this personal motivation, their rural-ethnic identities often worked against them. When interacting with the ESL programme, their rural-ethnic identities were often foregrounded, and this significantly affected their ESL learning experiences.

SM3 is one the students who struggled with his rural-ethnic identity. He was struggling to maintain his place as active intelligent student at university by working hard on his English language skills, and practised English whenever he could. SM3 in fact approached me himself to be interviewed for the current study, and was emphatic that the conversation should take place in English (although we often had to use Sindhi instead). His enthusiasm to practise his English language skills at every opportunity was apparent.

SM3 revealed that he considers university education to be an important opportunity to gain confidence and success. In order to attract teachers' attention, he always sat at the front of the class; unlike other students from villages, he was always well-dressed. In particular, he always wore a tie, which he saw as an identity marker for students who wanted to be viewed as particularly studious. In spite of his efforts, however, SM3 admitted that he faced many problems related to his rural-ethnic identity, which was associated with being poorly educated. His English language skills (listening and speaking in particular) were very weak, which seemed to be a result of his vernacular-medium education and his consequent lack of exposure to English in the past. He told me that due to his weak listening skills, he often struggled to understand what teachers were saying, and to decipher their accent:

[...] teachers' speaking fluency and accent is strange and not consistent [...]. Some teachers are very fast while they speak. And personally speaking being a villager and educated in a village school where we have no teachers speaking in English, I sometimes don't understand them when they speak so fast. And sometimes their accent is not English... it's strange...it's different [...]

(Interview with SM3 on 30.10.10)

Most of the ESL teachers did not realise that students, and particularly those who have studied in rural vernacular-medium schools, struggled to understand their instructions in English. This may also be due to the fact that these teachers attempted to speak in American/British accent, but in reality remain closer to Pakistani English (Rahman 1990). This means that teachers not only mispronounce certain words when trying to recreate an American/British accent, but they also speak too quickly to convey the fluency of their

speech. These linguistic quirks, combined with teachers' use of poetic expressions from English literature (in an attempt at elegant speech), mean that all students struggle to understand them when they speak English, and weak listeners such as SM3 all the more so. Students from rural villages lack the confidence to voice their concerns to teachers, so many continue to struggle in silence. However, some teachers do realise students' difficulties during one-to-one interactions. For example, TF1 realised that her English instructions were unclear to most of the rural students when she was confronted with one such student in her class:

[...] In the beginning, I didn't realise that [some] students don't understand my accent and can't cope my speed. When I am very fluent, they don't understand my English [instructions], because they have never had teachers in their village schools who have spoken in English. So, it is difficult for these students. I come to know that when I instructed students about a topic in a class and asked them to write a paragraph on it. In the end of the task, I asked a student if he wrote the paragraph. He said that he did it, but when I checked his copy, he didn't write a word. When I asked the reason, he said he didn't understand my instructions in English because I spoke fast [...]. You know we have limited class time, so sometimes we have to talk fast but it is problematic for these students [...]

(Interview with TF1 on 29.09.10)

Notably, TF1 only noticed this particular student because he sat at the back of the classroom, and mostly remained silent during her lessons. Unlike SM3, most of students from rural backgrounds tend to sit at the back of the classroom; since they do not understand teachers' instructions, they avoid participating in classes. Another reason for their lack of participation in the class is their *Sindlish* accent (speaking English in Sindhi accent), and the particular pronunciation of certain words associated with this. Their accent and pronunciation mark these students as belonging to certain rural-ethnic group, and leads to them being ridiculed in by others students of same ethnic group (Sindhi speakers of urban areas) as well as other ethnic groups (Urdu speakers of urban areas) in the class.

These students are usually labelled as villagers as soon as they speak in the class, and in some cases, they are even criticised by teachers, who also refer to them as villagers. Consequently, most of the students from rural villages remain silent in the class. Marked by their accent and pronunciation, these students are left with a sense of inferiority and exclusion from the community of the ESL classroom. SF2, a Sindhi speaker of urban Hyderabad, described this to me:

[...] they are Sindhis and they come from villages specially. They are not confident in the classes because there is a touch of their mother tongue in their English. So, whenever they speak, they are mocked or when they speak everybody laugh at them. So, they try to remain silent. I mean they are discouraged [to participate]

(Interview with SF2 on 27.09.10)

Aside from their accent and pronunciation, another reason for students from rural backgrounds for not participating in the classes is their limited knowledge of the context of the units in the Howe et al. (2006). Units in Howe et al. (2006) are mostly based on a Western, urban context, drawing examples from American and British culture in particular. For example, Unit One is based around traffic problems for residents of beach road, Unit Two is based on the use of technology in domestic work, Unit Three is based on wild animals such as gorillas (which are not found in Pakistan), and so on. Students from urban areas are usually familiar with these examples, usually because they have studied in English-medium schools, where books originally written for Western schools are used. These texts therefore socialize students into English-speaking Western cultures from an early age. Moreover, students from urban backgrounds use the internet and watch foreign television channels via satellite dishes.

By contrast, students from rural villages have limited exposure to the world beyond their villages. The poor education in vernacular-medium schools and a lack of access to electronic media (including the internet) further limit their knowledge of the world. During class discussions around these units, students from rural areas therefore have very little to say. For example, during a discussion on Unit One, SM3 had little to contribute. Having been born and raised in a small village where only a few affluent families and feudal lords have vehicles, he had never witnessed traffic problems; indeed, there were no proper roads in his areas. Similarly, SM16 had lived exclusively in a remote, deserted village (Tharparkar), in a house with hardly any electronic equipment for the domestic use. Neither he nor any of his family members had ever used a microwave oven or vacuum cleaner. This lack of contextual knowledge meant that he was reluctant to take part in the discussion generated by Unit Two.

SM3 and SM16 were notably very enthusiastic as students, and were always willing to take part in any activity. However, their rural backgrounds meant that their knowledge of contexts discussed in the class was limited, and so they could not participate fully (or at all) in these discussions. However, more familiar subject matter, such as a unit called 'Pirani' (Howe et al. 2006:177), did enable these students to participate in the class discussion. This unit is set in a

village, and focuses on the culture and life of villages in Sindh. SM3 expressed his intense interest in this unit, as it complements his rural-ethnic identity:

I like the story of Pirani a lot in that section [...] It's very close to real life, the life which we were accustomed to at villages. It talks about the injustice that is there. The settings are familiar. It shows the culture of Sindh. So, I really feel that I know it very well [...]. Since I know the context very well, I can easily write about it and I can easily talk about it [...]. Teacher initiated a discussion [in the class in the context of this story], and I remember I participated with more confidence because I knew these things more than those who are from cities. So, I really enjoyed this unit

(Interview with SM3 on 30.10.10)

This unit therefore provided SM3 with an opportunity to improve his English language speaking skills by taking part in the discussion. He participated with more confidence due to his familiarity with the contextual and cultural setting of the story, and he had many opinions and personal experiences to share. The story of Pirani provided SM3 with a rare opportunity to participate in the community of ESL classroom, and moreover, to gain some legitimacy in the community.

7.3. Previous learning experiences and ESL programme

This section analyses how students' previous learning experience interact with the ESL exercises/activities which are based on graph comprehension, and the ways in which students construct and foreground the identities of being *medical* and *engineering* students in these interactions. The focus is to understand how these interactions affect students' participation in the community of ESL classroom, as well as their learning experiences. In doing so, this section first focuses on students' motivation to study biology or maths subjects in the Intermediate (equivalent to UK A-levels) for the HSCE, which is linked with their prior learning experiences.

As discussed in Chapter 2, parents mainly encourage their children to join professional medical or engineering universities in contemporary Pakistan. If a child is asked what they want to do in the future, the most common answers are to be a doctor or an engineer; it is instilled from a young age that these professions offer the highest level of economic prosperity. Alternative career options are therefore rarely considered, and so biology or maths are frequently chosen as major subjects at Intermediate level in order to become eligible for medical or engineering universities respectively. Arts subjects can also be chosen as majors, and all major subjects are studied for two years.

As well as studying their chosen subjects at school, many students receive private tuition in their major subjects, and after sitting the HSCE, most students join private institutes for around six months in order to prepare for the medical and engineering university pre-entry tests. Of the students participating in this study, all have therefore studied either biology or maths intensively for two and a half years. During this period, these students will have developed certain learning experiences (Dressen-Hammouda 2007) which are associated with biology and maths. Moreover, these students had expected to gain admission to medical or engineering universities, but having failed to do this, they joined IELL at UoSJP; during their first year, many of the students reported finding themselves in conflict with the new disciplinary setting in IELL. The conflict between their previous learning experiences and the ESL programme is of particular relevance to the present study, and it was found that this conflict largely arose during ESL exercises which required graph comprehension. When interacting with these exercises, students constructed their identities as medical or engineering students; underperformance in graph comprehension is explained in relation to being a medical student (and therefore from a biology background), while good performance is attributed to being an engineering student (and therefore from a maths background).

Both students and teachers viewed these graph comprehension exercises as requiring technical knowledge, and, more specifically, it was argued that engineering students already have this technical knowledge as they have studied graphs in the past, and so are comfortable interacting with these exercises. By contrast, it was asserted that medical students struggle with these exercises due to their lack of previous exposure to graphs when studying biology, and so they take more time to understand them in the ESL courses. Medical students therefore have to focus on understanding these graphs, rather than using them as indicators to improve their English language skills, as is intended. SF13 was one of the students with a biology background, and struggled with graph comprehension:

We medical students had so many problems with graphs and maps. This was a very difficult part for us. These [exercises] took a lot of time. At first, we didn't even understand what the purpose of these exercises was... may be because we are medical students... it was the waste of time [...]. I didn't learn anything about English in these exercises

(Interview with SF13 on 02.11.10)

SM4 similarly cited graph comprehension when asked to discuss the aspects of ESL textbooks he found difficult:

These books have some exercises that are typical. Like there are maps and charts [graphs]. So, these were not clear to me [...]. Yeah, when we were discussing in group then it got clearer to me with the help of a friend [...]. Personally I was not able to do that [...]

(Interview with SM4 on 30.10.10)

The group referred to here by SM4 was almost entirely made up of students from a biology background, with one student from a maths background. This latter student was the only one to quickly understand the graphs, and subsequently explained them to the rest of the group:

In our group we have many students from different backgrounds. Like, X [avoiding name] is very good in these exercises. He understood them very quickly. You know, he is an engineering student, so it's easy for him. We are medical students. We need some support in these exercises to understand them. And they take so much time. If I would have done it alone, the class time would have finished but I couldn't have understood it [graphs] [...]. If I spent the whole time only to understand it [graph], then how would I learn English?

(Interview with SM4 on 30.10.10)

These findings confirm Roth's (2002:9) arguments, which suggest that if learners are unfamiliar with graphs, 'most of the reading activity is then concerned with structuring the graph [and accompanying text] itself [...] rather than with relating it to some phenomenon'.

These findings also stress the important issue of time allowed to complete certain activities (Fischer et al. 2005; Yu et al. 2007). Students from biology backgrounds tend to take more time to comprehend graphs than those from maths backgrounds. An average of fifteen minutes in total is allocated for students to complete graph exercises in the class; however, it was observed that students from biology background spent these fifteen minutes simply trying to understand the information presented by the graphs. Students from maths backgrounds, by contrast, were able to finish the entire exercise in the given time. Learners who were unfamiliar with graphs due to their lack of exposure to them in their previous fields of knowledge were therefore left feeling confused and frustrated, as evident from the quotation from SF6 below:

Graphs are bit confusing in start. I was puzzled to see them, and then I have to go twice to understand them, but you know how much time we have in the classes! [...] engineering students are really good in these activities, and of course only they talk [participate] in the classes. Medical students like me are slow in these activities I think. It is very frustrating sometimes because we didn't study them before and we cannot understand them here. These [activities] are not for medical students, you know what I mean. I always get bore in these activities [...]

(Interview with SF6 on 18.10.10)

This struggle to comprehend graphs also extended to novice teachers who had previously studied biology or arts as major subjects. These novice teachers acknowledged that they found activities involving graphs time-consuming and confusing, and realised that students from non-maths backgrounds had similar difficulties:

There are certain exercises that are boring, lengthy... like map and graphs are given; you have to work on them. See these are technical things. These are technical not from language learning point of view. Like a graph is given here and how to study that! A teacher of Science can explain a graph in a better than a teacher of arts. We try our level best to explain, because we have studied these only at intermediate level. But think of a person who comes from arts side [...]. Those [students] who know the graphs [participate in the classes]. May be they are engineering students. They show interest, make their own explanations out of these graphs, and participate in the classes

(Interview with TM4 on 27.11.10)

Overall, then, students seemed to construct and foreground the identities as medical and engineering students when interacting with graph-based exercises in ESL textbooks. These identities reflect students' previous learning experiences, acquired during two and half years' learning biology or maths. As students from maths backgrounds were familiar with graphs from school, they seemed more comfortable with graph comprehension, and demonstrated a high level of interest in these exercises. Indeed, these were the only students to participate in the class during graph comprehension exercises.

By contrast, students from biology backgrounds had little or no previous knowledge of graphs, as their biology-related topics did not require graphical literacy skills. This lack of prior knowledge significantly affected their use of the allocated time for graph comprehension exercises, with most of their time taken up in trying to understand the information presented by the graphs. In spite of good English language skills and usual confidence when participating in the class, students from biology backgrounds were observed to be passive and uninvolved during graph exercises. As mentioned in Chapter 6, teachers mainly focus their attention on students who respond actively and promptly in the class. Engineering students are therefore engaged and participate in the class during graph comprehension exercises, and receive teachers' attention and approval, while medical students feel ignored.

7.4. Interrelation of identities

Although the preceding sections have discussed students' various identities separately, this is not to suggest that these identities are self-contained. Indeed, as social agents, students have multiple identities which intersect and overlap during interactions with different aspects of ESL programme. When responding to various situations, students shift from one identity to another. For example, SF10 foregrounds her gender identity as a female student when interacting with male students during ESL activities which require her to communicate with them. Due to cultural norms, SF10 feels uncomfortable during these interactions, and in order to keep a distance from male students, she avoids participating in these activities:

Being a girl I have to keep some distance from boys [male students]. You know some boys and girls come here [UoSJP] more for dating than study [...] Talking to boys for study would also make me look like I am dating them. People make stories you know, so I keep distance [...] yes, I don't take part in these activities in which I have to talk to boys. I mostly remain quiet if I have to.

(Interview with SF10 on 27.10.10)

SF10 therefore chooses to interact with other female students during these activities. However, she also foregrounds her ethnic identity (Sindhi) when interacting with Urdu speaking female students:

I keep some [communication] distance from Mohajir girls [female students] [...] I have observed that they [Mohajir female students] show attitude when any of us [Sindhi female students] try to talk to them. They usually group with only Mohajir girls. And when we talk to them they make fun of us. I don't like their attitude and try to keep distance.

(Interview with SF10 on 27.10.10)

In this case, SF10's ethnic identity takes precedence over her gender identity. While interacting with male peers, SF10 therefore foregrounds her gender identity, rather than choosing to enhance her identity as an ESL learner. When interacting with female peers, she similarly limits her interactions by foregrounding her ethnic identity. SF10 did report attempts at negotiating her ethnic identity in order to interact with Urdu speaking female students; however, the inconsistency of her attempts meant that they were unsuccessful. Consequently, SF10 continued to reinforce boundaries established by her ethnic identity, and sustained the communication gap between herself and female students of other ethnic identities. SF10's resistance to negotiate her gender and ethnic identities therefore restricted her interactions to students who shared her gender and ethnic identities (e.g. Sindhi female

students), which therefore limited her participation in the community of the ESL classroom overall.

7.5. Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the diverse ways in which students' learning experiences in the ESL programme are shaped by their various identities and previous learning experiences. The chapter has presented students as social agents with multiple identities, and these multiple identities intersect and overlap when interacting with different aspects of ESL programme. Students' identities are also socially structured, and can act to limit their actions and interactions with textbooks, peers, and teachers. However, some students seem to challenge their socially structured identities. Against certain social norms, students were found to exercise their choice and agency when constructing identities to a certain extent. SM3 provided an example of this, as he worked hard in order to challenge stereotypes related to rural identities.

Students' identities also conflict with certain aspects of the ESL programme. As discussed, students from biology backgrounds often struggled with graph comprehension exercises in the ESL courses due to their lack of exposure to graphs in their previous fields of knowledge. Moreover, students' different identities often required them to play different roles. The domestic duties expected of SF1 due to her gender identity, for example, limited her ability to devote sufficient time to studying and fulfilling her identity as an ESL learner, in spite of her interest and motivation to do so.

Overall, this chapter has demonstrated the importance of students' identities, and the different roles associated with these identities, in shaping their learning experiences in the ESL programme. The following chapter focuses on the implications of these findings for future researchers, policymakers, UoSJP and ESL teachers.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This thesis began by suggesting that the increasing demand for English in higher education has brought about important changes in the HEC's policies regarding teaching and learning of English in the public sector universities, and that the new ESL programme has been introduced with the aim of enhancing students' language learning experiences. The central research question of this thesis therefore focused on the impact of the ESL programme on students' learning experiences, using a case study methodology.

The aim of the thesis was to understand students' interactions with the ESL programme primarily from their perspectives, supplemented by the views of teachers and an understanding of the broader institutional context. Using a sociological approach, a theoretical framework was developed to analyse students' learning experiences by using the concepts of identity, community and institutional influences. Three sub-questions were formulated, which focused respectively on issues relating to students' identities, the community of ESL classroom, and institutional influences on ESL teaching and learning. These sub-questions were addressed in the preceding chapters. This final chapter takes the reader back to the initial stage when I developed my theoretical understanding of how I would examine students' learning experiences. It also presents a summary of the main findings, the implications of the research, and concludes the thesis with reflections on my methodological and theoretical orientation.

8.1. My theoretical understanding

This study explored students' learning experiences in the ESL programme in higher education. It suggests that learning a second language is a complex process in which number of individual and social factors play a vital role in shaping students' learning experiences. In conducting this research, I have experienced many theoretical shifts, which informed my methodological orientation and my research findings and analysis. This section narrates the theoretical shifts returning to my argument developed in chapter 3 that students' learning experiences need to be understood from both a structural and agency perspective.

I started my PhD with assumptions about learning and teaching. Like any novice researchers, I assumed that I understood all the problems that students face in the context of ESL classes at the UoSJP mainly due to my position as an ex-insider. I have assumed that students

experienced learning difficulties in the ESL programme because of certain behaviours, and thus my initial focus was to consider the introduction of some interventions to change these behaviours to enhance learning. At that stage I was unaware that I had adopted a behaviourist approach to learning. On presenting my initial research proposal to my supervisor, I was asked to reflect on the theoretical approaches in my research. I was asked some questions which challenged me to explicitly consider my ontological and epistemological stance in conducting research

Consequently I realised that instead of assuming that I knew students' learning experiences, I should first explore myself as a researcher. As such I used a research strategy that was firmly grounded in constructivism. I developed an understanding that students construct their own realities, and that the best way to understand this is from their own perspective. I thus chose to use a qualitative research approach that would allow me to foreground students' perspective in understanding their learning experiences. This research stance directed me towards phenomenography theory.

However, I soon found that there were some methodological inconsistencies in the phenomenographic research approach. In particular, I found that this approach did not provide details of the actual engaged research process, i.e. research designs and analysis (Ashworth and Lucas 2000; Richardson 2000). As a new researcher, it would have been a challenge for me to effectively utilise the strengths of this research approach if details of research design and analysis are not available (Entwistle 1997). Therefore, I followed Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) and Biggs (1987) who developed their work using a phenomenographic approach leading to the development of learning inventories. I thus decided to use Biggs' R-SPQ-2F in analysing students' learning experiences. However, three issues troubled me. Firstly, the R-SPQ-2F was designed for the Australian context, and its validity in Pakistani context was an issue. In this respect, I found a study of Siddiqui (2006) that validates this instrument in the context of Pakistani higher education. Secondly, the learning inventory requires quantitative data analysis which was contrary to my use of a qualitative research approach. Finally, I realised that the learning inventory may only provide a limited perspective about students' learning experiences.

More fundamentally, I realised that the way I was planning to conduct this research would lead me to understand students' learning experiences from agent perspective only. As such I

would ignore the structural influences on students' learning experiences. I assumed that students learn as individuals freed from their context. This implied that social and contextual influences have no bearing on shaping their learning experiences. To remedy this gap, I sought literature which is grounded in a structure and agency perspective. This time, I sought a sensitising theory that would sharpen my understanding that individuals practice their agency, but not in context of their own making. This understanding brought me to the Activity theory.

I found that Activity theory is a helpful analytical tool that offers a framework to analyse individuals' interactions from their perspectives in their contexts. To better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Activity theory, I followed those studies which used it for analysing students' learning experiences in higher education. The way such studies used the Activity theory highlighted the importance of concepts such as students' identities, community, and structural (institutional) influences that shape students' learning experiences. However, Activity theory as a theoretical framework does not offer a clear and sound conceptual understanding of these concepts.

With these shortcomings, I decided to use the Activity theory to a very limited extent, i.e. only to identify the variables that shape students' learning experiences. Like phenomenography or Biggs' R-SPQ-2F, Activity theory also served as one of the stages of my research journey to reach the final decision of using identity, community and institutional influences in analysing students' learning experiences (see figure 6).

The next step of my research journey was to conceptualise these three concepts in ways that were aligned to my theoretical stance of structure and agency. To conceptualise identity, I initially followed the traditional symbolic interactionism of Blumer (1969). This tradition follows the assumption that individuals are free to define the situation in any way they choose with the consequence that society is always thought to be in a state of flux with no real fixed organizational form or structure. Identity as such is conceptualised as embedded in interaction with others. Individuals are free to shape their interactions, and construct or, negotiate identities. I found this understanding of identity limiting in bridging the structure and agency divide. Thus, I studied the 'structural approach' of symbolic interactionism (Stryker 1980) to find the ways in which I could bridge the structure and agency divide. I thus

adopted an approach to identity which understood identity formation as an interactional activity that to some extent is shaped by structure and agents' choice.

To conceptualise the community of the ESL classroom, I initially followed Ferdinand Tönnies's 'Gemeinschaft' which is large group of people who gather to form an association for their own self-interest. In *Gemeinschafts*, members are structured by mutual principles of behaviours and responsibilities to each other and to the community at large. Members usually have ascribed status in these communities. This understanding to community was quite structuralist and contradicted my stance of structure and agency. Thus, I adopted Lave and Wenger's (1991) *Community of Practice*. Like *Gemeinschaft*, people are grouped in large associations for their own self-interests in community of practices. However, they develop themselves personally and professionally through the process of sharing information and experiences within the group. This understanding enabled me to conceptualise the community of the ESL classroom as one which is shaped by structure but also acknowledges that individuals practice express agency in a community.

The analysis of institutional influences on the ESL programme drew upon the Bourdieusian approach to conceptualise the influences of macro structure (i.e. the influence of higher education on the policies of the university; the influence of university policies on its departments; the influence of departments on the structure of the programmes offered) on the micro structure (i.e. the interactions between students and teachers) in higher education.

These three concepts enabled me to analyse students' experiences from a structure and agency perspective as reflected in the finding chapters. As such my first findings chapter titled 'institutional influences on the ESL programme' highlights how individuals' actions and choices are shaped by the structure. Likewise, the second finding chapter, i.e. 'students' interactions with teachers and peers in the community of ESL classroom' provides a rich description of how interactions between teachers and students take place within the community of an ESL classroom. This chapter argues that structural influences shape teachers' pedagogic strategies and therefore their interactions with students. At the same time some teachers practice their agency and play the role of facilitators. The third findings chapter discusses how individuals are ascribed certain identities and how they contest these ascribed identities. Although the detailed summary of these findings chapters is given in the following section, the discussion above highlights the fact that using these three concepts

enabled me to bridge the structure and agency divide in understanding students' learning experiences in an ESL programme in Pakistan. Institutional influences in particular enabled me to understand the structural context of UoSJP and higher education in Pakistan more generally which shapes how students learn. In contrast, community and identity privilege students' learning from their vantage points recognising that both their identities and participation in the ESL learning community have structural determinants. In so doing, I have shed light on students' learning experiences from multiple lenses using a range of relevant theoretical constructs.

8.2. Summary of findings

Chapter 5 discussed institutional influences on ESL teaching and learning. In doing so, the field of higher education of Pakistan was conceptualised with a specific reference to English language teaching and learning, and UoSJP was located within this field. The chapter focussed on analysing the university's various policies and practices that directly and/or indirectly influence ESL teaching and learning.

With reference to UoSJP's position in the field of higher education of Pakistan, the chapter indicated that the university offers admission to a large number of students – a policy which directly impacts the overall quality of education provided. In particular, it was found that the university's lenient admission policies lead to a large number of students with poor educational backgrounds and limited English language skills gaining admission to various university departments. In compliance with the HEC's requirements, UoSJP introduced the new ESL programme in 2006. However, its policy to offer admission to the vast majority of applicants, in spite of limited resources, has adversely impacted the quality of ESL teaching and learning.

The findings suggested a conflict between university's policies and practices of the ESL, which was observed in number of ways:

1. University policy on class sizes: It was found that class sizes (150 to 200 students in a classroom) are too large to effectively conduct interactive ESL activities in a limited space of time (50 minutes). In addition, no teaching support tools — audio-visual aids, interactive white boards, overhead projectors, sophisticated sound system— are available to teachers in these classrooms.

2. University policy on employing ESL teachers: The findings suggested that there are fewer ESL teachers at the university than are required. Moreover, the university's policy endorses the hiring of inexperienced and untrained teaching staff, with no requirement for teacher training to be organised. Indeed, teachers reported being discouraged from attending independent or HEC-organised training sessions due to their heavy workload and the lack of substitute teachers to cover their classes.
3. Designation of ESL courses as minor: As minor, ESL courses have fewer credit points and fewer teaching hours than major subject, which was found to have three implications for teaching and learning: (a) students devote less time and attention to minors (b) teachers put in less effort when teaching minors (c) the university administration neglects the needs and demands of the ESL teachers.
4. University's quality and assurance policy: The university's Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) has had minimal interaction with the ESL programme. The over-burdened ESL teachers avoid sending ESL progress reports to the QEC, and in return, the QEC does not follow up on the quality of the programme.
5. Lack of university policy on ESL resources: It was observed that the university does not have any specific policies which promote ESL by offering sufficient learning resources, such as up-to-date ESL books in the libraries or sophisticated language laboratories.

Overall, the findings of this chapter suggested that UoSJP does not take the ESL programme seriously. The ESL programme was introduced purely because it was an HEC requirement, and has been treated more as a burden than as a priority. This chapter therefore highlighted the gaps between the UoSJP's stated policies and actual practices in relation to the ESL programme.

Chapter 6 discussed students' interactions with teachers and peers in the community of the ESL classroom. The chapter attempted to conceptualise the ESL classroom as a community, analysing the ways in which teachers' pedagogic strategies and class size shape student-student and students-teacher interaction; how these interactions limit or extent students' participation and therefore legitimacy in the community of ESL classroom.

It was found that teachers (who were all novices) were either play the role of facilitator or knowledge transmitter. Teachers' behaviour in class significantly affected students' participation and as well as their motivation to study ESL. Findings in relation to students' interactions with teachers and their peers are outlined below:

1. Teachers as knowledge transmitters: Like all novice teachers, these teachers have no teaching experience, skills and self-confidence, and so they adopt a highly defensive approach to teaching, and are deeply concerned with maintaining their authority and credibility as teachers. These teachers therefore view a silent class as a well-behaved class, and accordingly prefer long, monologue-style lectures in order to cover all the required material.

Interactive exercises are therefore avoided, as these require time and effort on the part of the teachers, and moreover, provide the opportunity for discussion and questions which could challenge their authority, reveal their own lack of knowledge or cause them to lose control of the class. If any students do challenge knowledge transmitters' authority, they seek to justify their incorrect answers, and then victimise these students in the class and even in their exams.

Unsurprisingly, students perceived these teachers as unfriendly, non-interactive, threatening, and less knowledgeable than other teachers (see below). Moreover, students feel demotivated, uncomfortable, and lack confidence in these teachers' classes.

2. Teachers as facilitators: In spite of the unsupportive institutional context at UoSJP, some teachers nevertheless exercised their individual agency to adopt different pedagogic strategies by allowing students to participate fully in the class, listening to their opinions, respecting their arguments, as well as appreciating students' feedback on their teaching, acknowledging students' contributions to the class, and demonstrating empathy to students' problems. When in class with these teachers, students feel encouraged, confident and motivated to participate in the community of ESL classroom.
3. Student-student and student-teacher interactions in large classes: It was also found that all novice teachers, facilitators and knowledge transmitters, shared the common strategy of focusing on the students who sit at the strong of the class for any interactive exercises or when seeking feedback. When teachers wanted to encourage students' class participation,

whether in terms of asking questions, gaining students' feedback, or allowing students to express their opinions, they usually focused on students who were willing to participate in the class, interested in the topic and responded promptly to their questions. Due to the large number of students (as well as the large physical structure of the ESL lecture hall), teachers mostly identified students on the front-benches as those who were willing to participate. Students therefore perceived sitting on the front-benches as particularly important, as they were able to hear teachers' questions and respond promptly. This visibility indicated their willingness to participate in the class, which further maintained their legitimacy in the community of the ESL class. By contrast, if students sat on the back-benches, both teachers and students sitting at on the front-benches assume that they are unwilling to participate in the class. They were commonly viewed as uninterested in the subject, as trouble makers, educationally weak, and lacking confidence. It was observed that teachers treated students on the back-benches fairly harshly, asking them the rhetorical questions to embarrass them, insulting them by singling them out to the class, and blaming them for any disruption during the lesson.

Overall, this chapter considered important issues relating to teachers' roles in the community of ESL class, and examined student-student and student-teacher interactions in the large physical space of the ESL classroom.

Chapter 7 addressed the research sub-question relating to the interaction between students' identities and the ESL programme, and discussed findings in relation to students' gender identities, rural-ethnic identities, and identities constructed as a result of students' previous learning experience. It was found that students frequently foregrounded these various identities when interacting with different aspects of the ESL programme. Moreover, the data suggested that some aspects of the ESL programme conflicted with students' identities, while others complemented them. In both cases, students' participation in the community of ESL classroom and their overall ESL learning experience was significantly influenced by their various identities.

1. Gender identities: Students' gender identities were found to conflict with certain images in Howe et al. (2006), which depicted stereotypical gender roles (p. 34). During class discussions based on these images, male students dominated and prevented female students from challenging these images. This led to female students feeling degraded and

discouraged, therefore losing their interest and confidence to participate in the class. It was also found that female students' expected gender-related roles for example, as sisters and daughters, conflicted with their roles as ESL learners. Data suggested that these female students were overburdened by the combination of domestic and university responsibilities. When prioritising their university workload, these students therefore focused on major subjects; as the ESL courses are minor which have little influence over their grades, they often neglect their ESL work.

However, female students' gender identities were found to complement certain units on the ESL course. Female students expressed particular interest and motivation to study units which focused on areas of experience which are exclusively male domains in Pakistan, such as driving. This increased motivation to study the topic meant that these students could further enhance their English language skills, and even used the internet to learn more about the topic beyond the prescribed course books.

2. Rural-ethnic identities: Students' rural-ethnic identities as villagers were found to conflict with certain units in Howe et al. (2006). In particular, these units were based on exclusively Western, urban contexts, which are unfamiliar to students from rural backgrounds. When interacting with these units, students from rural areas therefore felt isolated, and had little to contribute to the class discussion. However, students' rural-ethnic identities as villagers also complimented certain units (for example, Howe et al. 2006:177) which were set in rural contexts. Students from rural backgrounds demonstrated a high level of interest and motivation when interacting with these units, and their familiarity with the rural context led them to participate enthusiastically and confidently in class discussions and writing tasks.

The chapter also presented empirical evidence which suggested that students foregrounded their rural-ethnic identities when interacting with peers and teachers in ESL classes. Their rural-ethnic identities often conflict with the identities of peers and teachers, which significantly impact on these students' participation and membership in the community of ESL classroom, and so their overall learning experiences in the ESL programme. Students' rural-ethnic identities were found to affect their interactions with peers and teachers for two main reasons. Firstly, as villagers, they were perceived to have

poor educational backgrounds and limited English language skills. Peers mocked their Sindhi accent, which in turn discouraged these students from participating in the class.

Secondly, teachers occasionally berated these students by referring to their identities as villagers, which was marked by their struggle to understand teachers' accents and talking speech. This once again meant that students from rural backgrounds avoided participating in the class, and usually sat on the back-benches. Their lack of confidence and teachers' unsympathetic attitudes further meant that these students avoided interacting with teachers. Consequently, teachers did not devote much attention to students from rural backgrounds, either choosing to ignore them or showing frustration with them for failing to understand lectures. Rather than addressing rural students' problems, teachers instead ignore, insult or embarrass them during classes; these students are therefore unlikely to be able to improve their English language skills.

3. Previous learning experiences and identities: Students' identities as former medical students were found to conflict with graph-based exercises of Howe et al. (2006) and Eastwood (2006). These students had devoted two and a half years to studying biology in preparation for medical universities' pre-entry tests. During this period, they developed certain learning experiences which are associated with biology, and which do not include graph comprehension. These students therefore struggled to understand graph-based exercises in the ESL courses. Whereas they often spent the full amount of time allocated for these exercises (approx. 15 minutes) simply trying to understand the information presented in the graphs, students from engineering backgrounds (who had spent two and a half years studying maths) easily completed the task with the allocated time. As their previous learning experiences included developing graph comprehension skills, the engineering students were able to fully participate in the class during these exercises, while the medical students were left feeling frustrated, discouraged and ignored.

In summary, the three finding chapters contributed to answering the overarching research question – *how do students experience learning in the ESL programme in higher education* – by considering various aspects of students' learning experiences in the ESL programme from a structure and agent perspective. Using the chosen theoretical framework (see figure 6), analysis was done at both a macro- and micro-level. At the macro-level, the structural influences of the HEC and UoSJP on ESL teaching and learning were analysed, while at the

micro-level, individual student-teacher and student-student interactions in the community of ESL classroom were analysed. At an even greater level of detail, the interactions between student identities' as learners with their other identities were analysed. The findings from analysis at the macro- to the micro-level offer many implications for teachers, institutions, policy makers and of course for researchers; these implications are considered in detail in the following section.

8.3. Implications of Research

Due to the use of a case study, there are evidently certain limitations in terms of the generalizability of the thesis's findings in different contexts. However, findings from this research study may prove useful not only for future HEC and UoSJP policies and decisions on ESL teaching and learning, but also as an empirical example to other higher education institutions offering ESL programmes. The insights offered into how policies and practices impact on students learning experiences, for example, could prove particularly useful. The implications which have emerged from this research have been classified into three main areas: implications for policy makers, teachers, and for further research.

8.3.1. Implications for policy makers

Findings from this study are essential for policy makers (i.e. HEC and UoSJP), which are seeking to progress from traditional approaches to ESL teaching and learning to more innovative and interactive approaches. When making this transition, policy makers should consider the following strategic areas, which have been identified as key aspects to enhance the quality of ESL teaching and learning in any higher education institution.

i. Programme status. This study highlighted the importance of commitment from the HEC to improve the quality of ESL teaching and learning in higher education. The HEC devoted time, resources and energy to conducting research, training teachers and developing new courses for the ESL programme. However, although the HEC regulates ESL teaching in all public sector universities, and made the ESL programme compulsory for undergraduates, it did not define the programme's status. Individual universities therefore defined the status of the ESL programme in line with their own interests, which led to the courses of ESL programme being adopted as minor with fewer credit points and fewer teaching hours than major subjects. The current analysis suggested that the ESL programme was therefore not a significant priority for students, teachers or the university administration due to its status as

minor. Changing the ESL courses to major may therefore improve its status as a subject. It is therefore recommended that the HEC reconsiders its policy on the programme status, and require all universities to teach the ESL courses as major. This may lead to increased commitments in terms of time, finances and human resources on the part of universities. The HEC should therefore re-design its policy in order to meet the needs of all universities, which includes providing required financial and technical support for the implementation of the policy.

ii. Performance of the QEC. An important issue highlighted in this study was the role of the QEC in enhancing the quality of the ESL programme. This research has questioned the role of the QEC in promoting the progress and performance of the ESL programme, and therefore suggests that the HEC reconsiders the role of the QEC in relation to the ESL programme. The QEC should be held accountable for its progress in relation to the ESL programme, and regular checks should be carried out to ensure that the QEC is monitoring ESL progress and performance. In order to make the QEC more effective in relation to the ESL programme, the QEC should be required compulsorily to regularly provide feedback and recommendations on quality improvement for ESL teaching and learning.

iii. Implications for teacher training. This study has shown that the lack of support and training for faculty members is a significant barrier to the achievement of effective ESL teaching and learning at the university. These findings are consistent with those of the NCE, which led the HEC to acknowledge the importance of teacher training and use resources to organise teacher training and workshops. These training sessions and workshops are open to all ESL teachers, but teachers from public sector universities are prioritised when accessing these courses. However, as found in this study, UoSJP (a public sector university) has an insufficient number of ESL teachers; due to these teachers' heavy workload and a lack of substitute teachers, the university discourages ESL teachers from attending training sessions. Moreover, the university hires teachers who lack previous teaching experience and who are expected to teach without any preliminary training. Based on these findings, it is therefore recommended that the HEC considers a policy which makes it mandatory for public sector universities to send their ESL teachers to a training session or workshop before they begin teaching.

iv. Text books. During this study, it was found that ESL text books are of a fairly good quality when compared to textbooks used on old course at the university, and include numerous interactive activities based on different aspects of Pakistani life. However, there are two important areas which should be considered. Firstly, it was found that students were uncomfortable with the content of certain units in the ESL textbooks. Although the inclusion of certain topics could be justified by arguing that they reflect the true nature of contemporary Pakistan, the quality of students' learning experiences should be prioritised. It is therefore recommended that the selection of any textbook content should be made with the careful consideration of, for example, gender, rural / urban, ethnic and other identities. Remaining sensitive to students' various identities should be a crucial step in the process of developing good quality ESL textbooks.

Secondly, this study acknowledges that the new ESL syllabus covers a wide variety of topics and issues that appeal to students from different disciplinary backgrounds. However, there were problems associated with the sequencing of certain topics in ESL textbooks. For example, it was observed that students from medical backgrounds faced significant challenges with graph-based exercises. Although it is clearly important for these students to understand and study the information presented in these graphs, more consideration should be given to when these exercises are presented. Currently, the sequence of the ESL textbooks means that graph-based are studied in the first semester. Since students' previous learning experience, which may not support the interpretation of graph-based exercises, are still fresh during the first semester, many students struggle with these exercises at this time. Introducing graph-based exercises in the third or fourth semester may therefore be more effective. These findings therefore lead to a recommendation of re-considering the sequence of certain exercises in ESL textbooks.

v. Class size. Another important issue brought to light by this study concerns the number of students in the ESL classes. Analysis suggested that the high number of students in the class significantly affected teachers' attitude towards teaching the ESL programme, which in turn affected students' learning experiences. It is therefore recommended that the institution reduces the number of students per ESL class, which could be done by dividing existing classes into three to four groups. This evidently has financial implications, as well as implications for the number of classrooms and teachers required. In order to respond to these issues, it is suggested that an emphasis should be placed on increasing the number of ESL

teachers, since the number of available classrooms cannot be increased immediately. Hiring more ESL teachers would be important for two main reasons. Firstly, this would mean that smaller groups of students could be taught, perhaps on different days of the week (the ESL programme would also have to be given extra priority when organising timetables). Secondly, an increase in the number of ESL teachers would enable more teachers to attending training sessions and workshops, as more substitute teachers would be available. As suggested earlier, it is also recommended that the HEC provides financial support so that higher education institutions are able to hire new members of ESL staff, and construct new buildings for English departments.

vi. Interactive teaching tools. Based on the lack of teaching tools available to ESL teachers in this study, it is suggested that teaching support tools including AV aids, interactive white boards, overhead projectors, and sophisticated sound systems are provided for ESL programmes. With these teaching support tools, teachers would be able to implement many activities and exercises which they are currently unable to. Pronunciation exercises and listening activities, for example, could effectively be conducted with the AV aids.

8.3.2. Implications for teachers

This research has demonstrated the importance of teachers' role in shaping students' ESL learning experiences. It showed that teachers' attitudes and pedagogic strategies play a vital role in enhancing students' learning experiences. In this connection, the findings of this study recommend teachers to consider five factors in interaction with students.

i. Awareness of gender issues. Teachers should avoid gender bias in their interactions with students. In the present study, it was observed that male students were asked questions more frequently and were given more in-depth feedback than female students in the ESL classrooms. Male students also had more intellectually challenging interactions with teachers, which allowed them a greater degree of cognitive stimulation, and also legitimated their questions and participation in the class to a greater extent than female students. Teachers seemed largely unaware that their actions, which explicitly favoured male students, significantly demotivated female students and discouraged them from participating in the classrooms. Additionally, teachers should also be aware of potentially sensitive gender-related issues, and avoid discussions or comments which may disadvantage female students. In order to do this, attempts should be made to ensure that male and female students have

equal opportunities to participate, which will introduce a balance of power in the classroom. If male students dominate the discussions, and prevent female students from participating, teachers should intervene to ensure that female students are able to contribute, and feel that their arguments are legitimate.

ii. Awareness of students from rural backgrounds. It is important for teachers at UoSJP to appreciate that the majority of their students are from rural areas, and have poor educational backgrounds and limited English language skills. Teachers should devote extra attention to these students, as they are likely to be the least able students in the classroom. Bearing in mind that these students have weak listening skills due to their family backgrounds and previous schooling experiences, teachers should speak slowly and with a clear accent so that all students in the classrooms are able to follow and understand their instructions. It was also observed that students struggled to understand teachers when they attempted to speak in British or American accents, and so this practice should be avoided.

iii. Appropriate use of praise. Findings from this study suggested that teachers should adopt encouraging attitudes, as this can motivate students to study beyond the prescribed course books, explore class topics independently and bring new knowledge to the classroom. Student should also be encouraged to share what they have learned from other resources, and when students do participate in this way, teachers should clearly acknowledge and express appreciation for their contribution. However, praise should not be overused, as this can also have negative consequences for students (Woolfolk 2005). When given, praise should be specific and genuine. Teachers should also encourage other students to participate in a similar way. A few encouraging words after each students' contribution could inspire and motivate other students to participate in the future.

iv. Encouraging questioning. Teachers should also nurture a classroom environment in which students feel comfortable and confident enough to frequently ask questions. Encouraging students to ask questions is an important quality of a good teacher, and once this environment is established, it can significantly improve the quality of the class (Brain 1998). Similarly, answering questions effectively is also crucial. Teachers should view students' questions as an opportunity to teach the whole class something new. If they do not know the answer, teachers should not be afraid to acknowledge that a student has raised an interesting question, and then find out the answer in time for the next session. The teaching and learning

process therefore becomes a two-way process between students and teachers, which can further improve classroom rapport. Students are likely to respect teachers who exhibit dedication to teaching as well as a willingness to learn themselves.

v. Respect for students. Establishing respect for students among teachers is essential to create the ideal classroom environment discussed above. Teachers should avoid ignoring or insulting students, which will demotivate and discourage them. Acting in an exasperated or aggressive manner can cause teachers to lose their respect by students. Teachers should therefore keep calm and remain patient when in the classroom.

8.3.3. Implications for further research

Like all research projects, this study is finite in its scope; further research and reflections are needed. In particular, there are four areas that future researchers should consider.

i. Case study. Firstly, this research used a case study, which has limited scope as the findings are restricted to particular cases. However, conducting the study in this way has provided deep insights into students' learning experiences. This research has adopted a snapshot case study approach; due to time and resource limitations, the study focused on individual cases at a particular point in time. Although this research design allowed the ESL programme to be evaluated, and provided an insight into students' learning experiences, it is still recommended that future researchers adopt other forms of case study to explore students' learning in more detail. For example, a pre-post case study approach (which examines cases at the beginning and at the end of the ESL programme) or a longitudinal case study approach (which follows cases throughout the ESL programme) could be adopted. These different forms of case study could allow certain aspects of students' learning experiences to be explored which could not be considered through the snapshot case study approach adopted here.

ii. Data collection tools. Interviews were used as primary data collection tools in this study, with observations and document review as secondary data collection tools. Although these techniques effectively generated rich data, other approaches to data collection such as long term participant observations, life histories and participant diaries could have also provided interesting insights.

iii. Comparative approach. The findings of the present study highlighted various aspects which shape students' learning experiences, closely monitored students in their own contexts

and highlighted aspects of the ESL programme which hinder students' learning outcomes. However, the study only focused on students in one department of a particular university. A comparative approach would therefore extend the scope of the study, which could be done by comparing students' ESL learning experiences at different levels. At the institutional level, students' learning could be compared across different departments within a university. At the national level, this could be done by comparing students' learning across different types of institutions (e.g. private vs. public sector universities, general vs. professional universities). At the regional level, a comparative study could consider students' ESL learning experiences across countries which share similar characteristics (e.g. Pakistani students' vs. Indian students). At an international level, students' ESL learning experiences could be compared across different countries which do not share obvious characteristics (e.g. Pakistani students vs. UK students, for example).

iv. Textbook analysis. The findings from this study raised several questions relating to ESL textbooks, and the impact of textbooks on students' learning experiences. This suggests a need for an exclusive textbook analysis. Aspects which could be considered include: the organization and sequencing of material, the clarity and relevance of material, the presentation of pictures, graphs, and how these support or extend the text itself; the clarity of examples and illustrations, and how they represent race, ethnicity, gender and class; whether multiple and diverse perspectives are offered in relation to the content; whether chapters contain opportunities for self-assessment; and whether the intended goals and overall purpose of the material is clear. A thorough analysis of textbooks considering these factors would provide a useful insight into the role of textbooks in effective teaching and learning.

8.4. Reflections on my research

This study is the product of a research journey which explored students' learning experiences from their own perspectives on an ESL programme in a higher education institution. It suggested that learning a second language is a complex process, in which a number of individual and social factors play vital roles in shaping students' learning experiences. In the process of exploring these individual and social factors, I developed a theoretical understanding of students' learning, as well as myself as a researcher.

Learning to reflect on your behaviour and thoughts, as well as on the phenomenon under study, creates a means for continuously becoming a better researcher.

Becoming a better researcher captures the dynamic nature of the process. Conducting research, like teaching and other complex acts, can be improved; it cannot be mastered.

(Glesne and Peshkin 1992: xiii)

As a new researcher, I experienced numerous anxieties at the outset of this study. Although literature on qualitative research was a source of some comfort, I found myself as the *primary instrument* of data collection and analysis. This led me to realise that reflexivity is essential in order to conduct an effective piece of research. Russel and Kelly (2002) have argued that, through reflection, a researcher can gain awareness of what s/he is able to perceive, and moreover, what may prevent him/her from perceiving certain things. Reflexivity therefore requires a careful consideration of the phenomena under study, as well as the researcher's own assumptions and behaviour, and how these may impact the process of enquiry.

Although I found this argument very convincing on a theoretical level at the beginning of the research process, I had little idea what this meant in concrete terms. However, this began to change in the first year of my doctoral study, when my supervisor asked me to revise my initial research proposal and reconsider my research questions. During this time, I began to reflect on my research by recording *self-conversations*. These personal narratives helped me in identifying why I had chosen the topic of the present study, how my assumptions about teaching and learning had informed my initial research proposal, and how these assumptions guided my methodology.

This first stage of reflection allowed me to realise that I had undertaken my PhD with numerous assumptions about teaching and learning. Like many novice researchers, I have assumed that I was familiar with all the problems faced by ESL students at UoSJP. This was mainly due to my position as an insider, as I had both studied and taught English language for a year and a half at UoSJP. Before starting my PhD, I had assumed that students faced problems in the ESL programme due to certain behaviours; my interest therefore lay in introducing an intervention which would change these behaviours and improve their learning outcomes.

After reflecting on these assumptions, I realised that I was viewing students' learning experiences from a behaviourist perspective. These initial reflections also served as a memory prompt, which encouraged a second stage of reflection after I had carried out my research. Reflecting on further self-conversations I made connections between the

methodological literature, decisions taken during the research, the process of reflexivity, and my evolving understanding of the complexities inherent in qualitative research. By analysing these self-conversations, I became more aware of how I had managed each research stage, the issues and tensions which had arisen, and how I had dealt with these issues as a researcher.

A retrospective examination of my research therefore permitted me to make meaningful connections between theory and practice. Moreover, this process of reflection provoked in-depth learning which may not have been achieved through other methodological means. The experience of reconsidering my initial research proposal for this study led me to realise that reflection is an essential mediator of the research process. Most importantly, reflective self-conversations allowed me to meaningfully construct a personal sense of what it means to become a researcher.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Students' Questionnaire

A. Confirmation and Consent form

I confirm that I have freely agreed to participate in the research study titled as 'Analyzing Students' Experiences in ESL programme at UoSJO: A Case Study' conducted by Mr. Irfan Ahmed Rind, for the pursuit of his DPhil degree from University of Sussex, UK.

I have been briefed on what this research study involves and its purposes. I agree to the use of the findings for the stated purposes in the research outline. I understand that the material is protected by a code of Standards on Research Ethics of School of Education and Social Work. Mr. I.A.Rind thoroughly assured me that my identity will be kept anonymous and no such reference will be mentioned that may reveal my identity. I, hereby, assign the copyright in my contribution to the University of Sussex.

Participant

Signature : _____

Name : _____

Position : _____

Date : _____

I confirm I agree to keep the undertakings in this contract.

Researcher

Signature: _____

Name: *Irfan Ahmed*

Date: _____

B. Students Learning Experience Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect information about you as a student so that according to your personal information you would be requested to voluntarily participate in interviews.

All information supplied by you will be treated in strict confidence. Please be assured that no particulars will be realised for any reason. Your identities will remain confidential. All information will be used for research only.

Section A: *This section will ask information about you.*

1. Student ID. (Optional) _____

2. Name (Optional) _____

3. Age: (Please tick the appropriate box) (1) 18-23 years . ☐

(2) 24-26 years . ☐

(3) 27 & above . ☐

4. Gender: (Please tick the appropriate box) (1) Male . ☐

(2) Female . ☐

5. Ethnicity (1) Sindhi/Siraiki . ☐

(Please tick ONLY ONE appropriate box) (2) Urdu . ☐

(3) Punjabi . ☐

(4) Pashto . ☐

(5) Other _____

6. Where do you live? (Please mention only name of area and city. No full address).

7. Where do your family live? (Please mention only name of area and city. No full address)

8. Highest level of family education (Please tick in the appropriate box)

Family members	PhD	Masters or equivalent	Bachelors or equivalent	Below Bachelors	
				School	No school
Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder sister 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder sister 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder sister 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder brother 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder brother 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder brother 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Your previous education (Please use Capital letters)

Level of Education	Name of School	Private/ Government	Location	Medium of Instruction
Intermediate (11 th and 12 th years)				
Matriculation (9 th and 10 th year)				
Higher Secondary (6 th to 8 th year)				

10. Your previous results (Please write in percentage)

	First semester	Second semester	Third semester	Forth semester
Overall results	%	%	%	%
ESL results	%	%	%	%

11. Do you work apart from study? Yes/NO
12. If yes, what kind of work is it? _____
13. How many hours do you work? _____

Section B: *This section will ask you willingness to participant in the interviews*

Thank you for your participation. I would like to contact you for a short interview. The interviews will be on **volunteer** bases. If you are willing to participate in interviews please leave your name and contact details.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Contact No: _____

For any queries, please contact me at I.Rind@sussex.ac.uk

Appendix II. Students' Interview guide

Students' perception of UoSJP

1. Why did you choose University of Sindh?
 2. What is your image of the university?
- PROMPT: How does this image influence your learning experiences at UoSJP?

Students' preconceptions and motivations about the ESL Programme

3. How do you think this course is relevant to your studies in general?
- PROMPT: If no, how does it affect the way you learn in this course?
4. What was your perception of this course when you first hear about it?
- PROMPT: Were you prepared to take this course? If no, why not?
- PROMPT: If yes, how much do you think you were motivated to take this course?
- PROMPT: How much do you think you knew the basics of this course before commencing it?
- PROMPT: What is your perception of this course now?
5. What are your objectives in this course?

Teaching *(Interaction of students identities with teaching and its impact on their objectives)*

5. How do you think that the methods your teachers use are appropriate to teach in this course?
- PROMPT: If yes, tell me more about it?
- PROMPT: If no, why?
- PROMPT: How successful do you think your teachers are in providing clear and useful explanations of ideas in this course?
6. How will you explain the ideal teaching that make your learning experience pleasant?

Assessment (Interaction of students' identities with assessment and its impact on their objectives)

7. How does the assessment in this course compare with assessment you have experienced in other courses?
- PROMPT: In what ways is it similar or different? Novel or repetitive?
- PROMPT: (how do you prepare for this assessment) In what ways, if any, did the assessment in this subject help your learning, hinder your learning, or was not relevant to your learning? (for example, does it promote repetition and drilling of exercise or deep understanding)
8. In discussions with teachers, if there were any, about assessment pieces, what impressions did you get about what was desirable or would be rewarded?
- PROMPT: What is your reaction to this?
- PROMPT: According to the course guide line, this course aims to promote deep understanding of material that are being taught, How do you think that the assessment address this statement?
- PROMPT: Do you think teachers teach something in the class but assess something else?
- PROMPT: If yes, then what is your impression of that assessment?

Curriculum and workload (Interaction of students' identities with curriculum and its impact on their objectives)

9. What is your impression of the curriculum in this course?

PROMPT: How satisfy are you with these two books?

PROMPT: Is there anything in these books that looks strange or very appealing to you?

PROMPT: Is there anything in these books that make you uncomfortable? For example: images, names, sentences, ideas or philosophy?

10. What is your sense of the volume/amount of work in this course compared to other courses you have done?

PROMPT: What is your sense of the difficulty of the material in this course compared to other courses you have done?

PROMPT: What is your sense of any compromises or short cuts to your learning you may have taken in this course?

PROMPT: If yes, then which of these compromises or short cuts do you explain in terms of the course workload?

PROMPT: Or which of these do you explain in other terms?

11. What, for you, have been the key ideas/areas in this course? How well do you feel you understand each of these?

PROMPT: If teachers were to give more time or emphasis to one area, what should that be? Why?

PROMPT: If teachers were to give less time or emphasis to one area, what should that be? Why?

PROMPT: What is your sense of 'other factors' which might contribute to making this course's workload feels or appears greater than it is (e.g., poor subject structure, lack of organisation, difficulty accessing resources, novelty or unfamiliarity of learning processes, etc...)?

Work space and other resources (Interaction of students' identities with work space and its impact on their objectives)

12. How does the size of the classes/ number of students in each class influence your learning experiences? (can you compare studying in small class experience with large class?)

Prompt: How do you see yourself in a large class? (if you are motivated to present but didn't get chance to present how do you feel?)

Prompt: How do you see yourself in small class?

Prompt: Does it make any difference if your seating position changes from front to back in the large class?

13. What are your impressions of learning space in your institutes? (For example, the rooms, or other places that motivate you and your fellows to study or discuss in English after the classes?

PROMPT: How do you practice English with peer group at such spaces?

PROMPT: If there are no such spaces, what effects do you think it is on your learning English language?

14. What are your impressions about the learning resources (i.e. libraries, access of computer, access of internet, etc...) in this institute? How helpful are these resource to you in term of ESL programme?

15. What is other thing that you are using to achieve your goal?

Students' perceptions of self (Interaction of students identities as Learners v/s their other identities in and out of the university)

16. What do you think your image is in the class as student (for example, active participant, backbencher, position holder, comrade (political activist), etc...)?
- PROMPT: Do you have any idea how teachers think of you as student or a person?
- PROMPT: If yes, how does their (...) thinking affect the way you learn? Why?
- PROMPT: Do you have any idea how your class fellows think of you as student or as person?
- PROMPT: If yes, does their (...) thinking affect the way you learn? Why?
17. How do you think you approach a learning task that you are not going to present/discuss with peers or teachers?
- PROMPT: How do you think you approach a learning task if you are a group leader or are going to present it in front of class? And why?
- PROMPT: Does it make any difference to you or the way you learn, if teachers change your seating places (from front seats to back benches or vice versa)? And why?
18. You mentioned in the questionnaire that you are _____ (ethnicity). What do you think that your being ____ (ethnicity) affect the way you learn English in this course? If yes, why?
- PROMPT: How do you think your teachers' ethnicity influence your learning experience?
19. You mentioned in the questionnaire that you are from ____ (region). What do you think that your being from ____ affect your learning? If yes, why?
20. How do you think your economic situation influenced your English language learning in the past? Does it still influence your learning experience in university?
21. How do you think your family educational background influence your learning experience in past? And in university?

Questions added latter

- How would you compare female with male in the society of Sindh?
- To what extend do you see such differences at Sindh University.
- Do you think that English language is a way to give you independence?
- To what extend do you think that ESL course help you to reduce this gap between male and female.

Community of practice

22. How do you explain your teachers' attitudes in this programme?
- PROMPT: How encouraging do you think your teachers are to let you ask questions in the class?
- PROMPT: How encouraging do you think your teachers are to let you explain ideas in your own way?
- PROMPT: How much interest do you think your teachers show in your opinion?
- PROMPT: How much effort do you think your teachers take to motivate you for learning tasks?
- PROMPT: How much effort do you think your teachers take to make this subject interesting?

23. How do you define your relation with teachers of this course compared to teachers of other courses?

PROMPT: Does this (...) nature of relation affect the way you learn English?

PROMPT: If yes why?

PROMPT: How much effort do you think teachers take to understand your problems in this course?

PROMPT: How much care or sympathy do you think your teachers show to your problems?

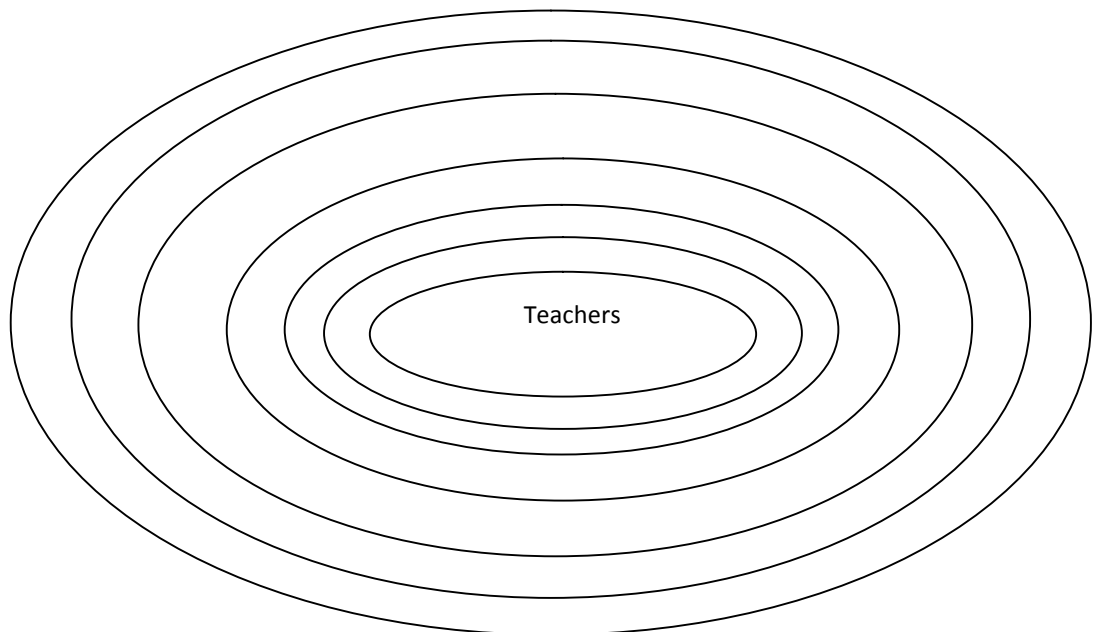
PROMPT: If they do, how does that care or sympathy help in your learning experiences?

24. How would you describe your relationship with your peers?

PROMPT: Do you and your peers spend time helping each other in learning in or outside the class hours?

PROMPT: If yes, in what ways and how do such practices develop? If not, why not?

25. Where will you place yourself in this circle, which represent your relation with your teachers?



26. Can you identify any of your class fellows who are closer to teachers than you? Why do you think he/she is closer to teachers? Does that help them to learn better than you? How? How do you define your relations with that person?

27. Can you identify any of your class fellows who are away from teachers than you? Why do you think he/she is away to teachers? Does that create any problem for them to learn? How? How do you define your relations with that person?

Appendix III. Teachers' Interview guide

Teachers' opinion of students' learning experience in ESL programme

1. How do you define the concept of teaching?
2. What in your opinion is the purpose of teaching?
3. Do you find the teaching language different than teaching of other subjects? How?
4. Why university have this assumption that they need remedial and compulsory course?
5. To what extend their this assumption is correct?
6. What is the ultimate goal of this course? What do you think is the goal of students in this course?

7. What purpose do you think the ESL programme serve in the development of students' learning experiences in higher education?

PROMPT: Do you think that students are aware of this purpose (...)?

PROMPT: If yes, do you think they are motivated to take this class because of this (...) purpose? If no, what are other reasons that motivate them to take ESL classes?

PROMPT: If no, how do you think it affects their learning? What efforts do you take to make them aware of this (...) purpose?

PROMPT: How do these (...) efforts reflect in your teaching methodology?

8. What do you think about the examination criteria? Do you find any clash between the examination policy and its conduct?
 9. How do you think the examination criteria help to serve the (...) purpose of ESL programme?
 10. How do you think that the structure and nature of curriculum help to serve the (...) purpose of ESL programme?
 11. What do you think is the nature of workload in this course? To what extend does the workload affect students leaning practices?
 12. How do you define the size of your class?
- PROMPT:* Does it help/hinder your teaching? Why?
- PROMPT:* What affects do you think it might have on students learning practices?

What are your experiences of teaching in large classes? Which students you mostly focus on while asking questions, for example front benchers or back benchers. And why? What are physical difficulties you face while interacting with students at back benches?

13. What is students' group activities mean to you?

PROMPT: Do you appreciate students' group discussions and tasks?

PROMPT: If yes, do you think institute has provided sufficient space to carry on these activities?

PROMPT: If no, why not? What do you think are the effects of it on students learning practices?

14. What is your impression of the learning resources for students in this institute?

PROMPT: How are these learning resources supportive to your teaching?

PROMPT: How are these learning resources supportive to students learning?

15. How do you think a teacher should treat his/her students?

PROMPT: Do you practice what you said?

PROMPT: If yes, how does that help students learn better?

PROMPT: If no, why?

16. Do you think that the students from different educational background experience learning in ESL programme differently? If yes, how? And why?

17. Do you think that the students from different social background experience learning in ESL programme differently? If yes, how? And why?

18. Do you think that the students from different ethnicity experience learning in ESL programme differently? If yes, how? And why?

19. Do you think that the students from different regions experience learning in ESL programme differently? If yes, how? And why?

20. Do you think that gender difference affect learning in ESL programme?

21. What do you think about the rules of teaching, and examination in ESL programme? Do you find any conflict between these rules with your practices?

Appendix IV. Number of students at different faculties at UoSJP

S#	NAME OF FACULTY	M	F	Total
1	Faculty of Natural Sciences	5621	2231	7852
2	Faculty of Arts	845	555	1400
3	Faculty of Islamic Studies	217	88	305
4	Faculty of Social Sciences	3740	727	4467
5	Faculty of Law	32	7	39
6	Faculty of Commerce & Business Administration	2143	439	2582
7	Faculty of Pharmacy	640	247	887
8	Faculty of Education	701	653	1354
TOTAL		13939	4947	18886

FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES																				
S#	Discipline	BS/ M.S./ P.G.D.								M.Sc.		M.Sc.		M.Phil		Ph.D		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Part-IV		Previous		Final(P)								
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1	Botany	50	40	42	30	32	23	26	17	14	27	13	19	5	7	4	2	186	165	351
2	Bio-Chemistry	50	49	43	31	41	39	36	48	19	10	13	16	0	0	0	0	202	193	395
3	Bio-Technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	3	9	7	0	0	0	0	21	10	31

4	Chemistry	80	67	62	52	53	35	63	35	27	58	16	8	8	3	2	0	311	258	569
5	Information Technology	58	38	50	36	41	13	50	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	200	107	307
6	Computer Science(PM, PE & CG)	218	72	157	46	131	24	111	30	23	1	15	1	0	0	0	0	655	174	829
7	M.C.S.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	4	5	9
8	Electronics	83	11	77	8	59	3	71	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	290	34	324
9	Environmental Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	3	6	2	2	2	1	0	21	7	28
10	Fresh Water Biology & Fisheries	35	10	30	5	19	2	23	4	1	3	1	2	6	0	0	0	115	26	141
11	Genetics	26	44	19	15	21	15	33	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	99	96	195
12	Geography	53	5	43	5	19	3	37	15	10	2	7	3	0	0	0	0	169	33	202
13	Geology	193	0	106	5	92	2	74	9	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	471	16	487
14	Mathematics	118	23	61	15	95	15	102	30	15	9	8	5	4	1	2	0	405	98	503
15	Microbiology	39	56	12	36	26	39	33	44	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	112	176	288
16	Physics	126	12	101	11	95	19	98	22	17	4	8	1	0	0	0	0	445	69	514
17	Physiology	36	36	20	27	28	31	29	27	2	3	5	4	0	0	1	0	121	128	249
18	Psychology	24	12	15	13	16	19	19	18	1	13	1	8	0	0	0	0	76	83	159
19	Software Engineering	74	15	51	9	47	9	61	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	233	46	279
20	Statistics	76	5	52	4	49	6	32	11	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	214	26	240
21	Telecommunication	85	16	72	11	76	14	65	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	298	52	350
22	Zoology	73	71	46	43	61	48	74	49	25	67	20	70	15	7	2	0	316	355	671
	Sub Total	1497	582	1059	402	1001	359	1037	436	179	206	125	148	53	21	13	3	4964	2157	7121
EVENING PROGRAMME		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Part-IV										TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F									M	F	
23	BS(IT)	87	10	61	7	52	11	28	1									228	29	257
24	BS(CS)	84	8	60	9	65	8	40	5									249	30	279
25	PGD-CS (Computer Sci.)	34	7	0	0	0	0	0	0									34	7	41
26	PGD-IT (Information Technology)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0									0	0	0
27	MS(IT)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0									0	0	0
28	BS (Software Engineering)	34	0	28	1	18	1	17	2									97	4	101
29	Chemistry	49	4	0	0	0	0	0	0									49	4	53
	Grand Total	1785	611	1208	419	1136	379	1122	444	179	206	125	148	53	21	13	3	5621	2231	7852

FACULTY OF ARTS																				
	Discipline	B.A. (Honours)						M.A		M.A.		M.A.		M.Phil		Ph.D.		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Previous		Final(H)		Final(P)								
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Arabic	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	9	1	10
2	English	82	66	63	57	79	42	49	45	54	41	41	27	15	1	0	0	383	279	662
3	Art & Design	10	26	14	21	7	29	0	0	0	0	14	29	0	0	0	0	45	105	150
4	Philosophy	2	0	8	1	7	3	1	1	14	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	33	5	38
5	Persian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Sindhi	40	12	44	7	38	8	6	5	59	12	8	9	24	1	2	1	221	55	276
7	Urdu	18	8	12	11	25	5	8	11	13	9	10	4	6	7	4	2	96	57	153
	SUB TOTAL	153	112	141	97	156	88	67	62	141	62	78	69	45	9	6	3	787	502	1289
EVENING PROGRAMME								M	F			M	F					M	F	
8	English							24	32			34	21					58	53	111
9	Urdu							0	0			0	0					0	0	0
	GRAND TOTAL	153	112	141	97	156	88	91	94	141	62	112	90	45	9	6	3	845	555	1400

FACULTY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES																				
S#.	Discipline	B.A. (Hons.)						M.A		M.A.		M.A.		M.Phil.		Ph.D.		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Previous		Final(H)		Final(P)								
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Comparative Religion	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	4	9	5	14
2	Islamic Culture	23	10	29	13	21	17	14	10	10	11	8	1	15	6	1	0	121	68	189
3	Muslim History	17	1	17	3	38	3	1	1	13	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	87	15	102

	TOTAL	41	11	48	16	59	20	15	12	23	18	9	1	15	6	7	4	217	88	305
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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES																				
S#.	Discipline	BS/ B.A. (Hons)						M.A.		M.A.		M.A.		M.Phil.		Ph.D.				GRAND TOTAL
		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Previous		Final(H)		Final(P)						TOTAL		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Anthropology & Archaeology	60	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	7	67
2	Economics	131	17	119	18	117	21	68	16	96	13	44	14	21	3	1	0	597	102	699
3	Physical Education BS(PE)	22	0	31	0	33	3	0	0	15	13	0	0	3	1	1	0	105	17	122
4	General History	24	2	22	2	37	3	0	0	22	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	107	11	118
5	Home Economics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	3
6	International Relations	112	16	76	16	72	13	36	4	81	14	20	2	4	0	0	0	401	65	466
7	Library & Information Science	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	21	0	0	47	14	3	0	0	0	99	35	134
8	Mass Communication	61	20	86	24	65	27	40	10	85	23	27	11	0	0	0	0	364	115	479
9	Political Science	68	7	51	6	62	9	13	5	76	12	5	0	5	1	1	1	281	41	322
10	Psychology	0	0	2	2	1	3	0	0	5	6	2	7	0	0	0	1	10	19	29
11	Public Administration	68	25	64	21	68	19	135	29	53	18	122	27	2	2	0	0	512	141	653
12	Sociology	106	20	72	11	69	15	40	10	85	21	21	3	6	0	0	0	399	80	479
13	Social Work	90	8	68	5	83	6	12	2	55	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	312	25	337
14	Rural Development Studies	58	3	48	2	34	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	140	11	151
15	Pakistan Study Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	11	0	11
16	Women Development Studies	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	11	13
17	Sindh Development Study Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	4	4	8
	SUB TOTAL	800	125	639	107	641	125	395	104	573	128	294	82	62	11	3	2	3407	684	4091
EVENING PROGRAMME		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
18	B.P.A.	59	1	53	2	24	9	0	0	41	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	136	12	148
19	M.P.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	12	0	0	21	2	0	0	0	0	73	14	87
20	PGD-Public Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	4	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	30	7	37

21	Criminology	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	1	0	0	29	0	0	0	0	0	57	1	58
22	BHPEd & MHPEd	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	7	0	0	13	2	0	0	0	0	24	9	33
23	PGD-Community Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	13
	GRAND TOTAL	859	126	692	109	665	134	526	128	614	147	360	89	62	11	3	2	3740	727	4467

FACULTY OF LAW																				
S#.	Discipline	LL.M												M.Phil.		Ph.D.		TOTAL		GRAN D TOTA L
		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Previous		Final(H)		Final(P)								
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1	LL.M.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	7	0	0	0	0	32	7	39

FACULTY OF COMMERCE & BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION																					
S#.	Discipline	B.Com./ B.B.A (Hons.)						M.Com/ M.B.A.						M.Phil.		Ph.D.		TOTAL		GRAN D TOTA L	
		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Previous		Final(H)		Final(P)									
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
1	Business Administration	161	93	119	51	118	27	153	46	101	21	30	10	0	0	0	0	682	248	930	
2	Commerce	168	45	129	21	91	13	64	23	102	8	31	9	2	1	1	0	588	120	708	
	SUB TOTAL	329	138	248	72	209	40	217	69	203	29	61	19	2	1	1	0	1270	368	1638	
EVENING PROGRAMME		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
3	Commerce	50	3	58	2	62	2	0	0	75	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	245	9	254	
4	M.B.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0	226	27	0	0	402	35	0	0	0	0	628	62	690	
	Total	379	141	306	74	271	42	443	96	278	31	463	54	2	1	1	0	2143	439	2582	

FACULTY OF PHARMACY																		
	Discipline	PHARM-D										M.Phil.		Ph.D.		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
		Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Part-IV		Part-V								
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Pharmacy	77	60	66	24	59	34	54	18	60	19	1	1	0	0	317	156	473
EVENING PROGRAMME		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2	Pharmacy	77	31	64	21	53	17	50	10	79	12	0	0	0	0	323	91	414
	Grand Total	154	91	130	45	112	51	104	28	139	31	1	1	0	0	640	247	887

FACULTY OF EDUCATION																				
		B.A. (Hons)						M.A.		M.A.		M.A.		M.Phil.	Ph.D.				GRAND TOTAL	
S#	Discipline	Part-I		Part-II		Part-III		Previous		Final(H)		Final(P)						TOTAL		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1	Education	15	6	5	8	9	6	8	3	0	0	4	8	7	8	1	0	49	39	88
2	B.Ed. (Evening/ Morning)	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	174	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	174	242
3	M.Ed. (Evening/ Morning)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	56	0	0	0	0	23	56	79
4	B.Ed. (Non-Formal Formal)	0	0	0	0	0	0	360	252	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	360	252	612
5	M.Ed. (Non-Formal Program)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	201	132	0	0	0	0	201	132	333
	SUB TOTAL	15	6	5	8	9	6	436	429	0	0	228	196	7	8	1	0	701	653	1354

Appendix V: Distribution of Seats according to district of domicile (Rural and Urban areas) at UoSJP

[Source: <http://www.usindh.edu.pk/admissions/distribution-of-seats>]

1. Admission to the following courses of study shall be made on the basis of District-wise urban-rural quota.			
(i) B.B.A. (Hons.) Part-I. (ii) M.B.A. (Previous). (iii) BS.C.S. Part-I Computer Science. (61 students from each group of Pre. Engg. Pre-Medical & Commerce) (iv) M.CS. (Previous) Computer Science. (v) BS(IT) Information Technology Part-I. (vi) B.Telecom. Telecommunication Part-I (vii) BS. Electronics Part-I. (viii) B.S. Geology Part-I. (x) BS Genetics Part-I (xi) Pharm- D (5-yr. program) First Professional. (xii) B.SW. Engg. Software Engineering Part-I (xiii) B.P.A. Public Administration Part-I (xiv) M.P.A. (Previous) Public Administration (xv) B.H.P.E. Part-I (xvi) B.H.P.E. Health & Physical Education (2-Semester program) (xvii) M.H.P.E. (2-Semester program) (xviii) LLB 5-Yr. program (82 seats details on page-69)			
2. (a) The District-wise allocation of seats for the Rural and Urban areas for admission to the above courses of study at Jamshoro Campus, is shown in the Table in next column.			
District of Domicile	Urban	Rural	Total
1. Hyderabad	03	01	04
2. Tando Allahyar	01	01	02
3. Tando Mohd Khan	01	02	03
4. Matairi	01	02	03
5. Badin	01	01	02
6. Thatta	01	02	03
7. Thar	00	03	03
8. Mirpurkhas	02	03	05
9. Umerkot	00	02	02
10. Sanghar	01	01	02
11. Dadu	02	03	05
(b) Allocation of seats on U/R quota in the districts shown here-under for admission to Business Administration (both for BBA & MBA), Computer Science (all groups BS.CS) Information Technology, Telecommunication, Electronics, Geology, Pharm-D., B.S. Genetics and Public Administration. also for 5-yr Law Degree.			
1. Sukkur	02	02	04
2. Ghotki	01	01	02
3. Shikarpur	01	01	02
4. Jacobabd	01	01	02
5. Larkana	01	01	02
6. Kambar/ Shahdadkot	01	01	02
7. Kashmore/ Kandhkot	01	01	02

8. Khairpur	01	01	02
09. Naushahroferoz	01	01	02

(c)The Urban Areas in each district of Sindh are specified as under.	
<i>(Areas within the jurisdiction of University of Sindh)</i>	
1. Hyderabad District	(a) Hyderabad Municipality (b) Tandojam Municipality
2. Tando Allah Yar	(a)Tando Allah Yar Municipality
3. Tando Muhammad Khan	(a) Tando Muhammad Khan Municipality
4. Matairi	(b) Hala Municipality
5. Badin District	(a) Badin Municipality (b) Matli Municipality
6. Thatta District	(a) Thatta Municipality
7. Mirpurkhas District	(a) Mirpurkhas Municipality (b) Shahdadpur Municipality (c) Tando Adam Municipality (d) Sinjhoru Municipality
08. Sanghar District	(a) Sanghar Municipality
09. Dadu District	(a) Dadu Municipality (b) Mehar Municipality (c) Khairpur Nathan Shah
10. Jamshoro District	(a) Kotri Municipality
11. Nawabshah District	(a) Nawabshah Municipality
<i>(Areas out of jurisdiction of the University of Sindh)</i>	
12. Sukkur District	(a) Sukkur Municipality (b) Rohri Municipality
13. Ghotki District	(a) Ghotki Municipality (b) Mirprmathelo Municipality
14. Khairpur District	(a) Khairour Municipality (b) Gambat Municipality (c) Pir Jo Goth Municipality
15. Naushahroferoz District	(a) Moro Municipality
16. Larkana District	(a) Larkana Municipality (b) Rotodero Municipality (c) Naudero Municipality
17. Kambar/Shahddkot District	(a) Shahdatkot Municipality (b) Kambar Municipality
18. Jacobabad District	(a) Jacobabad Municipality
19. Kashmore District	(a) Kandhokot Municipality
20. Shikarpur District	(a) Shikarpur Municipality
<i>The areas other than those specified above, will be treated as Rural.</i>	

Other rules for the allocation of the seats

Filling-in of the left over seats of quota- oriented courses of study

- (i) The seat/ seats left over in any category (Rural/Urban) shall be filled-in from the waiting merit list of the same category of the same district. However, in case there is no candidate on the merit list of the concerned category viz. rural or urban as the case may be, then the left over seat/seats will be filled-in from the merit list of the urban or rural category as the case may be, of the same district. There shall be **no reallocation of the vacant seats from one district to another.**
- (ii) The left over seat/seats from the categories of reserved seats shall be filled-in by selecting the immediate next candidate (s) from the waiting list.
- (iii) As regards (i) above, the left over seat/ seats because of non-payment of fees/ difference of fees, if any, within prescribed time limit, the seat/seats shall be filled-in as per procedure prescribed therein and the selected candidate (s) whose seat (s) has/ have fallen vacant due to non-payment of fees/ difference of fees, if any, for whatever reasons, shall **NOT** claim the admission and shall **NOT** challenge the admission of any other candidate, selected in his/ her place in the particular or any other quota- oriented course or general course of study mentioned by him/her in the Admission Form.
- (iv) The candidate/candidates selected against left over seat/seats as in (iii) above, **shall deposit the fees/ difference of fees, if any within 05 (Five) days** from the date of announcement of the Selection list. In case, he/she too fails to make the payment of fees/ difference of fees, if any, within time limit allowed to him/her, he/she shall lose his/her admission.
- (v) Candidates seeking admission to **Quota-oriented courses of studies** must submit Domicile Certificate of self, or parent if under 18 years of age and Permanent Residence Certificate.

Availability of general seats for fresh admissions, to various bachelor's & masters programs under the university teaching Faculties, is shown under the respective Faculties.

ALLOCATION OF RESERVED SEATS

1. SPORTS SEATS

2% seats are reserved for admission on sports quota in each discipline for BS/BA (Hons.) students.

- a) Candidates for admission against sports seat are to (____)tick mark the sports box on the form. They have to qualify Pre-Entry Test.
- b) Candidates applying against sports seats must fill **Evaluation Proforma** along with prescribed Admission Form.
- c) Candidates will have to appear in trial for selection.
- d) Candidates qualifying Pre-Entry Test, will be evaluated on the basis of their merit/ participation in competitions at various levels.

2. SEATS FOR CANDIDATES FROM LARKANA, SUKKUR DIVISIONS ON OPEN MERIT BACHELOR AND MASTER:-

Number of seats reserved for candidates domiciled in Larkana & Sukkur divisions are shown in table below. The applicant will have to appear and qualify Pre-Entry Test.

Arabic 10 English 10

Sindhi 10 Urdu 10

Art & Design 10 Philosophy 10

Comparative Religion 10 Islamic Culture 10

Muslim History 10 General History 10

Economics 10 Mass Communication 10

International Relations 05 Political Science 10

Psychology (Arts & Sc.) 10+10 Public Administration 17

Social Work 10 Sociology 10

Anthropology & Arch. 10 Biochemistry 10

Biotechnology M.Sc. 05 Botany 05

Chemistry BS/ M.Sc. 05+05 FW Biology & Fishries 10

Geography 10 Mathematics 05

Microbiology 05 Physics 10

Physiology 10 Statistics 05

Zoology 25 Commerce 08

3. FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES

Ten seats in each **degree** programs are reserved for female candidates, domiciled within the jurisdiction of the University of Sindh (domicile certificate to be attached).

Two seats in each of the following disciplines/ subjects of various Bachelor's/ Master's degree programs are reserved for the female candidates domiciled in **Sukkur and Larkana** Divisions (Upper Sindh).

1. Business Administration
2. Computer Science
3. Information Technology
4. Pharmacy
5. English

One seat in each **degree** program in other General Disciplines is reserved for female candidates, domiciled in **Sukkur and Larkana** Divisions.

The applicant shall be in the first instance, considered alongwith other candidates on general/ district-wise merit and thereafter girls seats shall be filled in according to merit and first preference.

4. SEATS FOR DISABLED PERSONS

One seat in each course of study is reserved for Disabled persons, domiciled within the jurisdiction of Sindh

excluding Karachi.

The box of “**Disabled Persons’ Quota**” be () marked on the top of the Admission Form. Attested photostat copy of the Medical Certificate issued by the Medical Board to be constituted by the Government, must be attached with the Admission Form.

5. SEATS FOR REAL SONS & DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPLOYEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SINDH

Ten seats are reserved in each course of study for the real sons & daughters of the employees of the University of Sindh including employees at the Pakistan Study Centre and Area Study Centre Far East & South East Asia. If any seat of sons/ daughters remained unutilized then Real brother/ sister can also be considered against them.

Two seats are reserved for Real sons & daughters of employees of the University Laar College, Badin.

In case of BSIT, Information Technology, the seats have been allocated for each H.S.C. group as under:-

Pre-Engineering 04 Seats

Pre-Medical 04 Seats

Commerce 02 seats

For the purpose of this facility, an employee means a regular employee with minimum of two years service, retired, deceased or confirmed employee maintaining lien/ deputation/leave with the University. The employees who have resigned, or were terminated or dismissed, shall not be considered.

The applicants under this category should mark on the top of Admission Form “**Seats for S.U employees**” box.

NOTE: All applicants under this category must fulfil the **minimum requirement of Pre-entry test**, qualification and percentage of marks, to be selected from amongst themselves on merit.

The applicant should attach service certificate from the employer in respect of his/ her father/mother, showing the name, case/surname of the employee as well as the period of service, issued by the Additional Registrar.

6. SEATS FOR REAL SONS & DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPLOYEES OF COLLEGES AFFILIATED TO SINDH UNIVERSITY

Two seats in each course of study are reserved on reciprocal basis for real Sons & Daughters of the Employees of the Government Degree Colleges and Law Colleges affiliated with the University of Sindh.

The applicant under this category should write on top of the Admission Form “**Seats for employees of Colleges**”

NOTE: Admission to any class under the category of “seats for the employees of the affiliated College to the University of Sindh” will be considered on production of the service certificate as per following proforma.

Certified that Mr./ Miss _____ S/O, D/O, W/O _____ presently working as _____ is a regular employee of this college. His/ Her date of entry in the College service is _____. The candidate Mr./ Miss _____ S/O, D/O _____ is his/her real son/ daughter. His/Her service in the College is more than 2 years.

_____ Countersigned by

Signature of the Principal Director of College Education/ Dean, Faculty of Law

Official Stamp Official stamp

7. SEATS FOR NOMINEES OF NORTHERN AREAS

TWO seats in MBA (Previous) and **two** seats each in B.Ed., M.Ed. and M.A. (Previous) Education, are reserved for the nominees of Northern Areas.

Application for admission alongwith academic documents must be channeled through the Director of Education/ Chairman, Nomination Board Northern Areas, Gilgit.

8. SEATS ON SELF FINANCE BASIS

Twenty five percent seats are available in all courses of studies on **self finance basis** for candidates domiciled in Sindh. For candidates from other provinces of Pakistan **five (05)** seats are reserved in each department (except **Pharmacy** where only **02** seats will be allowed). The fee structure for candidates from other provinces under this category will be as shown in the schedule of fees. Candidates for Admission on **Self Finance** basis will also **have to qualify the Pre-entry Test. No advance payment of Admission fee is required.**

9. RESERVE SEATS FOR NOMINEES FROM BACKWARD AREAS & OTHER PROVINCES OF THE COUNTRY

a) *Nominees of other Provinces of Pakistan*

- i) **One** seat in any discipline of the Bachelor Degree Program for one nominee each of Punjab and N.W.F.P. is reserved in any of the course of study, for candidate domiciled in that province, whereas **two** seats are reserved for the candidates of Balochistan Province..

- ii) **One** seat each for the Master's Degree Program for nominees of Punjab and N.W.F.P. is reserved in any of the course of study including programs of Faculty of Education, for candidate domiciled in that province, whereas **two** seats are reserved for the candidates of Balochistan Province.

Applications must be channelled through the Department of Education, Government of the concerned Province.

b) *Nominees of Balochistan and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)*

5% Seats, in addition to the following are reserved for students from Balochistan and Fata areas under the ECNEC special program. Selection of the candidates is to be conducted by the HEC.

RESERVED SEATS FOR FATA AREA

Program seat in each Program i) B.B.A. (Hons.) Part-I 1

ii) M.A. (Previous) English 2

iii) M.A. (Previous) General History

iv) M.A. (Previous) Islamic Culture 1

v) M.Sc. (previous) Chemistry 1

vi) M.Sc. (Previous) Statistics 1

vii) M.Sc. (Previous) Zoology 1

viii) B.H.P.E. 1

ix) M.H.P.E 1

x) B.Ed., M.Ed. and M.A. (Prev.) in Education 1

Completed applications for admission must be channelled through the Ministry of Interior, States and Frontier Regions Division, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

c) *Nominees of A.J.K. Government*

- (i) **One** seat in any of the courses of the Bachelor Degree Program,
 - (ii) **One** seat in any of the courses of the Master Degree Program.
 - (iii) **One** seat each in B.H.P.E., M.H.P.E., B.Ed. M.Ed. and M.A. (Prev.) Education program,
- is reserved for the nominees of A.J.K. Government. Applications for admission alongwith academic documents must be channelled through the Director of Education/ Chairman Nomination Board, Muzaffarabad, A.J.K.

10. SEATS RESERVED FOR ARMY PERSONNAL(ONLY FOR MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM)

Two seats are reserved for Army Personnel in the following disciplines for Masters' degree program:

Chemistry, Geography, Mathematics, Statistics, Economics, English, International Relations, Mass Communication, Political Science, Psychology and Criminology.

11. NOMINEES OF PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Two seats for nominees of Pharmaceutical Industries are reserved in Pharmacy discipline on **Self Finance Basis**, at the rate of fees charged from Foreign nationals.

12. SEATS RESERVED FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS

The University allows admission to a limited number of foreign national students in various disciplines for Bachelor and Master degree programs, at the recommendations of/ nominations by the Ministry of Education/ Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan, under Technical Assistance programs as well as on Self Finance basis.

a) Seats reserved for Foreign Nationals under Pakistan Technical Assistance Program

10 Seats are reserved for admission to **Pharm-D** under this program for foreign students.

b) Seats Reserved for Foreign Nationals

25 Seats are reserved in each course of study of the University.

c) Seats Reserved for Foreign Nationals

10 (Ten) seats in Pharm-D (Evening) program are reserved for foreign Naionals nominated by the HEC, Islamabad.

d) Seats Reserved for Foreign Nationals

03 (Three) seats are reserved for Thai Muslim candidates, **two** for students @ Master level and **One** for teacher at M.Phil/ PhD. level.

13. SEATS RESERVED FOR REAL SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPLOYEES OF NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN ANALYICAL CHEMISTRY

Two seats are reserved only for the real sons & daughters of the employees of National Centre of Excellence in Analytical Chemistry (excluding quota-oriented courses of studies) of the University of Sindh on merit basis. Service Certificate of the employee issued by the Director of National Centre of Excellence in Analytical Chemistry on the following proforma shall have be attached with te admission form. The wordings "**SEATS FOR CENTRE**" be written on the top of the admission form:-

Certified that Mr./ Miss _____ S/O, D/O, W/O _____ presently working as _____ is a regular employee of this Centre. His/ Her date of entry in the presently working is _____. The candidate Mr./ Miss _____ S/O, D/O _____ is his/her real son/ daughter. His/Her service in the Centre is more than 2 years.

Signature of the Director of the Centre

Official Stamp

ATTENDANCE AND OTHER ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

a) Students are required to maintain 75% attendance in each and every course of the program, failing which they shall not be allowed to appear at the final semester tests.

i) Attendance 10 Marks

(as per breakdown)

ii) Assignment/ Presentation 10 Marks

iii) Mid Term Test (after 8 wks of teaching) 30 Marks

iv) Final Semester Test 50 Marks

Appearance in Final Semester Test is mandatory.

b) If a student fails to attend any lecture during the **first four weeks** of the commencement of the semester as per announced schedule, his/ her admission shall stand cancelled automatically without any notice.

c) (i) Students detained on account of shortage of attendance shall join **relevant semester** program next session to fulfil attendance requirement.

(ii) Student whose admission is cancelled on account of zero% attendance or who is not allowed to appear at the final semester test for want of shortage of attendance as per “**a & b**” above, will be allowed admission in next academic session, without appearing at the “**Pre- Entry Test**”, on payment of Admission and other fees.

(iii) Students failing to successfully complete the coursework requirements of Bachelor/ Honours degree program shall not be allowed to seek provisional admission to Master's Programs in disciplines under Faculty of Arts & Islamic Studies.

Promotion of students to the next higher academic session in any program, i.e., Honours or Masters, shall be governed by rules framed for this purpose (see under **Semester System Rules** in this catalogue).

Appendix VI. Districts of Sindh Province [Source: <http://www.census.gov.pk>]

	Districts	Year	Population	Population divided into (in percent)		Ethnicities (in percent)											
				Urban	Rural	Sindhi/ Siraiki		Mohajir		Punjabi		Pakhtun		Baloch		others	
1	Karachi District	1998	9,856,318	94.75	5.25	9.33		48.52		13.94		15.42		4.34		12.4	
2	Hyderabad District	1998	2,891,488	50.81	49.19	60.96		27		5.02		2.78		1.20		2.04	
3	Tando Allah Yar	2010	575,000	-	-	65		35		-		-		-		-	
4	Tando Muhammad Khan	2010	547,215	-	-	-		-		-		-		-		-	
5	Matairi	-	-	-	-	-		-		-		-		-		-	
6	Badin District	1998	1,136,044	16.42	83.58	90.41		1.21						0.21			
7	Thatta District	1998	1,113,194	11.20	88.79	83		4						1		5	
8	Mirpurkhas District	1998	905,935	33.13	66.87	83.3		5.9		10.1		0.2		0.33		0.07	
9	Sanghar District	1998	1,421,977	23.29	76.70	-		-		-		-		-		-	
10	Dadu District	1998	1,688,811	21.36	78.64	93.33		2.56		1.88		1.17		0.42		0.28	
	Jamshoro District	1998	-	-	-	-		-		-		-		-		-	
11	Nawabshah District	1998	1,071,533	26.35	83.19	56.13		8.72		8.90		0.52		24		56.72	
12	Sukkur District	1998	908,373	50.87	49.12	75.06		13.82		6.63		1.53		1.47		1.49	
13	Ghotki District	1998	970,549	16.33	83.67	-		-		-		-		-		-	
14	Khairpur District	1998	1,546,587	23.61	76.38	95.49		1.7		1.16				2.7		0.33	
15	Naushahroferoz District	1998	1,087,571	17.69	82.31	-		-		-		-		-		-	
16	Larkana District	1998	1,927,066	28.90	71.09	95.20		3.57		0.31		0.06		0.50		0.35	
17	Kambar/ Shahddkot	1998	-	-	-	-		-		-		-		-		-	
18	Jacobabad District	1998	1,425,572	24.37	75.63	94.14		0.54		0.53		0.45		3.15		1.19	
19	Kashmore District	1998	312,500	-	-	-		-		-		-		-		-	
20	Shikarpur District	1998	880,438	24.08	75.42	79.37		1.81		0.24		0.22		12.01		6.35	
21	Tharparkar	1998	914,291	4.36	95.64	-		-		-		-		-		-	
22	Umarkot	1998	663,095	16.81	83.19	-		-		-		-		-		-	
	Total	1998	30,439,893	48.8	51.2	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
						27.5	92.34	41.48	1.62	11.52	2.68	7.96	0.61	2.74	1.50	8.8	1.25