A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

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English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has been increasingly researched in recent years. However, in this research the learner's voice is still not clearly evident. The current study investigates postgraduate students' perceptions of using EAP in studying for higher degrees in Wales and Syria. The study makes a contribution to the field by focusing on the learner's voice in two different contexts, where English is a native language or a foreign language. The students in the study were either home students in Syria or international students in Wales. The juxtaposition of two different contexts allowed for key points of comparison and contrast to be observed. The methodology employed in the research was that of a main and associated case study.

A range of data were gathered from University Wales and University Syria through the two case studies. It was found that most University Wales interviewees, as international students, perceived cultural context as an inseparable part of their concept of EAP. They were also aware that they were engaged with a number of overlapping cultures in their use of English. By contrast, the majority of University Syria interviewees, as home students, often perceived clear boundaries between EAP and the cultures surrounding it. It was also found that both groups of interviewees perceived particular features of teaching styles and resources as important elements in their use of EAP. The study findings are valuable in illustrating the similarities and differences of the students' perceptions of their use of EAP in two different contexts. They are also valuable in highlighting the students' identity as EAP learners, a pragmatic one in response to EAP and one that was evolving in response to the broad context of their studies.

A central finding was the key role enacted by context in students' overall perception of EAP. Context highlighted the necessity of re-defining EAP, closely considering the different contexts in which it occurs.
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS AS USED IN THE STUDY

**EAL** (English as an additional language): Refers to the learning of English by someone whose first language is not English in an environment where English is already the native language.

**EAP** (English for Academic Purposes): Is the teaching of English with the aim of assisting learners to study, research or teach in that language (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2006).

**EFB** (English for business): Refers to the use of English for business purposes.

**EFC** (English for Commerce): Refers to the use of English for commercial purposes.

**EFL** (English as a Foreign Language): Refers to the use of English as a foreign language.

**EGAP** (English for General Academic Purposes): Is a component of EAP designated to help students with their study skills as well as language skills (Jordan, 1997).

**EIL** (English as an International Language): Is defined as a non-native language used by people of different nations to communicate with each other (Smith, 1976).

**ELF** (English as a Lingua Franca): Refers to the use of English as a contact language between speakers of different languages rather than as a native language (Jenkins, 2003).

**ELT** (English Language Teaching): Is an umbrella acronym which refers to all aspects of teaching English (Jordan, 1997).

**ENL** (English as a Native Language): Refers to the use of English as a native language.
EOP (English for Occupational Purposes): Refers to the teaching of English in situations relating to professional purposes, for example English taught for working pharmacists, engineers or business people (Jordan, 1997).

ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes): Is a component of EAP meant to help students with English required for their study subjects. This involves any specialised study subject, such as physics, maths and pharmacy, which is taught in English and which is part of students' future vocational career (Jordan, 1997).

ESL (English as a Second Language): Refers to the use of English as an official language.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes): Refers to the teaching of English in the light of learners' needs analysis. It comprises EAP and EOP.

HNC: Higher National Certificate.

HND: Higher National Diploma.

IELTS (International English Language Testing System): Is a globally recognised English language test, which qualifies candidates to study or work in different places where English is the medium of communication.

Lingua Franca: Refers to a common language used as a medium of communication by speakers of different languages (Crystal, 2003).

MBA: Master of Business Administration.

Natural / Naturalistic / Social Use of Language: Refers to the use of language outside the classroom. It is in contrast with the academic use of language.

Register: Language varieties used in particular contexts, disciplines or occupations (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).

TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language): Refers to the teaching of English for non-native speakers of English in a non-native speaking setting (TEFL, 2009).
TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages): Refers to the teaching of English to non-native speakers, usually in a naturalistic environment (TEFL, 2009).

TOEFL: (Test of English as a Foreign Language): Is a globally recognised English language test, which qualifies candidates to study or work in different places where English is the medium of communication.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Overview

There is an increasing body of knowledge from research into English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Within this body of knowledge, the voices of the EAP learners are not clearly evident. As an English language specialist, I felt this was an important area to investigate. My interest in the topic initially stemmed from my desire to investigate the reasons for disappointment on the part of Syrian university students studying English in Syria despite the considerable improvement in Syrian higher education, as well as the increased interest in English as a language in an international context.

The present research deals with the perceptions of home and international students about their use of English in studying for higher degrees in Syria and Wales. Investigating students' perceptions is 'a most valuable source of information for the teacher to reflect on when dealing with an increasingly diverse student body' (Walters, 2007: 61). Also, investigating two different contexts would give rise to points of comparison and contrast, and ultimately contribute to the research on EAP by examining two different groups of EAP users. This chapter describes the background to the study. It provides illustration of the two contexts of Wales and Syria. The main aim and rationale for the study are also discussed.

English learning in general can be described under various categories as it has many purposes. In the light of Jordan (1997), the study of English is used to serve three main roles. First, there is the study of English for General Purposes, in the sense that English is studied
for no particular purpose, for example school-children who do not recognise any obvious reason for learning English. Second, there is the study of English for Social Purposes, as for conversation and in different communicative situations, such as shopping and letter-writing. Third, there is the study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which falls into two categories: English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), like teaching English to dentists or pilots, and, most importantly, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), for example an English course intended to help students read and understand chemistry textbooks (Jordan, 1997).

EAP as a term is characterised by fluidity and changing nature, as it is closely related to the context, which in turn is changeable (Dudley-Evans, 2001; Halliday, 1994; Hyland, 2006). As Hyland (2006: 37) notes, 'while language is often understood … as a transparent and autonomous system, this fails to account for how language is actually used by individuals acting in social contexts'. This is a point which I closely consider in the thesis. Overall, EAP is usually associated with different skills. Below I refer to main elements in EAP.

Study skills are a basic issue in EAP. According to Richards et al. (1992), these are defined as the strategies and techniques used by a learner when writing, reading or listening for academic purposes. For example, study skills required for reading a language textbook may include guessing word meanings, interpreting diagrams and note-taking, whereas study skills needed for a lecture may include listening, note-taking and asking questions for information, clarification or repetition (Jordan, 1997).

Needs analysis is also a key element of many EAP courses (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2006; Jordan, 1997). It is defined as the process of finding out the needs which a
learner has in learning a language and prioritising these needs in terms of importance (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). In this context, 'needs analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabuses, courses, materials and the kind of teaching and learning that happens' (Jordan, 1997: 22).

As regards syllabus and course design, it is concerned with the processes involved in designing an EAP course (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 1997). A syllabus can be defined as a specification of the content of a language course, in the light of needs analysis and overall teaching aims (Jordan, 1997). Following syllabus specification, the course is 'designed, then realised by means of timetables, and finally evaluated by utilising various kinds of feedback' (Jordan, 1997: 56).

Materials development refers to the production of teaching materials which provide suitable and effective sources of language input for students (Jordan, 1997). According to Hyland (2006: 94), 'while materials are predominantly paper-based, they can also include audio and visual aids, computer-mediated resources, real objects, or performance'. Examples of materials include illustrative diagrams, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, overhead projectors, computers, interactive boards and videos.

Learning styles and strategies are another important concern of EAP. A learner's learning style shows his or her 'preferred way of learning new skills' (Fernandez-Toro and Jones, 2001: 7). Several variables come into play in shaping the learner's learning style, for instance the educational system and the socio-cultural background that the student has passed through (Jordan, 1997). Learning strategies refer to the 'ways in which learners try to understand and
remember new information, for example techniques for learning new words in a foreign language' (Jordan, 1997:95).

In recent years, the field of EAP has been growing in general. Jordan (1997) provides an overview of EAP, investigating many concerns of the field, such as study skills, needs analysis, syllabus and course design, learning styles, tests and exams, and genre analysis. He also highlights research areas which require further investigation, for example EAP in terms of students' perceptions, learning styles or cultural context, areas addressed in my research in relation to two different contexts: Wales and Syria. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) discuss several pedagogical issues of interest to the area of EAP, for example testing, curriculum design and materials development. They also explore the history of EAP research and its implications for pedagogy. They investigate the primary approaches used in the teaching of EAP, for example the team-teaching approach and the content-based instruction. Hyland (2006) investigates fundamental controversies which currently engage EAP teachers, for example EAP and specificity, critical EAP and English as a global language. He also explores major ideas and methods currently used to inform EAP practice, for example genre analysis, corpus analysis and ethnographically-oriented analysis. However, there has been little research specifically on home and international students studying EAP. This is an area which I intend to investigate in the present research.

The present study seeks to address EAP from the postgraduate students' perspective. The idea of engaging EAP students in critiquing their understanding of how they use English is an area shared by critical EAP, which 'engages students in the types of activities they are asked to perform in academic classes while encouraging them to question, and perhaps even
reform, those activities and the conditions they are based on' (Hyland, 2006: 32). The research as a whole will feed into the development of knowledge about the phenomena of EAP in higher education. It will build up a picture of home and international postgraduate students' experiences of using English while studying for a higher degree in Syria and Wales. Syria is an Arab-speaking country, which has English as a foreign language, while Wales is an English-speaking country, where English is a native language.

1.2. Two Contexts for the Study

There were two contexts for the current study: the main case study context was Wales, while the associated case was Syria. Below is description of the two contexts.

1. 2.1. The Main Context of the Study: Wales

Wales is a country which is located on the western side of the United Kingdom, bordering England to its east, and the Atlantic Ocean and Irish Sea to its west. Wales has a population estimated at three million. It is a bilingual country, with both Welsh and English having equal status (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). However, Welsh is a minority language, while English is dominant. In the field of education, Welsh-medium schools exist at primary and secondary levels, but Welsh-medium courses are limited at higher education level, where English is the main means of communication and instruction.
My selection of Wales is due to several reasons. It is the country where I am carrying out my research. Also, Wales belongs to an English as a Native Language (ENL) context, where English occupies the status of a native language. This is set in contrast with Syria, which has an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, where English is a foreign language. This will allow me to investigate my topic from two different perspectives. Moreover, Wales is the home for a great number of international students, who are increasing in importance, so it is valuable to research them, especially since the international students' perspective has not been much researched.

Main cities in Wales include Cardiff, Swansea, Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, Wrexham and Bangor. Cardiff is the capital city of Wales. It is also the youngest European capital. The
attraction of the city is one of the reasons for international students to come and study in
Cardiff. The city is multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, including various ethnicities, for example
Arabs, Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese and Bengalis. Cardiff is the city where the main case
study institution is based and the latter is termed throughout as 'University Wales'. As a
consequence, different varieties of English are in circulation, since English is used as the
main means of communication by different communities in everyday life.

International students play a major role in higher education in Wales. Their numbers are also
on the increase (University Wales Strategy Office, 2008). They are exposed to and use
English inside and outside the classroom, since it is the main tool of communication between
different communities. These students engage with different cultures as part of their use of
EAP (Atkinson, 2004). This is a point which was strongly reflected in my data.

The university selected for my empirical study was University Wales. University Wales, as a
UK university, is seeking to receive more international students to improve its economic and
international condition (Jordan, 1997). One route of attracting international students is by
offering more help to them as a group. This help considers the students' academic and
cultural needs. In terms of academic support, there are various courses which are offered by
University Wales and which cater for a variety of international students' needs. The English
Language Training Centre (ELTC) offers language courses which are intended to meet the
academic needs of international students. The International Office also offers free academic
courses which help international students with their language problems. Cultural and social
support is mainly arranged through the International Office. There are many social services
offered to the newly coming international students in order to help them acclimatise to the new life-style in the new country.

As regards EAP at University Wales, most EAP courses at University Wales are either pre-sessional or in-sessional. Pre-sessional courses may focus on study skills, academic writing skills, library and research skills, independent learning skills, group learning skills and presentation skills. In-sessional EAP courses include one-to-one tuition as well as group teaching, where the focus is on study skills and academic writing with focus on the British education system. EAP courses usually have a cultural or social component to help international students integrate into the new culture.

In summary, University Wales provides social and cultural, as well as academic support to international students, who, in turn, offer income and balance to the University.

1.2.2. The Associated Context of the Study: Syria

Syria is a country of the Arab World. It is the country of my birth and growth. In terms of location, it is surrounded by Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and the Mediterranean. Syrian Arabic is the language variety spoken there. Another two Arabic varieties are also common there: Classical Arabic, which is the language of the Holy Koran, and Standard Arabic, which is the language of Arabic books and newspapers. In terms of population, Syria currently has about twenty million people. English is the most prominent foreign language in Syria, followed by French. In terms of education, Syria has had a great development in the education sector in recent years at pre-school, school and post-school levels. Arabic is the language used in all sectors of education in Syria. The number of highly educated people is
growing rapidly, with a lot of top students granted scholarships by the government to pursue their postgraduate studies abroad. However, an unfortunate fact about higher education in Syria is the growing immigration of highly qualified teachers, especially PhD holders, from Syria to other countries, mainly the Gulf countries, in order to obtain better prospects. The Syrian culture is largely dominated by Islamic religion and inherited traditions. This is much clearer in small towns and old generations, but is becoming less evident in large cities and young generations.

Figure 2: Map of Syria (Syrian Ministry of Tourism, 2009)
My selection of Syria as the associated context was due to many reasons. Firstly, there is paucity of research into EAP in the country, despite the increasing importance of EAP as a field. Secondly, Syria is an Arabic-speaking country. This will give my research a second perspective to be compared and contrasted with an English-speaking context. Thirdly, Syria has recently made great strides in the improvement of the education sector. This, I hope, will help me apply my research findings in the country and carry out further research on the topic later.

Main cities in Syria include Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Latakia, Idleb, Deir Ezzor, Qamishli, Hasakeh and Tartus. Damascus is the capital city of Syria. Interestingly, it is the oldest capital city in the world. Aleppo is one of the biggest Syrian cities. It is also the city where the associated case study institution is based and the latter is termed throughout as 'University Syria'. Aleppo is not a multi-cultural city, although it has been a world heritage site, where tourists from all over the world come to visit. In terms of religion, it is a multi-faith city. Most people are Muslims, but there are Christians and a lesser number of Jews, who co-exist peacefully.

Home students constitute almost all the student body in higher education in Syria. They are growing in numbers, since there is strong tendency on the part of the government towards improving study at university level. An ever-increasing number of university departments are currently empowered to supervise and award PhD degrees in different disciplines, including specialist English literature and linguistics at some Syrian universities. Students as EAP learners use English mainly inside the classroom domain, since the main tool of communication outside the classroom is Arabic. Some of them, however, make personal
efforts to be able to use English outside the classroom, although the context militates against that.

University Syria was the associated setting I selected for the subsidiary case study. It is Syria's second largest public university. Like all sectors of education in Syria, University Syria is increasingly encompassing more faculties, institutes and academic centres (University Syria, 2008). The support University Syria provides to its students is mainly academic, through the Institute of Languages. In terms of social support, it is marginal, since students are predominantly home students. However, there are a few social services offered to students, for example offering students loans which are returnable after students graduate and start to work. Also there are the University halls of residence which have nominal rental costs. They are offered with priority to students who are from other cities and have low income.

The Institute of Languages is the centre for teaching foreign languages to students and professionals. The languages taught include English, French, Turkish, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, and others. The assessment system followed in all courses is an internal assessment system. Three types of courses of English are mainly taught in the Institute: ESP, EAP and EVP (University Syria, 2008).

Concerning EAP at University Syria, EAP courses consider the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, with particular focus on reading and grammar. Written exams are the main method of student assessment. Other important aspects of EAP
are missing, for example academic essays, seminars and research articles. Further, the cultural aspect is not mentioned, as EAP courses are designed for home students.

It could be noticed that context plays a major role in the different courses offered by the two universities. For example, unlike University Syria, University Wales considers the cultural aspect in the courses it delivers to be an essential part of the international students' experience as learners in a UK higher education institution.

1.3. 'Academic' and 'Culture'

The terms 'academic' and 'culture' are of particular importance to this study, as they are integral to the concept of EAP as perceived by students in the study. 'Academic' refers to the academy in relation to the course of study which the students were undertaking and to the skills needed by students to undertake their studies (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 1997). 'Culture' is a very complex term (Atkinson, 2004; Williams, 1983). One overarching definition of culture is that it is an expression of values and beliefs shared by a group or society. Swann et al. (2004: 68) define it in the following way:

Culture refers to a set of everyday practices and associated beliefs, ideas and values that characterise a particular community or group, contribute to that community's sense of identity and need to be learnt by younger or newer community members. The term implies appropriate and accepted beliefs and practices.

For the purpose of this study, culture can be defined as referencing languages, symbols, signs, places and events mainly outside the classroom in the wider society.
The terms 'academic' and 'culture' are also interrelated, in that 'academic', referring to ways of studying, is affected by culture, the context in which the study occurs. I was interested to explore this in the research.

1.4. Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the main research question: 'What are Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Using EAP in University Wales and University Syria?' To achieve this aim, the overarching research question was broken down into three parts. Firstly, students' use of EAP in relation to academic and cultural references was explored. Secondly, students' perceptions of the teaching styles and support needed for EAP were investigated. The third point was to examine the differences in using EAP between home and international students. These three goals were examined via a methodology of main and associated case studies in Wales and Syria. They are expressed in five research questions, as follows:

1. Do University Wales international students refer to academic and cultural aspects of English in their use of EAP?

2. Do University Syria home students refer to academic and cultural aspects of English in their use of EAP?

3. Do international students at University Wales perceive particular features of teaching styles or resources (including facilities and support) as important elements in their use of EAP for their studies?

4. Do home students at University Syria perceive particular features of teaching styles or resources (including facilities and support) as important elements in their use of EAP for their studies?
5. Are there particular aspects of being an international student and using EAP which are different from being a home student using EAP?

Regarding the methodology followed, two case studies were conducted: in University Wales, as the main case study, and in University Syria, as the associated case study. The case study approach was used to investigate the two domains in their real-life contexts, in the sense that real people were examined in real situations (Cohen et al., 2007). The two case studies were used to provide rich data on the perceptions of home and international learners of using English at University Wales and University Syria. The two case studies allowed exploration of similarities and differences in the use of EAP in two different contexts. The main case study comprised semi-structured interviews with students. The data were triangulated with staff interviews, a student focus group and documentary evidence, in a way to enrich the inquiry (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). As regards the associated case study, it involved semi-structured interviews supplemented by documentary data. However, it should be noted that this is not a comparative study; rather, the associated case study was there to further illuminate the main case study.

The study draws on the field of sociolinguistics in many aspects. Firstly, it focuses on the use of language within a social context (Laugharne, 1997), particularly Wales and Syria, using a research methodology which is a case study approach. Another sociolinguistic theme is the use of language in institutional domains. In my study, they are University Wales and University Syria. A further sociolinguistic strand is the discussion of students' voice, giving accounts of students' experiences of using English for their studies (Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 1993).
1.5. Rationale for the Study

The rationale for selecting EAP from the home and international learners' perspective as the research topic was led by many reasons. In the first place, there is a striking lack of literature relating to the perspective of international students studying in the UK, despite the increasing importance of international students as an academic phenomenon in UK higher education (Etherington, 2005; Turner, 2004). Moreover, understanding the cultural and social context of international students, as noted by Montgomery (2007: 22), 'is a fascinating and significant inquiry that has been a focus across continents throughout the last few years'. He also comments that there is a growing research that highlights the importance of adopting a socio-cultural approach to understanding learning and teaching in higher education.

Secondly, many international students are studying and using EAP, but very little research is looking at EAP learners proportionate to the amount of activity in this area. One such study is Harris and Thorp (1999), which is about ten years old. Indeed, most research on EAP is more focused on the pedagogy of teaching, with focus on test results, curriculum design, written course work, among others, but less on the learner, despite the pivotal role the learner plays in the teaching of EAP (Tajino et al., 2005).

Thirdly, there is paucity of research into home students' perceptions of EAP within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Fourthly, I was in a good position to investigate the views of home and international students because of my personal experience as a Syrian home student and a UK international student. This is an aspect I return to later in the study.
1.6. English as an International Language

A main reason for the worldwide interest in EAP is that English is an international language. English has been introduced into most branches of life, such as business, medicine, technology, engineering, tourism and education, and the level of proficiency in English is increasingly rising in response to economic, business and social need. On an international scale, many countries, like India and South Africa, maintain a high literacy ratio in English, extending in proficiency levels from reasonable to bilingual competence (Jenkins, 2003). On an individual level, English language learners are aware that 'their social mobility and economic power can be enhanced by access to a standard international variety of English' (Carter and Nunan, 2001: 3). This awareness on their part carries with it acknowledgement of the socio-economic power of English.

A major issue 'which shapes and confronts EAP is the consequences of the dominance that English has assumed in higher education and research throughout the world' (Hyland, 2006: 24). English currently stands in the forefront in terms of its spread and use. A great part of the world's knowledge is accessed via English. An increasing number of universities on an international scale are using English as the medium of instruction. Students and researchers are expected to have a good command of English if they are to keep up with the developments in their fields, as most advanced branches of knowledge are mainly found in English (Hyland, 2006). According to Kennedy (2001: 31):

Because so much academic discourse is conducted through the medium of English, whether in journals, at conferences or through the internet, academics will need a competence in English, if they are to keep up with developments in their field, ensure that their own work is available to their colleagues internationally and
interact with each other. If the academics wish to publish for an international academic community, they will be forced to write in English.

The development of EAP, it follows, is an integral part of the high status which English has acquired in the world. This status is largely the result of historical circumstances, particularly the legacy of US and British colonisation, the expansion of a single market across the world, and the promotion of English by US and UK governments and private companies (Hyland, 2006: 24).

This point will be investigated later in the thesis.

1.7. Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter has described the background to the study. It has also provided description of the two contexts of Wales and Syria. The main aims and rationale for the study have also been discussed.

The next chapter will review the literature pertaining to EAP. It will start by defining EAP. Then it will move to discuss the historical and geographical dimensions of English as a global language, which had their direct impact on the current increasing interest in EAP globally. Next will be a discussion of EAP's historical and geographical development as a term. This will be followed by an exploration of the main models of EAP and then reflections on these models. The teacher as an important dimension of EAP will then be discussed. The EAP learner's role will also be investigated, due to its central role in the study. EAP will then be discussed in relation to cultural context, which is an important component of EAP. Next, EAP will be examined in terms of teaching and learning in two contrasting contexts, where EAP is used as a native language and a foreign language respectively.
The third chapter will discuss the methodology adopted in the current study. Firstly, the case study is established as the research strategy. It is then discussed in terms of different aspects, for example advantages and disadvantages. Issues of access and ethics will then be discussed in detail. Other points, like sampling and data collection procedures, are considered. Data analysis procedures will then be explained, including transcription, taping and translation.

The results obtained from the data in University Wales and University Syria are discussed in the next two chapters. The fourth chapter will focus on University Wales. The different themes which emerged from the data will be explored in relation to students, staff and documentary evidence. The fifth chapter will study the themes which arose from University Syria in relation to students and documents analysed.

The final chapter will include comparative study of the various themes which emerged from both University Wales and University Syria. It will also involve the study contributions and recommendations for further research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Definition of EAP in the Literature

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is the teaching of English with the aim of assisting learners to study, research or teach in that language (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2006). It is also defined as the teaching of English with a focus not only on language, but also on the context in which it occurs (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Pennycook, 2001). The above two definitions offer a strong rationale for my study, emphasising the learner and the context, both being central aspects of the present research.

According to Hyland (2006: 1), EAP is a broad term which covers areas such as teaching at school, undergraduate and postgraduate levels (ranging from lectures and classroom tasks to the design of materials), 'classroom interactions' (extending from tutorials and seminar discussions to teacher feedback), 'research genres' (from conference papers to journal articles), and 'student writing' (including exam papers and doctoral theses).

The practice of teaching EAP has existed for a very long time, although it was not formalised by a term until 1974, when it was used in more general sense (Jordan, 1997). EAP had a modest start as 'a relatively fringe branch of ESP' (Hyland, 2006: 1). The recent years have witnessed a remarkable increase of published materials for EAP teaching and a considerable growth of the research which informs them (McDonough, 2006). EAP has grown with the increase of university places in different countries and rising numbers of students carrying out their studies in English (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2006). Hyland (2006: 2)
argues that 'EAP is now a much more theoretically grounded and research informed enterprise'. According to him, the communicative requirements of the modern university go beyond the traditional didactic ways of simply correcting grammatical errors or polishing style. International research, practice and experience give evidence for the complex and highly diversified nature of such requirements. According to Hyland (2006: 2):

Supported by an expanding range of publications and research journals, there is growing awareness that students, including native English-speakers, have to take on new roles and engage with knowledge in new ways when they enter university. They find that they need to write and read unfamiliar genres and participate in novel speech events.

Further, in the past, written texts were the main vehicles of academic communication. Currently, texts can as well be spoken, visual and electronic. Students are challenged by innovations in study programmes, for example group work, peer- and self-assessment and student-centred learning (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005). They are also confronted by multimodality and various presentational forms (Hyland, 2006; Kress, 2003). These are concrete examples of the 'dynamicity' of EAP which Jordan (1997: 278) sees as 'a healthy sign for the EAP profession'.

Following this brief introduction to EAP, it will be helpful to discuss the language journey that contributed to the evolution of EAP as a discipline. This helps explain the factors that came into play to give English that popularity and influence around the globe.

2.2. EAP and the History of English Language

Just as any social phenomenon, English has its roots in the remote history (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Travelling back in this history is, in effect, a good route to a deeper understanding of
the global status of English today and provides an insight into the increasing interest in the study of EAP around the world.

This world language is originally a West Germanic language, spoken by the Germanic peoples, who chiefly comprised the tribes of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and others. Those tribes came from northern Europe into the British Isles in the fifth century AD, bringing English with them. English, then, did not originate in England, as its name may misleadingly suggest; rather, it was brought over from outside by the Germanic tribes. From the sixth to the eighth century these pagan settlers embraced Christianity, and, therefore, a number of Christian words from Latin were assimilated into English. During this period, English language acquired new dimensions, thanks to religion. In the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries the Vikings, another Germanic tribe, invaded Britain and eventually settled in its coastal regions. The dialect of these invaders strongly influenced the English language (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 2003; Yule, 1996).

The dialects spoken by the Angles and Saxons, together with the one spoken by the Vikings formed what would be called Old English. Old English was a typical Germanic language, especially with regard to inflections and vocabulary (Yule, 1996).

The Middle English period commenced with the invasion of England in 1066 by the French Normans. It was by virtue of the Norman Conquest that English became a distinctively English product (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), having less inflections and more distinctive vocabulary.
From around 1400 to 1600, substantial sound changes transformed Middle English into Modern English and formed the basis of Modern English pronunciation. As far as syntax is concerned, inflectional difficulty which characterised Old English was reduced in Modern English (Crystal, 2003).

In fact, the previous linguistic journey of English was an important step for the history of EAP, as it freed English speakers from inflectional difficulties, and, therefore, made English an easier language to communicate with. The spread of English is also related to its flexibility. As a result of the vast number of loan-words, English is commonly believed to have the largest vocabulary worldwide. Interestingly, however, the same reason is deceptive, as the easiness with which English is learnt also makes the risks of mispronunciation and misspelling of English words higher (Crystal, 2003).

In the sixteenth century the number of mother-tongue English speakers was estimated between five and seven million, almost all of them living within the British Isles (Crystal, 2003). Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, English was to set out on its world journey, for the first time, beyond the confines of the British Isles with the establishment of British colonies in the Americas, Australasia, Canada, New Zealand and others, with English established as a major national medium of communication in these territories (Brutt-Griffler, 2002).

English spread, as is noted above, is heavily dependent on the idea of travelling. 'The language has always been on the move' (Crystal, 2003: 30). In the first stages of English language journey, there was the travel into the British Isles from outside tribes and countries.
In the later stages, this travel was from the British Isles to the outside world, be it for immigration or colonisation purposes (Crystal, 2003). It follows, then, the idea of travelling is central to the history of EAP. Another point to be drawn from what has been previously mentioned is that the linguistic factors, including changes in sounds and inflections, as well as the non-linguistic ones, including economic influences, market forces, and the movement of people around the world, play an important role in understanding the evolution of EAP. It is an interesting feature of English that immigration and economic forces which have historical roots in the development of English can still be seen influencing the use of English in the 21st century, as noted by Brutt-Griffler (2002).

In the eighteenth century, the English colonisation extended to other countries, such as in Asia and Africa, to turn, then, into economic and political dominance over entire peoples. This was also accompanied by the British 'domination over the world market' (Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 114). These two factors combined to help English expand to become a medium for world communication, as well as the language of whole nations (Carter and Nunan, 2001). This paved the way for English to become a global language. It is no longer limited or provincial in scope. This is a key point in the definition of English as a language.

The above brief account of the history and evolution of English language is meant to explain how English has reached its current status as a global language. It is equally intended to feature the various factors that interplayed to bring about this status.
An examination of EAP and its development is thus closely related to the nature of English as a global language. The next section will consider definitions of global English and how these relate to EAP

2.3. Global English

A major reason for the world interest in studying English is the global status of English (Benesch, 2009; Hyland, 2006). The next sections will discuss global English from different angles.

2.3.1. Globalisation

'A vast amount has been said and written about globalisation, and this in itself makes it a difficult and sometimes confusing issue to write about' (Fairclough, 2006: 5). The term globalisation is of particular importance to my thesis. Firstly, globalisation is very important, since varieties of English are spoken in many parts of the world. Examination of this phenomenon is one key element of the present study. Secondly, there is growth in the numbers of international students studying EAP. It is in this situation of growth that I am able to carry out this study of international learners' perceptions of using EAP for their studies. Further, if people have no English, they will have no access to international communication.

2.3.2. Development of Global English

English holds a central position in the global language system, which makes it a hugely influential language. It has already been noted that global English started as a result of the British domination over the world market, underpinned by British economic and political
dominance over entire peoples, in the nineteenth century (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Military, economic, scientific, political and cultural influences of the UK increased to culminate towards the early twentieth century, following victory in the First World War (Jenkins, 2003). It totalled about 250 million mother-tongue English speakers in 1952, as pointed out by Crystal (2003). Also, there was the economic and political dominance of the United States in the twentieth century. Because of the key role played by English as the tool of the British and American foreign policy (Phillipson, 1992), English became a popular communicative medium all over the world to be used as a contact language for speakers of different languages (Brutt-Griffler, 2002).

What is more, the scope of global English for the second half of the twentieth century has extended beyond any local influences or associations. In other words, the past few decades have witnessed 'the spread of English from its historical boundaries to its current position as the pre-eminent global means of communication' (Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 1). People are no longer using English in association with the UK, the USA, or any other English-speaking country. English is currently developing all over the world to include the 'Englishes' spoken in the UK and USA, Australia, South Africa, Canada and others. These have become only varieties of global English and may be said to have had their world-wide influence on the decline. In this sense, English has been 'denationalised,' to use Brutt-Griffler's (2002: 5) word, as it is no longer the property of its native speakers. What is more, the worldwide use of English has developed to include non-native speaker varieties all over the world (Carter and Nunan, 2001). These varieties, sometimes referred to as international Englishes (Hughes, 2008: 5), are gaining more acceptance and prestige. The number of native speakers of English constitutes only about one quarter of the whole number of English-speaking
population (Crystal, 2003). Consequently, the vast majority of verbal contacts in English do not involve any native speakers of the language (Hyland, 2006).

The global spread and the dominant influence of English that have been witnessed in the second half of the twentieth century are a consequence of the striking progress in all aspects of life across the world, with the use of English being promoted as the key link (Melchers and Shaw, 2003).

2.3.3. Global English in Use

English is currently spoken in most countries around the globe. It is so difficult to estimate the number of people exposed to English or to obtain valid figures of those who use English internationally (Kennedy, 2001). 'Some learners persist in their efforts to learn [English] despite their difficulty and despite the fact that they do not have an immediate or tangible need for it' (Hirano, 2009: 33). This highlights the force of English as a global language.

As regards intra-national and international businesses, English is playing a decisive role in the commercial relations among different countries and individuals. Moreover, globally-recognised courses are run in most parts of the world for business purposes; English for business (EFB) and English for Commerce (EFC) are two examples (Melchers and Shaw, 2003). English has become a very important common language to be used as an instrument of contact between speakers of different languages in multilingual nations. People and companies with global businesses learn it as a medium of communication.
In science and technology, English mastery is the gateway for the efficient implementation of all sciences. Skill in computation and worldwide web is heavily dependent on a good knowledge of English since English is the major language of computation (Hyland, 2006).

Regarding international relations, English is currently the medium for global communication. It is the first choice of most to be made as a lingua franca in interactions and correspondence among people with different languages, backgrounds and cultures. In the tourist industry, English is the most common language of communication. Besides, English is the most frequently used language within many major international bodies, followed by French. The illustrative instances below are taken from Crystal (2003: 87-88), English is the only working language of the European Free Trade Association and the only official language of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries. It is also one of the official languages in most international political gatherings, for example the Association of East Asian Nations, the Commonwealth, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Moreover, international sporting organisations that work only in English are the African Hockey Federation, the Asian Amateur Athletic Association and the Association of Oceania National Olympic Committees. Scientific organisations that use English only are the African Association of Science Editors, the Cairo Demographic Centre and Baltic Marine Biologists. This shows the vital role played by English as a global language in almost all aspects of life.

Furthermore, with regard to the media, many countries transmit a number of English language local or international TV or radio channels. Syria, for instance, has a local second TV channel mainly transmitted in English, with Arabic subtitles for some programmes and
films. Saudi Arabia has two English-speaking channels to be transmitted to the outside world. Egypt has a TV news channel which is English-only. Many local newspapers and magazines in different parts of the world are published in English. The Syrian Times is an influential newspaper widely read by the public in Syria. Moreover, English publications, like the American 'Times' and the British 'Newsweek' are accessible all over the world.

2.3.4. Three Groups of Global English

English in the modern world is frequently divided between three distinct groups of speakers, according to the status English occupies in these groups: firstly, those who speak English as a native language (ENL); secondly, those who speak English as an official second language (ESL); and thirdly, those who speak English as a foreign language (EFL) (Jenkins, 2003). This neat division, however, is by no means definite. Jenkins (2003) points out some problems with regard to this division, which I summarise below. Many ESL countries, such as India and Singapore, have large numbers of ENL speakers, as a result of colonisation. Moreover, large groups of ESL speakers are living in ENL countries, most notably the USA and the UK, as a result of immigration. Besides, ENL is not a single variety of English, but differs from one territory, or even region, to another. Also, this division fails to take account of the fact that much of the world is bi- or multilingual, and that English is often spoken within a framework of code switching (switching back and forth between English and another language) and code mixing (blending English with another language, e.g. Spanglish in the US) (Jenkins, 2003). Overall, this broad three-way categorisation of English is useful in illustrating the extent to which English is spread across the world. Below is further illustration of the three groups.
English as a native language (ENL), also known as 'English as a mother tongue' or, in more technical terms, 'English as a first language', refers to the language of 'those born and raised in one of the countries where English is historically the first language' (Jenkins, 2003: 14). Those countries are mainly the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. English as a native language has around 400 million speakers (Melchers and Shaw, 2003).

English as a second language (ESL) refers to English used for administrative purposes in a country, serving internal functions, such as government, education, the law courts and the media (Jenkins, 2003). The term ESL is also used in the USA to describe programmes that teach English to people with a language other than English as their mother-tongue (Phillipson, 1992). ESL countries include Hong Kong, which is a former colonial territory of the United Kingdom, and India, where English, together with Hindi, serves as a means of communication between the diverse linguistic groups living there (Carter and Nunan, 2001).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL), increasingly referred to as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2003: 4), is usually taught in countries where English has no official function and plays a role mainly in external communication (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). For instance, English is a foreign language in Syria, Korea, China, Japan, France, Brazil and Mexico, taught in schools, or other educational settings, for purposes of 'communicating with speakers of the language, or for reading texts in the language' (Phillipson, 1992: 24). As a foreign language, English is widespread all the world over, amounting to one billion speakers ranging in proficiency levels from reasonable to bilingual (Jenkins, 2003). Moreover, this number is on the increase, demonstrating the growing interest on the part of foreigners to learn it. Individual reasons for learning EFL are many. Some examples are to communicate
with other speakers of the language, to master a world language as a means of furthering academic knowledge, to prepare for an exam, to improve chances of getting a good job, to join a college or university in an English-speaking country, to help learners with their business, and, finally, to get on in society (Jenkins, 2003).

Although English is not the first language in the world in terms of the number of native speakers who speak it, coming fourth after Mandarin Chinese, Hindi and Spanish, and although the number of ENL speakers is actually on the decline (Melchers and Shaw, 2003), English is the most widely learnt second and foreign language in the world (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). It is not only the expansion of English that is remarkable, but also the speed with which this expansion occurs. In fact, no other language has 'the global sway or the multifunctional use that characterises English today' (Melchers and Shaw: 2003: 8).

2.3.5. Kachru's (1992: 325) 'Three-Concentric-Circles' Model

This influential model of the spread of English is still of major interest in the early twenty-first century, and has been widely adopted by many recent scholars, for example Crystal (2003), Jenkins (2003) and Melchers and Shaw (2003). This model goes in line with the three-way categorisation mentioned above. Kachru (1992) divides world Englishes into three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. The inner circle represents the countries speaking English as a mother-tongue, and it includes the USA, the UK, Ireland, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The outer circle represents the countries that have English as an official language serving internal functions. It includes India, Ghana, Singapore, and many other territories. As for the expanding circle, it represents the countries that use English for external purposes. This circle includes Syria, China, Russia, Japan, and
many other countries that use English as a foreign language. Jenkins (2003: 15-16) points out that the English spoken by the inner circle is 'norm providing', the one spoken in the outer circle is 'norm developing', and the one spoken in the expanding circle is 'norm dependent'. She further explains that English-language standards are largely determined by speakers of ENL in the inner circle. But while the ESL varieties of English, spoken in the outer circle, are developing their own standards, the EFL varieties, spoken in the expanding circle, are regarded, in this model, as 'performance' varieties without any official status and, therefore, are dependent on the standards set by native speakers in the inner circle. The expanding circle implies an acceleration of language change, and, gradually, the idea of correct and standard English is being counter-balanced by varieties of English and regional versions around the world. Consequently, the idea of correctness and standard is becoming less powerful, and the acceptance of non-standard norms is on the increase. This point is emphasised by Scales et al. (2006: 717), who point out that:

> the view that all English users should express themselves by using an inner-circle model has been seen as heedless and disrespectful of English as an International Language (EIL). It also disregards the fact that users' goals for English use are extremely varied and maybe mainly instrumental.

Moreover, even the standards set by native speakers are changing. One interesting example is the process of 'regularisation', where it is currently acceptable to use 'teas' and 'coffees' instead of 'cups of tea' and 'cups of coffee' (Jenkins, 2006: 32). One reason which Hyland (2006: 3) mentions for this change in native standards is the 'increase in international migration', which has made it common for native teachers 'to find non-native users of English in their high-school classrooms'. This, I think, will ultimately increase pressure on native teachers to change their concepts of language standardisation.
This modification of the concept and standards of EAP makes it an easier tool of communication. This helps EAP flourish worldwide, since it is becoming easier to learn. Kennedy (2001: 26), for example, notes:

All countries … irrespective of the 'circle' in which they are situated, use English for international communication, and this fact has considerable effect on the introduction and maintenance of EAP programmes.

Overall, Kachru's (1992) model is an instance of the flexibility of English and its efficiency as a global means of communication, providing a large network that links different English language users worldwide (Jenkins, 2003). There is not much significance in mentioning ENL without the mention of EFL or ESL, or vice versa.

This model is, however, not without its problems. Below I mention three problems reported by Jenkins (2003). In reality, there is no clear-cut line between the inner and outer circles. In some countries of the outer circle, English is frequently used as the first language for many people and extends its official role to include its use in the home as the main medium of communication. Further, the model fails to consider the many speakers who grow up bilingual or multilingual, which makes it difficult to define the circle to which they belong. Moreover, the model is unable to account for ESP, and hence EAP, in which English proficiency may be similar regardless of which particular circle speakers come from.

The 'Three-Concentric-Circles' Model is closely related to my study since the three circles are affecting how EAP is taught. Further, my international participants have studied EAP in the outer- and inner- circle contexts, while my home participants have studied EAP in the expanding-circle context. This is addressed further in later chapters of the thesis.
2.3.6. Is Global English a Threat?

A current issue closely related to EAP is the consequences of the growth of English as a world language on other languages and their users (Hyland, 2006; Swales, 1997). Crystal (2006: 5) points out that 'of the 6000 or so languages in the world about half are going to die in the course of the present century: 3,000 languages in 1,200 months'. One major reason for the death of many languages is that English is a global language. According to Crystal (2003), the emergence of English as a global language will potentially eliminate the interest and motivation in learning other languages, or lessen opportunities to do so. As a result, minority languages may be caused to vanish quickly, and, other languages may be marginalised. This shows the power of a language to live and thrive at the expense of others' deterioration. This Phillipson (1992) terms as 'linguistic imperialism'.

A potential threat resulting from the death of other languages is the possible death of their cultures and the cultural knowledge and practices they encode (Crystal, 2006). English alone is not enough to effectively understand and preserve the indigenous particularities of other cultures, which are best expressed and protected by their indigenous languages (Jenkins, 2003). Another hazardous consequence from language death is the loss of identity, as it is 'widely believed that there is a natural connection between the language spoken by members of a social group and that group's identity' (Kramsch, 1998: 65). This frequently takes place when non-native speakers of English attempt to conform to native speaker varieties in order to achieve mutual intelligibility among other language speakers (Jenkins, 2003). This clearly shows when non-native English speakers find difficulty in dealing with terms or ideas that have no approximate equivalents in English, especially if they turn to be abstract or culture-
related terms. I point out the Arabic word 'hijab' which is sometimes translated as 'scarf' although this translation is no more than a distant approximation, as the word in Arabic has ramifications that the English equivalent lacks. For example, unlike the English word 'scarf', the Arabic word 'hijab' is associated with dress according to Islamic religion. As a further example, the Arabic word 'Rahman' is often translated as 'most merciful' which can be its synonym in a narrow sense, as, unlike the English term 'most merciful', the word 'Rahman' in Arabic is used exclusively to refer to God. As a consequence, the practice of using the above two Arabic words when speaking about them in English has been taken up by many Arabic speakers of English who are happier to adapt English to suit their national, cultural and religious identities, than look like native speakers of English at the expense of devaluing their indigenous beliefs (Jenkins, 2003). Other Arabic speakers, on the other hand, will be less ambivalent to adopt the English terms to refer to an exclusively Arabic entity.

Another danger arising from the 'malign influence of English' as a global language, using Crystal's (2000: 23) phrase, is mentioned in Crystal (2003). He points out that English can affect the structure of other languages especially by providing a good source of loan-words to be used by these languages. I draw as an example on the use of the English words 'television', 'radio' and 'computer'. In Syrian Arabic, these three words are frequently adopted and assimilated to the language to the extent that they have largely obscured their equivalent heritage terms: (rai), (midiaa), and (hasoob), respectively, words which are hardly used nowadays, except in educational settings. This state of affairs, as much as being a source of flexibility and enrichment for the borrowing languages, can also be a real threat for them, being equated with 'injury' and 'death' (Crystal, 2003). Crystal (2000) draws the example of French which tried to protect itself by law from this 'harmful' influence of English. For
example, it is now illegal in official contexts to use an English word where a French word already exists. However, it seems unfair to link borrowing words with the idea of linguistic death without taking into consideration many other related factors, such as the language power, be it political or economic, and adaptability, as there are many languages that have thrived from the borrowing of words. English, for instance, has borrowed thousands of words from over 350 other language sources (Crystal, 2003), and this was a reason for it to gain more power in absorbing different cultures and values, and to move further steps towards international and global use. Some examples are the Arabic words 'falafel', 'hummos', and halal (meat) which are common terms related to foods in the Arab culture. They are currently used in English because they are culture-exclusive, as is the case with the term 'kubba mincer', which is a type of food processor used mainly to prepare 'kubba', an oriental dish. In fact, openness to new vocabulary on the part of English, with its relatively free admission of words from other languages, as well as the ready creation of compounds and derivatives, partly accounts for global English. English adopts or adapts any word needed to refer to a new object or process (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2000).

On their part, many indigenous communities have realised the catastrophic consequences that may arise from the global expansion of English. In this respect, serious measures were taken in order to revitalise the minority languages and to end the potential threats set by global English. Programmes, systems and studies were planned to maintain heritage languages and make up for the potential losses. Some efforts, as mentioned by Crystal (2006: 339), included 'getting linguists into the field, training local analysts, supporting the community with language resources and teachers, compiling grammars and dictionaries, writing materials for use in schools'. In Wales, there has recently been great pressure on Welsh
exerted by the dominance of English as a global language, for example to publish in English in order to reach a wider audience or engage with a wider academic community. Great efforts are being made by the Welsh government to rescue Welsh from the overwhelming domination of English and to revitalise the language and maintain bilingual Wales (Iaith Pawb, 2003). Welsh varieties are increasingly being spoken in the homes and schools. A significant body of literature is studied in Welsh, alongside English, with an emphasis on Welsh culture and literature. Some Welsh universities offer doctoral students the possibility to carry out their research in Welsh. Many Welsh learner courses are developed to suit people's life styles, for example, before or after work, at the weekends, over the internet, and by distance learning. Media in Welsh, including TV, radio and newspapers, are also available (Namba, 2008). What is more, Welsh political and legal forces strive hard together to maintain and facilitate the use of the Welsh language.

Funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Welsh Language Policy has many goals; firstly, it aims to make it easier for everyone to use Welsh; secondly, it tries to increase people's confidence to use Welsh; thirdly, it encourages more people to speak, read or write Welsh in new situations; and finally, it endeavours to pass on the language to next generations (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). There is a Welsh Language Board to oversee this policy. The Board considers the Welsh language to be integral to the identity of Wales. Their aim is clearly set out in their National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales:

We want Wales to be a truly bilingual nation, by which we mean a country where people can choose to live their lives through the medium of either Welsh or English and where the presence of the two languages is a visible and audible source of pride and strength to us all (Iaith Pawb, 2003).
In Syria, the role of English is increasing in importance in all fields, as it is the first foreign language in the country. However, the government has been aware of the danger of the dominance of English as a global language and so many measures have been taken to maintain Arabic and keep English under control. For example, the education system in Syria is taught in Arabic from school to postgraduate studies. Moreover, Syria works hard to 'arabise' the technical words coined in the different research domains, for example medicine, engineering, physics and chemistry. All doctoral theses which were written in languages other than Arabic are required to be translated into Arabic in order for the PhD holder to be able to work as a lecturer at a public university. Recently, in late 2008, the government has issued a law which stated that all new shops have to be given Arabic names.

2.3.7. Global English in Education

According to Hyland (2006: 229), 'there is no denying the influence of the language on international publishing and on the growth of EAP'. Pointing out some uses of world English at education level, Melchers and Shaw (2003) state that at university level, PhD theses in various subjects are routinely written in English in many countries in order to be visible on the world stage and not be ignored by the international community. Similarly, Spanish scholars have increasingly made their presence more noticeable in international settings since the late 1980s, mainly because they started to publish and present their research in English (Moreno and Suarez, 2008). At undergraduate level, university departments increasingly publish textbooks in English. This is mainly because university textbooks in many subjects are too expensive to publish in languages with relatively few speakers. Even in languages with many speakers, translations may be out of date by the time they are available. All these factors encourage universities to offer courses taught in English (Melchers and Shaw, 2003).
Crystal (2003: 110) notes that 'English is the medium of a great deal of the world's knowledge, especially in such areas as science and technology, and access to knowledge is the business of education'. According to Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), English has become the world language of research, and an increasing number of universities are adopting English as the language of instruction. This has been accompanied by a parallel expansion in the preparation of non-native English speakers for study in the English language. This is taking place in English-speaking countries such as the United States, Great Britain and Australia, post-colonial territories such as Zambia, Malawi and Singapore, and other countries where English has no official status, such as Syria, China and Japan (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). There are centres for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) courses and tests found in most countries, including Syria and Wales. TOEFL and IELTS are pre-requisites for the admission to most universities in English-speaking countries.

As a consequence of the development of global English in education, there are currently a wide number of acronyms that have been developed to describe different aspects of English teaching. These are discussed in the next section.

2.3.7.1. The Development of Different Acronyms Relating to English Teaching

Different acronyms have been coined to describe English teaching. Below I refer to the main ones.

ELT, English Language Teaching, is an umbrella acronym which refers to all aspects of teaching English (Jordan, 1997).
As can be seen from the above diagram, many acronyms are subsumed within ELT, for example EFL, ESL, EAP and ESP. As well as the many acronyms developed to describe English teaching, there is fluidity in their definition and use. Because of this fluidity it is not always easy to tell which came first or second. ESP was established as an independent branch of ELT to refer to the teaching of English in the light of learners' needs analysis (Jordan, 1997). It was then divided into two main strands. The first strand was EOP, English for Occupational Purposes, which is used in situations relating to professional purposes, for example English taught for working pharmacists, engineers or business people. EOP has many branches, the biggest of which is 'Business English', which can range from teaching business-related language and skills known as EGBP, English for General Business Purposes, to the teaching of specific skills important in business, e.g. negotiation, writing letters and faxes, and meeting skills, known as ESBP, English for Specific Business Purposes (Dudley-Evans, 2001). The second strand is EAP, which refers to the type of English needed
in an educational setting. Because of the focal position this term occupies in the current study, it will be discussed in detail at the end of this section. Below I mention the history of different acronyms that came to use in language teaching, learning and use.

In 1976, EIL, English as an International Language, was defined by Smith (1976: 38) as a non-native language 'used by people of different nations to communicate with one another'.

EEP, English for Educational purposes, was first used in 1977 by Strevens, as noted by Jordan (1997), but it is not common now. In 1981, Abbott devised the acronym 'TENOR', meaning 'the Teaching of English for No Obvious Reason', as was mentioned by Jordan (1997). In 1997, Crystal (1997) introduced the term English as a Global Language, although the phenomenon was in existence a long time before that.

Until recently, the acronym EFL, English as a Foreign Language, was used to refer to English spoken in a country without serving an official role. This term was distinguished by different researchers (Carter and Nunan, 2001) from ESL, English as a Second Language, in which English was used for government, law and education, among other official purposes. Since late 1990s, it has become common to find ELF, English as a Lingua Franca, 'reflecting the fact that these English users from, for example, Europe and Japan, speak English more frequently as a contact language among themselves than with native speakers of English (Jenkins, 2003).

EAL, English as an additional language, refers to the learning of English by someone whose first language is not English in an environment where English is already the native language.
Two other acronyms introduced are 'TEFL' and 'TESL'. 'TEFL', Teaching English as a Foreign Language, refers to the teaching of English to non-native speakers of English. It takes place in different domains, such as public schools, language centres, private language institutes, further education colleges and universities (TEFL, 2009). In many higher institutes, prospective students are expected to achieve high scores in official tests for EFL such as the American TOEFL or the British IELTS, the two recognised tests of English language proficiency. Below is a description of IELTS, as an example.

IELTS is a globally recognised English language assessment jointly managed by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council, and IELTS Australia (IELTS, 2008). It tests academic English. The test can be preceded by an IELTS course, which prepares candidates to take the test successfully. IELTS is recognised by almost all educational and professional bodies around the world. It qualifies candidates to study or work in different places where English is the medium of communication. IELTS is available worldwide and has around 2000 centres in 135 countries (IELTS, 2008).

TESL, Teaching English as a Second Language, is defined as the teaching of English in a naturalistic setting to people whose first language is not English (TEFL, 2009).

Both TEFL and TESL are covered by the term TESOL, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TEFL, 2009).

As is clear, English has attained a degree of complexity that makes it very difficult to encompass all its different acronyms. What is more, new acronyms for English are being
introduced periodically to catch up with the fast-paced development in all branches of life, whether business, industry, science or technology, where international English is needed. An interesting example is the term 'Globish' which has been recently introduced by Jean-Paul Nerrière mainly to help business people and tourists communicate in English using only 1500 words (Globish, 2009).

Before I finish with the section about English as a global language, there are a few important points to be mentioned. Despite the world status that English has reached, it is still not used by at least two-thirds of the world population. In certain parts of the world, for example, most of the states of the former Soviet Union, English has still an 'unremarkable' presence (Crystal, 2003).

In summary, the above section discussed global English in relation to different issues, for example identity, culture, threat to other languages and education. The rationale for discussing global English is that it is an essential part of EAP. Kennedy (2001: 33) emphasises this point when he describes EAP as 'a teaching and learning process responding to the spread of English as an international language, itself a consequence of a constellation of economic and political factors'. Overall, an overview of global English is essential as a rationale to pave the ground for a research study of EAP. The next section will discuss the development of EAP as a term in relation to its history and geographical spread.

2.4. The Historical and Geographical Development of EAP

The next sections will endeavour to place EAP as a term within historical and geographical contexts.
2.4.1. History and Development of EAP

'English for Academic Purposes' as a term appears to have been coined by Johns in 1974 (Jordan, 2002). It first came into general use through the British Organisation SELMOUS (Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students) in 1974 (Jordan, 1997). The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP) is a national organisation supporting professional development of EAP teachers through biannual conferences (Cardew, 2006). In 1989, this term was used in a more professional sense, where according to Jordan (1997), the acronym branched into two main divisions according to the ends served. The first division is meant to help students with English required for their study subjects, known as ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes). This involves any specialised study subject, such as physics, maths and pharmacy, which is taught in English and which is part of students' future vocational career. The second division is designated to help students with their study skills as well as language skills, known as EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes). This mainly includes study skills practice, such as academic writing, listening to lectures, seminar skills, comprehension, using bibliography, conducting interviews, and note-taking, in addition to skills like proficiency in language use and formal, academic style (Jordan, 1997). Both EGAP and ESAP are EAP because they take place 'in the academy', but the difference is one of goals (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001: 12).

2.4.2. Geographical Spread of EAP

According to Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), EAP is currently to be seen in four main geographical areas described previously. First, it is conducted in the English-speaking
countries, where large numbers of international students come to study in English. It is carried out, second, in the post-colonial territories, such as India, Nigeria, Zambia, Pakistan and others, which have English predominantly as a language of instruction at school and university level. It is conducted, third, in countries where English has no official status, but which need English to access the research literature and academic publication in the English language (the countries of Western Europe, Japan, China, Latin America, Syria and others). And, finally, EAP is increasingly being taught in the countries of the former Soviet-bloc, as they seek to distance themselves from the influence of Russia and its language and position themselves as participants in the increasingly global economy and academic community (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). The study of EAP in the second and third categories is of particular interest to this study since most participants in the study are from these two categories. Such differences in the geographical spread of EAP assert the need to learn English in different places and different domains (Moreno and Suarez, 2008).

Flowerdew and Peacock (2001: xv) state that EAP has become an international activity, 'linked in with the overall trend towards the globalisation of information exchange, communication and education'. Electronic media and the worldwide web, as well as having a lingua franca like English, help that activity. Business and economic reasons increase the number of international students coming to English-speaking countries, as English is the driving force useful for them in the future. Moreover, because of the UK's history and the commonwealth, English has had a powerful effect on education systems in different countries.
The above discussions have placed EAP within historical and geographical contexts. The next section will highlight the main models for the teaching of EAP.

2.5. Main Models for EAP

Within these main models of EAP, it can be noticed that most of them revolve around academic writing. This is not surprising because, according to Jordan (1997: 164) 'as academic writing is so important for students of all kinds, and as it is such an umbrella term, it is hardly surprising that there is range of approaches and types of practice for it'.

2.5.1. The Product Approach

This model, sometimes referred to as 'current-traditional rhetoric' (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001: 56), is concerned with academic writing in EAP with particular reference to structure. In this approach, which was popular in the mid-1960s, a model is provided and various exercises are undertaken to shed light on its discourse features. Students are then asked to provide a similar or parallel text (Jordan, 1997). In this approach, emphasis is on 'the finished product, or text, rather than the process students go through in order to write their text' (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001: 56). This approach has often been combined with one that, beside highlighting the target text features, involves focus on rhetorical functions, such as descriptions, narratives, argument, comparison and contrast, drawing conclusions, and so on, which provide helpful structures for academic writing (Jordan, 1997). This is why it is sometimes referred to as functional-product approach (Jordan, 1997). It was, however, widely criticised in the 1980s, especially in the USA, on the grounds of its limitations. It was pointed out that this model restricts students' creativity by asking them to produce parallel texts, as noted by Jordan (1997).
2.5.2. The Process Approach

This model of EAP teaching blossomed in the 1970s. It heavily focuses on meaning-based academic writing. It was developed as a reaction to the product approach with its strict adherence to the rules and practices governing content and ideas to the detriment of the students' creativity and critical thinking (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 1997). This model, as pointed out by Jordan (1997) and Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), views writing as creative and emphasises the processes that writers pass through in order for the text to be produced. Such processes involve brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, feedback, revision and proofreading, which enable students to take more responsibility for their own learning, as well as to be active participants in working on their own progress (Hyland, 2006). Focus, then, has moved from the teacher to the learner (Jordan, 1997).

This approach, however, is not without contestants. For example, Horowitz (as cited in Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001: 57) 'questioned whether the process approach realistically prepared students for the demands of writing in academic context'. In his view, 'the process approach gave students a false impression of what is required of them in university settings and, in particular, its very special socio-cultural context and expectations'.

2.5.3. The Team Teaching Approach

This EAP programme was developed and described by Johns and Dudley-Evans (1980) and Dudley-Evans and Johns (1981). It has long been established at the University of Birmingham. In this approach an EGAP programme is combined with a subject-specific ESAP component with the aim of delivering a good EAP course (Benesch, 2001; Dudley-
The pedagogic grounds for this combination were that students would be in a better position to learn the common-core skills in the EGAP course if they also received more discipline-specific teaching (Dudley-Evans, 2001). This justification was also reinforced by studies on discourse and genre analysis, which showed that there is significant variation among the different academic discourses (Dudley-Evans, 2001).

In this approach, the subject teacher should co-operate with the EAP teacher in the classroom in order to deliver the EAP course effectively. Co-operation also involves preparing materials for the session, which go in line with the specific discipline, the tasks required of students, and the expectations of the department (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). The model was originally devised to help international students understand lectures, as well as prepare them for future exams (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).

The model has undergone several adaptations since its inception. For example, there has been a clear shift away from listening comprehension towards writing, whether that is classroom writing, involving examination answers, essays and research reports, or academic genres relating to professional writing. These could be technical or managerial reports, among others. Moreover, it has become more usual for the courses to be attended by native, alongside non-native students. The reason for this shift in focus, as stated by Dudley-Evans (2001), is that increased emphasis has been placed on written tasks relating to professional life in the assessment of students. Dudley-Evans (2001) mentions main reasons behind the success of these EAP courses at the University of Birmingham. Firstly, the subject teacher and the language teacher are allocated clearly-defined roles. Secondly, the time of each
subject teacher is reasonably considered. Finally, mutual respect exists between the subject teacher and the language teacher.

This model of EAP teaching appears to be an effective approach. However, it is still not without problems. First, the approach has proved successful in the UK, but it still requires investigation whether it would meet the same acceptance in other countries, where the code of relationship between the three elements of students, the subject teacher and the language teacher may be considerably different (Jordan, 1997). In addition, Dudley-Evans (2001) points out the problem of establishing the mutual trust needed among the different teachers to get the sessions going. In the second place, the team-teaching approach, as described by Benesch (1999), is overly concerned with making students adhere to the established practices of the institution and the syllabus at the expense of the students' critical views of them. Besides, this model strongly focuses on course content. This is why beyond Master's level, the approach may not work. For instance, PhD is an individual study and cannot be dictated by a subject teacher, language teacher or department. A student may well need help with some language or subject-specific elements, but this EAP teaching model seems not to fit such programme of study and another approach will be needed.

Despite such challenges, this approach to EAP met wide acceptance during the 1980s and continues into the present (Benesch, 2001; Hyland, 2006). The cooperation between the subject teacher and the language teacher in this approach was an aspect that appeared in my research, where a staff interviewee called for the cooperation between subject teachers and language support teachers.
2.5.4. Content-Based Instruction Approach (CBI)

This American model is one of the primary approaches used in the teaching of EAP. This approach confirms that language could not be taught in isolation from content and that authentic content provides the most appropriate context for language teaching (Brinton and Holten, 2001).

The approach is summarised by Brinton and Holten (2001: 240) with respect to several key points, which I summarise below. To start with, the goal of CBI is 'to provide a meaningful context for language teaching to occur'. Secondly, the organisation of a CBI course centres around content, as content is the starting point for decisions about what is taught. And finally, language and content are to be taught together. As is clear from this description, CBI does not focus explicitly on form. This point is emphasised by Schleppegrell and Oliveira (2006: 254):

Content-based instruction (CBI) is a major force in English as a Second Language. The rationale for CBI rests on the notion that integrating language and content has pedagogic value, as the use of meaningful language will motivate students and enable content learning along with language learning pedagogy today.

Brinton and Holten (2001) investigated the efficiency of this EAP teaching approach. They carried out research among students and teachers on a number of university-level content-based courses. The data they used in their research included end-of-term course reviews completed by teachers, student course evaluation and teacher questionnaires (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). They found that the approach did not meet satisfaction on the part of teachers or students. In the light of these findings, Brinton and Holten (2001) proposed methods for adapting the EAP content-based curriculum so that academic texts and lecture materials, usually found in these courses, can also be used with grammar instruction. Their
aim with these proposals was to suggest a way to successfully integrate grammar in content-based instruction. They pointed out that to achieve this goal 'the target curriculum and materials will have to be modified and improved, and also that some pre- and in-service teacher training will be necessary' (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001: 171).

As is shown, this EAP programme places less stress on teaching, but more on content which clearly shows itself in academic language and learning materials. Then, drawing on content, some grammatical elements may be investigated (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). However, as noted by Brinton and Holten (2001), although the importance of a language teacher is not clearly stated, there is the need by implication for a teacher who has expertise in language to mediate the text.

2.5.5. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL involves teaching course subjects through the medium of a foreign or second language. The subject can be entirely unrelated to language learning, such as geography or science lessons being taught in English in a school in Syria. CLIL has proved effective in all sectors of education from school through to higher education. Its success has been witnessed over the past ten years and continues to do so (European Commission, 2008). CLIL is sometimes referred to as 'dual-focused education', as lessons have two main goals, one linked to a particular subject and one related to language (Pickering, 2009). Teachers working with CLIL are specialists in their own discipline rather than traditional language teachers. They are usually fluent speakers of the target language, bilingual or native speakers. The key issue in CLIL is that the learner acquires knowledge about a specific subject, in addition to learning the foreign language. According to European Commission (2008), there are many
benefits for CLIL. For example, it builds intercultural knowledge and understanding and develops intercultural communication skills. Further, it helps improve language competence. Also, learners can have more contact with the target language. Finally, this approach does not require extra teaching hours (European Commission, 2008).

On the other hand, CLIL poses a number of challenges to many teachers as it requires a rethink of the traditional skills and knowledge of the language teacher, classroom practices and resources (Pickering, 2009).

2.5.6. Academic Vocabulary Approach

Developing students’ academic vocabulary has long been recognised by teachers of EAP as important for successful writing and learning to take place (Woodward-Kron, 2008). The academic vocabulary approach, proposed by Coxhead and Nation (2001), categorises vocabulary into four groups. General purpose high frequency vocabulary takes up about 80 per cent of academic text. Academic vocabulary forms around ten per cent of text in the academy. Technical vocabulary occupies around five per cent, and low frequency vocabulary has a percentage of around five per cent of the whole vocabulary used in academic texts (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). This approach views the second type, academic vocabulary, as particularly important for EAP because of several reasons. In the first place, academic vocabulary accounts for a significant number of words in academic texts. Secondly, academic vocabulary is widely common in academic discourse (high-frequency vocabulary). Finally, academic vocabulary is a specialised vocabulary that an English teacher can help learners with (Coxhead and Nation, 2001; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).
This model seeks to build up a list of academic vocabulary, either through corpus studies (studies of massive numbers of words, usually using computers) or frequency counts (the number of times certain words are repeated in a certain text) of academic texts (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). Coxhead and Nation (2001) state the need for EAP to focus directly on academic vocabulary and consider EAP learners' knowledge of academic vocabulary as a condition for their admission into a particular academic discourse community, helping to acquire the particular vocabulary for the particular field (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).

This approach seems to be a narrow model, based on words for teaching academic language. Writing happens with sentences and discourse structure, more than with vocabulary. This model, however, could be quite helpful with reading (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).

2.5.7. The Genre Approach

Based on Swales' (1990) and Bhatia's (1993) pioneering works on genre analysis, the approach focuses on teaching specific academic genres, such as essays, research articles and theses. The focus might be on 'language and discourse features of the texts, as well as the context in which the text is produced' (Paltridge, 2001: 58). This approach suggests that genre-based pedagogy in the classroom is particularly helpful in improving students' writing. Students can draw on exemplary genres in their learning to write (Hyland, 2006).

However, Swales (as cited in Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001: 63) refers to 'the occluded nature of academic genres' which students require for their writing. In other words, he points out that it is not easy for students to get the best representatives of certain academic genres, which are of particular importance to them, notably theses and essays, in order for them to
follow. Universities usually provide samples of essays and theses to students, but it is usually not possible to tell which are the best models for students to draw on and why, since the quality of essays and theses largely depends on the grades which the students were awarded and the amount of revision required, especially with the dissertation, by examiners before the final draft was accepted by the university (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).

It can be drawn from all the EAP models already examined that much of academic teaching highlights written rather than oral language, especially writing, and this is clearly reflected on these models, although with different degrees. Moreover, there is less focus on the learner, but more on the course. Besides, not all the models already mentioned take account of the socio-cultural conditions, despite their importance (Jordan, 1997). However, it should be noted that most of these models have an inherent philosophy which arises from the context in which they are created. For example, the process approach, in my experience, is not often used in the Syrian context.

2.5.8. Reflections on EAP Models

Two reflections on EAP theories will be discussed in the next two sections.

2.5.8.1. Role of Writing in EAP

Writing plays a key role in the study of EAP (Connor, 2004; Gilquin et al., 2007; Jordan, 1997; Klapper, 2006). Gimenez (2008: 151) notes that 'writing in higher education has been the focus of research efforts in EAP for more than two decades'. According to Coffin et al. (2003: 20), students use writing 'as assessment; as an aid to critical thinking, understanding and memory; to extend students' learning beyond lectures and other formal meetings; to
improve students' communication skills; and to train students as future professionals in particular disciplines'. On their part, Aktas and Cortes (2008: 3) point out that

One of the most important objectives of writing in an academic environment is to create texts that are coherent and cohesive in order to establish successful communication within an academic community

Writing is also deemed to be among the most difficult skills which challenge students' learning. For example, according to Murray and Moore (2006: 6):

Writing involves starting, progressing and finishing a complicated, challenging combination of tasks. It requires you to activate lots of different skills and orientations, sometimes at different stages and phases in the process, sometimes all at the same time.

Jordan (1997) also states that writing has been considered a major difficulty for students. Similarly, Levine (as cited in Murray and Moore, 2006: 6) notes that 'writing can be experienced as one of the most difficult of all skills, requiring an intricate combination of neurological, physical, cognitive and affective competencies'. On his part, Klapper (2006: 307) points out that writing is the most challenging skill for students. He mentions different reasons for the difficult nature of writing. Firstly, the language of writing is more complex than that of speaking: syntax is more complex and vocabulary is more varied. Moreover, students need to consider different points concerning writing, for example organising their ideas, writing coherence and text structuring and presentation.

Further problems with writing, according to Klapper (2006: 307), are lack of support and delayed feedback on written tasks. He says:

students usually end up tackling written tasks on their own without the moral and linguistic support of a partner or interlocutor, as in oral work, and that any feedback students receive on their written work tends to be delayed (often by as much as two weeks).
Writing can be divided into academic and non-academic forms (Jordan, 1997). The key role academic writing plays in the study of EAP is emphasised in the literature. For example, Gimenez (2008) points out that academic writing has long been considered as an essential skill for students to learn. However, not everyone would draw a distinction between academic writing and non-academic one. For example, one EAP staff interviewed in University Wales regarded the distinction between academic and non-academic forms of writing as superficial. He believed that 'writing is writing'. In support of his view, Murray and Moore (2006: 32) believe that not only academic writing, but also non-academic one can help improve academic English. He notes:

There are different kinds of writing not all of which can be defined as academic, but through them you can nourish your fluency in ways that may ultimately help you to become more prolific in more academic realms.

The above section discussed the significance of writing as a skill in the study and use of EAP. This point was heavily reflected in the interviews for both University Wales and University Syria. The next section will involve a discussion of the most appropriate language of instruction in EAP teaching.

2.5.8.2. Use of Native Language as a Means of Language Instruction in EAP Teaching

There is tendency in the literature to use the target language as the means of instruction. The use of the first language (L1) in learning the target language (TL) is considered harmful for students, as noted by Klapper (2006: 225):

We must acknowledge the danger in encouraging the use of L1 in the classroom. Overuse deprives students of TL input, which research
shows is crucial to language learning… Moreover, if learners become too accustomed to hearing the tutor use L1, they are likely to ignore the TL and will not derive any benefit from the TL input.

According to him, excessive use of L1 may lead students to use L1 automatically in situations where they are able to express their meaning in the TL. Cook (2001) argues that the target language rather than the first language should be used by both teachers and students in the classroom. Equally, Klapper (2006: 225) believes that 'L1 use need never dominate even at beginners' level … and on advanced courses … there probably should not be much need for L1 at all'. The focus on the target language is strongly echoed in the interviewees' comments on teaching methods, for example many of them criticised the use of first language in language teaching.

Due to the decisive role EAP tutors play in the classroom (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 1997; Klapper, 2006), the next section will discuss considerations regarding the tutor in the classroom.

2.6. Role of the Teacher in EAP teaching

Graham (1997: 124) comments that 'in even the most student-centred classroom, where perhaps learning is based on self-access to materials, the support and guidance of teachers is still likely to be needed'. Cohen (1998: 97) views the teacher as 'facilitator of learning'. He also sees teachers as 'partners in the learning process'. McDonough (2007: 370) also remarks that:

The teacher's role in all of this is central and difficult. It goes far beyond the provision of reward. It involves providing a supportive and challenging learning environment, but also facilitating the development of the learner's own motivational thinking, beyond simply identifying their original orientation.
Jordan (1997: 122) points out that 'the role of the teacher will vary according to the type of syllabus and course, and which part of the world it takes place in'. According to Klapper (2006: 205-206), the language teacher assumes different roles in the teaching process, as is illustrated below. The first role is the tutor as leader: This is the traditional notion of the teacher as the one who decides what is to be learned, how and when. The second role for the tutor is that of an organiser. In this respect, tutors are expected to plan activities thoroughly. Tutors can also act as resources. When students are asked to do a task, the tutor's role is to be available to provide appropriate support.

Tutors may act as fellow students. The tutor may wish to participate in an activity. Such participation can be beneficial in 'providing extra support for weak learners or stretching able ones' (Klapper, 2006: 205). The tutor may also assume the role of a counsellor. Counselling implies providing students with feedback and advice on performance. Tutors are often assessors. This role needs to be handled carefully. Tutors can act as researchers of their own classrooms, which could provide them great teaching experience (Klapper, 2006: 206). This point is also emphasised by Biggs (2003: 74) when he states that 'the teacher's role varies, from highly directive, specifying procedures and correcting answers, to supervisory, to consultant, to group leader'.

Tutors may assume several different roles in the same lesson, for instance, 'leading during an introductory phase, facilitating and acting as resource during group-work, and assessing and motivating during feedback' (Klapper, 2006: 205-206). Moreover, tutors may need to adapt their roles in the classroom in order for them to be able to help students in a better way. The
above two points are reiterated amply by my interviewees. Also, the significant role of the
teacher was very strongly evidenced in my data.

2.6.1. Native or Non-Native Teachers

There is some evidence in the literature that non-native teachers can be preferred over native
one. For example, Ha (2008: 95) regards the tenet 'the ideal teacher of English is a native
speaker' as 'unscientific and invalid claim'. Cook (2001: 176) mentions that native teachers
have one sole advantage which is 'language proficiency', while local teachers have other
advantages, for example they are members of the students' culture and have gone through
the same stages as the students. He stated:

Given equal training and local knowledge, the native speaker's sole
advantage is their language proficiency, no more no less. But the
native speaker teacher is not a member of the group that the students
are trying to become L2 users. They have not gone through the same
stages as the students. A non-native teacher may be a better model of
a person who commands two languages and is able to communicate
through both.

On his part, Klapper (2008: 227) notes that native speaker tutors are preferred only with
advanced learners. He says:

Non-native tutors' target language use with advanced learners may
not provide sufficiently challenging input ... there are grounds for
preferring native speaker tutors, including foreign language assistants,
with learners beyond intermediate level, or at least for these to supplement
the work of non-natives.

The concept of native and non-native tutors was mentioned repeatedly by the current study
respondents, although not all of them agree on a preference for non-native teachers over
native ones. The learner is the key focus in the next section.
2.7. Role of the Learner in EAP

Due to the important role played by the language learner in this research, it will be discussed in some depth. Firstly, views of learning in general will be explored. Secondly, I will move to discuss the language learner from different perspectives.

2.7.1. Two Views of Learning

In the literature there are several schools of thought about how learning takes place. Below I discuss two prominent ones, which are closely relevant to my study.

2.7.1.1. Constructivism

Constructivism draws on the theory that learning is an active process which occurs via continuous construction and changes to pre-existing knowledge and understanding, as new experience is gained (Fry et al., 2003). Knowledge and understanding, it follows, 'are constructed by the learner rather than imparted by the teacher' (Cohen et al., 2004: 168). Accordingly, for a successful teaching to take place, teachers 'have to understand what students are thinking' (Cohen et al., 2004: 168). Many concepts about student learning, for example experiential learning and the use of reflection, are grounded in constructivism (Fry et al., 2003).

2.7.1.2. Situated Learning

Based on Lave and Wenger (1991), situated learning focuses on understanding knowledge and learning in context and emphasises that the learner engages with others to develop/ create
collective, rather than individual, understanding. Supporters of situated learning view learning as a social process and consider that new knowledge can be generated from practice. Lin (2007: 18), for example, states that 'situated learning refers to the idea that learning does not take place in a vacuum'. He understands language learning as a 'socio-cultural process situated in everyday, lived-in worlds' and that 'investigation of language learning has to be studied in actual contexts of persons-in-acting'. On her part, Laugharne (1997: 84) believes that 'language never operates in a vacuum. There is always a context, a person speaking and usually an addressee or audience. The context is altered from one occasion to the next'. This view is also emphasised by Hyland (2002).

The above two views of learning are very relevant to the present research. The first view considers the learner as the focus of the learning process. The second view demonstrates the central role of context in learning.

2.7.2. Adult Learning Theory

The learning of adults has had much influence on higher education (Knowles, 1990; Knowles et al., 2005). 'Andragogy', as defined by Knowles (1984: 12) is 'the art and science of helping adults learn'. Knowles (1984: 12) sets five principles for andragogy. In the first place, adults are more self-directed. Secondly, adults' experiences can be a good resource for learning. Thirdly, 'as a person matures he or she becomes ready to learn when they experience a need to know something'. Fourthly, as a person matures, his or her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centredness. Finally, for adults the motivation to learn is largely internal.
Adult learning theory is of particular interest to my research, since all my interviewees are adult learners. Moreover, my study is concerned with adults as learners of language, which is an aspect discussed in the following section.

2.7.3. Adult Language Learners

According to Parker (2004: 9), 'adults can be good foreign language learners, and more so when their particular aptitudes and needs are taken into account'. Hyland (2006: 81) contends that 'a key aspect of developing an EAP course is formulating goals and objectives from the data gathered by needs analysis'. Accordingly, it is important to study language learners in order for a successful EAP programme to take place. The next section will discuss the characteristics of language learners.

2.7.3.1. Characteristics of Adult Language Learners

According to Parker (2004), adult language learners have several characteristics in common. For example, they are independent and goal-orientated. They are also practical and interested in relevance and purpose of what they are learning. They can draw on their life experiences for guidance.

Parker (2004: 10) further states the different likes and dislikes of adult learners with regard to learning. To her, adults are keen on 'practical and problem-solving approaches'. They like working together. Further, they like 'materials which are relevant and incorporate real-life experiences'. On the other hand, she notes that adults do not like 'activities which involve short-term memory, learning by rote, or oral repetition' (Parker, 2004: 9).
2.7.3.2. 'Experiential' and 'Studial' Language Learners

A learner's learning style is the way in which a student thinks and studies throughout his/her learning process (Jordan, 1997). Learners have different learning styles. According to Fernandez-Toro and Jones (2001: 7), some learners are 'visual' in the sense that they prefer to learn by seeing and some are 'verbal' in the sense that they prefer to learn by hearing. Some learners are 'holistic', whereas others focus on details.

Fernandez-Toro and Jones (2001: 7) point out that the learning-style difference which seems to be most important for language learning is that between 'experiential' and 'studial' learners. This can be seen as a scale:

'Experiential' ← Mixed → 'Studial'

More 'experiential' learners prefer to learn through the use of language in the foreign country and with native speakers. They often find grammar explanations and language exercises hard to understand. More 'studial' learners prefer to learn languages by reading language explanations, memorising word-lists and doing textbook exercises. They prefer not to attempt communicating with people until they have built up enough confidence (Fernandez-Toro and Jones, 2001).

Most people, however, tend to have a mixed learning style, using sometimes 'experiential' and sometimes 'studial' learning strategies. What is important to note is that no learning style is better than the other (Fernandez-Toro and Jones, 2001). In the EAP context, 'experiential' learning may not be possible if there is little or no access to native speakers. In my data, there was evidence of students using both styles, even when the context militated against such learning. For example, University Syria students made use of the internet to access natural
uses of English. Finally, a learning style adopted by a language learner leads to learning strategies (Jordan, 1997). These will be the focus in the next section.

2.7.3.3. Language Learning Strategies

'Language learning strategy has received considerable attention among language researchers and teachers over the last three decades' (Gao, 2009; 60). Scarcella and Oxford (1992: 229) define language learning strategies as 'specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques … used by students to enhance their own learning'. Cohen (1998: 46) states that learning strategies are 'learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner'. These strategies can be automatic or learned (Oxford, 1990).

The effective use of language learning strategies plays a vital role in the success of learning a language (Adams, 2006; Hadley, 2001; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992; Swales, 1990). Adams (2006: 259) notes that 'all language learners employ strategies; they differ, however, in the number, type, and frequency of strategies used'. According to Oxford and Nyikos (1989: 291), 'better language learners generally use strategies appropriate to their own stage of learning, personality, age, purpose for learning that language, and type of language.

Oxford (1990: 9) mentions six general types of language learning strategies: three direct strategies, which are 'memory strategies', 'cognitive strategies', and 'compensation strategies', and three indirect strategies, which are 'metacognitive strategies', 'affective strategies', and 'social strategies'. Below is an explanation offered by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000, 229) for the six strategies. Memory strategies enable learners to use imagery and associations, among other techniques. Cognitive strategies are concerned with 'reasoning and analysis', and
compensation strategies help learners to 'overcome various limitations such as lack of vocabulary while speaking, or inability to process an incoming utterance while listening'. Metacognitive strategies enable learners to 'become aware of their learning strategies so that they can make choices, plan, organise, self-monitor, and self-evaluate '. Affective strategies help learners override different 'sources of anxiety and inadequacy', and social strategies 'lead learners to take advantage of social contacts and environments'. A good language learner takes advantage of these strategies. The use of appropriate learning strategies often augments learners' language proficiency and self-confidence (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000; Cohen, 1990). According to Hadley (2001: 77), 'many learners are not aware of the strategies that they use to approach a task and would profit, perhaps, from making them explicit'. So it is good for teachers to help learners become aware of learning strategies in order to take full advantage of them (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000).

**2.7.3.4. Adult Language Learners' Needs**

Understanding of learners' changing needs is a good starting point for designing an EAP course (Molle and Prior, 2008; Tajino et al., 2005). According to Klapper (2006: 103), tutors should 'interpret learners' needs and the demands of the learning situation in the light of their own beliefs about language teaching'. Parker (2004) notes that there are various reasons for adults to learn a language. Examples are travel, business, tourism, family, owning a property abroad or helping children with homework. Moreover, different learners have different learning styles (Fernandez-Toro and Jones, 2001). It is important to take into consideration why individual students need to learn the language, maybe through interviews or questionnaires, and to try to make opportunities for language learning which meet those
needs (Parker, 2004). According to Beaton (2004), carrying out a needs analysis will help the teacher to identify the learners' interests, goals and motivation.

This clearly emphasises that 'the traditional pattern of the long, thin course, spread over a number of years with a long-term aim of producing a linguist with a high degree of fluency in the target language (the 'near native speaker' model) is simply not viable when teaching the majority of adults' (Parker, 2004: 11). Students learning a language for tourism purposes will probably need more work on listening and speaking than on writing. On the other hand, in some examinations, an oral mark is worth less than grammar or reading marks. This will usually lead to less emphasis on speaking in the teaching and learning programme (Copland, 2004A).

2.7.3.5. Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation is a key concept in learning. According to McDonough (2007: 369), 'motivation is a property of the learner, but it is also a transitive concept: coaches can motivate their clients, and teachers can motivate their students. Furthermore, it is dynamic and changes over time'. Beaton (2004) notes that motivating students is a main gate to helping them remain enthusiastic and focused. Guilloteaux and Dornyei (2008: 55-56) point out that 'without sufficient motivation, individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals. Similarly, appropriate curricula and good teaching are not enough on their own to ensure student achievement – students also need to have a modicum of motivation'.

Motivation is of great importance in language learning. Fernandez-Toro and Jones (2001: 12) call motivation as 'the power-house of language learning'. According to Lin and Mackay
(2004), motivation is a necessary condition for the success of language learning. Guilloteaux and Dornyei (2008: 55-56) point out that 'motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate second or foreign language learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process'. On his part, McDonough (2007) points out that motivation is what pushes people to learn English, to learn to teach English or to teach it.

According to Green and Haworth (2003), just as learning is inhibited by anxiety, it can improve by success. Green and Haworth (2003: 9) further note that 'if [students] can achieve moderate success at each stage of their learning, then that may in turn set up a virtuous circle of: success → motivation → success'. Accordingly, motivation is a cause of success as well as a result of it (Yule, 1996). Motivated students are more likely to succeed than unmotivated ones. Moreover, students who tasted success are usually more boosted to learn.

Klapper (2006) distinguishes between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and states that intrinsically motivated students enjoy a challenge or want to learn out of love of the subject or to satisfy curiosity; while extrinsically motivated students are concerned with receiving a reward or pleasing a teacher or a parent. Applied to postgraduate students, intrinsic motivation might be real enthusiasm for a research question, while extrinsic motivation could be to get a PhD or publish a paper. On his part, Beaton (2004: 25) distinguishes between 'instrumental motivation' and 'integrative motivation'. With instrumental motivation, the learner simply needs basic language, maybe for a holiday or business trip. Integrative motivation involves a learner interested in learning to become fluent, for example, in order to be accepted in a foreign community.
2.7.3.6. Good Language Learners

A lot of research has focused on the 'good language learner' and the strategies they use to be successful (Grenfell and Harris, 1999; Fernandez-Toro and Jones, 2001; Harnisch and Swanton, 2004; Klapper, 2006). According to Klapper (2006), a good language learner is someone who is self-reliant, motivated, enthusiastic, active, not afraid of making mistakes, and practises a lot. Similarly, Stern (as cited in Grenfell, 2007: 9) notes that a good language learner is

active; having technical know-how and developing language as a system; … willing to practise and use the language … having a personal learning agenda, being self-evaluative as well as being sociable and constantly looking for meaning.

According to Copland (2004 A: 86), 'the characteristic that all the researchers believe good language learners share, however, is the ability to study the language outside the classroom, be this formally or informally'. This was often evident in my data in University Wales and, to a lesser extent, University Syria contexts.

Having discussed EAP from various angles, it is necessary to discuss the close relationship between EAP and the cultural context. The following section will review the socio-cultural context of EAP.

2.8. EAP and Culture

The close relationship between language and culture has been highlighted for the last two decades. Brogger (1992: 27) highlights the close relationship between language and culture when he contends that 'culture and language are inextricably interrelated and interdependent'. Jordan (1997: 4) notes that considering the cultural context is an integral part of EAP.
teaching. Hadley (2001) highlights the importance of integrating culture with language study. Baker (2003) argues that as every language reflects the beliefs, values and practices of its culture, then learning a language will also involve learning the culture expressed by the language. In turn, Hyland (2006: 42) argues that culture … influences not only how students are expected to write and speak in the academy, but also the ways of writing and speaking they bring with them from their home environments. Roberts (as cited in Lin, 2007: 22) called for 'a holistic approach that takes into account socio-cultural processes in second language development'. This means that the mere teaching of the traditional skill areas of EAP is not sufficient. Montgomery (2007: 22) contends that 'in the current moment, particularly in the higher educational research, there is a renewed and wider interest in the significance of socio-cultural contexts'. Moreover, Risager (2007: 4) points out that it is expected for a language course to involve culture as a part of its content. He says: 'language teaching has admittedly always had a cultural dimension in terms of content'. Indeed, culture has played a key role in the study of EAP throughout the last twenty years.

According to Atkinson (2004: 277), studies of EAP need to include 'a better conceptualisation of culture'. He believes that the idea of culture has not been theorised fully in EAP studies. He notes that EAP studies have traditionally thought of culture as what he calls 'received culture', which he defines, drawing on Gupta and Ferguson (1997), as 'the idea that a world of human difference is to be conceptualised as a diversity of separate societies, each with its own culture' (Atkinson, 2004: 277). He says that EAP studies should further develop the idea of culture.
Atkinson (2004) argues that there are many conceptions of culture, for instance received culture, post-modern culture, cultural studies culture, culture in the world, big culture and small culture. For example, in his 'post modern' view of culture, which comes from globalisation, he says that in the world of EAP, TESOL and L2 writing, there are some 'fascinatingly hybrid world citizens' (Atkinson, 2004: 281) in the sense that they do not fit neatly into a category, regardless of where they are living or the language they are speaking. Relating to my study, some of my students could be viewed as global citizens. This may imply that they are not much attached to their native cultures; they keep moving from one country to another; they are as comfortable in other countries as they are at home; they are able to speak several languages; they look at the world as a 'global village'; and/or they are open-minded. These hybrid citizens are on the increase, encouraged by 'the globalisation of higher education and advances in communication technologies' (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005: 12).

According to Atkinson (2004: 285), 'in education, the idea of classrooms as cultures has been an important concept'. Interestingly, he describes lots of 'small cultures' overlapping in educational settings. He indicates both the different sizes and levels of these interacting cultures, starting from the culture of individual classrooms through to national culture, and the partially overlapping relations among them. (See figure 4 below). He notes that small cultures have crucial roles to play in the analysis of any particular educational setting. Such cultures are national culture, professional-academic culture, student culture, classroom culture and youth culture. He further states that student culture would have special practices and norms in any education situation, and these would overlap with, but not be subsumed under, national cultural norms and practices and those of youth culture. Youth culture
practices and norms would themselves partly overlap with national culture, but by no means be contained by it since youth culture goes beyond national boundaries, and so on.

Figure 4: Overlap of Different Cultures in an Educational Setting (Atkinson, 2004: 285)

Applying the above diagram to international students studying at University Wales, the following diagram could be drawn:
This model will be used to illuminate the key terms academic and culture, which I engage with in my study. It will appear as an important element in my concluding chapter.

This post-modern view of culture as consisting of several overlapping cultures is also emphasised by Sowden (2007: 305), who notes that:

Teachers need to be aware not only of the cultures of their students and their environment, but also of the cultures that they themselves bring to the classroom.
Montgomery (2007: 22) also notes that 'it appears that social and cultural contexts of both students and staff are being viewed as influential in student learning and development'.

Having discussed the role of culture in EAP study, it would be useful to draw a distinction between home and international EAP users in an attempt to further highlight the role of culture in EAP learning and use. This reflects an important strand in the design of this study, where both groups were represented.

### 2.8.1. Home and International EAP Users

It is commonly thought that the study-abroad environment is 'potentially more beneficial to L2 development because students are exposed to target language input' both inside and outside the classroom and they have 'varied opportunities for authentic language use with native speakers' (Taguchi, 2008: 424). These opportunities are believed to result in considerable language gains. In the home environment, by contrast, the interaction opportunities are usually confined to the classroom domain (Taguchi, 2008).

#### 2.8.1.1. An Example of the Role of Cultural Context in the Development of International Students' Pragmatic Comprehension

In his study, Taguchi (2008) examined the role of cultural context in the development of students' pragmatic comprehension. Pragmatic comprehension, as noted by Taguchi (2008: 424), 'refers to the ability to communicate meaning in a socially appropriate manner and to interpret meaning according to context'. The participants were two groups of Japanese students: 60 EFL students in a college in Japan and 57 ESL students in the USA. The
participants' ability to comprehend indirect refusals and indirect opinions was measured before and after the students were given about 120 – 130 hours of classroom instruction. Participants' comprehension was analysed in terms of accuracy and speed of answering questions correctly. The results showed that both groups improved considerably in terms of comprehension accuracy and speed over time. However, the EFL group comprehension accuracy was much better than comprehension speed. On the other hand, the ESL group improved much more in comprehension speed than accuracy.

A few studies, for example Dewey (2004) and Freed et al. (2004), found that the study-abroad environment is not always more beneficial to English language learners than the home environment, as students may not be able to make use of the target language environment efficiently. Indeed, my data showed that some international students may be isolated from the local culture.

The next section investigates EAP in an ENL context, as the main case study in the present research was based in this context.

2.9. International Students' Experience of Study in an ENL Context

There is little research that has looked at international students' perceptions of their study experiences in an ENL context, but it is an area of increasing interest. A good example of recent work is Robinson-Pant (2005). In this book on educational research, the author discusses questions and issues raised by international research students regarding their different experiences and assumptions of what makes 'good' educational research in the UK context. The aim, as pointed out by Robinson-Pant (2005: 166), is to benefit from
international research students' experiences both 'in terms of teaching and learning support', which she refers to as 'two way learning' between supervisor and student, as well as 'in terms of developing alternative research approaches and practices'. The book analyses the challenges confronted by international students when defining a research question, choosing research methods, collecting data, deciding which language to use and writing up their dissertations. It uses the real-life experiences of international students to illuminate the kinds of dilemmas they may face. It is directed to both students and their supervisors, suggesting to students how to tackle cultural differences, and to supervisors how to approach the challenges faced by overseas students in their research (Robinson-Pant, 2005). The study is useful in that it casts a closer look onto international students' experiences in the UK, based on the students' own perceptions, followed by critical comments on the students' own statements. The work is similar to my research in that it sheds light on international students' perceptions of themselves as learners in a UK context.

Another earlier study on international students' perceptions of their learning in the UK was carried out by Harris and Thorp (1999). The purpose of the research, as stated by the authors, was 'to view more closely, through the eyes of the students themselves, the total learning context for which EAP tries to provide support' (Harris and Thorp, 1999: 5). The study participants were first-year Higher National Diploma (HND) Hotel and Catering students. The research instruments used were participant observation and ethnographic interviews. There were no pre-determined questions for the interviews; rather, the key issues were intended to emerge from the seven informants. The findings were that different factors, in particular the affective and the cultural, interlace with the more traditional skills areas of EAP.
Harris and Thorp's (1999) study is similar in some aspects and different in others to my current study. It mainly revolved around international students' perceptions of their learning of EAP within a UK setting. However, my study also investigated home students' perceptions of EAP.

As is clear from the above two studies, different factors intertwine in the international students' perceptions of EAP. Such factors go well beyond the academic aspects of EAP to include cultural ones. However, to have a further understanding of international students' perceptions of EAP, it will be good to investigate international language learners in a non-UK context, as could be seen below.

A case study on international students in a non-UK context was carried out by Robertson et al. (2000). The context of the study was an Australian university. The study discussed international students' perceptions of the difficulties they experienced in Australian universities. Their teaching staff's views were also investigated. The study used the Delphi technique, 'whereby problems identified are narrowed by consensus' (Robertson et al., 2000: 89). Questionnaires of open-ended questions were distributed among students and staff in three rounds. After each round, the emerging views were returned to the participants for further evaluation.

The study findings revealed that poor understanding of slang, accent and colloquial English, lack of confidence in written and verbal skills, feelings of isolation and tuition expenses were among the main problems perceived by international students. The lecturing staff
acknowledged the problem caused by their speed of delivering the lecture. They also criticised international students' poor writing, speaking and critical thinking skills. The findings of my study supported some of these points, particularly difficulty in understanding slang, accent and colloquial language as well as feelings of isolation.

It may be said from the above studies that international students in different ENL contexts experience both academic and non-academic challenges. This point was also highlighted by my current study.

The next section will consider EAP teaching and learning in higher education. It will highlight aspects enjoyed by international students when studying EAP in an ENL context.

2.9.1. EAP: Academic Support

Concerning academic support, Read (2008: 150) notes:

The internationalisation of education in the major English-speaking countries has long created the need to provide various forms of academic language support for those international students who have been admitted to the institution, but whose proficiency is still not fully adequate to meet the language demands of their degree studies. Language support most often takes the form of English for academic purposes (EAP) courses targeting specific skills such as writing or listening.

EAP support and training in the UK is usually provided in the form of pre-sessional and in-sessional courses, with the aim of improving international students' language skills and familiarising them with academic discourse and various genres related to their disciplines (Krishnamurthy and Kosem, 2007). The programmes offered also need to equip the students with research skills, such as conducting interviews and designing questionnaires, and
reference skills, including dictionary use and using library catalogues’ (Krishnamurthy and Kosem, 2007:356).

2.9.2 EAP: Cultural Support

With regard to ENL universities' responses to the growing number of international students (Jiang, 2008), most of them provide support and encouragement for international students. In the UK, many universities, University Wales included, organise a programme of events before students start their courses to welcome them and to help them make new friends and get used to their new surroundings. Social and cultural activities are often run for international students throughout the year. Universities also provide a variety of clubs and societies that students may wish to join (UCAS, 2008). Universities normally have international offices which are appointed to provide support to overseas students throughout their stay at universities. The offices organise induction programmes, social programmes, such as local excursions, and visits for students. Moreover, they help 'sell' universities in foreign countries. Students can arrange to see the International Student Support Officer to discuss any concerns or queries they may have, regarding their admission, study or leave to remain in the UK.

The support offered by UK universities to international students has improved remarkably over the last decade in view of the increasing importance of international students. This increased support has been a good reason for more international students to come and study in the UK.
2.9.3. Using Technology in EAP at University Level

An outstanding addition to the traditional methods used in EAP is the use of information technology to support English language teaching and learning (Chin, 2004; Edwards and McKinnell, 2007; Hanson-Smith, 2001). Stoller (2001: 218) notes that 'listening, reading and writing tasks become truly purposeful as students learn new computer skills, including the use of electronic mail, various software programmes and the internet'.

According to Hanson-Smith (2001), computer-assisted language learning started to be put into active use in the 1990s. This assisted EAP tutors in developing teaching materials, providing online assessments, helping with research studies, and providing invaluable means of accessing information from updated references and journals from home, with minimum time and effort, among many other formidable tasks (Hanson-Smith, 2001). Further, with the development of computerised speech enhancement, speech synthesis and speech recognition technology, EAP learners have been able to interact with computer systems in ways which simulate human interaction (Rost, 2001). Moreover, according to Copland (2004 A: 89), 'the internet in particular has changed how learners are able to access up-to-date and authentic resources either in the classroom or independently'. It has also allowed for 'the creation of learning communities that defy the constraints of time and distance and dependent relationships' (Edwards and McKinnell, 2007: 69). Indeed, EAP owes the computer and the internet much for the easiness with which it is now taught, learnt and researched.

According to Maier et al. (1998: 112), the use of computers in education can be divided into three main strands: 'as a resource, as a tool, and as a means of communication'. The use of computers as a resource is exemplified by computer-assisted language learning packages, the
internet, DVDs, videos and CD-ROMs. They provide invaluable sources of information that can be used by most students. They could also be very safe and secure information storage devices. Some instances of using computers as a tool are found in word processing, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations. They superbly substitute the traditional methods of dealing with information, as they are distinguished by ease and professionalism in use. As a means of communication, computers provide invaluable means of communication via electronic mail, computer conferencing, video conferencing, and electronic blackboard (Maier et al., 1998: 112).

As a matter of fact, information technology has played a key role in accelerating the spread of EAP in the UK, as well as the world (Hyland, 2006). It also made communication easier between international students and their teachers. This has also been a reason for the increase of international students in the UK.

2.10. EAP Teaching and Learning in an EFL Context

This section explores EAP in an EFL context, since the associated study in the current research was based in this context.

2.10.1. Foreign Language Teaching Methods

Various educational methods have promoted different views on how a foreign language is best taught in an EFL context. Below is discussion of two main teaching methods, which were mentioned by my University Syria respondents.
2.10.1.1. Grammar-Translation Method

This traditional approach derives its groundings from the traditional teaching of Latin (Yule, 1996). In this approach, the teaching of grammar and vocabulary is overly emphasised, and the spoken forms of language are under-represented (Harmer, 2004; Klapper, 2006; Yule, 1996). Hadley (2001: 176) also highlights 'the trend in the grammar-translation era that emphasised reading as the primary goal of language study'. This method, still widely common in the academic domain, is severely criticised on different grounds. For example, while it develops accuracy in language form, it usually fails to promote fluency in its use (Klapper, 2006). Moreover, Learners who have achieved high grades in learning language via this method may find themselves at a complete loss when exposed to situations in which native language is the means of communication (Yule, 1996). The following diagram illustrates some problems with the approach, adapted from Klapper (2006):

![Figure 6: Problems with Grammar-Translation Approach](image-url)
This approach was reflected strongly in the findings of my research, where most respondents in University Syria context said they experienced a grammar-translation approach.

2.10.1.2. Communicative Approach

This later revision of foreign language teaching and learning is partially a reaction against the belief that consciously learning the grammar of a language will necessarily result in an ability to use the language (Yule, 1996). According to this approach, how language is used in different social contexts is more important than the forms of language (Harmer, 2004). These approaches shifted focus from the teacher to the learner (Klapper, 2006). Also, the spoken skills are highlighted. Moreover, errors, which used to be regarded as negative hurdles intercepting learning progress, have later been viewed positively as signs of the learner's attempt to develop familiarity with the target language (Yule, 1996).

As noted by Taguchi and Naganuma (2006), the late 20th century has witnessed the widespread use of communication-oriented language teaching in many EFL countries. Many recent English curricula moved from past practices that emphasised grammar-translation mastery to a communicative teaching approach and highlighted students' listening and speaking skills in classrooms. However, my data on University Syria do not reflect this point. This is discussed further later in the study.

2.10.2. Literature on Home Students in an EFL Context

One case study, by Taguchi and Naganuma (2006), conducted in one English-medium university in Japan, examined how Japanese students who graduated from regular Japanese high schools adapted to a new English-only university environment in which general and
specialised subject areas are taught only in English. The study revealed the students' adjustment difficulties and explored the extent to which the difficulties stem from their previous experience in high school English classes. This case study compiled information from interviews with thirteen individual students who graduated from high schools and entered the English-medium university.

All thirteen students reported that listening was the primary source of adjustment difficulty in the English-medium context. They commented that, because the opportunity to listen to authentic English was limited in high schools, understanding teachers' directions in a university class was the major challenge. Similar to the listening skill, the students reported that the lack of speaking practice in high schools affected their adjustment to the English-medium university environment. Eight out of thirteen students commented that communicating only in English was one of the difficulties they had to overcome because they had almost no experience in speaking in English in high schools. Twelve out of thirteen students reported difficulties in adjusting to the amount of reading assignments in the English-medium university. The writing tasks were also reported to be demanding.

The difficulties which the home students perceived in adjusting to the English-only university were mainly academic, related to the four language skills. This is clearly contrasted with ENL context international students whose difficulties with using English were perceived to be intermingled with cultural, among other, aspects. This is a point which I closely investigate in my research.
In summary, this chapter started with an introduction to EAP. It then moved to discuss the historical and geographical development of English as a language and its implications in relation to the development of EAP as a field. The development of EAP as a term was explored next. Then I described some main models of EAP teaching, which have been of wide interest worldwide. The teacher and the learner, as key role players in EAP, were investigated. The chapter then explored the relationship between EAP and culture relative to the working definition used within this study and concluded with examining EAP in terms of teaching and learning in two contrasting contexts, where EAP is used as a native language and a foreign language respectively.

The next step in my study will be to discuss the methodology followed in my research.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The methodology I followed in my research was qualitative, examining in depth postgraduate students' perceptions of their use of English for their studies. Being qualitative, the research is less concerned with numbers and more concerned with information expressed in words, for example, perceptions, interpretations and feelings (Walliman, 2006). 'In contrast to formulating, testing and confirming or disconfirming hypotheses', as is usual with quantitative approaches to research, 'qualitative research draws on the data collected by the researcher to make sense of the human behaviour within the research context' (Burns, 1999: 22). Also, qualitative data often focus on smaller numbers of people than quantitative data, yet the data tend to be detailed and rich (Cohen et al., 2007).

The study drew on both naturalist and interpretivist theories. It was naturalist in the sense that the social world was studied in its natural state and situations were examined through the lens of participants rather than the researcher. It was interpretivist because students' perceptions were interpreted by the researcher, which 'opens the possibility for multiple perceptions' (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 11). Since I was myself an international student in the main case study setting, there were interesting points of comparison to be made with my experience and that of my participants.

A case study approach was adopted for investigating EAP in higher education, in Wales and Syria. The strengths of this type of qualitative research, as put by Maxwell (1996: 17), derive
from 'its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers'. This approach is usual whenever people are the focal point of the study, particularly individuals or small groups (Walliman, 2006).

### 3.2. Case Study as a Methodology

The main strategy used to collect and analyse data in the research was the case study. The case study is defined by Cohen et al. (2007: 170) as 'an investigation into a specific instance or phenomenon in its real-life context'. Its main purpose, as noted by Burgess et al. (2006), is to provide evidence which supports the claims a researcher is making. The research was focused on two higher education institutions in the UK and Syria. The focal point of comparison lay in the fact of the main case study institution being in an English-speaking context, whereas the associated case study context was Arabic-speaking. This allowed interesting points of comparison and contrast to be observed.

#### 3.2.1. Advantages of Case Study

Case study is an in-depth multi-method strategy, including an array of tools, used to collect and analyse empirical evidence in social research (Cohen et al., 2007). Other research strategies include surveys, histories, experiments, action research and the analysis of archival information (Burgess et al., 2006). What is unique about case study, however, is that it studies in depth individuals, organisations, communities, among other phenomena, through concentrating efforts on one, or just a few, research sites (Denscombe, 2007). It provides a unique example of real people in real situations (Cohen et al., 2007). It also has the ability to use a variety of tools, including documents, records, interviews and observations, 'in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny' (Denscombe, 2007: 45). As regards my research,
it ideally fits the definition of a case study. Firstly, it is based on multiple sources of evidence typical of case studies, which are interviewing, focus groups and documents. Secondly, it is concerned with individuals and organisations, which can both be illuminated by case studies (Gillham, 2000B). Moreover, this research approach is much used in similar studies to mine, which investigate people's views and perceptions of certain phenomena, as could be seen earlier in the thesis.

3.2.2. Uses of Case Study

In general terms, case study is used in three situations. It is firstly used when the focus of the research question is 'how' or 'why'. Secondly, it is used when the researcher has little control over events. Finally, it is used 'when the focus is on a contemporary event within some real-life context' (Yin, 1994: 1).

Applied to the case study approach used in the thesis, the 'how' question was concerned with postgraduate students' perceptions of using EAP, i.e. how they perceived it. The 'why question' involved the reasons for their perceptions, which contributes to the analysis of the 'how' question. With regard to the second point, the researcher was unable to control events, since the social world was studied in its natural state and situations were examined through the lens of the participants rather than the researcher (Silverman, 2006). 'It is not like an experiment where the research design is dedicated to imposing controls on variables so that the impact of a specific ingredient can be measured' (Denscombe, 2007: 37). Practically speaking, the problem encountered for accessing participants added to the uncontrollability of the study conditions. This will be addressed in more detail in discussing the sample. As for the third point, the study settings were contemporary ones, which were a UK higher
institution and a Syrian one. It was also dynamic, as could be seen through the change of my study timescale. This was also clear in the continued change of University Wales web pages regarding international students, for example the recent translation of the University Wales website, international students' web page included, into Korean and Chinese. This presentation of the website in several languages was not evident at the beginning of the study.

3.2.3. Problems with Case Study

The main problem with case study, as pointed out by Yin (1994), is its tendency to report biased views in discussing findings and drawing conclusions, since, as noted by Burgess et al. (2006), the information gathered depends largely on the researcher's interpretation. Other strategies, like surveys and experiments, are also subject to bias (Yin, 1994), but with case study, bias is more common and is less frequently overridden. Related to my study, bias may require serious consideration, especially with regard to my interviews in Syria, as I studied there for long years as a home student at school and university. This point will be discussed further later in the study.

In response to this concern, it is important to differentiate between bias and subjectivity. According to Kumar (2005: 214), 'subjectivity is related to a researcher's educational background, training and competence in research, and his or her philosophical perspective'. Bias, by contrast 'is a deliberate attempt either to hide what a researcher has found in his or her study, or to highlight something disproportionately to its true existence' (Kumar, 2005: 214). Accordingly, it is bias rather than subjectivity that is unethical. Moreover, adopting an interpretivist approach, as is usual with social research, I recognise that 'what we see is
determined by a complicated mix of social and contextual influences and / or presuppositions' (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 9). In carrying out the present research there was concern that good care would be taken to report all evidence fairly. Moreover, the main case study was not dependent on a single data collection method; rather, it relied on multiple sources of evidence, as described above, comprising teacher and student interviews, a focus group and documentary evidence. It was also supported by the use of an associated case study based in University Syria.

A second concern frequently encountered about case studies, especially when they consist of a single case, is that they provide little room for generalisation (Yin, 1994). Yin and Heald (1975: 317) point out that while 'each case study may provide rich insights into a specific situation; it is difficult to generalise about the studies as a whole'. Case studies, as noted by Burgess et al. (2006: 59), 'tend to refer to the uniqueness of that organisation or the community in which the research is located'. With regard to my research, the case study drew upon multiple sources of evidence in gathering data, as I have already mentioned. It also involved a detailed description of the study settings. This makes of it more likely to offer robust findings. The findings will not be generalisable, as is usual with this form of research. They may, however, enable comparisons to be made with similar studies grounded in similar circumstances, be they institutional, locational or social (Denscombe, 2007).

A third point raised against case studies is that they are excessively time-consuming (Yin, 1993). To this concern I can reply that the relatively lengthy time for the case study enabled me, as a researcher, to collect and analyse data carefully. It also helped me present my data in a clearer, more coherent, more attentive and more detailed way.
3.2.4. Case Studies in the Literature

The use of case study as a research approach is often found in the literature on research methods. One such study was conducted by Angelova and Riazantseva (1999), who explored the problems that four international students coming from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds faced in the process of adjusting to the requirements of discipline-specific written discourses during their first year of study in the Graduate School of Education at a large university in the United States. The study was designed as a nine-month ethnographic examination of the students' academic writing in English. The sources of data included interviews with the participants and their professors, focus group discussions, observations, analysis of written samples, and reflective journals kept by the participants. The results of the study suggested that international students, who come to U.S. classrooms with different writing experiences, need support to adapt more easily to the new academic environment. This support, however, depends on international students and U.S. faculties alike, addressing explicitly how academic writing conventions differ across cultures (Angelova and Riazantseva, 1999).

In her longitudinal case study, Ruth (1997) examined the reading and writing strategies of one student, Yuko, over a three year period and traced the process she went through to acquire academic literacy in English, her second language. Multiple data sources included interviews with the student and two of her professors, classroom observations, and texts from ten courses in three disciplines, including course materials and the student's writing, with teachers' comments. The investigation was enriched by a cross-cultural perspective. Yuko described learning strategies in two languages and in two countries: Japan and the USA. Data
analysis suggested that her educational background shaped her approach to USA academic practices. Her perceptions of her own experience changed over time, raising questions about cross-cultural interpretations of student learning. It demonstrated that it is important to gain the perceptions of students as well as teachers in terms of individual experience, and that these perceptions are mediated by geographical location and culture. This was also reflected in my research.

The above case study, like mine, draws upon multiple sources of evidence. Ruth's (1997) study highlighted the key role culture plays in academic learning and achievement. One person was examined over a three-year period of time. The role of culture was also investigated in my study, although rather than a longitudinal study with one person, my data examined these issues in relation to around sixty students during a period of around eighteen months in two case study settings.

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Three instruments were used in the present research: interviews, focus groups and documents.

#### 3.3.1. Interviews

Interviewing was the main method that I used for collecting data in my two case studies. According to Gillham (2000A), interviews are essential in case study research. Interviewing can be defined simply as a method of data collection in which a conversation, basically involving open-ended questions, is guided by a researcher for the purpose of eliciting information (Rubin and Rubin: 2005).
From the three types of interviews, I selected semi-structured interviewing as the main method for data collection, the other two being structured and unstructured interviews. According to Gillham (2000A), this research tool is the most important type of interviewing in case study research and, if carried out properly, can be the most productive single source of data. As pointed out by Freebody (2003: 133), semi-structured interviews 'begin with a predetermined set of questions, but allow some latitude in the breadth of relevance'. My selection of semi-structured interviews was for several reasons. First, interviews of this kind allow some flexibility for the researcher and the participants, not found with the structured type. For example, semi-structured interviews enabled me as an interviewer to probe informants in order to make them clarify or elaborate on unclear or unexpected responses. It also helped me to prompt interviewees, reminding them of points they missed or overlooked (Oppenheim, 1992). Also, interviewees can 'develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher' (Denscombe, 2007: 176). Second, semi-structured interviews are less time-consuming than unstructured interviews, and the interviewer is less free to follow the flow of his / her emotions. Unstructured interviews do not involve specific questions prepared beforehand to be asked of respondents; rather, they develop questions, probes and prompts in accordance with the interview flow (Kumar, 1999). By contrast, with semi-structured interviews, there is an interview schedule established in advance, which works as a clear framework, particularly for an inexperienced interviewer, like myself, and reduces bias in the study, since the researcher has less freedom in going beyond the questions already listed (Freebody, 2003; Kumar, 1999).
3.3.1.1. Advantages of Interviews

According to Kumar (2005), the construction of a research instrument is the most important aspect of any research endeavour, as it determines the nature and quality of the information gathered. He further states that each method has its own advantages and disadvantages and each is appropriate for certain situations. There are particular advantages to be drawn from using interviewing as a method of data collection, as shown below.

A major advantage of the interview, as pointed out by Bell (1999) lies in its adaptability. A skilful interviewer can follow up participants' ideas, probe their responses, and clarify vague or misunderstood questions, procedures which other methods, for example questionnaires, may fail to do. A participant can also make use of the participants' body language and visual signs, for example facial expressions, nods and smiles, to help better understand their answers (Bell, 1999). Further, participants tend to disclose sensitive and personal information in a face-to-face interview, which they do not usually disclose in a questionnaire (Gillham, 2000A).

Interviewing is also ideally suited for such a deep and exploratory type of research as my present study, which aims to gain insights into students' views and opinions. This method typically involves open-ended questions, which often yield rich and unpredictable responses. These responses, it was hoped, would help me answer my research questions and the overall aim of the study on home and international students’ perceptions of their use of English for their studies.
Finally, interviewing helped me gain understanding of informants as individuals and, hence, have better appreciation of their beliefs and practices (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This markedly enriched my overall research, which focussed on students' perceptions of using English for their studies.

Having dealt with main advantages of the interviews, semi-structured interviews in particular, it would be necessary as a next step to talk about the problems that are likely to arise from using this method of data collection in order to recognise them so that they can be avoided as much as possible.

3.3.1.2. Interviewing Problems

Huge efforts are required to carry out a good interview. O'Leary (2004: 164) notes that interviewing involves the need to 'prepare an interview schedule and data recording system; run a trial or pilot; modify the process as appropriate; conduct the interviews; and finally analyse the data'. Freebody (2003) points out that in interviews, all parties have rights and responsibilities. These require co-ordination among the different parties in order to ensure the success of the interview. Still, interviewing, as any other method for data collection, has integral problems. The knowledge of such weaknesses helps a researcher control or reduce their negative effects. It also works on increasing the researcher's confidence in the methodology s/he is using. Below are some problems that were associated with the semi-structured interviewing that I used in this stage of the research.

Firstly, interviews can be very expensive. For example, my interviews in Syria were very expensive, as I needed to travel from the UK to Syria in order to collect data.
Secondly, interviewing is time-consuming, as stated by Bell (1999: 143):

Interviews are very time-consuming. If you allow one hour for the actual interview, there is also travelling time and time lost through any one of numerous mishaps (respondent late home, sudden crisis with children which causes delay, unexpected visitor who interrupts the interview, etc.). Then there is the time needed to consider what has been said during the interview, to go through notes, to extend and clarify points that may have been hastily noted.

Another seeming problem with interviews is that interviewees may hold contradictory opinions over a certain point, which may mislead the researcher and give him/her contradictory results. However, this is not inherently in conflict with the nature of case study. Rather, it enriches the study as a whole and gives it further and broader dimensions.

Moreover, many interviewees' responses may be dependent on their concentration and mood. This problem was clear with my interview with a Chinese student. This student was desperate to end the interview hastily in order to catch the plane to his home country. For this end, he was speaking very fast, a problem which caused me difficulty in transcribing some of his answers. Also, many of his answers were rather short. Even, his simple answer to some questions that require thinking was 'I don't know.'

Inviting subjects to display their experiences, opinions and attitudes, as Cameron (2001: 147) points out, is 'potentially a face-threatening act', as it involves invading the informants' privacy and 'risks exposing the informants to negative judgement'. This frequently leads many participants to being more reticent, as well as more reluctant to engage with the interviewer's questions in a straightforward manner, by highlighting face-saving points and
marginalising, or concealing, face-threatening ones. Even further, as Marshall and Rossman (1999) note, interviewees may be reluctant to offer all the information the interviewer hopes to explore. For example, two interviewees from Syria did not give me consent to record their answers. Moreover, they answered my questions reticently. This was due to the sensitive nature of their profession.

Another problem usually associated with the relatively small number of participants found in interviews is commonly known as 'key informant bias' (Maxwell, 1996: 73), in the sense that there is no guarantee that the informants' views would be representative of the whole group under research. In my study, my participants' responses were regarded on an individual basis, even though their views might be representative of certain groups. The participants were a self-selected group whom I contacted mostly via email and personal networking. In terms of proportionality, they represent University Wales and University Syria broadly, as the sample follows the trend in terms of spread, as can be clearly seen in the section on sampling.

A problem, which I frequently confronted throughout my interviewing, was 'the control of bias and the maintenance of objectivity in terms of both the research process itself and the conclusions drawn' (Kumar, 1999: 12), since interviewing in itself is a highly subjective technique. This was clear in the framing of prompts and probes, as well as the interpretation of the participants' responses, particularly in hand-written interviews which required noting down the participants' responses. A prime example is the interviews carried out in Syria, my place of birth, childhood and education. Some preconceptions that I had then were my particular experience and knowledge of the topic in question and that I learnt and taught English in the same place under focus, i.e. University Syria. These preconceived notions
made me, on many occasions, interpret the respondents' responses unintentionally through my own lenses. Accordingly, trying to deal with these preconceptions and keep a fair and balanced point of view was to be taken into consideration in my study.

3.3.1.3. Interviewing Considerations

The interviews were initially planned to be carried out face to face, over the phone, and via electronic mail. On reflection, however, I decided to conduct face-to-face interviews, but not phone or email interviews, although the latter two could have been more convenient, as they would have saved me a lot of time, effort and expenses. This is because difference in the interviewing media would have the demerit of bringing about different responses. For example, email interviews would be markedly shorter and less elaborate than face-to-face interviews. For phone interviews, they would be difficult to record, as they may need to be hand-written, and so they could be frustrating, and a lot of ideas may have been missed as well. What is more, supplementing participants' answers by seeing their body movements and facial gestures would not be possible in email or phone interviews. The interviews were conducted in Cardiff, my research place, and Aleppo, following a 40-day visit to Syria. The interviews were carried out with 46 student respondents in total: seventeen interviews at University Syria and 29 interviews at University Wales. This number was dictated by the number of volunteers who were willing to participate, my supervisor's and my views of the requirements of the study, and the time limitations, especially for the interviews carried out at University Syria. The main participants were all post-graduate students studying at University Wales and University Syria. Five University Wales staff members were also interviewed, using a semi-structured interview. All the points above mentioned were also considered when interviewing the staff.
3.3.2. Focus Groups

A focus group is increasingly used as a method of data collection in educational research. It is a form of group interview in which a group of people discuss in depth a particular topic or theme provided by the researcher (Travers, 2001). This method generates large and intensive data in a relatively very short time, compared to one-to-one interviews (Cohen et al., 2000; Walliman, 2006). It also allows interviewees to challenge each others’ ideas and views as well as bring forward ideas not foreseen by the interviewer (Bryman, 2004). However, a demerit of this method is that it is sometimes difficult to arrange for a group of subjects to attend together for a group discussion. What is more, to interview experts or specialists may make focus group arrangements even worse (Walliman, 2006). Applied to my focus group arrangements, it took me over three weeks to attempt to get a set of four academic staff members together for a discussion session. What is worse, on the arranged day for the interview, only two interviewees were able to attend. Overall, two focus groups were carried out in University Wales: one included six students and the other two staff members. The students selected were all PhD students in the final phases of their study in order to get relatively sound data. They were five Egyptians and one Libyan. They were accessed through the help of a friend of mine. As for the staff members, they were an International Officer and a lecturer, representing two different views on EAP in the university.

It is worth noting that both the staff and student focus groups took place at the end of the data collection period. They were used to further highlight certain themes which emerged from the student interviews and which were seen as closely related to the main research questions. The staff and student focus groups helped me have a more rounded picture of students'
perceptions in relation to specific points which were deemed of particular importance to the overarching research aim.

3.3.3. Documents

Documents, whether historical or contemporary, are a rich source of data for social researchers (Punch, 2005). So much about the world can be learnt by looking at documents: a lot of the interaction which takes place in modern societies is mediated by different types of texts (Travers, 2001). The range of documents which might be examined by social scientists can be letters, diaries, biographies, brochures, government publications, mass media, publicity materials, websites, regulations, policy statements, statistical reports, television programmes, guides, and so on (Gillham, 2000B). Documents also include paintings, shopping lists, rail tickets, photographs and engineering drawings (Prior, 2003). What is more, an electronic document can also add sound to the multi-modal forms. Therefore, in some ways, it is rather artificial to restrict analysis of documents to text, especially since documents do not necessarily involve text (Prior, 2003).

Punch (2005) points out that documentary sources of data might be used in various ways in social research. She also notes that some studies might depend entirely on documents. In other research, for example case studies or grounded theory studies, documentary data may be collected in conjunction with interviews and observations. According to Gillham (2000B), documents are not usually expected to answer a researcher's research questions, but they form a part of the evidence. He further notes that the weight attached to documents in research depends on their relevance to the research questions. Below I refer to points which need to be considered when dealing with documents as a method of data collection.
3.3.3.1. Locating Documents

As Gillham (2000B) notes, documents may not be a part of a referencing system. Accordingly, locating them, or even learning about their existence, may not be straightforward. Therefore, it is important to contact the informants to whom the documents belong, for instance an office secretary, as their help can be vitally necessary (Gillham, 2000B).

3.3.3.2. Gaining Access to Records

Archival data can go back several years. Gaining access to these records may present some difficulties. Examples of such difficulties are mentioned by Gillham (2000B) and discussed below. From an ethical perspective, permission and approval for access and use of these records is usually required. Also, the records may be part of a computerised retrieval system that a researcher is not experienced enough to operate. The data may be in a form which a researcher cannot easily use. Also, Prior (2003) adds the concern of the reliability of the collected documents as evidence. Overriding these problems may need time and effort, so it is important to be clear that the sought records are worth the time and effort spent (Gillham, 2000B).

3.4. Two Domains for the Study: University Wales and University Syria

Harris and Thorp (1999) call for a deep understanding of the surrounding context within which students use EAP, due to its close relation to the way students use EAP. The study comprised two domains: University Wales and University Syria. Below is detailed description of the two domains.
3.4.1. The Context of EAP at University Wales

Like most universities in the UK, universities in Wales are public sector bodies that depend largely on the government for funding. International students are also a source of funding for the universities, in addition to their importance in internationalisation and creating a diverse student body. This is why the universities endeavour to attract more students from overseas, for example by offering more facilities and services. The universities are usually aware of international students' different needs, be they academic or cultural, as international students are part of the structure of all UK universities.

3.4.1.1. University Wales

The main setting selected for my empirical study was University Wales, which is based in Cardiff. My selection of University Wales as the main case study domain was based on several reasons. Firstly, it is a higher education university which is different from the one I am familiar with in my home country in terms of the education system and the student body. This would broaden my research horizons. It is important to find out how EAP learning in the universities of other countries takes place. Secondly, University Wales is my current research university, so it offers me an opportunity to study the institution where I am based. Thirdly, the study as a whole will help me have insight into the study of EAP. This, it is hoped, will contribute to understanding of EAP and of English as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon.
University Wales is a post-1992 university. It is typical of 36 UK universities which were created after 1992 from the previously named polytechnics. Like the older-established universities, post-1992 universities are seeking to receive more international students to improve their financial and international conditions (Jordan, 1997).

In terms of international students, University Wales is not a big university. In the academic year 2006/2007, the year of my main data collection, the number of international students studying at University Wales was 1297 coming from over 40 countries. These figures are small relative to large UK universities. For example, the University of Nottingham had about 6000 international students coming from over 130 countries (University of Nottingham, 2007). Cardiff University had about 3000 international students originating from over 100 countries (Cardiff University, 2007). The University of Glasgow had around 3000 international students from over 100 countries (University of Glasgow, 2007). As for the University of Southampton, it had about 2000 international students originating from over 100 countries (University of Southampton, 2007).

In its overall organisation, University Wales comprises five schools: Management, Health Sciences, Art and Design, Education and Sport. International students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, are distributed in all schools in variable proportions. For example, in the year 2006/2007, the School of Management had the greatest number of international students with a total of 1107 international students. School of Health Sciences came second with 110 students. School of Art and Design came third with 41 students, followed by School of Education with 21, and then finally School of Sport with 18 international students. As is
shown from the table below, there was a steady increase in the number of international students in all schools between 2003 and 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Wales Schools</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Art and Design</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Students in 2003/2004</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students in 2004/2005</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students in 2005/2006</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students in 2006/2007</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(University Wales Strategy Office, 2008)

As regards the number of international students by level of study, it is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Number of Postgraduate Students</th>
<th>Number of Undergraduate Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(University Wales Strategy Office, 2008)

Like many UK universities, University Wales actively encourages international links to receive international students. In 2006/2007, the year of my main data collection, the number of international students studying at University Wales was the highest reached over the recent years, as could be seen in the table below.
The following table shows the increasing number of international students at University Wales:

Table 3: Number of International Students at University Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Number of International students</th>
<th>Total Number of Students</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>7591</td>
<td>1/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>1297</td>
<td>10910</td>
<td>1/8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(University Wales strategy Office, 2008)

Also, the table above shows a significant growth of international students in relation to the total number of students. This emphasises the growing awareness on the part of University Wales of the importance of international students as an integral part of the University student body.

With regard to the country of origin, the students came from a wide range of countries. As could be noticed from the table below, the highest numbers in 2006/2007 came from India, followed by China and then Pakistan.
Table 4: Countries of Origin of International Students in University Wales in 2006-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending Countries</th>
<th>International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arab World</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(University Wales strategy Office, 2008)

3.4.1.2. Academic and Cultural Support International Students Receive at University Wales

The support offered by University Wales is explored below.

**Academic Support**

Language support for international students is materialised in University Wales by the International Office and the English Language Training Centre (ELTC), situated on two different campuses. The International Office and the ELTC are important dimensions of the international students' experience. They cater for EAP courses in two categories: free and commercial. The International Office has two English language and study skills support tutors who are available to help with any additional language or study skills support international students might need. They operate by giving individual or small classes, which are designed to suit individual needs and cover any areas where a student feels that they need to improve. The tutors also run a series of specialised workshops to cover aspects such as
giving formal presentations and group work. This service is free of charge for all international students and arrangements can be made for international students to see a tutor on a weekly basis at the campus where they are studying (University Wales International Students, 2008). Regarding the ELTC centre, it will be discussed below.

The ELTC centre was established to provide international students with language courses based on their needs and requirements. It runs various English language courses (ELTC, 2008). The general English language programmes within the ELTC aim to improve students' four language skills. Course elements include conversational English, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, cultural studies, as well as individual help focusing on students' own language needs.

Courses on English for Business and Academic Purposes focus on language skills for work or study. They also concentrate on IELTS, preparing students to sit the examination. Course components include meetings, seminars, discussions, presentations, telephone English and writing for business or study.

The centre also offers flexible study programmes to suit students' needs, including one-to-one tuition.

The summer schools offer students the opportunity to study in the UK during the summer and improve their language skills, their IELTS score and their understanding of the British culture. All students receive an attendance certificate.
Pre-sessional programmes focus on study skills, academic writing skills, library and research skills, independent learning skills, group learning skills, academic speaking and presentation skills, together with IELTS (ELTC, 2008).

As is clear, a component of English for Social Purposes is added to most of the above courses to enable international students to integrate into local culture and socialise with peers. This is emphasised in the literature. For example, Jordan (1997) notes that English for Social purposes is usually taught as a supplement to EAP courses for international students.

Similar courses to those offered at University Wales are run in different UK universities, taking into consideration the needs of international students. The examples below refer to EAP courses provided in three UK universities: Lancaster University, University of Durham and Coventry University.

Lancaster University runs different EAP programmes for international students at the University, including pre-sessional and in-sessional courses. The pre-sessional courses are two EAP programmes provided for international students intending to study at Lancaster University, and who need to improve their language and study skills in English before joining their academic departments. The in-sessional courses include regular general EAP classes, special teaching within some academic departments, and individual tutorials for students requiring extra support, especially with departmental written communication. All the courses provide help with cultural adjustment and social needs (Lancaster University, 2008).
As regards University of Durham, it offers students short or longer courses. One course is English for Academic & General Study. This programme is designed to prepare students for living and studying in the UK. The course covers all aspects of English language development both in terms of the language needed for students to cope with academic study and life in the UK, the content and research methods required in preparation for academic study and other essential aspects of British life and culture both within and outside the institution. Other courses offered by the University of Durham are pre-sessional and in-sessional English language programmes. The course contents are as follows: academic English, research and study skills, writing extended essays, seminar speaking skills and awareness of academic culture and conventions. The programme also involves individual consultations and on-line materials. (University of Durham, 2008).

At Coventry University, three main types of English language programmes are offered. The first one is the English language preparation programme. The course focuses on vocabulary, grammar, skills training and IELTS preparation. The second programme is a pre-sessional English language programme. It is usually offered to students who hold an offer of a place at Coventry University and need to improve their English language skills. General English language courses are the third type of programmes held at Coventry University. They are designed for students who wish to study at any university, but need to improve their English language skills. All the courses have a cultural component to help students engage with the local culture (Coventry University, 2008).
It should be noted that EAP courses offered by different universities in the UK are designed with awareness on the part of the universities of the vital importance of international students as a source of funding and as a factor in creating a diverse student body.

**Cultural Support**

There are examples in the literature which talk about the difficulties which international students need to overcome in order to adapt to the new culture. Byram and Feng (2006: 1), for instance, note that

> Study abroad necessitates living abroad, experiencing another way of life, changing one's habits of thought as well as those of eating, drinking and daily life. Or that is at least the expectation.

Cultural support at University Wales is mainly offered by the International Office. There are many social services offered to the new international students in order to help them acclimatise to the new life-style in the new culture. For example, University Wales arranges an international induction event, which helps students become familiar with different aspects of academic and social life. A special landlord's fair is also organised to offer private accommodation to those who had made that choice. Students are also taken on a guided tour around the city, and a welcome party is arranged. International Office staff assist with enrolment, directions to the place of study, visas, bank accounts, health provision and shopping. Moreover, the ELTC at University Wales provides international students with the opportunity to stay with a British family. This helps them integrate more smoothly into the local culture. The centre also offers some courses to familiarise international students and their families with the British life, for example, British cultural tuition programme, which gives a concentrated insight into British culture to help international students understand the social and cultural structure of the UK. Another example is the British familiarisation tuition
course offered for international students’ wives and dependents. This programme covers all aspects of integrating into everyday British life, from shopping and banking to medical registration.

3.4.2. The Context of EAP at University Syria

There are two types of universities in Syria: public universities and private ones, as an increasing number of private universities, currently ten, have recently been established in different cities, and public universities, currently six, are expanding to include more parts of the country. English occupies the status of the first foreign language in Syria; however, it is increasing in importance in all sectors. The number of private language centres is on the increase. Most of them use textbooks from the UK or the USA. Many people try to learn English in order to have better prospects in terms of future studies or to get a better job locally or abroad. The universities in Syria do not have attracting international students as a primary goal, although there is gradual growth in the number of students from surrounding Arab countries who study in Syria.

3.4.2.1. The Institute of languages

The Institute of Languages at University Syria was founded in 2000, previously known as the English Language Advisory Centre. It consists of four departments: Arabic, English, French and Foreign Languages departments. The Foreign Languages Department involves several languages, for example Spanish, Italian, German, Turkish and Farsi (University Syria, 2008). The number of students currently studying at the Institute of Languages in University Syria in about 1000 students. The assessment system followed in all courses is an internal
assessment system. The assessment method adopted is mainly the examination method.

Below is a description of the three main types of English language courses running at the Institute of Languages.

1. Courses of English for Specific Purposes (ESP): these courses help students in certain domains, for example TOEFL, conversation, writing, grammar, translation for engineers, commercial and medical English.

2. Courses of EAP: these courses run three times every year and consider the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, they focus most on reading and grammar. Most of the teaching staff are English specialists, who have a Master's or PhD qualification, usually from the UK or the USA. One EAP course is the Master's language course, which is a pre-requisite for the study of a Master's degree in all specialisations. It is from this course that most of my interviewees came.

3. Courses of English for Vocational Purposes (EVP): these language courses aim at training employees in different sectors, for example medical doctors, engineers and scientists (University Syria, 2008).

As could be seen from the EAP courses offered by University Wales and University Syria, though there are similarities, they are substantially different. The main difference is that University Wales has the social aspect added to many EAP courses. This aspect is absent in University Syria courses. Also, some EAP activities which are strongly present in University Wales courses, for example seminars and research skills, are absent from University Syria courses. This emphasises the importance of context of EAP delivery and how it is changing, which is a point I will explore further in the thesis.
3.5. Access and Ethical Issues

Access and ethics are two key issues which stand out as a continuing concern throughout the process of data collection and maybe after (Blaxter et al., 2006). Below I refer to the two issues in relation to my study.

3.5.1. Access

Access is mainly to do with how a researcher gets the research data (Blaxter et al., 2006). According to them, research may require gaining access to documents, people or institutions. The documents a researcher is required to access can be kept in libraries or by institutions. The people may be accessed in their homes, workplaces, universities, or over the internet. The institutions can be universities, schools, or government departments (Blaxter et al., 2006).

In relation to my study, most University Syria students were accessed in the Institute of languages at University Syria, with the help of the teaching staff there. A few were accessed in their homes, with the help of a personal contact. University Wales students were accessed mainly through networking. Most of them were accessed in their homes or in the mosque. Some of them were interviewed in the University, while others were interviewed in the workplace. The staff were accessed through the help of my supervisors. The documents were accessed mainly in the School of Education or through the help of my supervisors or the International Office.
3.5.2. Ethics

The conduct of ethically informed social research should be a goal of all social researchers, as consideration of ethical issues is a vital part of any research project (Blaxter et al., 2006). Certain ethical issues are to be taken into consideration when carrying out any research. This consideration is likely to need to take place through the research project, from initial planning through data collection to writing up' (Blaxter et al., 2006: 162).

I consulted the British Education Research Association guidelines (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2004) and considered several ethical points related to my research. The first point is voluntary informed consent. This implies that 'participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway' (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2004: 6). Secondly, 'researchers must take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported' (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2004: 6). Thirdly, 'researchers must recognise the right of any participant to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time, and they must inform them of this right' (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2004: 6). The fourth point is privacy. This entails that 'the confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data is considered the norm for the conduct of research' (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2004: 8). Fiththly, 'researchers must comply with the legal requirements in relation to the storage and use of personal data as set down by the Data Protection Act (1998) and any subsequent similar act' (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2004: 9).
In relation to my research, participants' voluntary informed consent was taken verbally. I explained to all the participants the importance of their participation and that the data collected from the interviews would be used to help me in my PhD research. I also told them that they had the right not to answer any question they might not be comfortable with. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the research for any reason. They were also asked permission to use a recorder to record their answers. I assured them of the confidentiality of the information they provide for the research and that their names will be replaced by pseudonyms. I also informed them that the data they provided would be strictly used for the purposes of the study. In relation to the staff interviews, an additional cautionary step was taken, which was to return their interview scripts to them to check for accuracy.

Two additional ethical issues relating to me, as a researcher, were also considered. The first issue was avoiding bias. According to Kumar (2005: 214), 'bias on the part of the researcher is unethical'. The second important ethical issue relating to the researcher was using the appropriate research methodology. As Kumar (2005) states that it is unethical to use a method or procedure which a researcher knows to be inappropriate, for example using an invalid instrument, selecting a highly biased sample or drawing wrong conclusions.

3.6. Research Design

According to Maxwell (1996), research design is built upon four main components. These are:

1. The research relationship that a researcher Establishes with those he / she studies.

2. Sampling: The different times, settings, and individuals a researcher selects to interview and the other sources of information he or she decides to use.
3. Data collection: how a researcher collects the data used.

4. Data Analysis: what a researcher does with this information in order to make sense of it.

I took the above four steps as a guide for me to design my research. Below is detailed explanation of each step.

3.6.1. My Relationship as a Researcher to the Participants

The role of the researcher and his/her relationship to the research design are very important factors in qualitative research (Gillham, 2000A). My position as a researcher in this study revolved between an insider's perspective and an outsider's one (Duranti, 1997). For example, some interviews were conducted with Syrian students on EAP in University Syria. Being the country where I was born and bred, Syria gave me an insider's perspective, investigating with a native eye. This means that I was investigating the country, culture and education system in which I was involved. An advantage of this is that it helped me get much more information than was literally said by the informants, as I possessed an insider's understanding of the culture of the target language, Syrian Arabic. It also offered me further insight into students' perspective, as I was once a home student for a long time. This was particularly important in interpreting the research data.

However, there were some disadvantages of being an insider. Since I was very familiar with the people and system, I may have unintentionally overlooked some data, which could be of importance to the research, on the grounds that they were too obvious to be mentioned. Moreover, I may have been, unknowingly, prejudiced, since I had a pre-conception of the education system in the country, having studied and taught there, as previously mentioned. This, however, is not inherently a problem for my study because the sort of research I am
carrying out is subjective by its very nature. As an interpretivist, I appreciate that the same thing may be perceived differently by different people, whose views can be influenced by the contextual factors, such as era and culture (Moses and Knutsen, 2007). I recognise these features of my research, which it shares with much other social science research. I strove to avoid the unethical bias mentioned previously by being careful to be accurate and rigorous in my research procedures.

A second group of interviews were carried out with international students in University Wales. In these interviews I benefited from the insider's perspective to a limited extent. I had lived in the UK and experienced the university educational system for over three years, studying at postgraduate level. Also, being an international student had merits and demerits. On the one hand, I was in a good position to understand and appreciate the interviewees' voices as international students. On the other hand, being a fellow international student added difficulty to accessing interviewees, as I had no authority over them to make them participate.

However, I was atypical of international students because I was an English language specialist and had good experience of EAP, unlike many interviewees who did not have the same language knowledge background. This helped me further interpret and evaluate students' perceptions in a more objective way.

To sum up, I assumed different roles in both University Wales and University Syria. In University Syria, my role was that of a home student and teacher. I also knew with whom to network and had more power/status as a university lecturer in the eyes of the interviewees.
This made it easier for me to access data in University Syria. Conversely, my role in University Wales was a fellow international student. This position at University Wales created a problem for me, as I had no means of demanding students to participate. However, the participants might have felt more able to express their views freely, as I was a fellow student.

3.6.2. Sampling

According to Cohen et al. (2007), the suitability of the sampling strategy that a researcher has adopted is essential to the quality of the research. On his part, Kumar (2005) points out that the accuracy of a researcher's findings depends upon the way they select their sample. Indeed, as is pointed out by Punch (2005), sampling is important in qualitative research as it is in quantitative research: a researcher cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything. To her, even a case study, where the case selection itself may be straightforward, will require sampling within the case. It is not possible for the researcher to study everything about even one case.

The main participants selected for my present study were university postgraduates from University Wales and University Syria, who were using English for their studies. The participants were selected in accordance with several criteria. All the students interviewed were post-graduate students who studied or used EAP as non-native speakers. Nevertheless, there were no further set boundary points in the research design, as some interviewees were Master's and others were PhD students at various progress points of their studies.
As regards accessing the sample, accessing University Wales students was considerably difficult, as the interviewees were all fellow international students like myself, and so I had no power over them and their participation was purely voluntary. This made me alter some sampling aspects, for example sample parameters and interviewing times. This also made me employ many strategies to obtain interviewees. For instance, I used personal networking, communication through University Wales staff, posters, and so on. However, with regard to the University Wales sample, care was taken not to include international students who had recently joined the university.

The University Wales main participants were 29 out of 900 international postgraduate students studying at University Wales in 2006/2007, the main period of data collection in University Wales. It is a percentage of around 3%. The following table provides a description of the main interviewees in University Wales:
As could be seen from the table above with regard to the sample representativeness of University Wales international students, it is a broad representation. The participants came from a wide range of countries. The Arab interviewees had the highest number of participants (15), coming from Libya, Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman,
and Syria. The Indians were next in number (6). Pakistanis came third (3). Nigerian participants were two. Two interviewees were from Korea, and one was from Botswana. As far as the factual number of University Wales international students is concerned, the highest number in 2006/2007 came from India with 430 students. From China there were 161 students. 64 international students were from the Arab World; Pakistan had 65; Turkey 46; Brunei had 40 students. Colombia 41, Oman 30, Nigeria 16, Sri Lanka 29, Thailand 25, Korea 7, Bangladesh 21, Botswana 10, Egypt 6, Libya 21, Kenya 14, Kuwait 1, Taiwan 17, Jordan 4, and Syria 2.

The following table demonstrates the above information:

Table 6: Comparative Number of International Students in the Study and in University Wales in 2006-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Sample</th>
<th>International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arab World</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is clear from the table, interviewees came from a wide range of countries. Moreover, Indian and Arab students as international students and as a study sample are high numbers. This shows some representativeness on the part of the sample. The relatively higher number of Arab participants is mainly because they speak the same language as myself and so networking was easier through Arab participants than other participants.
With regard to the staff interviewed at University Wales, they represented two different, but complementary, perspectives: International Office staff and lecturing staff. These two perspectives could broadly represent the staff at University Wales who are directly engaged with international students. Below is a description of the staff interviewed in the research:

Table 7: A Profile of Staff Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Language Support Tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>International Office Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>MBA Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>MBA Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>EAP Tutor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning University Wales student focus group, it comprised six international students from Egypt and Libya. This was a particular type of sample mainly because networking was easier through Arab participant, the researcher being an Arab student. The following table provides a description of the focus group participants:

Table 8: A Profile of University Wales Focus Group Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Age-Group</th>
<th>Current Study</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1 (W26)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>PhD Tourism</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2 (W27)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>PhD Tourism</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3 (W29)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>PhD Tourism</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>PhD Tourism</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>PhD Tourism</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>PhD Tourism</td>
<td>Libya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As could be seen from the above table, three participants from the focus group previously participated in the main interviews, while the other three focus group interviewees participated for the first time in the research.
University Syria interviewees were seventeen out of about 100 postgraduate students studying at the Institute of Languages in University Syria in 2004/2005, the main period of data collection at University Syria. It is a percentage of about 17%. Below is a profile of Syrian participants in the study:

Table 9: A Profile of Participants in University Syria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Current Study</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>MSc Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>MA Accountancy</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>MA Accountancy</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>MSc Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>MSc Agricultural Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30-33</td>
<td>MSc Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Diploma Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>PhD Computer Sciences</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>MSc Physics</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>MSc Maths</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>MA Arabic</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>MA Arabic</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>MSC Civil Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>PhD Architecture Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>MA Islamic Law</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>MA Architectural Engineering</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As could be seen from the above table, the University Syria sample also showed a broad representation, as all interviewees were Syrian home postgraduate students who had studied EAP in university or school. Different fields of study were represented. Regarding the
sample parameters, most interviewees were doing Master's, with only one student doing Diploma and one doing PhD. Also, most interviewees were male, due to the greater number of males studying in the Institute of Languages.

3.6.3. Procedures for Data Collection

Now I consider the steps taken in actual data collection. The development of my main research method was cyclical, involving three phases which were conducted at different times and locations. Below is a detailed description of the different phases of the first source of evidence in data collection.

3.6.3.1. Student Interviews

3.6.3.1.1. Pilot Phase

The first phase involved piloting the interview questions on my wife who was a university student, as well as four students studying for an MA in Education. The main goal was to test and refine my interview questions. This initial phase helped me to be prepared for the later interviews. In this phase, the interview questions were rather general, circumventing the targeted information rather than hitting the key-points directly. I also tried to acclimatise the participants to the interviewing situation and reduce the uncomfortable feelings on their part, resulting from the idea of them being interviewed (Kvale, 1996).

Evaluation of the Interviews at Phase One

The first part of the first phase of interviewing was to trial the interview questions on my wife at home in the evening of 10 November 2004. Trialling the interview for the first time,
with my wife in particular, was very fruitful. First, it helped me rethink some questions and gave me the chance to revise, reorder, remove, or add some others. Second, I had the perception that interviewing was not as straightforward a procedure as it first appeared; I realised that so many factors come into play in conducting a successful interview, including the recorder quality, the interview questions, the interviewee's concentration, and others. Third, it equipped me with practical experience about the nature of interviews, and hence gave me more self-confidence for future interviews. Finally, it helped me to ease myself into interviewing, as this was the first interview for me to carry out in my life, and accordingly, it was necessary to be carried out with someone with whom I was very familiar.

The second part of the pilot phase comprised four interviews conducted on an individual basis with university students studying for a Master's degree in Education. The interviews were carried out on 2 December 2004 at University Wales. The participants were four: a Chinese male, an Algerian female and two Brunei females. The total time for the four interviews was about two hours. Three interviews were recorded, while the last one was hand-written, due to a failure on the part of the recorder, which resulted in an unintentional loss of over two thirds of the interview.

From a technical point of view, the four interviews were helpful in many ways. Firstly, they helped me further revise the interview structure, via decreasing the number of the interview questions, as well as the addition, removal or adaptation of some questions. Secondly, I realised the importance of ensuring an adequate place to undertake the interviews in terms of feeling quite informal and relaxed, as my first of the initial interviews was carried out in the cafeteria, which was very noisy, a feature that had very bad impact on the informant's
concentration as well as on the recording quality. Thirdly, ensuring the quality of the recorder was not of less importance: I missed a considerable part of the first interview because the recorder was so sensitive that it picked up the noises around to the extent that the subject's voice was not intelligible in many parts of the interview. Moreover, the fourth interview was unfortunately lost because I was recording the interviewee while, unknowingly, the recording time was complete. I realised that only after the elapse of about two thirds of the interview. Further, I realised that arranging convenient times that fit in with interviewees' plans is not an easy matter. One supposed interviewee did not show up at the time of the interview; two other participants put off the agreed morning time until 2:00 in the afternoon, which was about four hours delay, because they had discovered that they had class observations, and then another half hour was added because of the transport congestion; the first participant, in turn, requested that the interview be done quickly and half an hour earlier than the agreed morning time to catch the plane to his home country. Fourthly, serving tea and coffee to the informants was very useful, as it created an atmosphere of informality and put the interviewees at ease. I provided some refreshments to all participants before interviews were conducted.

3.6.3.1.2. Phase Two: Interviews in Syria

On 23 December 2004, I travelled to Syria, mainly to carry out interviews and collect some documents regarding the study of EAP at University Syria. Previously, I had an official letter from my supervisor explaining the purpose of my research and my need for their help to get me admission from the people in charge at the university. The interview schedule for University Syria is found in appendix 1.
The first fifteen days in Syria were not up to my expectations. First, I began in making a connection to the English Department at University Syria, and this was a department I had already known very well, since I was a teacher assistant there three years earlier. The head of the department welcomed me and gave me some information about teaching English in the English department, which was of little use to me, and apologised for not being able to help with regard to EAP teaching as the department does not deal with this discipline; rather, it deals with teaching English language and literature for English specialist students. She, however, gave me a verbal consent and further pointed out that she was ready to provide me, if need be, with an official letter which would authorise me to interview students from other faculties and departments. Meantime, I contacted a cousin of mine who was a lecturer at the Faculty of Electricity at University Syria. He helped me arrange times when I could interview three of his post-graduate students, from the electricity department, in their own homes, upon their request, as it was the most convenient place for them. Two of the three participants were brothers. The three interviews were really exhausting as they were carried out one after the other, and the interviewees were living in two different locations of the city. My overall impression of the three interviews was that they were very tiring and that interviewing was not as easy as it might theoretically seem to be.

My next destination was the Institute of Languages in University Syria. I went there because I was informed about the possibility of finding postgraduate courses of EAP running there. I met the head of the Institute who welcomed me and redirected me to the tutor in charge of the English courses in the Institute. The tutor, in turn, welcomed me and gave me some documents on EAP teaching for postgraduate students in the Institute and answered many of my queries regarding the different courses and plans followed in EAP teaching. Then, he
gave me an official letter which requested class tutors to facilitate the process of interviewing their students individually. The English post-graduate classes running in the centre at that time were MA classes of different specialisations, for example Arabic, Engineering, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Accountancy, Islamic Law, among others. I managed to carry out fourteen interviews over a week, from 25 until 31 January 2005 in the Institute of Languages. They were carried out easily and smoothly, particularly if compared to the previous three interviews conducted in the interviewees' homes, because the students were interviewed in one location and one after the other during their course sessions.

The total number of interviews in Syria was seventeen interviews carried out on one-to-one basis. All the interviewees were Syrian post-graduate students studying at University Syria. Fifteen of them were MA students; one was Diploma; and one was reading for a PhD degree. The total time taken for all the interviews was about eight hours. All the interviewees were assured of confidentiality, that their information would not be passed on to any person other than those involved in the study, and that confidentiality is a pre-condition set by the university for conducting my research. Additionally, I told them to feel free not to answer any question they felt uncomfortable to answer. Both Arabic and English were used for interviewing, according to the interviewees' preferences: some students were not able to express themselves freely in English, and others were not confident enough to speak English before others. Two interviews were hand-written upon the request of the interviewees who did not like to have their actual words recorded, mainly to protect their confidentiality. This added to the difficulty of the situation, as I was slow in hand-writing, and consequently, I was involved in two main problems: first, I did not manage to write down every single idea I heard from the two interviewees, and this is a problem noted by Bell (2005), and second, many times I felt a little embarrassed as a result of frequently requesting participants to
repeat ideas I missed out, or to speak more slowly. Other interviews were partly unclear because of the noise, either coming from the room where I conducted my interviews, as it was a public room that was frequently accessed by students, or from outside the room. Other interviews were incomplete because of reluctance on the part of some interviewees to answer some questions.

3.6.3.1.3. Phase Three: Interviews in Wales

The next stage of my research with semi-structured interviews was back in Cardiff, at University Wales. On 27 April 2005, my supervisor and I arranged for an appointment with an International Officer at University Wales. The meeting was in my supervisor's office. The goal was mainly twofold. First, My supervisor and I wanted to ask her if she could provide me with useful information about the types of international students I could interview. Second, I asked her to offer me a link with the prospective interviewees, as she had the contact email addresses of most of them. The meeting was fruitful, and the information I obtained was helpful with regard to my later data collection and the research in general.

At this point, a problem occurred, mainly because I found great difficulty in accessing interviewees. This caused a delay of around six months in the planned data collection. However, I took advantage of these months to further test and refine the interview questions on one side, and to work further on the literature review on the other.

On Monday 21 November 2005, I had a tutorial with my supervisor when I assumed the role of the interviewee. Accordingly, I was interviewed by my supervisor in a way to further test
my interview questions. In the light of this interview, some questions were slightly altered because of their vagueness, and others were dropped because of their redundancy. This procedure is in some way similar to Gillham's (2000A) advice to the researchers of arranging to be videotaped during their interview as a way of practice.

At the same time, I met in December with a teacher of English for international students in the Business School at University Wales. The meeting took place on Friday 2 December 2005 at 11 o'clock in my supervisor's office. The teacher's practical experience in the field of teaching was a good help for me to further improve my interview questions. A version of the interview schedule for University Wales is found in appendix 2.

3.6.3.1.4. Interview Schedule Differences between University Wales and University Syria

As could be noticed from the interview schedules in the appendices 1 and 2, there were some differences between the two interview schedules for the two main instruments of data collection in University Wales and University Syria. One main reason for this difference is that the two interviewing phases are sequentially different, as University Syria interviews took place first, followed by University Wales interviews. This gave me some time to reconsider the research instrument for University Wales. This is why University Wales interview schedule is organised under three headings and has a written section. Also, University Wales is more developed as it is further tested and refined, for example, questions 14, 17, 18 and 19, which investigate the interviewees' skills and strategies as language learners were added to University Wales schedule due to their direct relevance to my revised research questions.
There are also some differences between the two interview schedules because they are context-related, for example the question which investigates the period of time University Wales interviewees spent using English in the UK. The equivalences between the two interview schedules are mentioned in the two tables in appendix 3.

The interview questions in both case studies largely determined the emerging themes of the study. This will be explained below

3.6.3.1.5. Linking University Syria Interview Questions to Emerging Themes
Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 provided background information about interviewees. Questions 6, 8 and 9 related to the theme on students' previous study. Questions 5, 10 and 11 addressed the theme on students and EAP. Questions 7 and 12 related to students' self-assessment. Questions 13 and 14 provided information on the methodology used for teaching EAP at University Syria. Questions 15 and 16 were related to the theme of support for learning. Question 17 was on the theme of a memorable event which students remembered.

3.6.3.1.6. Linking University Wales Interview Questions to Emerging Themes
Regarding interview questions, questions 1 and 2 were background information. Questions 3 and 4 related to substantial experience of English for studies in School and College. Questions 5, 6, 7 and 8 were on EAP at University Wales. Questions 9, 10 and 11 related to students' self-assessment. Questions 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 provided information about students as learners. Questions 17, 18 and 19 gave account of students' views of EAP. Question 20 was about students' account of a memorable event they could recall.
3.6.3.1.7. Phase-Three Interviews Resumed

In trying to access international students to interview them, I was supposed to meet an International Officer at University Wales for her help, but unfortunately she was absent from academic work for some time. I then had to follow a different route for my interviews. With the help of my supervisor I started to arrange for interviewing through making contact with an English language support tutor at University Wales. On 2 February 2006 she introduced me to two of her international students at the School of Arts. The two Korean students of Arts agreed to be interviewed, although with reluctance at the beginning. Three days later I was able to contact another two students from the School of Education. The first was an Algerian studying for an MA and the other was from Botswana reading for a PhD. I was then introduced to several MA students of tourism in another campus. I contacted them via email twice, but unfortunately none replied back, although they previously consented to be interviewed. Upon frequent discussions with my supervisor I planned three routes to work on for gaining participants to interview. The networks I planned to approach were personal contacts, through the mosque and Arabic speakers, contacts arranged through University Department and those through the International Office. One of my acquaintances through the mosque was studying for a pre-MBA (Master of Business Administration) at University Wales. He accepted to be interviewed and further introduced me to some of his colleagues whom I interviewed as well.

On 10 April 2006 my supervisor prepared the way for me to contact a member of staff at the International Office and ask him to facilitate contacting international students in University Wales. He accepted to put an advert on the International Office website which would request
help for my research interviewing. Accordingly, I was able to carry out interviews with a few students.

On 15 April 2006 a mosque friend of mine introduced me to two of his Arab house-mates studying for an MBA at University Wales who were to be my next interviewees. I interviewed one of them in his home. The second was interviewed days later after several rearrangements. This person also arranged for me to interview two of his course mates in his own home. Another mosque friend from Nigeria, studying for an MSc (Master of Science), introduced me to three University Wales students. I interviewed two of them on 17 April 2006, one in an Islamic Centre, and the other in his own home. He also arranged for me to meet another Nigerian friend studying at University Wales. I interviewed him together with his Pakistani friend studying the same programme with him. The two interviews were carried out at University Wales on 25 May 2006.

On 22 May 2006 I called a Jordanian friend who was then ready to be interviewed. I visited him in his home and interviewed him, as well as a friend of his studying at University Wales, who was living in the same building. Then, he also introduced me to another two of his friends studying at University. I interviewed them on 26 May 2006 in my friend’s home.

On 26 May 2006, and after several contacts with a tutor on the MBA programme at University Wales, with the help of my supervisor, he asked me to write him a message showing what kind of research I am carrying out and requesting for the help of international students. He then forwarded it to his international students on the MBA programme. Five students initially responded, but three of them silently withdrew, and only two Indians were
interviewed. The first was interviewed in University Wales on 17 June 2006. The other was interviewed on 23 June 2006. The interview took place in his work place, upon his request.

During June 2006 I worked temporarily for an international organisation. I met several students studying at University Wales there. I managed to interview seven students. Students interviewed were five males and one female. They were all Indians, except for one Nigerian. These interviews taught me the importance of sociability, as most of the participants were friends of mine in the work place. I also learnt the value of patience: a participant used to answer some questions in an aggressive manner. I was to respond in a gentle and careful way in order not to easily lose him as a participant.

On 25 July 2006 I sent a message requesting interviewees to a long list of PhD students, obtained with the help of my supervisor. Accordingly, I had several replies. Two days later I carried out two interviews in University Wales and another three in a local Islamic Centre. The five interviews were carried out easily, although the recording machine used for this occasion was not a very good quality, because the good quality recorder was temporarily missing, which added difficulty to the interviews transcription, but fortunately, almost none of the data was missed.

Gaining interviewees at this stage was difficult, as has been described, because I did not have authority over the students, and also because participants were on different campuses.
Overall, interviewing in Syria and Wales proved difficult and tiring. Nevertheless, following different routes for assistance with gaining participants, I managed to carry out the student interviews. I then moved to staff interviewing.

3.6.3.2. Staff Interviews

Having almost completed student interviews, my second step was to conduct some staff interviews in University Wales. With the help of my supervisor, I contacted a language support tutor in University Wales and interviewed her on 15 August 2006 in her office. By the end of the interview I requested her to be a part of my focus group and she kindly consented. I also asked her help in contacting a welfare officer in University Wales, who could answer the interview questions from another perspective. She immediately phoned her and arranged for a meeting during which I could interview the welfare officer. Three days later, I met her in the International Office and interviewed her, as agreed. Moreover, she was pleased to join my focus group provided that I choose a day when she was not busy. Two teachers of MBA were also interviewed jointly in the University Wales School of Management. The interview took place on 7 September 2006. Another member of staff who was an EAP specialist was also interviewed on 21 December 2006. The staff interview schedule is found in appendix 4.

3.6.3.3. Staff Focus Group

With the help of my supervisor I started to make arrangements for staff focus group interviewing by the end of January 2007. I contacted four University Wales staff members who were my previous staff interviewees. After several attempts to arrange for a time which would suit all the interviewees, agreement was reached on a mutually accepted time within
about two weeks. However, due to heavy snow fall on the meeting day, the focus group meeting was also delayed for about another two weeks, until 28 February 2007. On the time of the interview only two interviewees attended, while the other two had excused themselves due to emergencies. The interview lasted about 45 minutes. However, due to the similarity of the themes which emerged from the staff focus group to those which emerged from the staff interviews, I analysed the staff focus group interview as a part of the staff interviews.

3.6.3.4. Student Focus Group

With the help of a friend of mine I carried out a focus group with six students on 6 September 2007. The interviewees were all Arabs studying for a PhD degree in University Wales. Five of them were from Egypt and one from Libya, as mentioned earlier. The data from the focus group were used to amplify responses to the main themes which emerged from the student interviews, as has been mentioned earlier.

3.6.3.5. Documents

As regards my documents, some were related to University Syria, and some others were related to University Wales. University Syria documents were paper documents, mainly official documents related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP). As for University Wales documents, they were paper and electronic documents, relating to EAP and / or international students in higher education. They included publicity materials, official statistics, prospectuses, web pages, and so on. Some documents collected were easily obtained, especially the current documents, for example from the University Wales School of Education, where I am based, or through the help of my supervisors. The further the documents went back in time or the less circulated they were, the more difficult it was for me
to obtain them. For example, back issues of the staff newsletters in University Wales were obtained through prolonged contacts with different members of the International Office.

As for the procedures for presenting the documents, care was taken to maintain anonymity. Some more general material was scanned from University Wales and University Syria. The scan can be found in appendices 7, 8, 9 and 10. Other references are quoted directly in the text and the documents are referenced in the reference list.

One important point to note is that very different documents were analysed in University Wales and University Syria. University Wales' documents were mainly prospectuses, publicity material and information for students and staff. The documents in University Syria, by contrast, were mainly to guide staff and students on course content and assessment. University Syria does not have documents similar to those of University Wales mainly because it deals only with home students, who are expected to be familiar with the setting. Also, unlike University Wales, University Syria does not have the policy of 'selling' the University to students. Overall, both groups of documents were useful in informing my research questions and the case study in the two contexts.

**3.6.4. Procedures for Data Analysis**

The procedures of data analysis comprised two different steps. The first step was the preparations for data analysis, which involved three major steps: taping, transcription and translation. The second phase included data analysis and presentation. The two steps will be discussed below.
3.6.4.1. Taping, Transcription and Translation with Approaches Followed

By October 2007, I had completed seventeen interviews in University Syria, 29 individual interviews with students and five interviews with staff in University Wales, which included a focus group, in addition to a six-student focus group, as mentioned earlier in the chapter. The interviews took place in different locations, depending on the participants' situation, ranging from homes, classrooms, work places, campuses and extending to mosques. The location of the interviews was often dictated by the convenience of the participants, sometimes to the inconvenience of the researcher (Cohen et al, 2007). One demerit of this variety in interviewing locale was the unsuitability of some places for conducting quality interviews. For instance, several interviews took place in the mosque, where lowering one's voice is recommended. I organised the data from University Wales and University Syria and proceeded to transcribe all interviews on a word for word basis. The following sections discuss taping, transcription and translation procedures.

3.6.4.1.1. Taping

The main advantage of recording interviews is that 'it makes it easier to check the exact words of the respondent, as memories are hard to rely on' (Walliman, 2006: 93). The means of recording the data was varied, depending on the type of the dictation machine available, ranging from a highly sensitive digital recorder to a meagre-quality recording machine. An unfortunate result of this variety is that one interview was somewhat difficult to understand because of the poor quality of the recorder used, which led to the loss of some data and posed some difficulty in transcribing the interview. About six other interviews did not provide audio recordings of a very good quality because of the noise which surrounded the place. A good example is some of the interviews carried out in campuses or in some interviewees'
work-places. Restrictions posed on some places also played an adverse role in recording a quality interview. Overall, recording interviews in most cases added to the difficulty of the transcription process, but did not affect the quality and quantity of the data collected.

3.6.4.1.2. Transcription

Transcription is a lengthy process (Walliman, 2006). One hour of speech can take eight or nine hours to transcribe fully, depending upon a researcher's typing means and ability (May, 2001). Moreover, With regard to data transcript, I agree with Cohen et al. (2000:281) when they noted that when transcribing an interview, there is inevitable loss of data because 'a transcription represents the translation from one set of rule systems (oral and interpersonal) to another very remote rule system (written language)'. For example, in my interviews, there was difficulty in transcribing some facial expressions.

In their model of data transcription, Rubin and Rubin (2005: 203-204) point out that

the most precise transcripts write down on paper exactly what was said, including grammatical errors, digressions, exclamation, profanity, sharp changes of focus, and other indications of mood such as tears or laughter. Precise transcriptions also include stalling words such as urm and ah and spell words the way they are pronounced, such as ol' boy networks. Silences, pauses and hesitations are indicated, usually in brackets.

In the light of Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) model of transcription, the interviews were transcribed almost verbatim, including some grammatical errors which did not seriously affect meaning, stalling words such as urm and ah, irrelevancies and emotional reactions, such as laughter. Silences and pauses were indicated by interrupted dots. Participants' facial and bodily expressions which were thought they might add to the accompanying responses were mentioned. One departure from Rubin and Rubin's (2005) approach is that I deleted the repetitions resulting from language difficulty on the part of the participant because my
interviewees do not have English as their first language. Another digression is that events interrupting interviews, for example interrupting phone calls, were not included on the transcript. Also, some facial expressions, which I thought would not add to the data, were not transcribed.

Another procedure concerning transcription was that each of the interviewees' answers was preceded by the matching interview question asked, in order to allow full understanding of the responses for data analysis purposes. Before each interview there was mentioned information regarding the participant's name, language, home country, gender, age range, the interview's time, place and duration, and the course which the participant was studying. The purpose of this information was to facilitate data analysis at a later stage. A final step of preparing the transcript was to make multiple copies, one of them being a hard copy. With this I was almost ready for the next step, which was data analysis.

3.6.4.1.3. Translation

The means of communication in all interviews was English or Arabic. Regarding University Syria interviews, only three interviews were carried out in English, while fourteen interviews were conducted in Arabic, depending on the interviewees' preferences. As regards University Wales interviews, only five interviews were carried out in Arabic, whereas 24 interviews were conducted through the medium of English. Interestingly enough, most University Wales interviews conducted in Arabic were marked by shortness, hesitancy, and lack of confidence on the part of the participants, perhaps because of their feeling intimidated by their failure to communicate in English as would be expected from them, being international students in an English-speaking country. This adversely affected the amount of information supplied in
such interviews. However, I would have expected the interviews carried out in Arabic to be lengthier and more confident. Sections of the Arabic interviews quoted in the thesis have been translated into English. An attempt has been made to ensure that the translation adheres as closely as possible to the original meaning and also conveys the cultural dimension of the Arabic language (Dickens, 2002; Hatim and Munday, 2004).

With regard to the interviews conducted in English, those carried out with University Wales students were more elaborate than those conducted with University Syria students. One major reason for this is that University Wales participants, as international students studying in an English-speaking country, are expected to have better oral proficiency than University Syria participants, as home students (Segalowitz and Freed, 2004; Taguchi, 2008).

I now discuss the procedures of data analysis and presentation in both University Wales and University Syria case studies.

**3.6.4.2. Data Analysis and Presentation**

There are different approaches to analyse and present qualitative data. The analysis performed has to abide by the issue of ‘fitness for purpose’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2007: 461), in the sense that deciding the purposes for undertaking the research will determine the kind of analysis to be performed on the data. This, in turn, will influence the way in which the analysis is written up. The data analysis will also be influenced by the kind of qualitative study that is being undertaken. For example, a case study may be most suitably written as descriptive narrative with issues raised throughout. (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The analysis will
also be influenced by the number of data sets and people from whom data have been collected.

Drawing on Kumar (2005), I carried out a thematic analysis of the data. I clustered the responses under each question. I identified emerging themes and coded them by using labels. In writing up, I used a process of 'elaborated description' (Brown and Dowling, 1998: 83), where I described the themes and elaborated on my description by providing direct quotations from the participants.

Overall, the volume of data to be analysed was not huge, which allowed me to carry out the analysis manually without the need to seek the help of a qualitative software programme like QSR Nudist or N-Vivo. One possible disadvantage of the manual method of data analysis is that it was a more physically demanding and tiring process than analysis using a computer programme. On the other hand, it allowed me close access to the data as I worked with it, analysing it in detail.

In summary, this chapter discussed the methodology adopted in the research. It started with theoretical considerations in relation to the case study as the research strategy and the different tools used to collect data. The study contexts and the issues of ethics and access were also considered. The chapter then moved on to discuss the actual research design, shedding light on my position as the researcher in relation to the participants, the sampling issue, and the actual procedures of data collection and analysis.
In the next two chapters, I will discuss the results in both University Wales and University Syria case studies.
Chapter 4: University Wales Results

4.1. Introduction to Results at University Wales

My study of University Wales was based within the framework of a case study. This was supported by an associated case study, University Syria, which will be discussed in the following chapter. My use of the case study as the research strategy helped me have deep insight into the participants' perceptions and views of their use of English, by utilising different methods associated with case study, which were interviews, focus groups and documents. Moreover, the use of this strategy allowed me to examine the two settings in detail, and that was important in understanding the different effects of context on the use of EAP. The methodology design with regard to University Wales was informed by a set of research questions, which were hoped to help provide the data required to answer the overall research question: 'What are the Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Using EAP in University Wales and University Syria?' The questions related to University Wales were as follows:

1. Do University Wales international students refer to academic and cultural aspects of English in their use of EAP?

2. Do international students at University Wales perceive particular features of teaching styles or resources (including facilities and support) as important elements in their use of English for their studies?

3. Are there particular aspects of being an international student and using EAP which are different from being a home student using EAP?
Twenty nine international postgraduate students, given the labels W1 to W29, were interviewed at University Wales. They came from thirteen different countries belonging to the outer circle, where English is used as an official language, and the expanding circle, where English is used as a foreign language (Kachru, 1992). The student interviews were triangulated with interviews carried out with five members of staff (T1 to T5), one focus group, involving six students (F1 to F6), and documentary evidence. The interviews took place in different places in Cardiff, mainly according to the interviewees' preferences, including networking by the researcher, which was the main means of accessing the interviewees.

The case study provided data on the perceptions of international learners of using EAP at University Wales. Below is discussion of the results from the main case study.

4.2. Students' Interviews Results

The interviewees came from thirteen different countries and were studying on various programmes, including education, sciences, tourism and business administration. In terms of gender distribution, there were twenty four males and five females. The main purpose of carrying out these interviews was to investigate international students' perceptions of using English for their studies in University Wales. The aim was, also, to investigate how their views were similar to, or different from, those of the home students in University Syria, the associated case study. The interviews provided a student perspective which was compared and contrasted with the perspective of University Wales staff, who were also interviewed. The interview schedule can be seen in appendix 2 and is discussed in the methodology chapter.
4.2.1. Language Knowledge and Multilingualism

The following chart shows the number of languages the interviewees reported they had:

![Number of Students by Languages Spoken](image)

Figure 7: Number of Languages Spoken by the Interviewees

The languages mentioned by the interviewees, in addition to English, included Arabic, Korean, French, German, Swiss, Italian, Ikalanga, Setswana, Barber, Hindi, Tenbu, Punjabi, Amaru, Hebrew, Urdu, Hindi, Ibo and Tamil. According to the student interviews, all interviewees had two languages or more. This adds to the interviewees’ experiences as international students, as they look through a wider linguistic lens than monolingual students. It strongly reflects their flexibility and ability to learn other languages. Being multilingual possibly offers them cognition advantages. According to Landry (as cited in Cook, 2001: 10), ‘people who know two languages think more flexibly than monolinguals’. The majority of students had two languages. Some interviewees had more than two languages beside their
mother-tongue. This is particularly true of students from the Indian Sub-Continent, as one Indian student, for example, had seven languages. Students with many languages can be regarded as 'global citizens', to use Atkinson's (2004) term.

All the interviewees had English as a second or foreign language. This was also true for the researcher who had English as a foreign language. The interviewees might have felt that they had a shared experience with the interviewer. This might have helped them to speak more freely than to an English native speaker. This aspect was discussed in the methodology chapter.

4.2.1.2. Interviewees' IELTS Scores

The following chart shows the IELTS scores interviewees had for admission to their courses at University Wales.

Figure 8: Interviewees' IELTS Scores
As is clear, most interviewees' score was between 6 and 7. Only one interviewee had a score less than 6, but he was on a foundation course at University Wales and was doing Master's at the University of Nottingham. This demonstrates that University Wales students had a recognised proficiency in English. The IELTS qualification also helped students gain confidence in their language ability. For example, interviewee W23 pointed out that passing IELTS gave him confidence to study by himself. He remarked:

I didn't concentrate on English in University Wales because actually because the first I came here it was like conditional admission, and they want 6 in IELTS overall, and specially in reading and writing. So after I got that in the IELTS exam which I did in Cardiff university, I straight away I started my skills by myself, like depending in my reading and writing on myself only.

4.2.2. Substantial Experience of English for Studies in School and College: English

Courses Undertaken by the Interviewees

The ranges of EAP courses undertaken by University Wales students, as mentioned by the interviewees, were as follows:

![Figure 9: EAP Courses Undertaken by University Wales Students](image)

Figure 9: EAP Courses Undertaken by University Wales Students
As could be shown from the figure above, the majority of interviewees did general courses in
English, followed by interviewees who had all their education in English. A few interviewees
called IELTS tests and foundation courses 'EAP courses'. This is a point I return to later.

Interviewee W25 noted that he did a general English course:

> Basically I received only one course at the beginning of my study
> in Cardiff university. It was maybe general English. And it was
> useful for me. It was about three or four years ago.

Other interviewees pointed out that they did all their schooling in English. Interviewee W4
stated:

> In our country all subjects are taught in English, all of them. When
> you do year one back home, which is key stage one here it is done
> in Setswana, and there is a subject called English language. There
> you are taught English how to speak, how to spell. Then from year
> two, which is KS2, all subjects are taught in English in my country.

Other students had all their education in English. Interviewee W11 noted that English was a
compulsory subject because it was a national language in his country:

> Just general English for communication … as a part of my secondary
> school and university, which was compulsory in my country to learn
> English for better communication skills, because English is the national
> Language.

Similarly, interviewee W19 stated that all education in India was in English:

> Back in India, it was my second language apart from my initial language;
> all subjects are studied in English in school and university.

Other interviewees did foundation courses as types of EAP. Interviewee W13 commented:

> General English teaching urm… first time when I came to this country
> I completed a foundation course which taught us general English and
> how to do your assignments, and how to improve your speaking power
> and listening power. Before I finish I will have done my foundation in
> University Wales.
Other interviewees mentioned TOEFL and IELTS tests as types of EAP they undertook.

When asked about the EAP courses he undertook, interviewee W15 answered: 'I have taken my IELTS'.

Other students mentioned the role self-study played in the improvement of their EAP.

Interviewee W2 pointed out that 'because I was pregnant, so I couldn't go to college. I used to study myself at home'. Moreover, interviewee W1 noted:

I think studying English requires speaking English. We should learn English, not study. I think we need to speak to native speakers and read books, watch TV, something like that. When I was in Australia, there was more opportunity to speak English to native speakers because I was alone as international Korean. Every body was a source of my learning of English.

It is clear from the above quotation that this student perceived the overlap between EAP and its broader context. This is in contrast with the majority of University Syria students, discussed in the next chapter, who perceived EAP as excluded from its surrounding cultures.

Also, the student seems to adopt a mainly experiential learning strategy, where he prefers to study English through communicating with native speakers and watching TV.

Most University Wales interviewees undertook English courses in their home countries. This might be an advantage for them in their use of EAP in the UK, as they would have previous experience of EAP teaching and learning in a different context. Also, there is variety in the length of EAP courses undertaken by students. I may expect that, given the same starting competence, students who did longer courses were more confident than those who did shorter courses.
4.2.3. EAP and Study at University Wales

The students were asked various questions regarding EAP and studying at University Wales. They had wide-ranging answers, as is shown below.

4.2.3.1. Reasons for Selecting University Wales

Students were asked about the reasons for selecting University Wales. They had different answers, as follows:

![Pie chart showing reasons for selecting University Wales]

As is clear in the chart above, the main reason for selecting University Wales by the students was its reputation. Interviewee W25 stated that a main reason for his selection of University Wales was that it had a good reputation. He said:

I selected University Wales in the beginning of my Master's study. University Wales has a good reputation and it is the only university that has my department which is food sciences. I like my supervisor. He is a helpful person.
Interviewee W20 stressed the uniqueness of University Wales as a university. He stated:

> University Wales is a unique university. It is a mix, and all education is personal. The lecturers have a one-to-one conversation with you, which is fantastic.

The University recognition, as well as its location and the relatively cheap cost of its courses were the main reasons for interviewee W15 to select University Wales. He commented:

> There were many combined factors: there was the locational advantage … the second was the cost, and third of course comparatively the vast recognition.

Interviewee W11 noted that a main reason for his selection of University Wales was that it was comparatively cheap. He said:

> I selected University Wales because of the cost, the information system I study in University Wales is not anywhere. It is quite cheap and you get a lot compared to other universities … It is not expensive.

Interviewee W5 commented that he selected University Wales because ‘Cardiff as a city is the best in the UK’.

According to a few students, University Wales offers individual teaching. Interviewee W14 noted:

> I selected University Wales because I found I found they have one to one teaching and urm … you know, good educational centre and I felt comfortable.

The idea of one-to-one tuition is highlighted in the literature. For example, Klapper (2006: 249) points out that to understand the learner's problem, it may be necessary to have a one-to-one discussion with him or her. According to him:

> Getting down to the learner's level, to try to see the problem through the eyes of the weaker learner, in particular, can be difficult for able linguists to do. It is likely to require some form of one-to-one discussion with the learner and, if your university has one, reference to a language advisor who can work through with the particular student the problem
he or she is having.

Other students selected University Wales as a result of personal recommendation. Interviewee W2 stated that she applied for University Wales upon the recommendation of her friend. Likewise, interviewee W26 mentioned that he selected University Wales because it was recommended to him by friends who previously studied at University Wales. According to his friends:

They are doing a lot of support for supervision, for PhD students, and they give good support for students who would like to attend conferences.

As can be seen above, some of the reasons for students’ selection of University Wales related to the university itself, while others related to external factors. The following bar chart shows the percentage of the academic and non-academic reasons for selecting University Wales:

Figure 11: Reasons for Selecting University Wales
By examining the chart, it is clear that most of the reasons for selecting University Wales were related to the university itself. Interviewee W27 noted:

University Wales is a very famous one, especially in hospitality tourism and leisure management. It is considered the fourth all over the world in the field of tourism … also I found methodology which is one of the strongest worldwide in tourism.

Only a few reasons were not directly related to the university. For example, interviewee W8 pointed out that he applied for admission with the help of his friend who was studying at a neighbouring university.

4.2.3.2. How Students were Taught at University Wales

The students were asked about how they were being taught EAP at University Wales. They mentioned different aspects, such as: assignments, presentations, tutorials, lectures, seminars, individual tuition, programmes, thesis writing, communication, naturalistic use of English, reading newspapers, watching films and self-study.

A few students mentioned doing assignments as one way they were being taught English at university Wales. Interviewee W5 pointed out:

It is fine; I do assignments … there is support tutor to help us with assignments at any time. I frequently attend her class. She brings our attention to some mistakes. She is also ready at any time to offer her services.

Other students mentioned tutorials, lectures and seminars. For example, interviewee W4 said:

When I go to tutorial, meetings with my supervisor are in English.
That is when I speak English.

Interviewee W9 commented on how he was being taught English at University Wales:

Through attending my classes, through the lectures, through the
seminars… I think there is a lot to learn everyday, each time I go to the university, there is a lot to learn.

Interviewee W10 mentioned meeting the PhD supervisor as the only way he was being taught English at University Wales. He thought this was not sufficient:

I didn't receive any official English courses in University Wales, but mainly communicating with my supervisor; that's all, which is not enough for me.

Other students mentioned thesis writing as a main activity they were undertaking at University Wales. Interviewee W26 noted:

[I am] writing my thesis, sometimes giving some lectures at the university. I gave lectures last second year and I am going to give some lectures next semester. And I have done five, six … seven presentations last year, and some conferences and others, like CRM certificate for applying for and registering for my PhD in University Wales itself, and others like research methodology.

The quotation also highlights the emphasis of University Wales on presentations as an aspect of academic study. This aspect of academic study is mentioned by Hood and Forey (2005) when they highlight that the presentation of papers at an academic conference is a key means of disseminating knowledge in the academic discourse community.

On her part, interviewee W29 commented on research as an activity she was carrying out at University Wales, but she stated that the help of the university was required:

I worked on my research … It is a good improvement for my English, but from my point of view, I think there should be some more courses and more lectures on about how to improve your English and professional writing as well.

A few students pointed to individual tuition as an activity they were undertaking at University Wales. Interviewee W14 stated:

It was through individual tuition on one- to-one basis in University Wales itself, twelve hours a week.
Other students mentioned their social use of English as their main activity in learning English at University Wales. Interviewee W8 pointed out that he was learning English 'through reading newspapers and watching films on TV.'

Other students stressed the importance of self-study in learning academic English. Interviewee W3 commented:

We have sometimes tutorials, and most of the time I learn by myself because as you know, I am doing Master's, so we have few hours a month in which we do courses to learn how we do research, but most of the time I do study by my own because I have certain books to study.

The student appears to use a studial learning style (Fernandez-Toro and Jones, 2001), although the EAP context allows for an experiential style as well.

Interviewee W23 also noted the role of self-instruction in his learning of English. According to him:

I started my skills by myself, like depending in my reading and writing on myself only. Usually when I gave my paper or report to my supervisor, he gives me feedback for any mistakes or anything wrong with my writing. He reports to me in general.

The above quotation also highlights feedback as a teaching style followed by University Wales in teaching students. Race et al. (2005: 114) mention one of the merits of feedback as that 'students can refer to the feedback again and again, and continue to learn from it. On his part, Hyland (2006: 103) notes that:

providing feedback to students is often seen as one of the teacher's most important tasks, offering the kind of individual attention that is otherwise rarely possible under classroom conditions.

This could be very important for international students in particular, as it is an important way of bridging the gap between what they know and what they are expected to do (Hyland, 2006).
By further examining students' answers on how they were taught at University Wales, it could be found that they extend over a wide range of the spectrum. This richness can be attributed to the fact that these interviewees, as international students, experienced two or more different cultural contexts, as well as different education systems. Some responses were related to academic life. For example, interviewee W13 pointed out:

[We do] more writing when we do our assignments; we use English in doing our presentations, then in writing and speaking.

Other students' answers were permeated with their cultural experiences, for example 'reading newspapers and watching films on TV', as interviewee W8 remarked. Interviewee W12 brought the two domains, academic and cultural, together when he stated that:

I use English mostly in communication with people and for our assignments and essay writing.

It could be noticed that most University Wales students perceived their use of EAP as closely related to its surrounding cultures.

4.2.3.3. Students' Perceptions of Their Study at University Wales

With regard to students' perceptions of their study at University Wales, they had different answers. Most answers were positive (13), while others were negative (7). Among the positive answers were the following:
On the other hand, negative answers included the following:

From the two diagrams above, among the positive comments were that University Wales has good language programmes, improves speaking and offers opportunities to learn English naturally. Among the negative comments were that there should be more emphasis on academic writing, and more support, including free specialist courses, should be provided.
One of the positive answers offered by students was that University Wales had good English programmes. Interviewee W4 stated:

I think they have a very good programme. I think they have the good idea that they have special classes for students doing Master's. We were told to give those people our dissertations so that they proof read our work, but I didn't feel I needed any proof reading.

Similarly, interviewee W6 viewed University Wales as a good source of instruction. He noted:

\[\text{لديها كل مصادر التعليم فهي تعلم اللغة و تعلم الكتابة } \ldots \text{ وكل شيء.}
\]

It has all good sources of instruction. It teaches language; it teaches writing \ldots\text{everything.}

Interviewee W14 saw University Wales as excellent in terms of improving students' language:

\[\text{كأن هذا ممتازا ... كما تعلم تحسن اللغة كان ممتازا: 'It is excellent } \ldots\text{ you know, language improvement was excellent.'}\]

Interviewee W22 saw his study at University Wales as improving his academic English. He noted:

You do essays, reports, things like \ldots\text{ like } \ldots\text{ how to improve your English, you know, quickly } \ldots\text{ for academic study.}

Interviewee W1 commented on the improvement of all his skills in University Wales:

I think from processing of my work like writing essays, I have got some knowledge and skill of reading, skill of writing; with tutorial I can learn listening and speaking automatically. I like that.

Other interviewees mentioned the role of University Wales in improving students' speaking skill. Interviewee W12 pointed out:

Just like for speaking, just like \ldots\text{ being better and better in English as a student using English all around …}

The quotation also highlights the continuum of language use inside and outside the classroom domains. This point was also emphasised by other interviewees who considered study in
University Wales as a good opportunity for improving their English naturally. Interviewee W17 noted: 'definitely, you talk to everyone in English. Everything is in English …'.

Likewise, interviewee W19 commented:

> English is the language the more you actually speak, the more you improve yourself academically, so I ... I tend to speak with all strangers.

Interviewee W20 also remarked:

> This language is very excellent and fantastic as well, because it helps you improve your English; you try to speak all the time, you get better and better; that's all.

Interviewee W22 also emphasised this continuum of language use inside and outside the classroom. He commented:

> My plan is to study more about the language; you need to talk more to the people; the more you integrate with them, and in this way you improve your language. Yeah, reading and writing, you know a bit of reading and writing; you need, you know, to be good in class and write any paragraph and let your teacher check for you your mistakes and correct them. That is for writing and reading, but for talking and listening to TV, and such stuff like that you improve quickly.

One of the negative answers mentioned by some interviewees was that their study at University Wales did not offer them enough time and help. Interviewee W3 noted:

> In one year we have about twenty hours only to show us how to do research, but I am talking about myself; we need to improve our writing, and may need help from our tutors, so maybe sometimes they do not have this time; they do not give us time.

This point was also highlighted by a staff interviewee who stated that he does not have enough time to answer all students' needs.

On her part, interviewee W29 stated that there should be more courses on English and academic writing. She said:

> It is a good improvement for my English, but from my point of view,
I think there should be some more courses and more lectures on about how to improve your English and academic writing as well.

According to other students, study at University Wales needs some courses on academic writing, as is suggested by interviewee W26 who believed that:

when I am writing for the first time, I read for the second time, I discover some faults in my writing, so I am wasting some time in writing English, so I need some enhancements or some courses for writing English.

Other students preferred to have free specialist courses. For example, Interviewee W5 noted:

أفضل أن تكون هناك دورات تخصصية مجانية بدلاً من الدورة العامة.

I prefer there are free specialist courses rather than general language.

This point was opposed by a staff interviewee who pointed out that learning general language is the most useful for developing English language skills and plays an important role in the students' ability to cope with a new culture, as could be seen later in the chapter.

4.2.3.4. Comparison between University Wales and Elsewhere in Terms of English Teaching

Interviewees were asked to compare and contrast the way they were being taught English in University Wales to that of a country they visited or heard about. Most of the interviewees compared and contrasted their study at University Wales to a place or country outside the UK. The most striking feature of comparison was the use of language outside the classroom domain in University Wales, as contrasted to academic domain of language use in other countries mentioned by the respondents. Interviewee W9 pointed out:

Since I am learning English from English people, I am learning the pure English er … I think it is much better than the English I used to learn.

Another interviewee, W13, stated that in the UK one uses English in various domains:
When I did my foundation course in University Wales, my English was better than in my home country, because here you deal with English everywhere.

Interviewee W25 noted that study in an English-speaking country makes students' life easier.

He said:

Yeah, I could compare it; speaking English in an English country does make life easier for us… I prefer to study in a country they speak English.

Interviewee W26 stressed the importance of the UK as a native country for learning English.

He noted:

Of course, I am learning English here in a native country…. Here I have got a lot of study skills in writing English, and dealing with English as the language in speaking, using it in life, something like this, of course. I feel I am going ahead here.

Similarly, interviewee W23 stated that learning English through daily contact with people is a merit for studying academic English in the UK:

It is much better to study English here because you speak to native people here and use it daily in your communications; wherever you go you have to use English ... When you are learning this language from the native people, it much better when you speak to the native people and are surrounded by these people you will be forced to use this language more and more; it is better of course.

As is clear from the above five examples, the interviewees' perceptions of EAP are intertwined with their cultural experiences as international students at University Wales. This adds to the mixed academic/ cultural identity of students as international learners of EAP, a point that is returned to in the conclusions of the study.

Other distinguishing qualities in University Wales, as compared to interviewees' home universities, as pointed out by interviewees, were as follows: better teaching experience,
native teachers and quality of education. For example, interviewee W3 commented that in University Wales the most distinguishing feature is that students are taught by native teachers. He noted:

> Oh, there is a big difference, of course. For me, there is difference when you are taught by native teachers from when you are taught by second or foreign language teachers. I found a big big difference between what I was taught in my country.

Other students commented that study in University Wales was better than elsewhere. Interviewee W2 stated:

> I think study here is better than study in Korea. I studied English in Korea for a long time, but I couldn't improve. Just we study grammar, and almost always Korean people want to speak English properly. So when I came here, I am a little bit good at grammar, but am not good at listening and speaking, so I am very confused. So two or three months I didn’t want to go out; I wanted to stay at home. Things now are better.

### 4.2.4. Students' Views of Language Skills Needed for Their Study of EAP

The students were asked about their views of the language skills needed for EAP. They had various answers, as could be seen below.

#### 4.2.4.1. Language Skills

The following chart shows the skills students said they needed for their study of EAP:
From the diagram above, students emphasised reading and writing as the most important skills in the use of EAP, followed by speaking and listening.

The most important language skills the students highlighted were reading and writing. This is not surprising since reading and writing are much needed in the study of EAP. Jordan (1997: 143) points out that 'reading, as a skill, is normally linked with writing. This is a fundamental characteristic of the target academic situation in which students are typically reading books and journals, noting, summarising, paraphrasing, and then writing essays'. Interviewee W28 pointed out:

في دراستي... أظن أنها الكتابة...القراءة، فهما الأكثر استخداماً في الحياة العملية والمستقبلية.

In my study... I expect it is writing... writing and reading, which are the most used in the practical life and for the future.

Similarly, when asked about the language skills most needed for study, interviewee W3 mentioned: 'Writing and reading a lot to improve'.

The same skills were stressed by interviewee W22 when he stated:
You really need reading and writing which are the most things important for the course, because you need to do assignments, you don't talk. You need to do a presentation, reading and writing; the more you read, the more you improve in English.

The skill next in importance identified by the interviewees was listening. Interviewee W2 noted this as the most needed skill for her study of English:

Listening, because sometimes I do not understand my kids when they are speaking. I miss some words.

The above quotation is an evidence of the continuum of language use from academic to informal registers, where the interviewee attempted to understand her children when they spoke English to her.

The least mentioned as an important skill in English study, according to the interviewees, was speaking. Interviewee W11 noted:

I can see speaking or presentations and vocabulary to help you improve, and grammar. You need all of this.

4.2.4.2. The Most Efficient Way to Learn EAP

Students were asked about what they thought was the most efficient way to learn academic English. They had different answers. The most frequent skill stressed was reading.

Interviewee W4 remarked:

It is to read and research through certain areas, maybe one of them grammar, one of them plural, and whatsoever, and always consult your teacher.

The above quotation is also a further evidence of the importance of teacher support in the teaching process.
Interviewee W1 viewed reading as the most important skill:

I think ... reading because if I read a lot and quickly I can get some idea and knowledge quickly and of course I will get the structure of the sentence automatically and it can help to write, and it can help to speak, and it can help to listen.

Likewise, when asked about the most important skill, interviewee W15 said: 'Yeah, reading'.

The second highest frequency response was the use of informal language register.

Interviewee W8 pointed out that the best way to learn English is by communicating with native speakers. He said:

The most efficient way is through direct contact with native speakers and always trying to keep away from the people who speak your native language. Within this environment, I think you get better and better.

On his part, W13 stressed 'reading newspapers' as the most important skill in learning English.

The above two examples highlight the interception of local culture in the academic life of international students.

Three interviewees mentioned the learning of all academic skills as the most efficient way to learn academic English. Interviewee W5 said:

I am concerned with English in all skills and aspects. Speaking is important; listening is important; reading is important. They are all interrelated. For example, you know a word and you are able to pronounce it…

Similarly, interviewee W6 stressed the same point as above when he stated:

'to be honest, everything; everything is important for learning English'.
The importance of skills together was also highlighted by all the staff interviewees at University Wales, as will be shown later.

Three students also mentioned the use of the computer and internet as the most efficient way to learn academic English. Interviewee W27 pointed out that the computer offers an easy and efficient way to learn English. According to him:

"Academic English urm ... The most appropriate way now is through CDs. I think the computer is important in this matter. It provides easier way to learn English, very efficient one. Now somebody who is learning English cannot avoid using the computer materials at all."

Similarly, W29 highlighted the use of the computer as the most efficient way to learn academic English. According to her:

"The most efficient way is to join a course, to buy a software like WhiteSmoke, if you have heard about it. It is something helping academic writing, for example, if you write an article and you use some er ... English language but not very professional, not academic, it can er ... it can correct it."

4.2.5. Self-Assessment in EAP

Students were asked to assess themselves in different aspects of the language. They had various answers, as can be seen below.

4.2.5.1. Students' Self-Rating of English

Students were asked to self-assess themselves in English. Those who self-rated their English as limited or satisfactory were considered under-confident, whereas students who self-rated their English as good or very good were regarded confident.
From the chart above it could be noticed that, surprisingly enough, confident participants were almost confident in all four skills in equal measure. Similarly, participants who were not confident were almost not confident in four skills in equal measure. This result is consistent with the responses of University Wales staff interviewees who viewed all skills as equally important in teaching and learning EAP, as will be shown later.

In general, most participants had a high level of confidence across all the skills, while only a few were not confident, a result which is consistent with the interviewees' IELTS scores they had in the previous section. The positive role self-confidence plays in learning is emphasised in the literature. For instance, Cavani (2001: 35) notes that 'clearly self-confidence also has a major role to play in encouraging any [student] to stay on the path leading towards their ultimate goal'. Moreover, self-confidence is viewed as one of the qualities of a good language learner, as was discussed in the literature chapter. Confidence in turn can lead to enjoyment in language learning, as noted in the next section.
4.2.5.2. Aspects of Language Enjoyed by Interviewees in their English Study and the Reasons for Their Enjoyment

The interviewees were asked about aspects of language which they enjoyed. 21 answers were analysed, since not all respondents answered the question, as follows:

![Bar Chart]

Figure 16: Aspects of Language Enjoyed by the Interviewees

As is clear from the chart above, the most enjoyable aspect of language study, according to the interviewees, was speaking. Interviewee W25 remarked:

Speaking, I like speaking … I like speaking because I can keep communicating with people, and that will improve my English very quickly.

Next to speaking, respondents enjoyed listening, reading and social use of language.

Interviewee W23 stated:

I enjoy like watching movie in cinema or watch movie on TV… now I can understand what they say straight away and you can recognise when you listen and you can catch them and you can know what they are speaking about in general; it is very useful; I enjoy speaking because I am living here.
In the above example, listening and speaking are overlapped with the social use of language. The student makes use of his stay in the UK to improve his listening and speaking skills. This is a further example of the interrelation between the domains of language and culture. This is emphasised in the literature. For instance, Kachru (1999: 75) notes that 'culture and language co-evolve in the same relationship as that in which, within language, meaning and expression co-evolve'. On his part, Montgomery (2007: 22) believes that 'learning is fundamentally a social process'. It is interesting to note that the students enjoyed speaking most, while not rating it highly as an important skill in EAP.

The least enjoyed aspect by students was writing. This may be because it is a difficult skill, as is pointed out by Klapper (2006), Jordan (1997) and others. Davies (1996: 120), for example, notes that writing for many students 'consists in laborious handwriting, copying information from textbooks or note-taking dictated by the teacher or written on the board'.

When students were asked about the reasons for enjoying the aspects of language they mentioned above, they had various answers. Interviewee W26, for example, pointed out that he enjoyed listening and speaking because they helped him listen to news and accents:

> In listening, I enjoy listening to news and listening to a different accent of pronouncing English, especially here in England.

He further highlighted the social use of language as the main advantage of studying in the UK over study in his home country. He noted:

> When I was in Egypt, unfortunately most of English users, of English speakers, they are very proud and they are learning English and they are going to pronounce words in a wrong way. You feel you don't know how you are speaking English. But here I found they are accepting speaking English in different accent and they have found here in [the UK] there are more than four or five accents
in English language, Welsh one, Scottish one, Irish.

The interviewee stated that learning English should take place in a native country. It also clearly demonstrates that University Wales students experience language learning, using English for their studies and reflecting upon it, through the wider context of culture. This is in contrast with University Syria students, as could be noticed in the next chapter.

On his part, interviewee W1 pointed out that his enjoyment of speaking to native speakers was because it helped him learn naturally:

Because it is not only we talk about English, when I speak to people I don't think that I have to learn English. We just talk about private things.

The interviewee explained how he found it easy to learn English through interacting with native speakers of English. Seago (2000: 1) points out that 'there is certainly agreement on language and culture being the two components that make up the study of a language'. Indeed, 'context and culture in language teaching and learning is a topic that has developed in many directions and with considerable vigour in the last [two decades]' (Byram and Grundy, 2003: 1). This is a point discussed further in the conclusions of the study.

**4.2.5.3. Difficulties Encountered with the Language**

University Wales students were asked about the difficulties they encountered in their learning of EAP. There were 22 different responses, as not all the respondents answered the question, as is shown below:
As is shown, the greatest difficulty encountered by the interviewees was accent. An interviewee, W3, pointed out:

My difficulty in English is sometimes listening because of the different accents. Because in my country I studied the English, the academic one, but when I arrived to Cardiff for my study, sometimes it was difficult for me to understand the accent. You know for me it was strange, I felt as if I didn't study English at all, because of the way you learn English, this speed of delivery in speaking, sometimes.

As is clear from the quotation above, the student's difficulty in understanding the accent made him consider that he had missed a big part of the study of language.

On his part, interviewee W10 also stressed that his main problem in language was with the accent. He noted:

With the language itself no; I don't think I have problems, but my problem is with the accent, sometimes you speak with somebody especially over the phone… British gas or electricity guy.

Interviewee W15 regarded accent as the problem of all international students coming to the UK:
I think it is probably the accent. And I am sure anyone who comes from a different country they will have the same problem of accent.

The difficulty spoken language poses for foreign language listeners is mentioned in the literature. For example Davies (1996: 112) argues that 'inexperienced users of spoken language often need time to assimilate the words, work out the meaning and formulate a response'. Klapper (2006: 322) also notes that listening to naturalistic language is a real challenge for non-native listeners. According to him:

Possibly the greatest challenge for FL listeners is coping with authentic speech, in the sense of unrehearsed, naturalistic language use. This can feature incomplete utterances, false starts, repetitions, syncopated forms, colloquialisms, fillers and pauses. These are challenging enough ...

Interestingly, listening is not high on the difficulty list too, although accent and listening are so closely related. This may be because international students are more exposed to listening in classroom domain, but mainly experience accent outside the classroom.

The difficulty next to accent, as the interviewees reported, was writing. Interviewee W5, for example, noted: 'I have difficulty in writing'. Similarly, interviewee W6 commented: 'I find difficulty in writing'. The difficulty of academic writing is emphasised in the literature, for example Jordan (1997) and Klapper (2006).

Although it was seen as a difficult skill, writing was viewed by the respondents as an important skill in the study and use of EAP. According to some students interviewed, academic writing is the basis of language learning. For example, interviewee W10 noted that focus on academic writing is the gateway to learn language when he commented:

I think for us as students to concentrate more on academic writing, especially now I am working on my thesis and I find it much more
difficult than what I anticipated. So concentrating on academic writing, the way you should write, how to address people, how to communicate with them, this will improve your special skills and future career as well.

Reading was viewed as the least difficult language skill according to the students interviewed. Interestingly, this is in contrast with one EAP staff tutor who believed that reading is the most difficult language skill.

4.2.6. How English is Used by Interviewees

The following diagram shows the various uses of English as stated by the students.

![Diagram of English uses](image)

Figure 18: The Different Uses of English by the Interviewees

The diagram illustrates the broad perspective of using English as perceived by international students. On one end of the continuum is the academic use of English, as is clear in the
mention of the four language skills. On the other end of the continuum is the English fully permeated with cultural aspects, as is clear in the mention of shopping.

As regards the frequency of the different uses of English, they are shown in the following chart:

![Frequency of Uses of English](image)

Figure 19: Frequency of the Different Uses of English by the Interviewees

As is clear from the chart, the highest frequency is reading. This underlines the importance of reading in the academic life of international students, as far as University Wales's views are concerned. However, the types of reading mentioned by interviewees were various, for example reading newspapers, novels, academic books and reading for pleasure. Next to reading comes the use of English within the work domain. Using English at work, whether full-time or part-time, gives the students an opportunity to improve their English. It also
stresses the importance of cultural experiences of language in international students' perceptions of EAP.

4.2.7. International Students as Learners

The interviewees were asked about different aspects of being language learners. They had various responses, as was noted below.

4.2.7.1. Students' Motivation

According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993: 2), a motivated individual 'is one who wants to achieve a particular goal, devotes considerable effort to achieve this goal, and experiences satisfaction in the activities associated with achieving this goal'. Students were asked about their motivation to learn English. Among all the interviewees who answered the question, only one interviewee, W22, said he was slightly motivated: 'slightly, yeah, slightly'. On the other hand, 23 interviewees said they were motivated. This is hardly a surprising result. Interviewee W4 pointed out:

I get motivated, --- because my tutors … all of them they have been telling me to read widely, I read widely and provided them with what I read and they were very positive. They congratulated me on what I had done. Then I became motivated; I read more and more.

The above quotation stresses the importance of praise in motivating learners. This is found in the literature, for example Newstead and Hoskins (2003) note that students may be motivated as a result of others' approval. Being motivated, in turn, is one of the qualities which make a good language learner, as Klapper (2006) demonstrates. The quotation also indicates the role teacher support plays in students' learning. This was also found in the University Syria data.
4.2.7.2. Extrinsic / Intrinsic Motivation for Learning English

According to Beaton (2004: 21), 'there may be family, professional or integrative reasons for pursuing a particular language'. Interviewees had different motives for learning English, as is shown by the following pie-chart:

![Pie chart showing different motives for learning English](image)

**Figure 20: Interviewees' Motives for Learning English**

From the chart it could be noticed that the professional objectives score the highest frequency for learning English, followed by communicative and academic goals.

Interviewee W8 commented:

> My objectives are strongly connected with my work. A high percentage of English in the medical field depends on discussions in English language. A person needs to be proficient in English.

On his part, interviewee W25 pointed out:

> Yeah, it is going to improve my job. To speak another language certainly to improve my salary, get you a good position in life.

Interviewee W6 noted that learning English helped him in international business. He said:
Back home in Libya, I have a wholesale shop for foodstuff. I go abroad to import the goods. English is very much useful for me; when I travel abroad to ship goods, it facilitates my dealings. It is better than buying the goods from Libya and costing me a lot.

Next in importance for students are communication motives. Interviewee W9 stated:

I think it is gonna increase the… the… number of people I can communicate with. English is very widely spoken language… and I think English is the language of the … of the … new science, and the science I came here to learn is all in English.

Likewise, interviewee W27 underscored the importance of English in communicating with people in various life situations. He noted:

My goals … first of all, to understand the English people very well. Secondly, it is a universal language now; English is a universal language. My work as a tour guide in Egypt … needed very very important intention to understand and to know English very well because you are dealing with tourists.

Academic motives came third in importance. Interviewee W2 pointed out that her objectives for learning English are ‘to teach students and for my MA degree now and in the future for my PhD’. Similarly, interviewee W1 commented:

One thing I think about is to get a job; another one, to study PhD. Third, I need to have good English, so study makes me motivated.

Interviewee W29 highlighted study as a reason for her learning of English. She stated:

To do research, to improve my writing skill, to improve my reading, my pronunciation, and to speak like British people.

Five interviewees linked their learning of EAP with English being an international language.
Interviewee W17 noted:

My objectives … for learning English is I believe that English is a common language that is being used throughout the world. So, I believe using it is like opening myself to the world.

Similarly, a main reason for interviewee W14 to study English was that because it is an international language. He noted:

أتعلم الإنجليزية لأنها تساعدني في دراستي ولأنها لغة عالمية فهي محكية في كل بقاع الدنيا

I learn English because it helps me in my study and because it is an international language; it is spoken everywhere.

On her part, interviewee W4 said:

English is an international language. Therefore, if you are fluent and know English well, you can communicate with any community; you can go and work anywhere. You know, you can read; you can do whatsoever because most of the documents are written in English.

Two interviewees mentioned getting acquainted with culture as the objective for their study of English. Interviewee W22 remarked:

To improve speaking quickly and understanding the different accents, the different cultures, to understand all of them. That is my objective, to consider when some one talks to me, you know, to understand what they want exactly.

On his part, interviewee W10 noted the importance of language in understanding culture:

Understanding the culture and transferring the science from English language to Arabic language and to Arabic learners.

By further examining interviewees' answers about their plans to achieve their objectives, it could be found that some plans were study-oriented. For example, interviewee W13 pointed out: 'None special; reading books and doing assignments'.

Other plans are culture-oriented. One interviewee, W28, remarked:
For example, to practise English constantly through speaking ... also through friends from other countries; you can speak to them. For example, the street is a way for communicating with people which might help you in language. Also reading... reading, for example the daily newspaper or following the programmes on BBC.

On his part, interviewee W27 noted:

Actually, for English, it is just communication... just communication with people um... and I am trying to understand more and more about the accents, the variations of tongues in the UK. Actually, there is no one tongue for the British people.

It can be seen that the motivation behind most interviewees was intrinsic. It was also pragmatic, needs-based, and mediated by the broader cultural context.

4.2.7.3. Strategies to Overcome Language Difficulties

Students were asked about the procedures to overcome language difficulties. They had various answers. Some students suggested study as a strategy to override language difficulties. Interviewee W2 stated that 'to overcome it, I have to study'. Other students viewed reading as the way to overcome language difficulties. Interviewee W4 underscored the role of reading in learning language. She noted:

I think the main thing you should do depends on my age and my level; if you have difficulty in English, you should read more the more you read and the more you listen to TV, you can grasp sense.

According to two interviewees, the naturalistic use of language (Klapper, 2006) is a strategy to overcome language difficulties. Interviewee W14 noted:
to meet English people more; to speak with native speakers'. On his part, interviewee W27 stressed the route of naturalistic use of language to overcome any difficulty. He stated:

Be more and more with the British people, Welsh people to get the accent. This is the only way. Here I try to listen to one speaking the Welsh accent, English language, Welsh accent.

The above two students emphasised an experiential learning style in order to overcome language difficulties. This is expected, since this type of learning is encouraged by the study context.

One student stressed the importance of travel in the study of EAP. Interviewee W17 pointed out:

I think er… it depends on individual. If the individual wants to go to Ireland, Scotland and England to see how language is used, they can do that, or if you want your directors at the university to enter you into a course, like an exchange programme, it sounds a good idea.

The above quotation highlights the continuum of language use between academic and non-academic domains in the life of international students.

Overall, the students' views of the strategies to be adopted in order to overcome language difficulties can be divided into academic and non-academic, as is shown in the following chart:
Examples of academic strategies were study, reading, checking difficult words, writing, listening and practice. Non-academic strategies included naturalistic use of language, travel, communication and talking to professional people.

Interviewee W3 suggested the use of academic and non-academic strategies to overcome language difficulties. He said:

To be honest, for listening maybe it is a matter of time; for example I cannot find in books to tell you that this accent is Welsh and this Accent is Scottish, or whatever. May be if I live here for a long time, maybe I can differentiate and understand different accents. For writing, I think, the only thing that can improve my writing is reading. Through reading I can learn a lot of things. I can develop my writing style, and I can learn vocabulary using my writing.

4.2.7.4. Using the Computer/Internet in Learning English

The use of the computer and the internet had a large role to play in the learning of EAP, according to the students. Students were asked about whether they use the computer/ internet for their study of English. The following chart illustrates their responses.
As is clear from the above chart, most students confirmed that they use the computer for their learning of English, while a lesser number stated they do not.

One interviewee, W28, pointed out her use of the computer to communicate with people: 'regularly I use email, yahoo messenger to communicate with people'.

Interviewee W28 remarked that she used the computer to help her improve her academic English. She stated:

I use the computer, for example in programmes like the talking dictionary. Also, I browse websites, newspapers, etc. in the internet through English.

Interviewee W1 explained that he used the internet in his research:

When I research, I search the computer, for example Google search engine, because I should skim resources.

On his part, interviewee W8 noted that he used the computer 'for researches, information and exchanging letters with friends'.

Interviewee W25 noted that he used the computer and internet 'to gain some information, to
Interviewee W5 also commented that he used the internet to learn English:

There are special didactic lessons on BBC. They even use everyday language, which is different from academic language.

Interviewee W21 also mentioned that he used the internet: 'Regularly, I use email, yahoo messenger to communicate with people'.

As is shown from the quotations above, University Wales students used the computer and internet as a method of learning English. This is also true of University Syria students, who stated they use the internet for improving their English.

The minority of interviewees stated that they did not use the computer or the internet for their learning of English. For example, when interviewee W2 was asked whether she used the computer for her study, she answered 'not much'. Likewise, interviewee W3 said:

For me no, I cannot learn from computers. I can learn, you know, from books, from newspapers, from tutors, but it is really hard for me to go to the computer and learn.

The small number of students who said they do not use the computer for their studies is not surprising, given the overwhelming presence of computers in higher education study.

4.2.8. Memorable Experiences of Using EAP

The following chart shows the students' negative and positive memorable experiences of EAP they mentioned in the interviews:
It is shown from the chart that most experiences were positive. Interviewee W8 pointed out:

During pre-MBA I was learning the skills of presentation. Of course, I did the first presentation, I was nervous, but at the end my performance was excellent. This gave me a great boost to continue my journey.

Interviewee W6 stated:

I did a test in my school and obtained 90/100, which was unexpected. It was multi-answer test, and I got 90 / 100; I did not expect it. Even the teachers asked me: how did you get it? I told them: only God knows.

Interviewee W26 also said:

I remember a teacher of English who was teaching me at university. And he was trying to help us understand how to use grammar in use and your writing and your talking, really concentrate on practising grammar in our words, in our ways of talking, in our ways of writing, and he tried a lot to facilitate grammar for us.

As would be expected, the positive experiences of those learners would benefit their language learning. This is emphasised in the literature. For instance, Parker (2004) points out
that positive experience of language learning has a direct impact on students' learning and should be taken into account in the language teaching process.

On the other hand, seven student experiences were negative, for example W4 noted:

When I was doing my university level, doing my Diploma, we lost one lecturer who was teaching English, so we stayed about a semester without a teacher, and you know there was no one who was encouraging us to read literature books. Therefore, when it was the time came to do final exam, it dropped my grade from B level second class up to third level. Because there was no one encouraging us to read and therefore my mark dropped.

The negative experiences which students passed by would be expected to impact negatively on their language learning and confidence. Parker (2004: 11) notes:

The student who has had a bad language-learning experience in school comes with a number of hang-ups about what it means to learn a language and lacks confidence in his or her own aptitude as a language learner.

As regards the domains of the students' memorable experiences, they are shown in the following chart:

![Figure 24: Domains of Interviewees' Memorable Experiences](image)
Fourteen interviewees’ memorable experiences were related to the classroom domain.

Interviewee W7 stated:

A teacher used to give us a movie for an hour and after the film ask us questions about it. There were colleagues who were better and more experienced in English than myself. Yet, I achieved a high mark.

Eight experiences were not related to the classroom domain. This implies the continuum of language use inside and outside the classroom domain. The following is an example of a memorable experience outside the classroom by interviewee W22:

When you come to the UK and you know how to speak proper English, you know, you talk to the people and sometimes they do not understand you, they start laughing; this is quite embarrassing... embarrassing, yeah, embarrassing.

Moreover, as is pointed out by Beaton (2004: 30), 'all learners have lives which extend far beyond the classroom setting and which enrich their contribution to their own learning and that of others'.

With regard to the ranges of experiences inside the classroom domain, they were various: seminar presentations, teachers, examinations and language courses. The most frequent memorable experience related to the classroom was examination. This may be because examinations usually play a decisive role in the academic life of students. Interviewee W25 pointed out:

Yeah, I got a top mark in one of my modules in my Master's study, and that was the highest one; I didn't expect it to be like this, but it was good.
As regards the range of experiences outside the classroom domain, they involved various themes like communication, accent and spelling. Interviewee W4 commented:

I know that when I grew up from my primary school, I was very good in English because my dad would speak English all the time with us.

The above quotation also shows that practising English at home gave the learner a good basis for EAP. This also underlines the continuum of language use inside and outside the classroom. This interviewee may have come from an ESL context, where English might also be spoken at home, since it is one of the official languages of the country.

The highest frequency repeated experience was language communication. What I mean by communication is speaking and listening, mainly in a natural environment (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). Interviewee W11 pointed out: 'When I came to the UK, I had no difficulty in communicating with people'.

As regards the positive and negative memorable experiences mentioned by the respondents inside and outside the classroom, they can be seen in the two charts below.
As is clear from the above chart, most of the interviewees' memorable experiences inside the classroom domain were positive, while only a few were negative.

As could be noticed from the above chart, the positive memorable experiences outside the classroom domain were slightly outnumbered by the negative ones.
It can be concluded from the above two charts that the students enjoy English language experience inside and outside the classroom; however, they sometimes encounter more problems where this is mixed with cultural experience. W19 stated that accent was a problem he faced from the time he came to the UK:

First when I came over here to the UK I was not able to understand the accent of the people, like 'ta'. 'Ta, is like 'thank you' in a short form. In India there is no such word like 'ta', so that was one of the funniest situations I have ever had. So people said to me 'ta' and I did not understand it, until my friend told me that 'ta' means 'thank you'.

4.2.9. Summary

It can be said that students at University Wales use English on a continuum of contexts. The academic domain of language use is varied, for example tutorials, lectures, seminars, assignments, thesis writing, presentations and self-study. The cultural domain includes using English in a non-academic context, for example, watching TV and reading a newspaper. Personal effort is stressed by some interviewees as an important element of learning English. This variety of ways in which University Wales students use English corroborates our claim that these students as international learners of EAP have a broader conception of language mediated by their experience of living abroad. This may be contrasted with the formalised way in which University Syria students learn, as will be shown later.

Regarding students' views of their study at University Wales, there were both positive and negative points. Among the positive points mentioned by the students interviewed were having a good language programme and being a good place to learn language naturally.
Among the negative points were that the need for a greater focus on writing was needed and that insufficient support was offered in terms of time and effort.

Using language in naturalistic domains was one of the main features to distinguish study at University Wales from elsewhere, as noted by interviewees. This is evidence of the interrelation between EAP and the broader cultural context, in University Wales students’ views. Other distinguishing features for University Wales included the good location and reputation it had and its native teachers.

With regard to students’ self-rating of English, most of them were confident in all skills. This confidence was not clearly discerned in University Syria students, as could be seen in the next chapter.

As regards the language skills, reading and writing were highlighted by University Wales interviewees as the most important skills needed in the study of EAP. As for writing, it was thought to be among the least enjoyable and most difficult skills. The difficulty of writing is echoed in the literature, for example, Jordan (1997) and Klapper (2006). Reading and writing as the most important skills were also highlighted by University Syria students, as will be shown later. As for speaking, it was viewed by students as the most enjoyable skill, yet considered to be among the least important skills in the use of EAP.

Presentations and assignments were highlighted by University Wales students as important aspects of academic language study. These two aspects are also emphasised in the literature, for example Gimenez (2008) and Hood and Forey (2005). Interestingly, both aspects were
not mentioned at all by University Syria students, as will be shown later. This illustrates that understanding EAP as a term has a degree of fluidity, depending on the context in which it occurs. This is a point which I will return to later.

The idea of teacher support was also highlighted by University Wales interviewees. As will be seen, this is also true of University Syria interviewees. The importance of teacher support is echoed in the literature, for example Davies (1996), Cohen (1998) and Klapper (2006). The role cultural context, especially accent, plays in the international students' perceptions of EAP was clearly mentioned. For example, using English socially outside the classroom domain was a main difficulty which the students experienced in the domains of language use. The effect of cultural context is not clearly seen in the University Syria interviews, as will be shown in the next chapter.

As regards the interviewees' learning styles, most of them adopted mixed or experiential learning styles. Their selection was most of the time dictated by the EAP context.

Finally, the uses of the computer and the internet were highlighted by the University Wales students in their language learning. It is also echoed in the literature, for example Hanson-Smith (2001) and Stoller (2001). This aspect was also a strong feature from the findings of University Syria interviews.

In the next section I discuss the results from University Wales staff interviewees.
4.3. Staff Interviews Results

Five staff members from University Wales were interviewed: two female members of staff from the International Office and three university tutors. The interviewees were given labels from T1 to T5. The interviews were carried out to gain information about the international student body at University Wales. It also involved the staff perceptions of some issues regarding EAP teaching and learning at the University. The information was used to provide further insight into the interviews carried out with the students at University Wales.

4.3.1. International Students in University Wales and the Subjects and Programmes which Attract them

Interviewee T2 confirmed that the number of international students is about 600. According to official statistics, the international students are around double this figure. This could be justified on the ground that the statistics may have had broader categorisation of international students, for example considering those who are studying in University Wales franchises. Interviewee T1 pointed out that the biggest groups of international students at University Wales came from India, China, Brunei and Oman. Other countries included Syria, Thailand, Pakistan, Egypt. The Indians who make the biggest number of international students are concentrated on the MBA programme. Their number, according to interviewees T3 and T4, was 352. After that, there are a lot of Arabic speakers spread around mainly studying biomedical sciences and tourism. The largest number of students are reading for a Master's, since most are undertaking an MBA. There are about 25 international students studying for a PhD.
According to interviewee T2, the courses undertaken by international students depend on what is needed in a particular country, as well as on qualification. She said when asked about qualifications:

There are obviously some courses which attract students more than others, and it depends on whatever is happening in a particular country. Hospitality management is often very good for places where tourism is thriving. The sports side does not necessarily attract international students. Some of them are attracted but not qualified. That goes to a lot of competition. I don't think it is a matter of attracting them. It is whether they are qualified to go to them and what countries look for that qualification.

Interviewee T3 remarked that programmes like HND (Higher National Diploma) and HNC (Higher National Certificate) do not have many international students. One possible reason for this is that HND and HNC qualify students for certificates, and international students usually come to the UK in order to obtain degrees rather than certificates.

Interviewees were asked whether the number of international students was growing. Interviewee T1 stated that the number of students is on the increase. She mentioned:

Well, it is always difficult to tell how many students will actually come, but I know from the International Office that the applications are increasing this year. The last three years have grown every year, increased every year, which is not the same in every university; I don't think. Some universities are on decrease.

According to interviewee T2, 'the number of enquiries about courses and application is steadily increasing each year over the last three years'. Statistically speaking, this is also true. (Please see Chapter 3, Section 4).

Interviewees T3 and T4 highlighted the same trend as above with regard to the MBA students. Interviewee T3 noted that the number of international students applying for University Wales is steady. He said:
It is stable. Last year we had two hundred students in, because we have two intakes a year, so when I say 350 students to you, that is 200 in September and 150 in February. The programme director said this September we are on target, 200 again this September.

Moreover, interviewee T3 pointed out that he and his colleague had started new pathways in relation to the MBA programme, which are attracting the interest of more international students. This helps the number of international students to keep steady, or even to increase:

My colleague and I have launched new pathways… and I think we are getting a lot of interest on these new pathway programmes. So I think our feeling is it has been going to ten years. When we started, it was 30 students. So, we already are 352 students in one calendar year. Urm … whether it will go on increasing at that level, I am not sure, but we are certainly holding steady.

Interviewee T4 felt that this showed the success of University Wales in continuing to attract international students despite a difficult global situation. He said:

To remain stable in the current global climate, political climate… with all this uncertainty and unrest, urm I think it is actually pretty fundamental achievement … I think to remain stable actually would in relative terms indicate an increase had we not had those additional factors influencing people.

### 4.3.1.2. University Wales Support of and Provision for International Students

**Compared with Other Institutions**

Interviewee T1 noted that there are various services offered to international students by the International Office. She also mentioned that Cardiff as a city is attractive. She pointed out:

They get well looked after by the International Office. Not many PhD students; once they come in December they get induction; they get a kind of job-shop where they apply to work. On top of that, they are offered what they need. And also Cardiff is a big city which attracts international students.

Interviewee T2 noted that University Wales is quite small and comparatively new. She
also mentioned some characteristics of University Wales. There are strong ties between the students and their tutors due to the small number of students in many classes. This, according to the interviewee, makes University Wales different from other institutions. She said:

The teaching methods are different. You find rather than the lecturer talking to the students and students listening, you find a lot of interaction. The classes are around forty students maximum, which means the tutor gets to know the students and their names rather than tutors giving a lecture to hundreds of students attending and tutors do not know individual people. It also makes the atmosphere friendly atmosphere, so the classmates get to know the tutors.

The importance of interaction among students is emphasised in the literature. For example, Parker (2004: 14) notes that 'providing opportunities for adult learners to work together, sharing problems and experiences may help to build learners' confidence'.

Interviewee T3 pointed out that there are good support services for international students from the International Office. He said:

Well, you know the feedback from the students is very positive. I think we have built up an expertise …with Indian students. I heard things from students like they feel like it's a home from home, and I do think that other universities don't do that. We have very good support services from the International Office. We have very good counselling services.

Interviewee T3 pointed out that University Wales went further than other UK universities in their services for international students. He gave the example of designing a cookery site for students:

We have even built a cookery website for students from India who are arriving in the West for the first time. It shows recipes, we tell them where they can practise their religion in Cardiff, where they can eat out. A lot of our students, for example, are vegetarian … urm. So we have a website which is student-driven, which we've just launched. So I think we go perhaps further than other universities do.
Interviewee T4 further commented that what is competitive in University Wales compared with other universities is the quality and student support. He said:

> from my perspective, I think that the unique experience is that culturally coming here is very different for them. That is not to say that at University Wales we create a unique culture; but what we do actually in terms of competition with other universities, for international students that appeals to them, is the fact that we are so open and we are so supportive.

Interviewee T4 mentioned different types of help offered to University Wales students:

> We do give them a lot of time; we give them a lot of pastoral care. And I think, importantly, we help them wherever we can proactively for passing any difficulty, personal financial, whatsoever without becoming intrusive. So they have confidence that we will offer them help and support as much as we can.

Interviewee T3 explained different services offered by the International Office in University Wales. He said:

> When the student arrives; we go to Heathrow and Gatwick; we meet the students; we give them induction sessions, especially for them. We explain to them the difference between doing a Master's level against undergraduate level. We take them to sessions where we explain to them the differences between how they may have learnt or been taught in India and how they learn and are taught here.

Interviewee T4 mentioned visits paid by University Wales students to different countries as a part of the University Wales programme. He noted:

> We offer our students, international students … an international visit, and that is a unique part of the University Wales programme. Urm … Last year, for example, they have been to South Africa. They go to Canada … on a business-related research typescript… They also have a cricket match, yeah, which is part of their programme, and that is a unique part of our service.
4.3.1.3. Tutor Support at University Wales

The staff interviewees were asked about the support the students should receive from the tutors at University Wales. Interviewee T3 explained that sometimes he needs to use his initiative to help international students overcome their language or culture problems. He said:

For example, in China, the culture is not to lose face or so. So, occasionally they won't tell me they're in trouble. And then I read it and then I think wait a minute; this is someone where [the international language support tutor]'s intervening would help. And the feedback afterwards is always extremely positive… they thank me afterwards enormously because it shows we are taking an interest; it shows we are trying to up the standards that they pass, or even get a distinction.

It is clear from this quotation that this tutor shows an understanding of cultural differences and he uses this knowledge to help students improve. The need to understand about students' different views and challenges is illustrated in the literature. For example, Hammond (2006: 270) notes that 'effective support is dependent on an understanding of the nature of the challenge faced by students'.

One proposed way of helping students to overcome difficulties is to change and adapt curriculum delivery and assessment methods. Interviewee T3 said:

Now what I do is invigilated test, which means that I stop any collusion or plagiarism or copy-paste. When they come to the test, they know what they are going to do. There are no surprises in my tests. And I say to them, if you want to write an essay fine; if you want to write a bullet-point report, fine, because … in the business world we don't ask them to write 3000 word essay.

He also commented that a tutor should search for different routes to help students learn, so long as the teaching quality is not affected:

I have to get them to M. level. I can't compromise on the Master's level quality. But there is a different route in curriculum delivery and assessment to get to that M. level. And I adapt in my delivery
because otherwise it is failing students.

Interviewee T3 also mentioned the high expectations of international students in terms of staff time and pointed out that sorting out the difficulties with international students should be a joint responsibility between the international students and the staff. He commented:

All the overseas ones tend to be quite needy. You know, really needy. You know, yesterday I said to them just I can't cut myself into a hundred. So you will only have a little bit of my time. You need to think for yourself and then come and check with me, but think for yourself first.

This point is also emphasised in the literature. For example, Copland (2004B: 42) argues that 'learners] have as much responsibility for the learning process as the teacher'. The above quotation is also about international students' different expectations in their home countries where they are not necessarily expected to think for themselves. This is another difference in the domain of culture, academic culture. This corroborates Atkinson's (2004) claim that international students engage with different overlapping cultures which have their considerable impact on the students' use of EAP.

4.3.1.4. How International Students are Taught English at University Wales

Interviewee T1 noted that there are two groups of international students: one is taught at the language centre and the other by her as a support tutor from the International Office. She stated:

I mean there are two groups of international students in University Wales. One group is at the language centre and the other which I teach, who are post-grads, so I can't tell you how they are taught in the other centre basically, but that is English language intensive. When they come to me, it is optional, voluntary; they do not need to come.
As a language support teacher, interviewee T1 explained that she teaches study skills to big groups of students. She also does small groups of one-to-one tuition. She stated:

I do a variety of things. We do some big group; do some lectures where we teach study skills such as writing and listening, more about the structure of language; and I do small groups and one-to-one tuition. And how I teach depends on how they are and who they are really. We occasionally do grammar, but not very often.

Notably, the availability of one-to-one tuition was highlighted by a University Wales student interviewee as a main reason for his selection of University Wales.

Interviewee T1 also explained how she deals with the difficulties international students encounter when they arrive to University Wales:

I think they struggle when they come with culture. A lot of students come and they cannot speak. If they come with that, to be honest, I do not have much to do with them. I tell them come back in a month, and generally they will have improved their speaking. So, we tend to focus on how to structure a sentence, how to structure a paragraph, how to structure an essay, referencing. So it is mainly to do with academic writing.

The difficulty the domain of culture poses for international students was also mentioned by a University Wales student interviewee who pointed out that time is needed to overcome cultural problems, for example accent. Moreover, the stress on academic writing was mentioned by many University Wales student interviewees.

Interviewee T2 was asked about how international students are taught English at University Wales and she answered that they get free tuition, mainly about how to do study skills in the British way. According to her:

International students get free tuition, study skills tuition. It is not necessarily English language; they are actually taught to put their own skills into the British system, so they learn how to do study skills in the British way.
Interviewee T4 mentioned different measures taken by University Wales to help students with English language, for example making students aware of the language support courses and identifying weak students in order to help them. He noted:

We have induction programme. They are made aware of the English language course which is available to them. And we as tutors are encouraged ... quite significantly actually to identify any students, at the earliest possible opportunity we can, who may well be struggling in terms of their level of understanding... Anyway, we identify, we talk to them individually and work with them and we send them to the English language support tutor.

4.3.1.5. Comparing the Language Support University Wales Offers with Other UK Universities

Interviewee T1 stated that the support University Wales offers is fairly similar to other UK universities, but it may be unusual for the language lecturers to be a part of the International Office as is the case with University Wales. This makes them closer to international students. She noted:

I think it is fairly similar, except that some bigger universities really have big language centres where students go and attend classes; they are very large classes, really. For me and my colleagues, we tend to do more one-to-one tuition, and it is quite unusual for the language lecturers to be part of the International Office, which is what we are.

According to interviewee T3, the large numbers of international students taking the MBA programme is not easily found in other UK universities. He mentioned:

I think we built up a unique selling potential on international students really. We are one of the largest MBA programmes in Europe, and it has been going ten years, and 90% of the people come from India, so ... I think in terms of the Indian students, we are probably the best practice of it.

He further stated that they have a highly qualified language support tutor totally dedicated to international students. Another unique point mentioned by Interviewee T3 is that in
University Wales there is 'a Republic of China staff member and an Indian faculty member that students can turn to with any problem'.

4.3.2. Difficulties International Students Encounter at University Wales

The staff respondents were asked about the difficulties which international students encountered and how to address them. They had various answers, as could be shown below.

4.3.2.1. Difficulties Encountered by International Students

The difficulties which international students faced were both cultural and linguistic, and had their effect on the students' academic work. For instance, interviewee T3 felt that difficulties his international students encountered were largely cultural and were to do with their circumstances as international students. Accordingly, teaching those students the way to acclimatise to the new academic culture was a challenge which was a part of teaching EAP. Referring to his Indian students who had a reasonably good command of English, he commented:

What I find is that our learning experience and learning habits are very different. You know, I get the impression they are not necessarily taught to think for themselves the same level as here, and I find acclimatising them to thinking for themselves on M. level or Masters level is a challenge. So I felt they needed support in that sense.

The above quotation demonstrates that international students have to engage with different cultures, and that staff have to take this issue seriously. Hyland (2006: 42) emphasises this point when he argues that 'the knowledge and expectations of our L2 students may be very different from our own and therefore influence their performance in class'.

Interviewee T3 further mentioned other problems, related to academic culture, which his international students encountered and how he dealt with them:
I have to really encourage them to think and have their own opinions, evidence their own opinions. A big problem is copy-paste. Trying to get them collectively to understand how the system of referencing works. I find that very hard.

Interviewee T1 mentioned another difficulty challenging international students and she thought that staff should be specific in what they expect of international students. She said:

I am not sure that we are always specific in that what we want them to do as we could be. We say write a report; go and write a report. What does that mean? … In particular, we have to be very specific about what we are expecting them to do.

She also mentioned some cultural problems which international students encounter. She thought that University Wales needed to ensure they understood the need to address them. She noted:

They also have other cultural issues … and even they don't know when they arrive how they should address their tutors, is it ‘doctor’? And we don't tell them. Some of them do, but not everybody does. And they don't necessarily think like when they expect you to be available or not. And how much time they can expect from you. Even what UK office hours are … Those sorts of things I think they could be a lot better.

Cultural differences can also lead to students’ misunderstanding of the tutor-student relationship. This point was illustrated by interviewee T3 when he emphasised that teachers should maintain a balance between being ‘somebody [students] can approach but not somebody that they feel so close to’. He gave a concrete example from his contacts with his international students. He said:

Then I get into trouble because they become too familiar. You know, one helped me when I was busy carrying too many things, and one came and helped me this morning. And the others said 'Oh now you think you are gonna get better marks because of that'.
One difficulty which international students encountered, as noted by interviewee T1, was the language barrier which international students face when studying in a foreign country. She said:

The first disadvantage clearly is language, for somebody like yourself to write a PhD in a foreign language is clearly a huge task, huge task in your own language.

4.3.2.2. How University Wales Should Support and Approach the Difficulties

Interviewee T3 emphasised the importance of taking a holistic view of the students' needs and taking a 'joined-up' approach, where university initiatives, good links between the International Office staff who teach EAP and lecturers in Schools are needed. He said:

I found we needed a very holistic approach to the student um ... not just EAP ... and I feel support has to be almost for the whole person.

Interviewee T1 also noted that University Wales' support for international students has to ensure that 'a whole university [is] on board ... everybody has got to be on board'.

Interviewee T3 further highlighted the importance of adopting a holistic approach for teaching students. He said:

I think that part of the whole issue is ... not providing support purely in a limited EAP sense; providing support to the whole person; really try to understand who is it you are teaching. Even if they are mature students: who is it you are teaching? what are their problems? What is their outlook?

The call for a holistic approach is also emphasised in the literature. (Please see Literature Chapter, Section 8).

Interviewees believed that there should be a good link between programme lecturers and EAP support tutors. According to interviewee T3, 'it is vital that there is a mutual respect
between lecturers and support [tutors']. He further commented that University Wales has this
strong link. He said:

So what I feel is a strength at University Wales is the very close
collaboration between lecturers and [support tutors]. We would
know what we do ourselves, and what needs to be passed on. And
occasionally I have to pass on a lot to [the international language
support tutor].

The interviewees also highlighted the importance of the aspect of empathy with international
students. For instance, interviewee T3 commented about some staff's lack of sympathy with
international students and called them to be more empathetic towards them. He said:

I think my colleagues … can't put themselves in the shoes really of
the students. And this is what scares me a bit.

Interviewee T3 also gave a concrete example of how he attempts to empathise with and
accommodate international students. He explained how he revised a plan of going to a pub,
which could have been harmful to some of his international students. He said:

I looked at some of my students and I knew they like going to the
pub for having a beer, so I thought we could do this, and then I saw
two of my women students who wore scarves. Wait a minute! They
probably would not like to be in a pub environment or seeing some
of my work students drinking. So I told them and said 'would you
prefer, you know, if we went into a coffee shop?' And they said 'Oh
yes, thank you, we would much rather be in a coffee shop'.

He also saw a need to change some home students' pejorative attitudes towards international
students, asking home students to be empathetic.

4.3.2.3. Language Difficulties Encountered by International Students

Interviewees were asked about the difficulties international students encountered in
University Wales in terms of academic English. Interviewee T1 answered:
I think it is writing. I think there are some big problems with speaking, not very many, and I do think that tends to improve quickly. Writing language ... It is not always the language issues. Sometimes they do not understand how to write an essay.

The difficulty writing skill poses is pointed out in the literature (Jordan, 1997; Klapper, 2006).

Interviewee T2 stated that understanding accent was the most difficult aspect of language international students found at University Wales. She noted:

Initially I think ... often if they learn English in their countries, they are used to learning text-book English. When they come to the country, and people have different accent; people speak very quickly, so listening is a difficulty.

The difficulty accent poses in the learning of English was clearly mentioned by University Wales student interviewees too, as it was viewed as the most difficult aspect of language learning. The problem of accent is also mentioned in the literature. For example, Klapper (2006: 322) points out that a difficulty of naturalistic language is:

the speed of authentic language. Brought up on diet of planned FL speech, delivered at a slow or moderate rate, most students' reaction when they first encounter naturalistic speech is mild panic, especially if speed is compounded by regional accent or unusual intonation patterns.

According to interviewee T3, a difficulty encountered by international students is the tendency of some of them to copy-paste. He said:

I find, when you talk of difficulties, for certain students … there seems to be tendency to copy-paste. And I find that difficult, and I try to encourage firmly against that. But what I have noticed is with some international students who are not really comfortable in English. With the internet now it is very easy to take a paragraph and put that in. So sometimes you are reading something which is written in not quite good English, and then suddenly you see a change in form and you are reading an Oxford professor, you know.
Interviewee T3 then mentioned that he takes the proper measures to stop this from happening again: 'What we do is that we correct that immediately … and usually the student then doesn't do that again'.

Another difficulty, mentioned by interviewee T5, was that international students do not have the chance to use language outside the classroom. He said:

> They have problems perhaps urm ... with opportunities to use the language. This maybe they don't have sufficient contact with the outside community... I think that is the primary problem. Outside the context of the class-room they often don't feel they need to use it.

This demonstrates that international students can be isolated from the local culture. Indeed, my data strongly reflected this point.

Furthermore, interviewee T5 perceived reading as the most difficult skill for students. He said:

> The [skill] which presents most difficulty is reading ... because it involves time and effort. Speaking and listening on the whole tend to develop fairly naturally. And writing is something which you can control and achieve some kind of effect, but reading you can't control what is coming in … It is a receptive skill.

The above quotation highlights reading as the most difficult language skill because it requires more time and effort on the part of the learner. This trend, however, is in contrast with that of University Wales interviewees who believed that reading is the least difficult language skill.

Besides, Klapper (2006) points out that writing and listening skills are more difficult than reading. On the other hand, Evans (2008: 246) emphasises the challenging nature of reading when he states that 'EAP students face considerable challenges in reading, and reading to write'.
4.3.2.4. How to Address Language Difficulties

Interviewees were then asked about how to address the language difficulties their students encounter. Interviewee T1 answered that teachers should ask students explicitly about their problems. She said:

Perhaps the academics are sometimes not as explicit as they should be. I think we assume that students understand the system and ask about what they do not understand. Sometimes out of pride students do not ask. We do not realise that they do not understand. For example, we could ask them to write reports about how they like, what should be done … So with that … we could predict where the problems would be.

Interviewee T2 confirmed that it is normal for international students to experience difficulties at the beginning and suggested that students should mix with native speakers, get a job and listen to radio and TV. She said:

Some students become very nervous at the beginning and they do not understand what people are saying to them because they say things very quickly. It is basically a case of time will help you. The more you listen and the more you don't spend with your nationality and speak your own language, that will help. What we encourage students to do is to go out, get a part-time job, mix with people, British, not just international friends, and listen to radio and television.

Interviewee T5 also pointed out the necessity for international students to mix with students from a different nationality or a different language group and to practise English. He noted:

Well, partly it is a question of how you recruit students; I mean we got a good mix here. Those students who want this opportunity to spend time with students from a different nationality or a different language group can do that. Urm … sort of can get part-time jobs or … You have to recognise that urm … if you want your English to improve, you've got to practise it.

Mixing with different nationalities as a means of improving language was also mentioned by University Wales student interviewees who believed that language should be learnt by practice rather than studied, and there should be contact with English-speaking people.
4.3.3. Staff Views of EAP Skills

The Staff interviewees were asked different questions regarding their views of EAP skills. Their answers were wide-ranging, as could be found below.

4.3.3.1. The Most Useful Language Skills for Students

The staff interviewees were asked about the language skills which students most need for their studies. They all agreed that each language skill is equally needed by students in their study of English.

Interviewee T1 noted that all language skills are important, especially listening to lectures and accent:

> Well, they are all kind of interactive, really. They need them all in fact. The immediate one is listening, to concentrate on the lectures. Some of them speak brilliant English; they speak English as a second language, but they learnt formal English, so I think when they arrive, they have trouble understanding accent, and terminology, and that type of thing, so listening is the immediate one. In the long term, reading and writing.

According to interviewee T2, all the skills are important for students: 'all of them, they need all of them'.

Interviewees T3 and T4 also believed that students need all the skills. For example, interviewee T3 stated:

> All of them, possibly even in equal measure. I think the tricky time comes with dissertation because then they are expected to do, say, 18000 to 20000 words. So luckily that is the end of their taught part. So by that time, perhaps they are more fluent. But sometimes I do feel concerned for them when they do these large pieces of work.

As is clear from the previous quotations by the interviewees, all the staff tutors agreed on the point that all skills are important for students to learn the language. This is stressed in the
literature as well. For example, Broady (as cited in Klapper, 2006: 293) remarks that 'the integration of skills is typical of authentic language use and is likely to prove the most productive pedagogical approach.' On her part, Parker (2004: 14) comments that 'the emphasis on the four skills has been a feature of language teaching at all levels in recent years'. This is, however, in contrast with most University Wales students interviewed who highlighted reading and writing as the most important skills which students need for their study of EAP.

4.3.3.2. The Most Efficient Way to Learn EAP

According to interviewee T1, the most efficient way to learn EAP is practice. She said:

> I think it is probably to do some preliminary intensive academic English. I don't think it is really to learn how to do it as try to apply it. When students come here, total immersion occurs, I would say. But it is no good unless they have some kind of feedback where they can say: 'how can I improve this?'

No good to have an idea if they do not understand why.

The quotation above stresses the role of feedback in learning English. The importance of feedback is found repeatedly in the literature, for example Hyland (2006) and Mitchell and Myles (1998). It was also reiterated by University Wales student interviewees.

The emphasis on practice in learning is echoed in the literature. For instance, Klapper (2006) highlights practice as a quality of the good language learner. Also, Copland (2004A: 52) notes that 'in language classrooms, students need the opportunity to practise what they have been taught'.

Interviewee T2 stated that the most efficient way to learn academic English is to be taught in a native country by a native teacher. She pointed out:

> The most effective way to learn academic English is having a British person teaching you. When you are in your own country
and you are having someone from your nationality to teach you English, their own habits come out and they may not necessarily be in constant touch with the new language or slang. They only teach you text books, but academic English is what is necessary, and learning in this country, I guess, is the best way if you need to learn the structure of an essay and be familiar with study skills.

However, the idea of preferring to teach language by native teachers rather than non-native teachers is in contrast with many authors in the literature, for example Cook (2001) and Klapper (2006).

Interviewee T3 felt that the most efficient way for students to learn academic English was to drive their own learning. He mentioned:

One thing I have noticed is if you allow them to drive their own learning, I am getting the best results in that way. So … if you let them work in groups; if you encourage them to present to the others, urm… I find that dynamic. If they get over shyness, if they get over the fact perhaps that they don't speak 100% fluently, if you encourage them and let them speak to their peers and work with their peers, I find we get astonishing results.

According to interviewee T4, the most efficient way to learn academic English is to increase the level of interaction between the students and the teacher. He said:

When I start off teaching when they are new to the University Wales programme, I find that a lot of students urm … are almost quite scared to make comments or to have some sort of interaction with you … which could go back to cultural things. But for me, I think the more I encourage interaction, the more we encourage debate, challenge, questions with their peer-groups and with you as their tutor.

The above quotation also highlights the impact of cultural differences on international students as learners of English. This impact was highlighted by many student interviewees at University Wales.

Interviewee T5 commented that the most efficient way to learn academic English depends on the students, as different students learn in different ways, depending on their ability as well as their motivation. He said:
To learn academic English … umm well, I think it depends entirely on the student. What would be the most efficient way for you might not be the most efficient way for somebody else. It depends on your ability in the language and your motivation.

Interviewee T5 further suggested that students model on texts found in textbooks with the help of teachers. He mentioned:

Ideally the student should look at the type of text which he or she finds in the books they are reading and try to model on that. Then they actually take specific genre models, copy those, if there is a taught situation. With classes then they should ask the teacher to provide those models and whenever they practise, using academic English, they should take account of the feedback they are given.

4.3.3.3. The Aspect of Academic Writing Which Students Find Most Difficult

Interviewees were asked about the aspects of academic writing which students find most difficult. Interviewee T1 answered:

I think it is generally style and vocabulary probably. I mean, they do have grammar problems, it is difficult to generalise. Some of our students are much more advanced than others. I think grammar can be learnt easily, but I think style is much more difficult to learn. Some students do quite well. You do not tell them from native speakers, but I think their style is the biggest problem.

Interviewee T2 noted that the most difficult aspect of academic writing depends on the teaching system international students used to have in their own country. She said:

It depends on which country they come from and the type of system they use to study English in their own country or to study their own language. Grammar is always the same when you learn English.

She gave an example of the copy-paste method which is permitted in some countries and prohibited in others. She noted:

It might be acceptable to copy information from books in one particular country, whereas you get penalised in this country for plagiarism. Students don't understand what plagiarism is, and they get very shocked when they fail because of that.
This quotation explains that the difference in academic culture can lead to tragic results. It is evidence that international students need to engage with different cultures for them to be successful in their EAP and studies.

According to interviewee T4, the most difficult aspects of academic writing are grammar, vocabulary and critical evaluation. He stated:

> I think it is grammar; vocabulary, and what I have just spoken about really critical evaluation. At Master's level they find that very difficult. It's almost they don't believe it when you say, you are entitled to compare and contrast these two authors, and when we say to them we really want your own interpretation, analysis and critical evaluation of that, they look at you: Are you really telling me the truth?

This quotation further illustrates aspects of the academic culture which international students are required to consider in their study of EAP.

According to interviewee T3, the most difficult aspects of writing are structure and logic. He said:

> My concern often is with logic. Like I like to see an introduction, main body and conclusion, and a thread of logic through. And occasionally I find with international students it's a little bit disjointed. So they have a paragraph sitting here, a paragraph sitting here, and paragraph sitting here, but no linking phrases or communicating sentences. So for me, it is not so much style, grammar, vocabulary, it is more sentence structure and um.. thread of logic.

Interviewee T5 also had strong views on the question of academic writing. According to him:

> I think writing is writing. The way you put it depends a lot on the situation. If I write an essay in informal English, it is still an essay, is it an academic writing? I don't know. If by academic writing you mean sort of writing which is typically associated with umr … the academic context, then I suppose style does present a problem…

To him, grammar and vocabulary are the main components of academic writing:

> I am concerned actually with having the grammar and vocabulary right. I think vocabulary is the key problem at any level … In sentence structure syntax, vocabulary and style rather than grammar per se. Although you can't really distinguish between them not
even artificial distinction.

It is clear from the staff interviewees' responses that, in their view, style, vocabulary and grammar were among the main problems students find in their study of academic writing. The results are similar to those of a study carried out by Jordan (as cited in Jordan, 1997) where teachers of international postgraduate students were asked about the most difficult aspects of academic writing which their students encounter. The aspects with greatest difficulty, according to the teachers, were style, grammar and vocabulary respectively.

4.3.3.4. Staff Views on Effective EAP Provision

Interviewees were asked about their views on effective EAP provision. They had different answers. Interestingly, T5 was sceptical about the concept of EAP itself. According to him, the priority of EAP is to have a basic knowledge of English and to be able to communicate simply and clearly rather than having to write a special type of English. He said:

I have my doubts about the concept of EAP. To some extent I think it is an artificial construct. Urm ... my own feeling is that the basic grasp of the language and the ability to communicate simply and straightforwardly and clearly is often sufficient. The notion that you have to write a special type of English is I think misleading. For my purposes I am happy the students can manipulate the language even at what we might consider a neutral level rather than a very formal level.

He mentioned that areas of language which are common in academic discourse, for example, use of the passive and reported speech and language statistics, should not be considered as an end in themselves; rather, they must be within wider context of language learning. He commented:

My experience is it is fatuous to focus on these as an end in themselves if they are not contextualised within a mastery of the language.
He also said that students need to acquire a general knowledge in order to operate in a new culture rather than a specific knowledge of a certain field of study, which may create tension between the teacher's view and that of the students. He remarked:

> Very often what is most useful for the purpose of developing English language skills may be of very general nature, and if students have a specific course in mind or a specific purpose for the English language study, there can be a tension there er ... However, general knowledge is a key factor in the students' ability to operate in a new culture

This is why he selects general subjects for teaching students, not considering his students' fields of study. He noted:

> I usually convince students that what I do is that whatever subject we deal with providing it is inherently interesting, is worthwhile in the long term, even if they themselves do not feel it may relate directly to the field of their study.

The point of having general English rather than specifically academic was stated by one University Wales student interviewee. Moreover, the above quotation reflects the importance placed by this tutor on the inter-relation of the domains of language and culture.

According to interviewee T5, there are different factors that come into play when devising an EAP course. He noted:

> I think it would depend on how much time is available, … what is the anticipated level of participants, what they aim to do after the course, whether it is intended to be pre-sessional or in-sessional.

Interviewee T1 stressed that the language practical aspects are the most important skills to be highlighted in effective EAP provision, and then there should be focus on reading and writing. According to her:

> I actually tend to stress at the beginning more of practical aspects of English language, more about expectations, about academic life and style… How the whole system works really…write down what is in the lecture or seminar, what they mean.
On his part, interviewee T3 noted the importance of varying the methods of assessment so that students use the method which they feel they are best at. He explained:

> What I think is important is a wide range of assessment. I mean, OK if one tutor has an exam; another tutor gives an essay. OK. But for example, I don't particularly like exams or essays for international students. I find often they feel threatened by that, so I tend to do marks through coursework and presentations where they work in groups. And I am tending to experiment with new forms of assessment.

### 4.3.3.5. Staff Conceptions of EAP

The interviewees were asked about their views of the actual existence of EAP. Their responses showed that they, except for one, felt that there is such a thing as EAP. Interviewee T3 differentiated English for Academic Purposes from English for Conversational Purposes.

He said:

> you know instead of teaching English for conversational purposes, the whole focus is on teaching English so that [students] succeed in their university assignments.

Interviewee T1 disagreed with those who argue that there is no such a thing as EAP since she believed that specific type of English is required so that students can be a part of the English academic discourse. She said:

> I think to say there is no EAP, it is like to say there is no academic discourse, and definitely there is academic discourse. I think the main problem our students have is to make that step... for Indian students it can be very flowery English, very formal; they transfer that into academic discourse. I think, it's the academic culture.

She found that some students are not able to make the step in developing their English to academic written style.
However, interviewee T1 acknowledged that to teach academic English as EAP separately is
difficult. In fact, she questioned whether it is possible to teach it effectively at university at
all. An important factor in her view is the kind of teaching which students have received
beforehand. If teaching prior to university is skill-based and students are able to apply these
skills to several situations, then she believed they are 'more rounded students', more able to
cope with the academic demands. However, she said that some tests are more limited, where
students can pass the language proficiency tests and yet not have the language skills to be
able to study at appropriate academic level. This point was also emphasised by a staff
interviewee who believed that scoring a minimum 6 at IELTS is sufficient for students to
meet university requirements of proficiency, but still does not qualify the students to be
capable of coping with all the academic demands which studying abroad places upon them.

4.3.4. Summary

According to staff interviewees, the number of international students in University Wales is
on the increase. According to statistics, the number is actually increasing considerably year
by year.

Regarding the support international students should receive at University Wales, the staff
called for a holistic approach in teaching international students, where the whole person is
considered and the efforts of the university as a whole are required. In practice, according to
the staff respondents, the international students at University Wales are offered help by the
International Office, who help students cope with their new academic and cultural life in the
UK. The University also tries to be empathetic with the international students. For instance,
there are Indian and Chinese members of teaching staff to be closer to the international
students' problems and needs. Concerning language support, there is a support tutor who is fully dedicated to international students. She teaches them in groups or individually.

With regard to the most useful skills for international students, all the staff interviewees viewed all skills as equally useful. This is contrasted with the student interviewees in University Wales, who regarded reading and writing as the most useful skills for their academic use of EAP.

As for the most efficient way to learn EAP, one staff interviewee pinpointed practising language in society. Another suggested to use English in a native country and be taught by native speakers. Both the above two views underline the continuum of language use inside and outside the classroom. Another staff interviewee focused on the interaction between students and teachers. Another view was for students to drive their own learning.

The difficulties international students encountered, as perceived by the staff interviewees, were cultural and linguistic, and the way to tackle them required the efforts of the staff and the students as well. An important aspect of the help offered by the staff, as highlighted by the staff interviewees, is to be empathetic to students. The staff interviewees also underscored the importance of having a good link between the lecturers and language tutors. This is another aspect of the holistic approach which the staff interviewees called for.

With regard to the difficulties international students encounter in their use of English, as viewed by staff interviewees, they were various, for example writing, listening to accent and the lack of opportunities to use English outside the classroom. As is clear, many of the
difficulties arise from the domain of culture. Concerning addressing these difficulties, suggestions propounded by the staff interviewees were wide-ranging, for instance, asking students about their difficulties and adapting assessment in a way which does not prejudice quality.

With regard to the most challenging aspects of academic writing, they were various: vocabulary, style, grammar, structure, logic and critical evaluation.

As regards EAP provision, a staff interviewee was sceptical about EAP as a concept. To him, the use of simple and clear language was sufficient. According to him, general English rather than specific knowledge of English was required for the success of an EAP programme.

The staff interviewees emphasised the international students' engagement with different cultural aspects. This point was also reiterated by University Wales students. It is also referred to in the literature, for example Jordan (1997) and Trahar (2007). This confirms Atkinson's (2004) claim that international students need to engage with different overlapping cultures in their study.

4.4. Student Focus Group Results

Six international students from University Wales were interviewed together as a focus group: five males and one female. The goal was to enrich the University Wales individual student interviews and follow up on particular themes which emerged from the student interviews. The focus group took place at the end of the data collection process. A copy of the interview schedule could be found in appendix 5. Much of the discussion was centred around the
domain of culture and how being in an English-speaking culture affects international students' learning and use of EAP. There were various views on how significant culture is. Some students agreed that the domains of culture and language are inter-related, and that the difficulties and advantages of being in an English-speaking culture had an effect on their study of EAP. Other points discussed were the support international students receive from University Wales and the resources available to them.

4.4.1. Support Offered to International Students at University Wales

The focus group discussed the support received by international students. Some comments were positive, while others were negative.

One of the positive comments was the availability of a language support tutor fully dedicated to international students. Interviewee F1 noted:

> Acceptable support here in school by offering us a special teacher like [names tutor] that she is supporting us if we need special advice or some private meetings with her to check something we can discuss some matters, but actually she is not just doing this, she is doing a lot of things; she is supporting all international students; she is helping and organising some events for international students.

It should be noted that this student appreciated the fact that the language support teacher's remit was wider than merely teaching language, but also organising cultural or social events.

The idea of the tutor as a language tutor and culture helper was also highlighted by interviewee F2. He stressed the importance of having a personal tutor who helps students overcome shyness and other barriers in addition to teaching language. He stated:

> The second thing is the tutor, the personal tutor who can see face to face each PhD researcher. It is a very hard mission but is very necessary, specially to those like most Libyans, you see Libyans, maybe Moroccans, because they are actually very shy and their culture is dominating their behaviour so much…if it is face to face communication, they will be easily contacting and easily dealing
with their tutor. The tutor will find out a way to get them out of the shyness to deal with others with confidence.

However, some interviewees felt that the support is not sufficient at school level. For example, interviewee F1 noted:

As you see, we are coming from different countries, international students coming from different countries ... They are all coming to the School. They need support, especially in English or especially in language. We want to write in academic way, to be able to speak in academic way.

Three interviewees emphasised the need to have more support for academic writing. For instance, interviewee F3 noted the need for support in terms of academic writing as well as social life:

We need a lot of support in relation to our academic writing, the community. The relationship between staff and international students should be highlighted and they should support international students more than they do at the time.

According to interviewee F1, the support University Wales offers to international students in relation to academic writing was not sufficient. He commented:

Specially writing, we need more and more workshops here in the School. We had just one workshop for academic writing for just one day and I think academic writing cannot be taken just one day. We have to have a large number of books in the library as well talking about how to be able to write in an academic way.

Interestingly, he saw redrafting as a waste of time. He remarked:

And also we need to have bigger support that can support us in our session in academic way writing, which is enhancing our writing, instead of wasting hours and hours in writing and rewriting our stuff again or trying to check it with our supervisor or trying to search in different books.

Interviewee F2 also felt the need for more support for international students with regard to their research or thesis writing. He pointed out:
There are no courses, even for the international students to know how to write their thesis effectively, and I do think if the institute offers a kind of general English courses in the beginning, for example for the newly coming international students for one year at least intensive courses in general English and then in the second year or even in the other six months, they can provide them with professional dissertation and thesis writing skills in English. This will be a very good programme.

4.4.2. Comparing Study at University Wales to Elsewhere

Interviewee F2 compared the resources of University Wales to the resources in Egypt, his home country and noted that University Wales was better with regard to several points. He said:

There are very big differences … between studying here and my university in Egypt. First of all, in terms of resources, there we have very modest library. It is very vast area but very small number of books, and those books related to the specific area of study of all PhD students there is very small. Here we have wonderful library; we can get inter-library loan system. We have no interlibrary loan system in our faculty in Egypt. The access to data in Egypt is very difficult.

Interviewee F1 also commented on University Wales resources as better and more updated than those of Egypt, his home country. According to him:

Why we came here? To study here in the UK instead of studying in Egypt. It is the system, the level of knowledge existing here, the updating of information. Here we can find we are dealing with researching which is very recent and is going to be with the future, just what is going on nowadays.

He also mentioned that supervisors in University Wales were better than those in Egypt. He stated:

Another important thing actually is the supervisor. Here you can be supervised by very intelligent person who directs your work, understands your aim and controls your thesis monitoring all the process of doing the research till the end.
Interviewee F5 also pointed out that the UK is the best place for international students to learn the domains of language and culture. In his own words, 'the best place you can go for is Britain in terms of language and culture.'

4.4.3. Impact of Culture on International Students in University Wales

Three interviewees did not see the domain of culture as a challenge for learning EAP. Two of them acknowledged that culture has a significant role to play, but they did not view it as a challenge, especially in the UK, as is discussed below.

Interviewee F1 differentiated between language and culture. To him, culture does not stand as a challenge for international students because people who come with a good language can easily communicate in the English language without the need for a knowledge of the local culture. He noted:

I don't think that culture is a challenge for being able to merge in English. Actually, I think it is language itself the barrier not the culture because you can't say any another people coming from a different culture can't merge in English language, except if he has a language barrier which is making it difficult for them to be able to use this language properly.

To him, culture can be a barrier for assimilating into the English community but not for using English language. He said:

It can't be said that English culture can be a barrier for being able to use English language but can be a barrier for the use of the English culture or to be able to merge in the English community.

Interviewee F4 also agreed with interviewee F1 that it is language rather than culture which stands as a challenge for international students: He pointed out:

As a challenge for the culture I believe that the whole world now is
living in one culture because the world has turned into small village as a global urm … atmosphere. So I believe that the challenge is the language itself not the culture.

Interviewee F5 also stated that culture is an important aspect, but it cannot be viewed as a challenge for language learning in the UK. He remarked:

I say that it is an important issue the culture in Britain. I am talking especially about Britain; it is an important issue, but it is not a challenge, so what happens if you are living in another country like the States, like Germany, like Japan? In these countries I can say the culture is a challenge.

The view of the above three interviewees is in fact opposed by many authors in the literature who view the domains of language and culture as interrelated, for example Trahar (2007), Lin (2007), Byram and Grundy (2003) and Jordan (1997). It is also in conflict with many other University Wales student interviewees who believed that cultural domain has a great impact on learning EAP.

The other three interviewees viewed culture as a real challenge for international students in their use of English for their studies. Interviewee F2, for instance, believed that the role of cultural context is decisive in mediating the international students' use of English. He noted:

Actually this is playing very big role and very vital role in terms of the communication between the international students coming to the UK to study … So the effect of culture on understanding the language here in the UK for the international students is very common and is very important point.

Interviewee F6 also underlined the challenge the local culture poses for the international students' use of English. According to him:

Culture is affecting the communication between the international students, the Indians, the Egyptians, the other international students and the local and the British or German or Japanese or any other nationality.
The key role played by the cultural context on international students' use of English, as pointed out by the previous two interviewees, is emphasised in the literature. (Please see Chapter 2, Section 8)

As regards the impact of cultural context on international students' use of EAP, it can be viewed in terms of both positive and negative points. One positive impact was that some interviewees felt that Wales has lots of nationalities and that the Welsh are used to welcoming outsiders and living with a mix of cultures and that this was helpful to students in terms of learning English language and culture. Interviewee F5 noted:

I think that culture is important but is not a challenge in communicating, especially with the British community because this community is really international or multi-national community. They are used to living with different nationalities, with different people from all over the world.

He gave the example of London where there are a lot of nationalities, which was helpful. He said:

If you go to London for example, you can find at least more than three hundred languages spoken in this nice and big city. And there is more than three hundred nationalities communicating with each other and living really nice with each other. So, I think it is an important thing … Not long time we all adapt with the community we all adapt with each other, with our supervisors at the university, with our colleagues at the university.

Interviewees also highlighted the importance of learning English by spending time in an English-speaking country. Interviewee F2 stated:

Obviously the language is like an obstacle to communicate purely with the people here but the longer you stay the better you will be in communication. It's a matter of time, it's a matter of age as well. If you come here in much younger age, it will be much easier for you pick up language much much easier. But if you are like in our age, you will need more and more time to absorb more the language.
Gradual adaptation to the new country by international students is emphasised in the literature. For instance, Ward et al. (as cited in Burnett and Gardner, 2006: 64) on their research into the adaptation of Japanese students in New Zealand found that the students 'experienced the peak in their difficulties on arrival; and that these decreased with time.'

Interviewee F5 further believed that the impact of culture on international students is positive in the UK. To him:

> In Britain this is different … different cultures, different habits, different religion, different accent, but you still can communicate still you can live. Still you can go to the mosque. You can find friends from Britain, British or non-British, do you understand? So if you're talking about Britain, I think in my opinion it is an important issue but not a challenge.

Interviewee F2 gave a similar response. He said:

> … it's indirect effect between the culture and the language through the communication. You see this is the idea, for example someone is very easy-going person very intellectual so he can easily cope with the local people here especially we are in Cardiff which is an open community. If you are in a different city, maybe the response is different. You see even the UK, the community is open; they like the international people they used to see international faces.

As regards the negative impact of cultural context on international students' use of English, many points were raised in the discussion. Firstly, interviewee F2 noted that there are difficulties with idiomatic expressions. According to him:

> There are many idiomatic expressions which we cannot absorb till now… there are many idiomatic expressions that dominate the way of culture they are representing for the international students.

Interviewee F3 also highlighted the cultural differences which could lead to problems in communication with native speakers. She said:

> I think culture has a big role in challenging the international students because we came from a different culture we have learnt different
things. Even our stories when we were children are different from the stories here. So sometimes when they say an expression, we understand it from a different point of view although they can understand it as a very different thing.

This, according to her, may be a main reason for losing confidence, which negatively affects students' learning. She noted:

> Sometimes you feel it, you can see someone who says, 'Oh can you repeat that again? I don't understand you.' That makes you lose confidence. If you believe in yourself, it makes you feel that you are not very good; you are just someone who came from outside, and this is not your community.

Another negative effect of cultural context on international students' use of English is the feeling of alienation and isolation from the local culture. Interviewee F3 commented:

> You can't find a British friend of some international students is a British student. They just trying to make communities by themselves, don't take anybody from outside. Therefore the international students find themselves in their groups. So you find the Indian students, the Egyptian students.

She also stressed the above point when she commented:

> Some international students can come here and stay for four years and they don't know anybody they don't know anything. They didn't learn anything, couldn't go inside this community.

Another point raised by interviewee F3 is not being able to join in social activities and the difficulty to make friends. She said:

> I think there are some gaps between the international students and the British students because of the culture because we didn't use to drink wine because we didn't use to go out, I mean girls and boys; this is difference in cultures so I think there is a gap and it might be a challenge for us to be inside this community trying to communicate with them because we are coming from different culture and we have different needs.
The above three quotations are clear examples of international students isolated from the positive impact of the local culture, a point which was also emphasised by a staff interviewee. The point is highlighted in the literature. For example, Byram and Feng (2006: 2) point out:

Foreign students live in isolation, on the margins of society in which they reside. This may be their choice, and a resistance to the input of life in 'the West' by those from 'the East'… In many universities, there exist communities within the community, and the ideal of the university as a community of scholars is seldom a reality for those from elsewhere.

4.4.4. Summary

The discussion of the student focus group revolved mostly round the impact of cultural context on international students' use of English. It also discussed the support international students receive from University Wales and the resources available to them, as compared and contrasted with the universities at their home countries.

As regards the impact of culture, according to most students, culture played a key role in the international students' use of English for their studies. There was emphasis on the interrelation between language and culture. This trend is emphasised amply in the literature, for example Byram and Grundy (2003), Jordan (1997), Lin (2007) and Trahar (2007). This point was also highlighted by many University Wales student interviewees who viewed their use of EAP through a wider cultural context. To some interviewees, culture was a real challenge for international students, mediating their use of English for their studies. This appeared in different aspects. For example, cultural differences may be a reason for alienating international students and making them under-confident. According to other students, however, culture helps international students in their use of English. For instance,
the belief that Wales is an open multi-cultural community helps international students to become acquainted with the local culture and provides them with more opportunities to use English outside the classroom domain.

As regards the support University Wales offers to international students, it was appreciated by most interviewees who regarded the services offered to international students as 'acceptable', having a language support tutor fully dedicated to international students, helping them with language as well as social life. Also, several interviewees viewed University Wales as having better resources than the universities in their home countries, including the system as a whole, library services, and supervisors. However, interviewees repeatedly noted the importance of helping international students integrate into the local culture more efficiently and providing them with opportunities to use language outside the classroom domain.

4.5. University Wales Documents

Documents are a rich source of data for social researchers (Punch, 2005). Documents were collected from University Wales. They were analysed in order to inform the main case study. Below is analysis of the various documents collected.

4.5.1. Prospectuses

According to Directgov (2008):

A university or college prospectus gives information about a particular course and institution, covering facilities, tuition fees, scholarships, courses, accommodation, support services and more.
The prospectuses are an important type of documents, as they are the main source of information for international students, helping them to decide where to study. The prospectuses collected for analysis were University Wales' postgraduate prospectuses for the years 2006 - 2008. The three prospectuses are very similar to each other. They are printed in bright colours and they have attractive pictures of university life in a way to invite students to browse them with interest. The intended audience are prospective students. The goal is to 'sell' University Wales for students, international students included. The language style used in the three prospectuses is academic but straightforward in order to help students read them and understand them easily. Descriptive flowery language is sometimes used, especially when talking about Cardiff as a city. Examples are 'beautiful', 'lazy day on the beach', 'funky and unusual shops' and 'outstanding natural beauty' (UW Prospectus, 2007: 12-13).

The three prospectuses are a part of the marketing campaign the University regularly carries out in order to attract more students to join. They start with talking about the location of University Wales, which is the City of Cardiff. This may be because Cardiff as a city is a prime advantage for University Wales in terms of beauty and social life, partly being a capital city. This point was in fact emphasised by some University Wales interviewees when they mentioned the reasons for selecting University Wales. As mentioned in UW Prospectus (2007: 7):

Cardiff is a great place to be a student … It is a young, prosperous and vibrant city, full of character and atmosphere with a range of first-class facilities for sport, entertainment, nightlife, shopping and sightseeing'.
The prospectuses make it easy for students to find information about the courses they are interested in. Moreover, with each programme talked about, there is clear guidance for students on how to apply and what conditions they are expected to meet in order to join University Wales.

The international students are assigned a separate section in the three prospectuses. This demonstrates the University's interest in international students. It also tries to convey a hidden message that University Wales understands that international students should be given special care because they come from a different environment in terms of study and social life. As pointed out in UW Prospectus (2006: 66), 'University Wales' excellent support services for international students are designed to ensure that a student's stay in Cardiff is a happy and successful experience'. The section explores in brief different issues which are of importance to international students with regard to integration into the new environment in terms of study and social life. This demonstrates the overlap of academic and cultural domains in the life of international students. The section first talks about the reputation of University Wales for welcoming international students. This point was the major reason mentioned by many international students for them to apply for a place at the University. Then the section mentions the advantages which international students gain from joining the University. Such advantages are: specialist induction programme 'to help students familiarise themselves with their new surroundings, settle in and make new friends before the academic year begin' (UW Prospectus, 2006: 66). There is also free English language and study skills support, with individual and group teaching options and guaranteed university accommodation. There are also dedicated international welfare support programmes to help with personal welfare and academic issues, cultural programmes, with a number of events
and cultural evenings organised, student support services ensuring confidentiality, free airport welcome service to first year students, religious support, disability support service and fixed-level fees for the duration of the course. Most of these academic and social services were emphasised by the University Wales students and staff interviewed.

As regards EAP teaching at University Wales, English language and study skills support is outlined in brief. The option of individual or group teaching is available. The University also offers academic study skills and a series of short courses, including research skills, making presentations and confidence increasing. This shows that University Wales is eager to support international students in terms of language, as English is not their first language. The information in the prospectuses gives factual information regarding the support University Wales offers to international students. This can be used to triangulate with the data obtained from University Wales students' interviews.

The three prospectuses are similar to each other in terms of framework. However, there are some differences. The prospectus of 2006 is smaller in size, and the colours and pictures it has are not as attractive as the ones found in the prospectuses of 2007 and 2008. This may demonstrate the University's attempt to improve its marketing campaign over time in accordance with the students' interests. It also shows that the prospectus plays a key role in attracting students to University Wales, which urges the University to improve it from year to year. Also, each prospectus should be viewed as valid for the year when it was published, as prospectuses need to be updated to cope with the rapid developments in universities. This gives students a better vision of what is going on in a particular university. It can be inferred from the development of the prospectuses through the years of 2006 – 2008 that University
Wales is successful in attracting more international students since the University is steadily allocating a separate section for international students in the three prospectuses. The improvement of the prospectuses over the years also implies an attempt on the part of the University to attract more international students, who are a part of the whole student body in University Wales. According to UW Prospectus (2008: 16), 'University Wales provides education and training opportunities that are accessible, flexible and of the highest quality'.


The booklet is provided to international students by University Wales as a part of the students' admission pack. It details the main issues that are of help to international students in accommodating themselves to their study in the new country, starting from academic services and ending with cultural issues and financial matters.

Contact names are given for each service so that international students can call the right person if need be. As an international student, I find the booklet attractive in that it is put in the form of bold headings containing the most frequently asked questions and answers. The language used is academic, yet simple to help international students assimilate into the new life. The booklet may be regarded as a message to international students about University Wales' awareness that most international students are 'vulnerable', as referred to by a staff interviewee, and should be given special care, having come from a different academic and social environment. It also shows that University Wales has experience with international students in terms of academic and social needs. This point was repeatedly highlighted by the staff interviewees.
Compared to the prospectuses mentioned earlier, the booklet does not have colours or pictures. This may be a part of the marketing plan by University Wales, since students have already joined the University.

As regards EAP support, University Wales offers this as a free service to international students. There are also the contact details of the language support tutors for students to call them if they need to. This is a part of University Wales's attempt to integrate international students into the new academic environment and support their learning.

4.5.3. English Language Training Centre (ELTC) Materials

Publicity and information leaflets were collected from the ELTC. They were all the printed materials produced in 2008. There are also ELTC materials on the University website. The targeted audience are non-UK students in general and the international students in particular. The ELTC works hand in hand with the International Office in order to make the transition for international students from their home environment to the new one as smooth as possible. Moreover, the ELTC is a source of funding for University Wales. The leaflets are about the teaching of English provided to international students at University Wales. Most of the leaflets are coloured and all have pictures of students on their study. This, I think, gives the leaflets more attraction as well as more credibility. They also have catchy titles to help students find their programme(s) of interest quickly. They are part of the University's marketing campaign for attracting more international students.

Each leaflet states clearly a programme's content together with the conditions for admission.
One leaflet mainly involves an EAP course taught as a four-week summer pre-sessional programme. The course helps students to meet their academic needs for university study and is suitable for first degree and Master's level students. It is intended to introduce students to the following: extended academic essay and report writing skills, library and research skills, academic speaking skills including seminars and discussions, and academic presentation skills.

One of the courses mentioned in the leaflets is EAP as a part of a larger ESP intensive programme, taught together with EVP. The course, as mentioned in a leaflet, is designed for those working or planning to work in a business context, and those intending to develop academic language skills for study and research purposes. The course focuses on the following skills and areas: reading development, presentation skills, active listening and time management.

The course also offers students home-stay accommodation, where international students are offered the opportunity to live with a British family, in an attempt to help international students integrate into the new culture, which is among the most cited problems which both University Wales students and staff interviewed highlighted. It also helps students improve their language skills.

This seems to be a good level of provision, since it takes into consideration students' academic language as well as the cultural aspect of life in the UK. These two domains were experienced by the University Wales respondents in their study of EAP at University Wales, as they repeatedly noted.
4.5.4. University Wales Student Charter

This leaflet gives information about the Charter Mark which University Wales received several times for student service excellence. The target audience is prospective as well as current students. The motto of this leaflet is 'The student experience remains at the heart of our learning, teaching and assessment strategy'. A message conveyed by this leaflet could be that the Charter is a concrete evidence of the distinctive support University Wales offers to its students. This also gives more status to the information provided by the University about its support for students, including international students. This evidence of support is furthered by the testimonies of both University Wales students and staff interviewed.

4.5.5. University Wales Learning Centre Leaflet

This leaflet is coloured and has pictures of the Learning Centre based at one of University Wales' campuses. It is a part of the marketing campaign which University Wales carries out in order to attract more students to join. It can also be regarded as a guide for current students to know more about the University's facilities. The leaflet gives a description of the Learning Centre and the services it offers. It is typed in both English and Welsh as a way to provide for and attract Welsh speaking students. It is divided into four subheadings: study and research areas, learning materials, study advice service and IT Suites. In terms of study and research areas, the Centre provides a flexible environment that includes rooms for students to book, for planning or practising presentations and assignments. The learning materials include books, journals and electronic media. Study advice and learning support is available to all University Wales students. As for the IT Suites, a modern computer suite is accessible to all University Wales students. The leaflet also includes the Learning Centre opening times and
dates, which makes of it an easy guide for students to be familiarised with the main services offered by the Learning Centre.

A message which could be conveyed by the leaflet is that University Wales is proud of the good services the Learning Centre offers, and it tries hard to help students accommodate into their study environment as smoothly as possible. Indeed, the Learning Centre has most of the qualities that University Syria respondents looked for in a good learning centre, as could be shown in the next chapter.

**4.5.6. Websites**

Websites play an important role in the marketing campaign University Wales has (University Wales, 2006). One merit of websites is that they are easily updated and accessed. Below is a mention of the University Wales website, viewed in October 2008, as it relates to international students.

There is a separate section allocated for international students on the University Wales website. The section is useful in that it gives accessible information to international students about different academic and cultural issues with regard to study at University Wales. There are sections on past, current and prospective students with information relating to each. There is a section on the ELTC centre with the different courses and support it offers to international students. The web pages are updated and improved regularly. For example, the site was translated into Korean and Chinese only a few years ago with the purpose of attracting a wider range of international students. Moreover, some pages currently offer the possibility to translate into several languages, like Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian
and Spanish. The translation facility is powered by a Yahoo translation engine. The section as a whole on international students is a part of the University marketing campaign for attracting more international students. It also offers support to current international students in order to help them be acquainted with the latest issues regarding their study and social life (University Wales International Students, 2008). As mentioned on the website, 'University Wales is committed to making your time at the University a rewarding experience on both an academic and a personal level' (University Wales, 2006).

4.5.7. Staff Newsletters 2005 - 2008

The staff newsletters are monthly periodicals. The targeted audience is the University Wales staff. The language used is academic. The purpose of the newsletters is to acquaint University Wales staff with the latest news regarding the University. Staff newsletters often contain a section where there is news about international students which is of interest to the University. Below are some newsletters between 2005 and 2008 which were examined particularly to find references to EAP and international students.

The staff newsletter produced in November 2005 had one section on international students at University Wales. The newsletter stated that 'over 780 international students from 48 countries outside of the European Union are studying now at University Wales, a significant increase of 130 on last year'. This included 35 students carrying out high level research courses and over 300 other postgraduate students including those on the MBA programme. The newsletter mentioned several benefits those students bring to the University. For example, 'as well as a valuable income stream, they also give the university student body a
positive, ethnic and cultural balance and they make a contribution to the internationalisation of the curriculum'.

The message clearly demonstrated is University Wales' interest in recruiting more international students, who form an important part of the University student body as a whole. It also shows that University Wales is pleased with the number of international students which is clearly on increase. The tone of the message is celebratory.

The staff newsletter of December 2007 had a section on international students in the first page, which may imply that university Wales gives special care to international students. The newsletter pointed out that University Wales received a record number of new international students, with over 800 students enrolled from over 70 non-EU countries. It also mentioned the services the new students received to be accommodated to the new life at University Wales. They were also welcomed at a special party hosted by the Vice-Chancellor, which involved an evening of traditional Welsh dancing and a buffet dinner. The newsletter highlights University Wales' approach to the international students, in order to help them accommodate to their new environment as smoothly as possible. This is a point reflected in my data.

As regards the staff newsletter of April 2008, it had a section on international events which University Wales organised for its international students. The international students had taken part in several exciting trips, including a visit to Buckingham Palace, a traditional Welsh Banquet at Cardiff Castle and a day trip to Swansea. International students were also given the opportunity to enter a free prize draw to win an adventure weekend in the Brecon
Beacons. This demonstrates University Wales' focus on the social side in addition to the academic side in the life of international students. This point is highly emphasised by the student and staff interviewees at University Wales.

4.5.8. Summary

Documents from University Wales were collected and analysed in order to inform the findings from the University Wales interviews. Three main themes emerged from the document analysis. The first theme was regarding the support international students receive from University Wales. The support takes two forms: academic support, including language support, and social support. Concerning academic support, University Wales offers free English language and study skills support. The University also offers academic study skills and a number of short courses, including research skills, making presentations and confidence boosting. Social support includes an airport welcome service and an international induction event. The International Office staff would also be assisting with enrolment, visas, bank accounts, health provision and shopping. From my reading, this support is typical of other UK universities. This theme was recurrent in both University Wales student and staff interviews.

The second theme was the value placed by University Wales on international students. This showed in different aspects. Firstly, international students were assigned separate sections in most of the documents collected. Secondly, University Wales is aware of the key role international students play in forming an integral part of the University as a whole in terms of enriching the culture as well as providing income. Thirdly, University Wales, as mentioned in one document, has a very good record of success and retention rates amongst international
students, and a high level of student satisfaction is regularly achieved in University Wales' surveys of this group. This indicates that University Wales places a great value on international students. This point triangulates with what both University Wales students and staff said earlier in the chapter.

The third theme arising from the documents analysed is University Wales' provision for EAP. Several EAP courses are offered by University Wales to international students. Areas covered include extended academic essay and report writing skills, library and research skills, seminars and discussions, and academic presentation skills. Some EAP courses offer the opportunity for international students to live with a British family in order to integrate into social life in addition to their study of language. This highlights University Wales's awareness of the interrelation between social and academic domains in the life of international students. This is a point strongly reflected in my University Wales student and staff interviews, as could be shown earlier in the chapter.

The documents analysed in this study are similar in one way or another to the documents used in other UK universities. The overall strategy for all UK universities is to attract more international students in the current internationalisation of higher education (Jiang, 2008).

4.6. Overall Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the main case study, analysing the results from three methods of data collection: University Wales student and staff interviews, student focus groups and documentary evidence. The individual student interviews were intended to investigate the international students' views of using English for their studies in University Wales and the
question of EAP learning in higher education. The aim was also to investigate how their views were similar to or different from those of the home students in University Syria, the associated case study, which is discussed in the next chapter. The interviews provided a student perspective to be compared and contrasted with the perspectives of University Wales staff. Concerning the staff interviews, they were carried out to provide information about the international student body at University Wales and involved the staff’s perceptions of issues regarding EAP teaching and learning at the university. The information was used to give further insight into the interviews carried out with the students at University Wales.

As for the student focus group, they confirmed several points raised by student interviews and expanded upon them with examples. Below is a mention of the main themes which emerged from the data analysed in the main case study.

**International Students and EAP**

It could be said that international students at University Wales learn EAP in two broad and often overlapping domains: academic and cultural. The academic domain mentioned by students was varied, for example tutorials, lectures, seminars, assignments, presentations, thesis writing and self-study. Self-study was highlighted by interviewees as a method of learning English. The cultural domain included the use of language outside the classroom, for example using the computer, watching TV and reading a newspaper. Moreover, the uses of the computer and the internet for academic and informal social purposes were emphasised by University Wales students. This point is also echoed in the literature, for example Copland (2004A), Hanson-Smith (2001) and Stoller (2001). The variety of the ways in which University Wales students use English highlights the point that these students view their use
of English from a wider perspective mixed with cultural context. This may be contrasted with the text-based way in which University Syria students learn, as will be shown later.

As regards students’ views of EAP, they had various responses. Concerning the language skills, reading was thought to be the most important skill, followed by writing. Reading and writing as the most frequently used skills were also stressed by University Syria students, as will be shown later. As for speaking, it was viewed by students as the most enjoyable skill, yet considered to be among the least important skills in the study of EAP.

With regard to the staff interviewees’ views of the most useful skills for international students, all the staff interviewees considered all skills as equally useful. This is contrasted with most student interviewees, who regarded reading and writing as the most useful skills for their study of EAP.

With regard to the difficulties international students encounter, according to students, they were accent, linked to listening, and then writing. From the staff perspective, the difficulties were mainly writing, listening to accent and the lack of opportunity for students to use English outside the classroom domain. As is clear, the difficulties posed by accent and writing were stressed by both students and staff at University Wales.

Concerning addressing language difficulties, some suggestions propounded by the students were more practice in reading, academic writing and the use of English in a natural context. Several solutions were proposed by the staff, for instance asking international students about their difficulties, advising international students to mix with other nationalities, especially
native speakers, and adapting assessment to suit the needs of international students. It is clear that both staff and students perceive cultural context as a key factor in international students' use of EAP.

According to the students' learning styles, most interviewees followed an experiential or mixed learning style. This was largely encouraged by the context of their study. This is in contrast with the majority of University Syria students who adopted a studial learning style, instigated by their context of study.

**Support Offered by University Wales to International Students**

Regarding the support international students receive from University Wales, according to the data examined, it takes two forms: academic support, including language support, and social support. Concerning academic support, for example, University Wales offers free English language support. Social support includes an induction event, assistance with programmes enrolment, as well as ongoing assistance with the cultural and social aspects of life in the UK.

Concerning interviewees' recommendations for support improvement, all University Wales interviewees, teachers and students, emphasised the major role played by tutors. The importance of teacher support is echoed in the literature (Davies, 1996; Cohen, 1998; and Klapper, 2006). Tutor support, as perceived by respondents, involved different aspects. A few interviewees noted that language teachers should also undertake the task of helping students with their personal and emotional problems. One staff interviewee asked teachers to be more empathetic to international students. Adapting programme delivery and assessment
methods in order to help students pass exams was another suggestion offered by a staff interviewee. Two staff interviewees called for a holistic approach in teaching international students, where the whole person is considered and the efforts of the university as a whole are required. This is emphasised in the literature. For example, Tajino et al. (2005: 27) note that 'designing an EAP course requires collaboration among various concerned stakeholders, including students, subject teachers, institutional administrators and EAP teachers themselves'. The staff interviewees also underscored the importance of cooperation between the lecturers and language support tutors.

**EAP and Culture**

There is consensus among staff and most student interviewees that the cultural context plays a key role in the international students' use of English for their studies. This point is emphasised amply in the literature, for example Byram and Grundy (2003), Jordan (1997), Lin (2007) and Trahar (2007). Different cultures were mentioned by interviewees, for example academic and local cultures. While some students were happy to integrate the different cultures into their concept of EAP, others were pragmatic in their approach to the cultural context, as is clear with students' acceptance of the referencing system used, which most of them were not used to in their home countries. This reinforces Atkinson's (2004) claim that international students need to engage with a range of overlapping cultures in their study.

To some interviewees, culture is a real challenge for international students, mediating their study of English. This showed in different aspects. For example, accent was regarded as the most difficult aspect of language for international students in their use of English. Moreover,
cultural differences were viewed by some interviewees as a reason for discouraging international students and isolating them from the influence of the local culture. To other students, however, the cultural aspects had a positive influence on international students in their use of English, for example by being able to socialise with other communities.

The above different themes corroborate our main question regarding international students' perceptions of EAP. Moreover, the issue of EAP from international students' perspective will be further illuminated by finding out home students' perceptions of EAP at University Syria, as is shown in the next chapter.
Chapter 5: University Syria Results

5.1. Introduction to Results at University Syria

My study of University Syria was based within the framework of a case study. University Wales was the main study and University Syria was the associated study. As a reminder, below are the research questions that informed the methodology design with regard to University Syria. It was hoped they would help answer the main research question: 'What are the Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Using EAP in University Wales and University Syria?' The questions related to University Syria were as follows:

1. Do University Syria home students refer to academic and cultural aspects of English in their use of EAP?
2. Do home students at University Syria perceive particular features of teaching styles or resources (including facilities and support) as important elements in their use of EAP for their studies?
3. Are there particular aspects of being an international student and using EAP which are different from being a home student using EAP?

Seventeen home postgraduate students from University Syria were interviewed as the associated case study. The interview schedule can be seen in appendix 1. The interviews took place in the Institute of Languages in University Syria, except for three interviews which took place in the interviewees' homes. All the participants were from Syria, which is an expanding-circle country, where English is used as a foreign language (Kachru, 1992). The interviewees were on various higher degree programmes. The main purpose of carrying out
these interviews was to investigate how the views of University Syria students, as home
students, were similar to or different from those of University Wales students in terms of
their use of EAP. The data were analysed and presented under the headings of the emerging
themes. The emerging themes relied largely on the questions asked to the participants. The
interviews were informed by documentary evidence collected from University Syria. Below
is discussion of the results of the associated case study.

5.2. University Syria Interviews Results

Seventeen home postgraduate students from University Syria were interviewed. They were
given labels from S1 to S17. In terms of gender distribution, there were fourteen males and
three females.

5.2.1. Background Information about Interviewees

From the interviews it could be found that all the interviewees were home students from
Syria. This is important on two different levels. Firstly, all the interviewees shared the same
culture with each other and with me, as the researcher. Culture, according to Kachru (1999:
77), 'denotes a body of shared knowledge'. This shared knowledge helped make the
interviewees feel more comfortable to express their views. Secondly, interviewing home
students in Syria gave insight into the main case study in Wales.

All the interviewees had Arabic as a first language and English as a foreign language. Some
interviewees had three languages, and one student had four. This is important because these
interviewees were likely to have more academic and cultural experience and therefore, their
answers might be more mature and more wide-ranging. According to Diaz (as cited in Cook,
2001: 88), 'bilinguals are more flexible and creative in their solutions to problems than monolinguals'. The languages represented by the interviewees included Arabic, English, French, Russian, Kurdish, Turkish, Italian and German.

The interviewees were aged between 25-34. This is expected since they all had finished a first degree and were studying for a higher degree. As regards programmes studied, seven discipline fields were represented. One interviewee was studying education, one Islamic law, two Arabic, one medicine, and the others were studying science, engineering or mathematics. The participants were one Diploma, one PhD and fifteen on a Master's programme.

5.2.2. Students' Previous Study in Relation to EAP

The interviewees were asked about their previous study in relation to EAP. They had various answers, as could be seen below.

5.2.2.1. Students' Previous Study

The participants were asked about their previous study. Their answers were wide-ranging.

Most of the interviewees mentioned the schooling and university study they received. For the method used in school and university, it was mostly based on a grammar-translation approach. Interviewee S6 pointed out:

The teacher reads the text, translates it into Arabic, takes out difficult words and writes them on the board and translates them, then questions, then exercises, and the same goes for university. Regarding grammar, rule, an example and then do exercises. During study, there was no personal effort, as for the textbooks, they were satisfactory.
Interviewee S8 pointed out the importance of personal effort in learning academic English and comments on the traditional approach adopted by Syrian universities and schools. He stated:

My learning of English was eighty per cent personal effort. In school I used to be a top student. At university, it was pure dictation, not reassuring situation. For school, you know, traditional approach: we open the book, read the text, translate and do exercises. It is dictation-based.

Interviewee S12 mentioned his previous study of EAP:

We studied English from year seven; it depended on the teacher's method of teaching. For me, my teachers were excellent and I used to take full marks 50/50. In secondary stage, there were more intensive lessons; my marks dropped down to 40s/ 50. At university, I used to get 90+. Then in Diploma, I got 95. it was really high.

The student went on to mention the huge discrepancy between the pre-Master's language study and the Master's language course (a pre-requisite for the MA):

In this MA course, I was shocked that things are quite different, with great difficulty I regard myself very weak in English. Its level is really advanced. The teacher before used to give us a rule in English with its explanation in Arabic. Now, however, everything is delivered fast and in English. I hope there is translation and simpler method; this will help us improve better. Students are treated as very advanced.

This quotation raises two important points. Firstly, the student was used to the first language, Arabic, in his pre-Master's language study. This negatively affected his learning in the
Master's language course when he was expected to use the target language for communication in the classroom. This is a problem noted by Klapper (2006). Secondly, the student perceived the need for the Master's language course to take into account students' learning capacities (Walters, 2007). This may emphasise the role of students' perceptions in the improvement of their language learning.

According to interviewee S14, the teaching of English in school was exam-focused. Students used to study in order to pass the exam. He pointed out the futility of this method:

> Usually carelessness comes from the student more than from the teacher. As I have already mentioned, English was not an urgent need for us to take care of it, so study was to pass the exam only. When the exam comes, we memorise the required words, then take the exam. What was difficult, we used to ignore it. We later discovered that this method was wrong.

This makes students lose motivation in learning English, as was noted by interviewee S9:

> All students have passing the course as their priority rather than study English for language sake, and this is a problem. We are now bored; for three months every day there are lessons and we feel there is no motivation.

Interviewee S10 highlighted the poor school teaching in rural areas in Syria:

> In school, there was no focus on English because I was living in a rural area. Those who taught us were teacher-institute graduates who understand nothing about English. The lessons were Arabic lessons in the name of English. The high school was the same case. No teacher gave us what we required or wanted…everything was
study-ready; you need not understand; just memorise certain sentences and exercises and take the exam. Curricula do not rely on understanding.

The student noted that the teachers in the rural areas were not up to the students' expectations. This could discourage students.

On the other hand, interviewee S15 mentioned the important role his father and teacher played in making him motivated and his teacher's role in taking his learning forward:

In elementary stage my father urged me to learn English, due to his long suffering because of his ignorance of English, as his language was French. It is necessary to learn English. Our preparatory school teacher was widely experienced, and this was reflected on my career of English. I then used to read stories like 'Round the World in 80 Days' and listen to radio upon my teacher's request, to BBC.

This quotation highlights the importance of teacher support in motivating students.

This point was also reflected in the comments of University Wales students, as reported in the previous chapter. The quotation also emphasises the role of personal effort in learning English outside the classroom.

5.2.2.2. EAP Training Before and During Postgraduate Studies

Students were asked about the language training they had undertaken before and after starting their postgraduate studies. Regarding training before starting their postgraduate studies, they had various answers. Some students had done courses in the English Language Advisory Centre. Interviewee S4 remarked:

This quotation highlights the importance of teacher support in motivating students.
Only in the Advisory Centre I did four levels… they concentrated on reading, vocabulary and grammar. They were fine.

The above quotation may imply that University Syria students would be expected to have problems in the spoken skills. This is a difficulty of the grammar-translation approach for teaching English language. Also, it is clear that the above student's positive reaction to the mentioned courses strongly reflects the role of context in his perception of EAP. It could also imply that the student adopts a studial learning style, which could be partly dictated by the context.

A few students stressed their personal effort in learning English. This is further evidence of the role this plays in Syrian students' use of EAP outside the classroom. According to interviewee S9:

كان جهداً شخصياً ولم يكن لدي وقت للدورات. كنت أدرس وأدارس الدبلوم لذا لم يكن لدي وقت. فعلت ما بوسعني للدراسة والحصول على المراجع ضمن اختصاصي الفيزياء أو الرياضيات. كنت أحاول ترجمة بعض النصوص إلى العربية. وبعد إكمال الدبلوم التحقت بدوره الماجستير المكثفة لمدة ثلاثة أشهر أربع ساعات يومياً.

It was personal effort and no time for courses. I was teaching and doing Diploma, so I had no time. So I tried my best to study and obtain references in my specialisation, physics or mathematics. I was trying to translate some texts into Arabic. After completing the Diploma, I joined the MA intensive course for three months, four hours daily.

This quotation could indicate that the student is using a studial learning style, largely dictated by his study context. He adopts a pragmatic approach in his learning of English, by making use of all that is available to learn English.

Interviewee S3 highlighted his personal effort in learning EAP:

أحب الإنجليزية ولذلك أفضل بذل الجهد الشخصي على اللغة على الالتحاق بالدورات، ولذلك لم أنتمق بأي دورة.

I love English, so I like to make personal effort on the language, not to take courses. This is why I did not take any courses.
All the students interviewed, except one, had undertaken or were undertaking an MA language course. Some interviewees commented on the MA language programme, which, as they felt, was too advanced for them. This was mainly due to the gap between their study of EAP before and during their post-graduate studies. Interviewee S15 pointed out:

I did French courses but not English ones: only the MA English course. MA course is good but intensive: it has information, vocabulary, grammar, but needs more refinement or extension.

Six books in three months, which may not achieve the required goals.

This may suggest that the EAP training prior to postgraduate study was insufficient for Syrian students to be able to use EAP at post-graduate level. Also, it could be noticed that grammar and reading were the focus of the Master's language programme, as the student noted. This will also keep students under-confident in the spoken skills.

As regards the language training students did after starting their post-graduate studies, they had different answers. Some interviewees commented on the MA language course. For example, interviewee S10 pointed out that the course was compulsory and had poor placement of students in the sense that students were not allocated in their right levels. He contrasted it with a private institute he joined, as follows:

In the private centre I find myself better than here because here it is above my level so I feel lost; I used to come three or four hours for the MA course and feel they are a waste of time. Whereas in the centre I spend 1.5 hours but they are all beneficial; first I am placed...
in my true level not like here so that I can well understand and participate. After all, I am not all bad in English.

Interviewee S12 stressed that the MA course was very advanced and intensive:

This MA course is four hours daily between two teachers. The content is very advanced and intensive as if they are expecting us to be English natives. The method of delivering information is very advanced, as if we are expected to be geniuses in English ...

Interviewee S16 stressed the need for paying more attention to writing. He noted:

Here we have lack of care towards writing. Emphasis is on reading and grammar, not on writing or listening.

It could be noted that University Syria focuses on reading and grammar, which are core elements in the grammar-translation approach, largely adopted by University Syria, as noted by the student.

Interviewee S15 explained that teaching EAP at University Syria is not satisfactory 'because it makes your primary goal to pass the exam, overriding all other motivations'.

Interviewee S2 highlighted the importance of practice in improving her English. She said:

Regarding writing, I made good progress by practice, not because I learnt something which helps me write; because I practise and read a lot, a thing which helps me a lot ...

It is clear from the above two quotations that writing plays a significant role in the University Syria students' perceptions of EAP.
5.2.3. EAP at University Syria

The interviewees were asked questions about their perceptions of the approach followed in teaching EAP at University Syria. Their answers could be seen below.

5.2.3.1. What Most Attracted Students to Learning EAP at University Syria

Students were asked about what attracted them to learning EAP at University Syria. They had various answers. One interviewee, S1, mentioned that she liked the focus on grammar:

Here, I like the concentration on the grammar; we are good in grammar because we took grammar very good and all the tenses and how to use them.

This may demonstrate the narrow vision some interviewees as home students of EAP have as learners. Peacock (as cited by Hawkey, 2006: 242) points out that 'learner perceptions may be detrimental to language learning'. Hawkey (2006: 242) further says that:

Sixty four per cent of the learners in Peacock's study believed that learning a language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules – the same learners were assessed as significantly less proficient in the target language than the thirty six per cent who had a different view of the nature of language learning

The above student's view of the focus on grammar might be contrasted with University Wales students' perceptions of EAP which take into account the different surrounding cultures. This example also illustrates the influence of the study context on the learners’ perceptions of EAP. This point is emphasised in the literature. For example, Hyland (2006: 75) notes that 'while we need to consider learner needs, in its various guises, every course is also a creature of its local context'.

Another interviewee, S12, stressed the importance of the teacher:
I loved English because of my good and helpful teachers. Teachers were ready to translate questions and help students to do exercise and read rules. I used to participate in reading lessons. I had strong foundation in English. Now I find great support from my English foundation.

The quotation also highlighted the role of the study context on students' perceptions of EAP. Translation, grammar and reading were the skills highlighted by the student in his perception of EAP.

Interviewee S4 also pointed out:

The female teacher there used to teach us from her heart as if we were her children. She used to make good effort on us, so she managed to help us improve in a short period of time.

This is also true of Wales, as teacher support in the view of the students plays a major role in the education system in Wales, as noted in previous chapter.

One student, S16, highlighted the importance of learning English as a key to understanding culture:

What I noted in English is that you enter a totally different world from ours in terms of its culture, traditions and conventions. Anything unfamiliar will push you to enter it. For example, our Oriental society is different from the Western society: family codes, street codes, dealings, manners of speaking, even in literature and all other sciences, due to our different beliefs, faiths and culture. This unfamiliarity urges you to acquaint yourself with it.

This quotation reveals the student's perception of his use of EAP. It is, however, unexpected, since in the majority of University Syria interviewees' comments, boundaries can be seen between EAP and its surrounding cultures, which are dominantly in Arabic. Moreover, this
student recognised his identity as a Syrian user of English. He implicitly detached himself from the identity which English reinforces as a global language.

Students were also asked to compare their study place to another place of study. They had various answers. Interviewee S1 commented that teaching is better when the language of communication used is the same as the language taught. This might have been a negative judgement on the grammar-translation approach followed at University Syria. He stated:

I did a French course in the French Council… but ... it was very good because you mustn't talk in Arabic and the people who teach you are foreign people; their native language is French, and they obligate you to talk in their language. In the first time you feel you don't understand but in the second time you feel that you have a good practice.

The use of the target language for communication in the classroom is also reiterated in the literature. (Please see Chapter 2, Section 5).

Some interviewees preferred the use of the computer in the teaching process. Interviewee S5 noted:

في لبنان والأردن وبعض الدول الأخرى يعبئون الاهتمام للإنكليزية منذ البداية. بدؤوا يطبقون هذا في بلداً منذ السنوات الأولى يتعلمونهم المحادثة ويعتنون بهم وهم صغار. ولديهم أيضًا فريق عمل جيد ومؤهل بهم يستخدمون الكمبيوتر على سبيل المثال.

In Lebanon, Jordan among others, firstly, they pay attention to English from the start. This started to be applied in our country. From their early years they teach them conversation. They look after them since young. They also have a good and qualified staff. They, for instance, use the computer.

One interviewee, S17, stressed the importance of aural and oral materials and practice in improving the teaching of EAP. He mentioned:

I had friends from the Gulf, Saudi Arabia in particular. Their language was stronger than ours. There, everything is made available for them, while we lack in such resources as aural and oral aids, for example visits as a part of the plan during the courses, not to be restricted to the classroom. For instance, when they speak about a river or mountain, they can go to
that river or mountain. Here we depend on dictation: write the new words, and then we may refer back to them or not.

5.2.3.2. Students' Views of EAP Teaching at University Syria

Students were asked about their views of the methodology used for teaching EAP at University Syria. Most of the aspects they mentioned were negative. The following chart shows the negative views:

![Pie chart showing negative views of EAP teaching methods](image)

Figure 27: Negative Points about the Methodology Used in Teaching EAP at University Syria

As is clear from the above pie-chart, the majority of students criticised University Syria's use of a grammar-translation approach. Another main concern was the lack of practice in teaching English. Other problems included poor placement of students, unqualified teachers and artificial use of English.

One interviewee, S12, pointed out that the method of delivering EAP was traditional, where
lessons in the textbook are explained by the teacher and then we do exercises'.

Another interviewee, S4, stressed the excessively teacher-centred aspect of the education system, which is a problem of the grammar-translation approach (Klapper, 2006). He stated:

It is a traditional method. It depends on the teacher rather than the language. My daughter was in a school. She did not like her English teacher, so she was not good in English. When she changed her school she loved her teacher, so she started to love the language.

Interviewee S1 noted that the method followed is theory-based and has no practice:

I think not OK, no… because um… there was no listening… we had to take homework, and to learn grammar. Even there is no practice.

This is a common problem in the grammar-translation approach where 'there is no role for learning through doing' (Klapper, 2006: 106). Interviewee S15 explained:

Students … are usually dictated information; teacher writes vocabulary on board, and asks students to write. Consequently, this will not increase their linguistic repertoire; second, they will forget the information quickly; and third, there is no conversation. I prefer that they reduce the course in favour of practice. In secondary stage, I prefer that teachers should not use Arabic, provided the student is well founded in English …, so that the student is able to communicate in English.

Moreover, the benefit of using the target language as a means of communication in the classroom is stressed in the literature, for example Cook (2001) and Klapper (2006).

Interviewee S15 pointed out the importance of everyday language as a kind of practice to support academic English. He noted that learning English in the classroom domain alone is not enough:
In Saudi Arabia, there are lots of experts and tourists from other countries, which implies there is English in everyday life. Institutes there are better than ours, perhaps because of their contacts with the West. Sometimes, they teach you English in the street, they teach you English about life or work, while we are still kept locked in our classrooms.

This quotation illustrates that this student’s concept of an EAP user goes well beyond the classroom culture. He perceives a continuum of language use inside and outside the classroom domain.

On his part, interviewee S9 highlighted the need for University Syria to have native teachers of English:

In my opinion, … it has one weakness; in addition to the courses, I hope they bring us an English native speaker with whom we can communicate. We have poor terminology. Second, some terms are difficult to us as they have different contextual meanings: take on, off, etc. in every sentence they have different meanings. We are weak in this. I hope they make concentration on this.

However, this idea of having a native teacher is opposed by different writers in the literature, as mentioned in the literature chapter.

As for the positive points mentioned by the students with regard to University Syria, they were the recent introduction of specialist tutors and a specialist subject to be studied at university. Interviewee S17 explained that the students are receiving more attention, and the language teachers are becoming specialists.

There was no attention for the practical aspect, like repetition,
whether students understand or not. Currently they are taking this point into consideration, that I repeat the lesson once, twice or three times; I do not mind time as much as students to understand … not to be restrained with a specific timetable, weekly or monthly. What is more currently, teachers are specialists and love the subject, different from our days.

Interviewee S8 also pointed out the introduction of a specialist English subject to be taught at university:

Regarding University, recently there has been reconsideration for Methodology. Now there is a specialist subject taught in English from Years 1 to 5. When I was a student, I had English 1, English 2, English 3, not as specialist subjects, except in Year 5. A doctor came and taught us medical engineering in the first semester. Of course, a person like myself, will be confused between heart and artery (Laugh). Now there are compulsory subjects taught in English. For our country, English is now started at school from Year 1. And at university, you now have at least one subject in English.

5.2.4. Interviewees and EAP

Interviewees were asked questions about EAP. They had wide-ranging answers, as could be seen below.

5.2.4.1. Interviewees' Reasons for Learning EAP

Interviewees mentioned several reasons for their study of EAP, as is shown in the following chart:
From the chart above, the highest frequency of reasons mentioned by the interviewees for learning EAP was academic. Next comes professional goals, followed by the learning of English as a world language.

Some students mentioned academic and professional development as the main reasons for their learning of English. Interviewee S4 pointed out that he studied English لاتحسن علميًا وآكاديمياً ‘to improve myself professionally and academically’.

Other students mentioned research as a reason for learning EAP. Interviewee S6 pointed out that his reason for learning English as a postgraduate student was to help him with his research. He noted:

هذا يتعلق بالمرحلة التي تمر بها: ففي المدرسة والجامعة الهدف هو اجتياز الامتحان أما بالنسبة للماجستير والبحث العلمي بشكل عام فالهدف هو قراءة المراجع التي تخدم البحث. It is related to the stage you are in; at school and university, to pass the exam, while in the MA and scientific research in general to read the references that serve the research.
To other students, English is the language of science. Interviewee S15 stressed this point when he stated:

English learning opens wide horizons; especially that Arabic is no longer the only language of the time. English is basic in modern sciences. Any person who wants to learn modern sciences should learn English. Maybe French in architecture is stronger, but the USA is now producing books and researches in my specialisation.

On his part, S9 remarked that English is a global language, as well as the language of science:

Of course, it is a world language, and then in any conference or meeting it has priority. Then it is the language of science. All over the world you can speak English, while if you speak French only a specific group of people can speak it. English is the language of the world. Scientific programmes, even if they are French in basis, they usually have an English version.

The idea of English as the language of science is mentioned in the literature. For example, Wood (2001: 71) calls English 'the language of research scientists around the world'. He further comments:

for scientists to become recognised and successful their work must be read and cited by their peers as frequently as possible. To ensure such citation it is imperative that their work be accessible to as many as possible and thus that it be written in English, the global language spoken by more people around the world than any other.

Interviewee S9 also pointed out the importance of English in all fields:
use of English, in science, in study. For instance, any institute or company you apply to work for, they require you to be proficient in English, in addition to experience and scientific degree.

The second most frequent group of reasons for learning English mentioned by the interviewees were professional. Interviewee S10 noted:

"أولاً، من أجل دراستي. كوني طالب ماجستير عليٌ أن أتعلم الإنجليزية لكي أقرأ المراجع الإنجليزية لأنها أفضل من المراجع العربية. والسبب الثاني من أجل حياتي العملية. فحتى ما توجه الآن في سوريا عليك أن تكون ماهرًا بالإنجليزية للحصول على أي عمل راقٍ."

Firstly, for my study. As an MA student, I am required to learn English in order to read English references because English references are better than Arabic references. Second reason is for my practical life. Currently, wherever you go in Syria, English is required for any prestigious job.

What is interesting is that most interviewees who mentioned profession as a goal for their learning of English associated it with academic goals, as in the above example and others previously cited. This highlights that the two are often inter-related. Interviewee S3 pointed out:

"والأهم من هذا، أتصور أن الإنجليزية ستساعدنى كثيرا في دراستي بسبب المراجع وفي الحياة العامة أيضا. فعليا أن تتعلم الإنجليزية. وفي مجال العمل، تعتمد معظم البرامج الجديدة على الإنجليزية."

Most importantly, I imagine language will help me a lot in my study for references, as well as in general life; a person is supposed to know English. In the field of work, most new programmes depend on English.

The link between study and profession is also found in the literature. For instance, Cobb and Horst (2001: 315) comment:

"With the growth of English as the lingua franca of work and study, many non-English speakers find themselves needing to attain some level of proficiency of English in order to function in jobs or courses."

Two interviewees mentioned that their reasons for studying English were because it is an international language. Interviewee S7 noted:

"لممارسة الاحترام كما أن جميع المراجع بالإنجليزية وهي أيضا ضرورية من أجل الإنترنت. ولكن قبل الجامعة كان سبب ذلك إزامة دراسة اللغة وحبيب تعلم اللغة كلغة عالمية"
To practise specialisation, as all references are in English, in addition to the necessity of the internet. But before university, it was due to the compulsory study of language as well as the love to speak English as a world language.

One interviewee, S2, mentioned the acquaintance with a new culture as a goal for her study of English. She stated:

الهدف الأول هو أنني أحب اللغة الإنجليزية والهدف الثاني هو أنها تساعدني في التواصل مع الناس والتعرف على الحضارات الأخرى، ولكن الهدف الأول هو أنني أحبها.

The first goal is that I love English; second, it helps me communicate with people and be familiarised with other cultures, but the first goal is that I love it.

Interviewee S17 remarked on the role of language in learning culture and pointed out the need for learning different languages:

First of all, each language is a world on its own. Being a speaker of Arabic, I am aware of the news of the Arab World; I know the hidden things and the pluses and minuses. Being a speaker of English, I have become a second person. I know the secrets of English, its literature and sciences, a second person I mean. To know French, then I will become a third person. I mean that a person needs to know more than a language and not to restrict themselves to one language.

This comment is supported by the literature. For example, Ha (2008: 63) notes that 'the more languages you speak, the more identities you have'. Also, Byram and Fleming (1998: 1) state that:

In learning another language students are exposed to, and inevitably learn something about, one or more other societies and their cultural practices.

It could be drawn from the reasons for University Syria students to study English is that for the majority of students there is clear demarcation line between their use of English and the cultures associated with it. This is contrasted with most University Wales students'
perceptions of their engagement with different cultures as inseparable part of their use of English for their studies.

5.2.4.2. To Whom Interviewees Speak English

The following chart demonstrates the different categories to whom the interviewees speak English.:

![Pie chart showing percentages of different categories to whom interviewees speak English]

Figure 29: To Whom Interviewees Speak English

As is shown by the chart above, it is surprising that students almost equally used English in the classroom, at work and with families and friends. This will be illustrated below.

Six interviewees noted that they spoke English only in the classroom. For example, an interviewee commented that he spoke English 'in the classroom only'.

Six interviewees used English at work. Interviewee S1 noted:

[I] talk in work as a restaurant accountant; we have an English
accountancy programme.

Interviewee S4 also remarked:

أنهى أربع دورات إنجليزي أثناء الدبلوم ولكن من خلال سفرتي إلى السعودية واحتلاطي بالهندو والباكستان بالإضافة إلى عملي في المحطة الحرارية مما يضطرني للتكلم مع اليابانيين. من خلال ذلك تحسنت إنجليزتي عن طريق الممارسة فقط.

In Diploma I finished four courses of English, but my travel to Saudi Arabia mixing with Indians and Pakistanis in addition to my job in the thermal station which compels me to speak to Japanese people, my English improved, so it is by practice mainly.

It seems that this student used a mixed learning style in his learning of English. This, as is clear, is largely dictated by the surrounding context.

Interviewee S1 talked about his use of English at work, including speaking to other non-Arabic speakers. He stated: 'In my work I work with German experts, so I have to talk in English with them'.

Two interviewees used English within academic and professional environments. Interviewee S1 said:

Here to my teacher, to my colleagues, and … urm in my work to … also to my colleagues.

The above four examples stress the importance of work in improving the interviewees' academic English, as well as the importance of English proficiency in obtaining good jobs. As previously mentioned, those who practise English at work presumably have a better level of English competency than those who do not. Moreover, the above example is an illustration of the pragmatic use of language. The interviewee wanted to speak English to anybody in order to improve his English language.
Five interviewees used their English to speak to family, neighbours or friends. Interviewee S16 used English to 'speak to my brothers and sisters.' On his part, interviewee S5 mentioned:

أحاول في هذه المرحلة أن أتكلم مع الأصدقاء... في العمل والأخوة في البيت والأصدقاء في البيت
At this stage I am trying to speak to friends ... friends at work, brothers at home, friends at home.

Interviewee S16 used English to speak to a colleague. He mentioned:

لم أتكلم الإنجليزية قبلها. فيبدها التحقت بدورة الماجستير بدأت بعض المحادثات مع الزملاء في طريق العودة من الدورة إلى البيت.
I haven't spoken English before. After I joined the MA course, I sometimes started to initiate conversations with my colleague when leaving the course along the way to our homes.

This underlines the importance of using English in broader contexts to improve academic English. Also, it is clear that the interviewees try to use English outside the classroom domain. However, their frequency of use is limited.

Equally, interviewee S8 noted:

أستطيع أن أخبرك أنه بالنسبة لي بشكل خاص لدي جيران أجانب دائما ما أتكلم معهم
ولكن هذا محدود جدا
To tell you, for me as a special case, my neighbours are foreigners and so sometimes I speak to them. However, it is very limited.

The above three quotations could demonstrate that the interviewees were using an experiential learning style, although the context encouraged against such learning. Their scope of using English outside the classroom, however, is rather narrow, as clearly noted by the last quotation.

5.2.4.3. How Often Interviewees Used English

The following chart shows how often the interviewees used each of the language skills in EAP:
By further examining the chart above, it could be found that reading was the most frequently used skill among University Syria interviewees. This may be connected with the point that most interviewees judged themselves best at reading, as is shown later. As previously mentioned, this can be partly because the methodology used at University Syria is based on a grammar-translation approach, where the written rather than the spoken language is emphasised (Klapper, 2006; Yule, 1996). Interviewee S1 pointed out that she had to read because it is the way one learns English: 'I read because some books I have to read them. It is language… it is English'.

The second highest frequency skill was speaking. I expected writing to have the highest frequency after reading. One clear reason for this discrepancy is that only four interviewees out of seventeen mentioned how often they used the writing skill. This is despite the fact that their MA language course provided them with an opportunity to practise writing in English. Another possibility is that some University Syria interviewees used personal effort in
speaking English in a non-academic domain, especially at work, as is clearly shown earlier in the chapter. Interviewee S3 noted that he spoke English 'daily but partially as a part of my work'.

5.2.5. Self-Assessment

The interviewees were asked self-assessment questions about different aspects of their study of English. Their answers could be seen below.

5.2.5.1. Students' Self Rating of their Skills

The interviewees were asked to rate their language skills. The rating scale had four grades: limited, satisfactory, good and very good. The interviewees with limited or satisfactory language skills were regarded under-confident, whereas those with good or very good skills were considered confident.

The following chart shows the interviewees' self rating of their language skills:

![Figure 31: Confident and Under-Confident Interviewees](image-url)
From the chart above, it can be seen that most of the students perceived themselves to be
good at some skills and poor at others. Most students appeared to believe themselves to be
best in reading, which has the lowest frequency as a problem for participants. This may show
that Syrian interviewees use reading as a main means of learning EAP. As one interviewee,
S2, pointed out:

(في المدارس الحكومية كان هنما الوحيد هو كتاب القراءة) 'In a state school we were mainly concerned
with the reading book'. Another student, S3, stated that in school

'we used to read what we had without listening or practice'.

The skill next to reading, according to the interviewees, is writing. This may be partly
because the methodology used mainly draws upon a grammar-translation approach, where, as
noted by interviewee S6,

the teacher reads the text, translates it into Arabic, takes out difficult
words and writes them on the board and translates them, then questions,
then exercises, and the same goes for university. Regarding grammar,
rule, an example and then do exercise.

Klapper (2006: 104) emphasises this point about the grammar-translation approach when he
states:

a grammar-translation approach assumed that languages consisted
of a collection of rules and words that could be readily described
and listed. Acquiring a language, it was thought, constituted a process
of learning these rules and words explicitly and in a linear fashion. It
was the role of teaching, on the other hand, to exemplify the rules,
to present them deductively, to encourage their memorisation and to
provide practice with a conscious focus on form.

It seems from this evidence that this approach leads students to under-confidence in speaking
and listening, the spoken skills which are viewed by many linguists in the literature as
important as the written skills. For instance, Wright (2005: 73) notes that 'speaking and listening must be a major part of your English lessons'.

On the other hand, students' focus on reading may suggest that reading as a skill is favoured by students in their learning of EAP. Reading as the most important skill was also highlighted by University Wales student interviewees. Further in support of this point, Macalister (2008: 254) states that 'the inclusion of extensive reading as a component of an EAP programme was positively perceived by the learners'.

Whereas their reading was felt to be strong, it is clear that the interviewees considered themselves to be worst in listening, which had the highest frequency as a problem for participants. This may be partly because, as mentioned previously, the approach followed at University Syria is a grammar-translation approach, and partly because of the difficulty of listening as a skill, as is echoed in the literature. For example, Klapper (2006: 345) notes that 'listening is a demanding activity and students need substantial support with it'. He also points out that listening, especially extended listening, is indisputably a more challenging skill than reading. He points out several reasons for that, as follows:

It rarely occurs in a concrete setting; it places a far greater strain on memory; it involves parallel processing of sound units and meaning; it often requires spontaneous decision-making on the part of the learner; with audio tapes or CDs, there is no opportunity to exploit facial expressions and body language; there is usually no possibility of negotiating meaning by seeking repetition, recap or reformulation.
5.2.5.2. Difficulties in the Use of EAP

Students were also asked about the difficulties which challenged their use of English. They had different answers. These are shown below:

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

Figure 32: Difficulties Which Challenged Students' Use of English

From the above chart, the skill which posed the most difficulty for University Syria interviewees was listening, which, according to interviewee S3, ‘needs high concentration and practice’. Interviewee S2, similarly, noted:

> With listening … you will need to see the meaning of the whole sentence. This is why, if you miss a word, you will not be able to return to it.

Interviewee S4 viewed listening as the most challenging aspect of English study because of the speed in delivering the lecture.

Listening is followed by speaking. Interviewee S1 commented that 'speaking is more difficult than others … because you know the meaning… you know everything, but you can't arrange
this in mind quickly'. Interviewee S5 pointed out that 'Listening and speaking because of speed' are the most problematic skills for students. This is expected since, as previously mentioned, University Syria focuses more on the written skills rather than the spoken skills. Reading was the least problematic skill for the interviewees. This is mainly because it is the skill which most interviewees used and rated themselves best at, as is shown earlier in the chapter.

This information supports the evidence gathered from students' self-rating of their skills above. It highlights that students require more support in speaking and listening. It could also be seen that cultural aspects were not mentioned by most students among the difficulties which students encounter. This is contrasted with University Wales students' perceptions of overlapping cultures.

5.2.6. Support for Learning

The interviewees were asked about different aspects of learning support required for the learning of EAP. They had various answers, as could be seen below.

5.2.6.1. Students' Views of a Good Learning Centre

Students were asked about what a good learning centre should include. The most emphasis was on teachers. For example, a few interviewees pointed out the importance of having qualified and experienced teachers who had studied in an English native country. Interviewee S9 stated:
It should have qualified teachers; a teacher should have a degree from the UK or America only. At least they are supposed to have spent four or five years there. It is not enough to be a graduate of English, because graduates will have finished textbooks and they are not necessarily qualified; wrong pronunciation is common among them.

He further noted that the best way to learn English is within a natural context:

When I learn English from its original source and live with the people speaking this language, I gain many skills that I cannot gain through textbooks.

The quotation demonstrates that this interviewee's learning style is experiential; however, his opportunities are limited, since the EAP context makes this type of learning difficult.

The second important component of a good learning centre, according to the interviewees, is the availability of audio and visual aids, including computers. Interviewee S3 pointed out:

The components found in this institute are almost sufficient: TV, video, DVD, but it is better to have a computer for every person.

On his part interviewee S9 noted:

Education technology: visual, aural, explanatory aids. They are found here in the MA course, but very simple, listening to some passages only. I hope more listening. We have twenty hours, so they should allocate four to five hours for listening. Listening is the most important skill, together with speaking. Grammar can be learnt quickly.

The above two quotations illustrate that the students highlighted the importance of teaching styles and resources inside the classroom. Moreover, these teaching styles and resources focus on speaking and listening.
Interviewee S10 highlighted the importance of a ‘correct and scientific methodology’ in a good learning centre. He noted:

A correct and scientific methodology. Conversation is to be taught at the end of the course after other skills are learnt to be used for speaking, not to tell the student in level 1 to speak from the beginning as he/ she will be terrified. Teachers teach what they like, while in private centres, teachers observe the plan set by the centre administration.

It could be seen from the quotations above that the majority of University Syria students asked for a better use of the teaching styles and resources already available in the University.

5.2.6.2. Role of Computer/ Internet in Language Learning

Students were also asked about the role of the computer/ internet in their learning of English.

All of them except one sought the help of the computer/ internet in their English study.

Interviewee S5 pointed out:

A big role for the computer in the light of the programmes currently introduced, programmes to teach English or any other language. Second is the internet. When I log into the Encarta, the programmes are first of all in English. I find out there are words which I do not know. But through the course, I started to learn bit by bit. I have a desire to surf the internet and see what is going there. So the internet plays an important role.

On his part, interviewee S9 noted:

Very important. For example, while you spend an hour translating
a word, a computer does this easily. Secondly it helps me search for a piece of information faster. It is good in teaching pronunciation. Some dictionaries give you both American and English pronunciations. It is a high technology which saves time.

Interviewee S17 considered the computer and the internet as important reasons for the expansion of English. This ultimately creates more need for giving support to academic English learning globally. He pointed out:

It is true that the computer and the internet helped English to spread out. All computer programmes depend on English to the extent that it is difficult to download a programme if you do not have good English to deal with this programme.

Interviewee S15 stated that he used English in chatting with his friends over the internet:

'I often chat over the internet with colleagues and friends.'

Interviewee S3 remarked:

In Italy there are interactive programmes installed on computers to enable students to talk to the computers. It is a more advanced method.

On his part interviewee S6 noted that a good way to learn English is to use CDs and oral discussions, which will help students improve in a noticeably short time. He said:

I would rather prefer to give students CDs to learn English, and the student is asked from these CDs and an oral discussion in English. Despite the suffering on the part of the students, they will improve in three months' time.

Interviewee S11 regarded the internet as his 'prime motivator for learning English'.

However, an interviewee, C15, considered the role played by the internet as detrimental to academic learning of language. He stated:
This quotation may reveal the interviewee's perception of his identity as an EAP user. He recognises the necessity of keeping global English under control.

It is clear from the above quotations that computers and the internet were thought by the Syrian interviewees to be important means of learning English.

As could be seen, the majority of interviewees highlighted the need for EAP support inside the classroom. Not much was mentioned about the cultural support which EAP learners require from outside the classroom domain. This also implies that most University Syria students, as home students, were aware of a boundary line between EAP and its surrounding cultures.

5.2.7. Memorable Event
The interviewees were asked about a memorable event they had regarding their learning of English. They had various answers. The following chart shows the students' negative and positive memorable experiences they mentioned in the interviews:
It is clear from the chart that positive experiences greatly outnumber the negative ones. An example of the positive experience was noted by interviewee S9:

When I was a scientific baccalaureate student, our supplementary textbook was A Tale of Two Cities. Once, my teacher asked me to stand up and write some words on the board. I challenged the teacher in front of the students about the words of the book. I agreed. He gave me 'Aristotle's philosophy' to write; and he guaranteed me to get the full mark if I write the phrase correctly. I missed the 'e' only. Then I scored 25/25 in the final exam.

On the other hand, an example of a negative experience was noted by interviewee S11:

A memorable thing for me personally is my repeated failure. The blackest point in my memory is the first MA English course.

As regards the domains of the students' memorable experiences, they are shown in the following chart:
The above chart reveals that most of the interviewees' memorable experiences were related to the classroom domain, whereas only a few were not. This illustrates the Syrian students' view of EAP through the classroom domain. An interviewee, S10, pointed out:

في امتحان الصف التاسع حصلت على العلامة الناجحة وهذا عائد للمدرس الذي كان يدرسنا
In year 9 exam, I had full mark. This was mainly due to the teacher who was teaching us.

The above quotation stresses the importance of teacher support in the learning process. This is found in the literature. For example, Graham (1997) and Klapper (2006).

Interviewee S17 highlighted the problem of missing a teacher for some reason:

I am from the Eastern part of Syria … The teachers were either university students or baccalaureate students who leave us once their exams draw close. I mean not specialised English tutors. What happens to us is that once the students start to accommodate themselves to the teacher, the teacher will be changed. You will become disappointed, because I loved this subject because this teacher was present and encouraged us… I felt that I studied years 7 and 8 almost without a teacher.

Interviewee S13 noted that the methodology used in University Syria 'depends heavily on the teacher. There is little focus on conversation, a bad thing'.
With regard to the ranges of experiences inside the classroom domain, they included references to teachers, exams and lessons. The most frequent memorable experience related to the classroom was the teacher. This reflects the decisive role teachers play in the academic life of Syrian students, as is clear in the following example by interviewee S7:

خلال المرحلة الثانوية قد يبعدك المدرس المُمر عن اللغة وقد تحصل على علامة جيدة ولكنك تتحرف عن مسار اللغة.

In the secondary school, a boring tutor may distance you from language. You may get a good mark, but you veer off the way of language.

The important role of the teacher was also shown by other interviewees in University Wales, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

As regards the range of experiences outside the classroom, they were restricted to winning a competition, having friends and the role of the internet in learning. This confirms that the home students' perceptions of EAP are largely focused on the classroom.

As regards the positive and negative memorable experiences mentioned by the respondents inside the classroom domain, it can be seen in the chart below.
Concerning the memorable experiences inside the classroom domain, as could be seen in the above chart, they were more positive than negative. This may indicate that the students enjoy EAP experience inside the classroom. Interviewee S17 explained:

In school year 11, there was a teacher who used to teach us a story in our textbook by giving us roles to enact. He used to tell us: do not worry if you make mistakes, as I will correct you. It was full of fun. This made all students interact and love language.

The above quotation also pinpoints the importance of teacher support in EAP learning. According to Hess (2001: 34), the job of language teachers is to give students support and encouragement and help them increase their motivation. The students in the above quotation were motivated by the lively and interactive approach to learning created by the teacher. The quotation also stresses the importance of the toleration of errors made by the learner. This is found in the literature. For example, Yule (1996: 194) points out:

An error, then, is not something which hinders a student's progress, but is probably a clue to the active learning progress being made by a student as he or she tries out ways of communicating in the new language.
The quotation above also underlines the importance of feedback in the development of the student's learning. Feedback was also emphasised by University Wales students. This is also pinpointed by Klapper (2006: 250) when he states:

Able students will not be able to progress further unless we tell them what is good about their work and which aspects can be improved still further.

The following chart illustrates the positive and negative experiences outside the classroom domain:

![Figure 36: Positive and Negative Memorable Experiences of Interviewees Outside the Classroom Domain](image)

There were only four occurrences in this category. Three of the memorable experiences outside the classroom were positive, whereas only one was negative. This may reflect the point that home culture unexpectedly can have a positive impact on a few home students' perceptions of EAP. Interviewee S13 pointed out that because of learning English 'every year I know new people … I like to have friends'.
The above references to home culture were unexpected because my initial supposition was of cultural reference being to English culture when considering EAP. Also, the references are in conflict with the overall findings regarding University Syria, which suggest that most University Syria students recognise clear boundaries between EAP and its surrounding cultures. This finding indicates the complexity, but also the value, of culture in investigating EAP.

5.2.8. Summary

To sum up, University Syria students learn EAP in a formalised way. The teaching method followed at University Syria, according to the interviewees, is mostly the grammar-translation approach, where the focus is on grammar and reading. Moreover, the role of the teacher is excessively emphasised. Many students interviewed were unsatisfied with this approach. This makes them less motivated. English study becomes more advanced during the postgraduate study. This creates a gap which is too difficult for most students to bridge, as they noted. Teachers, as noted by respondents, do not take students’ capacity into consideration and expect them to be up to the standard of a postgraduate student. Some students tried to compensate for this gap by making more personal effort outside the classroom domain by speaking to family and friends and using the computer and internet.

According to Syrian interviewees, the most frequent skills used by the students were the reading and writing skills. On the other hand, the skills found to be most difficult by students were the listening and speaking skills. Students’ use of English was heavily focused on their academic and professional goals and not clearly mediated by different cultural aspects.
Most students were aware of boundaries between the learning of EAP and its surrounding cultures, which are pre-dominantly mediated by Arabic. As regards the learning style adopted by interviewees, it was mostly studial, largely dictated by the students’ EAP context.

5.3. University Syria Documents

The documents collected from University Syria in 2004 were related to Academic English teaching in the Master's compulsory language course at the Institute of Languages. They were used to inform the students' interviews in the associated case study in University Syria. The target audience for the documents was the institute members of staff. The documents were written partly in Arabic and partly in English. They consisted of the guidance for staff on course content and assessment.

One document included a division of the marks given for assessing students in the Master's language course. It is as follows: two tests during the course with a total mark out of five. The tests include focus on language in use, vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing. The second section includes five homework pieces with a focus on writing. The student's total possible mark is out of five as well. There is a section on ESP assessment. It takes the form of a topic to be presented by a student in front of the class and to be discussed at the end of the course in the presence of the exam committee headed by the head of the Centre. The total mark the student will receive is out of ten: five for the topic and five for the presentation. At the end of the course, there is a written exam which receives a mark out of 80. The marks are distributed as follows:
As is shown, the focus of the course was mainly on writing in general and grammar in particular. This may illustrate two points. First, University Syria views writing as an essential component in the study of academic English. Second, the Institute of Languages at University Syria teaches students language in a didactic way, drawing mainly upon grammar translation approach for language teaching. This shows that students do not have much practice in spoken skills and that the marks allocated to this component are comparatively small. Related to the interviewees' views, language teaching should take more account of the spoken skills, in which students seem to be under-confident. It is also worth noting that the cultural aspect was not mentioned.

Another two documents were related to the Master's language course timetables for the different groups of students in the Institute of Languages. They included four tables illustrating the different modules taught to students in the different sections. The subjects
taught included text, ESP and writing. This also indicates that writing was the key aspect of academic language taught in University Syria.

A further two documents involved a list of textbooks to be used by staff in their teaching of the ESP module in the Institute of Languages at University Syria. Such titles were: *Oxford English for Computing, Information Technology, English in Medicine, English in Physical Science, Mathematics, English in Agriculture, Economics, English for Arts, English in Mechanical Engineering* and *Architecture and Building Construction*. Also, there was a mention of the sections to be taught from ESP text-books. They were: 'Reading Your Textbook', 'Using an English Dictionary', 'Improving Your Reading' and 'Making Good Notes'. It could be seen that reading receives a special focus in the ESP teaching mentioned above. The textbooks used for teaching writing were *Weaving It Together 2* and *Weaving It Together 3*.

**5.3.1. Summary**

Documents from University Syria were collected and analysed in order to inform the findings from University Syria. The documents highlight the University's focus on writing, especially grammar, and reading. This confirms the findings from University Syria interviewees that University Syria teaches students in a didactic way, following a grammar-translation approach, where grammar and reading are particularly stressed, while speaking and listening are under-represented. This is expected to make students under-confident in the spoken skills. It may make students discouraged, as noted by some students. The importance of the written skills was emphasised by University Syria students. However, they called for more emphasis on the spoken skills. Moreover, there was no mention of the cultural aspect in teaching EAP
in the documents. This contrasts with the results from University Wales case study, where the cultural aspect was often highlighted when the academic language was mentioned.

5.4. Overall Chapter Summary

In summary, students in Syria learn EAP in a text-based way. The teaching method followed there is mostly the grammar-translation approach, where grammar and reading are over-emphasised to the detriment of the spoken skills, and the teacher's role is excessively underscored. Most students interviewed were unsatisfied with this approach which does not seem to offer them enough support to carry on EAP during postgraduate study. University Syria students recognised the priority of reading and writing, but they asked for more emphasis on the spoken skills and less focus on grammar. English study becomes too advanced for students during the post-graduate study. Some students tried to accommodate to this challenge by making more personal effort in using English outside the classroom domain, although with limited opportunities.

According to Syrian interviewees, the most frequent skills used were the reading and writing skills. On the other hand, the skills they found to be most difficult were the listening and speaking skills. Students' use of English highlighted their academic and professional goals and was not clearly mediated by the cultural context. The majority of students recognised boundaries between the use of EAP and its associated cultures. Most students appeared to use a studial learning style, which was heavily dictated by the students' EAP context. The internet was used to support their learning of English.
The analysis of documents also highlighted the University's focus on writing, especially grammar, and reading. Moreover, there was no mention of the cultural aspect in teaching EAP. These two points confirm the above findings from University Syria interviews. They also answer the research questions regarding University Syria students' perceptions of using EAP for their studies.

The next chapter draws together the conclusions to the study and recommendations for further research.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

EAP has been much researched in the recent years, as mentioned earlier. However, the voice of EAP learners is still under-researched. As an English language specialist, I recognised this is an important area which needs further investigation. I initially wanted to explore the reasons for the huge discrepancy between the expectations of Syrian students learning English as a non-specialist subject and the serious attempts of Syrian universities to improve the status of English as a foreign language. In this thesis, I have investigated home and international students' perceptions of using English for their studies. This was undertaken through two case studies based in two different domains: University Wales and University Syria, with the associated case study in University Syria used to inform the main case study of University Wales. Below is a reminder of the research questions that informed the research design:

1. Do University Wales international students refer to academic and cultural aspects of English in their use of EAP?

2. Do University Syria home students refer to academic and cultural aspects of English in their use of EAP?

3. Do international students at University Wales perceive particular features of teaching styles or resources (including facilities and support) as important elements in their use of EAP for their studies?

4. Do home students at University Syria perceive particular features of teaching styles or resources (including facilities and support) as important elements in their use of EAP for their studies?
5. Are there particular aspects of being an international student and using EAP which are different from being a home student using EAP?

In this chapter, I will offer conclusions for the study. The first section will provide an answer to the research questions proposed at the start of the study. The changing nature of EAP will be discussed in the second section, and the third section will draw on the study contribution. Study limitations and directions for future research will be discussed in the fourth section.

6.1. Main Research Questions Answered

Below is discussion of the main findings in relation to the main research questions proposed at the start of the study.

6.1.1. International / Home Students' Perceptions of EAP

In response to the first two research questions, it could be noticed that international and home students at University Wales and University Syria respectively look at EAP through different perspectives. On the one hand, international students at University Wales view EAP as a continuum residing inside and outside the classroom domain. Inside the classroom, students perceive various elements under the umbrella of EAP, for example tutorials, lectures, seminars, assignments, presentations and thesis writing. Outside the classroom, students refer to social activities as an integral part of their use of English, for example using English for shopping, communicating with native speakers and reading a newspaper. This is a novel finding which contributes to the literature on EAP international learners, as it highlights the important role cultural context plays in international students' perceptions of EAP. It also adds to Harris and Thorp's (1999) findings regarding the interrelation of different factors in
the international students' perceptions of EAP by exploring in depth the different perceptions these students have.

At University Syria, on the other hand, home students have a relatively narrow view of EAP, which mainly resides inside the classroom domain. Their concept of EAP mainly includes traditional academic references, such as teacher, text-books, exams, grammar and language courses. Some key components of EAP, for example presentations and seminars, were not mentioned by these students. This confirms Taguchi and Naganuma's (2006) finding that home students' problems focused on the four language skills. This shows that University Syria students have a narrower and less versatile perception of EAP than University Wales students. It also reveals that University Syria students learn in a text-based way. However, some University Syria students used EAP outside the classroom through personal effort in doing private language courses, speaking to families, friends and neighbours and at work, although the students had limited opportunities. This is an unexpected finding, as I would have expected less use of English outside the classroom domain.

6.1.2. Support Offered by University Wales and University Syria, including EAP Provision

In response to the third and fourth research questions, EAP support offered to students seems to be closely related to the context. University Wales offers two types of support to international students: academic and social. Concerning academic support, for example, University Wales offers free English language support, including various EAP components, for example essay writing, presentations and research skills. They also focus on the four language skills in their teaching of EAP, as noted by all the staff interviewed. Social support
includes an induction event, assistance with programmes enrolment, visas and accommodation, as well as ongoing assistance with the cultural and social aspects of life in the UK. Many students viewed University Wales as a good place to learn language naturally.

As regards the resources offered by the University, several interviewees viewed University Wales as having good and up-to-date resources, including the system as a whole, library services and supervisors. This supports Hammond's (2006) view of the importance of offering academic and social support to international students.

By contrast, University Syria, as noted by students, offers EAP support in a didactic way. The methodology used for teaching EAP, especially prior to the postgraduate phase, is mostly based on a grammar-translation approach, where the written forms are emphasised, especially grammar and translation, and the spoken ones are under-represented, and the teacher's role is over-estimated. Also, the first language is overly used in the classroom. The approach also does not take cultural aspects into consideration in teaching EAP. Most University Syria students interviewed were unsatisfied with this approach which does not seem to offer enough support for them to face the challenges of EAP during postgraduate study or to carry on further studies in English. This makes students less motivated, as noted by interviewees. For students, better use of the available resources is required, for example the use of DVDs, video players, computers, more qualified teachers and better placement of students in the right levels. The present research contributes to the literature by exploring further weaknesses of the grammar-translation approach and offering recommendations for improving EAP teaching.
6.1.3. Tutor Support at University Wales and University Syria

Tutor support seems to play a major role in both University Wales and University Syria. University Wales interviewees emphasised the support tutors should offer in the study of EAP. This support was perceived to involve different dimensions: social and cultural as well as academic. Interviewees called for a personal tutor who could help students overcome shyness and other barriers, in addition to teaching language. One interviewee suggested that tutors should be more empathetic to international students. Staff interviewees also underscored the importance of having a good link between the lecturers and support tutors. Similarly, University Syria respondents laid great emphasis on tutor support. A few interviewees showed how a teacher, whether good or bad, may have drastic impact on the students' success. This is a finding which further emphasises the important role of teachers in EAP teaching and learning, frequently cited in the literature, for example Cohen (1998), Klapper (2006) and McDonough (2007). This theme also contributes to the answer to the third and fourth research questions posed at the start of the study.

6.1.4. EAP and Culture in University Wales and University Syria

In response to the final research question, the surrounding culture or, rather, cultures seem to play different roles in both University Wales and University Syria. The key role assumed by the cultural context was highlighted differently in home and international students' perceptions of their use of English for their studies, as is discussed below.

International students at University Wales stressed the significance of cultural context in their perception of EAP. Different types of culture were mentioned by interviewees. Also, the staff highlighted problems which make students suffer, due to their failure to recognise the
different cultural differences they may come across. This reinforces Atkinson's (2004) claim that students need to engage with a range of interacting cultures in their use of English for their studies. Based on Atkinson's (2004) concept of overlapping cultures, I develop a model of the different cultures which affect international students' use of EAP in University Wales, with the languages associated with each culture. This could be seen below.

As could be noticed, the above model is adapted from Atkinson (2004) to suit the specific context of the main study based in Wales. For example, the national culture in Atkinson's (2004) model was replaced with the UK and Welsh culture. Professional-academic culture was replaced with University Wales culture. The youth culture which was evident in
Atkinson's (2004) model was not included in my model, in a way to emphasise that these EAP learners are students associated with a university setting. Also, youth culture is more associated with home students and with different group activities like going out together, experiencing peer pressure, attending parties and so on. Finally, unlike Atkinson's (2004) model, the model above includes the languages associated with each culture.

As is clear from the above model, the different cultures, which are mediated by the English language in all mentioned cultures, are helping international students at University Wales to perceive their use of English inside and outside the classroom domain.

According to some students, culture is a real challenge for international students, mediating their use of EAP. This was illustrated in different ways. For example, accent was regarded by student interviewees as the most difficult aspect of learning language for international students. Cultural differences, such as accent and religious considerations, were viewed by some students as a reason for alienating international students, thus isolating them from the influence of the local culture. Moreover, the cultural gap and failure to communicate with English-speaking people, as pointed out by both students and staff interviewed, might also lead to lack of confidence and motivation on the part of international students, and so negatively impact on their use of English in general and EAP in particular. To other students, however, the cultural aspect helped international students in their study of EAP: for instance, the belief that Wales is an open community and the Welsh are used to welcoming international students. This is an aspect which helps the latter to become acquainted with culture which, according to students, is an integral part of international students' use of EAP. It offers them opportunities to integrate into the society, for example by socialising with UK
home students. What is more, some interviewees regarded becoming acquainted with the English language culture as a main reason for their study of EAP.

The influence of culture on international students' use of EAP is a finding which confirmed and further elaborated on similar studies in the literature. For example, Harris and Thorp (1999) found that the cultural aspect, among other factors, plays a prominent role in the international students' concept of EAP in the UK. Similarly, Robertson et al. (2000) examined international students' perceptions of the problems they confronted in Australia. Elements relating to culture were among the dominant problems which the students experienced when studying there.

With regard to University Syria, the surrounding local culture seems to play a marginal role in students' use of English for their studies. Their use of English was heavily focused on their academic and professional goals and not clearly mediated by culture. Even one student regarded the informal language used in the internet as 'destructive', since it may increase the use of global English. This is a finding which further explored Taguchi and Naganuma's (2006) study about home students' adjustment difficulties to a new English-only university environment in Japan. English language culture was not reported to have an impact on the Japanese home students, a finding corroborated and expanded further by my study of home students in Syria, another EFL context. Moreover, most University Syria students' perceptions denoted clear demarcation lines between EAP and its surrounding cultures. Based on this finding, I develop a model of Syrian home students' use of EAP in relation to the surrounding cultures, as follows:
As could be seen, the above model is adapted from Atkinson (2004) discussed earlier to suit the specific context of the associated study based in Syria. The national culture in Atkinson's (2004) model was replaced with the Syrian culture. Professional-academic culture was replaced with University Syria culture. In a similar way to Figure 38, the youth culture, which was evident in Atkinson (2004), was not included in the above model. The model above also includes the languages associated with each culture.
As is clear from the shaded section in the model above, the use of EAP by University Syria home students is (virtually) separated from its surrounding cultures outside the classroom, which are dominantly mediated by the Arabic language. The model also highlights the internet as an opportunity for students to use EAP outside the classroom.

The above model could illustrate that, while my findings confirm Atkinson's (2004) concept of overlapping cultures in relation to international students using English for their studies in an ENL context, the concept does not seem to apply as well to home students in an EFL context, where my findings highlight clear boundaries in an EFL setting. I recognise this is a complex area and one which needs further investigation.

6.1.5. Students as Users of EAP

Listening to students' voices relating their experiences was valuable in providing insight into the students as EAP learners. The interviews showed both groups of students to be proactive in learning English and to have views to report on how they engaged with EAP. This proactive response did not, however, always reflect a positive attitude on the part of students, particularly Syrian students, towards their study or use of English. For example, interviewee S11 noted:

In terms of preference, I prefer to have all sciences in Arabic, my language, because Arabic is the most comprehensive language, but learning English is being a must, because all sciences are, unfortunately, in English.
Also, listening to students' descriptions of their learning styles provided us with interesting and, at times, unexpected answers. On the one hand, students' learning styles were strongly influenced by the context of their study. Most University Syria students used studial learning styles, since they had no real access to native speakers, whereas the majority of University Wales students used a mixed learning style or an experiential learning style, as both styles are supported by the cultural context. However, some students adopted a learning style which was not encouraged by the context of their study. For example, a University Syria student was pleased to use an experiential learning style, although his cultural context did not involve access to native speakers. Interviewee S3 noted:

The internet plays an important role. I have relatives in Italy. I chat with them using English, so I realised that I need to improve my English to communicate with them. Imagine that my English improved via the internet better than via learning academically.

Furthermore, listening to students who were using English for their studies was valuable in highlighting certain aspects of EAP. For example, the references to the internet and the computer were a strong feature of the data in both contexts. Also, the interviews highlighted the importance of teachers in students' life. One student explained how difficult it was for him to miss a teacher. Also, it was clear that University Syria students perceived the use of EAP mainly inside the classroom and enjoyed it. University Wales students' broader concept of EAP, on the other hand, reflected their use of EAP inside and outside the classroom domain. However, they enjoy it inside more than outside the classroom, maybe due to the difficulty that getting to know the local culture and integrating into it adds to their use of English outside.
Listening to students' voices, as could be noticed from above, provided insight into students' identity as EAP learners. This can help us 'better understand their attitudes and approaches to study' (Walters, 2007: 56). This will ultimately inform the teaching of EAP. At times, students' responses revealed unexpected views, which reflect the complexity, as well as the value, of students' perceptions in understanding EAP. This variability of students' perceptions can enrich the teaching process, especially if used 'as the basis for discussion about the expected outcomes of the course, and the … aspects required for meaningful and successful study at higher education level' (Walters, 2007: 61). Also, making students aware of these differences in perceptions helps them to understand the nature of language teaching they should receive and permits them to seek appropriate help (Pilcher et al., 2006). It also helps them become more effective learners.

6.1.6. EAP Skills in Students' Views

As regards the students' views of the most important skills in learning EAP, both University Wales and University Syria students viewed reading and writing as the most important skills in the study of EAP. Their view could be justified on the basis of their needs for these two skills in academic studies and assessment, which mainly require these two skills. This is in contrast with the staff interviewees at University Wales who view all four language skills as equally important in the study of EAP. This is also in contrast with most of the literature on EAP which views writing as the most important skill in the study of EAP, as could be shown in most of the EAP models discussed in the literature chapter. Moreover, University Syria students called for more emphasis on the speaking and listening skills. One possible reason is the practical need for these two skills, especially at work. This point could also be regarded
as a reaction on University Syria students' part to the University focus on reading and grammar to the detriment of the spoken skills, as has been shown earlier.

As could be seen, the emerging themes from the main and associated case studies helped answer all the research questions posed at the beginning of the study with regard to University Wales and University Syria. Firstly, the academic and cultural references students referred to in their use of EAP were explored. It was found that University Wales students referred to a wide range of academic and cultural practices of EAP, while most University Syria students referred to academic references in a rather narrow sense, drawing on the context of their study. Secondly, there was also a discussion of the types of support students perceived as important in their use of EAP. For University Wales students, the support was perceived to be related both to the classroom and domains outside it, whereas most University Syria students emphasised the need for academic support inside the classroom. Thirdly, a line was drawn in the use of EAP between home and international students. For example, University Wales students recognised the need to engage in different overlapping cultures in their use of EAP, while for the majority of University Syria students there was awareness of a demarcation line between EAP and its surrounding cultures. At times, I had unexpected findings. For example, many University Syria students used personal effort to use English outside the classroom, although such use was not encouraged by the EAP context. Also, a few University Syria students perceived the home culture to play a positive role in their learning of EAP. In a word, the emerging themes helped us draw a picture of home and international students' perceptions of using English for their studies, the overall aim of the study. They also highlighted how important the role of context is in the teaching and learning of EAP today. This will be the focus in the next section.
6.2. Changing Nature of EAP

EAP as a field is susceptible to change (Atkinson, 2004; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2006; Jordan, 1997). This changing nature of EAP represents 'a movement towards a more context-sensitive perspective, reflecting changes in both higher education and our understandings of academic communication' (Hyland, 2006: 16). This emphasis on context was reinforced by my study. Context had a clear impact on the two groups of students' perceptions of EAP, as these students belonged to two different contexts: Syria and Wales, which are EFL and ENL countries respectively. For example, the majority of students in Syria context recognised clear boundaries between EAP and its surrounding cultures, whereas most students in Wales were aware of overlapping cultures in their perceptions of EAP.

Hyland (2006: 17) highlights three main reasons for the changes in the nature of EAP. Firstly, more knowledge is gradually being gained about the different teaching contexts which students confront and about the particular communicative demands which their studies place on them. In the past, EAP was pre-dominantly a movement led by materials and teaching, concentrating on written texts and responding to the increasing number of L2 students joining university courses. 'Since then a developing research base has emphasised the rich diversity of texts and contexts in which students operate in the modern university' (Hyland, 2006: 17). This point was confirmed by my study, as students' perceptions of EAP, particularly in University Wales, took account of the variety of texts and contexts they experienced in the learning process. Secondly, again, according to Hyland (2006: 17), there is increase in the numbers of students from social groups traditionally excluded from higher
education, for example, working-class, ethnic minority and international students, which means that there is now a more cultural, social and linguistic diversity of student population in universities in different countries. My study confirmed this point, as my students belonged to the outer and expanding circles, using English as an official language and a foreign language respectively (Kachru, 1992). In this sense, the students should be assumed by their teachers 'to bring different identities, understandings and habits of meaning-making to their learning' (Hyland, 2006: 17). This point was also confirmed by my current study in relation to University Wales students as international users of EAP.

Thirdly, students now study a broader mix of academic subjects. There are now 'complex modular degrees and emergent practice-based courses' such as teaching, nursing and management. 'These new course configurations are more discursively challenging for students who have to move between genres, departments and disciplines' (Hyland, 2006: 17). This point was emphasised by my study, as my respondents belonged to various disciplines, so they had to accommodate their study of EAP to the different genres dictated by their fields of study. For example, University Syria students reading for a PhD in business are expected to read and write at least two research papers in their fields of study, often as a requirement for their degrees. They are also expected to be familiar with texts from economics, statistics, marketing, management, and so on.

Past certainties about teaching and learning in higher education are under increasing pressure to change, and the presence of international students in universities is an important factor in this (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005). This has provided EAP with a different role to play in the academic setting. It also made us ask new questions. For example, instead of addressing why
learners have difficulties in accessing the academic discourses, EAP now focuses on other issues like the role of culture and context in students' academic experiences (Hyland, 2006). The influence of study context on the way in which students learn and use EAP was indeed a main finding in my study.

6.3. Contribution of the Study

In summary, the current study investigated postgraduate students' perceptions of using English for their studies in Wales and Syria. The study also highlighted particular features of teaching styles and resources which students perceived as important elements in their use of EAP. The context was shown to play a vital role in both groups' perceptions of themselves as EAP users. The contribution of this study lies in the juxtaposition of EAP learners from two different countries: Wales and Syria. The two countries belong to two different contexts in relation to English: ENL and EFL. This allowed for interesting points of comparison and contrast to be observed. It is an important topic where not enough research has been done. It is an emerging area and so contributes to the field of EAP and new knowledge building.

Pilcher (2006: 57) notes: 'there has been little research into the effectiveness of EAP from the perspective of students on their courses'. It is substantial data set from two countries where very little data exists on EAP in general. That comparison has allowed very interesting perspectives on learner experience to emerge in answering the research questions. The study also explores through its discussion of Atkinson model the complex ways in which language and culture interact. There is a further work to be undertaken in studying language, culture and EAP, but drawing on a model such as Atkinson is a helpful way forward in addressing pragmatically this vital aspect of EAP. The study also adds to the body of knowledge on the
phenomenon of the increasing numbers of international students in universities in the UK (Etherington, 2005; Hyland, 2006).

This research has an applied aspect. My findings offer strategies and suggestions for ways in which EAP can be delivered. For example, EAP teaching can be improved by taking into consideration the learner's voice and the learning styles. It can also make better use of the different available resources and opportunities emphasised by students to improve EAP teaching. For example, UK universities may consider helping students to integrate into the local culture by forming multi-national communities inside and outside the classroom. This might involve assigning classroom group tasks to students of different nationalities, which would help them interact and form social groups. The universities may as well emphasise and encourage academic networking between different students by making regular meetings and collective tasks, where views are exchanged and needs are considered. University efforts outside the classroom might include working with the research student representative committee in the university to plan different social events which would include both home and international students.

Moreover, a method of teaching EAP could be applied in University Syria or similar contexts, which takes into account reading and writing, but with more emphasis on speaking and listening, and which offers more opportunities for students to use English outside the classroom domain. For example, one future plan is to found a linguistic laboratory in University Syria, self-accessed by students, which includes DVDs, TVs, computers and internet. A further application is to arrange for a collaboration between University Syria and University Wales, where University Syria students can practise English outside the classroom
domain by networking with native speakers from University Wales through the internet. Another application of the current research is to rethink the assessment method used in University Syria. This, it is hoped, will influence the direction of EAP in that context. These applications are particularly important in strategy development in Syria, as they will assist in bridging the gap between teaching and learning of EAP in Syrian higher education.

6.4. Study Limitations and Directions for Further Research

There were certain limitations to my study. For example, the current study was limited to two specific learner groups, home and international learners at postgraduate level. This could be profitably expanded to investigate EAP over a wider range of study levels or contexts. Also, as the sample was a particular type, because of the difficulty in accessing participants in University Wales especially, this made the current sample unavoidably skewed toward males, since accessing interviewees was for the most part done through networking. However, future research may take gender balance into consideration so that more representativeness of student samples could be achieved. Further, the focus group element of the study comprised Arabic speakers, and it could have benefited from a more broadly representative sample which would involve non-Arabic speakers as well. Moreover, some interviewees who did not have Arabic as their first language were interviewed in English. This gave them limited scope in expressing themselves.

Having researched this field, it is clear that there is still more work to be done. Future research could employ the narrative technique in investigating the learners' voice. Encouraging interviewees to give narrative accounts of their lives and experiences can give good evidence about the meanings they attach to their experiences (Elliott, 2005). The voice
of home students studying EAP in an EFL context, as learners, is still under-represented.
Moreover, future research could explore international students' perceptions of EAP in an EFL context. This, I think, would bring about interesting findings to be compared and contrasted with home students in this context. It would provide us with further insight into the learners' voice in different contexts. It would further inform the teaching of EAP, so that future EAP courses would provide students with a more rounded experience and better prepare them for the culturally diverse, global context in which students of English study in the twenty-first century.
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University Syria Documents

Master's Language Course Components 2004-2005

List of Textbooks at Master's Language Course 2004-2005

Master's Language Course Timetable 2004-2005

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Appendices

Appendix 1

University Syria Interview Schedule 17th Dec 2004

1. What country do you come from?
2. What is your age?
3. What languages do you speak?
4. How far are you in your study? What is your next step?
5. What are your general goals and objectives in learning English?
6. How have you reached your current level of English? Have you received a scholarship?
7. How do you rate your level of English? (Reading, writing, listening and speaking)
8. What EAP training did you have before starting your post graduate studies?
   General
   For specific purposes
9. Can you tell me how your learning of English improved to date? (writing, reading, speaking, listening)
10. Who do you speak English to?
11. How often do you speak English? (Often, sometimes, occasionally, rarely)
    How often do you read English?
    How often do you write English?
    How often do you listen to English?
12. Are there any aspects of study that challenged your knowledge of English? 
Is it speaking, listening, reading or writing? (Expand)

13. The methodology used in learning English in your current country of study? is it satisfactory? Can it be better? How?

14. What best attracted you to the learning of English in your current country of study? Can you compare it to that of a country you visited or heard about? Which do you prefer?

15. In your view, what does a good learning centre of English offer? How do you appraise that in your university?

16. What, in your view, is the role of technology in language learning in your current country of study? Did it help you?

17. Could you recall a memorable event in your career of learning English? Reward, high mark, extraordinary lesson, etc.?

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Appendix 2

University Wales Interview Schedule (04 Dec 2005)

All answers will be treated in confidence. It is highly appreciated if you could complete the following questions before the interview
Pre-Interview Questionnaire

1. Name (Optional)

2. Email address

3. Contact Number

4. Male/ Female

5. What is your age group?  18 – 24        25 – 34      35 – 44     45 +

6. What is your current study?

7. How long have you been using English in the UK as a student?

8. What was your last result in an official English test you carried out?

9. How do you rate your level of English

   **Reading?**
   
   V. good            Good                        Satisfactory            Limited

   **Writing?**
   
   V. good            Good                        Satisfactory            Limited

   **Listening?**
V. good       Good       Satisfactory       Limited

**Speaking?**

V. good       Good       Satisfactory       Limited

10. Could you recall a memorable event in your career of learning English? Reward, high mark, extraordinary lesson, etc.? (This question will form part of the interview)
11. Please add your examples to the diagram of ways in which you currently use English
Actual Interview Questions

Your Language Learning Background

1. What is your native language?
2. What other languages do you speak?
3. What general English teaching have you received so far?
4. What training of English for academic purposes (EAP training) have you received so far?
5. How are you being taught English in University Wales (focus and activity)? (e.g. What did you do last week?)
6. What is your perception of this activity?
7. Why did you select University Wales?
8. Can you compare the way you are being taught English now to that of a country you visited or heard about?

Self-Assessment

9. What aspect(s) of language are you particularly enjoying in your English study?
10. Why do you enjoy such aspect(s)?
11. Are you having any particular difficulties with the language?
12. What should be done to address these difficulties?
13. Do you seek the help of the computer or internet in English learning?

Skills and Strategies

14. How motivated are you? Please be honest!!!
15. What are your objectives for learning English?

16. What is your study plan to achieve them?

17. What language skill(s) do you most need for your studies? (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary)?

18. In your opinion, what is the most efficient way to learn academic English?

19. What skill(s) should be stressed?

20. Could you recall a memorable event in your career of learning English? Reward, high mark, extraordinary lesson, etc.?

Appendix 3

Equivalences between the Two Interview Schedules at University Wales and University Syria

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Appendix 4

University Wales Staff Interview Schedule

(All answers will be treated in confidence)

Section – 1 – International Students in Higher Education

1. What is the total number of international students in University Wales at the moment?

2. What are their home countries and languages?

3. Is there one main country or language group which come to this university?

4. What subjects do most international students study?

5. What level of study do they undertake? (UG, M level, PhD)

6. For which level of study do most international students apply to the university?

7. Are there any subjects offered by the university that do not attract international students?

8. What do you think is unique about the experience for international students when they come to study in University Wales?

9. Do you perceive the number of international students growing this year? And how does it relate to the numbers of students over the last three years? (stable, increasing, decreasing).
Section – 2 – EAP Teaching and Learning

10. How are international students taught English in University Wales (focus and activities)?

11. Is this approach similar or different from other universities in the UK, in your opinion?

12. What are the difficulties University Wales international students usually have with using English?

13. What should be done to address these difficulties?

14. What language skill(s) do students most need for their studies? (reading, writing, listening, speaking)

15. What do you think international students find most difficult about academic writing (style, grammar, vocabulary)?

16. In your opinion, what is the most efficient way to learn academic English?

17. What skill(s) should be stressed?

Section – 3 – Do you have any further questions or comments to add?

18. Comments

Thank you for participating in this research interview on EAP
Appendix 5

Student and Staff Focus Group Interview Schedule

1. Several students and staff say that culture is one big challenge for international students using English. Can you tell me more about this?

2. What is the balance, do you think, that a university should aim for in supporting international students' study and their use of English?

3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages for international students to carry out their research in University Wales instead of their home countries?

4. According to some people, there is no such a thing as EAP. Do you agree? (for Staff only)

Many thanks for your participation
Appendix 6

Phases of Education in Syria

**Kindergartens**

There are public as well as private kindergartens in Syria. Nursery school is an optional stage of education in Syria.

**Schooling**

There are two stages of schooling: basic education and secondary education.

**Basic Education**

Despite the increase in the population, Syria possesses a free but compulsory basic education system, which extends from year one to year nine, previously known as combining two separate stages: the primary stage, which comprises years one to six, and the preparatory stage, which includes years seven to nine.

**Secondary Education**

This is free but optional. It is divided into two strands:

The general secondary education: This is branched into a scientific branch, usually leading students to scientific specialisations at university, for example engineering, sciences, and medicine, and a literary branch, which usually qualifies students for literary specialisations at university, for instance Arabic literature, sociology, and history.

The Vocational Secondary Education: This is divided into different branches which help students assimilate into vocational life: these branches are: industrial, agricultural, commercial and computational.

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Appendix 7

Extract from University Wales Postgraduate Prospectus 2007

Cyclists can follow the Taff Trail, a cycle path running from the city centre all the way up to the South Wales valleys. Vigorous walkers can tackle the beautiful Brecon Beacons, some forty minutes from town, but if a gentle amble is more up your street, Cardiff is lucky enough to have vast tracts of beautiful parkland in and around the city centre.

Shopping City
As befits a capital city, Cardiff has everything a shopper could dream of, from big department stores like Debenhams and the world’s biggest Next, to smaller independent shops. The 2003 Experian Retail Ranking judged Cardiff to have the sixth best shopping centre in the UK (out of 50 surveyed) - and the best in Wales and the South West. Here is just a tiny selection of Cardiff’s shopping possibilities...

The High Street Arcade is full of funky and unusual shops, including Nice, which sells all manner of paraphernalia including modern items for the home, from inflatable chairs to enormous fur beanbags, a vintage clothing store and Buzz. Cardiff’s wildest shoe store, also has two outlets there.

Howells of Cardiff, a House of Fraser department store in St Mary Street in the city centre, houses numerous designer outlets including Joseph, D & G and Paul Costelloe.

It also has an excellent cosmetics department selling products by Benefit, Aveda, Darphin, Malika, La Prairie and Molton Brown, along with those of the better-known cosmetics giants.

Woodies Emporium is a men’s and women’s designer outlet in the Morgan Arcade. It stocks an extensive range of men’s clothing (Hugo Boss and Armani included) and a smaller range of women’s wear (Armani, D&G, Sticky Fingers).

The Welsh-made goods for the home at Melin Tregwynt in the Royal Arcade have received a huge amount of coverage in glossy magazines. Their blankets, trinkets, candlesticks and cushions are fast becoming cult items for stylish homes.

Cardiff can also boast the world’s oldest record store, Spillers Records in The Hayes, and Central Market, an original Victorian market, which can supply you with the cheapest fresh fruit and veg in town, it also houses countless fascinating stalls, including a fabulous vintage record shop.

Whilst the city centre contains several large covered modern malls, it is the plethora of Victorian shopping arcades weaving their way around the city which makes shopping here such a pleasure.
Appendix 8

Extract from University Wales Postgraduate Prospectus (2008)

If you are lucky enough to study in Cardiff, you will be able to take the opportunity to explore the areas outside the city. Cardiff is surrounded by some of the most attractive countryside and coastal scenery in Britain.

**VALE OF CLAMORGAN**

The south-western fringe of the city marks the start of the Vale of Glamorgan - an area of coastal and rural beauty with steep cliff faces and secluded bays. The best way to discover the Vale is to explore one of the country lanes, which cross its hills and wooded valleys. The market town of Cowbridge is at the heart of the Vale. Its main street is lined with wine bars, restaurants and smart boutiques.

**GOWER PENINSULA**

Further west is the beautiful Gower peninsula - the UK’s first designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The beaches on the Gower are particularly popular with surfers and the area also attracts walkers, rock climbers and hang-gliding enthusiasts - as well as those who just want a lazy day on the beach! The south coast has a string of popular sandy bays, such as Caswell and Langland. The northern shores are very different with stretches of salt marsh and tidal sands, including the three-mile Rhossili beach, where shipwrecks can be seen at low tide.

**WYE VALLEY**

To the east of Cardiff can be found the Wye Valley and the famous beauty spot, Symonds Yat, with wonderful river views. Here again is cycling, riding and walking country in abundance. The 15 miles between Monmouth and Chepstow is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK**

North of Cardiff you will find the Brecon Beacons National Park, which offers thousands of miles of public footpath including bridleways and cycle routes. This means that moorland, mountains, rivers and lakes are all within easy travelling distance of the Cardiff student. As well as walking, cycling and horse riding, visitors to the Brecon Beacons can take part in other popular activities such as climbing, gliding, sailing, windsurfing and fishing.

**TAFF TRAIL**

The Taff Trail is a 35 mile waymarked route that joins Cardiff Bay with Brecon. The route runs along old railway lines, canals, forestry paths and minor roads. It connects with a number of other routes so there are wonderful opportunities for exploring whether on foot or bicycle.

**Pembrokeshire Coast National Park**

If you want to travel further afield, to the West is Pembrokeshire and Britain’s only coastal based national park, which runs 180 miles from Amroth near Tenby in the south, to St Dogmael’s (near Cardigan) in the north. It is no exaggeration to say that the Park has some of the most spectacular stretches of coast in Europe.

**VISITING LONDON**

Many students who come to study in Cardiff, especially international students, are amazed to find that they can reach London in only two hours by train, or three by car.

This puts London within easy reach from Cardiff for a day trip or weekend break.
Appendix 9

University Syria Document on MA Language Course Components

MA Language Course Components

1- المذاكرات

- أعمال الدورة تشمل: المذاكرات

- 5 درجات لكل مذكرة، وفقًا لتقدير الدورة. ويحسب المتوسط النهائي من 5 درجات.

Language in Use, Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading & Writing

2- الوظائف

Writing

- حسب وظائف مادة ال

- 5 درجات لكل وظيفة، ويحسب المتوسط النهائي من 5 درجات.

ESP

- الامتحان الشفهي في المادة التخصصية

- يطلب من الطالب كتابة موضوع يتقدم به في الصف والمقدمة فيه فئة الدورة بإشراف لجنة الامتحانات التي يرأسها الدكتور رئيس المركز.

- 10 درجات: توزع 5 درجات للموضوع و 5 درجات للمناقشة

- الامتحان النهائي الكلي من 80 درجة

- يتضمن الامتحان النهائي ما يلي، وتوزع 80 درجة وفقًا لما يلي:

  - 10 درجات Language in Use
  - 35 درجة Grammar
  - 5 درجات Vocabulary
  - 15 درجات ESP
  - 15 درجة Writing
Appendix 10

University Syria Document on MA Language Course Textbooks

Master Course
ESP Books - SS

Section 2
Faculty of Agriculture
Faculty of Arts
Mathematics
Chemistry
Electrical Engineering and Electronics
Mechanical Engineering
History of Arabic Sciences and Heritage

1. English in Focus: English in Agriculture
2. English for Arts
3. Information Technology - Mathematics (Nucleus Series) - Oxford English for Computing
4. English in Physical Science (Chemistry)
5. English in Electrical Engineering and Electronics
6. English in Mechanical Engineering
7. English in Social Studies

Teachers should make sure that their students cover at least the first hundred pages of each book.