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The influence of teacher identities on teachers' perspectives towards the incoming Dual Language Policy in Abu Dhabi secondary schools

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Abstract

As part of an extensive education reform programme, Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) is currently introducing a Dual Language Policy (DLP) in which English, maths and science are to be taught fully through the medium of English while other subjects are taught through Arabic with the goal of producing biliterate school graduates. The DLP has already been implemented in Grades 1-6 and it is hoped that it will be migrated into secondary schools by 2015.

The success of any major educational policy innovation is dependent on professional support at many levels, including that of teachers. For this reason it is important to explore teachers' perspectives of the policy and how the policy might be in alignment or conflict with their professional identities. This study has adopted a discursive understanding of identity and a post structural theoretical framework. Using semi-structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis, this study sought firstly to explore the primary discourses which shape Emirati female secondary school maths teachers' professional identities. It then identified their perspectives on the DLP before exploring how their identities explained these perspectives.

The research found that the importance of childhood experiences in education, gendered roles, Islam, professional roles, relationships with students and their perspectives of society's view of them as secondary maths teachers were key aspects of participants' professional identities. It also found that teachers had fragmented identities resulting in mixed perspectives on the DLP. In some regard, this resulted in positivity towards the policy although simultaneously they felt their identities were threatened by it, causing them to view its implementation with caution. These threats were clustered around three main areas relating to pedagogic beliefs, their work ethic and linguistic and nationalistic discourses.

A significant finding of this study was that the participants held differing views regarding the principles behind the DLP. Some teachers had accepted the policy ideologically, having adopted a position which assumed the neutrality of English, while others expressed strong views against the encroachment of English in education and society more generally. Nevertheless, there was agreement across the participants that while English was necessary in 21st century Abu Dhabi, it must remain a second language. While this is the stated intention of the DLP, teachers expressed limited awareness of

how Arabic is being protected and promoted by ADEC, causing further animosity towards the policy.

By adopting a post structural position, this research demonstrates the complexity of the situation as teachers find themselves caught in the intersection of multiple, and often conflicting, discourses. It shows that contrary to the prevailing belief, teachers are neither powerless nor passive but are exercising their power, at the micro level, through acts of negotiation, resistance and subversion. By drawing attention to these teachers' discursive positionings, 'framing discourses', such as those related to patriarchy, Islam and linguistic imperialism, are highlighted. These are shown to both shut down and open up possibilities of being (Keddie, 2011), emphasizing the limited space these subjects have to manoeuvre in.

By exploring the construct of teacher identities in the Emirati context and relating it to the practical aspect of policy implementation, this study aims to highlight its relevance to education reform and contribute to a gap in the field. It is hoped that through this, teacher identity will become a more significant part of the educational discourse in this region, disrupting the continued epistemic privilege of Western-informed views of education.

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Abbreviations

ADEC	Abu Dhabi Education Council
CAS	Critical analytical study
DLP	Dual Language Policy
EMT	English medium teacher
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NSM	New School Model
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
TACOS	Terms and conditions of service
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAEU	United Arab Emirates University

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The study's rationale, goals and research questions

Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) was formed in 2005 with the remit to improve education across the emirate. Since then they have undertaken an ambitious reform programme addressing a significant number of aspects of education. Their flagship initiative is called the New School Model (NSM). It was first introduced to KG1 – G3 (ages 4-8) in 2010 and has since been migrated up the system annually, being introduced to the initial year of middle school (age 12) in 2013. It is hoped to be introduced to secondary schools (ages 16-18) in 2015. A key goal of the NSM is to develop biliterate graduates (in Arabic and English). To support the achievement of this goal, it is proposed that English, maths and science will be delivered wholly in English in a policy called the Dual Language Policy (DLP) (ADEC, 2010a).

This study sought to develop a deeper understanding of how secondary school Emirati teacher identities intersected with this policy's implementation. This research was conducted across two girls' secondary schools in Abu Dhabi emirate using general observations, lesson observations, in-depth semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. While this research does not claim to be representative of the teaching population of Abu Dhabi, it has highlighted some key themes which could prove relevant in other similar contexts.

The impetus of this study developed within my professional role as an Educational Advisor based in a secondary school. My responsibility was to train teachers in preparation for the DLP. Part of this training required teachers to use English when teaching. While they were usually willing to attempt this when I was present, for example observing a class (including informal observations), they generally did not use it when I was absent. (I knew this as my office was based in a corridor with classrooms, so I often overheard lessons). I was intrigued as to why this was the case and investigated it in an initial study, conducted in 2011, exploring the factors which influenced science teachers' stance towards the proposed Anglicisation of their curriculum. This research, which was assessed as a part of my EdD, concluded that teachers largely adopted a pragmatic stance recognising the importance of English in modern day Abu Dhabi while voicing some concerns primarily based on issues of

readiness, both of themselves and their students (Pattisson, 2011). Following on from this study, I conducted an in-depth critical analytical study (CAS) in the second year of my EdD, exploring the concept of teacher engagement in the context of change. I conceptualised teacher engagement as a tri-partite construct consisting of teacher identity, teacher motivation and teacher emotion. When planning for the current study I considered using this model as a lens through which to explore teachers' engagement with the DLP. However, as my conceptualisation of teacher identity shifted towards a discursive understanding (see 3.2), my psychological conceptualisations of motivation and emotion were no longer compatible. Additionally, at the proposal stage I felt an in-depth study of just one construct would provide more valuable insights. However, the data I collected were loaded with affect suggesting its inclusion may have added depth to this study (see 6.5).

In the Emirates, the vast majority of Emirati teachers are females and, being a woman myself, conducting research in a boys' secondary school may have been problematic. For these reasons this research explores the topic in relation to women. I also limited the participants to Emirati teachers in light of the current government policy on Emiratisation which encourages Emirati nationals to join the workforce. While the DLP is planned to be applied to the teaching of English, maths and science, English is currently being taught primarily by Western native-speaker teachers and the federal Ministry of Education has not yet released authority for the science curriculum to ADEC, meaning it is presently being taught in Arabic. Therefore, the focus of this study is most relevant to maths teachers. Consequently, the participants of this study are all female, Emirati, secondary school maths teachers.

I decided to focus on teacher identity because of a significant gap in the literature regarding this concept in the Emirati context. While the literature on teacher identity is huge, and multiple studies exist on this construct in a range of countries, especially in the West, research on teacher identity in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is minimal. When researching the topic for my CAS I was able to find just one author who had researched teacher identity in the UAE and that was in the context of initial teacher education. In my opinion, this is problematic as an understanding of teacher identity is important if the complexities of education are to be embraced and accommodated; policies which do not complement prevailing identities may not be consistently adopted by teachers over the long-term as they conflict with the positionalities that teachers

take up. If the complex intersections of discourses through which teacher identities are constructed go unnoticed by policy makers, implementation of policy will, I believe, be fraught with difficulties, increasing both the economic and human cost and often resulting in unsustainable initiatives.

It is my hope that this study, which focuses on and highlights the construct of teacher identity, may raise its status in the current educational discourse. Secondly, having worked in the Emirati educational system for a number of years, I am very aware of the limited opportunity teachers have to express their views, despite the profound changes they are being asked to implement. This is a serious concern for me as I believe teachers have a unique and critical view of the reality of education and should be given some forum from which to convey their insightful comments. Therefore, one goal for completing this research was to provide a voice piece for teachers.

My intention in this study is to establish how Emirati teachers conceptualise their professional identity and what the implications of these conceptualisations are for the implementation of the incoming DLP in secondary schools. To achieve this goal I constructed the following research questions.

- To what extent and for what purposes is English used in maths lessons?
- What are the key discourses through which participating teachers discuss their (professional) identities?
- What are the participating teachers' perspectives on the incoming Dual Language Policy (DLP)?
- How do teacher identities explain teachers' perspectives on the incoming DLP?

1.2 The study's structure

This study starts with an in-depth review of the setting of this research noting relevant aspects of the historical and political, economic, socio-cultural and educational contexts.

Chapter Three locates the study within the research literature. Firstly I present my conceptualisation of identity before exploring aspects of gender, patriarchy and Islam. The discussion then moves to linguistic issues with an examination of linguistic hegemony, neo-colonialism and its impact on language policy. This is followed by a

review of research on attitudes held in Islamic societies on the prevalence of English. The discussion ends with a focussed consideration of factors which influence teachers' choice on whether to use students' first language (L1) or second language (L2) when teaching.

Chapter Four, which covers methods and methodology, provides a rationale for my methodological position of post structuralism. Initially I intended to adopt a social constructionist position but found that this did not sufficiently illuminate the dynamics at play. Nevertheless, I have found this switch to be something of an intellectual leap. Therefore, while I have attempted to be consistent to my recent shift to a post structural approach, I recognise that the tendency to collapse back into humanistic thinking may have prevailed occasionally. In Chapter Four I also consider the important aspect of researcher positionality, reflecting on the influence I have had on the research before describing the research sites and introducing the participants. The chapter is finished with a discussion on the research methods I have selected for this study and a brief overview of ethical issues.

Chapter Five presents the findings of this research responding to each research question in turn. The final chapter then reviews these findings briefly before discussing methodological, conceptual and substantive issues raised through this piece of research. The practical implications of the study's findings are then considered. This chapter finishes by considering how the findings could be taken forward in future research.

1.3 The study's underlying assumptions

Before embarking further I believe it is helpful to clarify some key assumptions I held during the course of this research. These assumptions were formed through my professional experience, conversations I have had with educational stakeholders in Abu Dhabi such as school-based colleagues, ADEC employees and teacher educators and through reading research literature from around the world, primarily in previous stages of my doctoral study.

Firstly, I assumed that teachers would generally be resistant to the DLP due to limited readiness. This was a finding from research I conducted (Pattisson, 2011) and as it was recent, I did not expect significant shifts in perspectives. I assumed the limited readiness would be linguistic (limited teacher English proficiency), pedagogic (limited awareness

of bilingual education teaching strategies) and contextual (low levels of English within the student population). I also assumed teachers would prefer to teach in Arabic as this would allow for increased flexibility, spontaneity and confidence.

Secondly, as these reforms had been running for six years at the time of data collection, I assumed that many teachers would have experienced some shifts in their professional identity as they had repeatedly been exposed to new discourses but that any new positions would remain contested and fragile. Therefore, my assumption, which was based on my professional experience and data collected in a previous study (Pattisson, 2011), was that Emirati teachers would have the skills and understanding to deliver student-centred lessons but would more readily identify with a teacher-centred approach although I expected a spectrum of positions.

Thirdly, I assumed that successful bilingual education must adopt a student-centred approach where learners take a consistently active role in lessons. While this assumption builds on extensive reading and previous experience, it also indicates that my views on education are strongly influenced by prevailing discourses from the UK where I was educated and trained. The DLP appears to be born out of similar discourses so, in light of my previous assumptions, I expected there to be some tension between this requirement and teachers' current beliefs about effective teaching.

Finally, I assumed that I would be surprised by my findings! From my experience with previous research in this country, and from my everyday life, I have found that things are often not as they initially appear and there are many undercurrents I am totally unaware of. Therefore, I assumed the need to interrogate findings and maintain an openness to unexpected subtleties and complexities.

Chapter Two

The Context of the Study

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I set the scene for the reader regarding Emirati society with particular focus on Abu Dhabi. In this, I will give a brief account of its history and politics (including the changing status of English within the country's modern history), the economic situation both past and present and the socio-cultural context. This is followed by a synopsis of the history of formal education in the country before a more detailed account of current education reforms in Abu Dhabi under the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) is presented.

2.2 The historical and political context

The current political status quo in Abu Dhabi was largely established when the UAE was a British protectorate in the 19th and early 20th centuries, due to an agreement whereby the sheikhs refused haven for pirates in their ports with the expectation that in return the British would support them in the case of any uprisings. In effect, this ensured the ruling families retained their power base which they have hung on to (Davidson, 2011).

Oil was discovered in Abu Dhabi in 1958 and production began in 1960. This benefitted the ruling family for as their incomes rose they were able to fund development projects, legitimising their position and increasing levels of both power and prestige (Kazim, 2000). However, Sheikh Shakbout, the ruler at the time, was cautious in the spending of such wealth and did not support many of the extravagant plans proposed by the British. This led to his dismissal in 1965 and Sheikh Zayed, his brother, took over. Sheikh Zayed fully embraced the notion of development and provided funding for a wide range of ambitious projects. Between 1967 and 1970 over 98% of the oil revenue was spent, amounting to almost 3.1 billion dirham (approximately US\$850 million at the current rate of exchange) (Kazim, 2000).

In 1971, following a decision by the British government to withdraw from the region, the emirates in the lower Gulf, known also as the Trucial States, joined together in a cohesive federation in an attempt to ensure some additional security. Bahrain and Qatar were also invited to join but chose not to. On December 2nd 1971 the United Arab Emirates, made up of six emirates, was inaugurated. Ras Al Khaimah joined one month later. Since unification, the federal government has exercised jurisdiction over all seven

emirates although each retain some autonomy. Each emirate is required to contribute a fixed percentage of their GDP to the central funds and power is distributed according to relative size, wealth and population. Abu Dhabi is significantly wealthier than the other emirates (see Table 2.1) so retains certain privileges such as the right to veto decisions made at the highest levels, hold the largest proportion of ministerial positions and be assured that the ruler of Abu Dhabi will also be the national president (Davidson, 2011).

Emirate	1975 ^a	1992 ^a	2008 ^b
Abu Dhabi	28,194	80,979	520,000
Dubai	8,167	30,729	301,000
Sharjah	2,084	10,194	72,000
Ajman	214	1,562	11,000
Umm Al Quwain	112	852	3,700
Ras Al Khaimah	657	3,860	16,000
Fujairah	207	1,957	10,000

Sources: a: Kazim, 2000; b: Qassemi, 2010¹.

Table 2.1 The United Arab Emirates' GDP by individual emirates (in millions of dirham)

The significant difference in wealth between emirates is a source of concern and some uneasiness is felt over the sustainability of the current political set-up, especially given the recent events in neighbouring Arab states. In 2011, a number of civil society organisations were dismantled or taken over by government authorities and some people calling for an elected parliament were arrested and imprisoned (Human Rights Watch, 2012). In 2013 a significant trial was held in which:

[p]rosecutors accused 94 men and women of establishing, organising and administering the group and trying to divert the public's loyalty. They said the accused were seeking to undermine the principles of government and wanted to seize power (Al Khoori, 2013).

Their activities were linked with Al Islah, an organisation with affiliations to the Muslim Brotherhood. During the trial, there were claims that defendants had limited access to their lawyers, inadequate medical provision and the bank accounts of families and companies were frozen. Only Emirati journalists were permitted to attend the trial and about two dozen human rights organisations were banned from attending (Duffy, 2013)

¹ The current rate of exchange is \$US1: 3.65AED

giving a negative impression to international observers. However, the local media were quick to defend the system. Makarem (2013) reports that one commentator said:

The verdicts, which included both acquittals and convictions with imprisonment, prove the Emirati Judiciary's professionalism, steadfastness and respect for the law, despite the enormous media pressure that questioned judicial integrity.

The verdict found 69 defendants guilty. They were jailed for up to 15 years (Makarem, 2013).

Despite such statements of local support for the government, according to Davidson (2011):

As yet, no proper roadmaps are in place for genuine democratic openings, and this renders the existing politics brittle and highly vulnerable to rapidly mounting pressures for reforms from the fast growing and increasingly educated youthful population (p.4).

Given the linguistic focus of this research I feel it is necessary to add a brief comment on the introduction of English to the country. Although the Trucial States were a British protectorate for 150 years, there was limited exposure to English as the officers responsible for the territory were fluent Arabic speakers. This situation started to change in the 1950s with the discovery of oil as auxiliary staff generally did not know Arabic. Additionally, the British set up the Trucial States Development Fund which provided English language training for those in influential positions. As oil revenues grew, it became increasingly common to send sons Westward for education, further promoting the language's status. As development progressed, and with the ever increasing proportion of immigrants, many from non-Arabic speaking countries, English acquired the status of lingua franca and this position was sealed with the government's decision to make English the language of instruction at government universities in 2005 (Boyle, 2012).

2.3 The economic context

Before the 1970s, the Emirati economy was small. It had enjoyed a period of relative success based on the pearling industry at the end of the nineteenth century, but this crashed in the 1930s due to both the growth of fresh water pearls and political interference of the British in this trade (Davidson, 2008). However, with the discovery of oil in the late 1950s and the shift in policy towards economic expansion from 1965, there was an influx of labour to the region in the 1970s, primarily from South Asia. Since

then, there has been significant growth in the Emirati economy with figures from 2011 showing a 4.2% increase in GDP (Saad, 2012). Forecasts suggest the economy will continue to grow at a rate of 2.6% pa (IMF, 2012).

A key strategic policy of the UAE and Abu Dhabi governments is that of diversification of their economies. They are keen to avoid over-dependence on the oil industry and are committed to the development of a knowledge economy. While this has been a policy for some time, the rapid economic downturn of Dubai in 2008 brought into focus its importance, resulting in renewed efforts in its implementation. Consequently, in 2010 non-oil sectors accounted for 70% of the national economy (Ministry of Economy, 2011) and around 50% of Abu Dhabi's in the same year (OECD, 2011). The Abu Dhabi government has stated that:

a world class education system, from early childhood to university and adult education, is central to achieving this vision [of a sustainable knowledge economy] (The Executive Council, 2007).

This is a key rationale for the current education reforms in the emirate (see 2.5.2) and for the introduction of the DLP, as being biliterate is seen as a necessary characteristic of such a workforce (ADEC, 2009).

Another policy the government has adopted since the 1970s, is that of welfarism. Under this policy, Emirati nationals receive considerable financial support from the government. For example, under certain conditions they are eligible for free or subsidized housing, free education and medical care, scholarships for overseas study, a wedding grant, preferential loan rates (Abu Dhabi Government, 2013) and generous employment packages. Being an Emirati national is perceived as a privileged position which is closely protected and rarely extended to expatriates living in the country. Initially, the policy of welfarism was adopted to stabilize the local population, provide cohesion across the Emirates and offer a counter discourse to colonialism (Kazim, 2000). It was relatively successful in achieving these goals but at a cost.

A citizenry has been cultivated over the past forty years that is accustomed to material benefits and to very few forms of extraction, and thus lacks the motivation to seek meaningful employment (Davidson, 2011, p.26).

An alternative reading of this situation, based on data provided by my respondents, is presented in 5.6.

In mid-2011 the population of Abu Dhabi emirate was 2.12 million, of whom 439,100 were Emirati (20.7%) (SCAD, 2013). It is estimated that currently, only 9% of the labour force are Emirati (Davidson, 2011). Unemployment amongst Emiratis in Abu Dhabi is officially reported at 11.8% (SCAD, 2013) although inactivity rates amongst Emirati has been placed as high as 58% (OECD, 2011, p.14). Approximately 17,000 claim security benefits and over half of these people are able-bodied and capable of working (Davidson, 2011).

The proportion of women in the Emirati labour force has been steadily increasing although figures of their rate of participation vary significantly. In a government paper (United Arab Emirates Government, nd), it is claimed that 59% of the national workforce was female in 2008, an increase from 33.4% in 2007. Less dramatically, some quote the figure as being as low as 14.84% in 2010 (Trading Economics, 2012). The Ministry of Economy figures state that in 2008, 28% of the workforce were women (Aswad et al, 2011, p.560). The World Bank measured female participation in 2010 at 44% (The World Bank, 2012) while the United Nations Development Programme placed female labour force participation at 0.454 for 2010 (UNDP, 2013). One reason why these figures may vary so significantly could be that some refer to women in the population who work including expatriates, while others refer just to the proportion of national women who are in paid employment.

On paper, women are free to choose their line of work although this liberty is often not realised due to the strength of cultural expectations of women's position in this society (Kazim, 2000). As Aswad et al (2011) state:

Although personal inclination and individualism are taking a larger role in the society, family remains one of the highest influences on women's decisions regarding education and careers (p. 560).

Fundamentally, Emirati society is patriarchal and fathers or other male guardians exert considerable control over women's decisions. Some fathers do not permit their daughters to work outside the home or limit their options to establishments which practise gender segregation (Al Marzouqi & Forster, 2011). A survey conducted by Sayed (2001) showed that 74% of men and 65% of women believed that the family suffers when a woman works outside the home (Itani et al, 2011, p.412).

This state of affairs is also reported by Crabtree (2007):

Despite social progress in so many areas of daily life, findings indicate that gender normative behaviour continues to conform closely to the prescribed roles of men and women associated with religion and culture. Thus the proper domain of women is seen as being quintessentially in the home environment regardless of the political call to education and employment (p.579).

Additionally many women do not enter the workforce because of the lack of informative career advice while still in education so they are unaware of the opportunities available to them, particularly in non-traditional sectors (Aswad et al, 2011). Nevertheless, the government continues to actively support changes in opportunities available for women with the establishment of federations, government bodies and laws which promote female economic participation (Al Marzouqi & Forster, 2011). Within the cosmopolitan urban centres such as Abu Dhabi city and Dubai, these measures are starting to have an impact but they are less influential elsewhere.

2.4 The socio-cultural context

A primary influence within the socio-cultural arena in the UAE is Islam. Within the UAE about 16% of nationals are Shiites while 80% are Sunnis (GRC, 2012) with the majority of the local Abu Dhabi population adhering to the Maliki School² (Kazim, 2000). The government actively supports the Islamist agenda, for example by backing local Islamic organisations, sending considerable aid to needy Islamic countries and building mosques. This policy is one which resonates positively with Emiratis who largely consider their Islamic identity to be central. For example, in a study conducted at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) in 1991, 86% of respondents identified first with being Muslim while only 10.7% saw themselves first as Emirati (Kazim, 2000, p.422). In a similar study conducted in 1998 it was again found that the majority of Emiratis considered their primary identity to be that of a Muslim (Rashed, 1999).

Within the national population, Kazim (2000) identifies three socio-cultural positions – conservative, moderate and progressive. The conservatives promote the importance of local culture and values as well as the Umma (Islamic community). Their position has been strengthened by the threat from globalisation and the subsequent government policy to support their cause, for example with the establishment of the General

² Within Sunni Islam there are four main schools of jurisprudence which interpret the Sharia (Islamic law) differently. These schools evolved shortly after the Prophet's death where different environments promoted a range of interpretations to specific rulings. The Maliki school was adopted in Abu Dhabi (Kazim, 2000). This has some implications regarding women's status as will be discussed later (see 3.5 & 4.5).

Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments in 1999. The progressives want the UAE to open up to globalisation particularly within commerce but also regarding social issues such as women's rights and democracy. Their agenda is generally viewed more cautiously. The majority view is that of the moderates who desire a balance between the local and global culture. This view is shared by many policy makers who recognise the economic advantage of international business but who also wish to promote local values. However, subjects may be located across these positions as some discourses are resisted while others are internalised. This does not occur uniformly but in response to the local context. In his study based in Dubai, Rashed (1999) develops this idea noting that while some thinking remains embedded in the conservative past, Emirati values and traditions are shifting and there is generally an increase in the discourse of individualism, more readily associated with the moderate or progressive positions, bringing with it, apathy, selfishness and a significant rise in egotism.

2.5 The educational context

The Emirati school system is divided into five stages. Children start education in KG1 at the age of four, although this stage is not compulsory. After two years they progress to primary school, or Cycle One, for five years. Cycle Two, also called middle school, runs for four years from the ages of 12-15. Secondary school (Cycle Three) takes three years. Following Cycle Three, students can continue in higher education either at university or a more practical based college. All government education, apart from kindergarten, is gender segregated. Following a new law in 2012, it is compulsory for everyone to attend school until the end of secondary school (WAM, 2012; ADEC, 2013c). Prior to this law, schooling was compulsory until the end of middle school. All education is provided free of charge to nationals.

2.5.1 1930 - 2005

Formal education was started in the Emirates at the beginning of the twentieth century with the growth of the local economy when a number of wealthy businessmen invested in schools particularly in Sharjah and Dubai. These schools were staffed by Arab teachers primarily from Egypt and Jordan. However, with the collapse of the pearling industry in the 1930s many of these schools closed and education was once again limited to Quranic memorization (Davidson, 2008).

The mid twentieth century saw the spread of formal schools, once again as a result of business with Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. While all these countries invested in education across the Emirates, Kuwait took the primary role providing not only the curriculum but also textbooks and stationery (Abdullah, 1978). Very little progress was made in education in Abu Dhabi during this period, under the authority of Sheikh Shakbout; there were just six schools in the emirate in 1965, educating 528 pupils (Abdullah, 1978). However, when Sheikh Zayed took leadership in 1966, education became a priority and unprecedented gains were made in its establishment so that provision matched the other emirates by the time of independence in 1971. During this period teachers were treated with great respect and their advice was often sought by sheikhs. They are reported to have worked hard, often teaching classes of 50-60 students for long periods of time (Abdullah, 1978). Consequently, they enjoyed a high status within the community.

From 1975-1980 the federal government adopted new areas of responsibility including a central Ministry of Education (Kazim, 2000). One objective when forming the Ministry was to ensure the uniform provision of education across the UAE, a commitment spearheaded by Sheikh Zayed (Davidson, 2011). While exact data is hard to find, and that which is available often varies between sources raising questions of reliability, the 1970s to 1990s were undoubtedly characterised by the rapid quantitative expansion of education, as Table 2.2 demonstrates.

Year	Number of schools	Number of students	% increase in student enrolment since 1972
1972	204	48610 ^a	
1974/75	307	74907 ^a	154
1984/85	665	250645 ^a	516
1994/95	1091	499860 ^a	1028
2002/03	NA	595040 ^b	1224

Sources: a: MoE, 1997 in Al Saeed, 1998; b: Al Abed et al, 2005

Table 2.2: The number of schools and students in the UAE, 1972-2003

Year	AED	US\$	% Budget	%GDP
1976	500 million ^a	137 million	NA	0.9 ^e
1986	1.74 billion ^a	478 million	12.4 ^a	1.8 ^e
1996	3.19 billion	874 million ^b	16.2 ^b	1.9 ^e
2006	5.4 billion	1.46 billion ^c	26.1 ^f	1.1 ^g
2009	9.71 billion	2.66 billion ^d	23.4 ^g	1.2 ^g

Sources: a: Al Banna, 1990; b: Al Abed et al, 1997; c: Al Abed et al, 2005; d: Vine, 2009; e: The World Bank, 2007; f: UNESCO, 2009; g: The World Bank, 2012

Table 2.3: UAE government expenditure on education, 1976-2009

This significant growth ensured that all children were entering primary school at the age of six by 1985, a mere 13 years after independence. Despite considerable financial investment in education (see Table 2.3) the rapid quantitative growth led to substantial qualitative problems, partly because of a failure to develop a long-term planning strategy (Al Saeed, 1998). The first recognition for the need to address qualitative issues occurred in the early 1990s (Al Saeed, 1998). Since then there have been numerous initiatives but overall, “there is a sense of randomness” (Al Saeed et al, 2000, p.71) and a failure to make a fundamental shift (Al Banna, 1990) with the focus remaining on implementing tweaks rather than a systematic overhaul addressing fundamental issues such as the prevailing educational philosophy. Many of these problems remain today within the school system and include issues such as limited opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills, high drop-out rates (Gardener, 1995), low scores on international tests (ACER, 2011), a culture of fear amongst staff, poor communication, low levels of professional accountability, limited school-level autonomy and high levels of untrained or under-trained teachers (Al Saeed et al, 2000). Additionally, efficiency amongst teachers is limited with many, in my experience, being timetabled for a maximum of fifteen 45 minute lessons a week.

These issues have implications for higher education as the majority of entrants need to take remedial programmes prior to embarking on their degrees. For example, in 2007 91% of UAEU entrants and 99.6% of Higher Colleges of Technology entrants required foundational level bridge courses (ADEC, 2009). Some authors claim these programmes absorb as much as 40% of the higher education budget³ (Rugh, 2002). Additionally,

³ This statement refers to the Gulf region, rather than the UAE specifically, but is representative of the situation.

there is a significant mismatch between school graduates' skills and the needs of the labour market, especially in the private sector (Gardener, 1995; Rugh, 2002; The World Bank, 2007; Davidson, 2009). With Emiratisation being high on the political agenda, there is significant motivation to address the qualitative issues facing the Emirati school system (The Executive Council, 2007).

2.5.2 ADEC 2005 -2013

In 2005 Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) was established in law under the chairmanship of the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan. On its establishment, its remit was to develop education and educational institutions in the emirate (ADEC, 2013a). The establishment of ADEC provoked the demand for decentralisation to allow Abu Dhabi more flexibility in how its education system is run. Decentralisation - "the transfer of decision-making authority, responsibility and tasks from higher to lower levels and between organisations" (Hanson, 2000, p.276) - was secured in 2006 (Al Taneiji & McLeod, 2008). In Abu Dhabi's case, power was transferred from the federal to the emirate level but the administrative model adopted by ADEC has ensured decision-making power is rarely disseminated further. Regional or school level administrators currently implement policy but have limited opportunity to contribute to it (Troudi & Alwan, 2010; Al Taneiji & McLeod, 2008). Although it has financial and administrative independence, ADEC must coordinate with the federal Ministry of Education so its actions work within the "framework of the UAE's general education policy" (WAM, 2005). For example, school holidays and the nature, content and timing of school leaving exams are managed at the federal level.

The UAE's education system fared poorly in international benchmarking studies commissioned by the Ministry of Education in 2001 and 2005. These studies found that, for example, just 44% of teachers in the UAE were certified with a degree in education, new teachers had an average of only two weeks training before entering the classroom and students' learning time was as little as 50% when compared to international standards due to a short school day and academic year (The Executive Council, 2007).

Abu Dhabi's Educational Policy Agenda (ADEC, 2010c) states:

The Abu Dhabi government has identified education as its number one priority. The quality of the emirate's education system is central to, and will play a

defining role in, the successful implementation of Abu Dhabi's policy agenda and frameworks (Foreword).

ADEC was therefore established to manage the desired transformation. As Dr Al Khaili, former Director General of ADEC says:

We are aiming high...We do not just want to improve our education system, our schools and the performance of students; we want to be ranked as one of the best education systems in the world (ADEC, 2010b).

With these goals of excellence in mind, ADEC embarked on its programme of extensive educational reforms focusing on four specific areas: elevating school quality, improving access to P-12 education, providing affordable options to high-quality private education and focusing on national identity and career development (ADEC, 2009). Each of these key priorities consists of a number of sub-goals and are being implemented through a range of projects which could be described as 'policy hysteria' (Glatter, 1999). For example, teachers in the school where I was based were having to simultaneously negotiate new curricular, new assessment systems, new teaching methodologies, more intrusive and rigorous professional evaluations, an intensification of work through more periods, longer days and more accountability, the introduction of bilingual teaching (in Arabic and English), increased levels of professional development and working with foreigners as part of a Public-Private Partnership. No doubt, this list is not exhaustive. As Thorne (2011) points out, there seems to be a deliberate policy of sampling from a range of initiatives which have been implemented elsewhere, with the expectation of identifying which is the most effective.

Initially, ADEC adopted the model of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with four international educational operators from the USA, UK and New Zealand in 27 schools. By 2009, this had grown to include nine providers in 176 schools (ADEC, 2010b). Within this model, every school had a team of advisors based on their premises (or sometimes across two smaller schools), each with a specific focus including support for the principal, key curricular areas and a language specialist who provided training for the teachers to enable them to reach the competency goal of IELTS band 5.5⁴, set down by ADEC (Zaman, 2012). The PPP model started to be phased out from 2011 and was

⁴ The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is a UK/ Australian exam which was designed to establish language levels for people emigrating to English speaking countries either to live or for study. It is now widely used across the UAE as a benchmark for English language levels. A candidate who scores 5.5 is described as being a modest/ competent user (UCLES, 2010).

concluded in 2012 in public schools. Overall, the PPP was officially deemed a success by ADEC with, “a considerable rise in student and teacher attendance and grades, specifically in English, maths and Arabic language skills” (The General Secretariat of the Executive Council, 2010). However, ADEC chose to alter its approach. Having benefitted from this initial guidance and support, ADEC as an organisation had matured and felt more able to manage the reforms without this direct input. This decision mirrored its goal for Emiratisation while simultaneously reducing costs (Olarte-Ulherr, 2012; Al Khalil, 2011). Therefore, building on the progress made through the PPP, ADEC developed its second wave of reforms entitled the New School Model (NSM).

There are four key elements to the NSM: Arabic and English language development with the goal of biliterate school graduates, the better use of learning objectives, improved resourcing of schools to assist learning and enhanced support for teachers including ongoing professional development. These elements feed into the NSM objectives which are the adoption of child-centred learning, inclusion of the community in education, improved language and critical thinking skills coupled with a strong sense of identity and standardisation across all the emirate’s schools (ADEC, 2010a). It is interesting to note the key position afforded to the goal of biliteracy (referred to in this study as the Dual Language Policy (DLP)) indicated by its mention three times within the outlining of the NSM’s key elements (ADEC, 2010a).

The dual language model currently being adopted in ADEC schools is a side-by-side partial immersion model (Gallagher, 2011). In this model, instruction is conducted in both languages with a teacher of each language in each classroom at all times at kindergarten level or, at primary level, and now in grade six the first year of middle school, a native-speaker English teacher takes responsibility for English, maths and science and native-Arabic speaking teachers teach the remaining subjects (ADEC, 2010a). There currently are no options to learn maths or science in the mother tongue. It is generally expected this model will migrate to secondary schools although this has not been confirmed.

ADEC is very clear that the language policy of the NSM is *dual language* and they are therefore actively promoting the development of Arabic and Islam alongside English. The support for Arabic is seen through a number of measures such as the inclusion of a

key objective related to the development of cultural and national identities (ADEC, 2010a), contact hours for Islamic studies remaining the same in middle schools with the roll out of the NSM (ADEC, 2013b, p.12) and an ADEC document used to train school leaders (ADEC, 2010c), identifying the following characteristics of a biliterate classroom - “New topics and ideas being introduced and explored in Arabic” and “English and Arabic speaking teachers planning and assessing together” (although this last point contradicts alternative documentation which states English, maths and science will be taught fully in English under the NSM (ADEC, 2010e)). They have also developed a number of additional initiatives aimed at promoting the Arabic language and Islam. A report on the NSM in middle schools states:

The general goals of the curriculum include an extensive and accurate knowledge of Islamic principles and intellectual, practical and moral Islamic religion properties; moderation and ability to understand other viewpoints; the ability to integrate Islam in individual and social life; enhancing ways of communication; the ability to provide a clear explanation on Islam compared with other religions and strengthening national identity (ADEC, 2013c)

While ADEC is adamant that biliteracy is central to the successful realisation of the goals set out in Abu Dhabi Plan 2030 (ADEC, 2010c; ADEC, 2012), there have been obstacles to its implementation. Firstly, teachers’ English language ability is acting as a major barrier. It was estimated that less than 10% of tested teachers in public schools met ADEC’s requirements of IELTS band 5.5 in 2009 (ADEC, 2009; Zaman, 2012). By 2012, it was claimed that the proportion of teachers reaching the goal had risen to about 50% (Zaman, 2012). However, ADEC has recently stipulated that in the middle and secondary schools, teachers must have an IELTS score of 6.5. At the start of the roll out into middle schools just 17 male maths teachers and 15 female maths teachers met this expectation, out of 402 Grade 6 teachers (ADEC, 2013b). Therefore, there is a considerable shortfall of sufficiently qualified teachers to deliver this policy. Currently, this gap is being filled by native English speaking teachers.

Additionally, there are reports of strong sentiments within society which oppose this policy with claims that it will ‘erode the cultural and national identity of students’ (Ahmed, 2010, p.9). ADEC is, however, adamant that this policy is dual language and it is actively promoting Arabic and Islamic education, as previously explained. Recent research, also suggests that hostile views towards this policy are softening as improved

learning of English becomes evident without an apparent decline in Arabic skills (Khalifa, 2011).

ADEC's educational reform programme is certainly ambitious and planned with clear goals and objectives in mind. However, due to its top-down approach the question remains as to whether or not its implementation is sustainable given the limited opportunities key players have had to voice their views on the process. Research conducted in the UAE has shown that in such contexts, teacher morale is negatively impacted (Troudi & Alwan, 2010), partially due to the neglect of teacher identity, the conceptualisation of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Before exploring the specificities of this study, it is important to locate the relevant themes within the broader research literature. Therefore, this chapter starts with a presentation of this study's conceptual frameworks of identity and gender. Discourses related to patriarchy, gender and Islam, neo-colonialism and linguistic hegemony are then discussed. Next, research which identifies the layered and often conflicting perspectives towards the prevalence of English in Islamic societies is explored. The chapter finishes with a presentation of factors which affect teachers' stance towards using a second language (L2) while teaching.

3.2 Conceptual framework of identity⁵

Within the literature there is an array of conceptualisations of identity ranging from individualistic psychological views to subjective post structural/ post modern ideas. Initially, while working on the CAS, I was drawn to the work of Kelchtermans (1993). He suggests that identity evolves over time and is made up of five interrelating elements:

- Self-image: how teachers describe themselves through their career stories
- Self-esteem: the evolution of self as a teacher, how good or otherwise as defined by self or others
- Job motivation: what makes teachers choose, remain committed to or leave the job
- Task perception: how teachers define their jobs
- Future perspectives: teachers' expectations for the future development of their jobs (pp.449-450)

However, when engaging with this model at the early stages of this study, I found it did not offer sufficient flexibility to meet my needs so abandoned it in favour of a model found in Day et al (2006) which proposed that identity can be viewed as a bi-partite construct consisting of a both a substantive and situated self. The substantive self refers to the more stable, core presentation of an individual – that which is fundamental to them, while the situated self refers to malleable characteristics. The substantive self is

⁵ This section is closely related with the theoretical position of post structuralism set out in 4.2. It may be helpful for the reader to review these sections in conjunction.s

formed over time through consistent exposure to cultural, religious, familial and pedagogic beliefs. It is also influenced by past experiences including critical events and habitual practices such as experiences of education as a student. While the substantive self is stable, this is not to say it cannot experience change. Rather shifts in these core beliefs take time and are usually only experienced with a certain amount of 'trauma', by which I mean soul-searching, bargaining and emotional upheaval. The situated self, on the other hand, is an unstable construct which shifts rapidly depending on context and relationships.

I applied this model throughout the working of this thesis but at the end, as I was drawing the threads together, found it could not accommodate the complexity of my data and thus ultimately, was not useful for analysis. While working with this model, I simultaneously engaged with the role of discourse in identity construction so, when I abandoned this model I embraced a discursive understanding of identity which proposes that a subject's identity is produced through her engagement with discourse, understood as socio-historically produced patterns of language and behaviour (see 4.2.2).

When the 'I' seeks to give an account of itself, it can start with itself, but will find that this self is already implicated in a social temporality that seeks to engage its own capacities of narration (Butler, 2005 in Clarke, 2008, p. 23).

Therefore, a subject's identity has no essential or transcendental characteristic (Hall, 2000) but is constructed within a social context and is subject to the prevailing discourses of that context.

Post structural perspectives on identity have pointed out that individuals do not autonomously construct their identities in a social, cultural and political vacuum; rather, socio-cultural and socio-political discourses will determine what resources are available to use in the ongoing project of identity construction, just as the outcomes of this process, in terms of identities, will in turn shape the discursive patterns at work in different contexts (Clarke, 2008, p.24).

The relative meanings of these discourses are conveyed through language, within relationship, resulting in a bi-directional model of "individual in society/ society in the individual" (Clarke, 2008, p.24) whereby boundaries of possibilities are established, without suggesting a deterministic character to identity. Foucault suggested three techniques are at play – hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and examination, of which I believe normalising judgement to be of particular relevance. In

this he proposed that due to societal expectations, subjects adopt certain behaviours resulting in 'normalisation' (Foucault, 1979; Heyes, 2011). In this, a subject's response to a discourse is often based on assumptions and expectations placed on her which she has internalised, often without being aware of it (Ropers-Huilman, 1997).

Therefore, a subject will predominantly interpret her identity in light of prevailing social discourses resulting in an adoption of the relative meaning, leading to socio-historically contingent forms of subjectification. However, as identity is constructed socially and relationships are ongoing, identity is viewed not as a fixed construct but one which is fluid, evolving, contingent and exposed to continued negotiation (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Lee & Anderson, 2009). As Cooper and Olson (1996) state:

Identity formation is an ongoing process that involves the interpretation and reinterpretation of our experiences as we live through them... identity is continually being informed, formed and reformed as individuals develop over time and through interactions with others (p.80).

Identity is also viewed as something a subject *does*, rather than *is*, meaning it is not an essence which can be captured, but an ongoing process through which a subject acts out her life in a constant *becoming* (McGuishin, 2011). This process of subjectification occurs as a subject shifts position in response to the power of discourse as meanings are resignified.

Though they are regulated and inscribed by discourse and cultural practice, subjects can resist those normalising inscriptions and their material effects by moving from one discourse where only certain statements can be made to another where different statements are possible (Adams St Pierre, 2000, p.503).

This is the out-playing of the post structural conceptualisation of agency which:

does not presume freedom from discursive constitution and regulation of self. Rather it is the capacity to recognise that constitution as historically specific and socially regulated, and thus as able to be called into question (Davies & Gannon, 2005).

Once discourse is recognised as a social construction, a subject is able to disrupt that which was taken-for-granted and explore new possibilities of being as she struggles with and confronts power relations within discourses so, "meaning can be strategically reinterpreted, reworked and deferred" (Adams St Pierre, 2000, p.504). In this a subject can, "resignify the theoretical positions that have constituted [her]" (Butler, 1992, p.9 in Adams St Pierre, 2000, p.503) although this is complex as these theoretical positions are

embedded in the existing identity. A subject therefore exercises a radically conditioned agency where she can critically examine discursive possibilities and resist the powers which act on her both within herself and society (Davies, 2006). Subjects are therefore constituted but not determined.

Nevertheless, for an identity to be validated, it must be located within an interpretative system (Gee, 2000). As Butler (2001) points out, the existence of self is dependent on the Other and the normative horizon against which regimes of truth can be tested. Davies (2006) adds to this in claiming that new discourses are spoken into existence but this is not an individual but a collective task, even though the results can have profound personal implications. If the collective aspect is missing, identities which are claimed by individuals may be met with resistance or non-acceptance by others in their social domain (Lee & Anderson, 2009), with non-conformity sometimes resulting in significant sanctions as power relations are exercised.

Therefore, identity is conceptualised as a strategic and positional construct (Hall, 2000, p.17) which is built in response to, but also within, prevailing discourses.

It accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly are fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions (Hall, 2000, p.17).

As a subject recognises the possibility for alternative discourses, and then engages with these, her position shifts and identity evolves. However, the range of possible discourses is limited by societal expectations as identity construction must receive validation within relationship.

3.3 Conceptual framework of gender

Before exploring issues of gender it is important to establish how it has been understood in this study. I have drawn largely on the ideas posited in *Gender Trouble* (Butler, 1999), where the binary of sex and gender is interrogated. In this work Butler concludes that sex is merely a biological description while gender is culturally constructed and thus is open to a significantly wider range of interpretations. Nevertheless, she argues that the dominant assumption is that one's gender will follow one's sex because of powerful discourses within society.

The limits of the discursive analysis of gender presuppose and pre-empt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture. This is not to say that any and all gendered possibilities are open, but that the boundaries of analysis suggest the limits of a discursively conditioned experience. These limits are always set within the terms of hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality (Butler, 1999, p.13).

She goes on to argue that gender is performative and produced within an inherited discourse. This discourse traditionally espouses certain roles and behaviours which constitute uniform notions of masculinity and femininity. In other words gender is a heterosexual matrix which establishes a binary in language and in the psyche, establishing norms which extend beyond language into the processes of becoming a subject. These prevail as key fixers of the power relations we are made human through. However, Butler suggests the conceptualisation of gender is more complex than this when intersecting discourses are embraced, meaning that what can be understood by the word 'woman' cannot be captured in a single term. In this she highlights the dynamic nature of gender, indicating that the possibilities available to women are evolving as society itself changes.

Within Abu Dhabi, the dominant discourse regarding the performative nature of gender generally resists such Western conceptualisations where gender has a wider range of realisations. Instead it strongly emphasises the traditional hetero-normative regime perpetuated through socio-historical discourses such as patriarchy and Islam. However, as already noted, societies change and discourses evolve. Abu Dhabi is no exception to this with frenetic changes occurring within society, opening the door to the possibility for new discourses. However, before these can be proposed or adopted, prevailing discourses must be deconstructed.

3.4 Patriarchy and intersecting discourses

As discussed by Waters (1989), there are four primary traditions in the understanding of the term 'patriarchy' – "a kinship based system of government, a generalised masculine oppression, a mechanism in the social reproduction of capitalism and a sex-class system" (p.193). Moghadam (1992) defines it as, "a kinship-ordered social structure with strictly defined sex roles in which women are subordinate to men" (p.35). This definition straddles the first two traditions mentioned by Waters. However, in this discussion, patriarchy will follow Alexander & Welzel's simpler definition as, "the

systematic subordination of women to men” (2011, p.272). It is understood this subordination can occur in either or both the public and private spheres.

While gender hierarchies exist in every society, and many social systems prioritise men’s position, not all societies are patriarchal (Moghadam, 1992). Recent research has shown that patriarchy is stronger in Muslim societies and within Muslims who live outside their societies (when compared to non-Muslims who also live in these environments). These findings are remarkably robust showing up across all research cohorts which included categorisations such as religiosity and levels of education (Alexander & Welzel, 2011). Therefore, a dominant discourse within Islam is that of patriarchy. As Treacher (2003) states:

It has to be acknowledged that the Middle East remains the seat of contested but powerfully felt patriarchy. It is on matters of the nation, modernity and nationalism that men make their presence felt powerfully (p.67).

However, patriarchy is not limited to just the public sphere as indicated above; it is also present in the private sphere. According to Rashed (1999), it is common place for Western-educated Emirati men to demonstrate dichotomy in their thinking by not allowing their wives to work even if other values such as time keeping, work ethics and philosophies around child rearing, have adopted practices more readily associated with the West. The relevance of private patriarchy is emphasised across the literature (Bristol-Rhys; 2010; Badran, 2009; Gallant, 2006) (see 3.5).

Within Islamic societies patriarchy is largely taken-for-granted. It retains considerable power through the socially constructed knowledge it has produced in multiple dominant discourses which both pre-date and include Islam. There appear to be four primary social structures which work together to explain its prevalence in Emirati society. These include socialisation, culture, religion and economic structures. Each will be discussed in more detail.

Socialisation occurs in society through the explicit and implicit perpetuation of discourses so members adhere to social norms. This training takes place from the earliest ages within the home, and is reinforced as language brings reality into being through formal education in schools and mosques and, to some extent, through the media. In Islamic societies women are expected to, “be virtuous, righteous and uphold the moral order. The absolute imperative is that women be modest” (Treacher, 2003, p.62). They are encouraged to promote cordiality, limit their display of emotions,

especially emotions such as anger, and demonstrate submissiveness. They are also expected to refrain from criticism and complaints (Bristol-Rhys, 2010). Moghadam (1992) presents a similar point stating that the stability of family life, the fabric of religious observance and the maintenance of customs are largely sustained through women who are viewed as the preservers and upholders of social values. These feminist authors suggest such qualities do not particularly support political resistance but rather promote a posture of submission to the status quo reinforcing the patriarchal discourse. Consequently, it is argued that, “socialisation under Islamic norms ingrains patriarchal values as an inherent attribute of Muslim identity” (Alexander & Welzel, 2011, p.249).

There is evidence of systematic patriarchy in ancient times in the Arab region. Lerner (1986 in Moghadam, 1992) reports evidence of laws in Mesopotamia which institutionalised female subordination while the Assyrians, Hittites and Hebrews also drew legal distinctions between males and females. To some extent, this patriarchy has continued down the ages, firmly embedding itself in the culture of these communities (Kazemi, 2000). One way it is felt in the present day is through the use of sanctions against those who make choices outside these social expectations, especially when family honour is compromised demonstrating the power of this regime of truth in Middle Eastern societies. For example, Bristol-Rhys (2010) reports that one of her female university students was sent to the family farm and grounded for a month because of behaviour which was deemed to be flirtation. While both men and women are restricted by these expectations, women generally are afforded fewer personal freedoms. This scenario is described as cultural, rather than religious, as some strict Arab Christian families (for example in the Near-East countries) exercise similar sanctions (Hassan, 2008).

As patriarchy pre-dates the ascent of Islam and thus was a taken-for-granted aspect of the society within which Islam developed (Sidani, 2005; Baden, 1992; Ahmed, 1992), it would be reasonable to conclude it influenced the teachings of the religion (Keddie, 2011; Badran, 2009). Consequently, the prevailing Islamic discourse (as opposed to the fundamental Qur’anic message) promotes the subordination of women (Mir-Hosseini, 2012; Ahmed, 1992). Where these foundational beliefs are taught against the backdrop of eternal consequences, it is unsurprising they hold considerable power, supporting the patriarchal agenda as their underlying message appears to oppose resistance, or in some cases even dialogue, regarding the status quo which continues to privilege the

dominant position of men (Kirdar, 2010). This results in a regenerative cycle, perpetuating dominant discourses (Ahmed, 1992).

Some argue that patriarchy persists due to economic structures. Ross (2008) puts forward a case that the production of oil is a major contributor to this phenomenon. He states that when a country becomes oil rich it is no longer necessary for the women to work because the men are able to receive sufficient wages to cover the expenses of the home. Ross's assumption demonstrates the taken-for-grantedness of patriarchy as it presupposes the hetero-normative regime, undermining the notion that women may act as their own agents. When women remain at home their political influence diminishes as their social interactions are limited curtailing the exchange of new ideas. They are also less likely to form or join political organisations as they have fewer opportunities to bond with large numbers of other women or embrace wider societal issues and they have less leverage as they are economically dependent on others (men) probably creating a cautious attitude towards political activity.

Taken together, these factors promote the persistence of patriarchal attitudes. To some extent this situation is changing in the Emirates as more women receive higher levels of education and enter a wider range of careers. However, the rate of change varies across the country with more traditional communities, such as those in which this study is situated, demonstrating greater inertia. It should also be noted that despite some shifts in public patriarchy, private patriarchy remains largely embedded in Emirati society (Bristol-Rhys, 2010; Gallant, 2006).

3.5 Gender and Islam in the UAE

Within the literature there is some discussion of the concept of a single 'muslimwoman' identity (cooke, 2007). It is argued that many women embrace:

a single religious and gender identity even if their lives are as varied as the innumerable cultures they inhabit...so intertwined are gender and religion that they have become one (cooke, 2007, p.140).

While I agree that gender and Islam indeed intertwine in complex ways, I reject the notion that these categories should, or even can, be viewed as a single entity. Within post structuralism a subject's essence cannot be captured in a single term making such a theorisation untenable. This position fails to embrace the myriad of discourses which influence construction the of one's identity prioritising two aspects, to the exclusion of

others and ignoring the contingent, renegotiated nature of identity. As Zine (2008) states with reference to the single muslimwoman identity:

This construct subverts the saliency of race, class, sexuality and ideological orientation among those who claim their identities as Muslim and as women...Both 'Muslim' and 'woman' are loaded signifiers and contested categories that cannot be reduced to settled notions (p.112).

Nevertheless, while it is acknowledged that each construct is powerful, and that identity is constructed through the intersection of multiple discourses, this section will explore gender and Islam specifically and in tandem as I believe a detailed analysis of these discourses is necessary, given the significance of these regimes of truth to this study.

As previously mentioned (see 2.4), Islam has four schools of jurisprudence, established after the death of the Prophet. These schools interpret the Qur'an, establishing contextually appropriate rules for the application of Islam. Within the Islamic paradigm, men and women are viewed as having equity but not equality (Sidani, 2005; Treacher, 2003). In other words, men and women have equal value but, due to their biological characteristics, they have different roles. Each gender is said to complement the other leading to mutual fulfilment of both rights and obligations (Roald, 1999). The Qur'an itself has very little which directly refers to men and women's roles; it clearly states that the man is responsible for providing for the family (Sura 4:34) but is less implicit about the role of women. This has led Roald (1999) to conclude that "the lack of any specific injunctions in the Qur'an or Hadith clearly defining the social role of women indicates the flexibility of gender roles in society" (p.378). Others, however, claim the Hadith do address the role of women in considerable detail.

The Hadith are writings which record the spoken and acted example of the Prophet in his lifetime, and give much more detailed information on how to perform duties and obligations in Islam, sometimes contradicting the more vague injunctions of the Qur'an (Baden, 1992, p.7).

These accounts are based on reports from followers of the Prophet and were often transmitted orally for some time, before being written down. The application of the Hadith varies depending on the school of jurisprudence resulting in different interpretations on many aspects of life, including the role of women. The Maliki school of jurisprudence, which predominates in Abu Dhabi, is considered one of the more liberal schools with regard to women.

According to the Hadith, women's primary responsibility is within the home and additional work is only permissible if it does not conflict with this role (Baden, 1999). As Treacher (2003) states, "Women's roles as wives, mothers and daughters are seen as central to the spiritual well-being of the family and the maintenance of the social order" (p.62). She also states that Islam is a religion where:

matters of obligation, honour and responsibility to family and community dominate...one must bear in mind that throughout the Islamic faith the emphasis on duties overrules that on rights (pp.61-62).

This view is adopted by traditionalist who, in the context of the home, predominate in the Gulf countries (Rashed, 1999). Consequently, a discourse of private patriarchy prevails for many Emirati women with very real implications in terms of their personal freedom and choices regarding employment and marriage. This discourse exerts considerable pressure on them due to the persistence of traditional stereotypes regarding the role of women in society (fidh, 2010). As Kirdar (2010) states, "in reality, cultural rather than legal barriers are what constrain women from entering certain professions" (p.531). For example, Al Marzouqi and Forster (2011) report that Emirati women resist entering the field of IT because they perceive it as unsuitable for women. In such cases, women's agency is constrained by the dominant discourses which would render their involvement in such fields inappropriate.

Another aspect of the traditional gender discourse which is significant in Abu Dhabi is that of male/female segregation with some claiming that the mixing of genders leads to "moral decay" (Sidani, 2005). While some shifts in these beliefs may be evident in the UAE, as Bristol-Rhys (2010) explains, segregation persists because of social pressures. Many Emirati men do not allow their wives or daughters to leave the house alone for fear of what others may think or say. Within the Emirati community, reputation is of paramount importance being linked to job opportunities, placements for children, land for houses and marriage proposals. Therefore, it is critical to not only 'protect' this reputation but also to be seen to be protecting it, resulting in restrictions (Gallant and Pounder, 2008). The fact that 'protecting' women results in severely limiting their freedom (some are reported as prevented from visiting the shop directly outside the home without a chaperone (Crabtree, 2007)) is indicative of the patriarchal nature of this discourse and ties into the belief that it is the women who are the guardians of honour within the home. This discourse is unsurprisingly also recognisable in the conduct of women, with Bristol-Rhys (2010) reporting how her female university

students in Abu Dhabi initially balked at the idea of working with Emirati men while on work placement. However, as these women's agency developed and they recognised then questioned this discourse, new possibilities of being emerged within this context - a few days after starting their placements, their concerns had lifted. Such agency may not be exercised, however, as those who benefit from the dominant discourses may act to perpetuate them either out of vested interest and/or because they themselves do not have the opportunity to engage in alternative discourses.

However, the conceptualisation of gender in Islam presented thus far has been traditional and possibly limited. It should be noted that families ascribe to these beliefs along a cline with some women being given significantly more autonomy, although this still implies women's dependency on men. I also feel it is important to point out that there is a counter discourse through Islamic feminism. Feminism is no stranger to the Arab world establishing itself, most notably in Egypt and Morocco, in the 1920s. This movement was a secular, nation-based movement working towards gender equality. Islamic feminism, which has now become a significant movement with a sizable literature, started in the 1990s. Its goal is to establish social justice and gender equality through a new reading of Islamic texts challenging patriarchy in Islamic spheres. It also aims to challenge anti-women cultural practices in both the public and private spheres (Badran, 2009).

Some claim that due to its different guises Islamic feminism cannot be captured in a single definition (McDonald, 2008). Nevertheless, Badran (2009) attempts a definition, "Islamic feminism is a feminist discourse and practice articulated within the Islamic paradigm" (p.242). Others, such as Moghissi (1999), reject such a definition claiming Islamic feminism to be an oxymoron, based on foreign concepts brought in through the Muslim diasporas. Such positions were common place in the 1990s. However, since then the movement has gained momentum largely disarming these claims.

Despite the prevalent application of the Hadith, some people (such as feminists) question its reliability because of the deference of their writing, even claiming that some accounts have been fabricated or altered to accommodate the prevailing patriarchal agenda (Ahmed, 1992). Islamic feminists argue that the foundational Islamic teaching of equity between the genders (Sura 49:13) is hindered by these patriarchal ideologies which have seeped into daily practices through these interpretations. This demonstrates the power of the patriarchal discourse in Islamic contexts.

The hegemonic manipulation was such that the notion of a patriarchal Islam became naturalised and the inherent contradiction between the revealed Word and patriarchy was obscured...Muslim patriarchalists (in state, society and family)...for their own very different reasons, have over the centuries had a vested interest in perpetuating the fiction of a patriarchal Islam (Badran, 2009, p.324).

It is this disparity between Qur'anic teaching and those from the schools of jurisprudence which Islamic feminists aim to challenge and resist, with a view to achieving social justice. To accomplish this, there must be some porosity between Islamic and secular feminisms (despite historic animosity) as both movements have similar aims, notwithstanding their very different vehicles. Due to the nature of Western mainstream media coverage which tends to inaccurately portray women in Islam, it seems important to highlight this counter discourse which exemplifies how some Islamic women actively and capably resist the dominant cultural discourses. However, it is interesting to note that within the literature on Islamic and secular feminism in the Arab world, very little mention is made of such movements in the Arabian Gulf countries (with the exception of Yemen).

Within sections 3.4 and 3.5 the central themes of gender and Islam have been explored against the patriarchal assumptions which prevail in the UAE. The discussion has introduced the reader to the ongoing debate around beliefs regarding the status of women and their roles in society. Socialisation, culture, religion and economic structures have been proposed as significant influences for the perpetuation of patriarchy within the UAE. How this is realised in the lives of Emirati women has been briefly explored with the discussion noting the role of male guardians in women's life choices, the importance of segregation and the expectations placed on women regarding their behaviour and demeanour. In this, women's positionalities are constrained by the dominant discourses which have normalised particular identities and rendered others illegitimate. While there is evidence that some women are exploring new possibilities, this is done against a well-established normative horizon where dominant discourses appear to be largely prevailing, at least at the societal level.

3.6 Linguistic hegemony and language policies

While gender and religion are key aspects of identity for women in the UAE, the expectation of Arabic and English use in different social contexts is also significant, and given the focus of this study, one which requires some attention. This section will therefore lay out one theory which explores the dynamics within the set of discursive practices through which linguistic hegemony is constituted and how this is adopted in the creation of educational language policy.

According to Phillipson (1997), linguistic imperialism is:

a theoretical construct, devised to account for linguistic heirarchisation, to address issues of why some languages come to be used more and others less, what structures and ideologies facilitates such processes, and the role of language professionals (p.238).

This definition therefore, sets out two factors which influence the establishment of linguistic imperialism – structure and ideology. Structural factors may include aspects such as resources and investment in the teaching of language while ideological factors include beliefs about the relative value of languages and their appropriate roles, for example. Linguistic ideology is therefore set up in a specific socio-historic context and is supported and perpetuated by structural factors, which are themselves prioritised and made available due to the prevailing ideology. Closely related to English linguistic imperialism is educational imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). This is the adoption of educational resources and systems from countries where English is the mother tongue to ensure the prioritising of that language or pedagogy, for example through the introduction of a bilingual policy in schools or a language policy which adopts English at higher education. Implicit in this is the simultaneous prioritising of teaching methodologies which originated in the foreign context often based on an unproblematic representation of their effectiveness. This dynamic is very much at play in the UAE with Troudi & Jendli (2011) reporting that English is often associated with power, success, modernism, liberalism, freedom and equality while simultaneously being seen as the antithesis of old-style, transmission pedagogy. In this the constellation of associations with English is apparent so assumed meanings go unquestioned, leading to the adoption of discourses which are insufficiently contested.

Closely associated with linguistic imperialism is linguicism – a term which aims to etymologically mirror other forms of prejudices such as sexism and racism. This term

captures the notion of discrimination based on an inability to function in a dominant language or languages. However, for linguisticism to function it must be supported by imperialistic structures, such as educational language policies or, as in the UAE, the implementation of labour policies resulting in English often being the *lingua franca*. These structures have historically been established through international relationships such as colonialism and, more recently, globalisation and international trade supported by multinational companies and organisations. However, they are often perpetuated by the ruling elite who have internalised the discourses of external philosophies through the process of neo-colonialism. “Neo-colonialism is therefore the present day form of imperialism” (Phillipson, 1992, p.72). Neo-colonialism is not necessarily ominous nor is it usually planned. It does however, grow out of the hegemonic processes at play resulting in the reinforcement of associated discourses.

One such discourse is that English is natural, neutral and beneficial (Pennycook, 1995). This view fails to deconstruct the social, historical, cultural and political relations at play, privileging the position of English in relation to the national language. When educational language policies are developed from such a position, inevitably there is insufficient consideration of the intersecting, and often conflicting, discursive positions meaning implementation can become problematic.

There is a failure to problematise the notion of choice and an assumption that individuals and countries are somehow free of economic, political and ideological constraint;...there is a view of language that suggests that it can be free of cultural and political influences and is therefore neutral (Pennycook, 1995, p.38).

Consequently, language plans are too often implemented on the assumption of their neutrality and the goal of technical efficiency (Pennycook, 1995) so their ethnocentricity, which promotes English and Western values, is barely even recognised (Phillipson, 2006). Instead they tend to over-emphasise the potential practical benefits of English while under-estimating the complexity of implementation. Simultaneously, they underplay the social cost for some recipients in terms of perpetuating the balance of power, jeopardising the quality of learning experienced and imposing imported pedagogies. They also fail to embrace any dialogue regarding student rights to learn through their mother tongue (Troudi & Jendli, 2011). In her research based in the Gulf, Said (2011) reports the outplaying of this dynamic where in some circles there is a backlash to this state of affairs with an on-line dialogue chronicling the disappointment of many over the neglect Arabic has experienced within the school system and the

implications of this for their personal competencies in the language, particularly in written form. However, she claims these voices are not heard by the decision makers. She also notes how role models, such as sheikhs and emirs, fail to use Arabic accurately, further demoting its status, while demonstrating their preference for English⁶.

It is claimed that often countries that adopt policies which promote English do so as the decision-makers want to emulate the Western model (Pennycook, 1995). Phillipson (1992) identified three linguistic reasons why this may be so:

- English-intrinsic arguments – what English is
- English-extrinsic arguments – what English has
- English- functional arguments – what English does (p.271)

English-intrinsic arguments promote English as being essentially a superior language based on its rich literature and traditions. English-extrinsic arguments promote English based on the availability of numerous resources. English-functional arguments reflect the structural power dynamics in society which benefit those who are proficient in English with preferential opportunities, for example, in the workplace. It is interesting to note that in this discourse, there is very little discussion on what English *is not* in many of the contexts which adopt it (Phillipson, 1992). It is not the language of cultural heritage. It is not the language of personal thought and opinion. It is not the language of the home. It is often not the language of preference and it is not always the language of opportunity – for those who fail, it is a language barrier. Nevertheless, the strength of this discourse can result in English being adopted as a medium of instruction even when the level of proficiency within the teaching and/ or student population does not support effective learning and can result in a compromised education for a sizeable proportion of recipients. This reflects the prevailing power balance as those who are prone to failing, for example the poor or those outside the main urban centres, have limited voice in influencing policy change.

The subsequent gap between rhetoric of the goals of a policy and reality of what it actually delivers may be attributed to two primary reasons. The first, as touched on above, is that the policy may be based on false or overly-simplified assumptions. For example, a common assumption is that English inevitably provides economic advantages. However, Garcia (1995 in Tollefson, 2000) found that the social and political relationship between the minority and majority language played an important

⁶ Her comments regarding the accuracy of leaders' Arabic were not made about the UAE.

role in the extent of economic advantage one can expect from being bilingual. This does not contradict the initial assumption but it does highlight that the relationship is complex. The second reason for a gap between policy and practice is the failure to embrace the complexities, tensions and contradictions of policy implementation. “Policies that do not consider the specific challenges facing teachers and students in their daily lives are not likely to be successful” (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004, p.292) (see 3.8).

This section has presented sets of discursive practices through which linguistic and educational imperialisms have been constituted. Through neo-colonialism, where ruling elites unproblematically adopt prevailing discourses, these constructs are perpetuated. Consequently, language policies can be adopted on the basis of inaccurate assumptions and unrealistically simplified implementation schedules, such as the failure to address issues of identity or to embrace practical aspects within the classroom, resulting in unresolved tensions between expectations and practical outcomes. These two areas will be further explored in the following sections.

3.7 Language policy and identity in Islamic contexts

There have been a number of studies in predominantly Islamic states exploring the impact of English language policies on the identities of participants and their attitudes towards the language. While each country has its own historical, cultural and political context making each study to some extent unique, a number of common themes can be found.

Firstly, the discourse which promotes the economic and practical value of English has acquired particular power. For example, Washima et al (1996) found that in Malaysia the majority of their sample felt that learning English was no longer a non-Muslim thing to do and that it was an important step in self development. Mohd-Asraf’s (2005) study agreed stating that due to political and media pressure, as well as the realities of the job market which overwhelmingly require English, the majority of Malaysians understood the need to learn English and want to do so. Similar findings were found by Shaaban and Ghaith (2003) in Lebanon where their sample was positive towards English with regard to its use in business, science and technology and recognised it as the language of the future.

Nevertheless, while the discourse which emphasises the importance and practical value of English appears to dominate, eclipsing other dimensions of the scenario, there are

those who resist English and are ideologically less comfortable with its encroachment due to the associations between English and Christianity and/or Western values. This was found to be so in Malaysia by Kim (2003) and Mohd-Asraf (2005) who both report that some participants resist any identity based on English proficiency and consequently choose to communicate in Malay whenever possible. Shaaban & Ghaith (2009) report that in Lebanon attitudes towards English vary considerably between the Muslims and Christians. Christians generally were more positive towards English and appreciated exposure to the Western media while Muslims showed more positivity towards Arabic. Nevertheless, they report that 79% of participants chose Arabic as the language for daily communication. Atay & Ayse (2009) state that in Turkey, where Islamic identities are reportedly prioritised, some participants identified conflict in their attitudes towards learning English. On one hand, they realised that learning English had resulted in new ways of thinking and a different world view which they resisted due to their religious identity while on the other hand they acknowledged the practical need to learn English. Lee (2003) also found that learning English had changed participants' worldviews and had resulted in some cultural seepage, if their positioning had not generated framing discourses based on their own culture. Said (2011) points out that while language is not deterministic in terms of one's worldview, it does provide a socially constructed means of expression not necessarily found in other languages. Consequently, using L2 can therefore result in ideological shifts. For example, within Arabic 'Allah' is included in a wide range of words or expressions emphasising the Islamic principle of the centrality of God. When using English, this focus is lost with possible implications for identity. These studies therefore highlight that in Islamic societies the discourses which promote the practical and economic necessity of English are well established. Nevertheless, there is a split between those who have adopted the discourse of English neutrality and those who resist this as they actively negotiate their agency within the available discourses. This scenario indicates how multiple discourses intersect and can result in tensions in the realisation of one's identity.

In 2008 the federal government of the UAE announced that Arabic was to be the sole official language in all federal departments (Youssef, 2008), a decision which was welcomed by many in the academic community. However, enforcement has been limited (Issa, 2013b) due to the prevalence of English in society demonstrating the capillary network of power as the multiplicity of force relations produce a reality which supersedes top-down injunctions, even in autocratic systems. It is against this backdrop

that Badry (2011) explored issues of identity in bilingual Arab youth at a private university in Dubai. The findings indicate that for these participants (most of whom were not Emiratis), identity was no longer centred on the Arabic language while global English had been appropriated as an important element. This suggests that with the spread of globalisation, identities are evolving and generational paradigm shifts are occurring. For these youth, English was not perceived in terms of colonisation, as they had claimed it and used it for their own benefit resulting in empowerment rather than domination. However, it appears they had adopted the discourse of linguistic neutrality (see 3.6). Nevertheless, 43% of the participants said Arabic better expressed who they were, showing continued links between their identity and Arabic. These findings therefore suggest an enmeshing of Arab and foreign identities although it appears that the conceptualisation of what being an Arab entails, has evolved within this segment of the population. Echoing findings from studies mentioned above, these participants have moved beyond the binary that knowing English was either good or bad, taking a more nuanced stance.

Karmani (2005), however, proposes a more critical position that ultimately the spread of English in the Gulf is a form of colonisation and that it is prioritised to quell radical Islamic elements. Its spread is promoted on the platform of modernisation which silences arguments regarding its cultural, historical and political influence. In his article he identifies two positions in Gulf societies regarding the encroachment of English – the modernists who endorse it and the Islamists who reject the advancement of Westernisation and English. While I largely agree with his analysis of the politics behind the spread of English, I find his conclusion rather dogmatic, failing to embrace the nuances of the situation. From my research, and the studies reviewed here, there are evidently those who endorse the spread of English, at least to some extent, yet who identify strongly with Islam (see 5.4.3), indicating that not all Muslims reject the place of English.

This idea is picked up by Clarke et al (2007) whose study explored attitudes towards English amongst Emirati trainee English teachers and identified three positions towards the use of English in society. Firstly, there was a naive acceptance of the benefits of English without a critical awareness of the socio-political implications of language spread and the inherent threat it could pose for local culture and language. The second position was more militant perceiving English primarily as a negative influence in

society. The third, termed 'pragmatic engagement', accepted the reality of English in society while critically engaging with the cultural and linguistic issues at stake.

The debate regarding the positive and negative effects of English in society continues in the UAE in light of the default adoption of the policy of linguistic dualism (Clarke et al, 2007). In this, English has become the primary language of business, modernity and internationalism while Arabic is associated with religion and tradition. Nevertheless, the local media regularly reports alternative views in this, insisting that the Arabic language is central to the Arab and Islamic identity and, with its proud history, must be protected and promoted (WAM, 2012; Gulf News, 2010; WAM, 2004). Despite this, young people express views which support the use of English describing it as "the language of success" and noting that English is necessary to compete internationally and to access technology. However, some youth are reported as noting the need to simultaneously preserve Arabic (Issa, 2013a).

While research across a range of Islamic societies has therefore found three main positions towards the increase of English, it should be noted that all these positions are, to a greater or lesser extent, taken up contingently. Firstly, its spread may be uncritically accepted due to the assumed tangible (economic) benefits it offers. This position demonstrates a lack of reflexivity regarding the influence of English in society and/ or an assumption of its neutrality. It also illustrates how discourse, once internalised, can go unnoticed. The second position provides a counter-discourse prompted by a strong Islamic identity and its associated links with Arabic. The third position demonstrates a greater level of critical awareness where some tension is experienced regarding the role English plays as positions are negotiated and re-negotiated and previously assumed beliefs are questioned with the outcome of creating new possibilities of being. The studies reviewed in this section demonstrate the tensions subjects face as they are exposed to multiple truths through the intersecting of discourse. They illustrate how identity is socially constructed in language and is both contingent and evolving as subjects position themselves in relation to the meaning language inscribes.

These positions are also seen in Emirati society where due to prevailing power dynamics and a range of social factors, English is becoming increasingly influential. As the government responds to the national and international hegemonic forces at play, educational language policies in Abu Dhabi appear to be increasingly supportive of this shift, despite official claims to the contrary. However, for associated policies to be

implemented successfully in schools, awareness of practical factors which influence teachers' attitude towards such a policy must also be considered, and it is this which will be explored in the final section of this chapter.

3.8 Factors which affect teachers' attitudes towards using L2 while teaching

There have been a number of studies looking at factors which influence teachers' decisions on whether to use the students' first language (L1) or second language (L2), when working in a bilingual classroom, or more generally at the difficulties and motivations they experience when adopting a bilingual approach. These findings are relevant to this study as the language of instruction can have profound implications on teachers' identities as it can influence how successful a teacher perceives herself to be.

One factor which causes ambivalence amongst teachers towards using the L2 while teaching is the significant increase in their workload. There is generally a shortage of appropriate bilingual material on the market. Consequently, teachers need to adapt or create resources which is time-consuming (Coonan, 2007; Infante et al, 2009). Additionally, marking written assignments was found to be laborious as students often initially lack adequate literacy skills in their L2 (Mehisto et al, 2008). This increase in workload has led some teachers to adopt bilingual education hesitantly (Infante et al, 2009). Moate (2011) also reports that lessons need to be planned more carefully to ensure students have sufficient linguistic support to secure success and this is time-consuming, especially at the beginning. Linked to this final point is the question of training.

Mehisto & Asser (2007) found that in their study, 96% of the sample considered training, including ongoing observations and professional development, to be the most influential factor for successfully implementing bilingual education. Much of this training focused on developing skills to provide opportunities for authentic communication, ensuring the acquisition of both content and L2 (Coyle et al, 2010). They also report that 62% of their sample indicated that receiving training was 'highly motivating', hinting at an important knock-on effect of training. However, Milk (1991) reports that, unlike most training programmes which focus on competencies, bilingual teachers must receive training which cover four specific areas – teaching methodology, cultural understanding, knowledge of both L1 and L2 and some knowledge of linguistics – to be successful. Each of these components support each other.

Just as the collapse of one wall will lead to the collapse of an entire building, so the neglect or absence of one of the elements in the bilingual teachers' preparation may make the other elements useless (p.273).

Without this training, it is likely that teachers will not develop the strategies they need to successfully deliver the curriculum bilingually and will resort to 'coping mechanisms' which appear to support the use of L2 but which in fact fail to provide students with the systematic approach needed (Probyn, 2001).

Teachers' competency in the L2 is another factor which unsurprisingly influences their attitude towards using it. Moate (2011) found that teachers, even with near-native speaker levels, felt fear and insecurity when teaching in L2 and while this did not prevent them from doing so, indicates the emotional cost of working in L2 in such a public profession. Reporting from Malaysia, Heng & Tan (2006) state that in their study most teachers felt uncomfortable teaching in English yet were insufficiently motivated to attend classes to improve their language levels. Benson (2004) reports that teachers can be set up for failure by only being provided with inadequate short-term training programmes which inevitably result in limited L2 use. These findings are relevant to Abu Dhabi as research indicates that less than 10% of teachers in ADEC had reached the required proficiency level in English in 2009 (The National, 2009). This situation is being addressed but language learning takes time (especially if motivation is limited) and may have an impact on the success of this policy (Gallagher, 2011).

Students' level of English/ L2 is another significant factor which was found to influence whether teachers use L1, L2 or code-switched. Macaro (2001) found in his study that some teachers chose to use L1 in class to build student relationships. Although government policy was an influential factor in the teachers' thinking, and they incorporated strategies to support students while using L2, they also felt it was necessary to compromise on occasion. "I think if you have to sacrifice forming a good relationship with a group just because you have to use the target language, it's not worth it" (p.541). In South Africa, Probyn (2001) found education to be compulsorily conducted in English. In this context it was estimated that many students (in ex-DET schools – also known as African schools) knew approximately 800 words in English, when the native speaker level for their age was closer to 5000. Consequently, teachers felt forced to code-switch using both English and Xhosa throughout the lesson rather than following the policy of using English only. Teachers found this situation demotivating and saddening as they believed students often knew the content but were

penalised due to their L2 ability. They reported feeling trapped as they wanted to support students but were unsure whether this was best done by focusing on content or language. Similarly, Cincotta-Segi (2011) reports that a teacher in Laos code-switched in an attempt to meet official requirements placed on him, while simultaneously providing students with the L1 input they needed to learn the content. This research highlights the tensions faced by teachers as they negotiate the conflicting discourses imposed on them in the context of bilingual education.

Linked to students' level of L2, is student attitude towards using the second language. Teachers are often faced with the student assumption that bilingual learning will be too difficult (Infante et al, 2009). Initially, this assumption may be well-founded as students may be unable to express themselves satisfactorily to complete the tasks, if teachers do not provide adequate scaffolding. However, as receptive learning occurs from the outset this situation is temporary (Infante et al, 2009). As students' become engaged with the classroom tasks it was found that anxiety regarding language became peripheral (Mehisto et al, 2008). These findings however, are based on research conducted in Europe where learners in these programmes are selected due to their high ability and motivation and teachers are trained to deliver engaging student-centred activities. In less privileged contexts, this fear often remains well-founded (Benson, 2004; Probyn, 2001).

The final factor affecting teachers' attitudes towards using L2 to be discussed here is that of community support, both within the school and further afield. As Milk (1991) points out, for bilingual education to be successful the overall school climate must be supportive of positive student outcomes. It is inadequate for schools to merely identify a selected number of discrete points which may support the programme. Negativity towards the bilingual programme can be caused by poor communication and a lack of clarity of either its goals or the processes. Heng and Tan (2006) report such an occurrence in Malaysia with the consequential impact on teacher motivation and engagement.

With regard to the wider community, Kim and Elder (2008) found that in New Zealand, the status of the L2 in the national context impacted teachers' decisions on which language to use in class with increased status encouraging more use. They also found that pressures of time to deliver the curriculum and the nature of examinations, including which language they were in, acted as a strong influence in teachers' decision-

making. Parents were also an important part of the wider community and their attitudes influenced teachers' actions. A lack of information about the programme can result in parental negativity which may influence which language the teacher uses (Mehisto & Asser, 2007). This is important for this study as research conducted by ADEC, involving over 50,000 parents, has found that 82% would prefer their children to be taught in Arabic (Ahmed, 2012).

Therefore, a range of factors influence teachers' attitudes towards using L2 in class. These include, but are not limited to, an increased workload, the nature and amount of training teachers receive, teachers' proficiency in L2, students' needs including their ability in L2 and community support within the school and further afield. Kim & Elder (2008) also note an important finding when they state that the most significant factor they found was teachers' attitudes – those teachers who believed that using the L2 was desirable were more inclined to actually do so, even if the L1 was needed at times to make the material accessible. This finding demonstrates the relevance of teacher identity in educational policy implementation as subjects respond to their varied positionings. Consequently, the implementation of such a programme is complex and, as Probyn (2001) states, "Policy-makers should recognise that the determinants of language choice in the classroom are more complex than can be legislated for" (p.264).

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the main conceptual frameworks which are of relevance to this study. I started with a presentation of the conceptualisation of identity which follows a discursive understanding of the construct. Following this I outlined my conceptualisation of gender, noting the prioritisation of the hetero-normative regime in Abu Dhabi. Patriarchy, a system which supports the subordination of women to men, was also discussed and I argued that it was perpetuated through social, religious, cultural and economic structures. This was followed by a discussion on gendered roles within Islam. Having explored the aspects of gender and religion, I then turned my attention to the aspect of language with a discussion on linguistic imperialism, neo-colonialism and their influence on both language policies and identities in Islamic countries. The chapter concluded with a brief presentation of research on factors which influence teachers' classroom-based practice in relation to a bilingual policy.

Chapter Four

Methods and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the philosophical assumptions and practical procedures which have been adopted within this research project. I begin by laying out my theoretical framework before reflecting on some aspects of how my identity and position as a researcher have influenced the findings of this study. I then provide some background information on the study's sites and participants and the rationales behind their selection. The following section critically reviews my data collection methods of observations, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. Next I present my approach to data analysis. I have chosen to address ethical issues as they come up within the discussions of this chapter. However, I finish this chapter with a brief section dedicated to this topic.

When planning this piece of research I read extensively on alternative methodological positions (see 1.2), finally moving towards a post structural position. In the following section, I will present my conceptualisation of post structuralism which draws heavily on the work of Adams St Pierre (2000).

4.2 Theoretical framework of post structuralism

Post structuralism is often considered as being anti-humanist (Crotty, 1998). However, according to Adams St Pierre (2000) humanism is not rejected within post structuralism, rather it is viewed as being too broad to be useful. Nevertheless, post structuralism does question the humanistic ontological assumption which claims that reality is objective and external. Instead, it proposes that language and culture bring reality into being and involves a different understanding of the subject (i.e. the human agent) such that they are produced in and through discourse. Not only do these discourses both create and constrain the different ways of being and doing for the human subject, they also implant a desire to actively embrace this way of being (Davies & Gannon, 2005). Consequently, subjects do not have agency in terms of making decisions from outside the discourses set forth in different contexts. Instead post structuralism proposes a new kind of agency where a subject recognises the socio-historical nature of discourses within her and thus their questionability (Davies & Gannon, 2005). (This will be

developed further in section 4.2.2). This is a difficult concept to grasp as many discourses are so taken-for-granted that the power they exert goes unnoticed, giving the impression that individuals do have agency as autonomous, rational beings. As post structuralism challenges this, it aims to disrupt these assumptions, particularly found in binaries, with the goal of creating new ways to thinking. How it does this will be discussed in the following sections through a brief exploration of the themes of language, discourse, power and knowledge.

4.2.1 Language

Post structuralism questions the humanist assumption that there is a correspondence between a word and the world (Adams St Pierre, 2000); that a term, such as 'woman', 'Muslim' or 'teacher' can capture a category's essence. Within a humanist paradigm, identity is privileged over difference (Adams St Pierre, 2000) and this is portrayed through language in the creation of binaries, hierarchies, categories and other forms of classification. Post structuralism challenges these categorisations claiming that there are many relevant discourses through which a subject is constituted so their essence cannot be captured in a single word. Subsequently, meaning which shifts in response to the social context, can be disputed and requires further analysis. One way this critique occurs is through the process of deconstruction where structures are dismantled and rebuilt so new meanings can be ascribed to them (Adams St Pierre, 2000). By recognising the socially constructed and relational nature of language, questions regarding the relevance of assigned meaning in different contexts become apparent so assumptions can be challenged.

4.2.2 Discourse

Francis defines discourse as "socially and culturally produced patterns of language, belief and practice [which] develop over time" (2002, p.45). In a similar vein, Scott explains that "discourse is not a language or a text but a historically, socially and institutionally specific set of structures of statements, terms, categories or beliefs" (1988, p.35). Weedon (1987) expands on this, claiming:

Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, conscious and unconscious mind and emotional life of subjects they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts and feelings have meaning outside the discursive articulation, but the ways in which

discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases (p.105).

Post structuralism understands power and knowledge to be joined together within discourses which then become accepted and normalised. Once this has happened, it is difficult to think and act outside the prescribed discourse (Adams St Pierre, 2000) for as Ropers-Huilman (1997) asserts, the most influential discourses are those which have been internalised based on our positions in society. These discourses persuade us to not only behave in a particular way but also to desire the prescribed behaviour (Davies & Gannon, 2005). In this study, the over-riding and most influential of these discourses are termed as 'framing discourses', although in fact these can consist of a cluster of associated discourses. By engaging with discourse, post structuralism not only identifies their constraining and constituting powers but also demonstrates their unstable nature showing they can be disrupted, contested and resisted. For example, once the discourse of patriarchy is identified as a social construction, women can challenge and question its assumptions and begin to make new statements about their lives (Adams St Pierre, 2000).

4.2.3 Power

Foucault explains his ideas on power as follows:

It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallisation is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of laws, in the various social hegemonies (1990, pp.92-3).

Power is therefore not perceived as something possessed, something repressive or something institutionalised but rather as an immanent force which is constantly producing reality. The mechanisms of power are played out at the micro level and are interwoven in all social relations leading to a conceptualisation of power as a capillary network. This multiplicity of power relations intersect in myriad ways to constitute larger social patterns (Lynch, 2011). Additionally, power is seen as something which is productive.

It ... produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault, 1994, p.120).

Through these functions power produces reality (Foucault, 1979). However, for power to function, some degree of freedom must also be present. The conceptualisation of freedom here is not the ability to remove oneself from power relations but rather an ability to navigate these power relations, in an attempt to maximise capacities while minimising constraints (Taylor, 2011). When conceptualised as such, one can see that without freedom there is no opportunity for resistance and resistance is the force which brings about change.

By exploring power relations, post structuralism attempts to question the processes through which social realities are constituted. This production of reality usually does not occur as a revolution, but rather it is chronic – slow moving and low level, or as Adams St Pierre (2000) states it is “local, unpredictable and constant” (p.492). By embracing the complexities of power relations and placing them in the local situation, post structuralism opens up a more detailed analysis of resistance as small scale changes are identified even when it appears there is little change occurring at the societal level.

4.2.4 Knowledge

Within post structuralism knowledge and power are inseparable as knowledge is viewed as a social construction which is created in response to power relations. Knowledge is not something which is hidden and must be found but rather is developed in a socio-historical context where certain discourses are allowed and others, due to implicit social policing, are restricted or even unthinkable based on prevailing practices and the different ways these are valued.

Each society has its regimes of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned (Foucault, 1980, p.131).

In post structural analysis the concern is on the historical conditions and power relations which facilitated the appearance and perpetuation of certain discourses and therefore knowledge (Adams St Pierre, 2000). Therefore, it does not claim there is no truth but rather embraces the possibility of multiple truths; that people, being exposed

to different discourses and patterns of power develop “different truths and different ways of speaking the truth” (Foucault, 1988, p.51). In this it takes the position that all knowledge is socially situated.

4.3 Researcher positionality

According to Griffiths (2009) positionality refers to, “the social and political landscape inhabited by a researcher (e.g. gender, nationality, race, religion... social class and social status)”. Researchers inevitably bring these factors to their work preventing any social science research from being ‘neutral’. Reflexivity explores the relationship between the researcher and the research account, critically reflecting upon the social conditions in which accounts are constructed so informed interpretations of what is experienced, observed and felt can be made by the reader. It considers how the researcher makes sense of the research and the language used to represent this, indicating how the researcher’s identity comes through in the text. It also provides an opportunity for the researcher to reflect on problems and tensions faced in the research (Dunne et al, 2005). Reflexivity therefore enables a researcher to consider how she is positioned throughout the research process and how and why this position shifts. In this section therefore, I will explore my positionality by reflecting on my identity, the power asymmetry within this study, my epistemological positioning and how these aspects shifted as I progressed through the research.

One common binary considered by researchers regarding positionality is that of being an insider or outsider. I have worked in Emirati government schools for six years and am familiar with the ADEC reform process. I have also been a teacher for many years and thus am able to empathise with fellow teachers on issues of workload, classroom management and the general lack of encouragement which appears to pervade most educational systems. Nevertheless, entering this research I perceived myself very much as an outsider. This may have been because my participants shared some very obvious characteristics, such as nationality, job, subject taught, language and religion in which I differed. However, I believe it was for more fundamental reasons. While I hold a British passport I was born and brought up overseas and have lived abroad for the majority of my life. ‘Belonging’ is therefore something which does not come naturally for me and my assumption is to identify more readily with my ‘differentness’. Before entering the field, I reflected on this noting in my research diary:

I've been thinking about my identity and how I reflect this. For me it is less about being an insider/outsider – I will always be an outsider; it's about being friend or foe. I need to work on being a friend. How do I achieve this? Part of it is about taking an interest in the participants as people before and during the interviews – listening to what they say and how they say it to elicit the emotions behind the words. I also need to treat them as I would like to be treated without 'faking' it. What else can I do to show that I am on their side? (Research diary, 12/9/12)

Throughout data collection therefore I was very conscious of the need to build this friendship which I did by helping some of the teachers who were doing their masters, bringing them food from time to time, chatting with them in the break, giving them complete freedom as to when I conducted observations and interviews, respecting them as participants by providing full information on the research process and not persuading or manipulating them if they showed any sign of resistance about the research process. Nevertheless, I found this situation difficult – not because the teachers were unfriendly; they were extremely hospitable and kind – but because I was very aware of the temporary nature of our relationship and that it was one in which I was the primary beneficiary. I was also aware of the language gap between us which excluded me from much of the chat at break time and, as these teachers were generally busy, particularly in one site, I felt leaving them to work rather than trying to initiate conversations between breaks would in fact strengthen the relationship. However, as I progressed through this research journey I recognised the typical binary of insider/outsider may be such a simplification as to prove redundant. From my experience this aspect of my identity shifted in response to the immediate context as I exercised my agency to position myself more (or less) powerfully meaning I could move between these positions in ways that a simple binary cannot adequately invoke. I also believe that my role of 'researcher as professional' predicates some inherent straddling of these positions leading to a result which is more complex than I initially appreciated.

How I perceived myself however, was only part of the issue, the other part being how I was perceived by the participants. This is difficult to discuss as I did not ask the teachers directly about this. However, there is some evidence that their views shifted as the data collection proceeded and trust developed. Initially, I was aware that potential participants at one site were very hesitant about taking part in the research. The principal warned me the teachers may not be interested (and offered to *tell* them to participate – an offer I turned down!). Neither of the pilot study participants agreed to be recorded and a number of teachers I asked to participate, declined. While collecting

data at the school, I investigated this and found that in the previous year the relationship with the educational provider had been difficult leaving the staff disillusioned and unenthusiastic about the reform process. Consequently, many teachers initially viewed me with suspicion and were not sure of my agenda or affiliation. To combat this I spent time in the school drinking coffee with the staff, chatting with them, explaining what I was doing and why, stressing that I was not connected with ADEC and my research was in no way evaluative. Within two weeks I started to notice a thawing in the relationships indicating a shift towards trust.

To supplement the notion of being a friend I asked the participants to view the interview as a conversation. I chose the location in a private room which had sofas and soft chairs to conjure a feeling of relaxation and believe this was successful as within the interviews, the teachers' body language indicated they were generally relaxed and this was supported by the spontaneous inclusion of personal stories and jokes.

At the other site I received a courteous welcome, so aimed to develop warmth in the relationships. I include an extract from my research diary of one incident when this was achieved:

They [the teachers] gave me a gift today (!) as it's Teachers' day. I said in the UK this isn't really celebrated and explained about the low status of teachers and told them some of my horror stories! We laughed together – this was important as it let them see I understand what being a teacher is like. (Researcher diary, 4/10/12)

Nevertheless, I found interactions at this site fluctuated - on occasion, participants shared very personal stories providing a glimpse into their realities while at other times answers indicated more distance and evasiveness. For example, I asked one participant how she felt about her family choosing her career for her and she simply answered, 'It's ok, for us it's ok'. From the way this comment was said I got the impression that either she felt it *had* to be ok so there was no point discussing it further or that it was not ok but she did not want to discuss this with me. Therefore, how I was perceived became a complex intermeshing of my identity, participants' identities and the social construction of knowledge which is both evolving and contingent. This obviously influenced the data.

One aspect which has a significant influence on the quality of data, particularly that collected through interviews, is the asymmetry of power between the participant and researcher. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discuss, due to the nature of qualitative

interviews, the interviewer often has a privileged position as she enters the interaction with greater knowledge on the interview process and the desired outcomes. She initiates and guides the conversation often deciding which points are developed and which are dropped. She also has greater power over the analysis and presentation of the data. On the other hand, the interviewee enters with power of her own being able to choose whether to participate or not, which stories and information to share and how these are presented. Additionally, in the UAE where nationals make up the minority of the population, the prevailing discourse affords them a privileged position. While my participants never flaunted this, I was aware of this undercurrent throughout data collection. On occasion I chose not to pursue some points further, in response to a vibe or facial expression, as I did not want to overly challenge their ideas. This may demonstrate my own embracing of this discourse but could also be due to a respect for respondents and my ethical commitment to allow them freedom to respond to any particular question as they felt comfortable.

Epistemologically, I aimed for a co-authoring of findings where participants' voices would be clearly heard. For this to occur, I encouraged participants to exercise their power by speaking freely on the subject matter. In one interview the participant had important points to make, and being unfamiliar with the procedures of research interviews, starting sharing before I had a chance to ask any questions. Obviously, I let her speak as this datum was rich and authentic giving vivid insights to her professional frustrations and concerns. Other participants however, needed more guidance but in this I tried to keep questions open. I was very aware of the balance of power in this as I negotiated the desire to keep the interview conversational while encouraging greater reflection (Dunne et al, 2005).

As mentioned above, my goal in this research was the co-construction of knowledge, identifying more closely with Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) analogy of a traveller rather than a miner (p.48). In this, my intention was to converse with participants, challenging and exploring their thoughts to generate new knowledge or greater clarity. Through deconstruction and analysis of their texts, I then aimed to identify their meanings on the subject matter and checked these with the participants. Initially, I was concerned with how successful I would be in this and indeed some participants (when speaking with me) appeared to be reluctant to look beyond what seemed like the superficial level. On the other hand, other participants were very articulate and open to deeper

reflection explaining not only what they thought and felt but also explaining their rationales. For some, I felt this was a new process and led to a greater understanding of self while for others, it seemed to have acted primarily as a means to clarify and articulate pre-existing notions. My positioning in this therefore influenced the nature of data collected, informing how the data were explored which in turn influenced the knowledge which was produced.

Throughout this section I have reflected on how my position has influenced the data in this study. However, not only has the data been influenced by me – I have been influenced by the research process and I feel it is important to reflect briefly on how I have changed through this research journey. The most significant shift in my thinking has been the move away from humanist assumptions, towards the post structuralist position which questions assumed categorisations to create new possibilities of being. This has been challenging for me as it is difficult to watch humanism work as it is so all encompassing. Consequently, I have struggled (and continue to struggle) to recognise many of the discourses ingrained in me. While I do still fall into humanistic assumptions, I also feel excited by the possibilities this ontology offers, not only with regard to this research topic, but also to life more generally.

4.4 Site selection, site description and gaining access

This research was conducted in two girls' secondary schools in Abu Dhabi emirate. These schools were selected as they accommodated different segments of the population and may therefore represent different perspectives of the DLP. Additionally, their responses to the current reform programme, being implemented across all ADEC schools, varied; it appeared the adoption of changes in Il Madrasa Il Oola (translated from Arabic to mean 'The First School') were generally being applied at a superficial level while in Il Madrasa It Thanya ('The Second School'⁷) the administration were working to ensure a deeper shift in the school culture.

Il Madrasa Il Oola was located in a peri-urban district. It was a moderately sized school with between 500 and 600 students and a teaching staff of 55. 70% of the staff were Emirati, as were 95% of the students, with most coming from the local community. The socio-economic status of the catchment area covered a range, but most families were

⁷ I have chosen to name the schools 'Il Madrasa Il Oola' and 'Il Madrasa It Thanya' as this is how I considered them during fieldwork and to maintain confidentiality. The titles do not reflect any ranking between the research sites.

moderately wealthy with many fathers working as policemen, businessmen or in the army. Very few mothers worked outside the home. The school's social workers, who work most closely with the families, estimated around 50% of mothers were literate in Arabic and approximately just 20% of mothers had a working knowledge of English. Consequently, the relevance of learning English was perceived as being limited for many of these students.

Overall, the appearance of the school was rather run-down with graffiti on a number of walls, displays in the corridors which were either very old and/or torn or vandalised and there was rubbish piled up outside the building. A significant number of students appeared to skip class with no intervention from staff. Teachers spent their free periods in their staffrooms generally chatting and drinking coffee; in the time I was at the school, I do not recall seeing any teacher marking students' work outside the lesson. However, some improvements had recently been made to the school campus, such as a refurbishment of the entrance hall and an up-grading of the gymnasium.

Il Madrasa It Thanya was located in an urban site. It was a large school with over 1000 students and 95 teachers. The school population was predominantly local with 90% of teachers and 80% of students being Emirati. The socio-economic status of students covered a range with approximately 10% of students coming from low income homes (these students were mostly non-Emirati), 70% coming from middle income homes and around 20% coming from high income homes. Literacy levels amongst parents were reasonably high with over 90% of parents being able to read and write in Arabic and approximately 45% of parents being functionally bilingual (in English and Arabic⁸). Most fathers worked in government institutions such as schools, government offices or hospitals and the school's social workers estimated that around 50% of mothers worked outside the home.

This school was located in a relatively new building and was still in good condition. Displays on notice boards in classrooms and corridors were clean and current. Excellent resources were provided throughout the school. Overall, staff appeared purposeful and while they did stop for tea, this was generally limited to the morning breaks with other free periods being used to prepare lessons or mark work. However, some students

⁸ This approximate data was collected from the social workers who had conducted a survey at the start of the academic year.

could be seen loitering outside class during lesson time although this problem seemed more prevalent before a public holiday when lessons were less formal.

Before conducting research in ADEC schools, it is mandatory to get a certificate of approval from ADEC's research office and the school's department. This is secured by completing a lengthy document which explains and justifies the purpose and processes of the proposed research and is dependent on ethical clearance from the researcher's university (see 4.9). Having received this permission, I approached each of the Principals to gain access to their schools. In these conversations, the Principals asked a number of questions regarding the research such as its focus and what would be required of the teachers. Il Madrasa Il Oola appeared a little apprehensive about participating but agreed when I presented the certificate of approval from ADEC, stamped and signed by two prominent officials. Once they had seen the certificate, they were helpful and offered to support me in any way they could. The leadership of Il Madrasa It Thanya were open to participate but were aware of the regulations and thus asked for the certificate.

Initially, I resented the procedures put in place by ADEC as they were very laborious; the completed application form was about 10,000 words and took six months to process. However, I now realise how important such documentation is in the Emirates and am grateful that these procedures have been implemented as I am confident that without this official recommendation, access to schools would have been much more difficult.

4.5 Selection of participants

I decided to employ a purposive sample for this study as it allowed me to select participants who would embody a range of characteristics and positions, yet would be willing to engage in the interview process and thus provide rich data (Creswell, 2008). In addition to the purposive selection of schools I planned to hand-pick participants based on characteristics such as their nationality and years of service as well as assumed attitudes towards the incoming DLP. These were ascertained from initial conversations and observations. However, I found the selection of participants was more complex as not all the teachers I initially selected were willing to participate, resulting in some opportunistic sampling. While I found this disappointing I was careful to respect these decisions and did not try to persuade participation nor did I ask those who declined the reasons for their decisions.

In Il Madrasa It Thanya, there was an additional problem in that the Head of Department was quite assertive in suggesting who should participate, effectively barring me from having free range, I suspect due to some difficult micro-politics. Initially, this alarmed me as it required me to release some control of the process and potentially raised the ethical issue of whether participants were fully aware that this was voluntary. To overcome this I always had a private word with participants to reiterate that they were free to withdraw with no consequences. None of them did leaving me to wonder if they were happy to participate or if the Head of Department's power was too great. However, as all the teachers actively participated in the interviews, I concluded they felt reasonably comfortable taking part.

Initially, I worked with four teachers from each of the two schools in this study. However, one teacher from Il Madrasa Il Oola dropped out after the first interview, ostensibly due to work commitments. However, she asked that her data be withdrawn from the study suggesting her reasons for withdrawing were more complex. My feeling is she did not support the DLP but was uncomfortable discussing this, fearing it might have implications for her career.

It was not my goal to achieve statistical validity nor was it the intention to produce findings that could be applied across a wide socio-geographic spectrum. Rather the rationale behind my sampling was to acquire in-depth data from a group of participants who were in a position to provide informed answers (Cohen et al, 2007). In this, I feel my sampling was successful.

4.6 Introduction to the study's participants

All the participants were Emirati, Muslim female secondary school maths teachers (see 1.1). With one exception, all the teachers were married and five of them had young children and therefore had responsibilities within the home. Professionally, only one participant had less than five years experience, two participants had been teaching for between five and ten years and the remaining four teachers each had at least ten years experience. Prior to ADEC, professional development was rarely offered and only one participant had completed a post-graduate teaching diploma. The other teachers had no or limited teacher training (see 5.2). All the participants had been in schools with an educational provider as part of the ADEC reform programme so had received considerable in-service training over the previous three years on a range of pedagogic

topics. However, their views of its effectiveness varied and, in my opinion, only two teachers demonstrated significant shifts towards the target pedagogy.

Levels of English proficiency also varied across the participants. The data indicate three over-lapping positions - those who know English, those who have recently learnt English and those who feel a need to learn (more) English. As part of the preparation for the DLP, ADEC contracted professional Western language teachers to provide English lessons for maths and science teachers. Some of the participants in this study took advantage of this training and had thus learnt English over the last two or three years. These have been referred to here as those who have recently learnt English. Other participants failed to utilise this provision so still needed to learn the language if they are to successfully participate in the DLP. Competency levels, indicated below, were self-defined but largely reflect IELTS scores. (A more detailed description of each participant is included in Chapter Five in the form of vignettes).

Name	School	IELTS band	Definition of IELTS band	Self-defined categorisation
Aliya	Il Madrasa Il Oola	5.5	Modest/Competent user	Knows English
Fouzia	Il Madrasa Il Oola	4	Limited user	Needs to learn English
Jamila	Il Madrasa Il Oola	4	Limited user	Needs to learn English
Latifa	Il Madrasa It Thanya	5.5	Modest/Competent user	Recently learnt English/ Needs to learn English
Sameera	Il Madrasa It Thanya	5.5	Modest/Competent user	Recently learnt English
Shamsa	Il Madrasa It Thanya	5.5	Modest/Competent user	Knows English
Wafa	Il Madrasa It Thanya	5	Modest user	Needs to learn English/ Knows English

Table 4.1 – Participants’ English language competencies and self-defined categorisations⁹

⁹ To secure confidentiality I have changed the names of the participants.

4.7 Research methods

The fieldwork stage of this research was conducted over a six week period in 2012. During this period, I took a sabbatical allowing me to both focus on data collection and enjoy flexibility with my schedule enabling me to work at my participants' convenience. The following Gantt chart shows a timeline of when the key aspects of data collection were conducted.

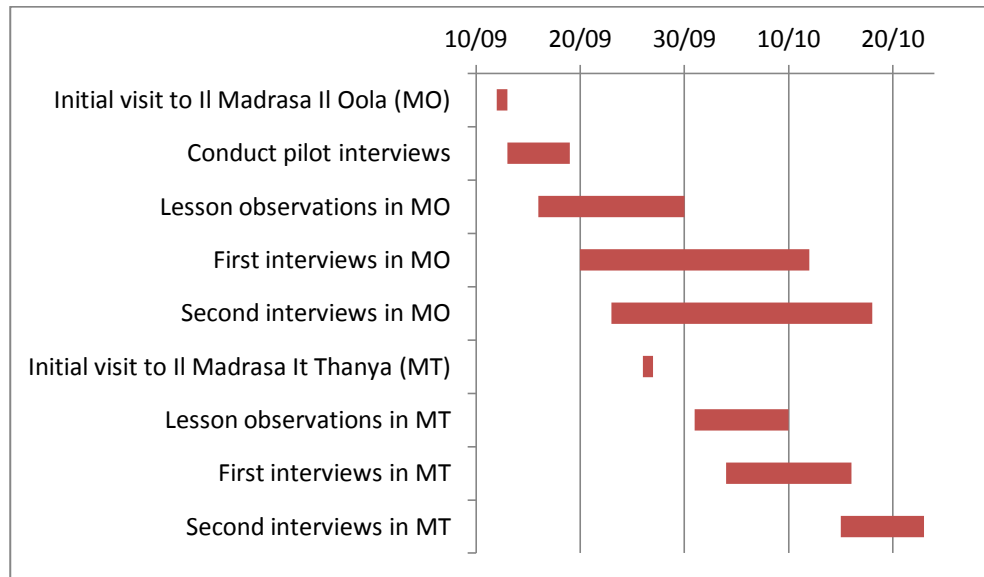


Table 4.2 - Gantt chart of fieldwork

Within this study I selected three data collection tools - observations, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. I will now discuss why these methods were selected, how they were applied and reflect on their appropriateness for this study.

4.7.1 Observations

In this study I used observations in two ways. Firstly, I conducted two unstructured classroom observations with the participating teachers. Each lesson lasted 45 minutes. The purpose of these observations was to establish the extent and purpose of English use while teaching, to identify the teaching methodology employed by the participants and to ascertain, informally, to what extent the reforms were being implemented at classroom level. These observations were neither video nor audio recorded as in previous research, participants were very uncomfortable with this idea. I respect this position, and as I needed to build trust and secure participation, I felt it was wiser to not

bring the subject up. I chose to conduct observations first so findings could be discussed during the interviews.

Before embarking on the observations I created a template to guide me (Appendix One). This was very simple and merely enabled me to circle which year group and school I was observing and to note the date, time and participant (using a code to ensure confidentiality). Under the heading section, I inserted a table divided into columns for time into the lesson, the teacher's language, the teacher's action and students' language. My primary focus was the teacher but I felt it was necessary to note student language as this enabled me to better understand the context which the teachers were working in. When noting student language, I made no attempt to identify the students speaking.

Prior to the observations, I negotiated when I would come to class so this was not a surprise. I felt this was important to facilitate a relationship where teachers did not feel threatened by my presence, although this did carry the risk that they might create a special lesson. I do not believe this was generally the case and when discussing observation times, a number of teachers invited me to class immediately. Having been involved in the reform process for a number of years, they appeared to have developed a familiarity with observations. I positioned myself at the back of the class. During the course of the observation I drew a simple map of the layout of the class and counted the students. Where possible, I noted any English used, verbatim. Occasionally, a teacher used a chunk of English making it impossible for me to keep up.

The second type of observation in this study was general observations. Their purpose was to note evidence which could point to the general character of the institution. Initially, I entered the sites with an open-mind and a willingness to learn (Denscombe, 1998), noting points of interest such as the physical environment, relational styles between staff and with students and indications of productivity. These initial points were informed by my previous experience in an ADEC school but I was aware that schools vary so was open to incorporating new categories as they emerged. I added to my observation notes throughout my time in the research sites. Obviously, the nature of these observations was influenced by the discourses in which I am subject including my professional role. I found that on occasion I had to rethink my observations as my tendency is to be evaluative based on my pedagogic expectations and professional role

while in this context, I was aiming to understand what was occurring and the reasons why.

Conducting general observations was a little problematic. Initially I discussed this request with the Principals, and suggested placing research posters around the school so the school population would know who I was and that I was observing them but they did not accept this idea. Additionally, the teachers were keen to escort me back to their staffroom after lesson observations. Therefore it was not possible to wander off or position myself somewhere I could watch events in the school unfold as I needed to accept the teachers' hospitality as this was an important part of building relationships. I managed this conundrum by trying to organise lesson observations so I would leave a class when the teacher had another lesson the following period. I then reflected on the lesson observation in a prominent place while watching events in the school. I also set myself specific fact finding tasks for each day, such as the nature and extent of extra-curricular activities, thus collecting all the data I wanted. As I became more established in the schools, teachers perceived me less as a guest, making it easier for me to wander freely around the school. However, my time in each site was relatively brief, meaning the general observation data collected represents that of a snapshot rather than an ethnographic understanding of the institution. This obviously sets limitations on the depth and complexity of the data I have collected.

Due to the educational discourses which I have been subjected to, I initially included observations to enable corroboration of claims made by participants in the interviews with the belief this increased the validity of my study. However, as I adopted a post structural position, my views on this shifted with data no longer being seen as evidence of that which is real (Davies & Gannon, 2005) but rather being seen as a way the participant is making sense of the context in response to conflicting discourses. There were instances where claims made in the interviews could not be corroborated through observations or documentary analysis, providing an opportunity for further analysis. For example, Jamila spoke at length of the value of group and pair work as opposed to whole class work but in her observations, she only used whole class work. Using documentary analysis of school-based reports, I explored this a little further and found that over the previous three years, while an educational provider had been in her school, she had consistently used the text book and whole class teaching.

In this situation, it appears that Jamila was located within the intersection of discourses which she was negotiating. A powerful discourse from her experience as a student, and throughout her extensive teaching career, was the prioritisation of teacher-centred/textbook-based pedagogy. Conflicting with this was the imported discourse which promoted student-centred learning – a discourse she was being directed towards by the government (ADEC), school administration and others in positions of power within the work place. She may also have assumed that I, being Western, also supported this discourse. This may have played out in the data where she embraced the teacher-centred discourse while teaching, as she exercised her power in this local situation, while positioning herself in the student-centred discourse in the interview as she believed that this discourse was more powerful in that context. This analysis has identified just two discourses when in fact many others are also at play, but it does highlight how subjects shift between discourses in response to power relations, making a nonsense of the pursuit for a single, unquestionable truth within social research. Consequently, as I have developed greater awareness of the complexities involved, and given the intersection of discourses and the multiplicity of truth, I am aware of the need to not over-prioritise the desire for clear cut answers (Yanos & Hopper, 2008) rather incorporating a more nuanced approach which embraces multiplicity and complexity with the goal of adding richness to the findings.

4.7.2 Interviews

I chose semi-structured interviews as the core means of data collection in this study primarily because they can acquire rich, pertinent data revealing the participants' perspectives and providing a window of understanding to the meanings behind actions.

Interviews are particularly well suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspectives on their lived world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.116).

These conversations provided insights into participants' identities through accounts of how they view themselves and how this related to their positions on the DLP. Consequently, when a number of interviews were completed recurrent themes emerged alongside aspects of individuality. For me, this dual level of data was especially valuable as it highlighted the human aspect of the topic: hinting at a community position but with the added depth of individual perspectives. Additionally, semi-

structured interviews enabled the exploration of both the importance and influence of social forces in the construction of identities, a central tenet to this study's epistemology. My goal was not to 'discover' a single truth, but rather to acquire a deeper understanding of the positions taken by the participants and explore the reasons behind these. Interviews were therefore appropriate as they provided the flexibility to accommodate this aim. Nevertheless, they are complex social interactions and need careful management (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Some issues related to this, such as researcher positionality, trust and the power asymmetry of the interview, have been discussed earlier in this chapter (see 4.3).

An additional potential pitfall of interviews is in the wording of questions. My aim was to form questions which were clear, focused, short and generated extended responses without leading the interviewee. One strategy I tried to use was to encourage the inclusion of 'stories' in responses. I requested participants to give specific examples, with as much detail as possible, to support a point. However, participants generally seemed confused by this request, partly because their concept of 'story' appeared to differ from mine but also possibly because their conceptualisation of academic research did not accommodate such everyday accounts. Overall, most participants seemed more comfortable sharing details about how they entered teaching, their career paths and aspects of family life than specific examples within the professional sphere.

I conducted two pilot interviews with teachers in Il Madrasa Il Oola. These teachers varied in a number of ways such as their years of service, English proficiency and vivaciousness. The pilots proved very helpful in enhancing the quality of the interviews. In terms of the questions, I realised some were too direct and the topic needed to be addressed more obliquely. For example, before the pilot I planned to ask what beliefs were important to them as teachers. After the pilot, I realised I could identify this information from more general questions such as their descriptions of a good teacher and why they felt the way they did towards the DLP. In other instances I reworded the questions so they were clearer. I also cut the number of questions, significantly reducing repetition (Appendix Two). In terms of technique, I recognised through the pilots, the need to stay alert throughout the interview so opportunities to probe, clarify and extend answers were not lost. As a result of the pilot I also reflected on details such as the location and timing of the interviews as well as features such as my appearance and body language. Finally, I recognised that the participants were nervous at the start

of the interview. This convinced me of the importance of building relationships before embarking on the interviews and of starting them off gently, based around questions where the participants felt confident and comfortable.

In total, I conducted two interviews with each of the seven participants. Each initial interview was in the region of one hour. Follow up interviews, which were conducted about two weeks after the initial interview, were shorter ranging from about 20 to 45 minutes. Each interview was audio recorded except for one participant who was not comfortable with this. In her case, I took detailed notes as she spoke. The interviews were all transcribed and a copy of the transcription was given to the teacher. The participants were encouraged to read the transcript and make any changes they wanted. These changes, alongside other points of clarification were discussed in the second interview. We also discussed ideas which had arisen through interviews with the other participants, with the goal of exploring if these beliefs were relevant across the cohort.

A significant issue in this research was that of language. In Il Madrasa Il Oola, I conducted the interviews in English with one participant and used a translator with the remaining two respondents. The translator was located in the school so was known to the participants. Her English was excellent and she was an experienced translator. Nevertheless, translation adds a dynamic to the conversation which influences the data. This can be both positive, such as giving the participant more time to reflect on answers so they provide additional information, or negative, such as losing certain nuances in answers for example by receiving a 'sanitised' version which does not include repetitions or accurate word stress. Additionally, some concepts may not have had ready equivalents across the languages resulting in some loss of meaning. However, when I asked about the selection of interview language, all three teachers said they were very happy to have used/ not used a translator as their message was clearly understood.

In Il Madrasa It Thanya, I conducted all the interviews in English because my translator was unavailable due to personal reasons and I was unable to find a replacement. The participants had moderate levels of English which were generally sufficient but at times made language visible and "an object of censure" (Robinson-Pant, 2005, p.128), meaning they had to think about the syntax rather than just their ideas. When I discussed the language of interview with the participants they commented that

although they had less flexibility in English, they were able to express their ideas. Wafa was the only exception to this and on one occasion she reverted to Arabic which I had translated after the interview. Her comments were then explored further in the follow-up interview. Conducting the interviews in English may have increased levels of apprehension and formality. I managed this by encouraging the participants, reminding them that I was interested in the message rather than the grammar and by paraphrasing responses to ensure I had not misunderstood them. Nevertheless, it is possible this could be a limitation of this study, the realisation of which resulted in further reflections on this issue (see 6.3.1).

4.7.3 Documentary analysis

The third data collection tool used in this research was documentary analysis, primarily of government documentation, mass media reports especially from the Emirati English language newspapers and school-based documents. Documents, as social products, are valuable as they demonstrate the world view and prevailing discourses available to the authors.

Therefore, documents cannot be regarded as providing objective accounts of a state of affairs. They have to be interrogated and examined in the context of other sources of data (Bryman, 2004, p.388).

Consequently, when using documents in this study I was careful to deal with them critically, interrogating them for simplifications, assumptions and theorising how their purpose may have influenced their content.

Government papers which were used included those from the Abu Dhabi government regarding its vision and future plans as well as policy documents from ADEC. Both institutions provide an extensive range of material which is widely available. Much of this material appears to have been written with the aim of establishing ambitious goals which are often presented unproblematically, apparently based on the assumption of buy-in from key stakeholders. These documents have therefore been useful in ascertaining the vision and long term aspirations of the government within the field of education. They have been less illuminating in the finer details of how they plan to address less tangible aspects of education reform, such as managing the cultural shifts required to achieve their goals, the role of identity within education reform and personnel issues such as teacher motivation.

Often the government announces policy shifts through the local media (Gardener, 1995) so I spent considerable time conducting searches at the websites of two of the main English language newspapers in the country (*Gulf News* and *The National*). When analysing these articles I was not only interested in extracting information, but also considered how the content provided insights into which positions were privileged and which were marginalised.

Thirdly, I incorporated school based documents, such as the school improvement plan, supervisor observation reports, lessons plans and materials and other background information such as school policy documents. These documents were useful in providing contextual information and when analysing some claims made in the interviews (see 4.7.1).

In this section, I have discussed the sources of data employed in this study, along with their associated strengths and potential weaknesses, as well as how I chose to manage their utilisation. I will now turn my attention to the analysis of data.

4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted on an ongoing basis, meaning I viewed it less as a specific stage of the research project, and more as an activity which occurred throughout each stage resulting in re-theorisations and refinement of findings as ideas developed. My goal in data analysis was to identify the meanings participants had drawn from their experiences (Denscombe, 1998) in relation to my research questions. To explore these meanings, I carried out a number of procedures and I will discuss these now in relation to the data collected through the interviews. However, it should be noted that I also drew on both documents and observations to add depth to the findings of how social life is performed and narrated.

Initial data analysis was conducted during the interviews as I sought to clarify and explore points (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This was especially important in Il Madrasa It Thanya where language was potentially an issue so points needed to be reworded to ensure my understanding of statements was accurate. Additionally, as I was aiming for a co-authored text, within the interviews I actively responded to participants' comments asking pertinent follow-up questions, providing pauses so points could be developed or asking for further elaboration, all of which required instantaneous analysis.

Once the interviews had finished (and sometimes during the interview), I spent time reflecting, noting additional points such as body language, facial expressions and vibes which I picked up in relation to certain questions. These were then incorporated into the transcripts which I completed shortly after the interview was conducted. When transcribing, I was careful to write exactly what the participants had said including language errors, the length of pauses and discourse markers, including those in Arabic. (Within this thesis I have now tidied up the quotes as a matter of respect for my participants who were uncomfortable seeing their language errors in print). In total I had 87 pages of text from the interviews. I then conducted an initial reading of each of the transcripts to identify points which needed clarifying or developing and made notes on how comments in different parts of the interview supported or contradicted each other or were of particular interest. I also noted points where I desired further clarification or elaboration and used this information when preparing schedules for the second interviews.

The next stage of data analysis was to create vignettes for each of the participants. I completed these between the two interviews as a way to highlight any gaps in my data. I also found that by storying, I was able to identify recurrent themes in the data on particular teachers, some of which informed my questions with other participants. These stories also helped me to grasp a little more clearly how the multiplicity of discourses worked together to create the participants' professional identities. To create these stories I read the transcripts multiple times drawing out biographical information and identifying how each teacher conveyed their professional journey. I then merged these ideas into a coherent text. An abbreviated form of these vignettes can be found in 5.2. At this stage I also conducted some manual coding where I highlighted quotes within the transcripts which related to different research questions, using different colours. However, I found the data to be more complex than I had anticipated and realised that to understand the data fully I needed to use a data analysis program. Nevertheless, this exercise helped to identify relevant codes.

The interview transcripts were then entered into Nvivo, a data analysis program, where I coded them. My goal in coding was to deconstruct the text so recurrent themes, commonalities and differences could be identified (Denscombe, 1998; Henn et al, 2006). Text which addressed a particular theme was grouped so it could be explored with other extracts, from any of the participants, discussing the same theme. Obviously,

I had some idea of the information I was expecting from the planning stage of the project but conducted this exercise with an open mind, allowing unexpected themes to be identified as I read the transcripts multiple times. The number of codes grew as I continued with the interviewing until I reached a point of saturation. On occasion, some sections of text were especially rich or corresponded to more than one code. In these cases the text was placed in more than one category allowing for relationships between themes to be explored. Nvivo was very helpful with the coding stage of data analysis as it was designed to manage large amounts of data. It also provided a convenient way to retrieve and reorganise the data allowing chunks of text to remain contextualised. However, once I had completed the coding, I proceeded with the data analysis without the help of Nvivo.

I then used a spreadsheet to identify which participants commented on which code and noted where this occurred in each interview allowing me to see at a glance the dominant themes for each participant. I organised these themes according to my initial conceptual framework of identity allowing for some early theorisation which I linked back to the literature, where possible. At this stage, I focused on the spirit of the text rather than the letter of the text (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I spent considerable time reviewing the theoretical framework and developing my understanding of how it might be applied to this research context. In this, the complexity and tensions inherent to the research questions became particularly apparent.

While I focussed on identifying dominant themes throughout data analysis, I also extracted chunks of text which were rich in meaning even if their claims were specific to just one or two individuals. The rationale behind this was to embrace the complexity of the situation and to portray a picture which reflected the contingent realities I had found, without over-sanitising them. Additionally, I proposed meaning behind the participants' words and actions which acted as an explanation or commentary on what I had found. In this, I stayed close to the data basing claims on specific quotes or observations although, no doubt, the inferences I drew were influenced by my experience in education and the discourses in my life.

When I shifted theoretical framework to adopt a post structural position, I reviewed my data and completed further analysis. I listened to all the interviews again focusing on evidence of tensions, complexities and contradictions. I also listened for links between quotes which demonstrated the relationship between key themes and findings. In this, I

developed a more nuanced understanding which embraced the multiplicity of positions and accepted the fragmentation which was evident particularly in the teachers' identity constructions.

4.9 Ethical considerations

It was important for me to ensure this research was conducted ethically, not only due to university regulations, but also because I felt this was a critical way to demonstrate respect for the participants. Therefore, I spent considerable time reading about and reflecting on a range of relevant issues such as gaining access, informed consent, relationship building with participants, protecting participants' anonymity, ensuring transparency throughout the fieldwork and collecting data which would best reflect the situation. How I ensured ethical practice with regard to many of these issues has been discussed within this chapter (see 4.3, 4.5, 4.7.1, 4.7.2). In some instances I decided to compromise my personal preference as I could not be sure there would be no negative repercussions for the participants and I felt this must be my priority. I applied for ethical clearance from the Social Sciences Cluster-based Research Ethics Committee at the University of Sussex and did not start fieldwork until receiving approval (Appendix Three). The guidelines set by the University of Sussex and the British Education Research Association have been followed throughout this study.

At the start of the fieldwork I clearly explained to the participants the focus of my research, what participation would consist of and that it was voluntary. I had information sheets regarding the research which I distributed when I invited teachers to participate. To ensure confidentiality my translator signed a confidentiality agreement. I have used pseudonyms throughout this piece and have been unspecific in relation to locations.

4.10 Conclusion

Within this chapter I started by presenting my understanding of post structuralism, setting out the basic principles behind this theoretical framework. I then went on to explain my influence on the research, reflecting on the importance of relationship building to engender trust – a point which has special significance for this sample who unanimously expressed their prioritising of relationships. After describing how the sites and participants were selected, I gave a brief overview of the participants. I then interrogated each of the research methods I used. I chose three research methods and,

through this triangulation, believe the findings of this study are robust. I finished the chapter with a description of my approach to data analysis and ethics.

By following these steps I have been able to develop a picture of the social realities for these participants in relation to the research questions. Through the exploration of the complexities of the social forces at play in these participants' lives, this has been achieved and is revealed through a text which is rich in quotes, giving a voice to these teachers. The themes which have been given the most credence are those which have been repeated and stressed across the participants although I have also discussed anomalies thus embracing complexity.

Chapter Five

Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the findings of this study, in relation to the research questions, highlighting recurrent themes, while simultaneously identifying points of divergence within the data. My goal is to portray the dominant positions adopted by respondents but also to identify aspects of individuality and difference, conveying something of the multiplicity of truth. I believe this is important because, in my opinion, one reason policy implementation is so often fraught with difficulty is because of a reluctance on behalf of policy makers to embrace the complexities which are inherent within education systems and the people who work there.

This chapter starts with vignettes of the study's participants and then proceeds to present findings in relation to each of the research questions (see 1.1). Firstly I focus on how and for what purposes English was used in maths lessons by my respondents. I then present the key discourses through which teachers discuss their identities before introducing their perspectives on the incoming DLP. Finally, I complete the chapter with a discussion of how teachers' identities influence their perspectives on the DLP.

5.2 Vignettes of the study's participants

At the proposal stage of the thesis I had planned to conduct narrative analysis based on the belief that stories can bring a primarily theoretical topic to life, highlighting the human element of a scenario and thus projecting the importance and relevance of academic study. While my research did not elicit professional narratives as I had hoped (see 4.3), the recognition of the importance of bringing out the human aspect of an in-depth qualitative study remained. Consequently, I created the following vignettes. The process I followed in building these is detailed in section 4.8.

5.2.1 Aliya

Aliya decided to enter teaching when she was still in primary school due to the influence of a favourite teacher. After completing her degree, she took a teaching diploma before entering the workplace. She has been teaching for the last three years at Il Madrasa Il Oola. Initially, she found teaching very difficult, primarily due to

classroom management issues. However, once she gained some confidence, she developed her own approach to classroom management based on close positive relationships with the students and found this generally led to cooperative behaviour from them. Since starting work, Aliya has developed a strong professional identity and is proud to be a maths teacher. Personally, she prefers to teach through English as she studied maths through English at university. However, she has reservations about the DLP as her students are not sufficiently proficient in English to understand the difficult concepts in the curriculum.

5.5.2 Fouzia

Initially, Fouzia needed to persuade her conservative father to give her permission to enter teaching. Having secured this, she completed her degree and then entered teaching directly. In the first year of teaching, which was at a middle school, she was observed regularly by her Principal and in this way developed her skills. After five years, she was required to move to a secondary school. While the material is more challenging and therefore more interesting, Fouzia is dissatisfied in her job, mostly because of classroom management issues, and is looking to leave teaching. She is hoping to find a job which has higher status, a better salary and allows segregation but concedes such jobs are very hard to find. Overall, Fouzia is not against the DLP but she feels it is being introduced too early and that neither teachers nor students are ready.

5.2.3 Jamila

Jamila entered teaching nine years ago, coming directly from university. She became a teacher as she feels it is the most appropriate job for women as positions are widely available allowing women to work close to home and thus simultaneously fulfil their domestic responsibilities. She remains committed to the profession, but admits that recently her motivation has started to wane due to the reform process and particularly the intensification of work. Nevertheless, she is proud to be a teacher and enjoys the recognition this brings within the community. Islam is very important to Jamila and she actively promotes its message with the students by setting a good example. She conceptualises herself as a mother to the students demonstrating her commitment to them. Regarding the DLP, Jamila supports the promotion of English in the UAE as long as it does not supersede Arabic. She feels that currently English is gaining too much power.

5.2.4 Latifa

Latifa chose to enter teaching partly because her family required her to work in a segregated environment but also because she wanted to work with people as relationships are key to her identity. She has been teaching for 17 years, having read maths at university. She has received no specific teacher training and until the ADEC reforms started, in-service training was virtually non-existent. Latifa is committed to teaching but is ready for a change and is exploring options. Latifa's approach to students has changed over the course of her career – from being very strict to being gentle and empathetic. She now finds the second approach fits her character better and facilitates better learning from the students. Latifa has recently learnt English and while she does use it when teaching, she feels uncomfortable at times as she has reduced flexibility and struggles to make the material accessible for the students. Consequently, she reverts to Arabic when needed.

5.2.5 Sameera

Sameera chose to enter teaching due to the influence of a teacher in middle school. However, this career was the only viable option for her, given the restrictions placed on her by her family's expectation for her to work in a segregated environment. After university, she completed a four months pre-service course before entering the classroom. She has been teaching for nine years now. Sameera has started to embrace the changes brought in through the ADEC reforms and generally teaches in an authentically student-centred way acknowledging this approach as more engaging and effective. However, she is looking for alternative employment partly due to the intensification of work. Relationships, both with students and colleagues are extremely important to Sameera so she perceives a key part of her role is building and maintaining positive relationships. Sameera is keen for the DLP to be introduced as she finds the current bilingual situation very difficult. Nevertheless, she is concerned about how the students will cope as she fears their current levels of English are inadequate.

5.2.6 Shamsa

Shamsa read maths at university but never wanted to become a teacher, partly because she did not enjoy school herself. She waited for a whole year, applying for alternative jobs despite familial pressure to enter teaching. Eventually, she applied to become a teacher and began work after a short summer course. She has been working for six

years now. There is some fragmentation in her professional identity between being proud and ashamed at her role. In terms of student relationships, she desires closeness but with some distance, wanting to be perceived primarily as a teacher. Shamsa wants to leave teaching because she is not able to deliver lessons of sufficient quality within the context of work intensification, causing considerable tension with her religious beliefs that ask for perfection. She is comfortable with the idea of teaching through English and prefers this to bilingual teaching. However, she is concerned about how students will cope.

5.2.7 Wafa

Wafa had some unhappy experiences at school and this motivated her to enter teaching so she could provide a better experience for her students. After finishing her degree, she entered the post-graduate diploma programme but dropped out after one semester for personal reasons. She did not complete this course but entered teaching directly and has been working for 10 years. Wafa is committed to teaching and does not want to change her job. She is proud to be a teacher. She is a devout Muslim and thus feels an important part of her role is to guide students' behaviour. Wafa expressed grave concerns regarding the DLP as she feels Arabic is being demoted and this is not beneficial for the country. Nevertheless, she will adopt the policy when it is brought in although her first priority will always be ensuring the students learn maths.

5.3 The extent and purposes of English in maths lessons

When conducting this research I felt it was necessary to gauge how much English the participants used while teaching maths and what it was used for, in response to research question one. From the data collected from the lesson observations (see 4.7.1) it was evident that the amount and purpose of English in maths lessons varied between schools and teachers. Initially, I considered presenting these data as a bar graph showing the approximate percentage of teaching input in English for each participant. However, on reflection I abandoned this idea as such a presentation primarily acted to highlight how little English was being used. As my understanding of the situation developed, and I adopted an alternative theoretical framework, I realised such a presentation was not appropriate as it failed to embrace the discursive tensions the participants face.

In Il Madrasa Il Oola there was very limited use of English – lesson titles were written up on the board in English and a few words were given to the students – but no sentence

level English was present and student English was limited to single words or very short utterances such as 'Teacher finished. I am finished'. When the teachers encouraged the students to use English, they often complained and then refused or those who attempted to use English usually broke down mid-sentence. Numbers were read and spoken about in Arabic but written as would be done in English. In terms of spoken English, Aliya used seven English words in her lesson (although these words were used more than once each), Fouzia asked one question while Jamila incorporated nine phrases in her class and some students used a little English. Data collected through interviews supported these observations with teachers saying they only used English for key words and some basic terminology such as 'plus' or 'minus'. Aliya said that in some topics she gave additional support with translating the questions, for example useful words which reoccurred were pointed out so students could learn to decipher the gist of a question without knowing every word.

In Il Madrasa Il Oola numbers and simple mathematical terms were rarely used in English. In the interview, Aliya explained:

...they [the students] find it easier to take the numbers in Arabic so I may say '3y plus...' but they tell me if I say it in Arabic they will find it easier...they need time, processing time.

In another section she repeated this sentiment:

...because I studied it first in Arabic I find I can do everything in English but I forget to read the numbers in English. Maybe it's the easiest thing but I could read the question and then say 'Hamsa, sabah, tallata, itinane [five, seven, three, two in Arabic]. Why? Maybe because...I got wahad, itinane before one, two.

In Il Madrasa It Thanya considerably more English was used but variations between teachers and lessons were still evident. For example, Wafa used a significant amount of English in her first period but almost none in the second although it was the same group. It appeared that initially she used an unusually large amount of English as students failed to reciprocate in English. Additionally, I stayed for the second half of this double period (which perhaps she was not expecting) and in this second lesson there was very little English. Part of this may have been due to the content of the lesson – students were completing exercises independently for much of it – but this did not account for almost all of the input being in Arabic. It may be that my presence influenced the amount of English she used in the first lesson (see 5.4.4).

Latifa and Sameera used the most English and incorporated it naturally with some English responses from their students, indicating an authenticity in the volume of English used. The English used was sometimes a little inaccurate, although this never compromised the message. It is also interesting to note that these teachers often code-switched. For example, 'How to write equation...but we use...gradient...x or y' where each of the gaps indicates some Arabic which was not translation but rather was completion of the thought.

The impression of a dual language lesson was enhanced greatly by the textbooks which were predominantly (grade 11) or exclusively (grade 10) in English. The questions were often displayed on the interactive whiteboard and were read (by the teacher or students) and then translated (by the teacher). Consequently, students were exposed to English but they tended to focus on the Arabic. As Shamsa said, "I read the question in English. They don't understand anything. I have to translate it to Arabic so from the beginning – say it in Arabic. It will be more relaxing!"

Overall, English was used to read questions from the textbook, give some classroom instructions, such as, "Open your books at page 71 and answer questions 2a, b and d" or "How do I find the gradient of a straight line? What's the rule?" and, with some teachers, to give some limited input. It was also used for single words such as simple numbers, common mathematical terms such as 'plus', 'minus' or 'equals' as well as mathematical vocabulary specific for the topic being studied such as 'gradient', 'equation' or 'constant sequence'. These words were often superimposed into Arabic sentences. Formulas were also given in English and some students in Il Madrasa It Thanya were therefore able and willing to answer questions fully in English as they recited the formula and solved the problem using corresponding numbers.

5.4 Key discourses through which participants discussed their (professional) identities

My second research question aimed to identify the key discourses through which the participating teachers discussed their identities. Initially, I had aimed to focus exclusively on their professional identities but found that due to the entanglement of discourses, personal and professional identities blurred to such an extent that this was not possible. While this led to a few moments of alarm, it resulted in me adopting a

more sophisticated position which better embraced the complexities at hand and produced a deeper understanding of these teachers' identities.

A number of themes, both within and beyond the workplace, were explored to ascertain the answer to this question. The most significant of these, which were spontaneously brought up by participants, included the importance of childhood educational experiences, gendered roles, professional roles including student relationships, the impact of Islam and participants' perspectives of society's view of teachers. These will now be discussed further.

5.4.1 Childhood educational experiences

A common theme across all the participants was the influence of their own experiences in school in selecting teaching as a profession; five of the participants were able to identify a specific teacher (or teachers) who inspired in them a desire to follow suit while, interestingly, two participants mentioned negative childhood experiences – one resulted in a desire to become a teacher to ensure her students had better memories of school while the other's experience continued to inform her ambivalence to the profession.

Participants in this study indicated that the primary influence of previous teachers was in terms of attitude towards the students. Aliya commented, "When I was in grade six I thought 'I want to be a maths teacher'. In the class it was nice and I loved my maths teacher and so on, so why not?" Latifa stated, "When I was a student our maths teachers were very good and they respected us so I wanted to be like them". This influence is significant because, as will be discussed in section 5.4.4, a key aspect of teacher identity was found to be teacher-student relationships. Therefore, having positive role models, who established an example of constructive and respectful teacher-student relationships, significantly influenced the participants.

Wafa, however, joined teaching partly because of her negative experiences as a student. She recounts the story as follows:

I wanted to become a teacher because I wanted to give information to the whole class without focusing on just some of the students because when I was at school the teachers believed in some of us and only focused on a few students and I wanted to change this.

When asked for further details on this defining experience she explained:

I remember in prep school there was an Egyptian teacher – when I came from primary school my score was 98% and I was second in the school – but this teacher thought students from other countries like Egypt, Syria and so on were more intelligent than us. Every class she would say we were foolish and many bad words...It gave me a bad feeling... I always tried to change her mind but she wouldn't change. Even if I answered a difficult question, she still wouldn't change.

Wafa went on to explain how this experience continued to have a bearing on her as she strove to treat her students fairly and influence them positively. This case is interesting because although she was exposed to discourses which held considerable power, she positioned herself to resist the expectations these placed on her reflecting how power relations can invoke resistance, rather than the reproduction of dominant discourses.

Therefore, all the participants were able to identify specific experiences or relationships from their childhood which informed not only their decision to become teachers but also how they chose to present themselves in the professional arena. The primary areas in which this influence was felt were pedagogy and student relationships (see 5.4.4).

5.4.2 Gendered roles

While childhood teachers played some role in motivating participants to enter the profession, the evidence suggests the most influential factor to their initial decision to become teachers was that of gendered expectations of females in this society. The threads of gender, religion and culture (or society's expectations) are closely woven making it tricky to tease the strands apart, and while this might make for a clearer read, I do not believe that such a categorical approach is desirable as it fails to embrace the complexities of the real life situation. The following discussion therefore, while focusing on gender, will inevitably incorporate aspects of religion and culture.

Gendered expectations played a critical role in participants' selection of teaching primarily because of the patriarchal discourse which imposes male/female (gender) segregation. While this situation is changing in the UAE, and there is more acceptance for a wider range of opportunities for women, this change is recent and did not apply when most of these teachers started work. Additionally, this shift is reflected more readily at the policy rather than the familial level, especially outside the major cities (see 3.5). While most of the participants stated this was the main reason for entering teaching, amongst the participants there was some variation in the amount and nature of negotiation families allowed. For example, Fouzia told me:

Coming from a conservative family my father would not allow any other job for a girl other than teaching... [however], my father is open to discussion and he could sit down and make conversation with me and he might be convinced of my point and change his opinion or he might convince me and in fact this happened as at the beginning he didn't want me to work at all... but I convinced him from the beginning that this was what I wanted – that I always wanted to be a teacher.

Other participants appeared to have families who were less flexible. When asked why she chose to become a teacher Latifa described her experience as follows:

Because of my family, especially 15 years ago, we were not allowed to work with the males, with the men. This was the main reason... My family was the main reason. I like this job but in the past there were no chances, no other chances; just a small choice so the best one was a teacher.

Wafa also admitted that she had wanted to be a doctor but her family did not allow her to follow this path stating, "We spoke about it [which profession to enter] because at first I wanted to become a doctor and they said this was not allowed because I would have to work with men".

It is interesting to note that while the participants had very few alternatives they did, for the most part, *want* to be teachers. They considered themselves to have *chosen* teaching. I discussed this with a number of participants, asking them if they perhaps chose teaching because it was allowed and therefore a path they could follow without acrimony. They admitted this was partly the case but that other factors – such as experiences as a student or their own beliefs, also played a role. This is a demonstration of how subjects come to desire particular ways of being so rather than seeming to be forced into a role, subjects actively embrace these same discourses (Davies & Gannon, 2005).

In a similar vein, a theme which came out from all participants was their strong preference to work in a segregated context. For some of the teachers, having never experienced relationships with men (outside their family), they felt shy and uncomfortable in their presence. For others this preference was deeply rooted in Islam as religious and gendered discourses intersected increasing the power of this regime of truth. Fouzia, for example, stated that having got married to a more liberal man than her father, she was now permitted to work in a mixed context. However:

From the religious point I know it is difficult to find another place or job where I will not find a lot of direct contact with men and I want this, I don't want this

direct contact. I don't believe in this contact so even if I want to go and find another job there are few places where there are separate places for women. Yes, from a religious point I want this personally.

For other teachers, gendered cultural expectations of women were incorporated into their identities in a different guise. Jamila described it as such:

A woman can definitely find a teaching position in the area where she is living. She wants to be in her area because women have more responsibilities at home. We have kids whereas the man has more freedom to do what he wants.

When I asked her about the rationale behind this position she pointed out that she did not perceive this as a burden for women as they did not have financial responsibility in the home as men had. She claimed she did not have to work but chose to as she enjoyed her job but that her roles at home were her priority. In her case, the role of motherhood was so central to her identity she had incorporated it into her professional identity, "I'm doing the mother's role at both places – at school and at home. At home I am a mother and a wife and at school I am a mother and a teacher".

Cultural expectations on appropriate behaviour for women also appear to have been integrated into the teachers' identities. Fouzia, for example, stated that teaching is a suitable role for women because women are more caring and kind than men. They are also more patient and thus can work more harmoniously with children who may need additional help. These factors were recurring themes, especially with regard to student relationships (see 5.4.4).

While there was definitely agreement amongst the participants regarding the motivation which expected gendered (roles) provided for becoming a teacher, it is important to note differences also. Shamsa, while agreeing with other participants that she preferred to work with women only, stated that segregation was not a key reason for becoming a teacher:

My mother and father asked me, "Please become a teacher" – because I'm a woman, but I said, "No, I'll search first for another job. If I don't find one I will become a teacher"...It's important to work with women but the job itself is more important than this...They [her family] said, "No, don't work with men" but if I worked with them they would say, "OK, what can we do?"

This view demonstrates that segregation and gendered roles, while firmly embedded in this society, are viewed across a spectrum of perspectives and the strength of this discourse is beginning to fray at the edges, with some women daring to explore new

ways of being. In this, it is interesting to note the role of men. Shamsa's (newly acquired) husband, for example, was encouraging her to leave teaching even though this may result in her working in a mixed-gender environment while Jamila's husband was not yet supportive of such a move. Therefore women's explorations appear to remain subject to patriarchal sanctions, exemplifying the relevance of the interpretive system (see 3.2).

Gendered roles, which were a key discourse through which this study's participants discussed their professional identities, proved relevant in a number of ways. Firstly, my participants unanimously entered teaching based, at least partially, on the societal expectation for male/female (gender) segregation. Additionally, some participants embraced prescribed gendered roles incorporating motherhood and the characteristics of kindness and patience into their identities, in line with cultural expectations for women (see 3.5). While Shamsa was willing to defy a dominant discourse regarding gender, the majority did not admit to challenging it, indeed they desired it. However, there were some hints that as society changes, so these women were testing the waters to establish the extent to which new ways of being were feasible. This was evident, for example, through their willingness to consider working in a mixed-gender environment (see 5.6).

5.4.3 The impact of Islam

Islam was reportedly an underlying factor in all the participants' attitudes and behaviour and played a significant role in discussions on their professional identities. As Shamsa said:

The basic thing is my religion because our religion says we have to be patient and give things in a good way. Anything we give to anyone we have to do in a perfect way. Because of that we are encouraged in our religion to do something well or the best we can. Also, our religion makes us honest in our work and gives each student her rights. So I think the religion is the basic thing.

The theme of aiming for perfection was echoed by a number of teachers and identified as being grounded in Islam. Fouzia expanded on this with regard to student behaviour:

The religion urges me to treat students equitably and be patient and I even tell this to the [disruptive] student, "I can leave the class and go but I am responsible for this in front of Allah, to give you this and explain this to you and I will be judged for this so this is why I am standing here and bearing with your behaviour because I will be judged on it".

In this interesting quote, the juxtaposing of religious and professional discourses is evident as is the construction of reality through language – in this case the message of Islam. Where the discourses of Islam and professional roles intersect, Fouzia perceived her professional role in terms of an out-playing of her religion resulting in these obligations on her. In this example, the mechanisms of truth, power and self are seen to construct the subject, who reiterates and confirms these mechanisms (Davies, 2006).

Islam not only influenced teachers' approach to classroom management, it also motivated them to build positive student relationships (see 5.4.4). A number of teachers commented that through Islamic teachings they were encouraged to respect their students, promote harmonious relationships (see 5.4.2) and model appropriate behaviour. Fouzia mentioned that she discusses this with her students:

I try to urge the students about good manners, how to dress properly and how to relate with others. I try to give them advice from a religious point of view. I don't tell them they are the school rules...but I tell them, "This is your religion and it urges you to do so".

On the other hand, Jamila and Wafa both said they did not speak about this, but rather consciously behaved in an appropriate manner, with the expectation and hope that the students would learn from their example. However, blurring of Islamic and cultural expectations on (female) teachers was apparent in Wafa's comments:

For us, it is forbidden to paint the nails so she [a good teacher] shouldn't have a manicure. She should make sure her appearance is good and should wear her shayla (head scarf) properly and not tell the students to wear theirs if she is not wearing hers. Also she should treat other teachers well as some students may be observing this and she shouldn't say bad words.

Therefore, whether Islam is encouraged through words or action, these data demonstrate how discourses, once internalised, become assumed and are then perpetuated.

Islam therefore was claimed as central to these teachers' professional identities. It formed the bedrock which influenced how they behaved and, due to the eternal consequences, held considerable influence, becoming a framing discourse. Subsequently, as teachers negotiated intersecting discourses, the expectation to be seen to behave morally - even perfectly - prevailed with tangible outcomes in their performance.

5.4.4 Professional roles

When asked how they would describe a good teacher, the majority of participants answered in a manner similar to Aliya, “I think that to be a good teacher there are two parts – you should be good in the curriculum and with your students”. Therefore, with regard to professional roles, two very clear themes emerged from the data as being of central importance – having thorough curriculum knowledge and building positive relationships with their students. Participants conceptualised ‘curriculum knowledge’ as excellent content knowledge married with effective teaching methodology and classroom management skills while positive student relationships were nurtured primarily to promote effective learning. Through further discussion, however, it became evident that almost all these teachers prioritised positive student relationships alluding to the power of associated cultural, religious and gender discourses.

The participants all considered it important that they deliver the curriculum to give students the best chance of success in the final exams. However, there was some variation of how this should be accomplished. This is interesting because it demonstrates current shifts in teacher identities as prevailing pedagogic discourses are disrupted through exposure to alternatives made available as part of the ongoing education reforms. For example, Shamsa stated that with the new directive to build differentiation into lessons, it was not necessarily desirable to cover the whole curriculum with all the students as weaker students would not cope. It was therefore preferable to provide additional practice at a lower level so they would be able to answer some exam questions correctly. Aliya however disagreed, stating that at the end of the year all the students got the same exam so it was only fair to expose all the students to all the material. Aliya’s view demonstrates the power of prevailing discourses (Gaad et al, 2006) while Shamsa’s view indicates that the training provided through the current reform programme is beginning to deliver some change and an increasing awareness and acceptance of alternatives.

Differing positions regarding their role was evident elsewhere also. On the one hand, Sameera stated that part of her role was:

...to make it fun – leave the students to work, play games. Why? To change- if they stay nine periods and all the lessons are the same they feel bored and tired but if you make it fun maybe they will learn more. They play and learn at the same time.

Aliya agreed with this position commenting that if she included a range of activities it was better, stating:

I try, and I think that as I am going year by year ...I've got more ideas, "OK, they can play and do it as a musical or they can solve"... and they give beautiful ideas... We all enjoy the class and they don't think that maths is boring...I think the students don't forget it usually.

Based on the data from lesson observations however, student-centred activities, while present in both these teachers' lessons, did not predominate and the primary teaching resources were the text books and white board. This is interesting as it points towards the fragmented nature of identity with participants drawing from a range of pedagogic discourses as they negotiate their evolving positions.

On the other hand, Fouzia stated, "I have to give a lot of explanation at the beginning for the students to understand the subject but I can't change this style". While Shamsa mentioned that, "I like to stand in front of the students and give a lecture". Commenting on the role of a previous teacher, Jamila stated, "My teachers played a good role in making me like teaching, especially the maths teachers. They were very excellent". Later she added:

I've always liked mathematics from an early age and what made me like it more was the teachers because they were excellent teachers. I had a teacher...who used to teach in a very interesting way and I enjoyed the way she taught maths. She didn't just teach us for the exam but she used to tell us, "This is a mathematics problem which you should enjoy". It is obvious that I have the same strategies and words because of the influence of this teacher. I try to copy her.

Fouzia, Shamsa and Jamila's comments illustrate how the power of familiar discourses work to persuade subjects into particular ways of being and how it makes those ways desirable so they are actively adopted (Davies & Gannon, 2005). However, Sameera and Aliya's comments demonstrate how subjects can claim agency in a context so disrupt old ways of being and explore new possibilities, as identity evolves.

Whichever way teaching material was presented, a central goal of their role was to deliver successful lessons and much job satisfaction was drawn from being able to do this. For example, Wafa recounted a story of a previous student who visited her and thanked her for teaching her well. After this incident she described her feelings as "Wow!"; her pleasure was tangible. Shamsa described a computer based lesson which

provided an opportunity for the students to apply their learning. She explained that she felt “very happy if I do this type of lesson”. While Aliya stated:

When they [the students] love the subject and they love the teacher they will do everything. This makes me happy... If the students don't get the idea I blame myself but when they get it I am very happy.

These quotes indicate that effective teaching was identified as an important aspect of a successful teacher and it was considered as central to their professional identities.

An important characteristic of identity was revealed in Wafa's observation data. I observed a double lesson but on reflection, realised that Wafa may not have been expecting me to stay for the second lesson. In the first lesson a student-centred methodology was used while the second lesson took a more traditional approach demonstrating that the realisation of 'effectiveness' can shift in response to the audience and the perceived expectations of how they may define effective practice, emphasising its contingent nature. This shift also demonstrates that identity is something one does, something acted out, rather than an essence.

Another key discourse teachers discussed in relation to their professional identities was the prioritising of positive student relationships. Latifa explained how her views on this have changed over her career:

When I started I found a lot of students were very low in mathematics. At the beginning I couldn't understand why these students found it difficult because I was OK in mathematics. I was always acting badly with these students and told them, “Why don't you understand?” but afterwards I learnt not everyone understands in the same way...If you speak with the student as your friend most of the students will respect you but if you shout at them...they will not accept you. This is what I have learnt.

In this example of post structural agency, Latifa's discursive position shifted in response to the power of discourse so old ways of thinking were disrupted and resignification occurred.

Other teachers had also shifted from a traditional, strict stance towards students. Sameera suggested, “Respect the students, don't be hard with them [saying], “I am the teacher”. No, be friendly, make the relationship friendly”. While Latifa and Sameera described their relationships as that of friends, Aliya took it further characterising herself

as a sister to the students. When relating her conceptualisation of a good teacher, her first point was as follows:

Usually, for my students, I love them. I **have** to love them. I look for the positive things and ignore the negatives. I try to respect them and they will respect me. I work with them as my sisters...We talk about everything, not only school.

It was evident from my observations of Aliya that she really applied this policy. She regularly did additional work with lower ability students, chatted with all the girls and appeared to take pleasure from building these relationships. As she pointed out, "I love to talk with the girls...even those I don't teach, I like to talk with them". As mentioned earlier (see 5.2.3), Jamila also used a family analogy when describing her relationship with the students but, being older, viewed herself as their mother.

Some of the participating teachers therefore described their relationship with the students in terms of friendship, sisterhood or parenthood. This is an interesting point as when these types of analogies have historically been present with Western teachers, it is usually at primary, rather than secondary, level (Nias, 1991; Vogt, 2002). Although these teachers did appear to care for the students and offered support for matters outside the classroom, as would be expected with such conceptualisations, the primary motivation for developing such close relationships was to secure leverage to enhance learning. As Fouzia said:

Definitely it's very important to have a good relationship with the students because the students will stay with me for a whole year and will definitely be affected if my relationship with them is not good, and if she hates the teacher she will not accept any information given by that teacher.

Positive relationships with students were therefore critical to how these teachers saw themselves professionally. As Latifa said, "I think the main thing is your relationships". Nonetheless, other factors were also found to impact the participants' professional identities including classroom management and workload.

While not all the participants mentioned classroom management, many did, suggesting it was an important aspect of their professional lives. Five of the seven respondents in this study had moved from middle school (grades 6-9) to secondary school (grades 10-12) in the course of their career. This switch often highlighted the issue of student discipline with many of the participants commenting that secondary students were harder to control. Of all the teachers, Fouzia spoke most regularly on the topic of

classroom management – perhaps because it was a source of strain for her as the following comments revealed:

In the beginning I thought it [teaching] was only the subject matter...I didn't think about classroom management...but I found out...it's the most difficult part. It [classroom management] is harder in this school than in the middle school because in middle school the students might be afraid...whereas with the secondary school girls you need to be more strict...Generally speaking – for anyone – teaching as a job is very stressful... Now, I will prepare to change career to something other than teaching because of dealing with the students. I find it better not to deal with them.

Latifa also discussed the strain of classroom management stating:

The big problem is when we deal with the student...You know this is our problem in our job and there are many behaviour problems with our students...I face a lot of problems with students.

What is interesting about these comments is that neither teacher, but especially Latifa, appeared to have any classroom management issues (as I would describe them). Their classes were silent when the teacher spoke with the vast majority of students listening and trying to answer the questions. The students worked well when they were asked to with most of them remaining on task for extended periods. If a student did step out of line one look from Latifa appeared to fix the situation! I never heard either of these teachers raise their voice nor did I witness them struggling to gain the students' attention. There appears to be an expectation of problematic student behaviour which is perpetuated, even when it is not realised, possibly because of reactions of sympathy or respect this situation generates from those outside of the education field (see 5.4.5). Alternatively, the perception of a problem may arise from a discourse which sets an expectation for 'perfect' student behaviour which, when it is not achieved, results in these teachers' reactions. Additionally, students may have been behaving better than usual due to my presence although I did not sense that while observing the classes.

Some teachers' expectation was that kindness and positive student relationships would result in cooperation from the students. While this generally was the case, they did admit that at times students pushed the boundaries too far, as Aliya's comment illustrated:

Sometimes with some students because they see me as a sister they don't accept me as a teacher when I become tough with them. "What's wrong with you? We

are sisters!” So what?! I’m a teacher before being a sister. I tell them sometimes, “There are limits. Don’t forget yourselves. I’m a sister but before I am a teacher”.

Fouzia also commented on this saying that initially she had portrayed herself as a sister with the students but found this was not effective as with this conceptualisation, the students did not listen to her. Therefore, she started to set limits in her relationships with the students to ensure effective learning.

Therefore teachers viewed themselves, and expected to be viewed, as teachers first and sisters or friends second. This scenario illustrates the tensions these teachers face with regard to the multiple, often contradictory, demands placed on them at the intersection of relevant socio-historic and professional discourses.

An additional point revealed through this research was the tight boundaries teachers drew around their legitimate job description. Five of the seven participants complained about the additional duties they were expected to perform, stating their role should be limited to, “teaching only – not duties, not assembly. So it’s teaching in the class. It’s enough tasks. There shouldn’t be other tasks because I have to grade and mark the tests so that’s enough” (Fouzia).

This sentiment was echoed by Wafa who stated, “Sometimes they want a lot of duties...I don’t like these duties” and by Sameera who said, “I don’t like the many duties that the administration has for us. I hope to come to school only to teach the students and not take the other duties”. These duties were having such a demotivating effect on her that later she stated, “I want to change...there are many duties which are hard and I want to change”. Although it should be noted that the duties were not the only reason Sameera wanted to leave teaching, they were obviously an important factor. It is unclear if this dissatisfaction with the requirement to complete additional duties comes from the nature of these duties, from the intensification of work or a combination of both aspects. However, Latifa and Shamsa also commented that this addition to their role was demotivating them and they were looking for alternative employment (see 5.6).

These findings therefore indicate that regarding their professional roles, teacher identities were discussed through two primary discourses – effective teaching practices and positive student relationships, sometimes conceptualised in terms of sisterhood or friendship. Additional themes which were evident through the data included the importance of classroom management and the parameters of the job.

5.4.5 Participants' perspectives of society's view of teachers

As identities are formed within a social context, others' perspectives hold considerable power in their construction. This research found that overall, teaching was perceived as a prestigious job by the participants, all of whom said they were proud to be a teacher. This pride was magnified by society's perceptions regarding both maths and secondary school teaching. Within Emirati society, maths is reportedly considered to be one of the most difficult subjects so teachers of this subject receive additional respect. Jamila, for example, commented that she was viewed as being "very intelligent like Einstein or Newton", that she was considered "a genius" and that teaching maths was well-esteemed. Other participants had also experienced similar comments contributing to a strong positivity towards their profession. The importance of maths to these teachers' professional identities was reflected across the data with frequent comments emphasising its relevance to their conceptualisation of self. This may well be because of the status given to the subject in the society.

Additionally, teaching in secondary school was considered especially prestigious as Shamsa explained, "I feel that it's a good thing to be in secondary school because they are not children. It has more status than middle school but middle school is better than primary school!" Aliya added that when she tells strangers she is a secondary school teacher they respect her more and even change their manner with her, sitting up straighter and using more formal language!

However, some participants were aware that society's view was not wholly positive towards teachers. Fouzia noted that while teaching was seen as a good position, she also received comments indicating some degree of pity as teaching, and especially working with the students, was considered difficult and undesirable. Some teachers mentioned that while teaching was a respected role, there were other positions which were more respected – particularly that of a doctor or an engineer. This socially-constructed knowledge influenced their identities with a number of teachers comparing themselves with these alternative jobs. Shamsa, for example, stated that if she tells a stranger she is a teacher she feels proud but if she discovers this stranger holds a more prestigious position (based on her or society's perceptions) she feels ashamed. Therefore, for some of the participants, this aspect of identity was particularly fluid and possibly fragile.

Some of the teachers apparently perceived their terms and conditions of service (TACOS) as an extension of society's view of them. As discussed above, teachers drew conclusions regarding their position based partially on comparisons with other professions, and with regard to TACOS, a number of teachers felt they received an unfavourable package, negatively impacting their professional identities. Fouzia and Jamila particularly felt that their salaries and benefits did not fairly reflect their level of training commenting that others, for example government office workers and police officers, received more yet many had not even completed their secondary education while teachers were all graduates. They also felt that teachers work harder than these other professions adding to the perceived injustice¹⁰. Overall, however, participants felt that as secondary maths teachers they were valued in Emirati society.

In conclusion, the key discourses which frame participating teachers' professional identities were related to their experiences at school as children, their (female) gender, Islam, conceptualisations of their professional roles and society's perceptions of them as teachers. It was found that these discourses intersected strengthening some positions while creating (irreconcilable) tensions in others. For example, the importance of positive student-teacher relationships can be understood through an exploration of the intersecting of discourses from childhood teachers who acted as positive (or negative (see 5.4.1)) role models, Islamic discourses which promote cordiality and cultural gendered roles which expect patience and kindness in women. Conflicting discourses can be seen in relation to the current reform programme where teachers are located between established and recently introduced pedagogic discourses. In this, they are negotiating their position in an ongoing process.

5.5 Teachers' perspectives on the incoming Dual Language Policy

In response to research question three, my analysis of the data collected in this study highlighted four primary themes regarding teachers' views of the incoming DLP. It should be noted however, that grouping the data this way has been done to aid its presentation and is somewhat artificial as there is crossover between the categories. The identified themes include the personal impact of the policy on teachers, the influence of students' needs, practical considerations of both current and future policy

¹⁰ In November 2013, ADEC announced a 25-35% salary increase for Emirati school teachers (Zaman, 2013).

implementation and the ideological principles behind the policy. Each of these will now be explored.

5.5.1 Teachers' perspectives on the personal impact of the DLP

Unsurprisingly, teachers' English language proficiency was a significant influence in how they viewed the impact of the DLP on them personally. The participants' levels of English ranged from being limited users to being competent users (see 4.6). Some of the participants, particularly those who had graduated more recently, stated that having studied maths at university through English, they *preferred* to teach in English as they were more familiar with the subject-specific vocabulary in English than Arabic. As Aliya stated:

For me, I think it [the DLP] is very good because I studied maths in English so I feel very comfortable with the book because the supervisors, the Arabic supervisors, asked me to read the previous book but I found it too difficult to read. I don't know what they mean by the words but in English it's OK.

Shamsa supported this view when she said:

English is not a problem...because I learnt English at the university. When I read some Arabic words I don't know what these Arabic words mean in mathematics. I know it in English but not in Arabic.

Therefore, speaking merely from the perspective of what is preferable for them with their specific skill set, these teachers indicated a preference to teaching through English.

A second group of teachers were those who, in preparation for this policy, had recently learnt English. These teachers reported that now being able to communicate in English was advantageous both professionally and in their personal lives. For example, Latifa commented, "We must speak [English]. We must. So when I learnt English, I felt stronger maybe. I could talk with anyone. I am not ashamed because I do not speak English". Latifa worked very hard to develop her English attending external institutes as well as the classes provided by ADEC at her school, improving from 'an extremely limited user' to a 'competent user' (UCLES, 2010, p.2). She was pleased about this and obviously felt it was an important personal achievement. Others in this category also expressed positivity towards the personal benefits of teaching through English stating that it gave them an opportunity to practise English or a reason to develop their language skills further.

While those who had recently learnt English reported the positive consequences of being bilingual, they also indicated a need to continue developing their English skills as their current level did not provide them with the flexibility or confidence they needed to use English professionally. For example, Latifa stated:

Because I am a maths teacher, sometimes I find when I speak English, I find it difficult to know how to express the message so I feel uncomfortable to explain it in English, especially if there are complicated words so then I use my language [Arabic] to explain.

When I asked teachers how they felt if they made a mistake in English, most of them stated it was not a problem. For example, Wafa said, “I smile and then they smile. We always make mistakes and I encourage my students to get used to making mistakes without being scared”.

Sameera answered:

In the beginning I felt shy to speak English... I was afraid – maybe I would make a mistake and the students would say, “The teacher doesn’t speak English well” but now it’s OK and I practise. It’s not a problem if I make a mistake...Sometimes I say to the students, “If I make a mistake, can you correct me?”

While the teachers described above had achieved the initial IELTS band required by ADEC for English Medium Teachers (EMT), some of the participants would technically be described as ‘limited users’ (UCLES, 2010, p2). Interestingly, they also expressed positivity towards the personal benefits of teaching through English. For example, Jamila stated:

I have benefitted from this on a personal level. I practise the language more and this is an international language so it’s good to develop myself in this...most of the research on the internet is in English so there is something personal inside me which makes we want to do this [develop English].

However, when asked if she was learning English, she stated that she was but that it was limited due to time constraints and that over the previous three years she had attended about one 40 minute lesson a week. It appears to me, that Jamila was willing to subvert the discourse which promotes the value of English but was unwilling to be *seen* to be doing this, perhaps because of the power of an intersecting political discourse which demands compliance or because she was conversing with a native-English speaker.

Other teachers expressed the view that this policy was being introduced too early. For example, Fouzia stated:

The teachers are not yet ready to do this so it is a little bit hard at this time...I believe the teacher should be a role model for the student so I should be very competent in what I'm delivering and I should be better than them – in terms of language now and the subject matter itself. For the moment I think it will be difficult as I must have a very strong background in the language and I must be well prepared for this. I feel that if I am making mistakes in the language, for example, the students will think I am probably making mistakes in the subject matter as well and this is not good.

These sentiments appeared to be holding Fouzia back from attempting English in the class. Other teachers explained how they also had held such views but these changed once they started to use English. As Jamila said:

At the beginning I was afraid that I couldn't do it but always at the beginning when we don't try something we think we can't do it but now I am more relaxed...I feel more confident...Even though I only use small expressions the students are like, "Wow! You're using English!"...so this gives me confidence as the students are looking up to me.

Therefore, the majority of teachers – whether they previously knew English, had just learnt it or still needed to learn it - expressed positivity towards the policy with regard to their own professional development. These data demonstrate the strength of the discourse on linguistic imperialism in the UAE (see 3.6), with most of the participants apparently internalising it without fully questioning its ideological underpinnings (see 5.5.5). However, tensions between discourses were evident as perspectives towards the DLP were generally less positive when viewed with regard to other considerations.

5.5.2 Teachers' perspectives on the DLP regarding students' learning

When the participants spoke about the DLP, they expressed concern due to a powerful discourse which placed high expectations on them regarding student success. In this discourse, teachers, rather than students, are held wholly responsible for results (ADEC, 2013b). As already discussed in the findings regarding teacher identity, maths is generally considered (one of) the most difficult subjects in the UAE (see 5.4.5). The students struggle with the content even when it is in Arabic and teachers expressed concern about how they would manage in English, as Fouzia explained:

I tend to find that the students find the subject very hard and even in Arabic I try to use the simplest language possible to simplify the subject for the students and I'm using colloquial Arabic [rather than classical Arabic] to deliver the message for the students, let alone if I use English...I want to make sure they understand.

Other teachers also expressed that it was their priority to ensure the students grasped the mathematical material and that using Arabic often facilitated this. For example, Jamila stated, "Using the mother tongue when I'm giving information to the students will make it easier for them to grasp it". Aliya pointed out a pertinent observation when she stated, "If the question is in quite simple language I think they can do it [in English] but I think they forget it...usually it's Arabic before English". I find this very interesting as it highlights the difference between process and product. The students can produce work in English but they currently do not have the proficiency to think in English so the constant translation can result in confusion. Additionally, as their English language levels are generally elementary, they can produce the results when the necessary vocabulary is fresh in their minds but at a later date, they are unable to recall the words and therefore may fail to recall the mathematical concepts.

Shamsa and Wafa both picked up the idea that when student language levels are low this has obvious repercussions in the maths classroom, should they teach through English. Shamsa commented:

If they know some English and I teach completely in English, they will lose everything...If they don't understand and I teach in English so I speak with myself, no one is with me. This is a problem!

Wafa stated it more succinctly, "Students don't understand English so how can they understand maths if it's in English?" Although this concern is clearly valid, the teachers did not respond to this obviously problematic situation by refusing to use English. Rather they were gradually developing strategies which met students' needs while simultaneously attempting to incorporate their understanding of the policy. When doing this, the primary influencing factor was the students' language levels. As Shamsa put it:

First of all I think, "This is easy for the student. This is easy" so at the beginning I think about the students before I decide, and if I put some English words that are difficult I try to repeat them many times to [help the students] get the words.

Aliya echoed these ideas:

Usually, it depends on the students' levels in English. For this year, I think they are not as high as last year... Even when they read the question they do not have good pronunciation so it will not work if I give huge sentences so we read the questions and underline the important things.

Another strategy was to respond to the students' lead rather than force the issue to using English as Jamila explained:

I'm now starting with vocabulary and the terms and expressions. So today, for example, I asked the students to start speaking in English in the class but they didn't feel comfortable and they didn't like it so they started just by reading the questions and expressions in English and I will try to encourage them to use it more in the next trimester.

Shamsa added, "If she [a student] speaks English, I speak English as well if she feels confident but if she speaks Arabic, I speak Arabic. I don't usually ask them to use English". In this scenario, teachers were faced with intersecting and contradictory discourses one of which demands students succeed in maths while the other requires the teachers to follow government policy, in this case to use English while teaching. Teachers demonstrated the power of the first discourse by primarily using Arabic in class while simultaneously demonstrating a willingness to compromise, to some extent, in response to government policy.

One reason teachers had persevered and were trying to use at least a little English in their classes was because of a belief that using English would benefit the students in the long run. As Aliya stated:

It will benefit them *later* when they go to university...it's better to avoid the foundation course if it's possible to cover it in school then it's better as it was very difficult...For me, I found it a shock like, "What's this? I can't do anything!" It's extremely difficult as in school it was Arabic and then [at university] it was English.

Jamila primarily used Arabic at university so she could not recall personal experiences but still indicated an appreciation that learning more English at school would be beneficial, "I'm trying to prepare students for when they go to university and remind them they will only use English so it's better to try and get used to more English". Shamsa also commented, "It's good because everything is in English, every job needs English. They say, "Where is the IELTS certificate?" so it's good for students". Despite this, Fouzia's comment that, "This time it's a little bit hard as the students are not qualified", appears to sum up the teachers' perspectives, expressed not only in words but also through their actions and the amount of English they actually used when teaching (see 5.3).

The data highlight the tensions teachers are faced with as they negotiate intersecting, and often incompatible, discourses. It is at this point that the most powerful discourses

become evident as teachers act out their identities. The data indicate that for these teachers, the most powerful discourses are related to their responsibilities as *maths* teachers and how they can best meet the needs of the students to successfully complete the curriculum, a theme which is repeated in the following section.

5.5.3 Teachers' perspectives on the current introduction of the DLP

As discussed in the previous section, in terms of implementing the policy, participants unanimously expressed the concern that using English compromised students' ability to grasp the subject matter. These teachers' primary concern was ensuring students learnt the material in the maths curriculum as demonstrated through these sample comments, "If I find that English will affect my students I will use Arabic. I told them, "It's maths before English"" (Aliya) or as Sameera stated, "It is more important for the students to understand the maths. I want the students to understand how to solve, then take the words and definitions in English".

When this priority was coupled with the large curriculum, teachers believed they were not able to deliver much meaningful language work. As Fouzia said:

Now, with the overload of the curriculum and the short time span I have, I feel that the students only need the subject matter and if I start giving them something beyond that they will not pay attention.

This view was supported by others who stated that lack of time prevented them from doing student-centred activities or the students from keeping records of the translation provided by the teacher, both of which could arguably support the implementation of the DLP.

Some teachers also commented on the current problem of translation. They expressed that working solely in English or Arabic would be preferable to constant code-switching as it was difficult to work in two languages and this took up valuable classroom time. Related to this concern was the additional workload which resulted from translating the textbook which is fully (Grade 10) or partially (Grade 11) in English. As Aliya put it, "The problem is to translate the book into Arabic for the students during the planning. I have to spend many hours to find the accurate translation for the words". When I asked her about this, she explained that even if she did not give the translation to the students, it needed to be ready in case the students asked for it as she did not want the language to hinder their progress in maths. She felt it was her professional duty to do this as the

students came to her classes to learn maths and without this support she was concerned they would lose heart and give up. These sentiments indicate the power participants have attributed to the expectations placed on them for student success.

Another factor which influenced teachers' perspectives on the DLP was the unclear message they had received from ADEC. While ADEC has made it clear that they are working towards a dual language education system and a key output of the current reforms is biliterate school graduates (ADEC, 2009), the nature of the policy at secondary level is yet to be revealed. Indeed, from personal sources based in ADEC, I understand policy makers are still undecided on which model will be adopted. This uncertainty has had a negative impact on teachers' views of the policy. Lack of clarity on current requirements in secondary schools has resulted in some confusion and the belief that this goal is now not a priority. As Latifa said, "They [ADEC] said we have to use English for 20% and then not less than 40% of lessons [in the previous school] but now in this school, never mind if you speak 10 minutes, 20 minutes – until now they don't say".

5.5.4 Teachers' perspectives on the future implementation of the DLP

In terms of future implementation of the DLP, my analysis of the data revealed two main themes – these being teaching methodology and training.

Given that the participants were all maths teachers, it is unsurprising that they demonstrated a lack of awareness regarding second language teaching methodologies. However, when asked if teaching through English would result in a change of their classroom strategies, the majority of teachers reported that it would not, only the language of instruction would change. In a couple of interviews I explored this further suggesting that given the limited English proficiency of the students, and possibly the teacher, working wholly in English may require less whole class work/ teacher talk time. I also suggested that including more group work may provide the students with the opportunity to practise English. However, the participants did not follow this line of thought, demonstrating the strength and the assumed nature of the current discourses on appropriate approaches to teaching maths.

Interestingly, the teachers also stated that teaching through English would not be that difficult as maths does not contain much language. As Aliya said, "In maths there are phrases and only numbers". This sentiment was picked up by Wafa and supported by Fouzia who stated, "With maths they only deal with rules, no language is needed

whereas with other subjects they use language to explain parts and to read or whatever". I have also seen this sentiment echoed in the media by higher education professionals. For example, Dr Christina Gitsake, head of the Foundations Programmes at the Higher Colleges of Technology (a key governmental institute of higher education) is quoted as saying, "It [maths] is mainly symbols and equations and that can be taught in English because the concepts will remain the same" (Ahmed, 2012). This sentiment is puzzling to me. Even though maths may largely consist of symbols and equations, these need to be explained and processed through language resulting in considerable teacher talk and student thought. If these two elements occur in different languages, students are presented with a considerable challenge.

Related to these views were views on training needed for the DLP. Most teachers had received, or been offered, some language training but had had limited input related to teaching through a second language. The teachers at Il Madrasa Il Oola had been provided with in-school professional development sessions on planning for language, teaching vocabulary, scaffolding learning in a second language environment and using group work to support second language use – sessions which all reflected the assumed incoming teaching philosophy. Teachers from Il Madrasa It Thanya had been given guidance on which classroom phrases they might use in English and been encouraged to write the lesson's title, learning objectives and key words on the board in English.

In terms of future training needs, most teachers did not express an awareness of needing training since they felt they would not be changing their methodology. Those teachers with limited English considered developing their language proficiency as their primary training need. Some primary school teachers have been given a sabbatical to develop their English and pedagogical skills and Jamila was enthusiastic about this option. However, Aliya suggested they be given the opportunity to observe a model dual language class, set in a similar context to theirs, so they could see what was required and how it could be implemented. She felt this would be more useful than attending workshops.

The teachers therefore held clear opinions in terms of the practical implications of policy implementation. The key points which were discussed revolved around a preference for teacher-centred teaching methodologies, the problem of incorporating English into lessons due to time constraints which resulted from the large curriculum, the increased workload brought on by the need to translate and the unclear message from ADEC

which prevented them from developing a vision of this policy. Through the discussion, the lack of awareness regarding second language teaching methodologies also became apparent and this influenced their views on necessary training. These views were not expressed defiantly, but rather as concerns which needed attention. However, when discussing the principles behind this policy a number of teachers held much stronger views as will be discussed next.

5.5.5 Teachers' perspectives on the ideological principles behind the DLP

Throughout the data a number of participants expressed a taken-for-grantedness regarding the advantages of using English within Emirati society. Participants commented on the benefits of English within their own lives and in the workplace and there were no spontaneous comments questioning this position (see 5.5.1). When I asked participants if they felt expatriates should learn Arabic, they all said this would be a good thing but it was not a position which generally was held strongly. For example, one participant said it would be advantageous to the expatriates while others commented that it was not important or even laughed at the suggestion. Wafa, however, held a stronger view:

Perhaps this is not offered [Arabic language training for expatriates] because they [Emirati officials] see English as intelligent and Arabic as foolish. I feel this. One person came to the school last year and a teacher asked, "Who told you that our language can't give knowledge?" He was not able to give an answer to that so said that his message was the government's message and he couldn't disagree with the government.

The power relations of this quote are, I believe, worthy of further analysis. In this story the government are portrayed as the dominant power while the official is the impotent pawn. However, the resistance from the audience is portrayed as somewhat heroic as an individual takes on the government, an act Wafa emulates by conveying the story in this manner. In this she demonstrates her willingness to exercise her power and resist due to a clear, if implied, view that the government position is wrong. This story demonstrates that at the micro level there is some willingness to resist the powerful discourse which privileges governmental policy. This resistance is born out of a nationalistic discourse which Wafa has apparently embraced.

Returning to her views on linguistic ideology, she continued:

Why English? Our language is Arabic. I have this belief that some countries like Germany, Japan and China like to promote their language and have been successful in their own language so why not us? The ancient Arabs started their civilisation by translating all the Greek and other sciences ... into Arabic and then improved on it. After that the non-Muslims translated what they had done. They didn't take it in Arabic but they translated it into their language so they didn't say, "We need the Arab language" but took it in their own language and took only the science. Then they improved it so they kept their language identity and they improved. We have done so at certain points as well – we didn't need another language like English, and we improved even though we didn't use another language and we excelled in the sciences.

These views were supported by Jamila who commented:

Everyone [in the community] is against it [the DLP] because they don't have the language. In countries like China they have their own mother tongue and they are using it for everything. They don't have a second language so why do we need a second language...we don't want it [English] to be in school or forced onto us...We have our mother tongue and we don't have to import another language.

Most of the participants expressed concern over the apparent domination of English in Emirati society. Generally, these comments demonstrated a clear position against a further advance of English. In the Emirates there are legal restrictions in criticising the government so it is possible that participants felt freer in expressing concern towards a societal phenomenon and these comments reflect an authentic underlying unease at the policy towards biliteracy. However, it is also possible these views were expressed because participants had experienced negative consequences from the domination of English perhaps in the form of linguicism (see 3.6). For example, when asked how the superseding of English over Arabic made her feel, Jamila replied:

It gives me a feeling of longing for the mother tongue, to hear Arabic in society and when I go to the hospital or hotel...I feel like a handicapped person in my own society and I have suffered from this with one of my children because when he was in hospital they would say something and the translator would translate something else and if my husband didn't speak English I would be lost.

However, other teachers held an alternative view that English was useful and incorporating it in school would be beneficial but that it must remain a second language. For example, Shamsa said, "I encourage learning English as a second language, not a first language. That's it. I like to study English but...in our country we have to put our language as the first language". Later, she added, "I agree with English everywhere but not every everywhere! They have to put Arabic the first language, they

have to... Now I have to speak English in my own country. I don't like this". These sentiments were repeated by most of the respondents and were expressed primarily as a concern to the diluting impact this would have on their language, culture and religion. On this point they were unanimous in their view that English must remain a second language. From my experience as an expatriate in this country, this runs against the dominant discourse which partially has acquired such strength due to the national demographics (see 2.3). However, within the Emirati community a counter discourse which resists the domination of English, may be reflected here and be the most prevalent.

This principle therefore appears to be the crux of the matter for many of these teachers – that the DLP must be just that; a policy which enables dual language use within maths lessons. As Aliya stated, "It should be English with Arabic...English will be the key words and some sentences, no problem but... I have to explain it in Arabic clearly". Jamila, indicating some contradiction to her earlier comments, agreed, "I don't think it should be an obligation to teach all the lesson in English but only as an aid, then it is something good". Shamsa suggested that if the government wanted maths to be taught fully in English they could organize two streams – one which studied in English and one in Arabic, allowing students to choose.

However, despite these views, which essentially disagree with what is known of ADEC's policy, teachers commented that they would follow ADEC's decision to the best of their ability. For example, Wafa simply stated, "When I have to use more English, I will do it". This demonstrates their understanding of the requirements to be seen to comply and show respect for political authority. Interestingly though, these comments of compliance were only pronounced by teachers in Il Madrasa It Thanya. Overall, as noted earlier (see 4.4), it appeared the reform process is being applied more thoroughly in this school.

To summarise the findings of research question three, the participating teachers' perspectives on the incoming Dual Language Policy were found to be highly complicated but were categorised into four general areas. Firstly, when considered from a personal perspective, teachers were generally positive about teaching through English as they either found it easier to use in the classroom or because it gave them the opportunity to develop their English language skills. Secondly, teachers discussed the policy in relation to students' learning and were less optimistic as they felt using English would

compromise the learning of maths and thus have negative consequences on exam results which were of critical importance. Therefore, meeting students' needs was the top priority although teachers showed willingness to incorporate the DLP when these needs could simultaneously be met. When discussing the practical implications of policy implementation, teachers stressed their priority as teaching maths before English. As maths specialists, they demonstrated limited awareness of issues related to second language acquisition and the possible implications of these changes for teaching methodologies. Finally, teachers discussed their views regarding the ideological principles behind the policy. Some participants revealed strong views against the continuing growth of English within Emirati life and education while others appeared to have internalised discourses clustered around linguistic imperialism or were perhaps more cautious about expressing criticism in the context of the current political system.

5.6 The influence of teacher identities on teachers' perspectives on the incoming Dual Language Policy

From the evidence in this study, teachers' identities, which were both constrained and constituted by the intersecting of religious, social, cultural, nationalistic and professional discourses, were found to exert considerable influence on teachers' perspectives on the DLP. While teachers' identities demonstrated some fragmentation, resulting in mixed perspectives, the evidence indicates that they primarily perceived the DLP as a threat.

One cluster of pedagogic discourses and regulations which teachers found themselves located in included the proposed language of instruction, presumed required teaching methodology, the large curriculum and pressure to ensure students' success in exams. When viewed together, these aspects of the educational landscape were perceived as a considerable threat as some established discourses were shut down in exchange for unfamiliar practices while other practices or expectations remained unchanged leaving teachers in an untenable position. As discussed in 5.5.2, teachers unanimously expressed grave concerns regarding the negative impact using English would have on students' acquisition of maths. Simultaneously, as part of the NSM, it is presumed secondary teachers will be required to adopt a student-centred teaching methodology (ADEC, 2009). For many teachers this constituted another threat, contradicting prevailing beliefs based on both recent professional, and childhood, experiences. A teacher-centred approach to classroom practice was seen as more efficient facilitating the completion of the large curriculum which has traditionally been the primary target

school supervisors expected teachers to meet (Gaad et al, 2006). This priority apparently lingered with a number of participants. The preference for teacher-centred lessons was also perpetuated by the backwash effect of exams which do not require the development of critical thinking skills. Students' exam success is especially important to parents in Abu Dhabi, and as teachers placed considerable value on society's view of them (see 5.4.5), they acted in response to the power of this discourse. As Aliya said:

You see, for the parents – not all but most of them - ...only the final certification counts. So the mothers don't come to school and ask about this or that... They don't know the curriculum itself...they only care about the score.

Indeed, teachers themselves had embraced the importance of exam results, using it as a key indicator of their own success. For example, Aliya said that when she planned lessons, 70-80% of her focus was on the exam. Therefore, the contradictory juxtaposing of pedagogic discourses and regulations regarding the proposed language of instruction, teaching methodology, expectations to complete the (large) curriculum and the importance of students' success in examinations created considerable tension for teachers. In this, teachers' identities were threatened significantly influencing their perspectives on the DLP.

Another professional discourse which was threatened by the DLP (and other reform measures) was their work ethic. Within Western school systems, it is generally agreed that expectations placed on teachers are demanding and are often a source of complaint amongst teachers (for example, Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009). While this arguably has improved the experience for students, research shows it has come at a high cost to teachers' well-being (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996). Nevertheless, the power of this discourse has resulted in socio-historically formed knowledge which is often accepted as an integral part of the profession. Consequently, ADEC staff who are drawing from this Western model have created policies which result in a mismatch of agendas, as Emirati teaching staff are engaged with alternative discourses. In the UAE expectations placed on teachers have, since independence, been less rigorous (see 5.4.4). Many of the teachers in this study entered teaching with the expectation of a limited workload, as has recently been the case in government schools (and remains the case in government schools in the other emirates), and this has been incorporated into their professional identities. However, the introduction of new policies, including the DLP, has led to a considerable increase of work. Consequently, teachers who were meeting the required governmental expectations found themselves located between intersecting and

conflicting discourses leading to tensions and dissatisfaction. This is exemplified as professional and religious discourses clash, as can be seen in the following scenario brought up by Shamsa:

I can't find time to prepare special lessons. I like to do that but I can't find time so I see this year I am not very good at preparing lessons...If they give us little work, fewer hours, we will do many things but they [ADEC staff] don't know that...They say teachers must have 24 periods and they don't do research in schools to see what is happening there.

She then went on to explain that she wanted to leave teaching because of the pressure, but also because she was not able to do her work perfectly and in her understanding of Islam, she was required to work in "the perfect way"; the primary reason she wanted to complete excellent work was because of her religion. Therefore, Shamsa's religious beliefs, which constitute an integral part of her identity, influenced her perspective on the incoming DLP, creating some negativity and resistance. This scenario again demonstrates the complexity of education reform and the relevance of identity in negotiating its implementation, seen in the impact this personal aspect of identity has had on the professional role. While I do not claim such a position can be applied across the teaching force, other participants also mentioned the importance of completing excellent work in relation to their religious beliefs, indicating its relevance.

A possible response to this may be that the teachers need to accept the intensification of work as necessary if the current reforms are to deliver the desired goals (and I have often heard this sentiment from Western/ Westernised colleagues). This attitude indicates the unquestioned, assumed nature of their discourses (with the inevitable assumption of their superiority) and is an out-playing of neo-colonialism. It demonstrates an unproblematic representation of the situation, failing to question whether it is necessarily better to prioritise work, if economic outcomes should be a primary objective and what will be sacrificed with the adoption of this agenda. It also fails to embrace the additional aspects of teachers' lives including not only their religion, but also their prioritising of relationship building and their roles and responsibilities at home (see 5.4.2). These teachers were experiencing genuine tension as they attempted to negotiate the intersection of these influential, yet antagonistic, discourses.

I would argue that this scenario is exacerbated by aspects of patriarchy which are evident in this dynamic. Firstly, patriarchy is apparent as predominantly it is men who are making the decisions for a feminised work force who have very limited opportunity

to express their views (Troudi & Alwan, 2010). Secondly, the decisions makers appear to have failed to accommodate societal expectations placed on Emirati women leading to an apparent clash between governmental policy on the intensification of work and the reality of private patriarchy where female teachers' roles at home have not changed. As Wafa laments, "Mostly, I feel tired...I am controlling here and controlling there. With my daughter, I am teaching here and teaching there...There is no time for myself".

In this scenario, participants had limited room to manoeuvre due to prevailing power relations. Nevertheless, there were hints of resistance. For example Sameera commented, "Before women were not allowed to work with men but now, in my family, it's OK. If I work with a man maybe they think it's OK". The cautious nature of this language demonstrates how this position is still being negotiated but also shows a willingness to claim and exercise her power. Other participants also demonstrated a willingness to exercise their power seen through acts of subversion and resistance such as limiting the use of English in teaching despite lip-service to the contrary and actively seeking alternative employment. The evidence of this study therefore suggests that pedagogic and professional discourses were superseded by those of Islam, gender and nationalism with repercussions on teachers' perspective on the DLP, demonstrated through acts of subversion and resistance.

Linguistic identity was another area which was found to have influenced teachers' perspectives towards the DLP. Within the respondents there were a spectrum of positions and indeed some teachers demonstrated some fluidity within their position. In this discussion, in a bid to highlight the key dynamics at play in this complex scenario, I will focus on two participants' responses, one at either end of the spectrum.

Some participants, for the most part, appeared to accept the assumed neutrality of English based on extrinsic arguments (see 3.6). For example, one respondent said, "I use it [English] if I go to a workshop or if I go shopping or if I have a meeting – because most meetings have foreign people so we need to speak English". In this comment she represented a position that accepts that English will and should be used in such contexts based on practical factors. This position apparently does not question the appropriacy of using English in a meeting held in a country where Arabic is the official language, nor indeed needing to use English while shopping, demonstrating her acceptance of the ideological structures which support linguistic imperialism. Consequently, from this position the *principle* of teaching in English was not problematic.

At the other end of the spectrum, a second participant indicated a strong resistance to the workings of linguistic imperialism (see 5.5.5), stating that Arabic was sufficient for all and every situation so should be used in Emirati schooling. These sentiments were linked to nationalistic aspects of identity although the influence of religious aspects was also evident. For example, she expressed a concern that the Islamic identity of her students was being negatively influenced through the advance of modernity. In this, she discussed how students now-a-days are exposed to many Western ideas so they will try anything, forgetting the Islamic way. This position is not exclusively related to the prevalence of English but as a significant proportion of popular culture is in English, it is relevant. In these comments she exemplified a concern regarding the cultural, historical and political influences of English on Emirati life. Therefore, this position demonstrates considerable ideological resistance to the incoming DLP as the principles behind the policy conflict with nationalistic, religious and linguistic aspects of her identity.

In conclusion, the evidence of this study shows that teachers' perspectives of the incoming DLP were influenced by their identities in a number of ways. Firstly, the professional discourses embraced by many of the participants regarding the proposed language of instruction and teaching methodology conflicted with what is known of ADEC's proposals. This created tension, which was magnified by society's, and their own, prioritising of exam success. Secondly, irreconcilable differences between the teachers' and ADEC's expectations regarding workloads had resulted in the adoption of conflicting positions. This was exacerbated by the influence of Islam on some teachers' standards of work, where they no longer felt able to perform in "the perfect way" as required, due to perceived excessive demands on their time. This dynamic was further complicated by the discourse of patriarchy where teachers' roles beyond the school were apparently not considered, creating sufficient tension for many of the participants to be exploring the option of alternative employment. Linguistic and nationalistic aspects of teachers' identities also influenced their perspectives with some teachers expressing strong resistance to the continued demotion of Arabic in Emirati society, with the DLP being perceived as an out-playing of this.

It is important to note however, that these teachers' identities were fragmented resulting in positions which both resisted and accepted the DLP. For example, with regard to *their* English language levels the participants were supportive of the DLP.

Similarly, most teachers accepted that English is important in the 21st century Emirates and were open to supporting students in their acquisition of the language.

Overall, the respondents of this study, while voicing some concern over the incoming DLP, did not reject it. However, teachers were faced with a multiplicity of discourses which intersected to both constitute and constrain their identities. Consequently, these teachers found themselves located within conflicting positions affording them limited room in which to manoeuvre. Nevertheless, they had not adopted a position of passivity but were exercising their power through negotiation, subversion and resistance. Through this their framing discourses became apparent indicating the prioritising of discourses related to Islam, gender, nationalism and/or their subject (i.e. maths). Where these discourses conflicted with discourses regarding aspects of the DLP, they prevailed resulting in resistance towards the DLP.

Chapter Six

Final Considerations

6.1 Introduction

This study is an in-depth exploration of teacher identities in the UAE. It has presented rich data and thorough analysis of this core aspect of education, highlighting how teachers see themselves and what matters most to them. To my knowledge, this is the first study which has focused on this key concept with established teachers in this country and thus it introduces a vital construct to the educational discourse, providing an invitation for further study and application. In my view this is important as I believe teachers are the linchpin between policy and practice who determine whether educational reform is successful. Therefore, if they are not sufficiently considered, the outcomes of policy intervention can be disappointing. Teacher identity is one lens through which their priorities can be understood.

Chapter One of this study established its rationale and research questions (see 1.1). Chapter Two presented a detailed discussion of the context of the study. An exploration of this study's conceptual and substantive issues, as discussed in the literature, were the focus of Chapter Three. Methods and methodology were discussed in Chapter Four and the research findings were presented in Chapter Five.

In this chapter I will start with a summary of the findings of this research project. I then reflect on some methodological, theoretical and substantive aspects of this study before setting out its claims to knowledge. This is followed by a presentation of the implications of this research. The chapter finishes with suggestions for how the findings of this study might be taken forward in the future.

6.2 Summary of findings

In response to research question one (see 5.3), data obtained through lesson observations and some discussion in the interviews, revealed that teachers overall used limited English in lessons, although its prevalence did vary between teachers. English was used primarily for reading the questions from the text book which were often then immediately translated. Lesson titles and learning objectives were written on the board in English and some participating teachers included some classroom instruction and/or key words in English. When using English, teachers generally code-switched, often mid-sentence. Students were found to rarely use any English.

Research question two (see 5.4) established the key discourses through which participating teachers discussed their identities. Firstly, participants noted the influence of their teachers on their own current pedagogic values and practices particularly in terms of teaching methodology and/or attitudes towards relationships with students. A number of influential discourses associated to gender were also identified relating to the practice of gender segregation but also in terms of socio-cultural expectations placed on women. Islamic principles were implicated in these gender discourses but were also found to significantly shape identity in myriad ways, with participants claiming Islam as foundational to their conceptualisation of self. Key discourses clustered around their professional role were also central to their discussions on their identities. These including the importance of sound curriculum knowledge, effective teaching skills and positive student relationships, sometimes conceptualised in terms of friends, sisters or daughters. Additionally, understandings of their legitimate job description were important. Society's view of them as teachers was also significant and at this point their position as *secondary maths* teachers was emphasised adding further prestige to their conceptualisation of self. These discourses were found to intersect in complex ways. Where they complemented each other, they exerted considerable power on the respondents' identity construction; where their intersections conflicted, teachers were found to be negotiating their positions in an ongoing process.

Teachers' perspectives on the DLP were then explored in research question three (see 5.5). This study found that participants generally held positive views towards the policy with regard to their personal position either because they were more competent in English than Arabic with the curriculum material, or because the policy gave them an opportunity to develop their English proficiency. However, with regard to their students, they displayed considerable caution regarding the DLP, as students' levels of English were insufficient to facilitate successful acquisition of mathematical curriculum material. While this would be problematic in any educational context, the importance of examination success in Emirati society perhaps exacerbated this concern. Nevertheless, teachers reported a number of strategies they had developed to support inclusion of some English in their lessons. In terms of implementation, teachers revealed prevailing discourses through their answers which emphasised their prioritising of maths over English, their general preference for teacher-centred approaches and their limited awareness of second language teaching methodologies. They also reported that the lack of information regarding the policy made it difficult for them to develop a vision for it.

Ideologically, positions towards the DLP ranged from those who adopted a position which generally accepted the assumed neutrality of English to those who vehemently expressed the need to promote Arabic (and Islamic values) while resisting the apparent domination of English in Emirati society.

The final research question (see 5.6) looked to draw the findings of research questions two and three together by identifying how teachers' identities influenced their perspectives towards the DLP. While teachers' identities showed some fragmentation, primarily the DLP was viewed as a threat as contradictory discourses intersected at the point of implementation resulting in tensions and dissatisfaction. This study's identification of framing pedagogic, religious, cultural, linguistic and nationalistic discourses, illuminated the difficulties these teachers face as this policy is introduced within a context of profound professional and societal change. Nevertheless, participants were found to be actively exercising their agency in this complex situation through acts of negotiation, resistance and subversion.

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 Discussion of methodological considerations

One methodological issue which I have reflected on throughout this research is related to the language of interviews, particularly in Il Madrasa It Thanya. My initial decision to interview in English, was based around practical issues and I did not fully consider the ideological implications. As my insight has grown, I am now aware of the implicit message this decision may have conveyed regarding the relative power and status of English, building on the prevailing discourse of its neutrality. The strength of this discourse is demonstrated by the fact that the participants (with the exception of Wafa) assumed this research would be conducted in English and unquestioningly complied. At the end of the second interview I discussed methodological considerations with my respondents, asking if the language of interview had influenced their answers. They commented that although their answers had perhaps lacked the desired degree of precision or depth, they had been able to give me the information they wanted. They also stated that they preferred conducting the interview in English as they could speak with me directly. There was no mention if speaking directly with me in Arabic would have been ideal, providing another example of the assumed place of languages in their society.

As I reflected further on my data I could see that to some extent the dual language situation had resulted in some inevitable loss (Robinson-Pant, 2005). This loss was evident, as discussed above, in terms of precision and depth of answers but also in relation to the nuances of language. For example, in English (and in Britain), it is generally acceptable to express criticisms directly, particularly when discussing political decisions. In Emirati society (regardless of whether one is using English or Arabic) this is not the case, especially for women talking with a relative stranger. Initially, I did not appreciate this and thus failed to identify expressions of discontent. As my insights developed however, I noticed these subtle hints of dissatisfaction with the policy. With this new insight, it was necessary for me to review the data, adopting a more nuanced position.

Another methodological question I have considered relates to how my own identity may have influenced the presentation of data. I recognise that the conclusions drawn from this study cannot fully represent the participants' positions given the inherent contingency of identity construction and the inadequacy of language to accurately capture 'reality' (MacLure & Stronach, 1993). However, by creating a text which was rich in quotes, my intention was to provide a platform from which teachers could speak for themselves. Nevertheless, as I reflect on the process through which the final text was created, I realise the relative power of the researcher and researched are highly pertinent, perhaps with my power unwittingly taking precedence. The exercising of my power is evident in that it was I who selected which quotes to include, how they were edited and the commentary which accompanied them. Simultaneously, it was I who chose which quotes to exclude. While these decisions were made ostensibly to best represent the positions adopted, I realise they were also selected in an attempt to convey some sense of coherence amongst the complexity. This required a certain amount of sanitising of the text resulting in some positions being emphasised while others were minimised.

In this study there were some points on which participants appeared to hold a largely unified position making it easier to portray their perspectives, while on other points views varied considerably, as did the emotional energy with which the participants spoke. In the first scenario I am left questioning the reasons behind the apparent uniformity – was it because teachers really did share beliefs on the issue, perhaps due to aspects of wider social discourse or was it because some participants concealed

aspects of their beliefs, perhaps in relation to who they were talking with and the nature of the conversation? In the second scenario, while I tried to portray the tensions in the data, I sometimes struggled to convey the full complexity of my findings, resorting to some smoothing over of inconsistencies (MacLure & Stronach, 1993). To some degree I believe this is inevitable when conducting qualitative research on complex issues such as identity, but I feel it is nonetheless necessary to acknowledge this.

6.3.2 Discussion of theoretical aspects

By adopting a post structural position, this study has promoted new ways of thinking about the implementation of the DLP. It has resisted humanistic assumptions and challenged taken-for-granted notions regarding teachers' identities. Instead, it has adopted a discursive understanding of identity and thus has provided a new, complex conceptualisation of who these teachers are, noting they are not merely 'teachers', 'Emiratis', 'women' and/or 'Muslims', but that they are subjects who engage in multiple discourses leading to complex, fluid and evolving identities. This in-depth analysis has highlighted both the complexity of the situation and the nature of this complexity. It has suggested which discourses are most powerful, where discourses have been internalised, where participants are exploring new possibilities and how this impacts on policy implementation.

In this the capillary nature of power has been embraced demonstrating its micro level workings seen through tactics and strategies employed by the players in this context. These can then work together to create a substantial, anonymous, non-subjective force (Lynch 2011). Post structuralism, therefore, provides an alternative model of power to the prevailing model in this context, where apparently it is viewed primarily as something which is possessed, principally by those in positions of authority. This study has demonstrated how power consists of multiple force relations which come from below as teachers act out their identities with numerous examples of resistance (such as Wafa's views on the place of English in education, see 5.5.5), subversion (such as the Jamila's claims to support English despite using only Arabic while teaching, see 4.7.1) and ongoing negotiation (such as suggestions to introduce the policy with compromises, see 5.5.5).

6.3.3 Discussion of substantive issues

There is much known about the implementation of dual language education programmes with numerous studies focussing on foundational issues such as the most appropriate age to introduce children to dual language education (for example, Munoz & Singleton, 2011), the right balance between languages within such programmes (for example, Garcia, 2009) and the factors which influence teachers' decisions of whether or when to use the L1 or L2 when teaching. These factors were discussed earlier in this thesis (see 3.8) and included issues related to workload, L2 proficiency of both the teachers and students, community support and the nature and amount of training teachers received. I believe some further discussion related to teacher training in such a context is important.

Teaching in a dual language context, especially when students' (and teachers') L2 proficiency is limited is an extremely difficult prospect described in the literature as equal in challenge to being a newly qualified teacher (Moate, 2011). It comes at a high emotional cost (Probyn, 2001), and remains challenging for five years or longer (Mehisto & Asser, 2007). However, the smooth adoption of such programmes can be greatly enhanced through training specifically designed for this purpose. Without this training, research suggests teachers are prone to adopting strategies which meet students' immediate needs but which, eventually, prove largely ineffective as they are not grounded in theory (Probyn, 2001). This was found to be the case with respondents in this study who, with the best of intentions, incorporated some English in lessons but, without adopting a systematic approach, did not provide the opportunity for students to start thinking in English (see 5.5.2) which I believe is essential if biliteracy is to be attained by a sizeable proportion of the school population (Coyle et al, 2010).

Therefore, successful dual language education initiatives should be accompanied by pre-service and in-service training programmes (Mehisto & Asser, 2007). This training must be offered over a sufficient period to ensure teachers acquire the necessary skills and confidence (Benson, 2004). The most effective of these programmes ensure teachers have a high level of both L1 and L2 proficiency, some foundation in linguistics and second language acquisition, a wide repertoire of student-centred teaching strategies which enable them to incorporate productive activities based on authentic communication and a solid awareness of students' culture (Milk, 1991).

However, drawing on evidence from this study, I would argue that even the best designed programmes will fail to meet their goals if they do not accommodate the beliefs, priorities and key discourses of primary stakeholders as these understandings frame the ways in which these stakeholders position themselves. As demonstrated through this study, if these positions clash with those assumed within the policy, implementation will be problematic due to teacher resistance (see 5.6). In the following section I will discuss some strategies which could help to overcome this and bring policy and practice closer together but first I will clarify this thesis' contributions to knowledge.

6.3.4 Contributions to knowledge

One motivation for conducting this research was to address the gap in the field around the topic of teacher identity in the UAE. By adopting an ontological position which decentres the human agent and adopts a discursive understanding of identity, a key contribution to knowledge this study has made has been the identification of some of the framing discourses which constitute and constrain the participating teachers' identity construction. The framing discourses identified in the study included childhood educational influences, Islam, gender, professional roles including the relevance of positive student relationships and teachers' perspectives of society's view of teachers.

It would be expected that teacher identity would be implicated in their perspectives of the DLP but this study goes further to demonstrate how the intersection of discourses influences these positions (see 5.6). It demonstrates how complementary discourses result in strong regimes of truth. For example, positive student relationships were found to be of central importance to the participating teachers. This was due to the complementary intersection of religious and gender discourses which promote patience and kindness, childhood role models who demonstrated the positive (or negative) impact of strong teacher-student relationships and professional discourses which require student success which is better facilitated through positive relationships. Where these were perceived as threatened by the DLP, teachers' responses demonstrated a prioritising of student relationships in response to the power of these discourses, seen through an unwillingness to actually implement the policy. However, this study also demonstrates how conflicting discourses create untenable tensions for teachers, as they act out their identities. Where these tensions occur between professional/ pedagogic discourses on the one hand and cultural, religious and/or nationalistic

discourses on the other, professional and pedagogic discourses appear to hold less power. This is demonstrated in the scenario regarding work load expectations (see 5.6).

Thirdly, by adopting a post structural position which views power as a capillary network rather than a force which is exerted from the top down (see 4.2.3), this study has demonstrated that female Emirati teachers are powerful and are effectively and competently exercising this power. This is in direct contraction to the (Western) media perception of Islamic women where they are often portrayed as being passive and powerless (Keddie, 2011). However, it also contradicts educational research (Troudi & Alwan (2010) and Al Taneiji & McLeod (2008)), who report that teachers view themselves as powerless.

6.4 Implications of the study

This study has identified how the participants' representations of self in their professional (and private) realms are both constituted and constrained by the knowledge available to them in their discursive positionings (Keddie, 2011). It has shown how these positionings are socio-historically contingent, demonstrating the importance of considering localised teacher identities in educational policy implementation. It has highlighted how the construction of teachers' identities, which are born out of the intersecting of multiple discourses, is highly complex, informing behaviour in a fluid, contingent manner illustrating the complex nature of education. Nevertheless, technical-rational understandings of education are all-too-often privileged in policy discourses resulting in a failure to embrace the nuances inherent to this very human enterprise, with the possibility of providing simplified answers which do not necessarily address the real issues at hand (Mockler, 2010).

Whether the discourses which inform teachers' identities are considered or not, they remain a significant influence on teachers' decisions. Therefore, identifying them can facilitate informed decision-making with the potential of a reduction in both economic and human costs. For example, this study found that although teachers have been provided with considerable training regarding student-centred methodologies, many teachers failed to utilise these with consistency. Generally the reason was not that the teachers did not know how to deliver student-centred lessons (although for some teachers this may have been a contributing factor), it was that their understandings of

education conflicted with the underlying assumptions of these imported methodologies, which they then resisted as they exercised their power (see 5.6).

One way to address this scenario could be through guided discussions which establish how teachers individually and collectively view themselves, identifying current priorities and rationales behind these. This information could be used to inform policy decisions or, at a more localised level, could be explored further and, by asking appropriate questions, new possibilities of being could be explored. Nevertheless, this suggestion is based on the assumption that the current educational discourses need challenging and could be seen as an out-playing of educational imperialism and/or neo-colonialism (see 3.6). In this (expatriate) practitioners would therefore need to be careful to ensure they do not unwittingly privilege Western epistemology, for example based on assumptions which unproblematically promote critical thinking or individualised choice and freedom. Rather the focus of such discussions should be the articulation of teacher identity and an explicate linking between role and identity.

One reason such an approach may be useful is because, based on this study's data, many teachers were more familiar with the conceptualisation of their professional role rather than their professional identity. This is a common scenario amongst teachers and one which politically, is often encouraged as Mockler (2010) explains:

In relation to teachers' work, neo-liberal doctrines tend to work with the notion of 'role' rather than 'identity': where identity is demonstrably complex and interwoven between various dimensions of teachers' work, 'role' more comfortably fits the technical-rational conceptualisation of teaching that lies at the heart of the neo-liberal agendas. Aspects of teachers' role (i.e. what teachers 'do') are easier to quantify, measure and mandate than professional identity (i.e. what teachers 'are') (p.525).

An understanding of the key discourses through which teachers discuss their identities could therefore be used to encourage the adoption of policy, informing implementers of which aspects of the incoming policy to emphasise to engender support. In the context of this study, teachers expressed some resistance to the DLP as they were concerned that their language, religion and culture were being threatened by the spread of English (see 5.5.5). However, ADEC are taking measures to protect and promote both Arabic and Islam (see 2.5.2) although teachers were largely unaware of these initiatives which had resulted in this concern or even hostility. The understanding of teacher identity this study offers therefore has provided insights into the importance

of this miscommunication. This can be rectified by actively conveying the message that the DLP is conducive with this aspect of their identity as the status of Arabic, the cultural values of the country and the influence of Islam are being supported through this policy's implementation.

By establishing areas where teacher identities have already experienced some change, this study has provided valuable feedback to ADEC. It has demonstrated that to some degree the current reform programme is moving towards its goals but that change takes time as teachers need the opportunity to reconceptualise who they are. Lather (1984), reflecting on this reconceptualisation, states:

Such a task cannot be hurried. This mandates that we transcend whatever horrors of gradualism we might have. As long as our work is both tied to long-term structural change and rooted empirically in concrete situations, our struggles at the ideological level are critical revolutionary work (p.58).

In this study, it appeared that Latifa and Sameera had, to some extent, been given such an opportunity to discuss educational changes at an ideological level. Consequently, they were more willing to adopt new practices. Nevertheless, they continued to demonstrate fluidity in their positions as they negotiated between conflicting discourses, demonstrating the gradual nature of identity evolution.

Teachers in this study expressed a strong commitment to their profession, stating they were proud to be teachers and recognising their value in society (see 5.4.5). However, this position was fragile in the face of ongoing changes, both within the education system and society, with over 50% of the participants looking for alternative jobs. Anecdotal evidence suggests this pattern is repeated across schools in Abu Dhabi. Consequently, the necessity to interrogate implications of policy, both within education and society, becomes apparent. Pertinent matters for exploration regarding the DLP might include the cultural messages the policy sends, the degree of alienation recipients may feel when working in a second language, the trade offs for prioritising the economic agenda and the impact on the national identity. While ADEC did conduct some benchmarking prior to introducing the DLP (ADEC, 2010d), I have not been able to find evidence of research into these more complex questions. It is also evident that teachers have not received sufficient communication to allay their concerns, leading to the perception that their identities are threatened.

As discussed previously (see 2.3 & 2.5.2), the introduction of the DLP is seen to be key to the development of an Emirati workforce who will meet the government's economic goals. However, in its focus on economic issues, it appears the government has incorporated a number of assumptions which may prove problematic at implementation, due to issues of teacher identity, as highlighted in this study. Based on documentation for the roll out of the NSM (ADEC, 2013b), which includes the DLP, the following assumptions appear to underlie the proposed direction of implementation:

- Teachers will deliver the curriculum using student-centred methods
- Teachers agree with the need for English
- Teachers who have sufficient proficiency will teach using English only

In light of the data from this study I would argue these assumptions are premature, if ADEC plans to retain Emirati teachers. Firstly, as already discussed, a high proportion of teachers were uncomfortable with student-centred teaching methods (see 5.6). Secondly, while teachers did agree with the need for English in society and understood that avoiding the foundation year(s) at higher education was beneficial, as maths teachers their priority was to ensure the students succeeded in the *maths* exams. Therefore, they were not as committed to incorporating English as the assumed implementation plan appears to presume, given the size of the maths curriculum (see 5.6). Thirdly, the decision to use English or Arabic when teaching, appeared to be more related to students' English proficiency than that of the teachers', as the acquisition of maths was these teachers' priority (see 5.5.2).

This study has therefore highlighted the relevance of identity to policy implementation, indicating the importance of congruency between educational policies and key discourses which constitute teachers' identities. In a context of change, teachers may benefit from being given the time and opportunity to consider the construction of their identities, and how these impact their daily practice providing them with a some basic conceptual tools with which to close the gap between current and proposed ways of working.

While I acknowledge the ideas posited in this study do not reflect the current attitudes and approaches ADEC has adopted to manage this reform programme, I believe that if they generate conversation or raise awareness of alternative approaches to education

reform, challenging prevailing discourses amongst decisions makers, this will be a valuable contribution.

6.5 Taking the findings forward in possible future research

This study has explored the influences of teachers' identities on their perspectives towards the incoming Dual Language Policy. However, teachers are not the only stakeholders within this policy, and while it will influence many parties, students will arguably be most impacted. Therefore, conducting similar research with a sample of the student population across a number of schools could establish dominant discourses in their identity constructions. Exploring how these impact their views on this policy may illuminate this issue further, providing valuable insights into their views, fears, hopes and rationales. Students' views in an earlier study (Pattisson, 2011) were reported quite differently than in this piece of research. In the previous research, many teachers commented on the negative responses students gave when English was used in class:

Students themselves appear to have developed a strong negativity towards speaking English and held expectations for failure in this area. Consequently, they did not react favourably when the teacher attempted to use some English, even at word level. It was reported that they laughed, complained, refused to participate, became disruptive or even reported the teacher to the administration (Pattisson, 2011, pp20-21).

In this study however, students' responses to the use of English were expressed more in terms of discomfort, apprehension or lack of confidence indicating a significant shift within students' attitudes towards the DLP. Establishing if and why views are becoming more accepting of this policy, could hold valuable implications which could then be used at both the micro and macro levels to offer information and support, smoothing implementation – or indeed, if views were hostile, to recognise that either the policy is untenable or premature.

This study could also be extended by exploring teacher emotions in relation to this policy. In a previous piece of work completed as part of this degree, I conducted an in-depth study on teacher emotion in relation to teacher identity so am cognizant of its importance. However, during data collection I found teachers were reluctant to directly discuss their emotions and thus abandoned this aspect of the study. Having now

completed this research, I am surprised at the extent to which affect is evident in so many of the participants' responses and believe it could be valuable to explore this aspect further in future research. Having completed some initial data analysis on affect it is evident that a whole gamut of emotions are present in this context, indeed that affect is intrinsic to the respondents' subjectivity. For example, I have identified the following emotions – love, gratitude, satisfaction, pleasure, optimism, commitment and pride. The participants' felt pride in a number of situations such as when they had completed a successful lesson, received recognition for a job well done or when they were acknowledged as having prestige within the society. However, participants also expressed pride regarding their nationality and language which then created tension as they feared this pride might need to be compromised in light of the DLP.

Anger-based emotions were also dominant, although participants did not express this as such. However, their answers alluded to feelings of frustration (or something stronger) in a range of contexts such as the lack of support in dealing with problematic students, their TACOS when compared with other professions and the perceived unrelenting demotion of Arabic in their workplace and society. Other significant emotions included anxiety, with teachers admitting they were concerned about having to use English, the impact of this on students' learning and their relationships with them, the increasing workload and more general issues such as classroom management. The dominance of anxiety and fear indicate that teachers feel threatened by the introduction of the DLP (and other aspects of this reform programme). These emotions are then exacerbated by the limited space teachers have to move in given the absence of any meaningful mechanism through which to provide upward feedback in the professional sphere. In the private realm pressures remained as uncompromising as ever, building on framing discourses such as patriarchy where women remain solely responsible for the running of the home and the reading of Islam which encourages perfection in all areas of life. Additionally, professional realisations of self are implicated by discourses from the private realm, such as the expectation to be kind and patient, possibly adding more pressure on these teachers. Furthermore, teachers are caught between contradictory discourses such as the simultaneous promotion of ultra-modernism and ultra-traditionalism within differing aspects of life. The negotiation of these conflicting positions inevitably generates significant emotions suggesting the exploration of affect in this context would provide rich potential for future research.

Additionally, I believe that using a post structural framework of analysis has opened up new ways of viewing education reform in this context. From the findings of this study, I believe it may be possible to create a theoretical model which could be applied to different contexts, guiding practitioners in how to establish prevailing discourses and how these could be utilised to support education reform. This could be through practical endeavours such as the production of workshops where discourses are deconstructed and established as socio-historically contingent so new possibilities of practice and being can be explored.

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Appendix One**Lesson observation pro-forma**

Teacher's Name: _____ Year Group: 10 11 12
 School: 1 2 Date & Time: _____

Time (into lesson)	Teachers' action	Teachers' language	Student language

Notes:

Appendix Two
Interview Schedules
Sample One Pre-pilot interview

NB: These questions are quite structured. In reality I will use these ideas as a springboard but plan to conduct the interview in a more open, conversational manner.

Interview Questions

- How long have you been a teacher?
- Why did you choose to become a teacher?
- What attracted you to the job? Before you started teaching were there any parts of the job which you were uncomfortable with or afraid of?
- Can you explain in as much detail as possible what you thought teaching would be like before you started?
- Can you explain where did these ideas come from?
- Did you find teaching was like your idea when you started? Is it still like that for you? In which way? How is it different? Are these differences preferable for you? In which way?
- What pre-service training did you receive?

- How would you describe yourself as a teacher? Can you give some specific examples/ short stories, to illustrate what you mean?
- As a teacher, what is important to you both in terms of beliefs and actions?
- How do you think others describe you as a teacher? Why do you think this? – have they told you this or is it a guess you have made? Can you give any specific examples of instances which gave you these ideas? (If prompting is needed I may break this down to include the principal, colleagues, advisor, parents and students)

- When you tell someone you are a secondary school maths teacher, how do you feel? Why?
- Have you always felt this way?
- (If there has been a change) How have your feelings changed about being a teacher? Why? Can you explain with some specific incidents (or was it more general)?

- How do you define a 'good' teacher? What qualities does she have? Describe her behaviours?
- Would you describe yourself as a 'good' teacher?
- Can you explain in as much detail as possible why you think this? Please try to include some specific examples.
- Do you have evidence that others think you are a good teacher?
- Who? What evidence?
- When you teach through English are you a good teacher? Are you a better teacher? Why do you think this?
- How does this make you feel?
- Are you motivated by the prospect to teach maths through English? Why (not)?

- Please can you tell me in as much detail as possible what you believe your job is as a teacher?
- Have these ideas changed over time? (If so, how and why?)
- Do you think it is your job to build a productive relationship with the Ss? Why (not)?
- Do you think it is your job to deliver high quality lessons? Why (not)? How would you define a 'high quality lesson'?
- Do you think it is your job to decide what happens in your lessons/ classroom? Can you explain this to me?
- How do you feel when you are asked/ told to do something which you do not believe is your role? Can you give me an example?
- Do you think it is your job to teach through English? Why (not)?
- When you think of teaching mostly in English how you see yourself as a teacher? Can you explain why?
- How do you think this situation may influence how others see you as a teacher? In which ways?
- How influential is this view of you as a teacher, by yourself and others, in deciding how much English you use when teaching?
- Do you plan to remain a teacher? Why (not)?
- What might make you change your mind?
- When you think about the future of teaching in Abu Dhabi, what are your main emotions?
- Why do you feel this way?
- When you think about teaching maths through English how do you feel? Why?

We've spoken at length about how your view of teaching influences your position towards the DLP. However, I'm sure there are other factors which also influence this position and I'd like to explore these as we finish this interview.

- Can you tell me what is your position on the Dual Language Policy?
- Can you tell me the main reasons why you use the amount of English you use in classes? Can you give me specific examples to support these reasons? (These will be explored in a less structured manner)

If ideas are limited and a little more structure is needed, I may use the following questions to guide the conversation.

- What do you understand as ADEC's goal about teaching the curriculum through English?
- Why are they bringing this policy in? Do you feel they are right in their beliefs about this policy? (both why and outcomes)
- How do the students respond if you use some English in the lesson? How do these responses influence your views on the matter?
- What impact do you think this change may have on students' learning at school? Why?

- What impact do you think this change may have on students' learning after school, for example at college or university? Why?
- How do your opinions about this impact, influence how much English you use?
- What do your colleagues feel about teaching through English? How does this impact your opinions?
- What is your understanding of the school leadership's view on this policy? How does this impact your opinions?
- What support are you receiving to help you start teaching through English? Who from?
- Is there any training, material or support that you feel you need before you are really able to start teaching in English?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix Two
Sample Two
Post-pilot interview

Note the physical setting, time of day, a description of the participant, any events which may influence the interview and why a participant was selected

- ✓ *Thank you for coming to this interview*
 - ✓ *Confidential*
 - ✓ *Want to hear what teachers really feel and think about the introduction of dual language education so am asking that you give complete answers and include some specific stories and examples. If you use any names, these will be changed*
 - ✓ *Some of the questions may require you to think before answering. That's fine (good) – take your time and reflect. Don't worry about bits of silence and there are no right and wrong answers*
 - ✓ *If there are any questions you feel uncomfortable answering just say, and we can go on to the next one*
 - ✓ *As this is being recorded, please speak up and please turn off your mobile phone to avoid static*
 - ✓ *Do you have any questions?*
-
- How did you become a teacher? (motives? training? career path?) ((social expectations? whose?))
 - What attracted you to teaching? (still enjoy this? areas you find demotivating? How might teaching through English impact job motivation?)
 - When you tell someone you are a secondary school maths teacher, how do you feel? (because of maths? secondary school? teacher?)
 - What do you think it means to be a good teacher? (characteristics? attitudes? use of time? skills? etc) Has this changed since the reforms?
 - Can you tell me about something which you have done well in your role as a teacher?
 - How do you think teaching through English might impact your performance as a teacher? (positive impact? negative impact? reasons/examples?)
 - How do you feel about the prospect of teaching through English?
 - Overall, do you think the DLP is right for this country? Why? Why not? Do you agree with how it's being introduced?
 - Can you tell me the main reasons, including examples, why you use the amount of English you use in classes? (Ss language level – T language level – training – resources – time to prepare class – community values and expectations – national identity – colleagues – school administration position)
 - Anything else?

Appendix Three
University of Sussex Ethical Approval




Social Sciences & Arts Cross-School Research Ethics Committee CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL	
Reference Number:	1112/07/04
School:	ESW
Title of Project	The role of teacher identities in explaining maths teachers' perspectives on the incoming Dual Language Policy in Abu Dhabi secondary school.
Principal Investigator: (Supervisor)	Yvonne Joy Pattisson (Dr B Crossouard)
Expected Start Date:*	01/09/12
<p>*NB. If the <u>actual</u> project start date is delayed beyond 12 months of the <u>expected</u> start date, this Certificate of Approval will lapse and the project will need to be reviewed again to take account of changed circumstances such as legislation, sponsor requirements and University procedures</p>	

This project has been given ethical approval by the Social Sciences/Arts Research Ethics Committee (C-REC). Please note the following requirements for approved submissions:

Amendments to research proposal - Any changes or amendments to the approved proposal, which have ethical implications, must be submitted to the committee for authorisation prior to implementation.

Feedback regarding any adverse and unexpected events - Any adverse (undesirable and unintended) and unexpected events that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported to the Chair of the Social Sciences C-REC. In the event of a serious adverse event, research must be stopped immediately and the Chair alerted within 24 hours of the occurrence.

Authorised Signature	
Name of Authorised Signatory (C-REC Chair or nominated deputy)	Dr Elaine Sharland 20/08/12