

A Narrative Inquiry on the reflections of 10 Chinese pre-sessional students' interaction practices in preparation for study at a British university.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyse the experiences of 10 Chinese pre-sessional students preparing for study at a British university. Specifically, the aim is to better understand their English language learning experiences before and during their pre-sessional courses, and the potential impact these experiences will have on future L2 English interaction and use. The number of studies focusing on the large L1 Chinese cohorts on pre-sessional programmes and the consequent impact this has on L2 English use, is limited. This research aims to make a contribution to the growing body of pre-sessional English language research, and demonstrate its connection to cross cultural interaction research.

The constructivist-interpretive approach adopted in this research focuses on the distinct accounts of individuals, often homogenised in the extant literature. However, through Narrative inquiry, this study will challenge the, often unintentional, essentialist perspectives on Chinese international students at British universities. The research framework applies a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) to investigate how the experiences of the participants may have influenced their L2 interaction, and development of a L2 communicative repertoire. It focuses on key concepts from Dewey's (1938) theory of experience: situation, continuity and interaction. For this study, the situation refers to the notion of place (English language learning experiences in China, and in Britain), continuity (interrelation of language learning experiences in the past, present and future), and interaction (personal, social, and within the educational context).

The main research finding is that the internationalisation of higher education has impacted on the L2 interaction of the participants. This is largely due to the large numbers of same L1 students on the preparatory courses and limited interaction with other L1 groups during this time. As a consequence, this has had a negative impact on the development of an L2 communicative repertoire. In addition to this, past learning experiences and future aspirations will also influence the extent to which developing an L2 communicative repertoire is an objective for all the participants of the study. The main conclusion drawn from the narrative data is that higher education institutions need to take a much more active role in promoting

wider interaction across different groups. The starting point should be on the pre-sessional programmes within their role of preparing individuals for the internationalised higher education setting, as once the participants start their postgraduate programmes it will be necessary to interact with the wider university population. The current demographic of the pre-sessional programme results in few opportunities to gain experience in this type of diverse interaction. This could be achieved, however, through institution-led initiatives to promote more diversity and intergroup contact on pre-sessional programmes, and for the provision of institution and faculty level training, promoting and providing multicultural and cross-cultural interaction at university. Thus, providing adequate training for an internationalised higher education context.

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Appendix 14: The ELTC Learning and Teaching ethos

List of Acronyms

AMTB - Attitude Motivation test Battery
B2 - Upper Intermediate English Language Level
CDST - Complex Dynamic System Theory
CEFR - Common European Framework Reference for Language
CHC - Confucian Heritage Cultures
CLT - Communicative Language Teaching
DST - Dynamic Systems Theory
EAP - English for Academic Purposes
ELL - English as a local language
ELTC - English Language Teaching Centre
EMESUS - English Medium Education in Multilingual Settings
EMI - English Medium Instruction
EMP - English for Pre-masters
ERASMUS - European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ESB - English Speaking Background
ESAP - English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESP - English for Specific Purposes
HE - Higher Education
IC - International College
L1 - First Language
L2 - Second Language
NESB - Non-English Speaking Background
OECD - The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAE - Preparatory Academic English
OED - Oxford English Dictionary
QAA - Quality Assurance Agency
SDT - Self Determination Theory
SLA - Second Language Acquisition
THE - Times Higher Education
TUoS - The University of Sheffield
UK - United Kingdom
UKVI - UK Visa and Immigration Agency
UREC - University Research Ethics Committee

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 International students and British higher education

In the current context of the global pandemic COVID-19, there is a degree of uncertainty relating to future international student numbers at British universities. Up until this point, student numbers have steadily increased yearly with large numbers coming from China. While second language learning research has responded to this phenomenon, the focus has largely been on language proficiency and the challenges this group of international students have faced when studying at British universities. These studies are significant in developing awareness and understanding of the areas in need of development to enhance the experience of British tertiary level education for this group of students. There has also been a wealth of research on the internationalisation of higher education. Many studies have focused on how higher education institutions have incorporated the notion of globalisation and internationalisation into their policy and practice. However, research which focuses on the impact of internationalisation on second language (L2) use within the context of higher education in Britain is limited. Moreover, focus on language use of those students on the pre-sessional courses designed for entry into this environment, which factors in the significance of internationalisation, is even more scarce. My research will address the separation of the related themes of the impact of internationalisation on L2 language use in British higher education, and L2 language use on pre-sessional courses in light of the growing internationalisation of higher education. This will contribute to addressing this lacuna in the extant literature on pre-sessional academic programmes, and serve as an example of the type of study required to develop more research informed and improved pedagogies. The focus will be one group of pre-sessional Chinese international students at The University of Sheffield and the impact internationalisation has on their L2 interaction and development of a L2 communicative repertoire, which is not currently represented in literature on pre-sessional programmes or the internationalisation of higher education. The objective is for this research methodology to be applicable to other projects to better understand and promote interaction across the various groups within an internationalised university setting.

According to Tight (2012), universities have historically sought to widen participation as their survival previously depended on funding from research. However, more recently the income derives mainly from student fees (McClusky, 2020). Political and educational agreements have resulted in some students benefiting from local fee rates and freedom of movement through the European Union such as the ERASMUS programme. Alongside this, international student mobility has also been encouraged through research collaborations. Likewise, distance learning increases a university's international appeal, which reflects the growing global market of higher education. As a result, international students have a strong presence in British higher education institutions, for example in The University of Sheffield, international student applications in 2017 accounted for 52% of the total student applications (appendix 1). Correspondingly, for some faculties postgraduate 'overseas students' outnumber the home-status students. What is now probably more apparent than before is that universities are no longer just educational institutions but also commercial entities, which are dependent on providing the services to guarantee income from fees.

Chinese students are currently the largest nation group in the international student body at The University of Sheffield. However, it is unknown if this state will continue with the changing demographic of China forecasting a decline in numbers of young 'higher education age' people. Data from Kemp (2016) show figures in 2002 placed the number of Chinese international students at 700,000, a 300% increase on second place India. Although India's students' enrolments have increased in the United States, Australia and Germany, figures for the UK have fallen by over 12%. The increasing visa restrictions of Indian international students may be one of the factors influencing this downward trend to study elsewhere. This data shows the relevance of my study to the field of education in a number of ways. Firstly, as the Chinese international students are represented in such large numbers in British universities and these universities are growing more dependent on fees as a source of income. Therefore, it is important as a better understanding of the issues can pave the way for the pedagogical development of the higher education provided for this group and the wider student body. Secondly, if there are future trends to seek alternative locations, as the Indian international students have done for reasons relating to the quality of education on offer, the effects could be detrimental to British higher education in terms of funding research and employment of

teaching and support staff. Thirdly, with Chinese students accounting for the largest percentage of people studying abroad and the predominance of English-speaking countries as a destination for international students, this further reinforces the need for data generated in studies such as mine, as the issue of Chinese international students' engagement and interaction in English is a global phenomenon of global significance (OECD, 2014).

The environment presented above shows that international students are a fundamental part of the British higher education system, in terms of the numbers they represent and how this translates into the university's income through fees. The thousands of international students from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and the millions of pounds they bring to the economy is dependent on these students having the English language level to get a place on the course in the first instance. While there is a wealth of research on Chinese international students who are currently on their British university postgraduate degree programmes, there is a scarcity in the literature on the Chinese international students in Britain on specific educational pathways, such as pre-sessional academic English courses.

1.2: Rationale of this PhD

The purpose of this study is to better understand the interaction and engagement practices of 'international'¹ students on pre-sessional academic English courses. During my time as an English language tutor, I have continually encouraged second language (L2)² use in all interactions so the international students could develop their L2 English through consolidating the grammar structures and using new vocabulary items that were presented in the course books. My teacher-training strongly advocated this communicative approach as more successful in L2 language development than the traditional approach which focused on grammar, error correction, drilling and controlled practice of the L2 (Nunan, 1987). Yet despite adoption of this approach, my experience on pre-sessional programmes is one where students were not necessarily willing to communicate with one another using L2 English. When raising

¹ 'International students' are defined by The University as individuals who were non-UK domiciled at the time of application to the university.

² The term 'second language' is commonly referred to in the fields of language teaching and linguistics as 'L2'. This type of language is where the learners acquire or develop the official or dominant language of the country when this differs from theirs.

this issue with other teachers, the responses were 'they are very passive learners', 'they do not know how to communicate in English', and other such comments which placed the students into one homogenous group. This triggered recollections I encountered of being judged according to pre-existing assumptions about my black Afro-Caribbean British ethnic identity. I could not help feeling that the judgements of many of my co-workers were based on the students' ethnicity and cultural background and not on the individuals' performance or a possible negative impact of the learning environment, or the use of learning materials that were not conducive to authentic communicative interaction.

Chinese international students are the predominant nationality on the pre-sessional programmes. Although I could understand the difficulty in speaking English to classmates who shared the same L1, I believed these students should have had a utilitarian interest in using the second language (L2) as their student visas have both language proficiency (working towards B2 - Upper Intermediate on the Common European Framework Reference for Language - CEFR necessary for a tier 4 student visa) and time impositions. It would also be the language of instruction on the degree courses in which they came to the country to complete. Yet, when I had one-to-one conversations in tutorials, or chats after class or in group discussions as part of a formal assessment, the same students who I would repeatedly ask to communicate to other class members in English handled the interactions successfully. This was contrary to some of the negative over-generalisations I had heard in teacher staffroom conversations.

It was at this point I had witnessed certain behavioural patterns of students not communicating with each other in English during class. My assumption - Chinese international students who need to improve their English language proficiency not communicating with each other in English equals a lack of communicative skills - was insufficient in terms of what I had experienced in assessments and tutorials. It was not until I returned to tertiary level education as a student some 20 years after my first degree that I began to better understand the current context of the British higher education environment. It had not occurred to me that much like their present learning environment, for many of the Chinese international students on the pre sessional course, a large percentage of their current and future peers on the university programmes would speak the same L1. I wanted to understand how this environment impacted on interaction and engagement, and whether their current experience on the pre-

sessional would be sufficient preparation for what would lie ahead at university in Britain. This is the rationale for my research project. Although I have worked closely with Chinese international students for the last 14 years, my teacher-focused perspective alone cannot explain what interaction and engagement in English in this environment involves. For this reason, I hope to analyse the student perspectives. A better understanding of Chinese international students' experiences will hopefully lead to the development of informed pedagogies resulting in an improved experience in British higher education for both students and educators.

1.3: The overarching topic and aims of the thesis

The aim of the research is to analyse the experiences of 10 Chinese pre-sessional students preparing for study at a British university. Specifically, to better understand their English language learning experiences before and during their pre sessional courses, and the potential impact these experiences will have on future L2 English interaction and use. There are large numbers of students travelling from China after years of mandatory English language instruction to develop their academic English language skills for study at the British universities. While this trend has been well documented for students once they have started their degree programmes at British universities, the research on international students in Britain preparing to enter university is comparatively scarce. There has also been a wealth of research on the internationalisation of higher education and how higher education institutions have incorporated the notions of globalisation and internationalisation into their policy and practice. Less representative in higher education research is the contribution and impact of the pre-sessional and foundation programmes which act as the entrance pathway for many international students from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) into British universities. The last 20 years has seen some growth in literature focusing on various aspects of pre-sessional EAP courses. However, few studies focus on how the internationalisation of higher education resulting in large L1 Chinese student cohorts on the pre sessional programmes has impacted on L2 English use. This research aims to make this contribution to the growing body of pre-sessional research.

To address the main aim, the objective is to contextualise the English language learning experiences of 10 Chinese international students before and during pre-session courses at The University of Sheffield (TUoS) English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC), and contextualise the potential impact these experiences will have on future L2 English interaction and use. By adhering to the constructivist-interpretive approach adopted in this research, the study focuses on the distinct accounts of individuals who are often homogenised in the extant literature. It was for this specific reason, Chinese international students were selected as they are often viewed primarily as representatives of the largest demographic on these pre-session courses and many postgraduate taught programmes across Britain, and secondarily as individuals. The consequence of this is individuals are then labelled and othered according to assumptions about those who belong to this L1 group. However, through Narrative inquiry, this study will challenge the often unintentional essentialist perspectives in much of the extant literature that focuses on Chinese international students at British universities. These accounts aim to depict the individuals (rather than just as a member of a specific demographic) and their lived experiences of learning and using the English language. This is in order to move focus onto improving interaction across the internationalised student and staff body.

1.4: Brief overview of the literature related to the topic

In order to interpret the narrative accounts, it is necessary to problematize the current literature concerning Chinese international students and British higher education. Therefore, including a critical analysis of the literature on what internationalisation of higher education means for Chinese international students will directly inform this study by providing the setting for the environment these participants will enter. However, while these participants are considered university students, their membership to the university is currently transitional or provisional, with full membership dependent on the academic outcome of their pre-session courses. For this reason, it is important to review literature focusing on Chinese international students' experiences of British university pre-session courses, although these are limited in number. This will orient this research in the field and illuminate the issues in need of further exploration throughout the thesis, namely, the impact of the social and cultural environment on L2 English interaction.

With the main aim's focus on the participants' experiences before as well as during their pre-session course, it is important to review literature that informs the study of the language learning and teaching context in China. This will contextualise the narrative accounts of the participants, as well as inform considerations of the extent of the transition required for success in a teaching and learning context in Britain on the pre-session course, and on their degree courses at the British university. The areas of literature under consideration and critique are - Chinese international students and British higher education, Chinese international students' experiences of British university pre-session courses, the study of the language learning and teaching context in China, the impact of the social and cultural environment on L2 English interaction - to provide a background to the educational context before, during and after the pre-session course the participants are currently studying. However, in order to obtain a richer understanding of both the experiences and aspirations of the 10 students, it is also important to evaluate literature on the values attached to studying abroad. The analysis of such literature will act as a focal point when discussing the narratives.

1.5: Pre-session literature - identifying the gap

In order to situate my research within the field of existing literature focusing on pre-session courses in Britain, I conducted a systematic review starting with the Web of Science, then the White Rose repository and finally Google scholar. The initial Web of Science search, using the keywords 'pre sessional academic English' had 1 result which focused on writing pedagogy (Gardner, 2016). Amending the keyword search to 'preparatory academic English' amounted to 38 results and then this was refined for relevance - using the keyword 'Britain' that resulted in zero publications found. Using the keyword 'China' resulted in 2 sources: one article by Li and Curdt-Christiansen (2020) on teacher feedback and one data study comparing traditional teaching resources with e-resources (Muthumari, 2013). A further search on the Web of Science using keywords 'academic English pathway course' had 38 results, however when the search was refined using keyword 'Britain' there were 0 results. When refined using the keyword 'UK', there were 3 search results however only one of the three related to English language learning, but the focus was mapping proficiency cut-off scores to pre-session EAP programmes in UK higher education (Pearson, 2020a) and not directly relevant to this study. Keyword searches 'Chinese international students on British pre-sessionals' and 'Chinese

international students on UK pre-sessional courses' both had zero results. The keyword searches on the White rose repository with basic metadata (title, abstract, author, date) matches of "university, pre-sessional, academic English, Chinese international students, and " AND Full Text (basic fields and text of documents) matches using keywords 'preparatory academic English, Britain, Chinese students, pre-postgraduate, pre-masters' all had 0 results.

The Google Scholar search using keywords "university, pre-sessional, academic English, Chinese international students, Britain, U.K. interaction' had 1130 results. With the inclusion criteria 'pre sessional' in title and/or abstract, there were 69 sources (at the point of writing). On closer analysis of these sources, 16 related to Chinese international students on pre sessional courses in Britain. Of these studies, there is a variety of topics covered: pre-sessional students' expectations of teachers at UK universities (Bailey, 2005), language proficiency and cut off scores and their relation to EAP pre sessional courses (Pearson, 2020a), teacher and peer feedback on methods to support student-writers' learning opportunities (Cho, 2011), pre-sessional teachers' use of humour (Tran, 2020), focus on general academic skills (Mazgutora and Kormos, 2015), formative assessment to promote writing skills and small group discussion with background music (Cunningham, 2014), Chinese students expectations on teaching and learning techniques (Wright, 2015), and willingness to communicate on pre-university academic courses in English (Robson, 2015). Those most relevant to the focus of my research are: a focus on seminars (Burnapp, 2006), language use outside the classroom (Copland and Garton, 2011), online discussions (Skinner, 2010), intersecting identities of students on a pre-sessional EAP course (Bond, 2019), pre sessional students' interaction with native speaker (NS) communities (Jarvis and Stakounis, 2010), student expectations of pre sessional courses (Lamie and Issitt, 2005), transition onto master's courses (Wu and Hammond, 2011), and the effectiveness of pre-sessionals (Pearson, 2020b). Yet, of the more relevant studies mentioning interaction and engagement in L2 English, the studies do not adequately consider the impact internationalisation of higher education has had on L2 interaction, or the consequences this may have for the pre-sessional students once they start their degree programmes in Britain. This research aims to address this shortfall.

1.6: The value and contribution of this research

The value of my study and its contribution to the research on pre-sessional EAP courses is the adoption of a multi-dimensional approach to how personal, social, and environmental factors influence interaction in English for Chinese pre-sessional students studying in Britain. This is achieved by looking at the previous experiences outside their current higher education context that shaped their current practice. With this knowledge, both staff and student groups at higher education institutions will be better informed on not only the learning contexts from which many of their students have come, but also the impact internationalisation has had on interaction across the university. It is conducted using the methodology of narrative inquiry through narrative analysis, which is discussed in depth in chapter 3.

This research will also contribute to the body of literature on 'internationalisation' in higher education and will inform on the participants' conceptualisation of the term, an aspect that is underrepresented in research previously conducted. Although much of the literature defines and categorises the different learning, teaching and communicative styles between Eastern and Western cultures, more research is needed into how these generalisations impact on the behaviour of individuals. As a move away from homogenisation, this research fully intends to challenge many of the stereotypes and essentialist views of international students and their experience in higher education, gaining a wider breadth of knowledge and understanding of the interaction and engagement experiences of the 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional courses at a British higher education institution. This will be an analysis of the higher education experience from a subjectivist-interpretivist position. This subjective view on internationalisation may go some way in 'discovering' what Chinese international students want from a British higher education experience, and how institutions can address these needs.

1.7: My epistemological and ontological position

This qualitative research draws on post-structuralist approaches to offer a person-centred, holistic approach (Cohen et al, 2011). The challenge is to deconstruct existing stereotypical and essentialist views of international students and their experiences in higher education, to gain

subjective knowledge of the individual experiences and perspectives on the socio-cultural educational contexts in China, and in Britain (Squire et al, 2011). My ontological and epistemological position is that knowledge is a social construct where the experiences of the active agents (people) create a view of their own and of others' social reality. Therefore, the methodology adopts a constructivist-interpretive perspective that posits that we construct and develop our understanding of society through how we subjectively perceive our experiences.

The use Narrative inquiry through narrative cognition in this study sets out to challenge views by focusing on understanding the communicative actions of individuals, and how events and reactions to events have resulted in the present situation and have influenced aspirations for the future. The desired outcome (starting a master's degree at a British university) is the same for the participants. However, the result of using narrative cognition as a means to analyse the generated data is a collection of multiple personal accounts of one particular socio-educational context - the impact of the internationalisation of higher education on L2 interaction. This will provide rich data and contribute to a deeper understanding of this growing phenomenon. The use of narrative cognition will also provide explanatory knowledge for the way an individual interacts and engages and may offer explanations for our own behaviour and attitudes (as educators) to this phenomenon. To address the research questions, the research framework aims to create a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space incorporating place, continuity and interaction (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

1.8: Research questions

The research questions directing this study have been framed in a chronotropic-sense, in terms of creating a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space contextualising the place, continuity and interaction significance of factors influencing the past and current L2 interaction and engagement practices or behaviour.

1.8.1: Overarching research question - How has the 'internationalisation' of higher education influenced 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' L2 interaction, and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

Drawn from the topics and discussion of the literature, the interviews and subsequent narratives will establish whether the socio-educational context of the pre-sessional courses correspond with the current and future language needs of the 10 participants in this study. The objective is to generate data to inform the pre-sessional research field and higher education institutions of what international students may want from their experience in terms of English language development, and the relevance of this development for the future goals. A better, more transparent understanding may improve the alignment of both teaching and learning objectives.

1.8.2: Subsidiary research questions

Research Question 1: How did events which preceded the study abroad programme impact on 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' current interaction practices and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

Through narrative cognition, the focus of this study is to understand how language has been conceptualised for one group of Chinese international students. Semi-structured interviews will be used to retrospectively review events relating to the participants' English language development, leading to the decision to study in Britain. Data on whether the individuals in the study have had positive or negative experiences may reveal how the cognitive and emotive processes experienced affected their current interaction practices and development of a L2 communicative repertoire, in terms of how and when they interact and engage with other people. This is to assess the impact of the socio-cultural educational contexts in China on interaction practices as reviewed in chapter 2.

Research Question 2: What are the current interaction practices of 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional academic English programmes at a British university?

To avoid my perceptions or presumptions of the events from a teacher's perspective influencing the data generated, the intentions behind behaviour will be discussed. This will be achieved through negotiation of meaning with the participant. Thus, maintaining the subjectivist-interpretivist position of this narrative inquiry. This discussion of the teaching

approach is to draw attention to any connection the participants make between classroom practices and their L2 communicative repertoire inside and outside the classroom. One limitation of the study is that interaction will not be observed. Therefore, data generated on this issue will be the participants' 'perceived' L2 interaction and engagement only. This will also be of value as it will inform on the cognitive and emotive state of the individuals during communication (or lack of) with others while in Britain.

Research question 3: To what extent can pre-sessional academic English programmes aid the development of an L2 communicative repertoire?

This question addresses the participants' reflective perspectives of their pre-sessional courses and their current socio-educational contexts. In addition to this, it focuses on the participants' perceived future L2 English needs. The purpose, in light of the participants' experiences, is to establish whether pre-sessional courses adequately prepare students for the socio-educational context of British higher education.

1.9: Structure of the thesis

To address the overarching research question, chapter 2 explores research literature to contextualise the social and educational factors that may have influenced the participants' decision to study at a British higher education institution. For subsidiary research question 1, the topics under review are internationalisation in higher education; language as a commodity for internationalisation; and the institutionalisation of English language. For subsidiary research question 2, the topics examined to evaluate the participants' educational context are Chinese international students at British universities; problematizing the assumptions of cultural and intercultural communication styles; and problematizing the 'English Language Problem' in British Higher Education. In order to address subsidiary research question 3 on the effectiveness of pre-sessionals in the development of a L2 communicative repertoire, the topics critically discussed are the value of having a British higher education experience; and the current research literature on pre-sessionals. Chapter 3 examines the theoretical frameworks of educational research using Narrative Inquiry; and outlines the chosen theoretical framework - a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Chapter 4 provides the rationale for the methodological choice of Narrative Inquiry through narrative cognition, the justification for the

applied methods and the research tools. It also describes and contextualises the participants in the study and considers ethical issues arising within the research. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the pre-session programmes, along with the teaching and learning ethos of the language centre that provides the programmes. This is to articulate a more comprehensive understanding of the learning contexts of the participants' narratives. Chapter 6 presents the data and analysis in the form of the participants' narratives that are then discussed in the context of the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework. These are organised by each participant and presented as individual profiles. In chapter 7, the conclusion draws together the findings to address the main and subsidiary research questions and considers the limitations of the research. It will also present implications for future research and outlines a pedagogical intervention to promote interaction in an internationalised higher education setting.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter first examines the conceptualisation of the internationalisation of higher education and its impact on English language learning. The purpose of which is to better understand the context the participants will find themselves in once on their postgraduate degree programmes in Britain. This greater level of understanding is required to examine whether developing English interaction skills on the pre-sessional, in preparation for what is believed to be required of these students on their postgraduate degree programmes, is an educational end goal for these participants. Therefore, in order to gain this insight, it is important to consider what internationalisation in higher education actually represents. To understand how internationalisation of the university may influence L2 English interaction and the development of a communicative repertoire off campus, the discussion then turns to the linguistic landscape of the surrounding geographical location.

To address subsidiary research question two, the review will then move to examine literature on Chinese international students' experiences at British universities. This is in order to contextualise the participants' data on their current L2 English interaction experiences in Britain. To align with the constructivist - interpretive perspective (Schwandt, 1994) adopted in this research which views the participants' experiences as the source of knowledge, the objective is to challenge many of the stereotypes and essentialist views of Chinese international students in British higher education (Gu, 2009). In order to do this, it is essential to problematise the assumptions of cultural and intercultural communication styles (Nguyen et al, 2006), and problematise the assumption of the existence of an 'English language problem' among Chinese international students at British universities (Murray, 2015, 2016; Yang, 2017). This conceptualisation presents the interaction practices of Chinese international students from a deficit perspective that this research sets out to challenge.

In discussing the role English language development plays in the internationalisation of higher education, the thesis will examine conceptualisations of English language teaching which corresponds to subsidiary research questions 1 and 2 on the participants' past and current experiences of learning English. According to Dewey's (1938) experience continuum, past

learning experiences will influence current learning experiences so it is important to consider the conditions that may have influenced the participants' conceptualisation of language learning. This is in order to delve more deeply into the possible attitudes towards English language learning and use for the participants. As a commodity (Cameron, 2012), the review will present a discussion on the objectification (Reagan, 2004), linguistic unification and institutionalisation of English language teaching (Fairclough, 1989, 2001). This leads on to an analysis of the appropriateness of the methods adopted for teaching English language to international students, for promoting L2 English interaction and developing an L2 English communicative repertoire, given how language may have been conceptualised and within the context of internationalisation of higher education. The review then moves to analyse literature on Chinese international students' perceived value of British higher education (Huang, 2013; Gu, 2009; Li et al, 2010) and the extent of the role interaction plays in attributing its value. This corresponds with subsidiary research question 2 and 3, which establishes what significance the participants attach to developing English interaction skills in their current context of higher education in Britain, and the significance of these skills for future career aspirations.

The realisation is that while the participants are Chinese international students, they are currently embarking on pre-sessional academic English programmes to gain entry onto their postgraduate programmes (Thorpe et al, 2017). Therefore, they may be considered on the periphery of the university context. Therefore, it is imperative to review pre-sessional literature on the participants' current learning environment to gain perspectives on approaches taken to improve interaction in English (subsidiary research question three). This is to establish how significant interaction during the transitional period of the pre-sessional programmes is in the pursuit of the next stage - starting a postgraduate degree at a British university. A critique of studies on pre-sessional programmes and how the value attributed to interaction practises on these programmes will follow.

What is an L2 communicative repertoire?

My research relates to the interaction practices of international students that considers the ease to which an individual can communicate successfully with others. There are, however,

social and cognitive factors that influence successful communication (Segalowitz, 2010) so any study examining successful interaction must consider the context within which the communication takes place. In my research, subsidiary research question 1 looks at the participants' contexts in China, and subsidiary research question 2 and the overarching research question look at the participants' context of the pre-session programmes in Britain. Within these contexts, an individual needs to be equipped with an appropriate communicative repertoire to facilitate successful interaction. To clarify what a communicative repertoire refers to and why it is an important feature of successful L2 interaction, it is important to provide a definition and an analysis on its emergence as a means to understand effective communication in this higher education context. According to Rymes (2014), a speaker who is fluent in a language may experience miscommunication due to non-conventional use of intonation and emphasis. These prosodic features of language use are essential in successful interaction (Kang and Kermad, 2019). A linguistic repertoire, a term coined by Gumperz (1965), would encompass the linguistic forms employed in a community to manage 'socially significant interaction' (Rymes, 2014, p528), whereas a communicative repertoire focuses on elements such as prosody which the individual uses for successful and meaningful interaction within a community. Other elements may include dialects and choice of register depending on the interlocutor and/or context, which Rymes (2014) states are accumulated over time and experiences, as the individual learns which elements support successful communication. This raises the question of whether an L2 communicative repertoire can be achieved on a pre-session course. The implication is that due to demographics of the pre-session (Lamie and Issit, 2005) and the lack of contact with the wider higher education community (Copland and Garton, 2011), essential practice and experience of the elements required for successful communication are missing. Therefore, one could question what role this form of interaction plays in the objectives of pre-session courses.

2.1. Internationalisation in higher education and L2 English interaction

2.1.1. Internationalisation in higher education

The overarching research question examines the extent internationalisation in higher education has impacted on the L2 English interaction of the 10 Chinese students in this study, therefore a better understanding of how internationalisation has been conceptualised in this context is required. Lumby and Foskett (2016) categorise 'internationalisation in higher

education' into two dimensions, one as philosophical and the other as an economic/market dimension. The philosophical dimension could be described as remaining true to the ethos of a university as a place, where international and home-status students share an educational experience where interaction and collaboration contributes to understanding and addressing global needs and issues. The economic/market dimension views 'internationalisation' from a business-oriented perspective. More international students result in a greater income from the higher fees charged at British universities (Naidoo, 2006). In addition, marketing an institution as an internationalised university produces benefits such as promoting global research and becoming a stronger competitor for research funding (De Wit, 2017). This dimension also considers the economic contribution of an internationalised higher education to the geographical surroundings (of the institution) locally (Blommaert, 2015). This topic, which examines the linguistic landscape, is covered in more depth in 2.1.2.

Whether internationalisation is an actuality is raised by Knight (2011) who states 'internationalisation' can be superficially embedded in an institution and identifies 5 myths of internationalisation: foreign students indicate an internationalised university; international reputation is a proxy for quality; international institutional agreements indicate internationalisation; international accreditations indicate internationalisation; and global branding is a sign of internationalisation. Focusing on the first myth, in this context the presence of foreign students does not create an internationalised setting (Ryan, 2012). Regarding the pre-session courses in this study, the majority of the international students are from the same country - China. Although China is diverse both ethnically and linguistically (Lam, 2005), students from this country using Putonghua as an official first language of their nation-state are often inaccurately seen as one homogeneous group. A similar situation exists outside the pre-session course classroom as these international students often share the same living accommodation buildings. Therefore, at least in terms of the demographics of the pre-session course, the 'international' categorisation may appear superficial. Moreover, while the overall number of international students may point towards a globalised, international campus; the data (see appendix 2.) demonstrates that the postgraduate degree courses the participants of my study are preparing to enter also have large percentages of Chinese international students. So, there is a strong probability that the living arrangements are

unlikely to change dramatically, and the students will continue to share accommodation with their same L1 group. By inference, this situation does not support much opportunity for interaction in English. From the data generated in this study, I hope to gain the participants' perspective on how this 'international' environment impacts on interaction in English and development of a L2 English communicative repertoire.

It could be inaccurate to assume that Chinese international students sharing the same university accommodation equates to little to no L2 English interaction. As such, this narrative inquiry questions which dimension (the philosophical or economic/market) was more influential in the decision to study in Britain and whether Knight's (2011) 'myths of internationalisation' were what attracted the participants to a British higher education institution. Gaining this perspective from the participants would provide a context for whether L2 interaction and developing a communicative repertoire was a pull factor (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2015) in deciding to study in Britain. In this instance, consistent communication and interaction in L2 English would not be hindered by sharing classroom space and living accommodation with other Chinese international students. This motivation to engage and interact could be dependent on whether the status of being 'internationalised' was something that the student desired or whether studying abroad was solely the means to obtain an internationally accredited qualification (Counsell, 2011). This international qualification could possibly carry much more social gravitas than a degree from a local university at home (Counsell, 2011). In this instance, extensive or continued communication in English may not be a desire or intention as solely having the degree from a British university would be sufficient (Cebolla-Boado et al, 2018). However, the success of the student in meeting any of the possible objectives of internationalisation may be dependent on which dimension of internationalisation their British university adopts.

An institution adopting the philosophical dimension could be historically linked to universities' pride in the global connections made through their research (De Wit et al, 2015), and their student base. However, adopting the economic/market dimension could be described as imperialist in its orientation (Walker, 2014). This is due to strong market-driven engagement in pursuit to become a world-class university at the top of both national and international league

tables, and be perceived as an 'education hub' professing leadership in student recruitment, development of a skilled workforce and leading in innovative research (Knight, 2011). When this is achieved, internationalisation is justifiably perceived as a positive outcome of globalisation. As Knight (2011) argues, this status could contribute to the strengthening of the regional and national identity of a higher education institution, which could act as the foundation or starting block to more global recognition and global citizenship. Global citizenship, however, has its own set of eligibility criteria such as intercultural awareness and skills (Schattle, 2009), in which competency in the language of instruction of the institution may be one. Therefore, claims of an 'English language problem' (Murray, 2015, 2016) may limit the progress of the international students at a university and have a negative impact on an institution's academic quality (see 2.2.5) and status. However, this is a view that has adopted a deficit perspective that places any communication difficulties at the hands of the Chinese international students, and which supports the application of a thick description of CHC influence on communication styles (Chen, 2015). This extreme or blunt categorisation of presumed cultural differences both essentialises and 'others' international students (see 2.2.3 Problematising the Paradigmatic Assumptions of Eastern and Western Communication Styles for discussion of this categorisation). As those in authority positions, such as teaching or lecturing staff at a university, who accept and apply this perspective to one group in an intercultural context could also perpetuate and aggravate the interaction difficulties grounded in their own prejudices.

To better understand which position a university may take Lumby and Foskett (2016) suggest looking at the institution's organisational culture in order to interpret their dimension of internationalisation. Drawing on the work of Jiang (2008), Teichler (2009), Gibbs (2010) and Deem et al. (2008); Lumby and Foskett (2016) identify four positions that HE institutions adopt to reflect their organisational culture:

1. Internationalisation is about recruiting overseas students to come to the destination country to experience the host country's culture, with an implicit assumption of the high value and status of that culture. So, students coming to the UK or USA, for example, would be coming to experience British (or any Anglophone) culture with an implied presumption of the high value

both of higher education and of the capital value of Western culture in a global context (Jiang, 2008).

2. Internationalisation is about cultural exchange, in which cultural differences are valued and emphasised (Teichler, 2009).

3. Internationalisation means the participation of all in a homogenised global culture (Gibbs, 2010).

4. Internationalisation is about a group of equals working together, which includes only those who match perceived 'world-class' criteria of having the same culture, 'value' or 'worth' as other members of the group. The processes and principles are ones of selection and exclusion (Deem et al., 2008).

'Internationalising' the campus could be seen as creating a hierarchical structure where the students coming to Britain are seen to do so, to experience a better educational system than that of the student's' home country (see position 1). Universities have traditionally been places of cultural exchange in an internationalised environment (Altbach, 2004). However, universities have historically had one common language - Latin, and knowledge reflected Western learning of the time (Altbach and De Wit, 2015) with many but not all (take Al-Azhar in Cairo as an exception) modern universities adopting models based on mediaeval European traditions or models from colonial masters. While the language has changed to English, which is marketed as the lingua franca of business and academia (Phillipson, 2016), 'the university' continues to promote European/western values (Marginson and Van der Wende, 2007). As in the case of this study, the pre-sessional students may have to come to terms with a different language of instruction as well as a different academic style and approach in the British university. So, although a university may promote or propagate internationalisation as celebrating 'diversity' (see position 2) where different cultures will not be ignored (see position 3), the conventions to be followed and the academic styles adopted are only those representing values of the British higher education, which will present those students classified as 'international status' students as different and excluded, and who may experience otherization (see position 4). Attempting to

understand which position if any, a HE institution adopts may be a question of critically analysing what message the institution publicly gives to students and staff (and prospective students and staff) on their websites, in relation to how their programmes reflect their view of internationalisation, and the views of how internationalisation manifests from the 'active agents' in the institution such as the students and teaching staff.

Many of the above conceptualisations view internationalisation as a manifestation of globalisation (Teichler, 2004), and the focus of the literature is largely on the university as an institution and the impact international students have on British higher education institutions. An alternative perspective is offered by Tian and Lowe (2009) with a focus on the individual in the internationalised context. Their studies report the findings from two studies on Chinese students attending seven British universities, which examined whether the students' experiences within this context could support the potential for a personally transformative internationalism or existential internationalism. At this individual level, internationalism in higher education would aim to develop authentic international communities (Chen, 2015). This form of internationalisation would unite different nations represented at a university to promote and work towards building a better understanding of the different cultures while maintaining mutual respect of cultural differences and identities. These conclusions were a response to the findings of their studies, which found that intercultural interaction did not develop naturally on or off the campus. The outcome was the same for the international NESB³ postgraduate students in their study who had little to no experience interacting in L2 English, and for their undergraduate participants, some of whom had already spent a year or more living in the UK before starting their university courses.

Tian and Lowe (2009) admit that like much of the research on internationalisation, they also focused on the problems experienced by NESB international students and not on strategies to address or overcome these issues. This focus on issues NESB students have in acclimatising to the internationalised higher education context, in addition to the categorisation of NESB students as one group, and ESB⁴ students as another, could also be further propagating

³ NESB - Non English Speaking Background

⁴ ESB - English Speaking Background

essentialist views of the individuals sharing the higher education environment. This is particularly significant, as students categorised as NESB have been held responsible for the interaction difficulties. Reference to the categories in my studies is mindful of this and applies the terms to solely distinguish students whose previous environment utilised English as the main or one of the main languages to communicate, and not as any one group representing 'the norm' or accepted standard, status, or behaviour.

Nonetheless, the value of an approach incorporating personal transformative existential internationalisation is the inclusion of all students and staff, irrespective of whether they would consider themselves ESB or NESB international status students and staff. This places responsibility for improving intercultural and international interaction and communication of all members of the higher education institution, and not just the NESB students, as does much of the extant literature. It would be an ongoing process involving intercultural communication and interaction skills training which would be mutually and reciprocally beneficial to every university member. This conceptualisation of the internationalisation of higher education goes beyond the state of simply having international students on campus.

The above literature will be used to analyse and locate the experiences of the participants of my study. Firstly, to establish to extent the participants' conceptualisations of internationalisation of British higher education match the philosophical and/or economic perspectives presented in the literature and how their conceptualisation of internationalisation has impacted on L2 English interaction. Secondly, as my research focuses on individual experience, the concept of existential internationalisation is best suited to analyse the participants' perspectives on the impact internationalisation has had on interaction in English and on their L2 English communicative repertoire while on their pre-sessional course. This analysis will specifically address the overarching research question - How has the 'internationalisation' of higher education influenced 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' L2 interaction, and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

2.1.2. Internationalisation in higher education and the linguistic landscape

The previous section discussed the conceptualisation of internationalisation in higher education and how the participants' conceptualisation of internationalisation may impact on L2 English use. This next section continues with the theme of internationalisation, but the focus now shifts to the participants' life outside the campus and the classroom. The literature reviewed will both provide a context for the environments the participants find themselves in and aid the data analysis when addressing subsidiary research question 2 - what are the current interaction practises of 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional academic English programmes at a British university?

Due to the demographics of the pre-sessional courses which run consecutively throughout the academic year and the summer period, and not to mention the Chinese international students currently on undergraduate and postgraduate courses; Sheffield will have many same L1 international students using the facilities of the city. As a result, the city has seen the growth of many Chinese owned businesses catering to the Chinese international student community in the form of restaurants, supermarkets, accommodation and gyms. How the environment outside the language centre or university impacts on interacting and engaging in English is addressed by Blommaert (2012) who offers an informed discussion of how 'visual language' presents the socio-cultural, ideological and material contexts that manifest within a location. According to Blommaert (2015) a linguistic landscape can be defined as the visual language located in a specific geographical space, for instance, a city or town. Representations such as shop signs, graffiti, and posters reflect social, cultural and ideological indexicals or signs of the practices of the users of the space. The significance of a multicultural and international linguistic landscape; for example, could inform on the demographic features of the area. If a city centre has a range of international businesses such as restaurants and shops with signage written in a 'foreign' language, it is fair to assume people from this particular language group reside, work, study or regularly visit the area. Thus, study of the linguistic landscape with specific focus on the language choices of the business owners can provide information on existing presumptions of the potential customer base and community demographics.

In order to analyse the data responding to subsidiary research question 2 (on the current interaction practises of 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional academic English programmes at a British university), participants will be asked whether the linguistic landscape has had an impact of their L2 use and development of an L2 communicative repertoire. Throughout Sheffield, there are a number of Chinese restaurants and supermarkets throughout the city centre which are within walking distance of the main university campus and students' accommodation. Many of these businesses have signage, menus and websites written in Hanzi (Chinese characters) or Pinyin (Mandarin using a Romanised letter system) with English translations of their products (see appendix 3) so they are also open to nonfluent Hanzi users. Some websites of these businesses have the language option of content in Hanzi or English that suggests that some users may be more at ease using the Hanzi option. This linguistic landscape may offer home comforts to the participants and while the presence of these businesses does not exclude non-fluent Hanzi users, this could be viewed as a missed opportunity to be more involved in the wider community if these are the main facilities the participants use. As it could be argued that these facilities remove the necessity to develop language to be able to interact and engage effectively thus developing an L2 English communicative repertoire.

This issue of contact with the wider community was a finding from the Bamber (2013) study. Here, the students, who were Chinese postgraduate students studying at a UK based Russell group university, acknowledged that their English language skills would have benefited from full integration into the culture. However, the participants would mix more or less exclusively with fellow Chinese students, eat Chinese food and speak in their L1. The findings of the study revealed that improving English interaction skills may have been a focus for these students when they initially applied for their postgraduate course. However, the lack of diversity in their university department resulted in social networking mainly confined to other Chinese international students. While there are clear differences between the contexts of the Bamber (2013) study and this research - one group being students already on their postgraduate programmes and my participants on pre sessional courses in preparation for postgraduate study, both groups of participants are Chinese international students studying in Britain within a large cohort of students who have the same L1. It would be informative to ascertain whether

any of my participants predict a change in their willingness to interact in L2 English once they are more accustomed to their new linguistic landscape. Therefore, the findings from the Bamber (2013) will be considered when analysing my participants' perspectives on any correlations between current interaction practices and the linguistic landscape in the wider community.

2.2. Chinese international students at British universities

The previous section focused on an environment in which the participants currently have temporary membership as pre-sessional students. To address the overarching research question, it is imperative to examine how students seemingly from similar contexts have managed interaction in the environment the participants are preparing to enter. During the pre-sessional programmes, the students are encouraged to make full use of the facilities on the university campus such as the libraries, cafes and restaurants, sports centre and the students' union social events and activities. So, while the pre-sessional programme is not a credit-bearing degree programme, the participants (particularly those on the longer pre-sessional course starting at the beginning of the academic year) share the campus and accommodation with students who have already started their degree programmes. They are also on programmes specifically designed to prepare the students for full integration into this higher education environment. For these reasons, the next section focuses on literature relating to Chinese international students in British higher education institutions. It will serve to contextualise the key issues raised in regard to interaction practices of this demographic group. This includes an analysis of the criticisms directed at Chinese international students at British universities that is necessary when assessing the effectiveness of the pre-sessional programmes that are supposed to prepare international students for the higher education environment (see 2.3). However, due care needs to be taken not to assume that the findings of these studies are applicable or generalizable to the diverse group of students who fall into the category of Chinese international students studying in Britain.

2.2.1 Interaction and intergroup contact

There are various theories relating to Chinese international students' transition into British higher education institutions. These aim to conceptualise the different aspects of the students' learning experience in terms of student performance and the difficulties this diverse group of international students face in adjusting to higher education in Western - English speaking countries. Topics featured in the literature include: challenging the notion of the passive Chinese international student (Liu, 2009); the negative impact of emotional isolation and loneliness on academic confidence (Turner, 2006); the presumed dichotomy in Western and Confucian teaching and learning styles, and the negative impact this has on how Chinese international students are perceived (Wang and Byram, 2011); and the social and academic anxieties experienced by Chinese direct entry students transitioning into the partner UK university (Quan et al, 2013) to name some of the areas of focus. Claims often grounded in outdated stereotypes are that Chinese international students contribute less to class and group discussions (Li et al, 2010), have a more passive-receptive approach to learning (Watkins and Biggs, 1996) and have an absence of critical thinking skills (Shaheen, 2016) are often the result of insufficient institutional support as well as the cultural, social and academic differences between China and the UK.

One study that does not solely focus on the problems but provides analysis of how students have addressed challenges (Quan et al, 2016) proposed a process-based stage model for students who overcame or avoided the issues mentioned above and achieved good academic results through their successful academic adjustment. This qualitative study retrospectively presents the coping strategies adopted and possible stages in the adjustment process. The stages are pre-departure stage; the first arrival stage (after three to four weeks arrival); adjusting stage (between four weeks and the beginning of Semester 2) and the final achieving competence stage (the middle of Semester 2). The study recommends more support in the first arrival stage as this is when the students become made aware of the culturally different teaching and learning styles and are required to manage their expectations. This period was found to be the most stressful.

The selection criteria for participants from the Quan et al (2016) study was that the students had no experience of British higher education before their master's courses but did state there was a 6-week pre-English language course. It does not mention if the pre-English course covered academic teaching and learning style or academic expectations; so, it would be difficult to compare the findings with the data in my study where this is one of the main areas of focus of the pre-session courses. While the study focuses on the academic adjustment to British higher education, there is no mention of interaction as a valid part of that adjustment, either by the participants or as a recommendation. There is one reference to a student asking other Chinese international students who had done the same or a similar module before for support but no mention of interaction with any non-Chinese students. One recommendation from the study was that the Chinese international students may need more support in the first three to four weeks of their programmes beyond what was offered in the master's course induction. Another suggestion was that recruitment agencies in China should provide some pedagogical support on the differences between Chinese and British academic conventions. What can be concluded from the study is although the initial focus is on how this group of Chinese international students overcame adjustment issues; there is no responsibility of adjusting to British higher education placed on the institution or on the other students (non-Chinese).

Of the acculturation and cross culture literature reviewed in the Quan et al (2016) study, it is only the U-curve 3-stage model (Lysgaard, 1955) which refers to any form of communication between cultures. Although, there is mention of socio-cultural adjustment within the acculturation or adjustment to British higher education. This implies that this adjustment is achieved without interaction with the host community or other (non-Chinese) students. Although, Quan et al (2016) acknowledge that the 1-year duration of a master's course may hinder socio-cultural and academic adjustment. However, if the Chinese international students' numbers in the Quan et al (2016) study are reflective of the numbers representative of the number at Sheffield university, there may be little opportunity or necessity for interaction with NESB international or home students on the master courses. This may result in a reduced need to develop an L2 communicative repertoire, which is what my study intends to investigate.

In terms of developing an L2 communicative repertoire through increased L2 interaction, one of the recurring issues covered in the extant literature is that Chinese and British students in the same higher education institution may have a different assumption of student and teacher roles that impacts on how much Chinese international students interact with their peers. There are claims in the extant literature (Biggs, 1996; Biggs, 1999; Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Chan, 1999; Wan, 1999; Woodrow & Sham, 2001; Turner & Acker, 2002; Branine, 2005; Sliwa & Grandy, 2006), that Chinese students have the perceived notion that the teacher is the provider of knowledge, and the student the recipient. However, for their British counterparts the teacher is a facilitator and organiser. The students' role from the British perspective is to engage, question and critically analyse what the teacher delivers. This interpretation of the relationship between students and tutors was also a contrast noted by the participants in the Liu (2009) study that stated that these close relationships in China could lead to flexibility with grades allocated and that this did not occur in the UK. However, these views of the Chinese learner should be treated with caution, as they could be considered essentialist. The socioeconomic diversity across China results in individuals classified as Chinese international students having quite distinct levels of knowledge and experience of British higher education, and varied experiences at their home universities.

Other research has also contrasted different learning and teaching pedagogies. Durkin (2008) found the East Asian students in their study opted for a 'Middle Way' rather than choosing between the different styles, resulting in the hybridisation of culturally acceptable norms from the Western methods and their own. The recommendation was for the institutions to adapt the mindset of traditional Socratic dialectic linear logic favouring argumentation, to an approach that includes the more passive acts of conciliatory accommodation considering inference over explicitness, and mindful listening over debate. Zhou et al, (2008) adopts the perspective of Chinese and British cultural groups having their own place or position within a higher education institution, rather than all students sharing an internationalised space. Their study proposes the adoption of a cultural synergy model where rather than presupposing that the Chinese students in a British HE setting will naturally assimilate to the ways of the host students and teachers, a mutual effort before and during courses would aim at developing awareness of the pedagogical differences between cultures to limit the mismatch of

expectations for both cultures in the same higher education setting. These studies aim to resolve the apparent problem of different teaching and learning styles, and do not present a 'solution' of replacing one presumed learning style over the other. However, the question arises of whether this approach only extends to teaching and learning practices or a complete overhaul of how university programmes assess a student's performance and knowledge acquisition. This also leads to the question of whether this hybridised British higher education model is what international students are looking for when they enrol on these programmes (see 2.7.4).

The above literature does not appear to account for the level of diversity and factors that may influence the pedagogies of the countries that have been classified into these opposing groups (see 2.2.1 below). Through narrative inquiry, my research is significant as it provides a subjective perspective of the factors that influence interaction in English for the Chinese international student participants in my study. The intention is to establish from the participants how far Western and Eastern teaching styles still exist for these participants and to what extent, if any, they influence L2 interaction on the pre sessional programmes. The question of whether an absence of a cultural synergy approach, raised in the above literature, is what is affecting interaction and engagement in English will be discussed during the data generation. I also intend to establish whether this 'cultural synergy' is the idealisation of the educators (lecturers, teachers, and tutors) more than it is for the Chinese international students in the study.

Moving beyond the perhaps overly generalised pedagogical differences between Chinese international and British home students, Harrison and Peacock (2010) present the findings from a study which takes the perspectives of the home students' experience of internationalisation of higher education. They refer to Allport's Contact Theory - or Allport's Intergroup Contact Hypothesis as per the critique offered by Pettigrew and Tropp (2005) with its four conditions for successful contact: equality, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support. The first two conditions are presumed as present in a university setting; however, the study concludes that shared goals and intergroup interaction does not occur organically or spontaneously between the student groups defined as 'home' or 'international'.

On applying the Integrated Threat theory (Stephan and Stephan, 2000) with four potential types of threat to intergroup relations: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes, later reduced to two (realistic and symbolic threat); Harrison and Peacock (2010) concluded a necessity for managed intergroup and intercultural interaction. The reason for this institutional level intervention is that the conditions for intergroup contact are not occurring naturally. The internationalisation and cultural/ethnic diversity of a university's student body does not automatically equate to these groups interacting with each other. It is more of a question of each group occupying their own identifiable space rather than sharing the space.

The lack of cross-cultural interaction between home and international students may have an impact on Chinese international students' L2 interaction and development of an L2 communicative repertoire. Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) present the perspective of the international students' experience of intergroup contact. Though it should be noted that this study focuses on undergraduate students who will be spending three to four years in a UK higher education institution as opposed to the one-year postgraduate programmes of the participants of my research. The study also focuses on participants from 11 different countries. However, the relevance of its inclusion in this literature review is the acknowledgement through the findings that international students may choose to interact within their own or a similar cultural group that can impede intergroup contact and interaction. The demographic of the undergraduate student population is much more diverse than the postgraduate population, so this may occur more frequently for students already on masters' programmes and those pre-sessional courses where students from the same or similar cultures are more highly represented. Secondly, the study concludes that its undergraduate participants felt they had limited opportunities to interact with the wider multiracial environment outside of their universities, even during the 3-4 year time period of undergraduate studies compared to that of a 1 year pre-sessional course and subsequent 1 year masters' programme. These findings raise the issue of whether the participants in my study have similar apprehension about intergroup contact when they start their postgraduate degree courses at the university.

Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) also study inter-group contact using the conditions of the Contact

Theory, though they point out it was not designed for interculturality, but for 'inter- group tolerance and the reduction of prejudice' (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009, p465). It reported that many international students felt that they were on an unequal footing at the start of their courses. The issues for this disparity were anxiety about speaking up in class and the ability to answer questions in class. However, this was less of a challenge as the students adapted to the pedagogical approaches at the university. A fifth of the students in this study had difficulties with intergroup contact when they started their university courses, giving a lack of confidence in their English language skills and having different social life patterns to the British students as the main causes that contributed to feeling uncomfortable and alienated. Authority support fared well in the study with international students positive about the mentoring system in place, additional language support for 'non-native' speakers, and the approachability of lecturers. However, 23% of the case study participants had more negative feedback about their personal tutors as they felt the tutors 'took sides' with home students when there were disputes over incomplete work. There were also claims that some tutors had poor communication skills when dealing with students' whose first language was not English. One observation is that the Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) study does not appear to attribute any sense of responsibility for inter-group contact to home students nor the university for adjusting to the impact of internationalisation and the cultural diversity within the university.

2.2.2 Problematizing the assumptions of cultural and intercultural communication styles

Assumed different communication styles of the different cultures represented in the student demographic at British higher education institutions, have been held as the root of critical or higher order thinking skills and interaction difficulties between students from a Confucian heritage cultures (CHC) context and students who would be considered to be from a more Western educational context. Shaheen (2016) examined the views held by British university teachers on difficulties in critical thinking skill development of their students from non-Western educational backgrounds. One conclusion from this study was that it was both cultural and educational factors influencing the development of the essential skills required to adjust to British university study. Durkin (2008) also attributes these factors to difficulties East Asian students have in adjusting to educational practices in Britain. What may be considered

Western academic practice to students from a CHC country are presumed to be a universal standard or generic educational norms by home students and staff at British higher education institutions. Thus, these distinctions proliferate the idea of an 'us' and 'them' cultural dyad perspective. Durkin (2008) concludes that all parties (university teaching staff and students) should develop a better understanding of what should be presented as stark cultural differences, in order to acquire the necessary intercultural competence required for cross-cultural communication.

The cultural dyad presented in much of the extant literature is of one side representing the 'West' - Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand (Durkin, 2008) and on the other side 'the East' - Confucian heritage cultures (CHC) such as China, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam and Singapore (O'Dwyer, 2017). However, this view does not take into account any diversity across and within the nations belonging to CHC heritage; and the different historical and social paths taken which have led to a CHC that has evolved and is evolving differently in the different countries. Park (2011) believes this dyad creates a number of misinterpretations concerning the reported dichotomy presented between Western and Eastern styles of communication and education pedagogies, stemming from a Western perspective that has a possibly outdated and limited view of CHC. In offering a more accurate and contemporary analysis, Park (2011) describes a thin and thick CHC discourse. The former is labelled as socially constructed and evolving; and therefore, a situationally specific description of a communication style. The latter is based on the more traditional interpretation of Confucianism according to the following criteria:

- ...should uphold some clearly distinct Confucian elements such as tao (way), jen (humanity) or li (rite, social ceremonials and conventions);
- these elements should exist across more than one geographical region and border, to ensure that they are not folktales: and
- these elements can be traced back to textual classics of Confucius or widely recognised Confucian schools' (Park, 2011, p383).

CHC has been understood without due regard to historical and philosophical development,

and the diversity across both its nations and its individuals (O'Dwyer, 2017; Park, 2011). As a consequence, claims of the influence of the CHC background on some university students may have been exaggerated. According to O'Dwyer (2017), many educationalists tend to attach the 'thick' traditional interpretation of CHC when describing cultural background and influence, which is criticised as not appropriate due to the fact it is an outdated view of the East and Southeast Asian university students it labels. If this perspective of CHC is used as a basis to understand the cultural differences and influences present in their institution, then it is as irrelevant and as inappropriate as attaching Christian values when comprehending the behaviour of students originating from cultures considered as Western (O'Dwyer, 2017). The recommendation is that the focus is shifted from accrediting academic and adjustment difficulties to the influence of coming from a CHC country, to recognising the impact of the prior learning and type of individual academic experience. Subsidiary research question 1 which considers past learning experiences, and subsidiary research question 2 which focuses on current learning experiences on the pre-session programmes will investigate the credulity of the paradigmatic assumptions of Eastern and Western communication styles, presented by Chen, (2015) (figure 1) based on participants' experiences of education in China and in Britain which is discussed below in section 2.2.3. The participants' perspective on the perceived cultural differences concerning communication styles will be more insightful than the application of a 'thick' description of CHC influence of communication.

| Ontology | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| East | | | West | | |
| Holistic | | | Atomistic | | |
| submerged collectivistic | | | discrete individualistic | | |
| Axiology | | Epistemology | | Methodology | |
| East | West | East | West | East | West |
| Harmonious | Confrontational | Interconnected | Reductionistic | Intuitive | Logical |
| indirect subtle adaptative consensual agreeable | direct expressive dialectical divisive sermonic | reciprocity we hierarchical associative ascribed | independent I equal free will achieved | subjective nonlinear ambiguous ritual accommodative | objective linear analytical justificatory manipulative |

Figure 1: Paradigmatic Assumptions of Eastern and Western Communication Styles from Chen, 2015, p76

2.2.3. Problematising the paradigmatic assumptions of eastern and western Communication Styles

To address the challenges of communication in a globalised or internationalised context, such as British higher education, it is important to problematise intercultural interaction as the presumed objective of pre-sessional students, and to problematise the potential influence cultural assumptions have on interaction. One analysis offered by Chen (2015) takes as its premise the internationalised context as a 'new home' for the different cultures sharing the environment. Intercultural interaction within this 'new home' is contextualised as the 'boundary game'. According to Chen (2015), effective communication leading to successful interaction between groups will transform a 'cultural' boundary into a point of access, creating a passable route between the cultures sharing an environment. To achieve this, strategies have to be adopted to facilitate the interaction between the cultural groups that result in the creation of 'boundary wisdom' (Chen, 2015, p77). Chen's (2015) view is that boundary wisdom will develop during the time spent moving across the cultures where 'intercultural communication competence' results in respect and acceptance of cultural differences. In order to arrive at this state of mutual understanding, a code of conduct or global ethics must be applied to provide a nurturing environment where all the cultures represented in the community are equally valued as contributors.

However, the idea of boundary wisdom and a boundary game is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, the distinction between cultural groups sharing an environment presents an 'us and them' dyad particularly as one of the 'cultural groups' are officially labelled by the higher education institutions as having international student status and the other has 'home-status'. This implies that one group has permanent rights or access, and the other group does not, and that this equates to an unequal footing in terms of their sense of belonging, or right to inhabit the 'new home'. The second problematic area is of the supposedly culture influenced personality characteristics presented as paradigmatic assumptions of communication style differences in figure 1. This implies that these characteristics are solely influenced or dependent on where an individual is from. It does not take into account a range of factors that

would influence how someone communicates (Park, 2011; O'Dwyer, 2017). A third factor to consider is if an individual wants to interact, a position forwarded by Page and Chahboun (2019). They argue that research that assumes that intercultural communication is the objective without confirmation from the international students themselves, is contributing to the othering and essentialising of the international student. Page and Chahboun (2019) state that much of the extant research on intercultural communication at universities focuses on the social isolation of the international student who is passively unable to make connections with home students on their programmes. This is a deficit perspective of the international student in question, as this may be the choice of an active agent who has decided that forming relationships with home students is not one of their objectives for study abroad. Their study recommends that future research should start 'by de-muting the subjects of the research' (Page and Chahboun, 2019, p881). By presenting the narratives of the participants' learning experience, my research intends to provide a more accurate unmuted account of the subjective perspectives of the international student experience.

2.2.4. Membership to a guanxi and intercultural interaction in a higher education context

To address subsidiary research 2 in establishing the current interaction practices of the participants, the next section examines literature on the role of social and interpersonal relationships within a Chinese cultural context. Based on my experience of teaching Chinese international students in British higher education institutions, a common feature of social and interpersonal relationships in China is membership to a guanxi. Therefore, it is important to establish whether the perceived benefits of belonging to a guanxi, which Chong et al (2013) describe as an 'indigenous Chinese construct' (Chong et al, 2013, p53), could impact interaction in an internationalised higher education context. The term guanxi is often associated with business networks and relationships, and describes economic and/or power influences within and across organisations (Chong et al, 2013). This relationship network can also extend into other aspects of society such as facilitating social capital for certain parents to optimise the successful schooling of their children (Xie and Postiglione, 2016). Therefore, it is important at this point to differentiate between the Chinese concept of guanxi and the western concept of

networking. The OED defines networking as the process of interacting with other people for the benefit of business or employment opportunities. Whereas Feng and Patulny (2021) would characterise the concept of Chinese networking or guanxi as complex interpersonal relationships which can vary between weak and strong, and short- or long-term connections. In an attempt to better understand the perspectives, theories, and methodologies of Chinese networking or guanxi, Chen and Chen (2012) reviewed over 200 articles with 'guanxi' as a keyword. Of the three themes of focus, one theme - studies on the micro level analysis (individual and interpersonal) - relate quite closely to the type of social networking experienced by the Chinese international students I have taught previously. This type of guanxi is defined as a personal bond of friendship and support to manage life and work. It also places Confucian virtues of relationism at its core; with the 'friend-acquaintances' guanxi relying on a system of reciprocity, fairness and face-saving. This relational system places the needs of the guanxi (the group) over and above the interests of any individual member.

Misinterpretation of culture-based behaviours, such as membership to a guanxi, could present itself as an individual exhibiting low level of interaction and engagement within the environment of an internationalised higher education institution (Wang and Greenwood, 2015). This may manifest, for example, in situations such as a student not asking a question during a lecture, as they would not want to take the time of the whole group for their individual needs. As a group, the guanxi would approach the teacher/lecturer after the session so the whole group would benefit from the response. Attributed to the Confucian philosophy of 'other-directed self' (Wang and Greenwood, 2015, p256), the notion of community and collectivism takes precedence over an individualistic mindset. It is claimed to lead Chinese international students to form cooperatives to help and support its L1 community by developing an awareness of how others are likely to react or feel about an individual's behaviour. When this cooperative or 'guanxi' with others is formed, the individual is now part of a collective that acts to support and help each member with the group's needs. In addition to this, the individual will now need to be aware of how others may perceive their behaviour. Therefore, the guanxi will provide a safe environment as all of the members should be considering how their actions could be interpreted. This adheres to the Confucian virtues of respect for leaders and elders,

maintaining harmony, saving face in terms of personal embarrassment and/or causing embarrassment to others.

Acting for the good of the group or collective, in order to maintain harmonious relations and mutual benefits or rewards, can often be misinterpreted as a lack of independent thought or autonomy, or a lack of critical analysis (Wang and Greenwood, 2015). While it could be argued that Confucian learning and communication styles may influence the reluctance to engage in the Western communicative style of more combative debate and adversarial positions (according to a thick description of these communication styles), this should not be interpreted as a lack of desire to engage. The interaction and engagement of Chinese international students is more likely to occur as with any student who feels comfortable and confident in the environment. If a student were to apply this thick description of Confucian cultural influence, behaviour and interaction would be influenced by not putting themselves at risk of embarrassment or behaviour that could embarrass the group. An opposing view may be presented, but not in such a confrontational or explicit style or at the expense of embarrassing oneself or others. The data generated in my study hopes to establish whether membership to a *guanxi* for these participants is likely to impact on interaction in English, or negatively impact the development of an L2 communicative repertoire.

The initial difficulties Chinese international students may encounter when they start at a British HE institution do not necessarily persist throughout their time at the university. According to Wu (2015), Chinese students adapt to the different environment through adopting new practices that balance contradictions between their learning goal, ability and experience, and the demands of Western pedagogies. The study responds to the somewhat negative evaluations of much of the extant literature on Chinese students' performance in Western universities which homogenise the Chinese learner - the area my study counters through a subjectivist stance. The recommendation offered by Wu (2015) to address this issue, is the development of an intercultural education system where academic staff and students understand the influence of their culture, seeking criticality and sensitivity to the diversity of cultures during interaction and communication in their cross-cultural learning environment. My research will allow the participants to reflect on their current learning to establish whether

they consider their experiences on the pre-sessional course as intercultural, and whether the teaching approaches adopted demonstrate understanding of the potential influence cultural diversity may have on interaction, as recommended by Wu (2015).

2.2.5. Challenging a deficit view of NESB students

As subsidiary research question 2 investigates interaction practices on their pre-sessional course, is it significant to assess the higher education environment the participants are at the point of entering. This will allow an informed evaluation of whether the pre-sessional programmes adequately prepare Chinese international students for the interaction required in their postgraduate studies. Much of the extant literature presents a view of Chinese international students as NESB students facing widespread criticism concerning their English language use once at British universities. The review of this literature sets out to challenge the basis of these criticisms that essentialise Chinese international students by categorising individuals as one homogenous group who behave the same, and which does not account for diversity across individuals or how the wider contexts in which the criticisms were made, impact on the interaction practices of this group of learners. One such criticism, the 'English Language Problem' is defined as the dilemma universities face with large numbers of international students on their courses. Although it should be noted that the institution establishes the language proficiency entrance level, the literature focuses on NESB students whose proficiency level was accepted by the university but who appear to struggle with the course/programme content. Studies, such as Murray (2015, 2016), report that university lecturers are having to slow the pace of their prescribed syllabi and moderate their language to cater for international students with a lower language proficiency. There is also the publication of rumours regarding the lowering the standard of work for international students with lower English language proficiency levels (Times Higher Education (THE), 2018). These criticisms are not directed at all international students as the students targeted are from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) in a general sense, and Chinese international specifically, as the largest nation represented among the international students studying in Britain. In his publication, Murray (2016) offers an extensive critique of the effects of globalisation on the standard of English which he considers to be the common denominator of changes in higher education over the last 5 decades, largely due to the changing demographic of the student

population in British universities.

The 'English Language Problem' (Murray, 2015, p 29) is claimed to also affect the quality of higher education, seemingly leading to students' from English speaking backgrounds (ESB) frustration that the learning/teaching material is not sufficiently problematic or that the content has been diluted. Other studies echo the criticisms raised by Murray (2015) such as when ESB students are grouped with NESB students, problems occur with cultural disposition, lack of comprehension, reluctance of NESB students to participate and NESB students not having an adequate proficiency of language. These claims have been found in a number of studies examining international student acculturation. In their research into self-determining human agency and language proficiency, Sawir et al. (2012) acknowledge that oral communication may be weaker when international students start their programmes and they call for a regulated standard of English language proficiency for all degree programmes. However, Sawir et al. (2012) also conclude that for some technical subjects and disciplines, students can successfully pass a course based on their content knowledge. The same study claims that the English language proficiency expectation varies across the university teaching staff, as some teachers will credit progress in knowledge content and are not overly concerned with discrepancies in language expression. Moreover, while language related issues in the work of international students may be criticised, not all university teaching staff are trained to support students in improving in this area.

Andrade (2006) focuses on international student adjustment issues relating to language proficiency and states these issues also relate to culture. Andrade (2006) stressed that relationships with home students could be beneficial to international students even if this initial connection may be difficult to establish. Martins (2015) reports on challenges facing Chinese international students when moving from Eastern to Western universities as Chinese students favour knowledge based on reproducing the models presented by instructors. However, the students in this study accepted that they would need to adapt *their* approach to communication and learning. The conclusions were that the universities also (not only the students in question) needed to adapt their approach to the Chinese learners at their universities (Martins, 2015). The theme of the negative impact of the application of a thick

description of CHC cultural influence also emerges as the basis of problems concerning the transition from passive to active learning for postgraduate Chinese students at British universities (Liu, 2009) and adapting to the Western convention of critical thinking and argumentation (Durkin, 2008).

Once again, negative comments from the media (Paton, 2018; Swain, 2018) state NESB students do not always have the appropriate level of proficiency to pass the course or achieve first class degrees. These critics question how the student understood the course content when the same graduating student cannot manage communication (though, the point raised by Sawir et al. (2012) regarding more technical disciplines should be considered here). They claim the consequence is that a degree from an English-speaking country does not necessarily guarantee the English language proficiency of the graduate. In countries such as New Zealand and Australia, NESB graduates still need to take English proficiency exams to enter careers such as Nursing (Murray, 2016). The quandary appears to be where the ideological allegiances of the universities lie, whether it is maintaining the quality and equality of education for all students and demonstrating the NESB students, who in some cases bring the highest income, will receive language support that attracts even more of this group of students thereby generating more income to the university.

The high numbers of international students in UK higher education increases the necessity for English Language provision in the institutions to be regulated. Despite the level of competition for international students in the British higher education market, the level of English language competence cannot be compromised as failure to graduate or students graduating with a low level of English could prove counterproductive. It is not only the NESB students' risk of alienation from potential employers if the universities fail to address the issue of language competence and linguistic diversity in universities. However, those maintaining a deficit perspective still place the responsibility for any language related interaction issues not at the level of proficiency but as the cultural trait. This is exemplified by Murray's (2015, 2016) claims that English speaking background (ESB) students are becoming more and more dissatisfied with NESB students' inability to fully participate due to being products of collectivist-oriented, not individualist oriented backgrounds/cultures. However, as stated above, this narrow,

essentialist view does not take into account the diversification of CHC influence across geographical locations and across generations, or of the individuals it refers to (Park, 2011).

This issue of English language proficiency and NESB communication will now be discussed in more depth to respond to subsidiary research questions two and three. The main position is that the higher education institutions establish the proficiency score cut off for international students, so any discrepancy between the proficiency level of the international students and the English language level required for the degree programme lies in the hands of the H.E. institution. Calls for the tests used to determine whether a student has the level of English language competency for the purpose of higher education study to be regulated were a conclusion of The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education in the UK 2009 report. This report stated that unregulated tests posed a potential threat to all students, compromising the educational standards and negatively affecting all students. The recommendations were veracity of the tests; that the staff at the universities administering fully understood the test; and that they were not misused or misinterpreted in the face of competition for students by other universities. In 2016, the UK Visa and Immigration Agency - UKVI required B2 in all skill areas for visas to study at university in the UK - although this implies as these students have the required level to gain entrance into a UK higher education institution, they also have the level to manage tertiary level studies. However, the B2 language requirement is the minimum level of entry, and further language support and development will probably be required. While most universities have this language support facility in place, the 2012 Times Education Survey claimed there is substantial variance in the annual spends on language development for registered students. Those with NESB students with greater language support needs were spending as much as £903 per student annually while others spent less than a third of that amount £227 per student.

Although all of these students have achieved the proficiency level required to obtain a place on their course, it is less clear how these scores translate into experience of L2 English communicative competence necessary for successful engagement for the university programmes. I would question whether what is set as a requirement for acceptance onto a university course in Britain, reflects the true demands of the course (in terms of interaction

and L2 English communication required on a daily basis). Blommaert (2014) offers a micro level perspective on how people affect language, as opposed to a macro level analysis that tries to find explanations for the effects of language on people. This may allow a different perspective of this English language 'proficiency' issue, and the willingness or preparedness of NESB international students (Chinese students in the case of this present study) to engage and interact in English within the context of what being an international student means in today's society. This micro level approach would focus on how people affect language - where the use of English by international students at British universities could be more fairly represented in terms of a chronotropic sense. Here the type or amount of English used by specific groups of international students is influenced by the cultures and membership to these (and other macro social categories) within the British university context defined by the time space in which the language is in use. In my study, this will consider the changes in language use from that of a foreign language learner in China, to a second language learner on the pre-sessional course, to a potential second language student at the British university.

2.2.6. What do Chinese international students want from a British higher education experience, and why?

To examine subsidiary research 3 on the extent to which the pre-sessional programmes aid in the development of an L2 communicative repertoire, it is important to question whether this is in fact a learning objective of the Chinese international students choosing to do their postgraduate degrees in Britain (Page and Chahboun (2019). In examining the literature on Chinese international students at British universities, a number of factors have been held accountable for interaction difficulties this group of students may experience. However, the context of the internationalised environment raises the issue of whether developing L2 English interaction skills is something that these NESB students desire. Cebolla-Boado et al's (2018) study involving a data set generated from 120 British universities, informs on why the Chinese international student participants choose to study at British universities. The study refers to a human capital perspective where attendance at a desirable university is in order to improve opportunities in the workforce. This is supported by Xiang and Shen (2009) who have hailed international student migration as the most prominent social change aspect in China in the last

30 years. It also presents the perspective where attendance to a British university is designed to accumulate cultural capital that distinguishes the individual from others thus creating interest and a uniqueness. An overseas education is now common practice for more and more families (Cebolla-Boado et al, 2018). The conclusions of the Cebolla-Boado et al (2018) study found that due to the increased popularity of an overseas education, master's students considered the prestige and ranking of the British university most important. Although the rankings usually come from newspaper publications, such as the Times Educational Supplement or The Guardian, or the Shanghai academic ranking of the world's universities, the study found the main source of information about the press released university ranking came from contact with existing or past students who had studied in the UK. Therefore, it was the recommendations and suggestions from current or former Chinese international students that also raised the prestige and reputation of the British university. What also needs to be taken into consideration is the growing number of Chinese who have graduated in the UK and have returned to China are also part of this advisory group.

The cultural experience of living in the UK also influences the British university choice of Chinese international students (Cebolla-Boado et al, 2018) was echoed in the conclusion from an earlier study conducted with 188 Chinese students studying at a university in the UK (Counsell, 2011). The main conclusion from this study was that the Chinese international student participants' decision to study in the UK was for a perceived higher quality of education and to develop a foreign language skill. Most of the participants felt that a prolonged period living and studying in the UK would improve their career prospects, with a majority having the opinion that Chinese employers would consider a degree from the UK more favourably than one from China. This 2011 study also correctly predicted that UK universities would grow more dependent on the income from its overseas students.

While the Counsell (2011) study agreed with Cebolla-Boado et al (2018) regarding the first two reasons why Chinese international students choose British universities, the third highest reason was a shorter time duration of degree programmes. Yet, the student participants of the Counsell (2011) study also claimed the Chinese employers valued the longer time required to attain a Chinese degree over that of the shorter British degree. However, it would appear that

the duration of the university degree was further down the employers' priority list. In terms of British higher education, the four main reasons given as to why a Chinese employer might value a UK degree were: that the UK universities had more focus on skills and practice over the Chinese university focus on theory; with the increase in foreign business in China, employers required staff with a good level of English; study abroad would demonstrate the potential employees' independence and self-sufficiency; and a graduate from the UK would have cross-cultural experience. To establish whether the special status afforded to being a UK graduate is diminishing (Counsell, 2011), this area of investigation will be discussed with the participants of my study. The UK Government figures on student visas granted in 2018 and 2019 show a 20% increase in student visas granted to Chinese nationals brought the 2019 figure to just under 120,000 which is approximately four times that of visas for Indian nationals.

| Nationality | Year ending September 2018 | Year ending September 2019 | Change | Percentage change |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| China | 98,804 | 119,697 | +20,893 | +21% |
| India | 18,730 | 30,550 | +11,820 | +63% |
| United States | 14,888 | 14,987 | +99 | +1% |
| Saudi Arabia | 8,135 | 9,123 | +988 | +12% |
| Hong Kong | 9,203 | 9,095 | -108 | -1% |
| Other nationalities ² | 89,619 | 93,437 | +3,818 | +4% |
| Total | 239,379 | 276,889 | +37,510 | +16% |

Figure 2: Top 5¹ nationalities granted Sponsored study (Tier 4) visas. National Statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2019/why-do-people-come-to-the-uk-to-study#immigration-for-study>. Accessed on 23/06/2020

Whatever the reasons for choosing a British higher education, Bamber (2013) points out; the adoption of Western methods may only serve Chinese international students while they are in their British universities. Without continuing studies or research, or without employment that guarantees a salary of £25000, non-EU international students will have difficulties remaining in the UK so are likely to return to their home countries. This is under the presumption that international students wish to continue living in the UK as having spent the time to complete a

degree in an English-speaking country may be sufficient. A reasonable level of English language proficiency and computer literacy can provide a place in the middle-class elite groups on social network internet sites in China (Dong and Blommaert, 2016). The time spent in the UK and the symbolic prestige of English, to whatever extent the Chinese international students in the study are able to interact and engage, could carry enough emblematic significance for 'transnational (social) mobility and success' (Blommaert, 2012, p63). The narratives will reveal whether this is the case for the Chinese international students in this study. This is in terms of how the participants use their time while studying in Britain and whether it is a question of solely focusing on completing the academic work necessary to secure the degree qualification, or whether it is to also gain experience of living in a different country and developing interaction skills in English.

2.3. The conceptualisation of language

The previous section on Chinese international students at British universities was dominated by studies that centred on the difficulties experienced by this demographic. This was largely due to the application of a thick description of the influence of culture on those who are from CHC learning contexts, which was considered the cause of problems concerning interaction and intergroup contact. Cultural differences are apparent across many individuals in the internationalised higher education context, even those who are considered as belonging to the same language group or nation. Therefore, the issue of interaction among Chinese international students on the pre-sessional programmes, and the wider student body may be as much related to language conceptualization as it is to cultural influence. As the tool of interaction, the next section will focus on the impact of language in the internationalisation of higher education.

At the root of my research is the impact learning English as a foreign language has had on the participants' higher education experience, and continuing English language development is what has brought the participants to study on a pre-sessional course in Britain. Successfully passing the language requirements of the pre-sessional course will be the deciding factor as to whether the participants can proceed directly onto their postgraduate programmes or start the pre-master's programmes to join the university once these have been completed.

Therefore, English language learning is viewed as the denominating factor in the participants' higher education experience. However, my position is that learning English to pass an exam for academic progression is distinct to learning English for academic purposes, such as the type of English language learning the participants experience on their pre-session programmes. This also differs from the function of English when the participants have started their postgraduate programmes, where the English language instruction will be replaced with content learning in English. This will require the participants to reconstruct their conceptualisation of English from the perspective of English as another academic subject to learn, to English as a mode of communication and the language for interaction and communication (see 2.3.1). The literature reviewed in the next section will provide an analysis of how English has been conceptualised to present a rationale for the interaction practices of the participants. This will involve a discussion of how language is a commodity in globalisation, which acts as a key feature in the internationalisation in higher education, and the impact this has had on the interaction practices of the participants in China and in Britain on their pre-session programmes. This analysis may help interpret data from the participants on their use of language in this context and any development of an L2 English communicative repertoire necessary for successful interaction in English during and after the pre-session programmes.

2.3.1. The objectification of English language teaching and learning

The Western approach to language teaching takes a generally positivistic view of language as an abstract entity like mathematics or science, which can lead to a misunderstanding of the nature of language and to its subsequent objectification (Reagan, 2004). This issue with objectifying language is the acceptance of a technicist view of teaching and learning languages. If we take the English language as an example, despite being viewed as a fixed and static entity, codified and objectified, it has historically evolved over time from Old English to Middle English to Modern English. Yet, the demarcation or codification of the types did not stop one generation from understanding the next due to the continuity of English language use throughout the communities and across generations. This brings into question the viability of the objectification of the language. For the participants of my research, the English language as a taught exam subject may be interpreted in this technicist way. Reagan (2004) also considers

the atheoretical use of the term 'language'. This refers to how languages develop and evolve across social classes and between individuals who may share the same geographical space. Within the confines of a pre-sessional programme because of the limited contact with other language communities, Chinese international students may have little exposure to this English language diversity until they start their degree programme and may continue to view language as an abstract, objectified construct and not as the means for non-task related communication and interaction.

2.3.2 Linguistic Unification

According to Fairclough (1989), the connotation people draw with British Standard English is to the territory, and the proliferation of a standardised English language into all aspects of public life to show the level of achievements or gains of that standardisation. This conceptualisation of language is also seen by China's adoption of Mandarin Chinese / Putonghua as the official and standardised language of the public domain. At this time, China as a nation-state would need to unify linguistically to emerge from its historical, political, cultural and social isolation to increase its economic status in the world arena. Language would facilitate this move. Although Ji (2018) argues that this linguistic unification was an attempt to exert social control through linguistically engineering language to control what could be expressed and to achieve societal conformity.

These power relations also appear in the language classroom with the teacher holding the position of authority as the language expert and due to the objectification of language, a technician approach focusing solely on the correctness of grammar and vocabulary is adopted. This may inadvertently promote less interaction in the classroom as errors in production may be interpreted as not conforming to the expected behaviour or language proficiency level. With academic English for university study the focus on the preparatory course, this also lends less time to develop social language skills necessary to formulate the L2 communicative repertoire necessary to interact and engage whilst on the postgraduate degree courses. The linguistic engineering of appropriate language to use, coupled with the demographic of the

preparatory course may create an environment limiting an awareness of social and functional language which will be needed once the participants start their university courses.

2.3.3. Institutionalisation of language

Further exploration on how language is currently viewed is the notion that 'language' was invented largely as a part of colonisation, being particularly apparent when the language itself, (like English) is conceptualised as an institution. The institutionalisation of language has powerful effects on society in terms of identity, geographical location, policy creation and education. The approach to language as an invention could be understood within the context of political power agendas. One example of this is the adoption and adaptation of Mandarin Chinese or Hanyu as the official written form and Putonghua as its official spoken language for the People's Republic of China in the late 1950's. The 'invention' of an official language presented a modern China, and the replacing of Russian with English as the official foreign language taught in schools emerging with the Sino-Soviet chasm and the Cultural revolution between 1966 and 1976 (Lam and Wang in Rubdy and Tan, 2008) could be viewed as a manoeuvre towards the institutionalisation of language. As well as language symbolising the presence of a nation-state, it also inextricably entwined to society, with both co-dependent on each other. Fairclough (1989) argues that even when the individual is separated from the society, their language use will still be subject to its social convention. This may be applicable to language use for the Chinese international students on the pre-session programmes as the dominant nationality on these courses. Use of Mandarin Chinese among the students could be a method to unify the diverse ethnic groups and regional languages represented.

2.3.4. Language as a commodity - Language policy reform in China

Lam and Wang (Rubdy and Tan, 2008); claim the value of English language teaching in China was a means to advance China's economic progress and diplomatic profile from the late 1950's. This included a much more vigorous approach to English language training in primary, secondary and university education. The implicit trilingual (Putonghua/Hanyu, the minority language and English) and the bilingual (Putonghua/Hanyu and English) model was explicitly supported by The Law on Language Use of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Guojia Tongyong Yuyan Wenzhi Fa*) announced on the 31 October 2000 and effective

from 1 January 2001. This resulted in the 'strong' recommendation of compulsory English Language teaching from primary three to both Han Chinese and minority groups. According to Ji (2004), the propagation of English language teaching was not to develop intercultural communication skills with foreigners, which may account for some of the interaction difficulties experienced by Chinese international students and their peers in British universities. The argument presented by Ji (2004) is that discourse, vocabulary and grammar were categorised in such a way as to politicise learning and present the one-dimensional perspective of Maoism. Language that would function to present anything other than this perspective was not taught.

The expansion of Chinese universities after the Cultural Revolution resulted in an increase of approximately 30% of university students in China with a similar percentage remaining unemployed once they had finished university. Further statistics from the UK HE Statistics Agency reveal the UK hosted 89,540 Chinese international students in the academic year 2014/2015 that increased 34% over the five-year period to 2018/2019 to 120,385. These statistics reflect the value of English language teaching and learning, and the potential impact on future study or careers. Due to this trend on overseas education, the significance of international university ranking increased as the number of Chinese international student numbers grew. It then became increasingly important to obtain a degree not just from any foreign university but from a prestigious foreign university. According to Xiang and Shen (2009), this was a common occurrence from the 2000's. English language skills could now possibly be the gateway to a place at a prestigious foreign university. Whether this has subsequently impacted on English language use will be investigated in this thesis. This research aims to better understand how language and interaction have been conceptualised by the participants.

2.4 The appropriacy of English language teaching methods

In order to address the overarching research question of how internationalisation has impacted the interaction practices of the pre-sessional students in this study, an examination of the English language teaching methods employed for tertiary level education is required. This will inform on the types of interaction in English the participants have experienced during

their pre-sessional classes. This in turn will inform the research questions that discuss the extent the internationalisation of higher education has impacted on this interaction and any impact this has had on interaction outside the class. Subsidiary research question 2 focuses on the current interaction practices of the pre-sessional students in this study and subsidiary research 3, on how the pre-sessional programmes aid in the development of an L2 communicative repertoire. To respond to both of these questions, it is important to contextualise the learning experiences of the participants during their pre-sessional course.

The analysis of how language has been conceptualised in the previous section provides some context to possible attitudes towards language use and development. English language use may be defined by whether the pre-sessional student adopts a technicist perspective that may be considered abstract in the sense that the students are learning academic language in a classroom environment, and not the extra-linguistic features required for successful interaction in the internationalised higher education environment. However, outside of the classroom, interaction on the pre-sessional programme may be in Putonghua as it acts as a form of linguistic unification between the diverse ethnic and regional language groups represented in the Chinese international student cohort. This could also be the result of the institutionalisation of language and English language teaching in China. Emphasis on interaction may not have been the focus of English language teaching in China, as language policy placed emphasis on English as a gateway to higher education and the globalised world arena and not necessarily on English as a means to interact with 'foreigners' (Xiang and Shen, 2009).

The next section moves to analyse the approaches to English language teaching for the higher education context. This includes the CLT approach and EAP method adopted on the participants' pre-sessional programmes. The purpose of which is to investigate the appropriateness of the approaches to English language development in promoting L2 English interaction skills for use during and after the pre-sessional programmes and for the types of interaction required for postgraduate study in Britain.

2.4.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

There has been significant development in teaching strategies over the decades (Wong and Nunan, 2011), with growth in the role of English geared towards tertiary level international students either as the language of instruction - English Medium Instruction (EMI)⁵, or as a skill development - English for Academic Purposes (EAP)⁶ or English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)⁷. However, there is an argument that the dominance of the Communicative Approach (CLT) to language teaching that underlies these methods, has resulted in a pedagogy that does not place significant importance to cultural context. Born out of the shortcomings of the Grammar-translation approach and the Direct-method approach, CLT is accepted by many within the English language teaching profession as the best approach to second language teaching. Bax (2003), who refers to a CLT attitude where any teaching strategy other than heavy emphasis on oral communication is seen as 'backward', states that this approach is now having a negative effect and should be replaced with a more context driven methodology. Such an approach would take aspects such as the learners' attitudes and cultural expectations into account.

Demands for a revision of the language teaching approaches applied to second language learning is not a new phenomenon. Over twenty-five years ago, Ellis (1996) questioned whether the communicative approach, which is considered a Western language-teaching approach, could be successfully transferred to learners from Far East Asian cultures. Ellis (1996) reports on 'culturally embedded teaching practices' (Ellis, 1996, p213) which attempt to sensitise the creation of new knowledge into the existing beliefs and values of the learners. This practice minimises the gap between the current levels of performance and the intended learning outcome, thus decreasing the frustrations of the learners' production of language. For example, the communicative approach focuses on the processes involved in language production rather than the accuracy of the language produced. However, this approach to language learning may pose as conflicting to the high value exam-driven technicist form of teaching of English to which the participants may be accustomed. Language learning that

⁵ English Medium Instruction (EMI)

⁶ English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

⁷ English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)

values the observance of rituals, like the mastery of linguistic forms such as Chinese ideographs, represents a completely new concept of learning. These differences in 'meaning systems' may affect the cross-cultural transferability of the teaching methodology (Ellis, 1996).

Although English Medium Instruction (EMI) is considered a more context-driven approach to language teaching as it offers a different means to content and language teaching in tertiary level studies, this is not adopted on the pre-sessional programmes as these programmes offer more generic language instruction which can be applicable to multiple disciplines and subject areas (see 2.4.3). In what may be described as a direct response to internationalisation of higher education, there has been an increase in universities offering English Medium Instruction (EMI) courses and programmes (Dafouz and Smit, 2016). However, Jiang et al (2019) claim that the quality of teaching and learning achievements in EMI and ESP university programmes in China have been negatively impacted due to the low English language proficiency of the teachers. The teachers in the Jiang et al (2019) study admitted that their degree of confidence in presenting the basic content is higher than their confidence to use the target language to engage in dialogue with students. In addition to this, the teacher-led lecture style of teaching does not lend itself to promoting interaction between teachers and students, or between students.

2.4.2 Approaches to English language teaching on pre-sessional programmes at TUoS

The participants would have been introduced to CLT on their pre-sessional programme, where there would be continued emphasis to communicate solely in English. This would also be combined with an EAP approach as the course content is designed to prepare its students for demands of postgraduate education in Britain (see 2.4.3). The desired outcome of this combination would be for the students to develop the confidence and proficiency to communicate high-level cognitive skills or critical thinking. This would be in addition to learning specific academic conventions, in terms of the essay structure, presentation skills and seminar skills.

One criticism of the CLT approach is that a lack of culturally embedded teaching practices in this context, results in the participants possibly not willing to communicate for fear of making mistakes and to save face (Robson, 2015), just as the students participating in EMI studies in China. Like EMI, CLT on the preparatory courses may benefit from conceptualisation in the form of the framework proposed by Dafouz and Smit (2016), in order to incorporate guidance on the absent cultural teaching and learning practises necessary for its successful application into an internationalised higher education context. The data generated in my study should provide information on how far the current CLT approach successfully prepares the participants for British university. This takes into consideration both the criticisms of the lack of cultural context in CLT teaching (Ellis, 1996; Bax, 2003) and as stated by Dafouz and Smit (2016), that globalisation in higher education has resulted in the organic development of the university as a consequential multilingual environment.

2.4.3 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

Flowerdew (in Hyland et al., 2019) describes English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as a generic programme that caters for the growing numbers of international students applying to British universities. The role of the EAP teacher on these programmes is to equip the student with the necessary linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), by means of familiarising the student with the communicative conventions required by the target discourse community (Hyland, 2018). For this reason, it may be considered more context-driven than the traditional CLT approach, with 'higher education' presented as the context in which the language will be used. This involves the critical analysis of authentic academic texts to provide genre models of what the students will use in their academic departments (Hyland and Shaw, 2016). Whereas the speaking and interaction components of EAP programmes usually centre on presentation skills and seminar participation (Fielder, 2011), with a focus on the functional language to ask and answer questions or to ask for clarification (Jordan, 1997).

Although Hyland and Jiang's (2021) corpus-based study of 12,600 EAP-related articles covers over forty years of EAP research, and while there has been an increase in research on interaction on EAP programmes, academic writing is still the main focus. The same conclusion

was drawn almost 20 years prior by Basturkmen (2003) in that the use of spoken language in EAP has not received the same degree of attention as other areas of language use, and by Robinson et al (2001) who also claim there is little research on EAP speaking skills development. This is particularly significant as dialogic interaction is a key skill, particularly at postgraduate level (Basturkmen in Hyland and Shaw, 2016). The lack of attention has led to recent calls for more attention to be directed to EAP research investigating classroom methodology and practical pedagogical, especially concerning the transfer of teaching pedagogy from EFL to EAP contexts (Bell, 2022). This further exemplifies the significance and contribution of my research on pre-sessional students' interaction practices. This study will be an addition to the growing body of research on interaction on EAP programmes, and could inform future pedagogies, as it will represent the analysis of the learning needs of students within this higher education context.

2.5. The effectiveness of pre-sessionals in the development of a L2 communicative repertoire

The previous section discussed the possible shortcomings of the approaches to English language teaching in higher education institutions in their application of CLT, EMI and EAP. It also examined the continued emphasis on CLT. This final section of the review examines what role interaction plays in language development on the pre-sessional programmes. As stated in chapter 1, there is limited research that focuses on interaction practices of pre-sessional students and my research intends to contribute to this growing body of literature. Of the research that centres on pre-sessional programmes, only 69 out of just over 1100 studies looked specifically at Chinese international students in Britain. The focus of these studies were language proficiency and academic progression, and acculturation to British higher education. 16 of these studies mentioned interaction practices, although, none of which specifically examined the potential impact of internationalisation on English interaction practices. This study is unique in that it examines how the participants' past learning experiences have impacted on current interaction practices, which have all occurred within (and may have been directly influenced by) the context of internationalisation. A review of this literature will inform my study on the current research examining the nature and effectiveness of British pre-

sessional programmes for Chinese international students, and provide perspectives on approaches taken to improve interaction in English (subsidiary research question three).

2.5.1. The intended purpose of pre sessional programmes

To assess the value placed on communication and interaction in preparing for tertiary level study at British universities, it is important to examine the learning and teaching objectives of the pre-sessional programmes. These programmes are aimed at international students who, largely due to a language proficiency deficit, were unable to gain direct access to postgraduate degree programmes at their British university of choice. While the one objective of the pre-sessional programmes is to increase language proficiency in the four skill areas (reading, writing, speaking and listening) to meet the language conditions for entry on to the postgraduate programmes, focus has also been placed on developing the academic skills these students will need as postgraduate students at the university. The review of these studies will focus on the extent to which developing L2 English interaction skills is considered in the learning and teaching objectives of pre-sessional programmes.

2.5.2.1. Objectives of pre-sessional programmes

Whether developing L2 English interaction skills features as part of addressing this deficit is difficult to decipher as studies that focus on this objective are limited. Of the studies that directly focus on language deficit, a critical review by Pearson (2020a) looks at the English proficiency cut-off scores and the relationship between the scores and the pre-sessional courses' programmes. The main findings of the study were universities set a minimum proficiency score in order to be able to compete against the number of available pre-sessional courses places; most of the pre-sessional courses provided bridging programmes which were less linguistically challenging; pre-sessionals are employed to address minor deficits for prospective students and offer range of bespoke assessment, which can enable high progression rates onto university programmes; only a small number of universities not providing pre-sessional programmes had courses to orient students who were linguistically ready to join their university programme. The implication of these findings is that while universities may set a lower proficiency score, the pre-sessional programmes needed to

compensate for this by adjusting the linguistic competency for the students on these programmes. This could result in future communication difficulties for these students, as they have not had experience of the level of linguistic competency required once they start on their degree programmes. A paper based on the same study (Pearson, 2002b) highlights the students' suggestions for improving pre-sessional programmes by including more opportunities to integrate. Thus, providing justification to claims that developing communication skills and L2 communicative/linguistic competence is an area in which pre-sessional programmes may fall short.

2.5.2.2. Learning transfer from pre-sessional to degree programmes

Research on pre-sessional programmes has focused on the extent to which these programmes prepare international students for degree programmes. However, no study includes L2 English interaction or communicative competence as a key aspect in this preparation. Pearson's (ibid) mixed approach critical review on pre-sessional research divided studies into two main categories: learning transfer from the pre-sessional programme to the degree programmes and how the students from the pre-sessional acclimated to international study. The main findings were that the quantitative aspect of the review found that while pre-sessional programmes allowed international students to better their academic skills, the improvements made were unremarkable. These students were still likely to take longer to complete their degree programmes, require extensions or resubmissions, fail due to late submissions, or receive lower grades. The qualitative aspects findings were that while the students' perspective of the pre-sessional programme was generally positive, there were still calls for improvements such as the streaming of classes and more contact with British locals on the social aspects of the course. It also highlighted the limited amount of research on longer PSP or foundation courses, and that at the time of publication there were no studies on courses above 20 weeks. While Pearson (2020b) did not explicitly correlate contact with the wider community to effectiveness of the pre-sessional programme, the research subjects placed importance on intercultural communication. Culture, whether as a significant aspect to be included in a pre-sessional programme or obstacle in the successful transition into British university life, is also a theme raised in other studies (Lamie and Issitt, 2005; Bond, 2019; Wu and Hammond, 2011).

2.5.2.3. Pre-sessional acclimation to international study

One possible cause for the lack of attention paid to the importance of L2 English interaction for international students on pre-sessional programmes in pre-sessional research is this tendency to focus on either academic skills development or acculturation. Research has centred on writing skills (Cho, 2011; Issitt, 2017; Mazgutova and Kormos, 2015; Wilby, 2019; Green, 2006; Lim, 2020) which, given the nature of assessments at tertiary level study, is understandable as essay and dissertation writing are the traditional modes of summative assessments. Less focus is placed on speaking and interaction in L2 English. Studies which dealt with speaking usually focus on interaction or lack of interaction outside of the pre-sessional classroom (Copland and Garton, 2011; Skinner, 2010; Jarvis and Stakounis, 2010). This use of English was investigated when assessing pre-sessional students' acclimation to international study at a British university. Wu and Hammond (2011) reported that their participants, who had completed 5 or 10 week pre-sessional courses prior to starting their master's programmes, found everyday English language use challenging in the first term of their master's study. This was because it was more varied than what was experienced on the pre-sessional. Their study also revealed that most social interaction occurred in accommodation between those participants who had shared housing with other international students. While this provided academic and language support, language and culture differences were factors that had a negative impact on the adjustment to study in Britain. The international students in the study felt that they had to initiate contact with home students. With the exception of sharing accommodation and structured social or academic occurrences, they stated there was little to no interaction with home students. The participants found that being in a multilingual accommodation environment was largely a question of chance and their experience may have been very different if the accommodation had been different.

The experiences of the participants in the Wu and Hammond (2011) study indicate that the pre-sessional programmes may have fallen short in preparing the international students for initial interaction in English on their degree programmes. This may be due to the lack of interaction practice with home or ESB international students during the pre-sessional course, as these programmes are designed for students seeking to improve their English language

proficiency. As these courses take place before the start of degree programmes, university or shared accommodation is likely to be housed by other international students on pre-sessional programmes to improve their English. To address this, Lamie and Issitt (2005) state that the responsibility for this cultural component to adjusting to university study in Britain should extend beyond the pre-sessional programme. It is their view that higher education institutions should be more sensitive to international students' needs in order to provide a more rewarding experience. The recommendations are of an on-going needs analysis framework for curricular development, which includes this cultural aspect to the courses.

It is suggested that it may be the responsibility of the university to engage in appropriate 'cultural issues' (Lamie and Issitt, 2005, p122). One such example was a call for emphasis on the importance of the relationship between academic and teaching aspects and the administrative and pastoral functions of the university (Lamie and Issitt, 2005). Although the interrelated function of the English language centre for the course provision and the university for the infrastructure is established, it is difficult to maintain during the summer period when the pre-sessional course occurs. Suggestions are for a Summer course liaison officer to manage student concerns of more pragmatic nature, such as banking support, Asian food outlet information, to name but a few of ways in which pre-sessional students are supported in the transition to British university study. However, the challenging issue of communication and interaction with home and ESB students has not been addressed in their recommendations. The NESB students after their pre-sessional programmes will still not have experience, training or support in interacting with their home and ESB peers, as the programmes do not include this cultural aspect in preparation for higher education study in Britain.

2.5.2.4. Transition into higher education

As stated above, pre-sessional programmes accommodate the transition from home to UK universities with the development of language knowledge along with training in academic cultures and discourses. Although the financial, academic, social and cultural gains of internationalisation may have been acknowledged and publicised by universities, Bond (2019) refers to the ethical and moral obligation to recognise and address the issues arising from the

transition to the UK universities. This transition goes beyond a change of country or language of instruction and involves the shifting and intersection of the identities of international students. These identities move from a fixed or possibly established identity as a student in their home country to a representative of their home country, ethnicity and/or religion in the host country; as a language learner; as a scholar within their discipline and as an 'international' student when this transition to British university has been made.

In her study on the shifting and intersecting identities of international taught postgraduate students' transition from their home countries to British higher education, Bond (2019) presents a pedagogical intervention on a pre-session course that asks the participants to reflect on their changing identities. Bond (2019) reports of the 'liminal' linguistic spaces (Bond, 2019, p 651) experienced by international students who need to surpass the barriers of their L2 English language knowledge and the barriers of knowledge of the different academic culture and discourse of higher education in Britain. As the student moves through this liminal space, there is a shift in identity from first language speaker in their home country to second language student to international student. This shift is dynamic in the sense that an individual may change or shift identity in different social contexts. How individuals perceive themselves will in turn impact on how successful interaction, involvement and engagement is in the given context.

The main findings from this study were that the participants' reflections from the intervention revealed three problematic features: language, academic knowledge and culture. The participants viewed themselves from a nationality/cultural identity perspective, and language issues led to a decrease in self-confidence that led students to revert to other identities and the associated behaviour. For example, a NESB international student who is having difficulty following a particular lesson lapsing into translating into their L1 as they feel their lack of understanding must be a language rather than a conceptual issue. Thus, this student is regressing from the status of an international student into their previous identity as a language learner. The recommendation of this research is that pre-session courses should have pedagogical interventions, involving the self-reflection of changing and emerging identities, to connect the NESB international students' new approach to language development with their

academic discipline. However, how far this equips international students for the environment they will find themselves in once they have started their courses remains unclear. Whilst the participants have been encouraged to be aware of their shifting identity, this pedagogical approach does not include strategies of how this awareness will better facilitate the transition into an internationalised university setting. There is no mention or acknowledgement that moving to this internationalised setting will be a transition for all students. Therefore, as with much of the extant literature, the responsibility to adapt or transition is placed on the NESB student adapting to the British university and not the environment or institution adapting to accommodate the internationalisation of higher education.

2.5.2.5. Hybridisation versus Acculturation

A study, which could be considered distinct from other pre-sessional research as the language aspect of the research is based on interaction, is Burnapp's (2006) research on supporting the transition of pre-sessional students into British higher education. It questions whether 'acculturation' and the U curve theories can be applied to international students on pre-sessional courses. The study applies phenomenological geography focusing on 'space, place, placelessness and identity- that draws parallels with my study's three dimensional narrative inquiry space. The course designed as part of Burnapp's action research project was a response to requests for language support for international students. However, on diagnostic analysis, it was found that while there were issues with 'linguistic difficulties', there was 'a genuine confusion about the value, purpose, and forms of the expected, accepted, and respected behaviours in this setting' (Burnapp, 2006, p2). The language objective in Burnapp's (2006) study was to support international students not just on how to effectively interact and communicate on their university programmes but also on the purpose of interaction and communication in the higher education context.

In addition to the more traditional didactic and reproductive approach of 'how' language is used on tertiary level programmes, Burnapp's (2006) action research analyses epistemological assumptions in order to develop teaching and learning resources which informs the students of approaches to knowledge creation expected in the tertiary level institution. The example

offered was that of teaching seminar discussions. The course would also focus on examining the purpose of seminars as a learning tool in the social construction of knowledge as well as the language required to manage an academic discussion, organise ideas, and demonstrate critical thinking, for example. Approaches taken from intercultural training (Landis et al, 2004), Kolb's (1984) learning styles and Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning objectives were employed in the design of the teaching and learning resources for this course.

There were three main findings from the study. Firstly, there is more than one method or trajectory to support international students' transition into British higher education but pre-sessional courses should focus their aims more on the hybridisation or creation of a new/third space between the students' previous learning style and techniques and what will be expected once they start their university programmes in Britain. Complete acculturation into British or Western higher education may not be achievable as the international students have their past learning experiences which will impact on how and how long it takes to adapt to their new environment. This is more likely to occur as the student gains experience of the learning and teaching styles and approaches in the host countries. This theme of past learning experiences impacting on current and future learning directly corresponds to my first subsidiary research question - How did events which preceded the study abroad programme impact on 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' current interaction practises and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

The second finding was with the recognition of 'hybridisation' rather than 'complete acculturation' being preferential, intermittent interventions would be necessary as adapting to the new learning environment is a phenomenon which will occur over time. Therefore, the input from more experienced international students, and EAP programmes not solely focusing on 'teaching the methods' of the host environment but also consideration given to creating strategies for the newer international students would incorporate the previous learning experience. Thus, creating a third space that is neither the home nor the host countries' learning approach. The third finding recommended that universities move away from the focus of acculturating the learning styles and approaches of their international students to fit into

the host country, and move towards promoting cultural synergy and recognition of the positive and productive aspects of learning and knowledge transfer of other cultures.

The question Burnapp's research raises is whether this hybridisation or creation of a third space will function if only the NESB students in the institution have exposure to this training. Without training for all who share this internationalised setting, there is no real 'third space' but more of a transitional space for the NESB international students between their host and the home learning cultures. This also raises the question of whether adapting to an internationalised higher education environment is the sole responsibility for NESB students if as the research states problems were not only linguistic difficulties.

2.6 Literature review summary

As my study on pre-sessional programmes is a complex topic with a number of interconnected themes, the literature in this review was drawn from more than one research area. The above review considered the following topics: internationalisation in higher education and L2 English interaction, Chinese international students at British universities, conceptualisation of language, problematisation of the 'English Language Problem' in British higher education, and finally the effectiveness of pre-sessionals in the development of a L2 communicative repertoire. As the nature of the pre-sessional course is to prepare NESB international students for university courses, any study looking at the effectiveness of these programmes had to examine this higher education setting. The presence of Chinese international students in this environment represents part of this larger social reality, which is the internationalisation of higher education. Therefore, the review sought to establish how current research has approached analysis of Chinese international student experiences.

With language as the reason for and the focal point of pre-sessional courses (as they are directed at NESB international students), this area must also come under scrutiny as second language development is a core aspect of any internationalised higher education context. Second language research is prolific. Therefore, the criteria for inclusion into this review was the teaching and learning of L2 English interaction skills for Chinese international students hoping to gain entry into British universities. To allow for a deeper understanding of both the

intrapersonal and interpersonal motives for interaction when analysing the data, it was imperative to first conceptualise language development and use, for this group of students. Even though language development for interaction and communicative competence may be considered a prerequisite for success at university for this group of international students, there are few studies that investigate this experience. My research aims to address this lacuna with its focus on the extent to which pre-sessional course adequately prepare students for interaction in this environment.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framing

The chapter provides a description of the theoretical framework underpinning this research. It will demonstrate how the choice of narrative analysis is best suited to challenge existing assumptions that essentialise Chinese international students. Firstly, the chapter will discuss how the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space theoretical framework supports this choice. It will then include a synthesis of the core elements from different conceptual frameworks in previous narrative inquiry approaches, and their applicability to this research.

3.1 How the literature informed this theoretical framework

My 14 years' experience of teaching Chinese international students in a higher education context, and assumptions grounded in a review of the literature on this research topic at the beginning of this project formed the basis of the research questions of this study. To address the overarching research question - How has the 'internationalisation' of higher education influenced 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' L2 interaction, and development of a L2 communicative repertoire - I needed to know why pre-sessional English language students were using their L1 to communicate with each other. Secondly, I questioned whether there were other socio-cultural factors negatively affecting interaction in L2 English. I was also concerned whether these factors would impact L2 interaction skills for future studies. This led to my third assumption of how important developing L2 interaction skills was for their future studies and career goals. To problematize these assumptions, the literature review examined the educational contexts of the participants to better locate an analysis of their relationship with English language learning. The undercurrent throughout the literature was educational experiences permeated the dimensions of time, place and interaction for the participants. Therefore, an appropriate theoretical framework would need to examine this three-dimensional relationship.

3.2 Three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000)

The themes in the literature reviewed are internationalisation in higher education and L2 English interaction, Chinese international students at British universities, conceptualisation of language, problematisation of the 'English Language Problem' in British higher education, and

finally the effectiveness of pre-sessionals in the development of a L2 communicative repertoire. To generate and analyse the data which presents and discusses the participants' experiences on these interrelated themes, an appropriate educational theory-based framework is required. In developing their three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) present the dimensions of interaction, continuity and situation that are figuratively adapted from concepts in the Deweyan educational theories of experience and interaction.

3.2.1. Dewey's education theory of experience and the experience continuum

John Dewey (1859-1952), as a preeminent authority in education, wrote extensively on the nature of experience. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Dewey transformed the term 'experience' into an inquiry term to better understand education. Dewey's education theory of experience involves both personal and social interaction that represents the first dimension of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. He theorised that as a result of this interaction, individuals and their experiences needed to be understood within a social context, this context represents the second dimension of place. Dewey's (1938) criterion of experience is continuity, that is, experiences develop out of other experiences forming an experience continuum. Education is viewed from the perspective of an experience continuum with past education or learning influencing current and future learning, thus adding the third dimension of temporality.

Education as an experience continuum is dynamic because the experience or learning is constantly changing and developing, as the individual's position on the continuum will be in flux with the accumulation of more experiences. This also depends on where the individual is positioning themselves on the continuum - from the standpoint of an imagined past or an imagined future. As well as this personal context, there is also the social context of the learning experience. Therefore, the interpersonal contact with others during each learning experience, as the individual's position fluctuates along the temporal continuum, will also have an impact. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) make reference to learning experiences as the 'environment', and 'place' as the position along the experience continuum. This is later developed into the

third dimension that refers to 'specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p51).

At the core of Dewey's (1938) philosophy on education was the belief of 'an organic connection between education and personal experience' (Dewey, 1938, p12). With the basis of this theory being that 'education is a development within, by and for experience' (Dewey, 1938, p17), and understanding the interaction of the personal and social in a context will conceptualise an experience. Influenced by this Deweyan belief, this research further adapts the three dimensions representing the experience continuum (temporality, personal and social interaction, and place) to investigate past, present and future learning as one dimension of the participants' L2 interaction experience; past, present and future L2 interaction as another dimension; and how these two dimensions affect or impact experiences in the third dimension of their physical environments (as high school, undergraduate university students in China, and now as pre-sessional students in Britain).

As stated, an individual could be positioned anywhere along the experience continuum - 'an imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future - with each point having a past experiential base and leading to an experiential future' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p2). Therefore, past experiences would impact current situations and future experiences would develop from current situations and experiences from the past. The focus of the research question concerns the participants 'imagined now' - 'imagined' as it is from the subjective perspective of their experiences during the pre-sessional programme. To meet the criterion of continuity, this would involve investigating how the past experiences of the participants have impacted on their 'imagined now'. To do this this data generated would need to include past experiences of L2 English. It may also involve projections of an experiential future - of when the participants are on their postgraduate programmes at a British university. To understand these personal and social experiences, as Dewey (1938) states, any interpretation must take into account the social context. In this study, it must include the interaction the participants have with others and with their physical environment on their pre-sessional programme.

3.3. Experiences as the basis for Narrative inquiry

To generate data, which could answer the overarching research question, the focus is on the experiences the participants have had, how these experiences have impacted their current practices, and how these experiences possibly influence their future aspirations. Narrative inquiry research allows for the re-telling of personal experiences and is well-suited to investigate how language teachers and learners are situated in specific social, historical, and cultural contexts. Since the early 1900's, Narrative Inquiry has had a long association with the field of psychology with its use of narrative case study research and sociology with research on individual biographies to examine social conditions (Barkhuizen et al, 2014). With language learning and teaching research incorporating psychological and sociological approaches at the end of the 20th century, narrative inquiry has become a legitimate and valuable educational research method.

Barkhuizen et al (2014) offer four explanations for the rise in interest in narrative inquiry for educational research. The first explanation is as a rejection of the positivistic quantitative research approaches examining psychological, social and educational issues. The second explanation is as a reaction to postmodernism's focus on self, identity and individuality, and of individuals abandoning established social constructions of social reality that aim at predicting human behaviour. The third explanation is as an effective resource that researchers can draw on in the construction of social identities. This will improve understanding of how individuals situate themselves and their behaviour in their social contexts. The final explanation offered is the notion that research should focus on the empowerment and involvement of the research subjects with the aim at widening the range of voices in published research (Casey, 1995 p215). Of the four presented, my research aligns closely with the second and fourth explanations. Regarding the second explanation, this research will investigate the value each individual participant has placed on L2 English interaction within the internationalised higher education context. I will take care not to presume an assigned value or desire to develop interaction skills as motivation for the participants' decision to study at a British university. For the fourth explanation, the choice of narrative inquiry will present the voices of the participants. As a result, the direct involvement of these Chinese international pre-sessional students in this research project will contribute to the widening diversity of the voices in published research.

This research intends to address this shortfall due to the limited amount of literature focusing on L2 English interaction within the context of the internationalisation of higher education.

3.3.1. Applicability of conceptual frameworks utilised in previous Narrative inquiries

To apply an appropriate theoretical framework to this research, decisions concerning the most suitable narrative inquiry approach were investigated. There are distinctions in the types of narrative inquiry: narrative analysis or analysis of narratives, and biographical or autobiographical. While the choice between research, which is biographical or autobiographical (discussed in depth in 3.3.2.), will be directly dependent on the research topic, there is more to consider when deciding between narrative analysis or analysis of narratives. During narrative inquiry, the researcher needs to be aware of the distinction between the focus on the narratives and the focus on the content of the narratives. Focus on the narratives would be analysis on 'how' what is said is articulated in the narrative, which could include discourse analysis and the sociolinguistics of the narratives, whereas the subjects and the socio-cultural and environmental contexts of the narrative are the focus in narrative analysis. Though this research utilises narrative analysis, it is removed from the Labovian model of narrative of personal experiences.

3.3.1.2. Labov's model on personal experience narratives

Labov's adult narratives of personal experience presents a series of independent clauses retold as a set of events that define the narrative (Labov, 2006). My study constructs narratives that develop from event-centred occurrences in all the participants' lives, an aspect similar to that of the Labovian approach where the recounting of past experiences of certain events are constructed into the stories. However, while the events that form the basis of the stories are connected in both a temporal and causal manner, these are more flexible than Labovian event-centred narratives. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework allows the narratives to be retold retrospectively and prospectively as the participant moves back and

forth along their experience continuum. Therefore, it does not adopt a solely retrospective chronology as it may include retrospection as much as it does aspirations for the future.

Another key factor in rejecting the full adoption of a Labovian approach to narrative inquiry is its utilisation of a semiotic representation of the events with clause level analysis (Johnstone, 2016). Labov's analysis examines the two functions (experiential and referential) of clauses in personal narratives. The experiential clause informs on why a story is being told and why it is significant to the audience, whereas the referential clause in a personal narrative informs on the content aspects of a personal narrative, such as events, the characters, and the environmental setting. While informative in analysing how the below sentence-level structure of a narrative assists the gaining of a deeper understanding of the complete personal experience, it is not appropriate for my study. This is due to this emphasis on structure, and that my participants are second language speakers and students of English, therefore, language errors are likely to occur. Because of this, there is the risk that any study adopting a framework that focuses on pragmatics, semantics, and syntax, may inadvertently result in a linguistic not experiential analysis of second language use, which is not the intention of this study.

3.3.1.3. Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenological narrative enquiry

The decision to focus on narrative analysis as opposed to the Labovian analysis of narratives can also be viewed as a challenge to traditional hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is taken here in the etymological sense of an interpretation of words. This sense is most commonly known in its application to study and offer interpretation into religious texts to establish what is considered to be true in a factual sense. However, my approach is a modern interpretation which lies somewhere between Gadamer's (2004) ontological hermeneutics of what causes an individual to develop their particular perspective and Ricoeur's (1988) hermeneutic phenomenology of how an individual relates or connects to their context. For this research, the focus is how past learning events have shaped the participants' current views on interaction in English (Gadamer), and how connected the participants feel to their current learning context (Ricoeur). The objective in adopting this modern interpretation is to develop a better

understanding of the subject matter rather than discover a 'truth' often sought in the natural sciences through positivistic research methods. In his analysis of the problems of hermeneutics, Gadamer (2004) states that understanding what a person says does not require a person to 'get inside another person and relive their experiences' (Gadamer, 2004, p 385) but is more a question of developing an understanding of the subject matter. The result of which is to understand 'the truth' as interpreted by the narrator. In the case of this research, it is not to discover the truth about interaction on the pre-sessional programmes at a British university. Rather, it is to better understand what the participants perceive to be true according to their experiences on the programmes.

Biographical narrative inquiry is where the researcher tells and /or analyses the participants' stories. In autobiographical narrative inquiry, the researcher is the research subject - although not completely distinctive as the researcher. The biographical approach is most appropriate for this research as the focus is on the experiences of pre-sessional students and not me as a pre-sessional teacher. I must, however, be aware that as language acquisition features as an aspect of the experiences of the research participants, there is a risk a focus on biographical narratives or life stories of the individual agents could quite easily become overshadowed by how their second language was acquired and used in a particular context. This narrative inquiry views second language learning as one dimension of the participants' personal narratives. Therefore, it will examine this dimension as a heuristic process within the context of a personal narrative, to maintain the focus on the agent and not the language development.

According to Corradi (1991), the biographical approach facilitates an emphasis on the agent and their role in societal transformations. However, she also warns of the limitations of methods adopting a heuristic focus. Data is generated or created rather than collected in a standardised form in this type of life story narrative inquiry, which will require appropriate criteria for evaluation. The distinction between the biographical narrative methods with a heuristic focus on generated data, and the more traditional scientific methods and data collection method is very apparent when looking at the criteriology. In the more traditional quantitative studies, the evaluative criteria look to replicate findings or claim generalisations. However, with a narrative inquiry research approach, the data itself may not be replicable but

the methods can be applied to other research. With this in mind, there still needs to be specific reference to evaluating the fundamental criteria of reliability, validity and inter-subjectivity of the methods and data (which will be discussed at length in **Ethics and other ethical issues** in chapter 4).

3.3.1.4. Polkinghorne's Narrative Configuration

Choosing narrative analysis as the research method for this thesis was influenced by the role that stories and narratives play in forming conceptions of self and the significance of the individual (Polkinghorne, 1991). Polkinghorne (1995) defines this mode of narrative analysis as the discourse that formulates 'events, happenings and actions of human lives into thematically unified goal-directed processes' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p5). A narrative configuration describes occurrences that follow a thematic thread culminating in an outcome or plot. In structuring the personal narratives, the concept of self is understood by the experiences or occurrences in life that are produced during the interaction of the self with the environment. This is representative of two of the three dimensions of this study's narrative inquiry space (personal and social interaction, and place or environment). According to Polkinghorne (1991), these experiences are temporally configured and, whether occurring in the past, present or future, impact on and determine 'the whole', which may be the individual's concept of self or the life story. This, in turn, incorporates the third dimension of temporality into the narrative inquiry space. For this study, to better understand the 'whole' of L2 interaction, temporal experiences are narratively configured through differentiation of the beginning (experiences before the decision to study abroad), middle (current L2 interaction on pre-session courses) and 'the imagined end' of the experience, which in the case of this research is postgraduate study at a British university.

3.4. Summary: A three-dimensional narrative analysis inquiry space on L2 English interaction and development of an L2 communicative repertoire

A number of decisions concerning the application of most appropriate theoretical frameworks have been made. With 'experience' as the focal point for narrative inquiry, the framework incorporates the Deweyan theory of the experience continuum. The data generation,

presentation and analysis will be organised along this continuum. In terms of data generation, as a biographical narrative inquiry, it presents a challenge to the traditional interpretation of hermeneutic inquiry by adopting a model closer to Gadamer's phenomenological hermeneutics to gain a richer understanding of the research phenomenon. The presentation will employ narrative configuration to present coherent developmental profiles of the participants across the three dimensions of this narrative inquiry space.

L2 English development and interaction within the socio-educational contexts of China and Britain, examined in the literature, are the themes to be discussed within the three dimensions. The themes reflect the stages each of the participants 'should' have experienced to bring them to where they are currently, which is studying on a pre-sessional course in order to start a postgraduate degree at a British university. These are learning experiences of English at school and university in China (as it was a mandatory subject), experiences leading to the decision to leave China for the UK, and L2 interaction experiences on their pre-sessional courses. All of these are events that all of the participants have experienced. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space of temporality, personal and social interaction, and place will facilitate analysis of the temporal and contextual changes and guide a theoretical interpretation of their experiences.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This qualitative research will draw upon traditions of the humanistic approaches in western sociology and psychology. It aims to offer a person-centred, holistic approach, while simultaneously problematising the structuralist argument that the impact of culture possibly inhibits agency of the individual. This is to address the gaps in the studies reviewed which reveal a lack of focus on how the internationalisation of higher education has impacted on L2 English interaction practices and development, for their largest cohort of international students - the Chinese international students (see 2.1). This is despite widespread research on this group. Although, there are qualitative studies such as Tian and Lowe (2009) and Wang and Lam (2009) that have addressed the issue of internationalisation on a much more personal micro level, there is still an overwhelming focus in the literature on studies on meso and macro level approaches to the issue (Sawir et al, 2012; Andrade, 2006; Martins, 2015; Liu, 2009; Durkin, 2008). The emphasis is on a presumed cultural dichotomy of eastern and western communication styles and the application of a thick description of the influence of CHC on the interaction practices of Chinese international students at British universities (see 2.2). Although there is a small but growing body of literature on pre-sessional research involving Chinese international students in Britain (see 2.4), the correlation between internationalisation of higher education and issues regarding interaction on these programmes has yet to be drawn. These approaches do not consider how an individual's past and current experiences of English language learning and interaction within the internationalised higher education context presented (see 2.3), may have impacted on further development of L2 English interaction competencies when the student is on a pre-sessional course to join a British university for postgraduate studies. An appropriate educational theory-based framework focusing on individual experiences which presents and discusses the personal impact internationalisation has had on English language learning experiences is required. As stated in chapter 3, narrative inquiry as a long established educational research approach facilitates this analysis. The application of a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) will allow analysis of past and present experiences, personal and social interaction in

English, and the impact the internationalised learning environment has on the experience and interactions.

4.1 Research aims

The aim of this research is to contextualise the English language learning experiences of 10 Chinese international students before and during pre-sessional courses at a British university English Language Teaching Centre. This is in order to assess the impact these experiences have had on L2 English interaction and use, and may have on future interaction practices when studying postgraduate degrees at the university. Through the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework, the participants will explore and reflect on their past and current L2 English learning experiences, and consider how these experiences have impacted on L2 English interaction. Each narrative will be discussed within the context of the environment, which is the internationalisation of higher education.

There are large numbers of students travelling from China after years of mandatory English language instruction to develop their academic English language skills for study at British universities (see chapter 2). This trend has been well-documented in the last 20 years, and there has been a growth in the amount of literature focusing on various aspects of pre-sessional EAP courses designed for international students in pursuit of university places in Britain. However, the number of studies focusing on how the internationalisation of higher education results in large L1 Chinese cohorts on these pre-sessional programmes and the consequent impact this has on L2 English use, is limited. This led to the decision to recruit all Chinese participants, as Chinese international students are the predominant nation group on pre-sessional programmes. This research intends to contribute to this growing body of pre-sessional English language research.

By adhering to the constructivist-interpretive approach adopted in this research, this study focuses on the distinct accounts of individuals often homogenised in the extant literature. It was for this specific reason that these participants were selected as they are often viewed primarily as representatives of the largest demographic on these pre-sessional courses and many postgraduate taught programmes across Britain, and secondarily as individuals. The

consequence of this is individuals are then labelled and othered according to assumptions about those who belong to this L1 group. However, through Narrative inquiry, this study will challenge the often unintentional essentialist perspectives in much of the extant literature that focuses on Chinese international students at British universities. These accounts aim to depict the individual's, rather than a member of a specific demographic, lived experiences of learning and using the English language. This is in order to move focus onto improving interaction across the whole student and staff body in this internationalised higher education context.

The data in the form of narratives will contribute to knowledge by presenting the impact the internationalisation of higher education has had on the individuals preparing to join this environment. With this knowledge, both staff and student groups at higher education institutions will be better informed on not only the learning contexts from which many of their students have come, but also the impact internationalisation has had on interaction across the university. Focus on the individual's experience of study abroad and higher education, as a major factor in the internationalisation of higher education, will be fully explored in the thesis.

4.2 Research Questions

Many higher education institutions have established English language teaching centres to support the growing number of students planning to embark on tertiary level education in a language other than the first language of their domicile countries. Therefore, as a response to growing internationalisation, this study contributes to research both in the field of higher education and internationalisation. Although the participants of the study may not be currently considered members of the university demographic, they are aware of large numbers of L1 Chinese students at their designated institution. This research will present how individual students view this phenomenon and the potential impact this environment will have on their future interaction in L2 English. Through considered critique, the research aims to challenge the extant literature that may inadvertently homogenise Chinese international students. It will achieve this by focusing on individual English language learning and development experiences.

4.2.1. The overarching research question - How has the 'internationalisation' of higher education influenced 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' L2 interaction, and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

Informed by the literature reviewed, the research questions aim to compare the conceptualisations presented in the literature with the social reality experienced by the participants. Although 2.2 focuses on Chinese international students who are situated on degree programmes at British universities, the participants on pre-sessional programmes will join this cohort. Insight into how the literature has approached research on this group of students will serve to provide a better understanding of the environment the participants will enter on completion of their current programmes. This will enable the analysis of the data concerning what expectations the participants have of the required level and amount of interaction in English, and if it is necessary to develop an L2 communicative repertoire when they start their postgraduate programmes. The data should also present the extent to which the literature portrays an accurate or up-to-date account of what intergroup/intercultural interaction (2.2.1-2.2.5) within the internationalised HE contexts represents.

In order to address this main question concerning the experiences of these students, I have considered key concepts from Dewey's (1938) theory of experience: situation, continuity and interaction. For this study, the situation refers to the notion of place (English language learning experiences in China, and in Britain), continuity (interrelation of language learning experiences in the past, present and predictions for future use), and interaction (personal, social, and within the educational context). Therefore, the focus of the subsidiary questions is to generate data that examines these three dimensions.

4.2.2. Subsidiary research question 1 - How did events which preceded the study abroad programme impact on 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' current interaction practices and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

Informed by the literature in 2.3 and 2.4.2, this question establishes how language has been conceptualised by the individual during their past experiences learning English in China. Gaining a perspective of how each participant views developing English interaction skills will

contextualise their current attitudes towards their current L2 English interaction practices and development of a communicative repertoire (2.3.1). This is based on the premise of Dewey's (1938) experience continuum with past learning experiences shaping current and future learning. Therefore, to understand the current learning context, it is imperative to revisit English language learning before the participants started their pre-sessional programmes.

4.2.3. Subsidiary research question 2 - What are the current interaction practices of 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional academic English programmes at a British university?

With the first subsidiary question focusing on prior learning, the second shifts to the educational and social context the participants are in on their pre-sessional programmes. The literature reviewed in 2.1.2 serves to contextualise the linguistic landscape and studentification of the environment outside the pre-sessional classroom and the data generated will reveal any potential impact this context has had on L2 English interaction and development of a communicative repertoire. As this involves intergroup/intercultural interaction in the host country - Britain, the second question draws on the analysis of the literature (in 2.2 - 2.3) based on students on degree programmes, to argue its applicability to students on the pre-sessional courses and discuss the potential to develop a communicative repertoire and improve interaction in English in this environment. This will include an evaluation of whether current practices are conducive to longer-term goals, based on the literature reviewed in 2.2.6. to assess the extent to which developing English interaction skills and a communicative repertoire are motives for studying at a British H.E. institution.

4.2.4. Subsidiary research question 3 -To what extent can pre-sessional academic English programmes aid the development of an L2 communicative repertoire?

Drawing on the literature in 2.4.1 and 2.4.3, the focus for subsidiary question 3 is whether the participants feel that the teaching methods applied in their current learning context in Britain has supported the development of L2 English interaction competencies and confidence, and whether this has provided the foundation to develop an L2 communicative repertoire. To

address subsidiary question 3, 2.5 informs on the learning and teaching objectives, and the social context of the pre-sessional programmes. The data generated should offer insight on whether this context is conducive to promoting L2 English interaction and the development of communicative repertoire.

4.3. Research Design

The study follows an ontological and epistemological position that knowledge is a social construct where the experiences of the active agents (people) create a view of their own and of others' social reality (Cohen et al, 2011). Therefore, the methodology adopts a constructivist-interpretive perspective (Schwandt in Lincoln and Denzin, 2003) which posits that we construct and develop our understanding of society through how we subjectively interpret our experiences. To gain insight into the social reality of one group of Chinese international students preparing for tertiary level study in the UK, this study will utilise first-hand accounts of the experiences of this group of students to construct and subsequently provide knowledge of their understanding of our social world.

Complementary to the constructivist-interpretive approach of this study, my ontological position could also be described as relativist with both intersubjective and intrasubjective constructions forming our life experiences which produce our view of what social 'reality' represents (Angen, 2000). Intrasubjective in the sense that the acts of cognition within the individual, which form an aspect of their knowledge, undergo an infinite cycle of 'processes of inner construction' (Miller and Brewer, 2003, p38) confirming, redefining, reconfirming the concept of social 'reality' with every new experience. For this reason, both the theoretical framework and the main overarching research question cover the subjective cognition of memories of events since the participant started learning and engaging in L2 English, to their current L2 use. Intersubjective in that the inner construction of the knowledge to be gained from the new experience does not occur in an isolated bubble or void. Interaction with the environment instigates the process of internal reasoning to comprehend the social world. This is reflected in subsidiary questions which examine the social reality of learning English in China (subsidiary research question 1), and the social reality of developing English in Britain (subsidiary research question 2) and prospectively on how these experiences collectively

impact of their current development of L2 English for their future life goals (subsidiary research question 3). These experiences are set within the socio-educational context of internationalisation of higher education and overseas study. Therefore, the participants will have had to extend their conceptualization of social 'reality' in light of culturally located factors as more knowledge will be constructed from new and distinct 'culturally informed relationships and experiences' (Angen, 2000, p 384) in the internationalised setting in Britain.

4.3.1 Narrative Approaches

The basis for this research was to capture first-hand experiences of what it means to prepare to study at a British university for this group of Chinese international students. Narrative research has been used for over 40 years to generate data of personal life stories (Squire et al, 2011) initiated with Labov's (2006) model on the structure of personal experience narrative. However, this research is to some extent quite removed from the Labovian approach in the sense that it is not aimed at the structural analysis of the narratives and the context is paramount in the creation of the narratives (see 3.3.1.2.). However akin to the Labovian approach, it is event-centred where recounting past experience of certain events forms the stories. Although the events that form the basis of the stories are connected in both a temporal and causal manner, the purpose of the study is not that of semiotic representation of the events. As second language speakers and students of English, there is the threat that any study that focuses on pragmatics, semantics, and syntax may veer from the significance of capturing the content and context of the individual experiences and result in a linguistic study on the acquisition of a second language.

Language acquisition factors as an aspect of the research topic, however there is the risk, the focus on biographic narratives or life stories of the individual agents can quite easily become overshadowed by how their second language is acquired and used in a particular context. This narrative inquiry on international students views second language learning as one of many factors influencing their life story, and will examine language as a heuristic process within their biographical experiences, to maintain the focus on the agent, and not the language development. According to Corradi (1991), biographical approaches facilitate this emphasis on

the agent and their role in societal transformations - such as the widespread presence of Chinese international students in British universities who are required to interact in English. However, she also warns of the methods adopted in biographical research with a heuristic focus. Data is generated or created rather than collected in a standardised form in this type of life story narrative inquiry, which will require appropriate criteria for evaluation. The distinction between the biographical/narrative methods and the heuristic focus on generated data, and the more traditional scientific methods and data collection is very apparent when looking at the criteriology. With the criteria of evaluation commonly used in the more traditional quantitative studies looking to replicate findings or inform on commonalities, reformulation of this criteria is required to represent the distinction with a narrative inquiry research approach. This is with specific and direct reference to evaluating the fundamental criteria of reliability, validity and inter-subjectivity of the methods and data (which will be discussed at length in **4.4**).

The study represents a challenge to traditional hermeneutics - in the etymological sense of an interpretation of words most commonly known in its application to study and offer interpretation into religious texts - in favour of more modern hermeneutics. The approach lies somewhere between Gadamer's (2004) ontological hermeneutics and Ricoeur's (1988) hermeneutic phenomenology (see chapter 3) where the objective is to develop a better understanding of the subject matter rather than discover a 'truth' often sought in the natural sciences through positivist quantitative research methods. In his analysis of the problems of hermeneutics, Gadamer (2004) states that understanding what a person says does not require a person to 'get inside another person and relive their experiences' (Gadamer, 2004, p 385) but is more a question of developing an understanding of the subject matter. This is the aim of this research, as I am not a Chinese international student who has lived the experiences of the participants in this study.

The understanding I hope the readers of this research will acquire, derives from the literature used to inform this study, the data generated in the interviews and subsequently emplotted (Boje, 2001) into a narrative format by the researcher thus acting as the medium for understanding. The difficulty is that although the common language in use is English, it is a first

language for me (the researcher), but a second language and a language consciously and overtly under development for the participants (as the participants are currently on English language programmes). Gadamer (2004) offers translation as an extreme example where interpreters attempt to minimise the gap between the original intended meaning and that which is reproduced, in this case the narratives. Although there is no translation from one language to another, there is still a need for both parties (the participants and the researcher) to interpret what the speaker means to say. This creates what Gadamer labels as a 'hermeneutic conversation' (Gadamer, 2004, p390) where what occurs is more than just accommodation with adjustments made to arrive at a shared understanding, but an active process of mutual interpretation. This involves both parties attempting to understand the text/speech, and both parties considering how the text/speech was constructed. This is followed by the mental reconstruction of the text/speech to arrive at its meaning.

4.3.1.1. Narrative Analysis as a research method

Choosing narrative analysis as the research method was influenced by the role that stories and narratives play in forming conceptions of self and the significance of the individual (Polkinghorne,1991), rather than the generic or homogenous labels of student, or language learner, or international student. When structuring the narrative, the concept of self is understood by the events and actions in life that are produced during the interaction of the self with the environment. According to (Polkinghorne,1991), these experiences are temporally configured and whether occurring in the past, present or future, impact on and determine 'the whole', which may be the individual or the life story. To better understand this 'whole', the temporal experiences are narratively configured through differentiation of the beginning, middle and end of an experience, in the case of this research the status of being an individual from China preparing to study at a British university. The transcripts of the interviews represent the temporal activities, which through a process of emplotment - identifying and connecting the beginning, middle and end, provide a coherent account of an individual's life and concept of self, evolving through the temporal events and activities (Polkinghorne, 1991). According to Boje (2001), the plot (derived from the emplotment) is related to locating 'the

microhistory and textuality of relationships between obstacles to human intentions, antecedents, behaviour, contexts and outcomes in webs of other events' (Boje, 2001, p108). In this study, this represents the interrelation of English language experiences growing up, achieving academic success in high school and university in China, parental and societal expectations, personal life and career aspirations, and how these factors have impacted on the present situation.

4.3.1.2. Narrative Configuration

Ricoeur (1988) equates narrative configuration with fiction, in the sense that the act of configuring the event told into a story or narrative, employs the imagination of the author. Yet, the verification process or member checking of the narrative construction by the teller is what creates the distinction between 'fiction' and a biographical account that has been constructed by the author-researcher and validated by the participants. Ricoeur (1988) also refers to a 'three-way debate between lived experiences, historical time and fictional time...[and] ability to present within discourse itself, specific marks that distinguish it [the narrative utterance] from the "statement" of the things narrated' (Ricoeur, 1988, p3). For this study, it is the participant who has an element of power in this debate, as firstly it is their lived experience, and the historicized account they have constructed and then told to the researcher. When 'their experiences' are developed or 'fictionalised' - in terms of the inclusion of the author's imagination 'to emplot' (Boje, 2001, p108) or configure these events into a narrative which coherently presents the temporal and causal layers to the participants' life stories, the member checking ensures that this is the 'truth' or interpretation they wish to be presented even if fiction or imagination facilitated the re-telling of the lived experience and the final narrative.

This concept of emplotment and the corresponding notions of time attached to it, creates the transition and completes the cycle from event - emplotment - (and back to) - temporality. There is no mention here of place, yet Ricoeur (1988) refers to 'ways of inhabiting the world that lie waiting to be taken up by reading, which in turn is capable of providing a space for a confrontation between the world of a text and the world of a reader' (Ricoeur, 1988, p5). In this study, the world of the text would represent the social reality of the participant's place at a

British higher education institution. The world of the reader would be the world of those with an interest in international students in British higher education. This includes the author/researcher in this instance, as a representative of the teaching profession in a British higher education institution.

Another value of adopting narrative inquiry in this study aiming to gain insight into the life and experiences of Chinese international students at British universities, is the ability of this approach to separate (the time of the) 'utterances' from (the time of the) 'statements' (Ricoeur, 1988, p77). The act of narrating is presentification of events or experiences not perceptible to the listener - in this case the British researcher - which according to Ricoeur (1988) distinguishes the two temporal periods of the narrating (in the interview) and the time narrated (the event or experience). The process of emplotting or configuring the narratives (especially from interviews as the accounts are the responses in semi-structured interviews), incorporates the subjective reflection on the acts or events from which the utterance stems. This creates a separation in the time (from when the event occurred to the time of retelling the event), the space (whether it was an event that happened in China, or at the airport, or in the classroom and physical environment where the interview is taking place), and the person (the child never hearing English spoken to the adult living in England).

With a distinction between the time of narration and the narrated times, surfaces the concept of choice for both the teller/participant and the author/researcher. The time period covered in the narrative of a 15 to 20-year relationship with the English language is not chronologically represented. This compressed, selective time is represented by events or experiences chosen by the researcher in the nature of the questions put to the participant, and the participant who decides the relevant times to affix to the response or account which Ricoeur (1988) describes as a 'jagged chronology, interrupted by jumps, anticipations, and flashbacks, in short, a deliberately multi-dimensional configuration' (Ricoeur, 1988, p 81). In terms of constructing the narratives, each one starts with background or backdrop to the participant; where they are from, and initial experiences of English language learning. Ricoeur (1988) states this brings the logicalization and dechronologicalization of the character's role in the narrative, which starting with events or actions would not offer.

The study adopts what could be described as a reversed version of a thematic approach with emphasis on the content of the narratives. This content is the resource, rather than an aspect of the data under scrutiny. There will be no investigations on how what is said should or can be interpreted, nor will this content be organised by commonalities or themes to draw comparisons across participants. The interpretation will occur when constructing each participant's story. I have constructed the themes as the researcher in how I categorised the questions put forward for discussion. The themes were to reflect the stages that each of the participants 'should' have experienced to bring them to where they are currently, which is in Britain studying for a postgraduate degree at university and the temporal and contextual changes as represented in the research questions. Therefore, an experience of English at school and university (as it was a mandatory subject), a decision to leave China for the UK (as they are in the UK), and first impressions of the UK, are events that all of the participants will have experienced. It is how they have experienced these events that is the focus of this research.

Narrative inquiry has transformed from being solely a research tool to what Conle (2000) states is 'a vehicle for curriculum' (Conle, 2000, p49), and thus a means for practitioner development and the primary objective of this research. While in the general sense of the word 'curriculum' may refer to the subjects taught in a particular programme of study, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) offers various definitions. I have taken the UNESCO definition of 'curriculum' to signify the unintentional development of values and beliefs of students, teaching staff and communities. Conle (2000) states that narratives have long been associated at both an individual and social level, as a means where cultures can express their worldviews and provide models of identity and agency. When the narrative derives from one particular educational institution, it can serve not only as a medium of data but also as a methodological development guide of the institution's practices. According to Conle (2000), educational narrative inquiry is an avenue for teaching staff voices' to be heard and has facilitated teacher development by promoting reflective practice and mindfulness which inquires and safeguards 'the particular, the temporal, the experiential and the moral

quality' (Conle. 2000, p52) of the entity under focus. By shifting the focus to the voices of the participants, this research aims to present the other aspect of the dialogism between the teacher and the student, thus also promoting reflection and mindfulness in the student, as well as the teaching staff.

Conle (2000) also warns of potential problems regarding actors' autonomy, independence of culture and communication transparency. In terms of autonomy, the actor or participant holds control over what 'truth' has been said in the narrative. Although as specified above, it is this subjectivity this research intends to present. The narrator may also interpret the events quite differently to the meaning the participants attached to events or experiences for a number of reasons. This unintentional misinterpretation could also lead to strategic use of narrative, especially when there is not a shared or mutual understanding of the context in which events and experiences occur. The result of which is a context-free narrative that actually reinforces the othering of certain individuals or groups. This also brings culture independence into the picture especially when the socio-cultural context of the participant differs from that of the narrator. The narrator may not understand the experience from the same personal-cultural context as the participant. Communication transparency could be affected by the subjunctive mood of the vocabulary of the participant, even more so for this research as the participants are students of the language being used. This could increase the likelihood of error in the comprehension of the narrator. In this study, the methods used counter these problems, such as the choice of person and mode in the transcribing of the interview raw data (see 4.5.5.), and awareness of the potential impact of culture and power relations on both the participants and the narrator.

4.3.1.3. Types of narrative inquiry research: the analysis of narrative method versus the narrative analysis method

Once the decision to choose a narrative approach to this research was made, the next decision was the type of narrative research. Polkinghorne (1995) outlines two types of narrative inquiry; the analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. These two methods produce very different

results. The analysis of narrative takes storied events that are usually presented chronologically with the aim of establishing theoretically derived common themes across the range of participants. This is conducted by using analysis procedures which could be described as paradigmatic, and that are more commonly related to the choice of words the participants use to describe their experiences such as those that may express hostility or indifference. As noted above regarding the communication transparency, this type of analysis would not be suited to my research. The aim of my research is to challenge this tendency of looking for commonalities among groups of individuals possibly leading to objectification and othering (as discussed in more detail in the following paragraph). The objective is for these examples to serve as an explanatory interpretation of the participants' life story or understanding of the factors creating their life outcome.

The rejection of the analysis of narrative approach stems from my view that the 'outcome' of the participants of this study has already been established. This is the decision to study in a British higher education institution to obtain a postgraduate degree. Taking this 'endpoint' as the beginning of the inquiry, my objective is to configure the data based on events that served as contributory factors leading up to this decision to study abroad. Data on these events may develop a more accurate understanding of the present situation of living and studying in Britain. To achieve this, the second type of approach offered by Polkinghorne (1995) of narrative analysis will be employed.

Rather than inductively deriving themes from the accounts of the participants, narrative analysis uses the data from the past events (leading up to study in a British university) to configure an explanatory narrative incorporating the temporal and dynamic elements that produced the outcome. This is guided by the theoretical framework of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) which structures the analysis of the participants' experiences temporally - in terms of past and present learning experiences of English language, personal and social interaction using English, and the impact of place in China or Britain, in the language classroom and outside the classroom.

Another reason why I opted for narrative analysis, not analysis of narrative, was to avoid the use of paradigmatic cognition to establish commonalities that also contributes to the othering of certain groups. This is particularly relevant, as the growing number of Chinese international

students choosing to study in a British university, will find themselves in pre-sessional English classes with high ratios of the same L1 students. Within this environment, the international student body may appear largely homogeneous, as many students of the same nationality will be in the same class. As narrative analysis focuses on understanding the actions of individuals, and how events have been experienced by the individual - this grouping, categorising, and subsequent othering of students from the same L1 background is less likely to occur. On the contrary, the research will provide multiple individual accounts of a group of individuals with the shared aim of studying at a British university. This will prove valuable to the field in terms of providing subjective knowledge of how an individual behaves and may offer some explanations to our own behaviour and attitude to the phenomenon of large numbers of Chinese students in British universities. These personal experiences will be presented within the cultural, socio-political and educational context of an internationalised higher education environment presented in the literature review, as they have not occurred in isolation of these environmental factors.

Studies such as Watkins and Biggs (1996), Chan and Rao (2009), and Lam (2005) presented research with a thick description of the strong socio-political and cultural ideologies of members of the Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) countries, which includes mainland China. This narrative inquiry will provide data on how members from a CHC context have responded to this type of presentation of the differences between Western and CHC cultures, specifically in attitudes towards education and learning. Another reason why this approach is suited for this topic is that narrative analysis will allow the individual participants to directly engage with these claims. As opposed to interpretations that may appear to present a homogenous group where in fact the individuals may have very different perceptions and life experiences. So, the narrative analysis approach should prevent this research from becoming an example of the colonising discourse which 'others' particular groups as Fine (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) claims is still present in some of the extant qualitative research. This is particularly relevant to this study as the focus is on one group of students who could first be othered for being international students, and again for being Chinese international students. Many research studies (McMahon, 2016; Huang et al, 2014; Quan et al, 2016; Quan et al, 2013; Wang and Byram, 2011; Liu, 2009; Wu, 2015; Tian and Lowe, 2009; Bamber, 2013; Wang et al, 2012;) have all focused on the experience of being a Chinese international student in a British university.

Unfortunately, the focus has been on individual experiences. Through the dialogic construction (between the researcher and the participant) of the narrative or life story experience, the conceptualisation of the international student as an ‘other’ can be rejected in favour of the subjective representation of the self as an individual preparing to study at a British university, which is the focus of *this* research.

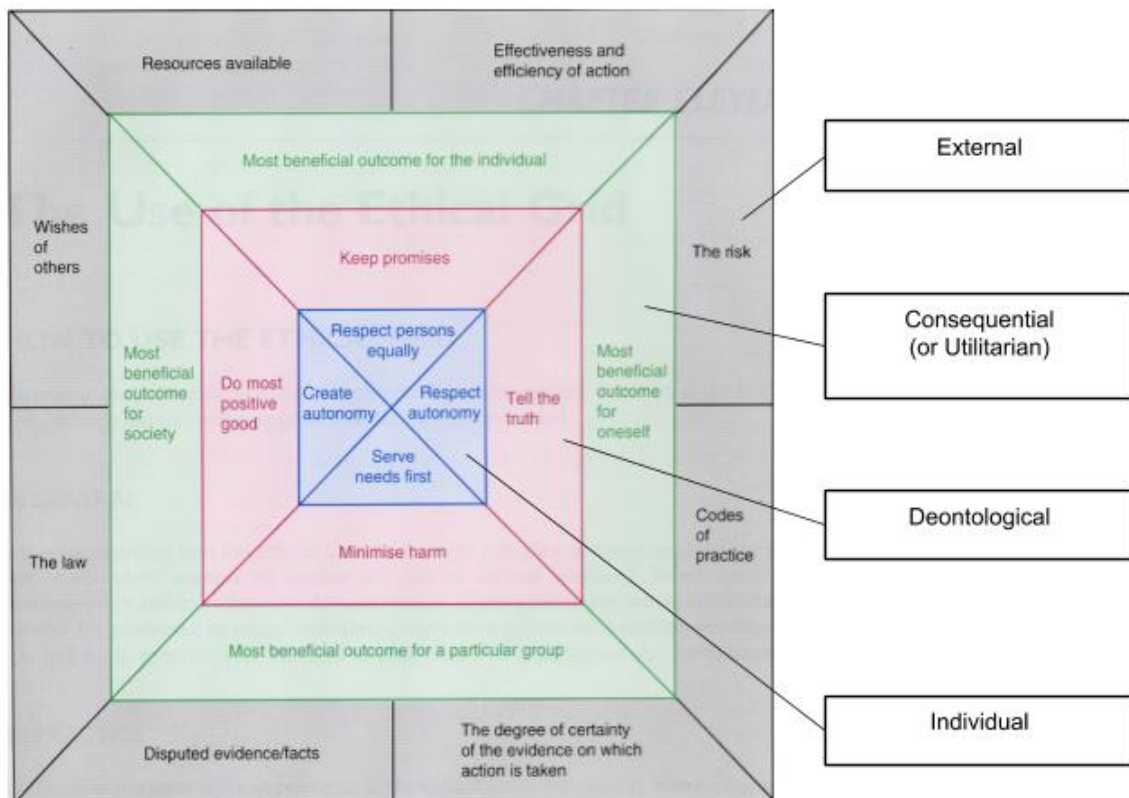
4.4 Ethics

Table 1: Flinders Ethical Framework

| | Utilitarian | Deontological | Relational | Ecological |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Recruitment | Informed consent | Reciprocity | Collaboration | Cultural sensitivity |
| Fieldwork | Avoidance of harm | Avoidance of wrong | Avoidance of imposition | Avoidance of detachment |
| Reporting | Confidentiality | Fairness | Confirmation | Responsive communication |

Source: Flinders (1992, p. 113).

Considering the perspectives of ecological, deontological or consequentialist (also referred to as ‘utilitarian’) research ethics as offered in Flinders’ (1992) ethical framework, acceptance of one perspective over another may create different conflicts at different stages with different participants (see table 1). Therefore, to take an absolutist stance at the beginning of the project may not only be problematic but it could be much less compatible with the constructivist-interpretive and relativist approach adopted for this research. This would mean making ethical decisions throughout the research, which Flinders’ (1992) framework aims to provide guidance on, to enable foresight into potential ethical problems. Similarly, Seedhouse (1998) also opts for guidance to develop awareness of possible ethical problems as opposed to unquestionably following a set of rules and guidelines. He suggests four layers representing the ethical aspects to which any decisions should be considered: individual, deontological, consequential and external (see figure 2) to assure non-maleficence, beneficence and human dignity throughout the research.



From Cohen et al (2011, p 77) Adapted from Seedhouse (1998)

Figure 3: Seedhouse's Ethical Pyramid Grid (1998).

Seedhouse's (1998) original aim was for healthcare research, and Flinders' (1992) framework for qualitative research. In these environments, as with educational research, there is a complexity of ethical issues as the environments involve interaction between people. Ethical consideration of how codes of conduct and rules determining expected standards of behaviour are said to maintain the integrity of the research throughout and beyond the process. However, Stutchbury and Fox (2009) refer to a 'defensible moral basis' (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, p 489), which may be interpreted by different individuals in a variety of ways. Therefore, it is important that the rationales behind ethical decisions made by a researcher are transparent and can be justified as actions taken to uphold the ethical integrity of the research. This could occur at the macro level in terms of breadth and legitimacy of literature used to inform the research and generate sufficient research to allow for a deeper and/or broader understanding of a phenomenon sufficient for a richer analysis, for example. At micro levels, this could involve how the chosen research tools were utilised. Stutchbury and Fox (2009) devised a methodological tool for effective ethical analysis in educational research (such as this current project) based on a Seedhouse's (1998) framework for healthcare research and

Flinders' (1992) ethical framework more specific to educational researchers. This has been utilised in my research.

4.4.1. Criteriology - evaluating the investigations

The methodological tool for effective ethical analysis (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009) was designed to develop an increased level of awareness of the ethical issues that may arise in this type of research. It posits topics and questions (see table 2) that may have otherwise been missed by the researcher and where conscious deliberation by the researcher could result in ethical decisions which are justifiable and transparent. In establishing a personal code of ethical practice, I considered both the applicability of the questions and any impact on my research (see table 2 on the following pages).

Table 2: Methodological tool for effective ethical analysis (Adapted from Stutchbury and Fox, 2009, p 495-496)

| Rationale | No. | Questions to consider | Applicable to this research |
|--|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| External/ecological | | | |
| Cultural sensitivity | 1 | What are the values, norms and roles in the environment in which I am working and are they likely to be challenged by this research? | ✓ |
| Awareness of all parts of the institution | 2 | What is the relationship between the group/individual I am working with and the institution as a whole? How does this affect the participant(s)? | ✓ |
| Responsive communication - awareness of the wishes of others | 3 | How might my work be viewed/interpreted by others in the institution? How will the language I use be interpreted? | ✓ |
| Responsibilities to sponsors | 4 | What are my responsibilities to the people paying for or supporting this research (local authority, my school, external bodies)? | x |
| Codes of practice | 5 | Have I worked within the British Educational Research Association guidelines? Are there other relevant codes which might also be applicable? Am I aware of my rights and responsibilities through to publication? | ✓ |
| Efficiency/use of resources | 6 | Have I made efficient use of the resources available to me, including people's time? | ✓ |
| Quality of evidence on which conclusions are based | 7 | Have I got enough evidence to back-up my conclusions and recommendations? | ✓ |
| The Law | 8 | What legal requirements relating working to children do I need to comply with? Am I aware of my data protection responsibilities? Am I aware of the need for disclosure for any criminal activity? Do I need written permissions? | x |
| Risk | 9 | Are there any risks to anyone as a result of this research? | ✓ |
| Consequential/utilitarian | | | |
| Benefits for individuals | 10 | What are the benefits of doing this research for the participants? Would an alternative methodology bring greater individual benefits? | ✓ |
| Benefits for particular groups/organisation | 11 | What are the benefits of doing my research to the school/department? Could these be increased in anyway? How will I ensure that they know about my findings? Is my work relevant to the school development plan? Can I justify my choice of methods to my supervisor? | ✓ |
| Most benefits for society | 12 | Is this a worthwhile area to research? Am I contributing to the 'greater good'? Is it high quality and open to scrutiny? | ✓ |
| Avoidance of harm | 13 | Are there any sensitive issues likely to be discussed or aspects of the study likely to cause discomfort or stress? | ✓ |

| Rationale | No. | Questions to consider | Applicable to this research |
|--|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| Consequential/utilitarian (continued) | | | |
| Avoidance of harm | 13 | Are there any sensitive issues likely to be discussed or aspects of the study likely to cause discomfort or stress? | ✓ |
| Benefits for the researcher | 14 | Am I going to be able to get enough data to write a good thesis or paper? Am I aware of my publication rights? What might I learn from this project? Will it help in my long-term life goals? | ✓ |
| Deontological | | | |
| Avoidance of wrong - honesty and candour | 15 | Have I been open and honest in advance with everyone who might be affected by this research? Are they aware that they can withdraw, in full or in part, if they wish? | ✓ |
| Fairness | 16 | Have I treated all participants fairly? Am I using incentives fairly? Will I acknowledge anyone involved fairly? Can I treat all participants equally? | ✓ |
| Reciprocity | 17 | Have I explained all of the implications and expectations to the participants? Have I negotiated mutually beneficial arrangements? Have I made myself available when those involved might wish me to be? Are participants clear about the roles, including my own, as they relate to expectations? | ✓ |
| Tell the truth | 18 | If there is any need to convert research how will I deal with this? What will I do if I find out something that the participants/school/department do not like? How will I report unpopular findings? | ✓ |
| Keep promises | 19 | Have I clarified access to raw data and how will I share findings including at publication? How will I ensure confidentiality? | ✓ |
| Do the most positive good? | 20 | Is there any other way I could carry out this research that would bring more benefits to those involved? | ✓ |
| Relational/individual | | | |
| Genuine collaboration/trust established | 21 | Who are the key people involved? How can I build a constructive relationship with them? | ✓ |
| Avoid impositions/respect autonomy | 22 | Am I making unreasonable or sensitive demands on any individuals? Do they appreciate that participation is voluntary? | ✓ |
| Confirmation of findings | 23 | What steps will I take in my methodology to ensure the validity and reliability (or confidence and relevance) of my findings? Can I involve participants in validation? Will I report in an accessible way to those involved? | ✓ |
| Respect persons equally | 24 | How will I demonstrate my respect for all participants? Have I treated pupils [students] in the same way as teachers? | ✓ |

The constructivist-interpretive approach adopted in this research will adapt the evaluative criteria for rigorous qualitative research as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which offers a functional equivalent to what is traditionally found in quantitative studies (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). This relates to the positivist tradition in quantitative studies that adheres to criteria of reliability, validity and representativeness to assess the quality and consequent replicability of its research. The same good practice in producing quality research needs to be applied when adopting a qualitative approach. However, as this type of research does not employ the same controls as quantitative methods, Bauer and Gaskell (2000) offer the more appropriate alternative to the criteria of reliability, validity and representativeness within two categories of confidence and relevance. Confidence is the assurance that the research presents a 'reality' and not a fictitious or fraudulent construction or claim by the researcher. This is assessed by triangulation and reflexivity, transparency and procedural clarity, corpus construction, and thick description. Relevance is assessed through corpus construction, thick description and communicative validation, to assure the practicability of any 'surprise value' confirming or disconfirming views represented internally. This is connected through theoretical framework and/or the extant literature or externally related to widely held common sense beliefs. In relation to the research methods of this research, the Evaluative Criteria for Rigorous Qualitative Research table (see **appendix 4**) indicates which criterions are compatible.

4.4.2 Research ethics and power relations

As in all valid research involving participants, it is vital that the consent given is informed (Cohen et al, 2018). This would include the participants understanding the aim of the research, which group has been targeted for the research, the type of data the research intends to generate, the time commitment, assurance that participation is both entirely voluntary and withdrawal from participation can occur at any time during the process. In addition, in order to guarantee privacy, measures must be taken to preserve anonymity. In facilitating transparency to avoid deception, participants should also have access to the data generated on request. It was essential that this information was fully understood by the participants.

4.4.3 Ethical approval and other ethical issues

Having considered the above, I had to gain ethical approval firstly from my university and then permission from the English Language centre to conduct the research with their students. The application for approval was made via a University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) approved online form (see appendix 5) and accompanied with participants information sheets (see appendix 6) and the consent forms (see appendix 7) that I intended to use with the participants. My main concerns when creating the participant information and consent forms were twofold. Firstly, the participants would be English language students who are taking language classes because the UK Home Office believe that they do not currently have the level to study in Britain for a degree of higher-level qualification. For this reason, I had to make sure that the written documentation would be accessible for their level of English although I had not met them or knew any information about their language level. As the participants' information form related to what participation in the study would involve, the information could quite easily be graded to its audience. However, I did not find the consent form as flexible; particularly as I followed the template offered by UREC that I had done to ensure I had covered all of the necessary areas. The main issue here was potential problems with vocabulary, so I gave the students plenty of time to read both the participants and the consent forms, with the aid of the translation applications on their mobile phones and in my presence so I was available to answer any questions. The second issue related to being a teacher at the teaching centre and making it transparent to the students that participation was completely voluntary and would in no way affect their grades or reports. At this time, I was still unsure how my role as a teacher at the centre where I am generating the data, would impact on finding participants to generate the data.

The initial communication to attract potential participants was a poster inviting those interested to an information meeting. The objective was to provide details on the objectives of the research and the level of participation required. This was publicised in the form of a personalised email to all Chinese international students studying at the language centre, and paper versions placed around the building. Both my contact details and that of my supervisor were made available (see appendix 8). This also included confirmation of the university's and

the language centre's approval of the research to inform potential participants that the necessary institutional review procedures had been conducted and approved. All of the potential participants contacted me via email to request additional information. This was an opportunity to start an interaction between the participants and myself. It also provided the opportunity to find out more about the motivation behind participation and to have some idea of English language level, albeit through the writing skills.

To arrange a suitable time to meet to discuss possible participation, there was probably an average of three emails per participant to coordinate a time to meet face to face. At this first meeting, at least 30 minutes was spent at the start to discuss aspects of informed consent. When this had been completed, I then gave the written consent form to the participants. At this point, I told the participants to take as much time as needed to read through the information, and to check any vocabulary which was new, or they did not understand - using electronic devices if necessary. I confirmed that any data generated would be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (in force at the time the data was generated - though this will now comply with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 which supersedes any previous act), and offered an explanation of the overview of its function. Before requesting that the participants sign two copies (one for me and another for themselves) I checked that there were no further questions or queries about participation in the study.

I also had to consider and factor my role as a teacher into my lexical choices throughout the research process. These would be the more inadvertent dimensions of power relations of myself as the teacher-researcher and the student as participants. Karnieli-Miller et al (2009) recommends acknowledging these power relations between researcher and participant, which often manifest in the lexis used by the researcher. Initially, I had to consider how I would refer to the participants in the study.

To utilise 'international students' would imply a universality among all students whose status has been decided by government legislation established in The Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 2007 (The Education [Fees and Awards] [England] Regulations 2007), under the Education Act 2005 (Education Act, 2005). This is anyone not normally resident in EU or EEA countries (with more specific information available at [The complete university guide](#) website) which would also include students with English as their first language. To utilise 'Chinese

international students' would suggest all students from this vast country share the same characteristics, again contributing to the stereotyping of this group of individuals. In addition, this could be representative of othering the participants through sole identification by country of origin and not as individuals from the same country. This is made more evident by being the British teacher-researcher investigating Chinese student-participants, bringing two aspects of supporting an unequal power relationship between the participant and researcher; one of the authority a teacher has over a student and the other of the British/Western teacher conducting research with Chinese students learning to acculturate to Western education styles and conventions.

To address the teacher/researcher-student power relation, the term 'participant' was employed to reflect the message of both individuality and anonymity. Collectively, the participants were referred to as 'one group of Chinese students', to reflect that I do not consider the experiences to be indicative of the experiences of every Chinese student preparing to study in a British university. As an example of qualitative research through narrative inquiry adopting a constructivist-interpretivist approach, 'subjectivity' in this study must refer to the Foucauldian sense of the word that represents the power of the individual agent and not the subjugation of the individual as in more traditional positivist research (Kelly, 2013). This is achieved through careful consideration and acknowledgment of the influential nature of lexical choices.

Another aspect of power relations pertinent to this research is that of perspective. The nature of narrative inquiry is to generate and construct the data through collaboratively working with the participant, which supports the subjectivity of the research. During this stage, there should be some level of equality in the power relations between the researcher and participant. Yet, as Karnieli et al (2009) points out, the researcher is ultimately the author in the study and as the author; I have the control in the research. Moreover, my analysis of the data during construction of the narratives will also be through the lens of a teacher in general terms; and more specifically one employed by the same institution the participants attend. These factual points are not subject to change so therefore, similar to the aspects of power relations above, will need to be considered, acknowledged and addressed.

Before the data was generated during the interviews it was made transparent that I taught at the institution, every participant would be anonymised, no information would be shared with

the participant's teachers and teachers of the participants would not have access to participant lists or interview transcripts. Data analysis would be through the lens of my position as a teacher-researcher. Therefore, references and inferences were clarified with my knowledge of the institution, my role as a teacher and information from the literature used to inform the study. This perspective was communicated to the participants during the member checking stage, as it was important for me to communicate the context in which I produced the narratives from the interview transcripts during the data analysis.

To maintain the subjectivity of the narratives, both researcher (me) and the individual participants had to consider and acknowledge the perspectives of the narrator, the experience being narrated and reflect on the accuracy of the account as a representation of the participant's experience. Throughout the research process as recommended by Cohen et al (2011) I established a 'personal code of ethical practice' (Cohen et al, 2011, p103). This has included honesty and transparency with the participants, and through reflection, I have applied the same processes with myself as the researcher and a teacher. By problematizing my views and the lexis I choose to represent these views, I have aimed to address power issues between myself and the participants to produce ethical research.

4.4.4 More ethical issues - anonymity of the university

An initial decision was taken to maintain the anonymity of the university. This was to be consistent with the stance on maintaining anonymity of the participants and further protect their identity. However, for a number of reasons this would result in inconsistencies. Firstly, this PhD is from the University of Sheffield, and as a staff member at the same university, I had stipulated that the research was conducted with students at my institution. Secondly, there would be a number of references made to Sheffield as a city, and to the University of Sheffield in the participants' narratives. There would also be data referring to international student numbers at the university the participants were attending that would need to be referenced, again revealing the name of the institution. Additionally, a quick internet search on the descriptions of the pre-sessional programmes and the pathway college could reveal the identity of the institution. So as Walford (2005) posits, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed in the context of educational research of this nature. There is also the position adopted by Howe and Moses (1999) that interpretative research that seeks to report rich data

based on the subjective experiences or observations of its participants cannot be obtained if complete anonymity and confidentiality are required. Thus, anonymising the institutions and the locations they are referring to could weaken the richness of the data and the presentation of the authentic opinions the participants hold. Considering these factors, and the number of Chinese international students on the pre-session programmes from where the participants were recruited, and with the anonymity of the participants' real names, and the Data Protection Act 1998 preventing any personal details of the students from the pre-session programmes such as the age, city of origin, previous university institutions being disclosed, the risk of disclosure or of someone deducing of the identity of the participants was negligible. Therefore, the decision to name the institution was revisited.

4.5. Methods

The next section describes the methods procedure followed in this research project. See **table 3** below for an overview.

Table 3: Methods procedure

| Methods Procedure |
|--|
| Step 1: ethical approval |
| Step 2: participant recruitment |
| Step 3: pilot group meeting |
| Step 4: transcribing pilot group meeting |
| Step 5: member-checking transcription of pilot group meeting |
| Step 6: initiating contact with 1st wave of participants |
| Step 7: interview 1 with 1st wave of participants |
| Step 8: transcribing interview 1 for 1st wave of participants |
| repeat of steps 2, and 6, followed by steps 7 and 8 with 2nd wave of participants |
| repeat of steps 7 and 8 for interview 2 with 1st wave of participants |
| repeat of steps 7 and 8 for interview 2 with 2nd wave of participants |
| repeat of steps 2 and 6, followed by steps 7 and 8 for interview 1 with 3rd wave of participants (for the rationale for this extended first interview see 4.4.4.2.3 below) |
| repeat of steps 7 and 8 for interview 3 with 1st and 2nd wave of participants |

| |
|--|
| repeat of steps 7 and 8 for interview 2 with 3rd wave of participants (for the rationale for this extended second interview see 4.4.4.2.3 below) |
| Step 9: creating the narratives from the interview transcripts for all participants |
| Step 10: final meeting for member checking and revision of narratives with all participants |

4.5.1 Context

The context of this research is an English Language teaching centre at The University of Sheffield. The centre is a part of Academic Services, a subsidiary of Professional Services that provides support for faculties, departments and key stakeholders of the university; is British Council accredited (<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation>) and authorised by The University of Cambridge ESOL as an IELTS exam centre. Students at the centre have unconditional offers and have chosen to improve their English Language proficiency before starting their postgraduate studies at the university, or have offers on the condition of an agreed English Language proficiency from their chosen department, or places on the pathways programmes which require a Secure English Language Test (SELT) to meet certain administrative requirements of United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>.

4.5.2 Participants

The participants (see **table 4**) were selected using non-probability sampling, but leaning towards critical sampling (Wellington, 2015) as I decided to only recruit students from mainland China. The original target group was students from a Confucian Heritage Cultural context (CHC) but this would include students from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam. However, as O'Dwyer (2017) and Park (2011) state, there is historical and philosophical diversity across geographical boundaries, and varying degrees of divergence from what could be considered the more traditional CHC influence more common to mainland China. Therefore, any study that includes the impact of cultural heritage should account for this diversity so participants from one geographical location were chosen. This would allow for a more directed focus in selecting relevant literature to inform and analyse the data generated. Given the scope of this research and the intention of generating rich data with

thick description, the decision to focus on mainland China would more easily facilitate this objective.

The original plan was to recruit all of the participants at the same time. However, the initial number of participants recruited was low despite many students making contact to obtain information on what participation would involve. A number of these students had wanted to join the study for speaking practice for exam preparation which were high stakes IELTS exams necessary to continue to the Pathway college programme to take place within a couple of weeks. They were not sure they could commit beyond their exams to the time scale of anything from up to a 9-month participation period (an academic year), so were rejected as participants. I then decided to focus on each new intake of students to the language centre occurring in the post-Easter period during March/April, and then again in the post semester 2 period in July. The redistribution of flyers advertising for participants resulted in 3 waves of recruitment.

The participants were enrolled on pathways to academic English courses, or pre-sessional language programmes offered by The University's English language centre between January and September 2017. Of the 12 students selected, one participant decided not to continue after the first interview, and data from one other student was not used as most of the participant's education had occurred within Chinese territories but outside mainland China. Three students participated in a pilot group discussion. All ten of the participants completed semi-structured interviews and member-checking of the narratives produced from the transcripts.

The first wave of participants would be studying at the language centre for at least 2 terms (23 weeks) and then at the Pathway college for another 2 terms (17 weeks) before entry into their departments. At the beginning of the study, these participants would have had an overall IELTS score of 4.5 with the need to increase this by one band to 5.5 by the end of the second term at the language centre. This score would need to increase by another band (to 6.5) during the two terms at the pathway college. The second wave of participants were on a 17-week pre-sessional course and the final wave of recruits, the third group were doing a 6-week pre-sessional course before starting their programmes at the university. For the second and third groups, the language centre has a staggered pre-sessional course minimum IELTS requirement. The second group would need to have an overall IELTS score of no less than one

band lower than the English language level required for their degree course, reducing to 0.5 of a band for participants in the third group.

Table 4: Contextual overview of participants

| Wave 1 | Pathway and time on English course | English level IELTS equivalent | | | Age | Province | Department | Time spent in the UK (at time of 1st interview) |
|--------|---|--------------------------------|--|--|-----|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | | Start of language course | Current level at the time of the first interview | Required level to start post - graduate course | | | | |
| Jack | 26 weeks (2 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college | 4.0-4.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 21 | Xianyang, Shaanxi | Politics and International Relations | 10 weeks |
| Lina | 30 weeks (3 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college | 4.0-4.5 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 24 | Zhoujian, Shanghai | Journalism | 10 weeks |
| Hannah | 26 weeks (2 terms) on Preparatory English course then | 4.0-4.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 21 | Wuhan | Architecture | 7 months |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college | | | | | | | |
| Stella | 30 weeks (3 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college | 4.0-4.5 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 23 | Heilongjiang province. | Engineering | 7 months |
| Wave 2 | Pathway and time on English course | English level IELTS equivalent | | | Age | Province | Department | Time spent in the UK (at time of 1st interview) |
| | | Start of language course | Current level at the time of the first interview | Required level to start post-graduate course | | | | |
| Charley | 17 weeks pre-session course | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 25 | Chongqing and Beijing | Journalism | 4 months |
| Ewan | 17 weeks pre-session course | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 22 | Hohhoh, Inner Mongolia | Automated Control System Engineers | 7 weeks |
| Joanne | 17 weeks pre-session | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 27 | Qingdao, Shengdong province | SchARR - Epidemiology | 4 weeks |

| | course | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|-----|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| Wave 3 | Pathway and time on English course | English level IELTS equivalent | | | Age | Province | Department | Time spent in the UK (at time of 1st interview) |
| | | Start of language course | Current level at the time of the first interview | Required level to start post-graduate course | | | | |
| Elsa | 10 weeks pre-sessional course | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 23 | Shanxi | Accounting and Finance | 6 weeks |
| Olivia | 6 weeks pre-sessional course | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 25 | Anhui | Law | 2 weeks |
| Jennifer | 6 weeks pre-sessional course | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 25 | Hunan | Oncology - Reproductive Science | 2 weeks |

4.5.3 Choosing the appropriate narrative inquiry research tools

There are a number of research tools which could be applicable to a narrative inquiry such as case studies (Bignold and Su, 2013), diaries (Tsui, 2007) or journals (Yang, 2008). However, in selecting the most appropriate tool theoretical divisions in the type of narrative research tools should be considered. There are tools that will generate data to express the internal states of the individual and those that provide data reflective of external social conditions (Andrews et al, 2013). The approach and tools selected in my research would need to be a representation of both. The narratives in my research focus on the individual's conceptualisation of how they are impacted by the external social environment of interaction in an internationalised higher education setting. They also focus on the internal state represented by the reflective accounts

of how this environment impacted the participant's attitude towards interaction. In taking these factors into account, I would also need to consider the context within which the data generation would occur and the participants' obligations in this context. As language students on a high stakes academic course (as successfully passing the course would decide whether a place on the postgraduate degree programme is offered), I would need a research tool that would not be overly intrusive or disruptive to their programme of study, yet could still generate rich data.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) outline research tools that have been utilised in narrative inquiry studies. Field texts (as used in Latta and Kim (2011) with notes made on the interactions between the researcher, participant and others in the environment was an initial consideration. However, as stated in section 4.5.3.2, it would not be feasible to engage in the participants' social contexts or unobtrusively observe the participants in their classroom settings without impacting on how the participants would usually interact in these environments. Although journal or diary entries may serve to provide some valuable data on the participants' experiences of interaction while on the pre-sessional course, this research tool was also rejected. This option could possibly remove the element of dialogic interaction geared towards achieving an authentic (from the participants' perspective) understanding of their experiences that would be necessary to produce narratives presenting the voices and attitude towards language development.

Tsui (2007) managed to address limitations by using a combination of diary writing and face-to-face conversation to expand on the various diary entries of her participant. However, her focus was on creating a narrative documenting one life story that would then be analysed to examine the identity formation of the participant. In Tsui's (2007) narrative inquiry research on identities, presenting the actual voice of the participant is not the objective as the narratives were not constructed using the direct speech of her participant. Whereas in my study, the narratives are the product of the analysis with the participants' voice and verbatim speech at the forefront. This issue could have been resolved with the option of storytelling as the research tool either in an oral form or in an autobiographical or biographical written format, which was applied in Ai's (2015) autoethnographic study. The rejection of the tool based on the

appropriateness to the context, however, related to my ethical obligation to not create undue stress (temporal and/or linguistic) on the participants. The student participants in my study would have coursework commitments and deadlines to meet on their pre-sessional programmes and may be unable to fulfil the additional commitment of writing or recording their life stories. For the above reasons, interviewing the participants at a convenient time negotiated between myself as the researcher, and according to their study schedules would be the better option. It would also provide the opportunity to create and develop a rapport with the participants, and be beneficial for the participants to gain more experience and practice in extended spoken interactions in English. Aside from these more pragmatic reasons for choosing interviewing as the research tool, the methodological rationale is presented in 4.5.3.2.

4.5.3.1 Piloting

There has been a use of pilot group discussions before individual narrative interviews, and group interviews as part of the data generation in range of narrative inquiry research (in nursing Law and Chan, 2015; in education and information technologies, Aghaei et al, 2019; in music therapy Tuastad and Stige, 2015, in teacher education, Leigh, 2019). This has been to test not only the questions to be used in interviews (Majid et al, 2017), but also provide insight and guidance on the practicalities of the research process (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Piloting semi-structured interview questions can also facilitate data generation and analysis, in terms of improving efficiency in processes applied (Xerri, 2018). The initial reason for my use of a pilot group discussion was to establish whether the topics I had researched in the preliminary review of extant literature on Chinese international students at British universities presented issues the participants felt affected the level of interaction on their current language programme. This followed the recommendation by Mikuska (2017) of the effectiveness of testing interview questions before generating any data for a study. Although, the interview questions were delivered more as cues for comment as a means to open a discussion on the particular issue in focus. Therefore, it was not a question of whether the questions were functional but whether the topics were such that the participants could maintain a discussion.

As a way of breaking the ice, the sessions started with some basic background information as suggested by Ricoeur (1988) as an effective means for starting the narrative interview process. The questions or cues related to where the participants were from in China, which led to discussion on the influence, if any, of minority languages in the lives and families of the participants. What followed was quite similar to what one may find in an English language proficiency test that could be the result of years of responding to questions on the topic of 'hometowns' in preparation for the language test, at least for this pilot group. The responses were largely descriptive of the geographical locations and of the key tourist attractions and places visitors usually attended. As the discussion moved to more personal topics such as why the participants had chosen to live and study in this area, the discussion became more natural and further removed from the teacher-student dyad to a researcher-participant mode.

I then moved away from the questions/cues by presenting some images of Chinese businesses in the city (see appendix 3). It was at this point I found the participants interacting with each other rather than responding to me, although they were communicating in English with each other. This was the second reason for testing the possibility of holding group discussions as according to Wang (2017) this could provide the participants the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences while listening to the experiences of the peers. This may also offer the prospect to the participants of further development of their ideas based on the social constructivist perspective of knowledge my research adopts (Gordon et al, 2015). However, when the discussion returned to use of English, responses were once again directed towards me. This type of interaction in the pilot group meeting may be related to my role as a teacher as the three participants only have the experience of the student - teacher connection with me as opposed to one between a researcher and participants. Yet, although the participants had returned to responding directly to me, the responses were longer and more expressive of their attitude towards learning and using the English language, and their initial thoughts about the social environment in Britain. However, I noticed that one participant appeared to be dominating the discussion and was appearing to correct the grammar of the other participants. This confirmed my decision to hold individual meetings thereafter as I wanted to ensure I had responses from all the participants on each topic. Individual interviews would also better maintain the subjectivity of the participants' experience as the focus and to move further away from the question - answer approach.

The intention was for the topics for the individual meetings to derive from any information or cues from the pilot group when I revisited the audio recordings. However, before moving on to this stage, as this is a narrative inquiry, it was essential to check what I had transcribed from the pilot group recording was accurate. Therefore, I reproduced the discussion into a written format for the three participants to read to ensure the information recorded was the information that they had supplied. The response from the participants was that the transcription was satisfactory and the only errors in the transcript were the spelling of city names, but the details were correct. The participants had nothing to add at this session. I had considered asking them to expand on some of the topics from the first session. However, I decided against this, as I wanted a more personal subjective response rather than the participant having to be concerned over what the others in the pilot group may think of what they had said. It was also at this point that I decided not to repeat this process with any new participants, as I would not be analysing specific language or the transcripts directly. In addition to this, the participants, as language students, were drawn to grammar and vocabulary correction rather than the content. I found myself in teacher-mode rather than that of researcher or observer. Member checking and seeking verification from the participants would occur after the raw transcripts were constructed into individual narratives, which would be consistent with narrative enquiry through emplotment (Petty, 2017), therefore the focus would be on authentication of the accounts and not the participants' verbatim.

4.5.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The rationale for choosing semi-structured interviewing is to gain access to subjective, contextual and situational knowledge of the social world through dialogic interaction with the participants (Mason, 2018). Although a number of research tools are available within narrative inquiry, the interview would accommodate an interactional dialogue between the participant and the researcher to construct 'trustworthy' data (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). It would not have been feasible within the scope of this study to observe this phenomenon from the point when the decision to study abroad, nor would a written account offer the opportunity for the researcher to clarify or to request expansion on specific points, so these narrative research tools were rejected. Through retrospection and prospection during the interviews, it would be

possible to generate data which incorporates the three dimensional aspects of this narrative space, from the start of the learning experience in China, to current L2 English use on the pre-session programme, to anticipated use when the participants start their postgraduate degree (**see table 5: Three-dimensional narrative inquiry space**).

The purpose of interviewing as a research tool in narrative inquiry is to elicit data with the goal of reconstructing perspectives at the time of the event recounted. This is directly applicable to my study, as the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework adopted would involve the participants recounting events from the past, and making projections on their futures. It is also consistent with the methodological approach of my study as the narrative inquiry interview should extend beyond the common question and answer format of a questionnaire or structured interview, and move towards more the type of everyday conversation involving listening and storytelling (Jovchelovitch and Bauer in Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). According to Mackay and Gass (2016), the nature of semi-structured interviews provides the space to steer away from any prepared questions used to guide the interview, to acquire more information about a topic. This would allow the interviews to centre on the topic of interaction and English language development, while providing room for my role as the interviewer or interlocutor in the dialogic interaction to ask for clarification or expansion. As the participants are students of English, this could also serve to ensure I have understood what the participants have said. This flexibility facilitates more personalised interactions with the participants of a study thus producing richer responses (McDonough and McDonough, 2014).

Data generation from the semi-structured interviews would need to incorporate the experience continuum (Dewey, 1938) which is the basis for the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework. Therefore, the three subsidiary research questions reflect these three time periods; past learning in China, current learning on the pre-session programme and the effectiveness of the current learning for the future environment on the postgraduate programmes. This is also the rationale supporting the decision to have three interviews per participant to discuss each time period to ensure that sufficient and appropriate data could be generated to respond to the research questions (see appendix 9: Research Questions-Interview Question Cues Matrix).

Table 5: Three-dimensional narrative inquiry space

| Interaction | | Continuity | | | Situation/place |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Personal | Social | Past | Present | Future | |
| Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions | Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view | Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times | Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event | Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines | Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view |

Note: Adapted from Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

Regarding the type of interview, semi-structured interviews were chosen. I have some knowledge of the subject based on literature reviewed and my experience as a teacher in the educational context under scrutiny, but wanted to gain knowledge on how the internationalisation of higher education has impacted the participants' interaction practices in L2 English within a specific context. Therefore, a mode of questioning which provides a context or topic but still permits degrees of digression from or expansion of the topic - as deemed relevant by the participants' experiences - is necessary. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that if the researcher is aware of what they do not know, through a structured interview, questions can be framed to acquire responses that fill the knowledge gap. However, before the dialogue with the participants I would not have awareness of the extent internationalisation had impacted the individual participant within the context of their unique learning experiences. If the researcher is unaware, the unstructured interview questions will allow the participants the space to inform the researcher of what they know on the topic. However, based on the literature review and the theoretical framework adopted, this is not representative of my position. Therefore, the semi-structured interview would facilitate narrative interviewing as recommended by Reissman (2008) to enable detailed yet focused accounts of experiences not solely themes, which allow the interpretative process of understanding the experience on the

theme or context during the dialogic interaction between the participants and the researcher (see appendix 9: Research Questions-Interview Question Cues Matrix).

4.5.4 The Stages of the narrative inquiry

The stages of this narrative inquiry (see table 6 below) followed the steps outlined by Creswell (2009).

Stage 1 Identifying the problem

This was in response to my classroom observations of the interaction practices of many of my Chinese international students. I had noticed quite different uses of English in one-to-one conversations with students in tutorials and when the same students were grouped together for activities that required interaction in English. I wanted to know whether and how social and cultural environmental factors impacted on the participants' interaction practices.

Stage 2 Exploratory literature search

This included reviewing a wide range of literature that focused on Chinese international students studying at British universities. There is a wealth of research on motivation and acculturation but the main focus in these studies was on language acquisition. As my students had already acquired an intermediate level (B1/B2) of English language proficiency, I searched for literature which would be more appropriate in contextualising their learning experiences. The search then moved to research focused on interaction practices and difficulties Chinese international students had with their peers when studying abroad. This would provide guidance on how I could interpret the narratives of the participants of my study to better understand their interaction practices.

Stage 3 Establishing a theoretical framework and developing research questions, aims and objectives

The next step was to align my ontological and epistemological assumptions with my methodological approach to address the research problem identified from the core concepts presented in the literature. It would require a method that focused on the experiences of the individual yet accounted for the environmental and temporal factors that may influence the

experiences. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework would provide a structure for the research questions, data generation and subsequent data analysis in the form of the learning stories produced. To apply this framework and align the interview questions with the research questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016), the interview questions had to provide temporal continuity from past learning experiences, present learning and future aspirations on the postgraduate programmes after the pre-sessional and possibly after their master's. These would incorporate the dimension of place in terms of experiences in China and Britain, and where the participants aspired to be after completing their postgraduate degrees.

Stage 4 Generating Data

Data would be generated from constructing the narratives - learning stories from the participants' interview transcripts. The collection of what could be described as raw data would occur when recording the interviews. However, this would then undergo the process of transcription and conversion into the narratives in stage 5.

Stage 5 Analysis and Interpretation of qualitative data

The transcribed interviews were interpreted and structured according to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework. This resulted in the presentation of the narratives into temporal periods of pre-departure to Britain, current time on the pre-sessional programme and anticipation of L2 English interaction on the postgraduate programmes. The narratives were then member-checked by the participants in order to validate the collaborative account of the learning experiences.

Table 6: The research process, the characteristics of qualitative research, and the characteristics of narrative inquiry

| <i>Phases of the research process</i> | <i>Characteristics of qualitative research</i> | <i>Characteristics of narrative inquiry</i> |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Identify a research problem | A qualitative problem requires exploration and understanding. | Narrative researchers seek to understand and re-present experiences through the stories that individual(s) live and tell. |
| 2. Review the literature | The scholarly literature plays a minor role. Qualitative researchers use the literature to justify their research problems. | <p>Narrative researchers foreground the participant's story and background the scholarly literature.</p> <p>For example, they may find direction or underlying structure for their research reports through the participant's story rather than through a conventional literature review or theoretical framework.</p> <p>The scholarly literature may offer guidance for how to interpret the participant's stories (i.e., find deeper meaning or new understandings through them such as the effect of internationalisation on the participants, and how second language motivation has been conceptualized).</p> |
| 3. Develop a purpose statement and research questions | The qualitative purpose statement and research questions are broad and general. The qualitative purpose statement and research questions seek participants' experiences. | Narrative researchers seek to explore the meaning of the individual's experiences as told through a story or stories. |
| 4. Collect qualitative data | <p>Qualitative researchers collect data following protocols developed during their studies.</p> <p>Qualitative data collection involves gathering text or image data. It also involves studying a small number of individuals or sites.</p> | Narrative researchers collect field texts that document the individual's story in his or her own words (e.g., interview transcripts, letters, journal entries). |
| 5. Analyse and interpret qualitative data | <p>Qualitative data analysis consists of text analysis.</p> <p>Qualitative data analysis consists describing information and of developing themes.</p> <p>Qualitative interpretations situate findings within larger meanings.</p> | <p>Narrative researchers analyse the participant's stories by retelling or "restorying" them into a framework that makes sense (e.g., chronology, plot).</p> <p>This often involves identifying themes or categories of information within the participant's stories (e.g., time, place, plot, scene).</p> <p>Researchers may then rewrite the participant's stories to place them within a chronological sequence (beginning, middle, end) and/or a plot that incorporates a main character who experiences a conflict or struggle that comes to some sort of resolution.</p> |

Table adapted from Creswell, 2009.

4.5.4.2 The interviews - first meeting with individual participants

4.5.4.2.1 First wave of participants

The duration of the first meeting was set at approximately 30 minutes in order to have sufficient time to acquire a lengthy response to the topics and so the participants were not placed under too much strain to speak at length in English. This resulted in 27 minutes 29 seconds for Jack, 18 minutes 21 seconds for Lina and 25 minutes and 24 seconds for Hannah. My main objective was trying to maintain and adhere to the semi-structured interview method. Writing down the question cues I wanted to use to make sure that I was covering all the areas that I wanted to do in this particular session introduced more structure than I would have opted for, for this first meeting. Having the questions cues (see appendix 9) in front of me did lead to the tendency of what felt like I was just sticking to the question that in itself defeated the object of having the 'semi-structured' interview label. As I was conscious of this and of course that the questions had been designed for expansion, a conscious effort on my behalf was required to focus on the responses given at the time (and not just consider the fact that the meetings were recorded) and raise follow up questions during the individual meeting based on the individual responses.

The tone for the first individual meeting with Jack was quite different from that of the pilot group as the participant appeared quite relaxed and gave long and personal responses to the topics. However, for Lina the discussion was quite strained, and the responses were short, often one- or two-word answers with little that revealed how the participant felt regarding the topics under discussion. The participant did not maintain eye contact and struggled to communicate in English. Transcribing the meeting was extremely difficult, as I had to fathom what was being said due to pronunciation issues, hesitation, and false starts. For Hannah, I had to rephrase the questions, at times more than once before the participant understood what I was asking. Although not tense, the mood was not quite as relaxed as with Jack and the responses were again quite short. When asked to recount an event the explanation was longer however, the meeting was very much like a question and answer session, rather than a discussion. On listening to the recording of the meeting, I knew I had to adapt my method of trying to get the participants to respond more openly to the topics. I found with Lina and

Hannah I started to rephrase and explain the topics and questions more, which resulted in the length of my input being longer than the response. My unease or anxiety at presenting questions to the participants that they could not understand could be a cause of the absence of a relaxed atmosphere, with my preoccupation with obtaining answers to the questions transferring onto the participants to supply them.

4.5.4.2.2 Second wave of participants

Reflecting on the experience with the first three participants for the second wave of recruits, my aim was to talk less in the meetings, reword the question cues that I had used with first group of participants to allow for more open-ended responses and to use follow up questions where I felt the participant could expand on the information already given. These individuals would be completely unknown to me (as the first group were students in my class) so I would learn more about them during the discussion. At this stage, I had already transcribed the pilot group meeting verbatim and with the additional emotive gestures and nonverbal indicators of the participants. This was a problematic process particularly with Lina (from the first group) who I later discovered had communication anxiety in both first and second languages which caused speech disfluency resulting in lots of false starts, restructuring of words halfway through articulation, and constant use of pause fillers and non-vocables. It also became apparent transcribing verbatim would also draw unnecessary attention to the language errors made by the participants that was not the focus of this study. The decision to not member-check the transcriptions of the individual meetings concentrating solely on the narratives, had been made as the transcriptions from the pilot group made the participants self-conscious of the language errors they had made, and then my role (in their view) of 'teacher' re-emerged once again. The participants communicated this even though I had only corrected the minor errors such as noun-verb agreement and personal pronouns. I was still uncomfortable with these amendments as it felt as though this would create an authenticity dilemma, as it was essential to maintain the integrity and accuracy of participants' voice, which would obviously include the language errors. The language corrections would, however, also assist in the coherence and cohesion when creating the narratives from the transcriptions. At this point, I decided the unchecked raw data of the transcriptions would be used to create the narratives that would then be member checked by the participants focusing on any factual or attitudinal

interpretation errors. I did not want this experience to have a negative impact on the confidence or self-esteem of the participants in terms of their current level of English as I felt it was important that the participants saw being part of the study as something positive in their language development.

4.4.4.2.3 Third wave of participants

The main challenge regarding this last set of participants would be the time restraints of the student's pre-session courses. Although Joanne from the second group was on a 17-week programme, she did not volunteer until later on in the programme. Participants from the third group were all on the 6-week programme and within a week of starting the pre-session had agreed to participate in the study. This would result in a limited time frame to meet the participants and establish some sort of relationship and level of trust required to put them at ease sufficiently to be able to converse openly and honestly about their experiences. The participants were engaging in a very intensive language programme in order to achieve their language condition to start their university programmes in 2 months' time. I was aware that there would be a short window of opportunity to meet with the participants more than twice, and not add undue pressure on them. Initially there was much more email and written interaction with these participants in order to coordinate a suitable time to meet and answer any queries. It was at this point I believed we would only be able to meet twice with the time of 4 weeks left available. Therefore, I informed the students that these would be longer sessions of up to 2 hours and if they had this time available.

On meeting with the participants, I was aware that the language proficiency of these students was much higher than the other groups of participants. I had thought a longer session may have been a strain on both myself and the participant, however, they had no difficulty in maintaining the dialogue over this extended period of time. The first half an hour of their first session was not recorded as we just got to know each other. This was not only to relax the participant but also to see whether they would be able to talk at length for an extended time. The conversation started on very general topics, from places of interest in the city, how long they had been there for, recommendations for food outlets, and then we discussed the

research study and the participation commitment. We managed to combine the topics from the first two sessions I had completed with the other participants into one, which gave me enough raw data to formulate the narratives. Fortunately, the higher language proficiency of the participants as well as my realisation of the importance of achieving as much clarity as I could at this first meeting resulted in a much less structured and more conversational encounter. Although Joanne had been in the UK for some time, she was not very confident in her spoken English language level and later admitted that she had fallen into the habit of speaking mostly Chinese. Elsa, Olivia and Jennifer had only been in the country for 2 weeks when we met. Therefore, all of these new participants were very motivated and enthusiastic to practise their language skills while evaluating and reflecting on their new experiences in Britain.

4.5.5 The transcribing process

From deciding which narrative inquiry approach best suits the research aims and objectives, the next consideration was the degrees of mediation in the final narratives in terms of person, and perspective and mode (Tedlock, 2004). The interviews were transcribed verbatim so were from the participants' perspective in first person mode (see appendix 10 for a sample transcript). The practicality of this was I would have a verbatim written account of what was said in the interviews. As stated above, in the pilot group the participants member-checked the transcriptions. The issue was that there was more than one speaker and although names were anonymised, the students could use details, such as geographical location and recollections from the group discussion, to identify the speaker. This was not problematic at this stage as no one outside of the study would be able to do this. However, (and the key factor in the decision to conduct individual interviews rather than group discussions in the actual project) I felt that the participants would feel somewhat inhibited in their responses as their peers would be aware of who said what. The importance of 'saving face' (Wang and Greenwood, 2015), may be a concern as participants and their language errors would be exposed to the other students in the study. This also contributed to the decision to change the member-checking stage of the inquiry away from the reviewing of the individual transcripts to checking the constructed

narrative. According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), the purpose of member-checking is to establish credibility through ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the data generated (see appendix 4). The transcripts, while representing the 'raw data' (Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2015), would not be the constructed life story which is under the influence (or authority) of the researcher. Therefore, even though the transcripts had been checked for their authenticity and accuracy, the narrative could be a fictitious account from the researcher's perspective. This is also consistent with conducting narrative inquiry through emplotment (Petty, 2016). As the member-checking of the transcripts led to over focus on the language errors, a key aspect that this study sought to avoid, the focus is on the accounts created not the verbatim. For the participants as students of English, this was an overriding preoccupation as it was an opportunity to see first-hand the errors they produced. This was a cause of embarrassment for some members of the focus group.

4.5.5.1 Mediacy and constructing the narratives: the analytical process

The perspective from which the narratives are constructed are in the mediacies of 'teller' and 'reflector' mode (Alber and Fludernik, 2009). The teller perspective is written in third person and represents the voice of the narrator (me -the researcher and teacher) which not only narrates in terms of sequencing and piecing together the account, but also informs and comments on the events in the accounts. In this sense, it is overt narrating as it offers my direct communication to the reader. Here, I am in the position of authority or control as I present the consciousness of the narrator. Yet, also present is the reflector perspective of the participants written in the first person. Alber and Fludernik (2009) call this the illusion of immediacy whereby the reader perceives the actions through the lenses of the protagonist - the participants in this case. As stated above, the member checking of the narratives was fundamental to the validity of this project, as I would need to interpret what the participants said, and this would need to be checked for accuracy and authenticity in meaning before it could be a credible reflection of their experience. In this sense, this is covert narration as the writer's perspective remains hidden behind the mode of first-person language used to present the participants' accounts.

The most accurate description of this analytical approach of this study is one of interactional analysis, at least in terms of how the data was generated. Riessman (2005) describes a dialogic process that occurs between the teller and the listener that was a significant aspect of the data generation. The participants were students of English as a second language, so time had to be taken to reach a mutual level of understanding of the questions and responses for both parties involved in the process. As the researcher and a teacher of English as a second language, I was consciously aware throughout that language proficiency would be a factor in comprehending the questions and the responses they generated. This would also be coupled with my role or position as a teacher at the language centre (discussed in more detail in 4.4.2) and of course, how much detail the participant felt comfortable disclosing given the roles of student and teacher. Of equal importance with language issues placed aside, I wanted to ensure that I had understood what the participant had intended as this was imperative to subsequent questions and the discussion at the time of the conversation, during the transcribing of the conversation and when I produced the narratives to be member checked or verified by the participant. It was also important for me that the participant felt confident that I understood what they had wanted to say.

In constructing the narratives, I initially attempted to write the accounts solely from the perspective of the participants, in first person mode. There were two main reasons why this was later rejected. Firstly, as the members of the pilot group were on longer language development programmes, the proficiency of their English was quite low in comparison to participants who joined the study later. Transcribing the pilot group discussion in itself was very challenging due to grammar and word choice errors, as well as the frequency of false starts, hesitations and the use of fillers (ers and uhms) to fill spaces and provide thinking time before responses. I found I was making an increasing amount of language corrections to create coherent transcriptions that were not truly representative of what had been said. I then chose to rewrite the transcripts, correcting only what would seriously impede comprehension such as inconsistent use of pronouns (he/she) which could cause confusion as to who the participants were referring to. These were written in first person mode, but in order to emplot the transcripts into a coherent narrative I would need to interpret and sequence events and change the language (particularly the grammar and some word choice) to make it accessible to both the participants and any other reader. Doing this in first person felt perfidious as the aim

of the research is to provide data on what this group of individuals have experienced, not a storified or fictitious account of the researcher/teacher/writer acting as the individual having the experience. As a result, as much of the minimally corrected direct speech from the transcript was used to present the voice of the participants. The sequencing of events and elements to make the narratives coherent were written in third person to acknowledge not only the presence of the narrator but also that this was another perspective - which is the second key aspect degree of mediation (Tedlock, 2004) or 'mediacy' (Alber and Fludernik, 2009) of constructing a narrative (see appendix 11).

4.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the research aims, and how the literature reviewed in chapter 2 informed the development of the overarching and subsidiary research questions. It outlined the constructivist -interpretivist methodological approach adopted in this qualitative research and the rationale for choosing narrative analysis as the most appropriate narrative inquiry method for this research context. The chapter moved onto present the ethical considerations and subsequent decisions made in conducting the research. This was followed by the methods procedure; including details of the waves of participant recruitment, and the research tools tested through pilot group discussions that led onto individual semi-structured interviews that were transcribed and transformed into narratives member-checked by the participants. In accordance with the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework applied, the three dimensions of continuity, personal and social interaction, and place were used to structure and analyse the narrative accounts of the participants. These narratives form learning stories, presented in the chapter 6, which conceptualise the English language learning experiences of the participants before and during pre-sessional courses.

Before the narratives, in order to better understand the learning contexts of the participants, the next chapter briefly outlines the pre-sessional and preparatory academic English programme pathways. It will also provide details of the teaching and learning ethos of the language centre. The purpose of which is to contextualise the narrative accounts, and to facilitate the discussion of these narratives in chapter 6. This will provide contextualisation when addressing the overarching research question on the impact internationalisation has had

on the participants, subsidiary question 2 concerning the participants' current interaction practices, and subsidiary question 3 on the effectiveness of the pre-sessional programmes in aiding the development of an L2 English communicative repertoire.

Chapter 5 Contextualisation of the learning context - pre-sessional and preparatory academic English programme pathways

5.1 Language requirements and length of programmes

The following paragraphs will define and describe the programmes available for Chinese international students hoping to start postgraduate degree programmes at The University of Sheffield (TUoS). According to the university's webpage (<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/international/entry-requirements/china>) any students from China will need an internationally recognised English language qualification. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination is named on this website, and according to the IELTS website <https://www.ielts.org/about-ielts/ielts-for-study>, the qualification is recognised globally by over 11000 education and training providers. For postgraduate taught programmes, TUoS requires a minimum IELTS score of 6.5. Though it is important to note that some postgraduate degree programmes have a higher English language proficiency requirement, such the MSc in Reproductive and Developmental Medicine which requires an overall IELTS score of 7.5 (with a minimum of 7.0 in each component). For those students who do not currently have the minimum IELTS score to start their degree programmes at TUoS, there are currently a number of pathway options available: English for pre-Masters (EPM) programme at The University of Sheffield English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC), Pre-Masters programme at The University of Sheffield International College (IC), and the Pre-sessional Summer programme at The University of Sheffield English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC). At the time the participants were recruited for this study, the EPM programme was called the Pathways to Academic English (PAE) programme. At the time of recruitment, the participants were categorised as PAE students, and were in a mixed cohort with the general English students. The cohorts of the pre-master's programme at the IC and the pre-sessional summer programme at the ELTC remain the same as they did when the participants were recruited.

The difference or deficit between a student's English language proficiency score and what is required to start their postgraduate degree, determines the pathway option and the length of

study within that option. For the PAE pathway at the ELTC, courses up to 30 weeks (divided into 3 terms of 12, 9, and 9 respectively) were available for international students with an IELTS level lower than 5.0 wanting to attend the IC pre-master's programme for 1.5 or 2 semesters. At the time of participant recruitment, the pre-masters' courses required an IELTS score of 5.5 (minimum 5.5 in all modes) for the 2 semester programme, and an IELTS score of 6.0 (minimum 5.5 in all modes) for the 1.5 semester programme. For the pre-sessional summer course pathway, there were four intakes for 17 week, 10 week, 6 week and 4 week programmes. Once again, the length of the programme was dependent on the difference or deficit between a student's English language proficiency score and what is required to start their postgraduate degree (see figure 4 for an overview of the pathway options).

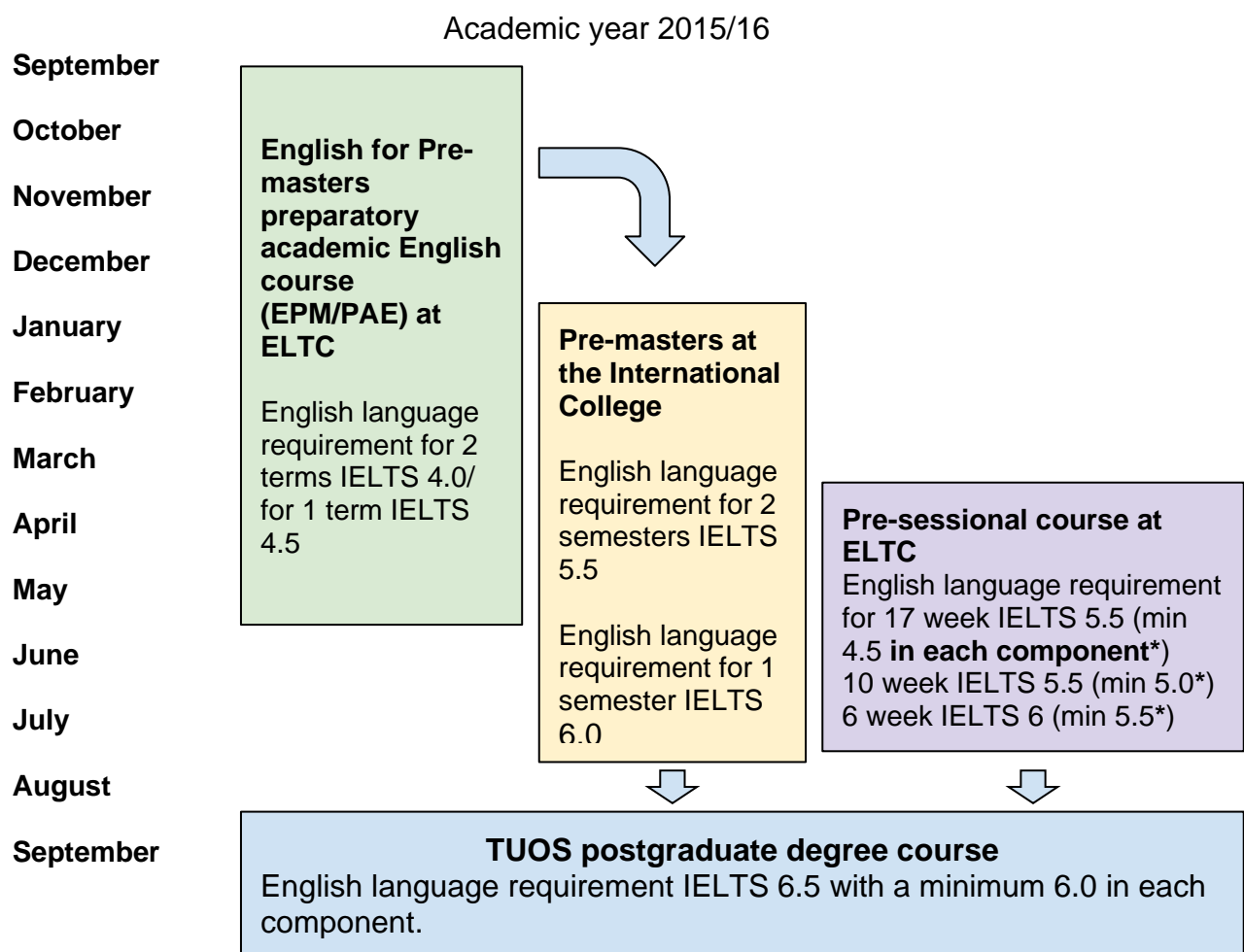


Figure 4: An overview of the pre-sessional pathway options

The breakdown of these pre-sessional course requirements is calculated on the postgraduate taught programme English language requirement which is most commonly an IELTS 6.5 (with a

minimum of 6.0 in every component) to start the university postgraduate taught degree course. For the academic year 2015/2016, requirements were for the 17 week programme an IELTS 5.5 overall with a minimum of 4.5 in each component; for the 10 week programme an IELTS 5.5 overall with at least 5.0 in all component scores and no more than two components at 5.0 OR LanguageCert B2 Communicator Pass Overall in Written and Spoken exams with a minimum of 25 points in each component; for the 6 week programme an IELTS 6.0 overall with a minimum of 5.5 in each component OR LanguageCert B2 Communicator High Pass Overall in Written and Spoken exams with a minimum of 25 points in each component, and for the 4 week programme an IELTS 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in each component. For students with a conditional offer for the postgraduate taught courses, successful completion of the pre-masters or pre-session course would result in direct entry into the postgraduate taught degree programme of TUoS. The offer is usually for the following academic year that starts within 3 to 4 weeks after the pre-session course.

5.2 PAE and pre-session programmes at the ELTC

As the participants of this study were recruited from the TUoS ELTC, the main focus will be the programmes (PAE and pre-session) the participants were enrolled on at the time of research. During the second and final interview stage, two participants had recently started their pre-masters programmes at the IC. For a brief overview of the programmes at the IC see appendix 12.

Four of the participants (Lina, Jack, Hannah and Stella) were on the PAE programme at the time of recruitment to the study. The aim of this programme was to address the English language proficiency deficit through a combination of both general and academic skills classes. This programme was available for students with an IELTS score of less than 5.0, aimed at international students who either wanted to increase their IELTS score to attend the IC for the pre-master's programme or those who wanted to improve their English language skills for personal or business reasons but did not intend to pursue higher education studies in Britain. The specific course aims stated in the programme handbook (see appendix 14) are as follows:

- To introduce and familiarise you with the study skills expected in a British academic environment

- To provide you with relevant practice in the skills and language awareness involved in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking
- To help you to improve your overall General Communication Skills in English
- To give you the opportunity to grow in confidence in using the English Language
- To help you become more independent as a student and learner of English
- To help you to fulfil any remaining conditions of entry to University of Sheffield International College, University or onto our Summer Programme
- To give you some insights into aspects of British culture

The programme consisted of 21 hours per week taught content, with 15 hours of general English (2 x 1.5 hours Monday to Friday), 1.5-hour lecture, and 4.5 hours (3 x 1.5 hours) optional afternoon classes. PAE students could choose from the following optional classes: IELTS preparation, social English, speaking and pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, and learning through technology. In order to progress onto the IC, students would need to attain an IELTS score of 5.5 (minimum 5.5 in all modes) for the 2 semester programme, and an IELTS score of 6.0 (minimum 5.5 in all modes) for the 1.5 semester programme.

The remaining seven participants were all enrolled on various pre-sessional programmes at the point of recruitment. Charley, Ewan and Joanne were on the 17-week pre-sessional programme, Elsa was on the 10-week programme, and Olivia and Jennifer were on the 6-week programme. There were no participants on the 4-week programme. For the first seven weeks of the 17-week programme, students would follow the same course as the PAE cohort and then join the 10-week pre-sessional programme.

The course aims for the 10 and 6-week programmes stated in the course handbooks were to:

- prepare students for academic study by providing authentic texts and setting authentic tasks and which require authentic academic skills to complete them.
- help students to pass the course by providing support throughout the assessment process.
- engage students in the process of developing and integrating their academic skills and

language competencies in preparation for their target academic course.

- integrate key digital and information literacy skills into the processes and requirements of academic study.
- help students become more autonomous learners who can use the resources available independently and effectively.
- build student confidence when interacting in academic situations.
- encourage students to engage critically with course content and tasks.
- engage students in the process of academic acculturation and help foster their academic identity.
- ensure students have met the language requirement of B2 on the CEFR in all 4 skills.

The pre-sessional programmes consisted of 21 hours per week taught content. The content is divided into 3 core strands, each aligned with a summative assessment task. Core strand 1 is academic reading and writing, with a summative assessment task of a 2000 word extended writing task amounting to 60% of the overall grade. Core strand 2 is academic listening and speaking, with a summative assessment of a seminar amounting to 20% of the overall grade. The final core strand 3 is academic reading and speaking, with a summative assessment of a presentation, also amounting to 20 % of the overall grade. To successfully complete the programme and progress onto the postgraduate taught programme at TUoS, students must have minimum 80% attendance on the pre-sessional course and pass all summative assessments. The criteria for the summative assessments are divided into 4 levels; distinction, merit, pass and fail.

5.3 Principles on learning and teaching approaches at the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC)

The ELTC Learning and Teaching ethos (see appendix 14) outlines the underpinning principles to the learning and teaching pedagogy at the centre. A summary of these principles are equipping the students with academic and generic skills to actively participate in their communities and develop higher order critical thinking skills; to promote a high level of learner engagement; to encourage interaction between learners to create learning communities with

reciprocal construction of knowledge, to promote self-directed learning, learner autonomy and reflective practice; to use constructively aligned and varied formal and informal assessments; and to value the importance of previous experience and learning. While the ELTC ethos applies to both the PAE and pre-sessional programmes, there are also more course specific principles for the pre-sessional course (see appendix 4). It claims to apply a process - oriented pedagogy where the learning-oriented nature of the assessment tasks aims to develop transferable skills for the students who participate in the pre-sessionals.

Chapter 6 The Narratives and Discussion

6.1 Structure of the narratives

In this chapter, the narratives of each participant have been categorised according to the life stages each participant has experienced. Through the process of employment (Polkinghorne, 1991), each stage of the narratives represents the denominating theme or dimension in their story, which transitions on to the next life stage. This adheres to Dewey's (1938) educational theory of the experience continuum (of past experiences influencing current experience and future aspirations). The narratives present the experiences which correspond to each aspect of the experience continuum (Dewey, 1938) and each subsidiary research question: Before international study in Britain (subsidiary research question 1), International study - becoming an international student and interaction as an international pre-sessional student (subsidiary research question 2), and After the pre-sessional (subsidiary research question 3).

Subsidiary research question 1 - How did events that preceded the study abroad programme impact on 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' current interaction practices and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

Subsidiary research question 2 - What are the current interaction practices of 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional academic English programmes at a British university?

Subsidiary research question 3 - To what extent can pre-sessional academic English programmes aid the development of an L2 communicative repertoire?

The narrative of each participant is followed by a brief discussion of issues raised. These are organised according to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space theoretical framework of (personal and social) interaction, continuity and place (see table 5). To analyse and discuss each narrative according to every argument, position or theory presented in the literature review is not the objective. This could result in interpreting the narratives with the aim of attempting to discover where they fit, or how they can be interpreted to suit an existing theory or model, whereas the purpose of this research is to place the focus on the individual experiences (the narrative). To ensure this, only the themes from the literature that resonate or reflect the experiences unique to each participant will form part of the discussion. The

intention is to construct a subjective representation of the participants' perspective on the role of internationalisation on their interaction practices and developing an L2 English communicative repertoire.

| Interaction | | Continuity | | | Situation/place |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Personal | Social | Past | Present | Future | |
| Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions | Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view | Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times | Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event | Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines | Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view |

Table 5: Three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Clandinin and Connelly. 2000

The structure of the paragraphs in the narrative sections of the chapter may be considered unconventional in terms of the format. There are direct quotes to present the subjective view of the participants in their own words (or as far as possible as English is their second language). As the data represents the spoken form of English, the units of speech do not follow the syntax of English written grammar (Biber, 2010). Units of information are still marked with capitals and full stops, but may be considered longer than a standard sentence. They will include a series of three dots (...) to indicate an ellipsis, a reformulation of the grammar/word choice (as the participants are L2 speakers of English) or pauses when the participants are thinking or formulating speech. Commentaries from the narrator/researcher at the beginning of each paragraph and between quotes serve to contextualise the data to allow for cohesive and coherent reading as a complete text. Table 4 is an overview of the participants to assist in contextualising their English language learning experience and language goals.

The association for qualitative research defines pen portraits as an informal description of a person <https://www.aqr.org.uk/>. The decision to include a brief pen portrait before each

narrative was to personalise- albeit from the subjective stance of the researcher - the information in the narrative. With the focus on the voices of the participants, the narratives consist of the direct speech of the participants. Although information concerning their programme of study is included in table 4 (below), the narratives alone may not capture the individual characteristics of each participant.

Table 4: Contextual overview of participants

| | Pathway and time on English course | English level IELTS equivalent | | | Age | Province | Department | Time spent in the UK (at time of 1st interview) |
|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| | | Start of language course | Current | Required | | | | |
| <i>Jack</i> | <i>26 weeks (2 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college</i> | <i>4.0-4.5</i> | <i>5.5</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>Xianyang, Shaanxi</i> | <i>Politics and International Relations</i> | <i>10 weeks</i> |
| <i>Lina</i> | <i>30 weeks (3 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college</i> | <i>4.0-4.5</i> | <i>5.0</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>24</i> | <i>Zhejiang, Shanghai</i> | <i>Journalism</i> | <i>10 weeks</i> |
| <i>Hannah</i> | <i>26 weeks (2 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college</i> | <i>4.0-4.5</i> | <i>5.5</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>Wuhan</i> | <i>Architecture</i> | <i>7 months</i> |
| <i>Charley</i> | <i>17 weeks pre-session course</i> | <i>5.5</i> | <i>-</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>25</i> | <i>Chongqing and Beijing</i> | <i>Journalism</i> | <i>4 months</i> |
| <i>Ewan</i> | <i>17 weeks pre-session course</i> | <i>5.5</i> | <i>5.5</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>22</i> | <i>Hohhot, Inner Mongolia</i> | <i>Automated Control System Engineers</i> | <i>7 weeks</i> |
| <i>Stella</i> | <i>30 weeks (3 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms</i> | <i>4.0-4.5</i> | <i>5.0</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>23</i> | <i>Heilongjiang province.</i> | <i>Engineering</i> | <i>7 months</i> |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| | <i>at the Pathway college</i> | | | | | | | |
| <i>Joanne</i> | <i>17 weeks pre-session course</i> | <i>5.5</i> | <i>-</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>27</i> | <i>Qingdao, Shengdong province</i> | <i>ScHARR - Epidemiology</i> | <i>4 weeks</i> |
| <i>Elsa</i> | <i>10 weeks pre-session course</i> | <i>5.5</i> | | <i>6.5</i> | <i>23</i> | <i>Shanxi</i> | <i>Accounting and Finance</i> | <i>6 weeks</i> |
| <i>Olivia</i> | <i>6 weeks pre-session course</i> | <i>5.5</i> | | <i>6.5</i> | <i>25</i> | <i>Anhui</i> | <i>Law</i> | <i>2 weeks</i> |
| <i>Jennifer</i> | <i>6 weeks pre-session course</i> | <i>5.5</i> | | <i>6.5</i> | <i>25</i> | <i>Hunan</i> | <i>Oncology - Reproductive Science</i> | <i>2 weeks</i> |

Jack

21 years of age from Xianyang, Shaanxi.

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 10 weeks

Academic Department: Politics and International Relations

Pathway: 26 weeks on General English course with IELTS training sessions (interview 1), then 23 weeks on pre-Masters programme at the International college

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 4.0-4.5, at the time of second interview 5.5, level required to start the Master's degree 6.5.

Jack had completed his course at the language centre by the time of the second interview and had just started his pre-Masters programme at the International College.

6.2 Jack

Jack has a very friendly

disposition and smiles a lot. He smiles when he is a little nervous. I noticed this when I first showed him the dictaphone for recording our conversation. He picked it up, examined it, told me that he had one similar that he would use to make sure he caught everything the teacher had said in class. He smiles when he is mentally searching for words to express his thoughts accurately. He first appeared naturally talkative when he entered the room as he commented on the room, the weather, the time as it was after lunch, but he only had time for a sandwich and not what he would consider a proper meal. His speech at this point is very quick and not always clear. As he relaxes a little and sits back in his chair, his speech slows, and he takes time to consider his responses. He seems more comfortable with the occasional silences. He becomes less concerned with choosing the 'perfect' word and explains what he feels with examples to make sure that I follow.

6.2.1 Before international study in Britain

Jack is from Xianyang, the capital city of Shaanxi Province. He describes it as a very historical city where the people still have traditional, ancient Chinese habits. The importance of English language learning was introduced to Jack by his parents at the age of 3.

"Primary school...before I went to primary school, my mother took me to an English teaching organisation to learn...listen to some English...I think it's very boring (laughter)...3 years old...but I just remember 'Daddy', 'Mommy' like this...these words (laughter)...My parents, especially my father, thought English is very important because my father is a doctor and he also has a doctor's degree....so... in China...English is compared with the whole study process. My father wanted to go to a very famous university in China to keep studying medicine but because of his English level ... he spent a lot of time to pass the exam. So, he thinks if I learnt about English when I was a child he hoped I would get a career more easily... not a career route like him."

From 9 nine years of age Jack states, he was already aware that it was an important school subject, comparative to Mathematics and Chinese.

"In our primary school? Erm...I remember when I was 9 years old... and English was already a very important course for tests. Before, we had English class but they were not very important but from 9 years it's become very important until now. I think mathematics and Chinese are the same level...Arts and Science subjects are another level, but the three most important are Chinese, Mathematics and English."

By the time Jack had become a university student, the significance of English had become even more apparent as his issues with Chinese higher education were developing. If Jack intended to try the higher education system in another country, then improving his level of English was imperative. This would be a challenge, as Jack admits that English was his weakest subject.

"I found I wanted to go to another country...to keep studying... because I think the Chinese higher education system has some problems. I don't like it, so I want to try other countries' education. So, I had to improve my English level because my English is the most poor subject of all. I'm good at Chinese, I'm good at Mathematics, I'm good at History and Politics, even Physics...and Biology ...all apart from English."

With the decision to study abroad made, an agent organised the university offer where on supplying information concerning which majors, Jack was given 4 choices of institution. The preparation to study abroad would be divided into the emotional and practical.

"From 2 years agoalmost 3 years ago I started to prepare for the IELTS exam and I had to submit my exam result to my university ...and also decide which university I would go to ...and this summer...last summer holiday I was preparing visa information...and my parents didn't really give any suggestions I just made my own decision. They just ... like gave me some money for the bank and I needed an account... I needed money to save so I could get a visa. I don't think it is very difficult because you know a lot of Chinese people came to Britain so they could give me advice ..according to some rules. So, it's not very difficult but complicated. Almost all my whole summer holiday I just did one thing and said goodbye. Because in China... I have a lot of friends in my hometown... I have a lot of friends in my university. I told them very early ... I will go to the UK."

For Jack, telling his parents of the decision to study in the UK would be a happy event that would instil pride in his parents.

"... because before I (was) very scared about learning English because it was my weakness but, so I have a lot of bravery to go to the U.K. They (Jack's parents) think it's the most difficult route ...there are a lot of options but I chose the most difficult way so I have to overcome a lot of difficulties. For example, to pass IELTS and try to fit in the local environment, try to use English to communicate with other people. I told you before, the first time I went to Sheffield, I couldn't speak to anyone, so they (Jack's parents) were also a little worried about me, whether I could overcome this difficulty. I think,

yes, but they are also proud of me. I made this decision and hope in the future I can overcome anything and get a Master's degree ... and my father hopes I could even get a doctor's degree (laughter) but it's hard for me...he suggested I could go back to China to study a doctor's degree...because of some financial problems ... some financial reasons. You know, in China, the relationship with our college is very important. They (Jack's parents) want me to have a local relationship so they want me to come back to China to keep studying."

In terms of leaving friends, Jack stated that they were a little sad. He also stated that he was reluctant to go back to China at the moment (for a holiday).

"Sometimes they feel a little sad because that means it's hard for me and hard for them to see me again because the aeroplane ticket is very expensive. Not only this, but also the holidays are not long enough for me to come back to China. And another reason is that I think I haven't got a lot of knowledge from the UK, so I don't want to come back because it's awkward. I think a lot of my friends in China have huge achievements, I have said before ...I have a friend ...we are best friends and he's already a businessman. He has his own car and apartment, so I also want to have some achievements... and my university classmates also are in a very good university in China, like in Beijing you know in Beijing there are a lot of famous universities, so I want to have some achievements to come back...so not to waste my time like this..."

6.2.2.1. Becoming an international student

Although there are large numbers of Chinese students on campus, Jack has noticed a pattern to their behaviour.

"I think I find it very interesting in the daylight in the (name of the library). Most of the students are ... I think are local or British students but ...at night I found a lot of people are Chinese. Because of some timetable...and I think the Chinese people...I think ... they really work hard. Because at the same time, on the one hand they have to overcome the language problem and the education system is totally different and at the same time pass the exam in all of their subjects and they have to spend more...more time on study. So, I think...for me I think it is good because I think Chinese students are very happy that a British university could give any Chinese student the opportunity ...to go to their country to study because our generation has a huge burden in the future... so everyone wants to improve themselves. So, if they have the opportunity they would like to continue studying and the parents ...including my parents are also very supportive for us to go to another country to broaden our horizons ...it's very important. So, I think it's good news for me."

According to Jack, the 'most significant difference' is the living arrangements for students in Britain.

"...sometimes I have more freedom, I have more privacy but on the other hand sometimes I will feel loneliness...I feel lonely because no-one could talk with me and just sometimes we share(the) kitchen but I think my roommates are busy so don't have enough time to talk and sometimes in China I think a lot of people want to talk to me, I want to (be) quiet, I want to do something by myself. But in Britain I find no-one could bother me (laughter) and sometimes I just ...whether I want to or not I just could do my...do something by myself...although I will ...get in touch with my best friend, he's in Scotland...sometimes we will spend time to play computer games together (laughter) and share our emotions sometimes ...I will do some application to get into touch with my family and other friends in China, but you know the time is so ...you know already it's 12pm here in China nowadays...now so I have a lot of classes from Monday to Friday, so during this time I don't have enough time to talk with them so generally I choose the weekend to communicate with them."

In comparing teaching styles in China and Britain, the most prominent difference is the student teacher ratio.

"In China, the main problem in the university is there are a lot of students. So, compared to the students, the teachers are not enough. So, almost every time ...it is a very huge ... classroom has almost 100 people or 200 people and just one teacher. They need a microphone and very huge screen...some people are far from the platform; they can't hear the teacher speaking and they sometimes can't even read the slides. So, sometimes the teacher can just focus on the good students and sometimes they will ignore other students like me. So, I don't have a lot of opportunities to talk with my teacher. Even (if) they are very good, and they are very professional in their area, they just can't focus on part of the students. So, I think in the UK, everyone has a tutor and they have more opportunity to talk with their teacher. So, sometimes teachers can help you do a lot of things, but in China sometimes just different teachers just have different functions."

Teachers tend to have more specific roles, some will give students the opportunity to do a presentation during the course, while others will only do a final exam. This system is particularly difficult for Jack.

"Some teacher will give you an opportunity to do presentations but some teachers don't give you any tasks, just a final exam...it depends on different teachers, but I think I am not happy about the Chinese university because my memory is not good ...even if my presentation is really good, and my essay is also very good, but sometimes I have to attend an exam and during this exam they require us to write a lot of details...I can't remember it directly and clearly ...I didn't get a very high scores but I think my level is not very poor so sometimes I feel very disappointed about this ...so I chose to choose the UK...to continue studying."

He also believes that on his master's programme, class sizes will be smaller and there will be group work.

"I'm not sure in the future when I go into university to do a master's, but I think maybe the classroom is not very big and I have not a lot of classmates. There will be a lot of group work and not just according to the exam and hopefully...I hope the exam does not just test your memory...I think it's very bad just (to) test your memory...sometimes my classmates when they finish the exam they can't remember anything but they can have a good score. I think it's not very fair for me, so I think they (will) have different ways to test you."

When asked how he felt about starting his master's Jack explained he was experiencing a range of emotions.

"I think at that moment I feel a little tired but the most important thing I worry about in the future is if I can finish my homework on time and have good, perfect homework ... a little nervous, a little excited, and a little exhausted."

6.2.2.2. Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

On the topic of friendships, Jack stated that recently he had formed a new friendship in England, with a Chinese undergraduate student.

"Oh yes recently I met a friend, my new friend, he just studies for a Bachelor's. He comes from the South West of China and I come from the North West of China, but the province is not very far from me. So, I think he is very interesting. We find we have a lot of things in common, for example, I like writing I said before, I like writing poems and novels, he also likes this ...so we have a lot of topics we can talk about. So, I think this is really interesting, especially as he lives in Sheffield, sometimes we can study together or do something together."

Although both students are from China, Jack refers to the fact that they are from different areas in China albeit not far in terms of distance, they are distinct in accent and dialect.

"Generally, if someone is Chinese of course we speak Chinese, and you know, sometimes I use a different accent.. because in different regions of China, the people have different accents so sometimes it's totally different. Especially (as) he's from South East of China. There is a local language even like a foreign language, like the difference between German and English."

Yet, there does not seem to be the same connections with any English students or other nationalities from his previous class.

"Yes, erm other nationalities, in the (name of language centre) there are some classmates from different countries. Sometimes we talk together but we don't have enough time to communicate, especially when the class (is) over. Sometimes, we use different means of communication ...so I sometimes recommend him or her (to) use Chinese applications... also they will introduce us to use Facebook and WhatsApp...something like this. So, sometimes I could communicate with them, but we didn't have an appointment. But I know other Chinese people have foreign friends. I think I don't like to make lots of friends and sometimes we become friends because we are lucky. So, maybe not everyone (has) this opportunity to get different friends if we don't have the same hobby. I (need) to think about what I need to say, so sometimes ... maybe I feel very awkward."

This lack of close friendships is one of the most difficult aspects of living in England. Jack will communicate with friends and family (in China) online, but the different time zones are a problem.

Because, you know I said before, I don't have a lot of friends in the UK and sometimes I just have to use a smartphone to communicate with my friends online and with my friends who are in China. You know sometimes, because of the time, we have different times so sometimes it's very hard for me. So, sometimes I feel lonely but... sometimes I think it can be overcome because compared with talking with people, playing with other people...sometimes I would like to read some books, just by myself. So, for example, I play computer games just by myself so I think it will be fine. But sometimes I miss my parents, miss my other family members, miss my friends, so I will use a smartphone to talk (to) them. I think it's really difficult but nowadays I think...er you know...I have already gone to the International College. I think maybe in the future I also need to overcome a lot of academic problems. I don't know how to write a standard English essay and my new classmates, almost all of them are Chinese but some of (them) come from South Korea, and Hong Kong. You know we can also speak Chinese but the culture is different to Singapore, and other South Asian countries. I think it's really interesting because I have a lot of cultures crushed (together)...but it's very interesting. There are sometimes when we have to use English to communicate. So I think in the future I will have more opportunity to talk with other people, other countries' people."

The English language classes at the centre were considered useful as Jack owes achieving the IELTS scores to progress onto the international college as a result of his time spent on this programme and living in England.

"You know I live in Sheffield alone, so sometimes I need to buy something, so I have to talk ...when I first came to Sheffield, sometimes I went to the market. I remember once I wanted to buy insoles, so I used my smartphone to check ...checking for a long time...and trying to read it. So, I chose the ones they don't know...so I choose other words (laughter) so I just show them my dictionary...I think it's very interesting. Sometimes I have to travel with my friends, so during this time we sometimes need to ask the train station staff where is the platform, which platform I need to go, and what is the timetable and how much (is) this ticket...or something like this...or sometimes I need to ask the bus driver I told them our destination and I ask him when arrive here please tell us. So, it's very interesting because you have to use English and sometimes you know in the language centre I will catch every opportunity to speak English, as much as possible, especially in the class. I think I'm very motivated to speak English, I think it's very useful because before I came to the UK, my spoken English is very poor but nowadays I already got 6.5 (IELTS). So, I think it's a huge improvement...and sometimes when it's just me alone studying at home I choose to watch English lectures...such as TED. I think it's very interesting ... different kinds of topic and these topics I could use academically in the future. I also could use these words on speaking generally. But...I am still very scared and careful because I think I didn't get too much living language. I just know some academic words so sometimes I know it but I don't know how to express it, so I think I also need to improve this in the future."

While improvements in listening and writing are believed to be the result of more overt language training, he relates the communicative style of teaching and continued interaction with classmates to inadvertently improving his speaking skills.

"I think listening has improved...and speaking has improved and also writing has improved... before I told you...my writing was just 5.0 but nowadays I got 5.5 and I think in the future I could get 6.0/6.5 but maybe I will not attend any IELTS exam but it does not mean I won't do more practice with writing. Definitely, it's very helpful because I already passed the IELTS exam because of last term's study at the (name of language centre), because including you giving me a lot of suggestions about how to improve and during this time I also worked very hard to improve myself, especially listening. I listen to a lot of IELTS topics and during this time I think I started to fit the tones of English. I can catch the meaning of the English. Before, I sometimes would be very nervous and sometimes my concentration had some problems. But, I think I have already made a lot of improvement. Because at the language centre I had lots of opportunity to communicate with other people. With my classmates, with my teacher, and during this time, my listening and my writing, speaking has improved, ...and not on purpose (unintentionally)."

Studying at the International College is different. Jack described the topics under focus at the language centre as 'normal' where everyone could contribute to discussions. However, he feels at the pathways college some students have no idea what the topics are about.

"I think there are a lot of differences, because in the language centre, there are a lot of opportunities to talk with my classmates and I think the topic is very normal and every topic we have something to say. Plus, you know, in the International College, we have a class named Social Science. Some people don't know the meaning of this. So, the teacher asks us to talk with each other ... sometimes we have no idea about this topic...sometimes we can't follow the teacher...the teacher just talks to themselves so sometimes we can't follow it. In the language centre, teachers just give a little homework, and this homework is not very difficult to do. But at the International College, some homework is a big job. Our essay writing teacher requires us to submit an outline of an essay, and for this essay we need to read some articles and find some references and have our own opinion and to write it down and check it, find some...if there is any problem with logic. It's a very great job."

Jack believes this to be a consequence of the range of subject area backgrounds of the students in this (pathways college) class.

"I think it's because they have different disciplines...I think I know because my major is politics and economics, and my hobbies are reading and working with different types of lecture articles. So, I can follow it. But sometimes, some words I don't know the meaning of, but I can follow the teacher's ideas. All of us have to enter the same class so we have different majors. Sometimes, for example, we talk about feminism...I think there are a lot of arguments when we talk about feminists and some Chinese students think the British culture is totally different from China, especially feminism and the social system. We have a lot of arguments and sometimes we have a lot of clashes...they don't agree with our teachers and the teacher's point sometimes...I think it's very interesting that we use different ways to think about one thing ...we have different traditions sometimes."

Jack offers an example of people in Europe or America who may view freedom as common sense. However, for some in Asia, the country is one large family, and everyone has a role, thus a type of connection - therefore not 'free' of each other.

"...for example, maybe in the Europe or America I think this is (a) common sense, everyone needs the freedom, but in Asia some people think the country (is) like (a)very huge family, they have different family...it has different parts so the connection is different so I think it's hard to say which is good and which is bad ...so we use different ways to think one thing...so it's very interesting...I think it's not very difficult for me because before I already knew ... my English is very poor but I know a lot of history about Europe, about America, about their country and I know the UK's political system ...so I think I can follow their ideas. Sometimes I think I hold objective opinions about these things, I think that I can catch on as I'm not a very traditional Chinese person, so I think it's okay for me."

6.2.3 After the pre-sessional

English will definitely have a role in the two career paths under consideration for Jack. One possible option is a career in journalism where English would serve as an international language to interview and correspond with foreigners/non-Chinese.

"There are a lot of areas I need to use English, for example, as a journalist. Sometimes, I could interview people from other countries and ...you know English is an international language so almost every country's people know it. So, sometimes I could use English to talk with them...and in China, they also need journalists who have a high level of English. And if ...in the future... I continue to study Politics; I will have to read a lot of academic articles ... English academic articles and I will write some essays to try to get published in some English journals. So, if I think about what career in the future I have, I will have to use English and I think it's very useful, especially in China. Two years ago I went to Hainan province, it's a very beautiful island in China ...to work in a media company and I found it very interesting. A journalist who worked there, studied in the UK before and he became very popular because his English is very good. He can interview people from other countries and he could also use both Chinese and English to write reports ... and he has more opportunities than other journalists, ...other journalists who are just good at Chinese. So, that's why I chose to study abroad."

6.2.4. Discussion

6.2.4.1. Personal and social interaction

In terms of personal factors, how his parents and friends may judge his development have impacted on Jack's experiences of learning English and developing English interaction skills. He refers to his parents and the pride they felt when he had decided to confront his anxiety about English and study abroad. The importance Jack's father attached to English for successful entry into a good Chinese university for doctoral studies, based on his own experience as a student, is a view presented in Li et al (2010). However, for Jack, it would extend beyond university choice. He also mentions his concern of what others close to him may think about his language skills, if he has not acquired his desired level of knowledge. This is to the extent of not wanting to visit friends in China until his language achievements are comparable to their successes of 'having their own businesses, cars, apartments or attending good universities in China'. This may not be the human capital referred to by Xiang and Shen (2009) but could relate to the emblematic prestige Blommaert (2012) associated with studying abroad. However, Jack feels that this would only serve if his communication skills in English are seen as significant as an

achievement as the success his friends have had in their careers and achieving financial independence. This is despite the fact that Jack admitted to being lonely in the UK and 'having no one to talk to'. Turner (2006) linked these issues of loneliness to problems of academic confidence. Jack's narrative has multiple mentions of not being 'good' at English, or not having a good (enough) memory for the Chinese educational system of reproducing knowledge in exams, and wanting to 'confront his problem with English' by studying in Britain.

Another example of how Jack's personal and social interactions may have affected his English language use and development of a communicative repertoire is his interactions outside the language class. Jack admits that he feels there is little time to communicate with non-Chinese students as the methods or technology used to communicate differs across student nationality groups. Many Chinese international students at the institution share the same social media apps that differ from what the other students at the language centre use. The result is that the intention or desire to interact with other nationality groups exists, which was a finding in Pearson (2020b). However, Jack's narrative supports the claim in Wu and Hammond (2011) that opportunities to interact with non-Chinese students and make 'foreign' friends is largely a question of luck. Although, as also stated in Andrade (2006), Jack hopes that he will have these types of interactions and connections in the future, the emphasis was on students from countries other than China and not necessarily 'home' students from Britain.

The type of social interaction experienced by Jack, outside the language class, is largely functional or transactional English. This mirrors the findings from Copland and Garton (2011) who state that although these were the shortest interactions in their study, they were the most frequently reported. Moreover, because of the focus on academic English, Jack does not feel he has the communicative repertoire (Rymes, 2014) to confidently manage social interactions in English.

6.2.4.2. Continuity

The impact of Jack's past experience of English language learning has had a combination of positive and negative impacts on his current communicative repertoire. The most positive impact has been during his pre-session course at the language centre where Jack adopted a

communicative approach to developing his English language skills that has increased his language production (Bax, 2003). Years of formal English studies did not instil confidence in Jack's competence in the language. This may be due to the technician teaching approach previously adopted and the resulting technician perspective of English (Reagan, 2004) Jack had, until he became an international student in Britain.

Jack spoke of an awareness of the importance of English for his future success, from as young as the age of nine. This has continued throughout his experiences for middle and high school, to undergraduate studies in China, and throughout his pre-session programme. This resonates with the idea that language has been conceptualised as a commodity (Rubdy and Tan, 2008) with a value that equates higher English language proficiency with more opportunities for success in terms of education and career. Jack's self-criticism of his language proficiency also cast doubt on his general educational performance and aspirations towards future work in academia. The claims from Rubdy and Tan (2008) of the role of foreign language in equipping the next generation for the globalised world, and how heavily the government in China attributed the value of a language to what can be gained economically, politically and socially gives perspective to the pressure Jack continues to place on himself to improve his language proficiency. Jack has to focus on the assessments, resulting in studying the language over developing his functional analysis and application of his L2 (Rymes, 2014).

6.2.4.3. Situation/place

Jack's negative comments in his narrative regarding the educational system in China demonstrate the impact 'place' has had on his learning experience in general, and his English language development specifically. Without having experience of a British university education, his assumptions are that an educational system abroad would be better than what he had experienced. This is aligned with Knight's (2011) second myth that the international reputation of a university is a proxy for quality.

According to Jack's narrative, the responsibility of successfully meeting the standards to pass both coursework and exams lies in the hands of the students. This differs from the idea that

the universities should play a more active role in the transition of international students into postgraduate studies (Bond, 2019) or that British universities should adopt a cultural synergy (Zhou et al, 2008) or middle way (Durkin, 2008) approach to accommodate the Chinese international students on their programmes

Lina

24 years old from Zhejiang, Shanghai

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 10 weeks

Academic Department: Journalism

Pathway: 30 weeks on General English course with IELTS training sessions (at the language centre), then 23 weeks on pre-master's programme at the International college

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 4.0-4.5, at the time of interviews 5.0, level required to start the master's degree 6.5.

Lina was still studying at the language centre at the time of the interviews. Her next stage would be to start at the International College for her pre-master's programme.

6.3 Lina

At first, Lina looks a little uncomfortable. She looks serious and while she is not frowning, she is not smiling either. As she speaks about her life, she becomes more animated and laughs occasionally. She gives very direct responses. When she is talking about the decisions she has made and her plans, she sounds confident and determined. She is mindful of language errors but does not allow them to stop her train of thought. After she has finished what she wants to say, she corrects herself. She appears to soften when she talks about her friends in China and her responses are becoming less about conveying the facts and more about how she feels about topics. I can see that she is getting a little tired. She asks for a dictionary to check on a word that seems to have given her a little respite from speaking. She smiles and then continues talking.

6.3.1 Before international study in Britain

Lina is from Zhoujian, near Shanghai. It is a coastal city, which hosts the famous West Lake in Hangzhou.

In primary school, English was more of an optional class of pronunciation and social skills, until secondary school and high school where the subject was then compulsory with the focus shifted to grammar.

"We study English in primary school...and in secondary school... we should take an exam if we want to go to the high school...we must take the English test ... yeah...it's a compulsory exam. Because in high school and secondary school, my teacher focused on grammar and writing, not speaking and

listening. So, we felt English was a little boring. We just remembered the words... not interesting. Yeah. I think the teachers were too focused on results not experience."

Her parents did not attach any importance to English studies at school, and other than to gain acceptance into a university she was of the same opinion.

"No...no. They...my parents don't think that it's important...Also, I think (laughter)... they don't think it's important but I need to go the university they require it...I need to pass the exams."

It was her decision to study abroad although financially it would depend on her parents' agreement.

"I decided to go abroad to study. Then I chose which country I planned to go to and I planned to go to the UK. So, I researched on the Internet...the university. They (Lina's parents) just gave me money (laughter). At first, they...my parents didn't agree because they think you graduate from university, you can get a job, and they planned for me to get a job...go to work and get married (laughter). But I think ...I can't find a good job in China in my hometown. So, I tell them I planned to go to another city, then I moved to Shanghai... by myself. And then I say I have decided to go abroad...study Masters...They say, 'you are (an) adult you can depend on yourself' so I told them my decision so they supported me."

Her plans were to change her current career path and do a Masters in Global Journalism.

"Because if we want to find a job, we need the English certificate ... certificate...yes... I have been in a job for a year... so I found some (other) job and the requirement is that I have an English diploma level."

The decision to study in England and not another English-speaking country was largely a question of the duration of the course and the options available for a student wishing to change from one discipline to another.

"In the class before where I studied... there... most students are studying in high school or university...and they intended to go to maybe Australia and Canada...and the UK. I have considered ... America but erm there are many reasons. America needs three years to study a master's and to come to the UK it's just one year. As I changed my major, some universities do not receive students changing their major so I also considered Australia but they (do) not have many universities ... only eight...Not many choices."

Lina had grown tired and dissatisfied with her job at the airport in her hometown after a year and believed the only way to get her ideal job would be a return to studies. Journalism at master's level would be somewhat distinct from her undergraduate experience of the study of air transport.

"Because er...I found after 1 year of work this job is not my favourite and I felt very tired and I was not enjoying this work. So, I wanted to change ...do something which is my favourite. So, I wanted to get a good job but some companies don't employ people who do not have a related major... so I should change my major and keep studying."

At the airport, English is understandably a key skill especially at the large international airports in Beijing and Shanghai.

"Erm...I think it depends in the future what company I'm working in (laughter) maybe. For example, before I was working in my hometown airport ... it's very small because my hometown is not a big city. So, not many people from other countries travel there... so mostly local people...erm often not using English. Maybe in Beijing, Shanghai and the (Guangzhou), the three big cities,...because they have many people from other countries ... We tend to use English more and more than in another city (where) there are not many other countries' people. So, you do not often use English. When I went to Beijing, Shanghai, bigger cities ... the airport staff use English everyday so maybe the journalist is the same. If I work in a small company maybe it's not very useful... but if I went to some company...with cooperation with another city...er culture maybe it's important ...erm ...I think nowadays...English has become a global language. So many people come to China and they can't speak Chinese, the most we can use is English for communication. I think nowadays because most people study English in primary school, nowadays most young people can speak English...although not very well...but basic communication is no problem. I have a friend from another country. She lives in Shanghai, and most (of the) young people can speak English very well. But sometimes, she travels to another city where they do not use English...they can't speak English."

With the decision to study abroad, and now with the support of her parents, Lina started part-time classes at the weekend to prepare for the IELTS test.

"I prepared for the IELTS test...just 2 years I think until now. Yes, at first I prepared for the IELTS test because I didn't know the information about the IELTS test. So, I researched some information and went to the class ... some part-time classes at the weekend. I studied there for about 3 months and they taught me what is the IELTS test and how to prepare...yeah...so after I prepared for the IELTS test myself."

6.3.2 International study

6.3.2.1 Becoming an international student

She had searched for her university course first which was what led her to make her choice of university. She was also aware there would be different styles of teaching and learning in Britain.

"Oh...it's a big difference...when I studied in university we ...the classroom is also different...mostly like the lecture...for example...the lecture (theatre) is a bigger room and many, many students and one tutor and one computer and we also have lectures...all have many students. In my class...my major ...maybe 30 classmates and sometimes some lectures we have maybe over 100 people. But, a small class is a little different because well ...it's similar to a lecture ... but the lecture is maybe above 200 students but in the small class we have 30 or 40 students, just one teacher and we (do) not talk with our classmates... we should listen to our teacher. Yes, all...mostly the teacher talking...no students talking...we shouldn't talk in class."

While Lina believes the teaching style will be different in terms of the teaching style adopted in the U.K., she believes the students in China also have their own learning habits.

"Erm...how to say... maybe they have many reasons...I think first the teacher's personal style...different teachers have their own method...but most...I think the education method there (in China) ...maybe the education system is different...Maybe ...I'm not sure how the classes go in Sheffield university but in China ... for example, we must focus on the result ...the exam result. We just study hard, at the end of the time we should pass the exam...and usually we don't (study) very hard...we just do homework and go to the class and don't worry about not passing the exam...until at the end of the term when we should (work) very hard."

As well as approaches in the classroom, Lina found the living arrangements very different from what she was accustomed to when she was at university in China.

"Big difference when I study in university we live in school...on campus...yes we have accommodation.. we live with classmates together one room live 6 people...we don't have a kitchen, so we go to the canteen to eat everyday...and in the school we have the canteen, restaurant, and accommodation and everything in the campus ..we don't leave...we don't need to leave the university and most of the universities you have shops...basic facilities so we buy anything there. But in the UK, the accommodation (is) not inside the university and the accommodation is different...we must live alone and we should cook (ing) by ourselves and no canteen...yeah. I rent a house close to there...(with) two girls...they are from China...and the...I think the fee for the accommodation... the fee is very expensive but in China it's very cheap when we live in the accommodation."

However, the social environment with large numbers of Chinese students at the university did not come as a surprise.

"No surprise. ...Many Chinese people living here... many Chinese students in the street, because...(of) this so many shops or companies, we don't miss our hometown... okay...I think many students ...Chinese students... in Sheffield (and) that is developing some industry...it's like the Chinese supermarket and Chinese canteen... it's very convenient. Sometimes I think it's (a) good thing because if you meet some problems you can ask them (for their) help and you can make many friends...we have the same culture but sometimes I don't think it is ...because most...if most friends ask you to eat dinner and you can't go to...then they will think you (are) unfriendly..."

6.3.2.2 Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

Lina does not view the number of Chinese students at the university as too problematic.

"...I think it's okay...I talk with Chinese (I) mostly use Chinese...(laughter)...so I don't think they affect my communication skills...the most...I'm using English in the classroom and sometimes with another country's friend (a friend from another country)."

However, the number of fellow Chinese students does come with social cultural commitments that cannot be avoided.

'Yeah...I think in China we focus on, for example, eating. I will ask you to go to my home to eat dinner. It is because we are friends I ask you, we focus on eating because when we're eating we can talk about many things to another person. In China, we use a round table because everybody can stay together and (face each other), we share the food and we go, I with my classmates, go to dinner, Japanese, Korean, ... and British, they only...every person has their own meal and just eats their own meal but in China everybody shares a lot of food on the table. While we are eating, we are talking, we are not very focused on the food, we are just focused on talking with another person...So, nowadays many friends come from China ...we must, we must go to eat together and become friends'

Though Lina feels, in addition to maintaining her old relationships, it is important to develop these newer friendships.

'We should care about ..I should continue with my friends who are in China and with my family connection. However, it is also important to form this type of relationship with people in the UK, ...Yeah, because we only need friends, erm...I hope to spend some time with friends, company with them er because I'm just by myself, I'm alone...I need my friend's help often and my family is far away so I should focus on the relationship of friendship...yeah'

Despite these social commitments, Lina has noted the best thing about living in England is the development of her English language skills, particularly speaking and comprehension.

"The best thing...I think er study is ... my English improved very quickly because when I studied in China to study English... I just focused on reading and writing ... no communication with...using English but now I should speak English everyday. I think that's er...and I receive many different minded (views)...for example ...I think nowadays there are...same gender they can marry.. Before I think it's very weird but nowadays I think it's great also... I think I change my mind nowadays. The first time I came to the U.K., I can't understand (when) most people speaking ...yeah sometimes in the class I just understand er...80% but nowadays I can understand most ... maybe 90 % and ...before I think my speaking (has) also improved ...sometimes maybe I needed a translator in my mind ...I should spend a lot ...long time to translate...but nowadays I directly experience my idea. Er...yeah...I think writing... before I read books...English Books...a little hard ...a little difficult...but recently I finished reading many English books...yeah it's easier than before. The most difficult...erm...I think writing...yeah. I think communication ... you just explain your opinion and the words people can understand but when you're writing you should learn to spell, and the grammar and some verbs are formal...Erm...nowadays I listen to radio BBC news every morning to improve my listening and sometimes I went to travel and I heard some people communicate I learn the...oh...some slang...and I remember when I wanted to travel I talk with some people and they are using some new verbs ...it's very interesting".

Moreover, English is spoken in class, and the international nature of the university provides the opportunity to see students from other countries which are both positive aspects of studying in the UK.

"I remember last year I came to the UK ...most of my friends have a WeChat group...we know each other in the group. It's their first year they come to Sheffield. And I know Sheffield local people because I joined a club in the Students' Union and yeah...and I know friends from other countries ...and of course we are classmates and sometimes I go to play and maybe (to a) bar and some place ... I know them. The communication club...the international communication cafe...once a week...every Friday evening... (People from) all over the world...yeah.. the organisers are local students and many other country's students come here and just communicating every evening...my friend recommended it because I remember the first time I ask my friend to go to play...he said he needed to ...he wanted to go to the international cafe so I accompanied him...so I know this club."

The extra-curricular clubs at the university are providing Lina with different opportunities to interact in English.

'because I like talking, communicating with others, and other students are ... international so when I am talking with them I can get many ideas and change my mind so I think it's a better way to learn some informal English speaking and get some knowledge about another city, another country'.

Since coming to the U.K. and joining the conversation clubs, Lina has felt more confident interacting with others.

'I think most Asian countries, most people are a little shy...yeah... but nowadays it depends on the person...erm but I think in my country we are a traditional country...people are very embarrassed to... (express) our mind and (but) nowadays I think with the economic, technological development people now are more open-minded...yeah ... I think at the beginning (when) I came to the UK, I was also too shy to express my ideas and opinions, to talk with another student, talking in a group but nowadays I enjoying this talking (a lot)..I can talk, express my many ideas ...yeah'.

6.3.3 After the pre-sessional

Looking ahead to the future, Lina did not say much more than the International College being more focused on her major whereas the language centre on her English skills.

"It's the class...the course is more (inaudible) with my major...yeah...because nowadays I just study English and focus more on improving my English, but maybe in the International College I will focus on my major knowledge. I worry about not pass(ing) the exam...to do the Master's...I plan to keep studying...just my plan I plan to (go) to the international college pre-Masters, and go to study Master's, and after I plan go to China or maybe another country. I want to earn some money and keep studying...I want to learn Japanese so maybe two years later I will go (to) Japan. Before I go to travel I can't speak English very well and I (was) reading the English books, I like reading books...but before I found it very difficult I only read the translated books...maybe in the future I can read original books and communicate with people very well. When I go (travelling) I can use English very well. I think the English is very important in my life...yeah."

Her experience of studying and living in Britain may also help with her career when she returns to China.

'...some companies just focus on the certificate, not usually the result. A graduate who has some 'international' experience whether it is attendance at an international school or one who has 'experienced studying in another city and got a good grade, ... comes back to our country and the government will give them support, yeah give them some advantage'.

6.3.4 Discussion

6.3.4.1. Personal and social interaction

Lina's narrative reveals that social factors may have initially impeded the development of English language interaction skills at school. Her description of English language studies as an

exam focused subject with limited opportunities for speaking practice confirms findings in Ji (2004) which states that communication skills were not the learning objective for English language teaching in China. It was a high stakes exam subject, and passing or failing the exam would impact future job choice and acceptance to a university. This technician approach to English (Reagan, 2004) is somewhat removed from her attitude towards English once she had started employment at the airport. English was viewed as a means to communicate and as a necessity when Lina worked in the larger cities in China. Lina has maintained this attitude throughout her pre-session course where both personal and social factors have influenced her English interaction skill development.

Based on her narrative, Lina's decision to study abroad appears to be as a means to obtain a cultural experience (Counsell, 2011) as she states she is more receptive to new perspectives. She has gained access to these new ideas through developing English communication skills which have provided access to different social groups. These skills, she feels, she has developed on her pre-session course that supports claims by Bax (2003) that the CLT approach improves language production. Lina has also engaged with forms of managed intergroup contact (Harrison and Peacock, 2010) provided by the university, for example, the international communication cafe and other activities promoted in the university's Student's Union. This could be viewed as an example of personal existential internationalism as presented by Tian and Lowe (2009) as she is creating and navigating through her own international context with different cultural groups. Rather than the natural occurrence of intergroup contact, Lina situated herself in an environment specifically designed to facilitate communication between and across cultural groups. Through managed intervention from the higher education institution, these opportunities provide the conditions for successful contact: equality, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2005).

6.3.4.2. Continuity

Lina's past experiences of learning English could have negatively impacted on her current L2 repertoire; however, it appears to have made her even more determined to move away from the objective technician view of English (Reagan, 2004). The focus on exams to get on the

master's programme to allow her to change her career path was what was necessary for Lina to get the place on the pre-sessional English course. However, her focus on language study has changed or evolved. Lina's narrative has revealed shifting identities (Bond, 2019) from the language student learning the type of English required to pass the assessments and complete tasks on the preparatory course, to the international student developing the type of English required to communicate outside of the classroom, enabling her to understand perspectives different from the environments she was accustomed to in China. She views her development in line with wider societal changes impacted by technological innovations and globalisation, and the effect these have had on more traditional perspectives. This is in line with observations in O'Dwyer (2017) on the diversity and range of CHC influence on individuals from these cultural context countries. Gaining an 'international experience' while acquiring her master's qualification could provide Lina with governmental support in finding secure employment when she returns to China. So, her learning experiences during study abroad are adding to her human capital value (Xiang and Shen, 2009).

6.3.4.3. Situation/place

In her narrative, Lina presents the correlation of the use and/or knowledge of English with membership to a globalised world, in the sense of the impact or more precisely - the increasing benefits of having English language skills in China - which supports the view upheld by Phillipson (2016) of English marketed and popularised as the unquestionable 'lingua nullius' (Phillipson, 2016, p4). Yet, it appears that the compulsory English language provision endorsed by The Law on Language Use of the People's Republic of China, may have delivered on the message of the importance of English to these participants, as stated in Phillipson (2016), but not necessarily on the methods to acquire the skills in the foreign language chosen to accommodate the globalised China. In changing the situation, and moving from China to Britain, Lina's narrative presents the methods she adopted. By looking for opportunities to use English, she is learning to communicate outside the classroom environment, developing her L2 communicative repertoire and broadening her perspective of social reality.

Lina has noted differences in learning and teaching styles in the limited time she has spent in the UK. Her experiences in China may support notions of a more passive-receptive approach to learning (Watkins and Biggs, 1996) which she ascribes to logistic reasons and the large number of students you would find in any given university class or group in China. However, being accustomed to this situation has not prevented her from taking an active approach to learning in Britain. The CLT approach adopted in her language class in Britain has supported her transition from a passive to an active learner. In taking a more active role in the development of her interaction skills, the linguistic landscape of the city (Blommaert, 2014), and the demographics of the pre-sessional course do not serve as obstacles in her language development goals.

Hannah

21 years old from Wuhan

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 7 months

Academic Department: Architecture

Pathway: 26 weeks (2 terms) on Preparatory English course then (23 weeks) 3 terms at the Pathway college

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 4.0-4.5, at the time of interviews 5.5, level required to start the master's degree 6.5.

Hannah had completed her studies at the language centre by the time of the first interview. She was now attending the International College to do her pre-master's course.

6.4 Hannah

Hannah enters the room energetically and apologises for arriving a little later than the time we had agreed. She is happy to be back at the language centre and asks me about her previous teacher, if I know him. She is enthusiastic about doing the interviews and curious about the research process. She takes time to think about and to check she has fully understood the discussion topic, but once she has done this, her responses are full. She digresses away from the topic at times but manages to find her way back. The conversation flows easily, there are no awkward silences. She smiles and laughs as she talks about her boyfriend and the English TV programmes she enjoys. We continue talking after the interview has finished.

6.4.1 Before international study in Britain

Hannah is from Wuhan and her major is Architectural Design. She became a participant in this research to obtain first-hand experience of doctoral research in the UK as she is currently considering it as an option when she completes her master's at the university. Hannah has studied English for over 9 years but admits that she really did not like the subject.

"Yes, I have studied English for a long time ... over 9 years but I don't like English...it's not good. Yes, like in primary school I just remembered I have English lessons but I don't remember what I learnt. Yes so it's not very useful to me..like erm maybe it's personal ...a personal reason I didn't study well in China for English but I think Chinese English teachers prefer to focus on some grammar or like to complicate sentences because in the exam the grammar is the key point to examine you"

In high school, the focus was grammar, reading and writing, although Hannah admits the students in class were not very proficient at these skills.

"Yes, but I think Chinese students writing is not good although they always focus on writing...(laughter) yes ...For me like when I write an essay some words...if I want to say some words

but I don't know the words I will translate it or search it on the dictionary but they will have a lot of options but I don't know which one is a suitable one, so I just choose one of them and use it. Some teachers will tell me it's not suitable like ... last time I write a sentence when students regain their class or regain their university but actually I want...I want to say when they resume the class. Yes, we talk about gap years so I say that and my teacher (name) he told me 'no you can't say 'regain' because 'regain' is always used to regain some confidence...regain power.. Yeah, yeah, so I think this is the problem ...we don't know which words are suitable for this sentence...or we don't know which... how to say... how to use it exactly."

It was never used in everyday life and was solely reserved for exams. So, participating in English was never a matter of choice.

"Yeah, I didn't I think...I didn't enjoy studying English in China ... Why? Because we don't use it in normal life so in that time I learn just to pass the exam, so it's like forcing you to do something not myself willing to do that but now I think...especially in this term...my attitude has changed."

The first steps to study in the UK were taken by Hannah, with a friend, where they started by searching for online agencies who specialise in study abroad.

"...for me agency maybe...some study abroad agency...they were employed to provide some like...basic information about the university...or they will according to their experience...like because...I heard they have some cooperation with the university, they can get some information from school...from university ...er so I got most of the information from the agent"

However, the current university was also the recommendation of her tutor who had studied as an international student at the same institution.

"...but for me I have a tutor at my university, he was study(ing) abroad in (name of city), because he was my tutor he recommended it to me."

Hannah discussed the choice of agency with her parents and following a visit to the agency preparation to study abroad was initiated.

"My parents didn't get involved deeply...just after I chose the agency I told them 'I think that one was great', we can have some contact with them. One day, my parents and I went there together and talked to them and made some decisions."

Yet, the decision was made two to three years prior when Hannah was a first year undergraduate student.

"Because I had the decision for a long time, when I was a freshman in university I had decided. So, in that time ...how do you say...I mostly focus on improving my GPA...because I think that was great to put in my daily life tasks, and then ... language preparation I think. I think it was 2 years later when I was in third grade, I tried to learn some IELTS tests, some skills about the test. But legal requirements, I didn't prepare them for a long time because...er how do you say...like bank statements you have time limitations I can't do that...prepare for a long time...maybe half a year before...how do you say...Yes, six months before I start to prepare some legal requirements."

In hindsight, Hannah believes doing her undergraduate degree in Britain would have been more beneficial than just completing her master's abroad.

"Yes, but I would like to say if I ...got the bachelor's degree it will be more useful than a postgraduate degree...do you get what I mean?...So, like not only me but a lot of my friends will think a British bachelor's degree is more useful...like my flatmate they will study for a bachelor's degree in the UK, study 3 years...but I finish my graduate degree in China and then came here just to study for a 1 year postgraduate degree. So, we think a bachelor's degree is more useful than a postgraduate degree because some employers will think you lived a long time in the UK. Maybe it's because a British postgraduate only takes one year, they admit it's valuable ... because they think one year is really intensive, so sometimes they will consider how much knowledge you can learn in one year... but sometimes they think if you finish a bachelor's degree in the UK it's better...yeah'.

Hannah's parents received the news that she wanted to study abroad differently. Her mother was '100%' supportive of the decision.

"Er...it's different between mum and my father. Like my mum ... she was 100% support me, she thinks 'girls should be ...how do you say...'open your mind, you need to see a lot of things in the world', we can't be...just stay at home and be a wife...we should have a good job like that. But my father was different erm he wanted me to find a job in my hometown...yes, but, when I mentioned I want to study abroad, he didn't (wasn't) against me but he didn't totally agree I think...he is not like my mum 100% support me...maybe half like that. I think he didn't want me to leave the home so far and secondly maybe he thinks girls don't need a higher educational background...I'm not sure because his opinion was changed like when I get the Edinburgh offer he was so happy about that so...but in that time I didn't get an ideal IELTS score so he changed his mind...he thinks I can't get my IELTS score so it means I don't have the ability to study abroad...yes so."

6.4.2 International study

6.4.2.1. Becoming an international student

Initially, the landscape with Chinese restaurants and supermarkets instilled a sense of security for Hannah.

"First saw them? Convenient I think...because in September when I arrived in England I thought to myself ...I'm afraid to talk with people in English so like Chinese supermarket or Chinese restaurant makes me feel familiar and makes me feel safe. Yes, especially in this supermarket."

Hannah was also aware of their existence before travelling to the UK therefore it did not come as a surprise when she found them along the main high streets in England.

"Not very, not too much...because I have got some information in advance so just made me feel safe I think...like if I don't know how to describe the product in (the) Tesco or Sainsbury's...I can buy it in this place."

On whether these facilities affected her communication skills, Hannah felt that the effect was negative.

"...negative I think actually...How do you say...like we can eat in a Chinese restaurant, buy products in the Chinese supermarket, we can cut hair in Chinese hair studio...like it seems like live in (an) Western country but all of things, all of the products I use are Chinese (one), it's not really, really, involved in Western countries. Just at the beginning when I first arrived it can provide some safe(ty) feeling for me, but after that when I was familiar with Tesco or Nando's (laughter) another restaurant I didn't usually...I didn't go there often, I think."

6.4.2.2. Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

Hannah felt the interaction between students was different in Britain.

"How do you say...because my university is the Institution of Fine Arts, so actually our atmosphere is quite free ... but the important thing I think is that we are not open enough ...as much as the British people, I think. Like they always hold a party on Friday night or something like that but ...in China we always have some small groups...yes we if we hold a party maybe we just invite my classmates or my roommates...like for me I will divide my friends into ...classmates...they all know each other we will invite them to this party but next time maybe our classmates want to hold a party but they won't invite 'my' classmates because they don't know each other. But in Britain, ...if you want to invite your friends, it's welcomed...yeah so think it's quite different. Yeah, you can come here if you're friendly or like that you are willing to join us."

In China, living arrangements for the university students on campus is also much more community oriented. Unlike the one person per room with a shared kitchen in Britain, in China Hannah shared her room with 3 other students.

"No, ...not the same quite different...er like in Britain I live in one room...I mean 1 person 1 room and we share the kitchen right but in China 4 people in the one room...yes but actually my university facilities are quite good...but a lot of other universities in China maybe 6 people will share the one room...so it's quite different...like, it's like a floor ...the top floor is beds, and the ground floor is table, and we share a bathroom...a dormitory...we don't have a kitchen we have another one...oh my gosh...It's been a long time since I use this word...dining room...oh yes. No, we don't cook the food, we have the staff to cook the food and they sell it in the building and we just buy it."

In terms of how much Hannah's social communication is in English now she is in England varies, though she does seek opportunities to engage in English.

"At the weekend what the percentage of how much I speak in English and how much in Chinese?...erm...for me half I think...because I am trying to speak English more ... like go hiking with other nationality people...or join some sports club like fencing, but it's the first time I joined it...I'm a beginner. My boyfriend is Japanese, so I have to use English every day to communicate with him. Who do I talk to the most in English? England? Most? Erm...most my boyfriend (laughter)...because we just got together in England...so I guess maybe it's my boyfriend because...because he went back to Japan so we communicate every day, regularly, so, so yeah. I just try to use English more but not all of the time...because my flatmate is Chinese... yes so when I go back home ...in Chinese I think."

Hannah wanted to travel to Britain to speak more English but she may have to change how she socialises now she is here.

"I don't know if there are a lot of Chinese on my course...Yes...erm because I have heard there are a lot of Chinese students ... Actually, I think it's not OK...because like in my mind I think...no in my opinion (laughter)erm...I want to study abroad because I want to become better so if I want to say Chinese or speak Chinese I think staying in China is better so I try to avoid spending a lot of time with my old friends ...try to get some new friends in this place."

At the International College, Hannah feels uncomfortable when large groups of Chinese students get together and chat loudly.

"It depends actually...I don't like (it when) a lot of people get together as a group ..like ...if I meet a lot of Chinese people getting together as a group or chatting loudly, I will feel a little bit uncomfortable because I think it's...because I will think maybe the local people will think 'oh ... Chinese students are

just like that...like organise a group and play with their Chinese friends and get together with their Chinese friends, they wouldn't like to get involved ...Chinese students at the International College'. But like my classmates, I think it's quite nice... they get used to speaking English like in our class we have Moroccan students, Japanese students and Korean students, of course Chinese students occupy the large percentage but I think they are nice because they want to make the other three different nationalities students (can) involve us, they will avoid speaking Chinese, try to speak English with them like that. So, I think they are quite nice..."

She feels that when Chinese students form the close-knit groups they are effectively closing the door to all other nationalities.

"Yes...I don't like this kind of group...because I can't understand why they organise a group because we are foreigners... we want to get warmer feelings than that...but to get ...in my opinion to organise a group like we close the door...we put ourselves into a cage...yes so...it depends..."

Hannah hopes that the demographic of her current class is reflective of study at the main university with a mix of nationalities represented.

"Er...for me actually...I prefer the classmate which is mixed (with) a lot of other nationalities, because ...it's not because I want to meet a lot of cultures...yes it can be (one of the reasons)... but there is a really really important reason for me I'm a little bit afraid to talk about...with local people...yes so...but there are a lot of European, or another Asian or another country's people...all of us are foreigners...British are local...when I get together with them I will feel not so afraid...it's better I think...but I don't know why I feel afraid why...when I talk with native speakers. Yes I will (would) I think if I am alone and chat with the local people maybe I will feel better...like last time I went to the cinema I don't know how to use the machine so I asked a local people (person) and ...the guy with his daughter I guess and he taught me how to use the machine...in that time actually it's okay...I feel not so nervous but yeah I agree when I get together with my friends I will rely on them...let them to talk or let them communicate with another guy...like last week we were trying to look at some house for next semester and I will...I think I will on purpose stand at the back, and let them communicate with the owner."

Although Hannah wants to mix with other groups, she still feels that having her own social network is essential.

'Yes...yes we have to do that I think...because it's not only relevant to study abroad because ... people are social ... I think everything is socially constructed so you can't live totally individually. So to establish a 'guanxi' or relationship or network is necessary and it's natural...even if you are not willing to do that'.

6.4.3. After the pre-sessional

On passing the IELTS exam to continue onto the International College, Hannah's attitude to English is much more positive.

"Erm...one of the reasons I think is because I passed the exam so I don't have the pressure about IELTS ... so I have more time to think about the real English not exams. Yes, so it makes English become more interesting than when I just focus on IELTS. So, like my major is in Architectural Design...English is necessary because a lot of um I don't know how to say...some corporations...international corporations are better...not always ...but they can provide some opportunities I think."

Although, at the moment she is not sure what her next steps will be but has considered doing a doctorate.

"Actually that's why I decided to join your (the research) group because I have ...I didn't decide but I have a plan (whether I) should study PhD in future ... so I want to know about the study life ...about the PhD...I want to decide. Maybe I'm not suitable to study forward or maybe I'm suitable ... so I want to get some information about real life and the PhD. So, if I decide to study then maybe I will stay in Britain and I haven't decided so I don't know."

She now believes that learning English will provide more opportunities to see the world, especially considering her major of architectural design.

"My purpose or my aim is I just want to study abroad and learning language is necessary for me...it's ...it's just complicated. Yes...I can use it...yes I mean...I think it's a tool to make me communicate with more people...just not only Chinese people and more opportunities to see the world. I just want to get more opportunities...cos in my major...architecture I think Chinese architecture...how to say...not only...not just only architecture... the design is more famous in some Western countries. So, I want to get more academic information or some academic knowledge about my major so I decided to study abroad. So, in that case learning English is necessary for me. Yes, my future...I just want to learn more and become better, yes."

During the final interview and member-checking the data from the previous interviews, Hannah wanted to add some more recent information on her father.

"About my father's opinion...this is recently when I Facetime with my mother, my mom told me (it's) changed in my father's view...so little story so er...maybe several weeks ago my father met his old friend and he said if my daughter comes back like ...how to say...he's trying to offer a job to me from his friend. So, his friend said, because his friend knows I'm studying abroad and my degree will be

the postgraduate not an undergraduate student...his friend says if your daughter is willing, she can come. After that my father thinks 'oh, a postgraduate degree is really better than a graduate student' so maybe now he thinks it's more useful.

Hannah reflects on her experience of the teaching approach during her time on the pre-sessional.

'I admit some (aspects of) British education style is quite great ... like some discussion groups have got a free atmosphere in class. I like that but...like (laughs) like...er...er...I don't know how to say...like for teaching method to some extent I do believe some Chinese teachers' teaching methods are still better, like doing more practice. So, I think it should be mixed... for Chinese educational system there is a lack of discussion but for the British... I think it's too free...so I don't know (too) well, but I think it should be mixed...'

6.4.5 Discussion

6.4.4.1. Personal and social interaction

The social factors influencing Hannah's current interactions in English are impacted by the large numbers of fellow Chinese international students at the International College. Hannah feels that many of these students are organised into social groups, which parallels a finding from the Bamber (2013) study. She believes this presents a negative image of the Chinese international student. According to her narrative, membership to a *guanxi* (Wang and Greenwood, 2015) prevents these Chinese students from interacting with other nationalities at the International College as it segregates them from the wider student population. She admitted that she did not feel at ease interacting with 'local people' and would rely on her Chinese friends to communicate on her behalf.

An apprehension towards inter-group contact was noted with postgraduates in Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) yet Hannah appears to be experiencing this before the start of her master's course. It is possible that any anxiety towards communicating with the wider student population presents itself even before intergroup contact is made. Therefore, if hesitancy to interact occurs pre-contact there could be other personal factors or causes rather than actual negative encounters with home students. Hannah equates herself with the other international students, which facilitates interaction with this group, even if they do not share a first language. This could represent conditions for successful intergroup contact forwarded by

Pettigrew and Tropp (2005), if the interaction with other NESB international students at the College is reciprocated.

Hannah states that one of her reasons for studying abroad was to meet new friends, albeit other international students, which is a view held by other pre-sessional students (Pearson, 2002b). It was during this period she also met her Japanese boyfriend so personal factors directly impacted on her English language interaction as daily communication with him would be in this language in common. She has also made active steps to interact with the wider student community through activities and membership to clubs at the university. This is also an example of managed group contact as suggested in Harrison and Peacock (2010).

6.4.4.2. Continuity

Hannah's past experiences are of learning English from a technicist perspective (Reagan, 2004) with a heavy focus on grammar and grammar translation. Her narrative offers the explanation of her dislike of the subject stemming from the lack of use of English, supporting Ji (2004) observation that English was not presented as a means for communication. This attitude towards English continued through her university education in China and until her pre-sessional course at the language centre. It was not until she had met the language proficiency requirement to start her pre-master's programme at the International College that she changed the focus of her English language learning to the development of a communicative repertoire (Rymes, 2014).

The ability to use English words correctly was one of the memories she had of her language learning experiences in China. Without the experience of using the language (Ji, 2004), Hannah found it difficult to contextualise vocabulary items necessary for effective communication. However, the transition from learning English through the technicist approach adopted (Reagan, 2004) to what Hannah describes as 'real English' was 'complicated'. This was because she had to pass her English exams to progress through university in China, and to study abroad. Although developing her English language skills represented her study abroad objective, the aim was to equip herself with the skills to communicate with a more diverse

range of people. This, in turn, would open future and global possibilities of employment in architectural design.

If Hannah had completed her undergraduate studies in Britain, she feels she would have gained more from the experience of living in Britain for 3 years as opposed to the 1 year duration of the master's. Her view is consistent with findings from Counsell (2011) that graduates believed Chinese employers would value the longer experience of living abroad and possibly enhanced English communication skills. Her belief is that studying abroad and developing her English language communication and interaction skills, could serve as a feature of human capital (Biao and Shen, 2009) when pursuing employment after her postgraduate studies. An example of which is that on learning Hannah was completing a master's degree in Britain, a friend of her father was prepared to offer her a job on completion of her studies abroad demonstrating the emblematic status of an international education (Blommaert, 2012).

6.4.4.3. Situation/place

Hannah's move to Britain was an opportunity for her to change her attitude towards developing English language skills into that of an attitude geared towards acquiring interaction skills. In her current 'situation' at the International College, she stated that she did not want to become a member of a *guanxi*, as Hannah believes this has a negative impact on her interaction practices. However, she also stated that this may be a necessity if she wants to avoid feeling solitary or to save face when interacting in English with the wider community (Wang and Greenwood, 2015).

She is still attempting to create the environment for personal existential internationalisation (Tian and Lowe, 2009) by interacting and forming relationships with other international students at the College. She noted that the geographical area around the university campus is a linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014) which provided a sense of familiarity and security when she first arrived from China. However, she was also aware that using the Chinese commercial outlets would prevent better integration into life in Britain and may have a negative impact on her English communication skills. Although she is still apprehensive about

interacting with local or 'home' students, she describes Friday night parties in her accommodation building where the British students make everyone feel welcome. This is quite different to the closed clique groups she experienced in university accommodation in China.

Hannah appears to have adjusted to the teaching style and approaches she has experienced so far in Britain. The CLT approach has proved successful in increasing her language production in the form of discussion and interaction in her classes that supports observations in Bax (2003). However, Hannah states the focus on discussion and debate may be at the expense of acquiring the essential subject or discipline specific content. This brings into question the extent to which pre-sessional teaching approaches communicate the epistemological assumptions of how knowledge is created at postgraduate level education (Burnapp, 2006). It also raises issues highlighted in Wu (2015) that the pedagogical differences a student experiences between one environment to another require both time and practice for adjustment. Yet, it may also be a question of teachers and students in an intercultural or multicultural context adopting a 'cultural synergy' model (Zhou et al, 2008) which sees adaptations from all parties in the environment.

Charley

25 years old from Chongqing and Beijing

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 4 months

Academic Department: Journalism

Pathway: 17 weeks pre-session course before starting postgraduate programme

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 5.5, at the time of interviews 6.0, level required to start the master's degree 6.5. Charley had completed 7 weeks of the 17-week pre-session course by the time of the first interview.

6.5 Charley

Charley is waiting and looking out of the window when I meet her for the first time, she is early. She is softly spoken but speaks with confidence. There is a slight American accent when she speaks. While she is thinking about her responses, she repeats the question cue. Once she has done this, her responses are interspersed with a personal commentary of what she was thinking or saying at the time of the event she is talking about. She maintains eye contact when she talks as if to check you are following her.

6.5.1 Before international study in Britain

Charley originally came from Chongqing, her mother's homeland, in the south of China which is characterised by very fair, almost white skinned people and spicy regional dishes. Mandarin was spoken at school and the local (Chongqing dialect) at home.

"...officially learn Mandarin? Hmmm how to say...because if I am here I am in Chongqing maybe for our generation they cannot speak very fluent Mandarin. Well, I was in school, when I was in primary school we speak Mandarin, but when we go back home we speak local language...so it's kind of that we should officially learn Mandarin from school from (the) teacher..."

During high school at around 15 years of age, her family moved to Beijing (her father's birthplace) where she had to learn to speak in Mandarin more fluently.

"the people are different and we should use a different language. For me, it means I went to another high school so the way to speak to people is different ...because these people have different customs ... because in Beijing we speak Mandarin... yeah...they only know one language but in other parts we speak two languages in China..."

Chinese language classes were taught using a method very similar to what is used in her current pre-sessional English class.

"We read a lot of articles, if we meet some words or language that we don't understand (the) teacher will teach us and we'll practice this vocabulary many times until we know them and we watch movies to learn new vocabulary...like we study English the same way I think."

Though memorising the new vocabulary from both the movies and articles was the area Charley found the most difficult and the least enjoyable.

"Hmmm...the least...the time that I met different vocabulary...you should memorise each it many times...yeah it's very hard."

She admits that she did not like her English classes at school; however, as a core subject along with Maths and Chinese, it was essential to acquire good grades in the subject.

"Actually when I was a child I don't like...I didn't like English but I was forced to study it because we had 3 courses...three main courses which are English, Maths, Chinese...it will affect our primary school and we should take them to (a) high level...we should have good grades in English so we are forced to learn it. Enjoy...no (laughter)...Nothing...nothing...totally different because in China the teacher forced us to study not like now I study for myself. I have the energy to study...motivation?"

As a child, it was difficult to understand why learning English was so important though its significance became clearer when Charley moved to Beijing.

"Because, when I was a child I was in Chongqing and there are firstly no foreigners... in Beijing many foreigners but when I was in Chongqing...I think why must I learn English, there are no foreigners, and maybe and probably I would stay in my hometown forever I'd never have a chance to use it ..yeah...but...after that when I moved to Beijing I noticed that it is important because I should learn...how to say...if I should go abroad to travel...I need to speak...I need to communicate...I need to say what I want when I travel so it's important... it's a way to communicate...it's a method to communicate"

However, to have English in her life is not necessarily a new concept to Charley as many foreigners lived in Beijing.

"Of course, even when I was in Beijing sometimes we speak English because...hmmm because sometimes there are many cultural activities...in Beijing, social activities. For example, when er ...how to say...we have TED talks in Beijing...they were every year. Yeah...yeah...they speak English when doing the talks. And ... er.... sometimes every year the movie festival...the movie festival in Beijing ... it's very famous and ...er we can see the original movies from different countries in English"

...famous actors, actresses from Hollywood. After the movie, they take questions...Oh yeah yeah...we speak English."

Similar to many families, Charley's parents first sought advice and recommendations from their friends who had children studying at university in Britain, concerning the quality of the education they were receiving.

"My parents got information from their friends, and maybe the daughter or son of their friends, currently studying in a university in Britain. So, maybe they will tell us about the quality of the university, but I mainly get information about the university from the internet...the rank...the world rank."

Though studying in Britain was not the first time she had thought about travelling abroad, Charley had also considered completing her undergraduate studies in America.

"America is my first choice when I was in the second year of my Bachelor I was thinking, I thought about maybe...you know transfer to America to study my Bachelor from the second year ..yeah when I was at that time ... I think the reason why I did not go ...after careful thinking, I thought I was not that mature at that time...so I decided to go abroad after graduation...why I choose Britain cos it's easier here because if I went to America they asked me to take 2 exams, 1 is the language exam, the TOEFL and the other I forget. My friend told me it is very hard...very difficult and ..there was a time I tried to study TOEFL and I found TOEFL more difficult than the IELTS."

In preparation for study in Britain, Charley did an IELTS course in Beijing but was not successful in the exam.

"I didn't learn much from that course. I wasted my time ... I didn't pass the IELTS and I went to another country to study IELTS...Well actually, in the Philippines...because the Philippines is near to China and the second language there is English and the price is very cheap...and the English environment is better than China and very good, ...very good. I went there for two months to study English. Yeah, full-time course. Yes, one to one course and the tuition fee include accommodation, includes three meals a day and includes your course fee. But ...on weekdays you cannot go outside, you just can stay at the school, they provide everything for you. You know for IELTS we have 4 sections, and four sections studied every day. When I was in the Philippines, every day I had different teachers, every day I had a teacher who was responsible for my four sections...four teachers, four sections, one to one. They check my work every day,...they were very responsible for my tasks."

However, Charley does not solely attribute her success on the course to the standard of teaching or organisation of the programme.

"I had a big improvement when I was in the Philippines because of the environment...the English environment is better than China...normally I speak English every day."

While her parents investigated options, they looked to the world university ranking on the internet to inform their choice. These would be the type of details her parents, like other Chinese parents, wanted to know.

"How much money do you need? (laughs)...Yeah, how much money do you need? When and what's the major you have applied for? And which city in Britain? ...And why did you choose this city? And they will check the rank because Chinese parents...put the emphasis on the ranking...of the ranking of the university so they asked about the ranking in the world."

The university chosen was a recommendation from the agency employed to deal with the course application.

"The first time I knew of the university was because the agency...the agency told me I can apply for the degree...apply for the master's degree from The University of Sheffield."

6.5.2 International study

6.5.2.1. Becoming an international student

Before starting the pre-session course Charley studied general English in Manchester for 3 months. She has maintained a close friendship with a fellow Manchester student from Kuwait.

"I enjoyed Manchester...actually I don't like the weather...it's windy, rainy but what I like is the people...I like English people...they are polite with 'thank you', 'sorry', and like (to) queue (laughter)... what I enjoy the most...my classmates in Manchester are really good...good people, we hang out together for fun...we travel. Yes, they are from different cultures so I can know...for example, most of them are from Saudi (Arabia), and I can maybe know their cultures...my close friend in Manchester is from Kuwait...yeah and she provides some information to me so maybe it's important to me..."

Charley believed that the communicative approach on the language course in Manchester helped prepare her for academic study more so than her current course.

'for this communicative way...I think yes. Yes, ...why actually it is not based on the experience at the Language centre because we are all Chinese, so we communicate in Chinese. Yeah, but when I was in Manchester I was lucky because my classmate is Saudi. He was a teacher in his country so when we talked in class he told me a lot about how to communicate, how to discuss the topics in an academic way. So, I learnt many things from him. I think it depends on your classmates, the level of your

classmates. If he is good or better than you, you can learn something from him. But sometimes if your classmate is .. erm...if the ability is lower than you...you cannot get something from him'.

However, this was not the experience Charley had when the dynamics of her class changed on moving to another city.

'Because (here in Sheffield) we have different situations, many of them - the Chinese students - they just graduated from school so we have ...they have a different way of thinking from me. They don't want to study because they've just finished studying and are now in the UK. They want to play; they don't want to study so in the class they just...how to say...just fish (gossip). Yeah .. they don't really focus on this study so if teachers say, "let's have communication", they just...we just gossip. They don't want to study, but I can understand but because now I am hungry for study so ...yeah different situation. But when I was in Manchester, all of the students are older than me because they applied for the PhD's. So, we have the same situation ... when teachers ask, "let's communicate", we have good communication about the topic and deep communication'.

In comparing her life as a student in China to her life as a student in England, Charley would say social aspects present the greatest differences.

"Social activities ...I think I really like the accommodation...the accommodation environment in Britain ... because in China we go university, the university will decide where we'll live and they will decide randomly who will be your roommates...we have no choice we can just share the same environment with 4 or 6 strangers...yeah and you cannot change...even if you have conflicts with your roommates...I don't like that I don't like living with others so I chose a studio, just me and I really like it and I think it can give me a good mood to prepare for my studies. I have more individual time and for the social....I'm satisfied with the social environment in Britain because as an international student I have met many students from different countries...normally they have an open mind...yeah and they don't judge you...yeah... I like this environment because in my country in China...we have a culture where people are likely to judge others...yeah...and erm life in Britain...but I don't like the food (laugh)...I don't like the food but there are many Chinese restaurants so it's okay for me."

There are social aspects, such as membership to a guanxi, that are similar to what she would experience in China.

'For me...no ... but, it is very important for Koreans, Japanese and Chinese ... but not for me...(laugh). Because, I think it's like ...individual...they think 'individual is small', just me, just one person...it's very small. We are not ...I am not strong...but if we are many people together and we have a strong

connection, we are a group, we are strong...and when we are strong, we can defend anything together...we have more confidence. It's about confidence...but for me...no'.

In terms of the negative effects, Charley believes forming a guanxi can cause groups to become isolated from the wider student population.

'... in their small group, you spend more time together ... you are more comfortable, you don't want to get out ...you don't want to get out from this small group.... Yeah, why should I find other friends, I have my group, we are harmonious, and we like each other so why should I find other people and yeah ... they do everything together'.

This not only prevents those in the guanxi from meeting new people, it also acts to reinforce negative stereotypes due to a lack of interaction.

'It's very hard, it's very hard because in our ...in our Eastern culture ...we like to judge people, we think it's a good thing. I judge you because I like you...I want you to become a better person...yeah... we like to judge people. So, we have deep bias and we think our judgement is good...it's good. So, if like...and not to be offensive ... but Muslims...I have a lot of Muslim friends some Chinese who have just come here ... when they meet Muslim people they are afraid. They think they are not good...so in this case they don't want to get close to them...that's our culture. And, I asked my Japanese friend, in their country they don't have Muslims and so they think Muslims are bad people. So, in this case...how can they get close with them...yeah...they have bias'.

Although Charley has managed so far without being part of a guanxi, she may need to reconsider.

'Yes...but it's not good for me nowadays...because if I don't form a group, no-one will help me...yeah...in Chinese, no-one will help me. So, I'm thinking these days when I start my post-graduate I need to form this... in a Chinese group'. (This will offer) '...a lot of help...first you won't be lonely, and they will help you with no condition if you form this 'guanxi'. I don't know in Western (cultures) but if you form a strong bond in a Chinese group, they will help you unconditionally.'

She had tried to form meaningful friendships with other international students, but had not been successful.

'...I don't know..Western? When I was in Manchester because they were no Chinese there...I tried to make friends with Italians and Spanish, and one French ...but I think we can not talk much...we hung out together many times but we cannot be so close...when they laugh I just (shrug) or when I laugh they just (shrug) (laughs). I tried but we cannot become friends, I don't know why...and.....I tried going

to clubs with them...we cannot become friends. It's strange because we tried, they tried with me...I tried to be friends with them... but I don't know why we cannot get each other...yeah...but there is a gap'.

6.5.2.2. Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

Charley believes the number of Chinese students at the university could have had a negative impact on her language development and would not describe the environment of her current programme as international.

"Oh 'international' ...(laughs) ...all Chinese...(laughs)... for this pre sessional course I haven't felt the international environment because we are all Chinese. When I meet Chinese people I will speak Chinese, every time ...when I meet classmates or people in the language centre I will speak Chinese. When do I speak in English? ...with foreigners I will speak English...of course. If you spoke in English to Chinese students here ...it would feel weird ... I'm trying to speak English to my classmates, but his English is not good, so sometimes when I speak English he will respond (to) me in Chinese, so I will speak Chinese to him. It's weird...we speak English, but we are Chinese. You know that's the problem in Sheffield cause in my class 12 of 14 students are Chinese. I speak Chinese everyday...but in Manchester...I spoke English everyday...so I'm thinking that my English is going down (laughter). Because I will spend my weekend in Manchester with my friend, I speak English at the weekend ...90 %. I think...erm...I think it depends on the personality of the people because take me as an example I ...normally choose my friends so I have many foreign friends, so the huge numbers of Chinese students don't affect my communication skills. When I go to travel...if I travel and speak English...maybeoh when I need to contact my friends everyday ...so I will speak English"

When asked her thoughts on the number of Chinese international students in the city, Charley stated that although she knew of the large numbers, she was still surprised when she arrived at the university.

"I'm shocked. I know in Britain there are many Chinese students but I couldn't imagine...oh so many...too many...I couldn't imagine because yesterday I met a girl who is from the Information School and she told me she is Russian...because currently I am in the Journalism department and I know in the Journalism department there are many Chinese students but she told me in her class it is 90% Chinese (in the) Information School...I think there are a lot of Chinese students in X...even in West street, every time I am in West street I hear the Chinese language. Even in Tesco...yeah.."

Charley believes that the same situation would have occurred if she had taken the offers she had received from Manchester University, UCL, The University of York, or Leeds University.

"I have no choice because, even if I went to another university there are still many Chinese students, yeah. I cannot choose because actually I had offers from the other universities ...you know the universities such as these, there are many Chinese students, we choose those universities by the rank, yeah. I know there is a university in Salford...I didn't know this university when I was in China, but this university has a few Chinese students...but it's not a good university for us ...for our thinking...for the majority of Chinese students this university is not good because of the rank. But ... I know this university has very few Chinese, very few Chinese but no-one goes there, even (though) we know this information. Because after we graduate from British university when we go back to China, people, our family, my friends, my family and employers in the society, they just focus on the rank of the university, so ...you understand."

While this situation will not have a negative impact due to her character, she accepts other Chinese students may have quite different objectives.

"I know...some of my parents' friends' daughters or sons even when they graduated, and they lived one year in Britain, they cannot speak fluent English, but they got a degree from a good university in Britain and that's what they want."

6.5.3. After the pre-sessional

The importance of language is not limited to just English, as language and globalisation play a vital role in Charley's future career aspirations.

"I will go to another country to find a job...there is a famous Chinese company...it has different branches all over the world and I thought maybe I will look for a place ... for a high salary. So, maybe because of globalisation and as I mentioned before I like travelling so I need to study English to communicate...erm it will provide convenience to me ...and er I'm thinking about also learning Spanish because of my family business. So, maybe I will expand my family business to South America ... so I'm thinking about studying Spanish to start my business...and to travel, to expand business, and maybe know more about this world...like reading and watching movies. If you know this language ... you can know the meaning without translation because sometimes the translation may make some mistakes...".

6.5.4 Discussion

6.5.4.1. Personal and social interaction

There are a number of references in Charley's narrative to the social factors influencing her choice of British university, and therefore, applying pressure to meet the English language

proficiency to join the postgraduate degree programmes at the institution. Her parents sought the advice of their friends when considering which university in Britain they wanted Charley to attend. This would include the university's ranking which Charley stated was the focus of most Chinese parents. Word of mouth and the prestige of a university were both noted in the Cebolla-Boada et al (2018) study. However, as her narrative states, the ranking of the university abroad may not just be a concern for parents, as friends, and potential employers would also pass judgement on an individual by the ranking of the university they attended.

Social influences impacting Charley's interaction in English while on her pre-sessional course initially appear two-fold. In one sense, her comments on the international environment at the university are in line with arguments presented by Knight (2011), in that internationalisation is superficially embedded into higher education institutions. She feels that the presence of large numbers of Chinese 'international' students on her programme is not representative of an international environment. This can directly impact interaction as 'it would feel weird' to communicate in English with fellow Chinese students. As the different levels of English language proficiency would affect successful interaction between the Chinese students in her pre-sessional class, Charley states 'we are Chinese' so it was more natural to communicate in Chinese. This supports Fairclough's (1989) argument that as language is inextricably connected to society it becomes a social convention. So, as part of this convention, Charley chooses the language which socially connects her to the person she is communicating with, which in the case of her fellow Chinese students is Chinese. However, she also states she has consciously chosen to make connections with non-Chinese international students which differs from the trend noted by Bamber (2013). In the social environment she has created with her connection to other (non-Chinese) students she considers herself international. This may be viewed as an example of personal existential internationalisation (Tian and Lowe, 2009) in creating an international environment for herself.

However, her narrative also reveals the difficulties she has had making connections with other international students from more European social contexts. This has led her to consider the support a *guanxi* could offer when she starts her postgraduate degree (Wang and Greenwood, 2015). This is representative of the finding from Bond (2019) that self-doubt whether it is

regarding language proficiency or academic competence can cause a shift in an individual's identity. For Charley, when she has made meaningful connections with other non-Chinese international students she identifies as an international student, when the connection has not been made she shifts to the Chinese student in the 'international' setting in need of support from her Chinese peers for successful navigation in this environment.

6.5.4.2. Continuity

Before the age of 15, which marked her family's relocation to Beijing, Charly admits she did not understand why there was such a heavy emphasis on learning English. With 'no foreigners' in her hometown, the English taught in class could only be considered within the context of exams and not a method of communication. Therefore, the claim that communication was not one of the teaching or learning objectives of English language studies in China (Ji, 2004) would only be valid for certain geographical locations where what had been taught could not be transferred into communication practices. The change of geographical location (see 5.5.4.3) appears to also account for her change in attitude to developing English communication skills when in China. This supports arguments against the application of a thick description of cultural influence (O'Dwyer, 2017), or in this case cultural practices, for such a diverse region. As, in addition to the educational, social and cultural differences represented, the demographics of the location will influence the modes of communication and interaction. This was highlighted by Charley's experiences of using English in Beijing.

Charley's narrative reveals that environmental factors impact the value of developing English for communication during her past learning experiences in China, in the Philippines and in Manchester. These factors also influence her present learning experiences as she appears to be seeking environments where English must be used for communication, i.e. with non-Chinese international students on her pre-session programme. Charley has also indicated that she will need to continue her language development as her future plans involve global travel and business.

6.5.4.3. Situation/place

In Charley's narrative, she has noted in each location mentioned, the influence of that location on her English language development and interaction. From her hometown in Chongqing and the technician approach to English language studies (Reagan, 2004), to her family's relocation to Beijing and the increase in exposure to English and her first experiences of using English to communicate to her immersive English language course in the Philippines, to her general English course in Manchester, and her current experiences on her pre-sessional course in Sheffield. The major shift in her attitude towards her English language development occurred when her family moved to Beijing when she was 15 years old. The change of location marked the transition of Charley from solely being a student of English to also becoming a user of English. This may have been the start of a personal transformation towards existential internationalisation (Tian and Lowe, 2009). Her narrative reveals how this cosmopolitan city accommodated her engagement in cultural and social activities with input, communication and interaction in English. Exposure to English language outside the language classroom supports the development of an English communicative repertoire (Rymes, 2014) which would serve her interaction needs in the Philippines, Manchester and her current location in Sheffield.

Charley accredits a significant development in her English language to her language course in the Philippines. A change in both the linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014) and the cultural environment from studying English in China resulted in daily use of English. This continued on her general English course in Manchester. During the general English language courses in the Philippines and in Manchester, Charley communicated and interacted in English with the other international students. The international students on these courses, according to Charley's narrative, appear to have created a homogenised global culture of English language learning with the commitment to using English as the lingua franca. However, Charley believes that the social and cultural environment on her pre-sessional course in Sheffield has had a negative impact on the amount of interaction and her overall level of English. Her narrative demonstrates that she believes the large numbers of Chinese students superficially create an internationalised environment (Knight, 2011). Her social reality is she feels she must actively search for social environments for interaction in English that mostly occurs with non-Chinese international student.

Ewan

22 years old from Hohhot, Inner Mongolia

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 7 weeks

Academic Department: Automated Control System Engineering

Pathway: 17 weeks pre-session course before starting postgraduate programme

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 5.5, at the time of interviews 5.5, level required to start the master's degree 6.5.

Ewan had completed the first 7 weeks of his 17-week pre-session course by the time of the first interview.

6.6 Ewan

As soon as we sat down, Ewan asked how long it would take and his initial responses were short. It was not clear whether this was due to being nervous or Ewan not being a conversationalist. There was no light conversation or small talk. At the end of the first interview, he admitted that he was worried about whether he would be able to understand me. He felt he only really understood his teacher who spoke slower than people he would encounter out of the classroom. But after a few minutes, the responses became longer, and Ewan spoke at length to make sure that I understood his viewpoint. As we started to exchange information - he helped me pronounce some Chinese names and shared information about an app he and his fellow students used, Ewan seemed much more relaxed and the conversation which followed felt much more natural.

6.6.1 Before international study in Britain

Ewan comes from Beijing, though his father is from Hohhot in Inner Mongolia and his mother from Hebei. He does not speak any regional languages from either area, just Putonghua - Mandarin Chinese. He recalls some of the activities from his English classes as a child such as the pronunciation of the alphabet and some simple phrases like 'How are you?' and 'Fine, thank you', but admits he really did not enjoy English at school.

"Because of the shortage of my English...but my Physics, and Maths and er...Chemistry are higher...I get much higher scores than my English. So, I'm prepared to spend time in science lessons rather than English...but I also need to care about the English because I want to get a high total score... Yes, I want this much higher, so I don't want to have a short area on something."

There was a lot of importance attached to improving the English grade as this could be the factor which decides whether Ewan would be attending a top university.

"Yeah...erm...first of all, I wanted to go to a high college of the university, so I have to improve my English level to get a high score. Secondly, I have to go to the UK or USA or (a place where) English as

an official language so I need to practise my English. I have made this plan in high school...I want to improve my English for this score so it's important for me to learn English."

The original plan was to do a Master's in China but unfortunately Ewan did not pass the entrance exam for the university due to his low English score in the postgraduate entrance exam (Kaoyan).

"I have a terrible score for my English at that time...I think studying English is too boring and Engineer(ing) subject and others like physics or maths more interesting but (to) learn English (is) too boring and just to remember and practice, practice and it doesn't show my IQ. They (his friends) wanted me to join the exam again...Master exam again but I didn't want to and I wanted to go abroad."

His parents agreed about studying abroad but had their minds set on the US.

"They want me to study, spend a lot of time studying and get a good score...and I think it is one of my reasons to go abroad. I will play part of my time but not the whole of my time. Because America is the strongest in the world and they (my parents) want me to go to the best one abroad."

However, a move to America would hamper the other reason why Ewan had decided to study abroad.

"I'd like to travel in Europe and if I study in the United States maybe I can only travel in the USA and study is only one of my reasons to go abroad...I have other reasons for example culture, people and travel."

By way of researching various UK universities on the internet and with the aid of online dictionaries and translators, Ewan applied to the universities without needing to use an agent to do it for him.

"Yeah, it's a technology age... just because I can understand and check the dictionary and the internet is just like a translator, and this translator uses advanced technology...it's very convenient."

Fortunately, he received offers from a number of universities in the UK, so this felt like the best option.

"Oh...yeah I apply and get the offers from Southampton, Manchester, Bristol, and Leeds but I don't enjoy the large city. If I can stay in (name of city) I think the environment is really good, there are a lot of trees and grass, yeah it's so good. ...I study in Nanjing...it's a big city as well...I don't...I have never experienced the small city or town in here, maybe I want a change of lifestyle..."

The reputation of the university is what first attracted Ewan to apply to do his Master's in Robotics.

"The university is famous for its ranking, it's a world class university and it's famous for its engineering ...department of Mathematics...is outstanding. So, I want to choose this subject and want to learn it from the University of (name)."

Ewan joined several courses to prepare for the IELTS test to a score of 5.5 in order to start on a 17-week pre-session programme at The University of Sheffield.

"Oh... during my winter vacation... I bought some course to improve my English level around January or February until my next term begins in my university and this wasn't organised by my university. Yes, but I only prepare for the test...the skills but it didn't teach me the knowledge. Erm...20 hours (a week) and 30 to 40 (students). Oh yes...this class was opened by a social company and earns money by setting up a number of courses like IELTS or TOEFL and some national tests about English....and some courses like computer tests."

Although English scores were tested throughout his bachelor's degree at university, it had been a while since he had studied English formally.

"I must test the score in my bachelor's degree from this university...and English I must study in my first year and second year, but in the third and fourth year I didn't need to study it. In my second year, several (other good) scores let me join the next year. In the first year of my university I usually didn't attend the English class but if you pass the final test it's okay. I prepared for my Master's exam and read some novels and surfed the internet...and usually I would study at the time (of the English class) or play computer games."

6.6.2 International study

6.6.2.1 Becoming an international student

He travelled to England with some friends he had met in an internet chat group specifically for Chinese students planning to study at the language centre.

"My friend...we booked the same airline and the same plan...together to fly around Manchester in this flight... we have a group, with three...two person who are friends...who knew each other before we went to X...so have been friends for a long time. We know each other will go to this university by internet...we know each other will study at the ELTC...we know this information on the internet by an app...in Chinese it's (repeats Chinese word), pronunciation is 'Qiaba'...and there we make a chat group..."

Student life in the U.K. is quite different to what he had experienced in university in China.

"I shared a room. One room for four people and it's better than a number of other universities...other universities usually have 8 people or 10 people in one room. My university is good...better than a number of universities in China so you get a better environment... but it is not as good as UK accommodation. We have four canteens in the campus and each of the canteens is very big and in our accommodation we don't have the kitchen if we need it we just go to the canteen and the price is very low 6 yuan and eating better than the UK. In the UK we need to spend more than 5 or 6 pounds in China ...in GDP/yuan ...it is about 50 yuan. But I think Chinese food is more delicious even in the canteen than UK food. But UK food is more expensive but not so delicious. The accommodation (in) the UK is better, but we spend more money...much more money. You know in China we take 2 or 3 thousand yuan for 1 year, about 8 or 9 times less than that for UK students. We get a bathroom but only two bathrooms in a big room and we have 16 people to use it."

In addition to differences in accommodation and cost, the number of hours spent studying in his current situation is a stark change to what Ewan had previously.

"In the UK, at the (centre) I study 20 hours per week ...about 5 hours per day but in China they have different hours at different level(s) of my university. For example,... in the first year to third year, I'm very busy...cos I'm an engineering student ...usually when busy study begins at 8am to 10pm after experiments for my course is not only for my theory...we only do the theory in my final year design. An experiment may happen on the weekend or at night, or in the afternoon when we don't have the course...very busy...maybe 30 or 40 hours per week when I'm very busy, including the time to do homework for all the course."

Whilst Ewan knew there would be some, he "didn't know that this university had a number of Chinese restaurants and Chinese shops.

"It's more convenient. I needn't speak English that's fine...but...not a good environment because I need to practise my English...it's better for me to improve my English level. But if those staff can totally be replaced by English speaking staff maybe they cannot cook Chinese food."

6.6.2.2 Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

Ewan knew beforehand that there would be a lot of Chinese students at the language centre and the university as this information was also on the internet app.

"Yes, yes. I searched for it ...I noticed information on the website...I know 'a lot' ...but so, so, so many yeah...enough..."

Ewan feels the numbers of Chinese students could possibly pose a problem when learning and studying English.

"When we are in this building (the language centre) usually we speak Chinese not English...but there are a lot of Chinese people...students... so it's more suitable if we speak Chinese ...more natural, more suitable. Maybe we'll speak a little Chinese and we make sure we speak English in this building and after we go back home we will... not speak English...it depends on who this person is...if he or she comes from China, we absolutely speak in Chinese...if (they are from) other countries we will speak in English. That's usual...some Chinese people get together to have a meal, so we'll communicate by more (suitable), more natural language... the more natural language is absolutely Chinese. But maybe some foreigners cannot understand this kind of language so we have to communicate in English."

Ewan thinks this may be due to the fact that the students are currently studying at a language centre.

"If we...just learn English...just studying English ...it's maybe a problem. Because if I get in a situation with a number of foreign students who (do) not come from China then it's only communication in English so we can both improve each other in English. But when we sit in a group of the Chinese, we will choose a more natural language to communicate...you know both of us are not good at English and some meaning of the sentence...we can't get each other and maybe Chinese is a better choice...than English. When we are studying the knowledge of our area (discipline) ...from my personal opinion, I don't care about how many Chinese people or foreign people are in this class...because we only pay more attention to the knowledge. I don't care about whether my classmates say it in Chinese or the other...it doesn't matter. I heard that the Chinese people in X usually get groups ..in that group we usually talk to each other in Chinese...so there... it doesn't affect me. Because...you know a number of Chinese students will choose the Management Department or Business department or Marketing department or maybe just several people in my department ...but in the department I will be communicating with those Chinese people...in my studies I will be using the English language. I think this is enough. I have a person who is studying Engineering that I think has studied in the UK for 1 year but doesn't know what the professor is talking about in the classroom but he can understand the screen or there are many details on the screen and he can remember it and after class he can do...he can self-study."

Although Ewan does not consider himself as having the more typical or traditional character traits of a Chinese person, he does believe he will need to comply with the convention of joining a guanxi for support while he is studying in Britain.

'Oh yes, yes I have trouble with this...because I'm different...yeah I think it's important...I try to put myself into this network but in the end I'm on my own. Because I don't want to be the different one...but I am totally different...I have trouble with it and I think I don't want to be this. You know if almost all of the people are one way, and you want a different way...it's a big problem ...so I want to

search/find a balance. In a group, there may be an outstanding person who can give this person an understanding in Chinese matters and to spread this information to others. If there is this understanding person whose English is very good and their understanding skills are very good...it will be helpful to the lower quality (proficiency) student who can (then) understand everything.'

6.6.3. After the pre-sessional

After completing the Master's in Robotics, Ewan thinks his use of English will mostly be limited to reading reports on advanced technology.

"I'll only speak Chinese...but when we use English we are usually searching for some report or to gain some...advanced technology from the magazine or internet...I will join the research group okay...we will do something with research...and this is my future job...and er...and for this job I will ...maybe I should get some advantage...advance knowledge from strong countries like America, UK...yeah...and usually these strong countries...they are ruled by English."

Ewan is not expecting to form many new friendship groups of people with different nationalities, on his course nor in his department, and believes group or seminar work with non-Chinese students could be difficult. Nor is he under the impression that this could negatively impact on his interaction skills when he starts his master's at the university.

"...I prepare to speak in my first language ...Chinese They (other Chinese students) can use the same language as me, they are very natural and comfortable. If I communicate with others in English, it is not convenient...and then the others who you are talking or chatting to are uncomfortable as well. They have to learn to speak English so you can understand...so it's not comfortable for the person who is talking to you...it's uncomfortable for each other. But if I speak...I'm talking to the person whose first language is Chinese it's more comfortable and effective...when we get a seminar or final task."

Given the number of Chinese international students at the university, Ewan believes there should be staff members who can communicate with these students in Chinese.

'...a Chinese personal tutor... I think Chinese students who are in Sheffield university occupy a good amount...a big percentage. They should have access to a personal tutor depending on the percentage of the students...you know Chinese students occupy the big percentage...it means we can have a number who can speak both Chinese and English, and a good level of knowledge...more than we have now. I think it's scientific...the number of first language personal tutors depend on the percentage who have different nationalities (international students)'

6.6.4 Discussion

6.6.4.1. Personal and social interaction

Personal factors affected Ewan's development of English while at school and university in China. In his narrative, he admits he had little interest in the subject. His conceptualisation of English was as a subject that required him to reproduce forms rather than apply higher order thinking skills which demonstrated his level of intelligence. However, Ewan also understood the importance of improving his English. He believed, as noted in Xiang and Shen (2009), that a high score in his English studies was necessary if he wanted to attend a high-ranking university. His narrative presents this personal struggle or conflict of taking the time to improve his English in order to achieve the same high level as the subjects he was interested in, such as Physics, Maths and Chemistry. This would result in less time for the subjects he enjoyed, a personal concession he was not willing to make.

However, it was not stated whether a technician approach to English (Reagan, 2004) was adopted in high school or university in China, Ewan's approach appears technician in nature. His focus on learning English appeared solely exam-oriented. As he did not pass the entrance exam for postgraduate studies in China due to his level of English, Ewan would need to continue learning English. The motivation behind the decision to take an exam course was to achieve the language level required to study English in an English speaking country to meet the language proficiency requirement to study at postgraduate level. This decision, made years previously (see 5.6.4.2), was not only because English could secure a place at a prestigious university (Xiang and Shen, 2009; Blommaert, 2012) but also to experience '[the] culture, people and [to] travel'. This marks a change in attitude from the technician approach Ewan previously demonstrated. To have a cultural experience was marked as the third most popular reason given for Chinese students choosing to study in the U.K. (Counsell, 2011).

Although the decision to study in the U.K. was influenced by personal factors, social factors may have had a negative impact on Ewan's English interaction experience once he arrived in Sheffield. Fairclough (1989) argued that language choice is subject to social convention, and for

Ewan the social convention outside the language class is to communicate in Chinese to the other Chinese students. In his narrative, he states that this is 'natural', 'comfortable' and 'suitable'. Just as it is the social convention to communicate in English to non-Chinese students. Additionally, the linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014) in the surrounding areas of the university also creates an environment where Ewan states he 'needn't speak English' as the Chinese shops and businesses are considered 'convenient'.

Ewan believes communication in Chinese may extend into his postgraduate studies, as his focus will be on studying the content knowledge of his discipline. He refers to the discomfort for both Chinese and home students when interacting with each other in English and the level of negotiation of meaning for mutual comprehension it would require, noted in studies by Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) and Andrade (2006). For this reason, and not to be segregated from his peers, he may need to join a guanxi. This may serve as both social and academic support for his postgraduate studies as noted in Wang and Greenwood, (2015). His narrative also states that there is a strong likelihood, based on what he has heard from previous students, that like them he will opt for group and seminar work with fellow Chinese students on his programme (Bamber, 2013). Though, Ewan does not believe that this will impact learning as technology assisted learning materials, such as presentation slides, and independent study will address the knowledge gap created by insufficient language proficiency to follow the course content in real time (Murray, 2016). However, this is unlikely to lead to the socially constructed knowledge intended from the group work activities. Burnapp (2006) found some international students were not aware or fully understood the rationale of the epistemological approach to knowledge creation at a British higher education institution.

6.6.4.2. Continuity

Ewan's narrative states had been considering study abroad since high school and that this was one of his motivations for improving his English language level. He was aware that obtaining better scores in English could secure him a place at the university of his choice (Xiang and Shen, 2009). However, Ewan found it difficult to engage in his studies and due to this, he was unable to study his master's in China as he had failed to meet the English language

requirement in the Kaoyan university entrance exam. However, the consequence of this lack of engagement and not doing his master's in China was Ewan achieving his objective of study abroad.

Whether Ewan's attitude towards English language learning was due to the teaching staff or methods in China, or whether it is more closely related to his personal experiences of learning English can only be assumed from the narrator's perspective. However, Ewan does express that he did not (prior to participating in this study) consider English a means to communicate rather than a means to progress academically. This resonates with ideas forwarded by Reagan (2004) of the objectification of language. Focus on language as a construct of grammar and vocabulary, with the sole emphasis on accuracy and appropriateness in an exam-oriented context did not encourage or motivate Ewan to develop an L2 communicative repertoire (Rymes, 2014). Although in his current context, classes are attended and he is living in the L2 environment, Ewan did not indicate that his English language development objectives differ from those he had in his past learning context. His projections for future English interaction are equally minimal.

6.6.4.3. Situation/place

The two previous sections discussed personal and social, and temporal factors influencing Ewan's learning experiences. This section focuses on the influence of the situation or place where the English language learning experiences occurred. In the first place, China, there is no mention of interaction in English or incentive to develop an L2 English communicative repertoire. The focus of English language development throughout his narrative is to acquire a place at a good university (Xiang and Shen, 2009), with the added incentive of a cultural experience (Counsell, 2011). He expresses an interest in travel, but there is no reference to developing the means to make connections with the people in the countries he would like to visit.

When his narrative shifts to his experiences in Britain, there is mention of some communication with non-Chinese international students at the language centre. In the

classroom, there is the shared goal of improving English language competence and the authority support of the teacher in class present to manage and support interaction. This environment may meet the criteria for successful inter-group contact (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2005). However, interactions out of the classroom environment are more in line with findings in the extant literature on Chinese international students in British higher education institutions, with Ewan choosing to socialise with other Chinese international students (Bamber, 2013), and concerns over communication difficulties due to low oral language proficiency (Sawir et al, 2012). There is no mention of how Ewan copes with day to day transactional interaction (Copland and Garton, 2011) which would be expected as he is now living in Britain.

Stella

23 years old from Heilongjiang province.

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 7 months

Academic Department: Engineering

Pathway: 30 weeks on General English course with IELTS training sessions (at the language centre), then 23 weeks on pre-master's programme at the International college

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 4.0-4.5, at the time of interviews 5.0, level required to start the master's degree 6.5.

Stella had not achieved the required language proficiency score of 5.5 by the end of her course at the language centre, at the time of her second interview. Therefore, she did not meet the requirements to go on to the International College for the pre-master's programme.

6.7 Stella

Stella says everything with a smile as if she is sharing a secret. There is a lot of general chat before the interview starts, her classroom down the corridor, what she had done in the morning, what levels I taught. Stella talks with ease and while she pauses at certain words - once we have clarified or provided an example of what the word means - she can talk at length. She provides lots of examples, both in Chinese and English, and punctuates most things she says with a laugh. She enjoyed mimicking her English teachers in China. Stella has strong opinions and is not shy about sharing her thoughts or theories on the topics. The conversation flows freely, and we have to move to another room because we are over time and a teacher needs the space.

6.7.1 Before international study in Britain

Stella was born in the Heilongjiang province, though stated at 18 she went to study at a university in Hunan.

"It was quite a long way ... about a 5 hour flight... I studied there for 5 years. Everything was different, the environment was strange...and the Hunan accent I couldn't understand...yeah the accent in the north and the south is quite different."

According to Stella, the value of language study is to be able to communicate more naturally and she enjoyed her Chinese language classes. However, she did not feel the same way about her English language classes.

"...so we can really understand each other. I think it's important. But in my opinion, the English language for my major Engineering it's not very important...it's (about) reading things ...understanding things...much more than listening and speaking. ...it (Chinese language class) was

good fun...and with the teacher we communicated...the teacher gives a topic, the teacher may tell us his thoughts and we can ask him questions and talk in the group and it was good fun...but in English language class we just learnt vocabulary...'apple', 'tree', teacher said a word and we repeated it...we didn't have a lot of communication in English...it was boring."

There were some aspects of her language classes, both Chinese and English, she did not enjoy. *"Ancient (Chinese) poems (laughter) are difficult to understand and not useful in our daily life, and in English, I don't like English (laughter). Maybe it was the English teacher (laughter). A strange woman, she spoke in a slow and small voice... we didn't like her, and she also would say 'don't mutter'. I didn't understand the meaning of the 'mutter'...I hated it...she would say a word...then blah, blah, blah, comma ... it was after about 5 years that I knew what 'comma' was ...a confusing class...I didn't like it and I don't like English. Of course, it's important to learn English...we have to take English tests...it's very important and it's as important as my mother language, and Maths. When I went to school at 7 or 6 I just began to learn English...now I think it's better, I've made progress...although I still don't like it."*

It was when Stella had graduated that she made the decision between studying in the U.K. or the USA, although her friends had decided much earlier. Most of the information was obtained from Chinese websites though her teacher also made some suggestions.

"My friend decided to study there ...when he was an undergraduate he decided to go there...Yes, before I decided. You know we have an internet ban...yes in my country we have an internet ban ... we can't visit websites other than the Chinese sites. I got some information from my teacher in the university...there were many projects connected between the university...and my teacher when he was at university. I searched on the internet and I read the introduction of some courses ...details and requirements and thought about it myself... then I told my parents I had decided to go there. My parents gave me the freedom, ... I could decide based on what I knew. Oh, my mother said "OK" (laughter)... 'should I pay for you?' (laughter)..I said maybe I will get a scholarship... 'Ok that's fine' she said. The first step must be to collect information...from the teacher and the people just there...and next, is the university.....the university gave me a requirement about my language ...yeah I had to prepare this and at the same time I had to prepare academic things...when I got an conditional offer I could just prepare how I could live there."

Stella finished her undergraduate degree in Hunan but unfortunately she did not meet the language requirements so decided to go to the language centre.

"When I graduated, I was thinking about where to go...the UK or USA. Although my English is poor,...I often read articles and projects by professors in the foreign countries...it's much better to be taught in the UK ... I thought it would be quite a different experience for me."

6.7.2 International study

6.7.2.1. Becoming an international student

Stella was initially anxious when she first arrived at the airport in Britain but was expecting to see other Chinese international students at the university.

"I came to Britain by myself. I planned the flight to Manchester Airport. The first feeling maybe ... was ... I'm in a cartoon...or I think maybe I'm going into a cartoon (laughter). This was really my first thought...and when I heard almost every person just speaking English I was confused and at that time...my listening was not very good and I was very nervous and didn't want to talk to anyone. When I arrived at the university, I knew there were many Chinese students here. When I walk around the university, I also see some Chinese, and may hear Chinese in the street and there are many Chinese shops ... it's not a surprise. China has a lot of people all around the world, we go to Australia, America, Korea, Japan...there are Chinese everywhere."

She has found a number of differences between life as a student in Britain compared to being a student in China.

"We all have free time, and we don't have many classmates. The teacher has more freedom and the relationship between the teacher and the student is very comfortable. But to tell you something about the difference...in this place we cannot really know how we can get help, where we can get information and the teacher always put things on the wall and they don't tell me ... they just tell me where I can find this out...I have many ways to study...if I don't know I just search for a place to study...I can find this. But, in my (old) university we don't have too many studies...they don't really care about the studies...the situation...or about the students. They care about...if the student they taught can graduate and if they can finish the class...if they pass the exam...or if they hand in the homework...they just care about this. I think we are just like a product... a student product. I didn't like it."

6.7.2.2. Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

Stella likes the idea of the university being diverse, however believes the number of Chinese students at the university conflicts with the notion of it being 'international'.

"We can have different projects from all over the world ... the teachers and the students are from different places. But if I say the word 'international' I may think there are too many Chinese (laughter)... I think if all of the Chinese students just speak English here it doesn't matter (laughter), but they speak a lot of Chinese...it's just like we are in my hometown...yeah...it is not very much

different. How do I feel about that? I think it is maybe a waste of time...they waste their time and money and their experience...they don't get a lot from this place.

She does not believe the number of Chinese international students at the centre will affect her English language development as she states she speaks mostly English.

'In our classroom (currently)...we don't have many Chinese students...it's fine...and it does not influence me too much or affect me too much. Outside the classroom maybe we just eat dinner together and we go to some Chinese restaurant...just with Chinese people. Speaking in English? We have to speak English here... in class, when you go to the bank, to go shopping, and just to go to Tesco...we have to speak English. In the UK almost 90% in English, so 10% Chinese... I just have a Chinese roommate...just one and another American and another is...just a local person.

However, outside of the classroom, Stella admits she enjoys speaking in Chinese with her Chinese friends.

Oh, at the weekend... if we have to ... all Chinese go together somewhere, or I visit my Chinese friends. I have to speak Chinese, but most of the time I'm in the library just speaking English. If I had to speak English to my Chinese friends ... it's strange...but sometimes we have some fun in our mother language and sometimes we need deep communication ... deep, deep, deep communication...and we can't do this in English. I spoke most in English to my American roommate called Rachel, but she's gone to London and will go back to her country...Saturday..."

Maintaining the social connection of being in a guanxi with other Chinese international students on her course is important to Stella.

'In Chinese opinion, all of 'guanxi' is important, all of this is very important. If you want to come back to China after university study in Britain, you must have this. It's really important. Lots of people who learn business or management,... they do this not for academic study, but they want to have opportunities to meet a lot of people from good families. So, when they come back to China, they will have good relationships with their classmates and when they want to do some things... they can help each other...Yes in China, the rich like to make a lot of friends if they are very useful. It's very important to the people who study business'

She also believes it is common to connect with your cultural group, and not just for Chinese international students in Britain.

'... just personality or their characteristics, and there are a lot of Chinese. I think people from every country like to study, learn, communicate with their country's people...it's very normal just like British people like to talk with other British ... it's the same thing...just my opinion. Lots of my friends...who

are doing a master's degree at a British university also like to study and communicate with other Chinese students because Chinese people...I think have different values. Chinese students may like to do lots of preparation...lots ...and they just do the things they think of, ...they make notes and just begin the work. But other people I know ... lots of people ...they like to delay the work...like to finish work right up to the deadline...but Chinese people don't like this'.

6.7.3. After the pre-sessional

It appears that English will feature in Stella's life, with the focus on English as an academic skill to support future studies and her career path.

"I may stay here at least 4 years and then I don't know where I will go...but English will be used throughout my life. I've decided to commit to my major, I will have to read many articles in English and communicate with the professor and other engineers just in English."

She does not believe that having a British degree will automatically secure employment if she returns to China, being able to talk about the experience is equally important.

'Maybe in the past after students studied abroad they found work but not now... because lots of people go abroad. The British universities are easy to apply to and easily give you a degree ...many Chinese know it. In the interview...in the job interview they must ask you about your English and your qualifications because it's part of your experience ... but if somebody can't talk about it in detail...this is not a good answer and the company will maybe reject them'.

6.7.4 Discussion

6.7.4.1. Personal and social interaction

From a personal perspective, Stella's narrative describes her negative feelings towards her English language learning experiences in China. She did not enjoy her classes and found the content, the teaching approach and the teacher uninteresting. Stella contrasts her English language learning experiences with the positive emotions she felt about her Chinese language class, specifically regarding the communicative and dialogic style of teaching Chinese language. The focus on vocabulary in her English class, with a lack of emphasis on communication and applying the language taught, was an issue raised in Ji's (2004) analysis of English in China as an example of linguistic engineering and not implemented to promote communication. Stella also stated in her narrative that neither communicating nor interacting in English was a priority for her major of Engineering as observed by Sawir et al (2012) who concluded that poor English communication skills did not always impede knowledge acquisition for students from more

technical disciplines. Despite the perceived lack of purpose of English for her future academic and career aspirations, Stella would not be able to progress on to her next level of study without passing her English exams.

There are social factors on the pre-sessional course preventing Stella from continued interaction in English. Language used in the pre-sessional classroom, and transactional language (Copland and Garton, 2011) is English. However, Stella believes that she must communicate with her fellow Chinese international students in their shared language to facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues being discussed. She follows this social convention (Fairclough, 1989) as it would be difficult for her to initiate this depth of discussion in English. Stella chooses to spend her social time outside the classroom with Chinese friends from her course, reflective of the findings from Bamber (2013) of the ease at which connections can be made with the same L1 group. Although, she states she communicated the most with her American housemate, who she conversed with using English. Therefore, situational factors could also impact the opportunities presented for more meaningful interactions in English which supports findings in Wu and Hammond (2011) that intercultural interaction occurring in university accommodation is largely a question of chance.

6.7.4.2. Continuity

Based on her narrative, there are a number of reasons why Stella's decision to study in Britain remains quite vague. As stated, her past experiences of English language learning were of a subject she did not enjoy, nor could see the relevance of. Even though she had negative feelings about learning English, she still decided to apply for postgraduate studies in Britain. However, many of her friends had already applied for places at British universities that supports the claims of study abroad being common practice for Chinese graduates (Cebolla - Boado et al, 2018). Her current experiences of interaction in English are limited to the classroom, which is reflective of her past learning experience in China. The CLT approach adopted does result in much more use and production of English (Bax, 2003) which she applies when in class or in the library, but it is still linked to learning practices and not towards authentic interaction in English. With the departure of her housemate, all other communication is in Chinese. This may be due to Stella still not being aware of the significance of developing

English language interaction skills for her future studies. There is no mention of what might be expected in terms of the level of interaction between herself and her non-Chinese peers on her postgraduate programme (Burnapp, 2006).

6.7.4.3. Situation/place

The impact of the situation or place on Stella's learning experiences have significantly influenced the amount of interaction she had in English. Her learning experiences in China were not conducive to interaction in English. In her narrative, she hoped her experience in England would be different. She noticed differences in terms of the approach to self-directed learning, with the student being required to actively seek out information rather than what has been reported in the literature of the more teacher-led approach in China (Biggs, 1996; Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Biggs, 1999; Chan, 1999; Wan, 2012; Woodrow & Sham, 2001; Turner & Acker, 2002; Branine, 2005; Sliwa & Grandy, 2006). Although Stella found this challenging, as she may require time and support (Quan et al, 2016) in acculturating to teaching and practices in the U.K. This was still considered preferable to the exam-driven approach Stella had experienced at her university in China.

While an increased learner-centred approach may serve to increase her level of interaction in English, the linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014), and the large number of fellow Chinese international students in the area around the university campus would not. With Chinese voices heard in the street and the numbers of Chinese restaurants and shops, Stella's conceptualisation of the internationalised university campus would agree with Knight (2011) in that it is a myth that international students at a university indicate an internationalised university, especially when these students come from the same country. From her perspective, Stella believes the 'Chinese student' is 'internationalised' as they are travelling worldwide to pursue higher education.

Joanne

27 years old from Qingdao, Shengdong province

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 4 weeks

Academic Department: ScHARR - Epidemiology

Pathway: 17 weeks pre-session course before starting postgraduate programme

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 5.5, at the time of interviews 5.5, level required to start the master's degree 6.5.

Joanne was 4 weeks into her 17-week pre-session course at the start of the interview process, and had just completed the pre-session course by the third and last interview.

6.8 Joanne

Joanne appears a bit nervous and her voice a little shaky. Her speech is quite quick. Although she gives long responses to the cues, it feels a little rushed. She looks embarrassed when she does not know how to say 'Gaokao' exam in English. Despite her lack of confidence, she speaks fluently with very little hesitation. She shifts around in her seat and fidgets with the papers on the table. When Joanne is engrossed in what she is saying, she seems calmer, and voice becomes steadier. Joanne then seems to notice that she has been speaking at length, this self-awareness seems to make her nervous, and she begins to pause, hesitate and want to rush the conversation to an end.

6.8.1 Before international study in Britain

Joanne is from a coastal city in the Shengdong province. There is a local dialect which is very similar to Han Chinese, so it was widely understood. Although she started studying English approximately 20 years ago, Joanne believes the lack of experience of using English as a functional language has had a negative impact.

"...I think it is difficult to me ...because I study English from maybe 7 years...but my English is still poor...because I don't have enough chances to use English...we just study in the classroom and pay attention to remembering the words, grammar and reading some papers and maybe trying to write a little text...we don't use it every day...for example now I'm in the UK I began to scan the BBC news and I need to read other things ... advertisements or something in English ...so I think maybe this is a chance to improve English by using and not just learning it"

Throughout her education in China, the importance of English has always been apparent.

"...yeah...because in China when we want to continue studying in university we need to take part in the examination named Gaokao....the English score is important because if you couldn't get a high

score in English...you won't have the chance to go to university. So, we keep studying but it's still not good. I think the class in China ...we learn English just for the examination...so I... we study the content of the examination..."

Her relationship to language study at school was closely related to the perceived attitude of her teachers.

"... at school Chinese was easier for me than English, I think...because I could... perform in the examination of Chinese better so I preferred to study Chinese. Because I think I paid attention to Chinese and I could get higher scores ... but even though I took some time and some energy to study English ... I couldn't get a good score, so I was not interested in English class ...and maybe it's the teacher of Chinese who looked kind and interesting and my English teacher in high school I didn't like her... I thought she was so strict and boring. Yes I think in China, the English class is boring ...it didn't have anything to attract me...I think if there were some interesting things to do in the classroom maybe I would have preferred to learn English...Yeah maybe when I was in middle school, every week we had a class to watch the movies or some drama in English...I think it's interesting. (But) when I was in high school...I think when I came to English class I felt stressed because my score in English class was not good and maybe the teacher wanted to choose me to answer some questions and ... I didn't know the answer and it was stressful and I felt scared. I didn't want to answer the question and I didn't know how to improve English but in order to improve our whole class score, I would have to improve my own score or I would drag down my class score so I felt uncomfortable in the class... just for the score but now I think English is important for everyone because it is popular all over the world. You don't know when you need to use English but when you need to use it and if you are good at learning English ... maybe you will have more chances to work...to study. In 2015 I had a chance to go to India for research but because I'm not good at speaking English I had to give up the chance I felt "what a pity."

On losing the research opportunity, it was apparent to Joanne just how important it was to study English in China. The decision to study abroad resulted in Joanne's decision to go back to studying English once again.

"After the university I worked for 4 years so in these 4 years I didn't study English anymore...then...since I wanted to come to the UK and I would need the IELTS so I just began to start English again. You know...maybe it's a personality problem, when I decided to...I thought about it for a long time...I couldn't make a decision. At first I applied for university in 2015, I had a gap year and thought more about the idea from June but I didn't make a decision... because my parents thought my job was good and er...I would be married and they thought my decision was not very good. Most Chinese parents think that if their children can have a job in a government department ...it's stable and comfortable. They think this is enough, yeah... so at first they didn't want to support me. If I couldn't get their support I would not have enough money to come to Britain. So, I gave up my plan

for 2 months and in September I still thought I needed to continue studying something so I argued with my parents, and my boyfriend, and I thought about it to myself for a long time. Then I decided I needed to go. I think this is a process I needed to pursue.

Joanne had to convince her parents that leaving her job in China to study in the U.K would be beneficial.

"My parents didn't want me to give up my job ... yeah. I got my job because I passed an examination. The examination in China for the government is difficult and I got this job, maybe over 80 people applied for this job. They think that it was a difficult process to prepare for this job ...yeah and they didn't want me to give (it) up and er...they want to find some method to keep this job and to continue studying in the UK but it's hard. I couldn't find any methods here to pursue both...keep this position and wait for me to come back. So, they didn't agree with me just because of the job. But I persuaded them that if I come back from Britain maybe I can get a better job. It took a long time to persuade them. But at last they thought maybe I have a chance to study in (a) different country and have a period living in a different country. Maybe this will be a wonderful experience in my life. Because I worked I made some decisions by myself, and my parents respect my decision. I began to look at this university...my sister studied in this university last year... not a sister in my family, just a friend. So, I think her life in this university is wonderful, and she thinks this university and this city is a good option and so I thought it's worth it to try."

Finding the time to prepare for study abroad was a challenge due to the commitment of a full-time job.

"I think the language is the most serious problem for me...because when I began to apply to this university I still worked, every day I needed to work 8 hours and I also needed 2 hours to go to work and to go home. So, I didn't have enough time to prepare for the English exam. But I tried my best to do some practice at night, at the weekend, so in fact I didn't prepare for the English exam well enough. ... Sometimes, on Monday I need to go work earlier because we need to (have) a group meeting before work, usually at 7 o'clock. Yeah, at night usually at 6.30 pm I would get home. After work when I come home I just want to have a rest, maybe read a novel, watch TV for an hour but usually I didn't eat dinner because I needed to lose weight...and maybe have 1 or 2 hours rest. I would begin to study English at 7 pm or 8pm until 11pm so I read some articles and wrote, and then practised for the writing and listening exams. Yeah I didn't have enough speaking (practice) because my parents can't speak English and I couldn't find people to help me practise. I had a course online... maybe 20 hours...everyday an hour or 2 hours...yeah. The teacher just taught me methods for the exam."

6.8.2 International study

6.8.2.1. Becoming an international student

Despite having to acclimatise to the temperature, Joanne's first impressions of the U.K. were positive.

"In fact, I didn't know anything about the city ...I just thought I wanted to go to another country to study. I came to England and arrived at Manchester airport... I came here from Manchester airport by car. On the day, I thought it was colder than China...when I left the plane I felt so cold. And on the road there are many mountains, sheep and some lakes. I think the landscape is beautiful. But when we arrived in the city, and we went around the teaching centre, the university and the city centre...we all thought "this is a little small", maybe compared to a Chinese city it looks so small. But I think there are many trees, grass and it looks more beautiful than China because in my home town there are many buildings, there are many roads, cars, people...we don't have enough space to plant trees and we don't have many gardens. So, I thought ... I like this environment."

When she first arrived in Britain, Joanne was not too worried about the large numbers of Chinese classmates and students at the university. She believed this will change once her language course finishes and her university course starts.

"In the city, there are many, many Chinese students, yeah, we had a lecture and we went to a restaurant near the library to have lunch...and yeah it's a Chinese restaurant but that day there were many, many people eating lunch there and I think ...all of them were Chinese. So, I asked my friends when we ate lunch..." how many Chinese in this university"? Sometimes on our table we are all Chinese so when we talk about some questions and we can't explain them in English... we can't control the urge and just begin to speak in Chinese. I think maybe after the language class, when we begin to study some classes of the major and there are not many Chinese in the class I think it'll be okay... the Chinese are so many...but it's not a problem."

Language study in the UK is very different to what Joanne has experienced studying her major at her Chinese university.

"I think it's so different in China when I studied in university. I studied at a medical college so most classes we just needed to listen to the teacher talking about some knowledge, about methods or some case at some hospital. Mostly, the study is divided into these two parts, listening or just doing something. We didn't have seminars. So, when we had to do something like the seminar group I needed to do some research in my summer holidays ... so I invited 5 students and (they) helped me to do some research in the community. Yeah... because we needed to prepare this research, so we needed to discuss the questionnaire, and the organisation and the data statistics. So, I think this was

once in the year at my university...but in Britain it is so different. We need to study some technology; we need to discuss with partners and mostly we need to do some presentations to show what we know...I think it's different."

6.8.2.2. Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

There are stark differences between university life in the UK and that in China, particularly the living arrangements.

"When I was in university, the accommodation was just...just like a bedroom and we are 6 girls living in one room. We shared the whole space, so I think maybe the relationships have been closer and now I live in UK student accommodation, there's an ensuite and we have our own bedroom and share the kitchen. Maybe in China the relationship between the roommates is closer but the space is crowded. You know the Chinese food is special to other countries' people but mostly I eat together with Chinese people. One time I invited my Indian roommate to have a try and she thought Chinese food is so good...it's delicious. But other roommates wouldn't join us. I have one roommate from Kenya, she doesn't eat meat and she just eats some vegetables, fruit, rice... but I prefer to eat meat. So, one time I invited her to eat together, she doesn't want to, I was cooking some vegetables for her, but she didn't come with us...I don't know why. I think last weekend, all weekend I spoke Chinese. I went to friends' accommodation and ate dinner, there were 6 people, all Chinese so just talked with each other in Chinese."

Although she has tried to create opportunities to speak in English, as her pre-sessional continues it has become more difficult,

"This is not a good opportunity to practise English...because when I meet some Chinese I begin to speak Chinese...but without control. I can't control myself ...sometimes I think they wouldn't understand me. I don't want to try to practise English. But I think at this university, the Chinese people are so many ... Monday to Friday when I come here and have a class...and I do try to speak English with classmates but after the class if I just go back to the accommodation I don't need to speak anyway. If I go out for dinner or go shopping I go out with Chinese, so I just speak Chinese. But if we go out with foreign classmates, maybe we need to speak English... the other classmates would feel isolated. Like my partner in the class, we need to talk about some questions, and last week I can remember we went on an educational visit to Wales together...we talked to each other on the route to Wales and I think he was the one I talked to the most, he's from Saudi Arabia."

However, there is the growing concern that the number of Chinese students on her course will impact on the amount of interaction she has in English.

But, today is the first day I sat with another 3 Chinese students in class. I don't know why...the seats

change every day ... but the tutor organised this team. Including me, there are 4 Chinese, so...I think today was more difficult. In the other classes, at our table there is usually at least one foreigner, so we have to speak English so everyone can understand the meaning. But today, our 4 Chinese are sitting on a table and sometimes we can choose to speak Chinese. Our tutor gave us a warning...but I can't control myself... I need to sit with other foreigners, I think. If I choose to sit with Chinese, I don't think this is a good chance to practise English. It is difficult to continue in English. Sometimes when I communicate and there are some words they can't remember I try to think about other words to show my meaning. But if the others are Chinese and I can't say something, I just speak Chinese directly. I can try my best to communicate in English, but if I meet some difficulty in this process I prefer to speak in Chinese again...I think there are so many Chinese students, maybe it is negative to us. I don't think it is international here because around me there are so many Chinese people. In fact, sometimes I don't think here has any difference with China. When I walk on the road I can see many Chinese people, I can hear some Chinese people speaking. I don't think this is international enough."

But, according to Joanne, having Chinese facilities in the area around the university is really useful and having Chinese speaking staff is helpful.

"I think the Chinese supermarket is useful to us because if I am going to cook Chinese food in the accommodation I have to buy something from the Chinese supermarket. You can't find enough ingredients in the British supermarket yeah, so I think this is good. If we don't use the Chinese supermarket we wouldn't cook Chinese food...and I think for Chinese students the food is an important fact of life... Also I think when I go to a Chinese restaurant, the food in this restaurant is less delicious than the food I cook but sometimes if I'm tired the restaurant is a good choice, because sometimes if I go to the Chinese restaurant I don't need to speak English...all people in this place speak Chinese ... I don't know whether they can speak English or not."

Joanne sees the benefit of the Chinese run businesses and feels much more comfortable making her transactions in Chinese.

"I went to a class at the gym and there are so many Chinese people ... I don't know why. There were three staff in the reception who are Chinese...yeah...I don't know why. Chinese people are maybe too much but sometimes when I want to talk about some details of the gym and the fees, I think if I can communicate in Chinese maybe because it's something about money or something like a long term contract ...I want to know some details correctly. So, I think the Chinese businesses are helpful. Yeah, sometimes when I go to the pub and some locals want to say 'hi' in Chinese to us... if we want to continue to communicate with each other we still use English but in pubs it's noisy and it's just some useless information...just "hi" and "how are you?", "oh, nice to meet you", just like that. If I need some help, for example, if I want to research a flat and I need to look at the contract carefully, I hope I have some Chinese people to help me check this contract...help me to understand the details on

that...I don't want to have some trouble later."

Interacting with other non-Chinese students has its challenges as Joanne feels that Chinese people may have a distinct way of communicating.

'Yeah...yeah... I think that we disagree with others easily but ...maybe we don't tell them directly...we also disagree but maybe we talk about some other things to show we disagree...for example if I want to ...if I want to say to my classmate today's clothes are not so beautiful, I don't say it's not beautiful directly...maybe "it's not better than clothes you are in yesterday"... "maybe the dress yesterday was more beautiful" ...so...just like this. I think at first it's the language which is the problem but it's also about the connection...maybe some people they want to talk to anyone around them....but some people they just want to talk with their friends...they don't want to try to have some new friends, they just think their old friends are enough...and I think maybe it's easier to communicate with the international students than British students...So, last week was our Intro week and I did not talk to any British students...I just talked with students from South America...some international students. I'm not sure...just some feeling...maybe it's because we are all...maybe not international students... but people whose first language is not English...I think they also talk slowly and it's easier to understand'.

For Joanne, negotiating connections with others is also culture-driven.

'I think it is difficult for me too...because I think if you want to interact with other people you need to search for some common habits or ...yeah...for example it's easier to interact with my roommate because I think our connection is the same and we have some common habits...so if we want to go to the cinema and we can find the same favourite film we want to see...but when I want to interact with other students ...and they come from different countries it's difficult to search for some common, routine thing to talk about...yeah and for example...they don't know my idols in China and I don't know the actors or singers they love and so I think it's difficult to find something you want to talk about...we don't know the world they live in...so I think it's actually difficult'. We have some classmates from Saudi Arabia and we tried to make friends with them but sometimes it's so difficult. The last time, we went to the zoo together and when we came to the area with the monkeys...my Chinese friends said maybe the monkey was a human...and the humans come from the monkeys and the students from Saudi Arabia don't think so...they thought it is maybe a God...so it's difficult to keep communication going...maybe it's the difficulty of culture'.

However, the main obstacle is language and the ability to adequately express yourself.

'Yeah...I couldn't talk about some difficult academic problem in English...so maybe if the language is not the problem we can talk about the academic problems... if it's in Chinese it is not difficult for me...but in English I need to check...I need to check the meaning of the word so it becomes more difficult...'

Therefore, to form social networks, Joanne feels that students in Britain would benefit from membership to guanxi. It may be time-consuming to maintain these relationships so social media apps can facilitate.

If it's a new environment and they don't have any friends maybe they have to make some new friendships and some networks. I think to make a better 'guanxi', we need more time to maintain this relationship and we need to have a lot of communication. But, with the international students and British students...we don't have a suitable app on the mobile and we can't keep this relationship...for example in a group of Chinese people we use WeChat and talk about...with others...but international students and British student they don't use this app so we don't talk about what we have done when we get home... we don't have enough time to communicate with them. If we are friends we are just about...what I ate...I just want to share...some interesting stories happening around me. So, we spend a lot of time to keep the relationship going but I think if we don't have the means with the international students or the British students...we couldn't exchange our stories after class and we just talk about something in the class.

Having spent some time in Britain, Joanne is looking to be part of a guanxi which offers social, cultural and academic support.

It's now different around me...I have some new friends I met them after I came to Sheffield so the friendship is quite short and I'm not sure it will last. But I think a relationship can be built...we study here...we also study the same major...my roommate is also studying in public health...yeah...maybe. Sometimes, for example with my neighbour...mostly we have dinner, have lunch together...but, except for the lunch and dinner time we don't have any contact...so I think it's a 'guanxi' developing because we come from the same nation...the same province in China and we are studying in the same major...and living in the same apartment.

Though in terms of language development, Joanne believes she would benefit from support which extended beyond the classroom.

The problem I want to solve is about the language. The language is difficult to improve just in the classroom...because we need to use the language...so for example...when I have a trip in the UK I think I use the language more than in class so I think...what the university can do is ... provide some English support ... they already provide some study skills about academic writing and listening ...we just need more language support'

6.8.3. After the pre-sessional

Joanne is apprehensive about starting her master's programme as many of her Chinese international student peers have difficulty following the programme.

'...and mostly they said they think it is so difficult to understand the meaning of the teacher...maybe it's about the language or maybe it's the information itself...they think it is so difficult to understand...I think when I begin my course tomorrow I think the situation will be the same...language is also the ... difficulty... we need to solve'

Joanne plans to go back to China after her master's and is not sure just how much English she will use when she returns home.

'I'm not sure. Before I came to the city I worked in the centre for disease control, and in the last job I didn't need to use much English. We just used it when we began some research. We needed to read others' research results and we needed to meet some English people. Sometimes someone gives some lectures in English. But I think when I return to China I don't want to work there again. I want to go to some university and I think I won't use English in my daily life but when I become an academic researcher, for example, with people listening and giving lectures and writing some papers, I may need English. In my hometown, there aren't any foreigners, so I don't need to speak English.'

The grade she acquires for her master's in Britain should not have any bearing on her future job prospects.

'I think if I go back to China and if I don't continue to study so I just want to go to work I think the grade is not a big problem...because I think in the environment of working...which level that you can finish the work is more important than the grade at university...so I think the certificate of the university is just a ticket for me to get a better job...and then when I begin to work ...the performance of the work is more important...but if I want to continue to study a PhD...I think the grade is more important...'

6.8.4 Discussion

6.8.4.1. Personal and social interaction

Joanne's learning experiences appear to be centred on learning English as opposed to communicating or interacting in English. Most references in her narrative before she became an international student in Britain, revert to exam preparation (Reagan, 2004). As an international student, she has tried to interact with non- Chinese students in her accommodation, which as Copland and Garton (2011) point out is one of the opportunities pre-sessional students make use of outside of the classroom to interact in English. However, this has not always had the desired outcome she had hoped for, and she seems to have withdrawn from engaging with the students at her accommodation. Social interactions with the wider community have been very superficial which Joanne relates as much to managing cultural and

communication differences, as she does to her English language competence. Her narrative also reveals growing interaction with other Chinese international students in Chinese, as her time on the pre-session progresses. Limited interactions with local residents (a finding in Jarvis and Stakounis, 2010) and choosing to mix more with other Chinese students (Bamber, 2013) has eased Joanne's transition into British higher education.

6.8.4.2. Continuity

English language use appears to still be dominated by focus on the receptive skills such as reading. This could be how Joanne has extended the technician approach (Reagan, 2004) she is accustomed to, to her current practices which limit English largely to classroom activities. Most of the hours outside class time are spent communicating in Chinese with other Chinese international students. Therefore, English language learning and development is still very similar to the EFL experience she had in China, with few opportunities to develop language skills based on authentic use (Ji, 2004).

She mentions choosing to interact with other NESB international students due to concerns about her language proficiency, rather than British 'home' students at an induction event for her master's course (Tian and Lowe, 2009; Copland and Garton, 2011). This suggests that she is not confident in the progress she has made, in terms of her oral proficiency, on the pre-session course. Joanne has also been told by other Chinese international students, who will be her future peers, that having the confidence in English to understand the course content may not improve once she starts her postgraduate studies. This is consistent with findings from Sawir et al (2012) and Liu (2009). This could be the reason why she has sought the support of these peers (see 5.8.4.3 below). It may also be relevant that Joanne has stated on finishing her Master's in Britain, and hopefully gaining an academic position in China, it is not likely that English will feature in her daily life. Therefore, with minimal interaction and engagement in English outlined in her future, it is questionable whether she has a need to develop an L2 communicative repertoire.

6.8.4.3. Situation/place

The presence of large numbers of Chinese international students in Sheffield, both in the city and in her class has had a negative impact on the frequency of Joanne's interactions in English. For Joanne, it is a myth that foreign students indicate an internationalised university (Knight, 2011). The linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014) reinforces her thoughts on study in Sheffield being much like student life in China. The difficulties she has experienced so far (maintaining interactions in English with her Chinese classmates, cultural communication difficulties with other non-Chinese international students) have led her closer to forming social network groups with fellow Chinese students for interpersonal support while in Britain (Wang and Greenwood, 2015). Joanne also noted the limitation of the 1 year duration of her master's but not in the sense of how much she could gain from 1 year postgraduate study (Counsell, 2011, Bamber, 2013) rather the difficulty within that time frame to form any meaningful relationships, much less a relationship where she would be communicating in English. This may be particularly relevant as Joanne's return to China after her master's does not involve a career that would require interacting in English.

Elsa

23 years old from Shanxi

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 6 weeks

Academic Department: Accounting and Finance

Pathway: 10 weeks pre-sessional course before starting postgraduate programme

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the course 5.5, at the time of the first interview 5.5, level required to start the master's degree 6.5.

Elsa was in the second week of her 10 weeks pre-sessional course at the time of the first interview. By the time of the last interview, she had successfully completed the pre-sessional course and was preparing to start her postgraduate degree.

6.9 Elsa

Elsa has a naturally quiet voice. She seems relaxed and talks very eloquently with a wide vocabulary. Her responses are very considered, and she manages to gently express quite strong opinions on her learning experiences. She is interested in my opinions on the topics and asks about my experiences at university, and compares them with her own stories. She asks for time to think before some responses, but this is not to find the words in English, but more to find a good example to present what she thinks on a topic. Elsa smiles a lot, both when talking about her favourite English films, and at the embarrassment of having to do recitals in English in front of her parents when she was a child. After the first interview, we spent some time talking about good places to eat out in the city.

6.9.1 Before international study in Britain

Elsa comes from Shanxi province situated in the middle of China and famous for coal production. Although both of her parents come from the same province, they were brought up in quite different places, so have different local languages.

"Yes, there is a dialect...but I can't speak any of them because my parents come from different places in Shanxi province so...yes... they won't understand each other. It's not 'don't know' it's... in the north part of China the dialect is quite close to Mandarin, and in my city most of the citizens live in the city and not the suburbs and speak Mandarin. I live in the city of Tiguang, it's the capital city of Shanxi province...and my father and his parents live in the suburb of Tiguang city...yes and my mother is from the southern part of Shanxi province...near to Si'an. When she did her Chinese 'gaokao' to enter university in Tiguang city she moved, after her graduation...it was about late 1980's at that time ... there was still a policy to distribute jobs when you graduate, throughout the nation. So, she left there at that time...and met my father... a colleague and finally married."

The favourite subjects at school for Elsa were Chinese and English for which she believes she had a particular talent.

"...these two were my best subjects when I was at school...I think they are quite similar to some extent. I don't know ... maybe I have a talent in language ...I just love reading. In Chinese, I just love reading... so maybe it's easier to understand an article than the others...and writing in Chinese was also enjoyable for me at that time.....because when I was a school child at that time I didn't have an imagination so I really enjoyed Chinese classes. For English...can I just say I loved to watch English movies...they are really fascinating to me because when I was young there were still English movies on the TV too, and there were really some masterpieces... Pride and Prejudice, erm...Titanic...many many years ago...The Mummy. The least enjoyable...erm... maybe when I learnt new articles in our textbooks ...some of them are important and will appear in the test paper and we have to recite them...recite them in front of my parents to let them examine us...it's a task assigned by the school."

From this young age the participant knew the importance of language study to her education, yet more than this, she now attributes language study to her current physical and metaphysical path.

That's the reason why I'm here now...English learning...er...it's important. When I was a school child, English was my advantage because I got good marks in that subject...and somehow it got me entrance into a good high school and university and the importance...it gives me a new perspective to see the world."

Her love of literature prompted Elsa to undertake an undergraduate degree in Chinese language and literature. However, she became somewhat disillusioned as the programme did not live up to her expectations.

"Because I love literature...when I was very young and ...when I was in primary school I spent a lot of time reading novels and all kinds of books and I lived to read...so maybe I thought with Chinese language and literature I can read more books and my Chinese score was good in high school so I can have my advantages to develop better ...so I chose the major but actually I don't know how to say...I didn't get too much to learn during my university. Erm...because some of my ...our classes for example the history of Chinese literature we studied Chinese literature from all periods from ancient times to modern times and you need to ...except for simply reciting the concept... you have to give some comments and give a review of something. I thought it should be subjective...it should be my opinion but the teacher told us to pass the exam you should recite things given by the teacher or authorities because they want us to learn it that way...so we have to ...and I hated that so I didn't actually learn very much."

At the end of her undergraduate degree course Elsa was unsure what her next step would be in terms of further education but knew if she wanted to improve her chances of employability, she could not continue to study the same discipline.

"Because at that time, I didn't really have a specific plan for my future but in the graduation year I just thought about whether to study law or finance as my master's degree... because as you see I didn't have specific plans."

Once the decision was made, however, Elsa had the challenge of studying for a university entrance exam on a subject area with which she had minimal experience.

"My major was Chinese language and literature and my exam was actually the degree I wanted to get ...the Master's degree in Accounting, so I took the exam for Accounting, and it's because ...I didn't know what to do after my graduation and I wanted to change my area into Business and Financial and so I changed my goal in the exam and I prepared for the exam for half a year. The university I wanted to go to was in Hubei province...a top 5 university for Finance and Economics, but Accounting was very hard...it's a hard major in China and the students taking exams for it is just increasing."

Understandably she did not pass the entrance exam, however Elsa had a contingency plan.

"...the year I graduated I took part in the exam for master's degree in China...but I failed...there was a gap between my score and the score to pass. So, I considered preparing for one more year or to go abroad to study. My parents thought maybe to get a Master's in the UK is good because you not only get your degree but also it's only one year...actually most ..many Chinese students choose the UK just because of the short time. I don't think it's important ... but my parents think age is important for a girl. I think the Chinese society has a stereotype about the girls ages, they think that if you are above 28, it is not easy for you to find a boyfriend or find a job because you are too old...and the companies will think she will be pregnant soon and there is invisible discrimination in the recruiting procedure."

Once Elsa and her parents had opted for study abroad. The next decision would be which country.

"...yes I was considering...I thought about Australia once...I applied for a university in Australia and I got an offer but finally I decided to go to the UK. To get a master's degree in Australia I had to take 2 years and the tuition fee is quite expensive...but about 5-600,000 RMB and er...because I'm an adult now I didn't want my parents to pay such a big amount for me. So, it was my mum who searched the internet at first and she found a programme held by the Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE) in Beijing. There's a programme...a pre-master's degree before you go abroad and they can help you to apply for it...the universities...so before I came here I stayed in Beijing for one year...and that time I got my IELTS score and I finished my application and made my decision to go to city Sheffield."

Elsa had previously enjoyed English classes and on joining the pre-sessional course at The University of Sheffield her level would be considered as an advanced to proficient user. This is according to the Common European Framework Reference for Language, with scores of IELTS 8.0 for listening, 7.0 for writing, 7.5 for reading, but unfortunately only 5.5 for speaking.

“But I took the IELTS test 3 times and they are all 5.5...so I kind of gave up. Because we just don't have enough opportunities to speak. In China, the education of English is just to perform well in an exam... then people will regard your English as 'good'. Maybe our education system ignores the importance of speaking, we do listening, we do writing and we do reading but there is no chance to do speaking. Who speaks to you? The teacher? There are too many students. Your classmates? They'll just think you are crazy..(laughs)..and they did have...there were some foreign students in school but the same reason you don't have enough chance to speak to them...oh..I mean foreign teachers.”

Though she had been advised on what to do to improve her speaking level.

“I tried to speak more but another weakness is that my voice is slow or weak, and it's hard for me to get heard above other students if I give a presentation or if I'm on stage and my teacher told me I should open my mouth when speaking.”

6.9.2 International study

6.9.2.1. Becoming an international student

Departing from her home in Xi'an, Elsa travelled to the UK alone but met friends in Manchester when she landed. When she first arrived in Sheffield, Elsa was amazed by the scenery and the way the streets looked as it was all so different from what she was accustomed to in her own city or the capital Beijing.

“I only met my friends when I arrived in Manchester... and when I departed from Xi'an, it was just me alone. I remember at that time I just opened my eyes to see everything I could see in my view and to remember... because it's really refreshing after several hours flight...someone told me England at that time was colder than my home town and I thought yes...that it is actually...maybe the first day all in my mind was excitement. Because there are hardly (any) skyscrapers here and there are some beautiful houses and the air is fresh and the sky is blue...just like what I can see from English movies. I think Sheffield is quite an ideal place for me because...it's not too northern and it won't be so cold in winter and the cost of living here... maybe is not as high as other places like London, Birmingham, and I knew there were a lot of mountains here, and the football here is famous. I went to see a match last week in the Hillsborough stadium...Sheffield Wednesday and another team I can't remember the name. Actually it was my first time to see a live match...on the tram coming back to

Sheffield someone was singing, dancing you know...(laughs). In the UK, people are more excited about football than basketball."

Regarding university life so far, both China and the UK have good and bad points.

"There are also many differences in the classes,...let me think...the teacher can walk around in the class, in the front there is a blackboard,...he can also stick paper on the wall to write anywhere...so we have to turn our heads with his steps...and he has so much time for brainstorming and group work, pair work to talk, to communicate and exchange our ideas...(laugh)...the UK we use Google Drive and Google classroom as an assistant, maybe it gives us a more direct way to interact with our teacher...in China we have Wechat but most of the time the teacher is not in this group...so in the UK, the teacher can release what he wants to tell us in an announcement in Google classroom and we can just follow it...it's a simplification of the procedure...but another bad point is that we have to check our mailbox (emails) everyday but also the tasks are in our mailbox. And, not only on campus but in the UK... I think you British use mailbox too much (laugh) you just do most communication by mailbox...and in China we don't use mailbox too much."

6.9.2.2. Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

The number of Chinese students currently on her course was a surprise to Elsa.

"Actually, the number of Chinese students is more than I expected...in my class for the English language course they are all Chinese and 2 are from Taiwan...and at break we speak Chinese. It's really bad for us to improve our English. I think maybe it's because it's a prep-class...people tend to stay in their comfort zone and it's ...of course easier to speak Chinese than with the local citizens so maybe I can always hear Chinese in the street, in the classroom, everywhere."

Nonetheless, on reflection of the expense of studying in the UK, Elsa does not intend to let the presence of a lot of Chinese students at the university have a negative impact on her personal experience here.

"I just think it is what you want... you spend so much on tuition fees to come here, so unless it is for the necessary social occurrence I try my best to avoid speaking Chinese. I now have had a long trip after my pre-sessional. I went to Birmingham, London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, the Lake District...and er...I have to find accommodation at each...I asked about the roads...so I had a lot of communication with people. Mostly, people were friendly and helpful and yes...maybe it was because I'm a foreigner ... I don't know. If you know what you are talking about then you just confidently talk about it...there is nothing to be shy about."

Elsa talks about the social connections she has made and why she has formed networks with other Chinese international students.

'...if you are alone in a different, foreign country...there will be some difficulties...if you have ...I don't know whether it can be explained as 'friends'....if you have some friends...for example I travelled with my friends around the UK so we can share the hotel fee, and Uber...but if you are travelling alone you will pay for all of them and it's very expensive...and also travelling with friends will add more fun. I used to live with another 4 Chinese students in the pre-sessional... but because I am not the kind of person who is good at socialising...it's a kind of pressure for me to talk to them or even for daily greetings...you will have to say something or it will be embarrassing to stay in the kitchen...you have to maintain a very basic 'guanxi' and now I've moved out so we have lost contact...erm...I don't know if you can take advantage of it, it is very helpful but if you are....but if your friends ask you to do something maybe you feel erm...maybe it's difficult for you to refuse them if you have to do it...it's the disadvantage of the 'guanxi'.

While she does not believe it is essential, there are advantages to forming a social network or guanxi with speakers of your L1.

'Of course, you can form a relationship with other nationalities...but I think it's quite important to have some friends from the same nationality because we have the same culture and we come from the same background and we are facing the same challenges from a foreign country so we can...so it's easier to help each other...just to talk something that has happened to you. So,...I think for the students I just mentioned who just want a degree, they want to make the 1 year as comfortable as possible...you can have the same friends, and the same kind of people will get together, ... but I guess most of the students they want to learn, they want to improve their English...so maybe they will not let themselves fall into the net of 'guanxi'

6.9.3. After the pre-sessional

When Elsa starts her postgraduate, she believes that intergroup interaction between Chinese international students and non- Chinese students may be challenging.

'First the situation with studying with other non- Chinese students ...I think because...let me think...first they have cultural differences and maybe students from different countries can organise some groups on tables...they tend to get together and if ...also like most Chinese students are ...they are just familiar with IELTS listening but to communicate with others...maybe it's hard for them to really understand. But it depends maybe...if non- Chinese students are willing to be friends with Chinese students...I think Chinese students want to be friends with non-Chinese students in their heart but there are difficulties, so they just give up. Between language and cultural difficulties, I think language comes first because if you don't understand them you ..what the people are saying... you don't...you will not know about the different cultures.'

One suggestion for improving intergroup interaction is if there were the same managed activities available to postgraduate students as there are for undergraduates.

'...if we had fewer Chinese students ...and if we have group work ...try to put Chinese students with non-Chinese students together. Maybe give them (the Chinese international students) more situations or more opportunities to get in touch with non-Chinese students...or teachers. There was a sports and activities fair last week and I think most of them are for undergraduates and I think for the university we should have some clubs or activities for the master's students'

6.9.4 Discussion

6.9.4.1. Personal and social interaction

Interaction and speaking in English had always been a personal challenge for Elsa as the social context of learning English in China did not lend itself to authentic opportunities for communication. Though, Elsa's narrative indicates the lack of communication was beyond social constraints and extended to the education system. Ji (2004) refers to this top-down political and ideological approach orchestrating the linguistic unification of China, where learning English for communication was not the objective. Elsa's experience demonstrates how this manifested in the English language class in China.

The idea of communicating with her classmates in English, as the only means to practice oral communication, provoked a reaction as if it would be absurd or unthinkable. This practice may have extended to interaction practices in Britain as Elsa describes communication in Chinese as a 'necessary social occurrence'. Fairclough (1989) argues that the strong connection between an individual and society, and the language to function within that society influences language choice, and for Elsa this may manifest in involuntarily choosing Chinese to communicate to her classmates during the pre-session course. This is also impacted by the combined factors of the linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014) of the environment outside the class, and the numbers of fellow Chinese students on the pre-session course.

Elsa stresses the need to construct relationships with people who share the same nationality and culture. The year duration of the master's programme influences how much time and

effort an individual is willing to invest in forming a supportive friendship group (Bamber, 2013). Yet, the social support offered by a *guanxi* (Wang and Greenwood, 2015), according to Elsa, would be accompanied with the disadvantage of less interaction with non-Chinese students that could negatively impact an individual's English language development. To counter any possible apprehension towards inter-group contact when students are on their postgraduate programmes (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009), Elsa supports the idea of more managed or institutional involvement in promoting cross-cultural interaction (Harrison and Peacock, 2010). This could include extending university induction activities that are organised for undergraduates, to the postgraduate cohorts.

6.9.4.2. Continuity

Elsa enjoyed English at school, and her good grades in English secured a good high school and a place at a good university. This would support Tan and Rubdy's (2008) claim of the high value of English for China in the globalised world, and its potential as a commodity that can provide access to high status educational institutions. However, Elsa admits that her English speaking skills were her weakest area and the reason why she had to do a pre-session course to gain entry onto her postgraduate programmes in Britain. Her school and university education in China did not provide her with English communication skills training, and her only other past learning experiences were of IELTS listening and speaking, which she feels are inadequate preparation for the level of communication required at a British university. This is a view presented by Murray (2016) based on the 2009 QAA report on quality and standards of higher education in Britain. Elsa believes the disparity between what Chinese international students are accustomed to during their IELTS training and what they face when interacting with non-Chinese students impacts both communication and interaction. She states that the poor communication skills of the Chinese students result in the avoidance of the intercultural exchanges with non-Chinese students which could have led to increased intercultural understanding (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009; Harrison and Peacock, 2010).

6.9.4.3. Situation/place

Both situation and place, and the transition from one location to another have impacted on Elsa's learning experiences. The English language skills that Elsa had acquired in China, which led to a place at a good school and university, according to her narrative, provided the opportunity for new cultural experiences (Counsell, 2011). On joining her pre-sessional class in Britain, she could experience and adapt to a different approach to language teaching based on communication and the interactional exchange of ideas, which was also a finding from the study by Wang and Byram (2011). However, Elsa felt the technology enhanced learning (TEL) methods including Flipped learning tasks (Hung, 2017) to encourage a more active and autonomous approach to learning, and electronic forms of communication may require more adjustment time than that available on the pre-sessional. Burnapp's (2006) studies also recognise that pre-sessional international students are not always aware, and should be provided with training on the epistemological assumptions underlying the teaching and learning practices at British universities.

Olivia
25 years old from Anhui
Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 2 weeks
Academic Department: Law
Pathway: 6 weeks pre-session course before starting postgraduate programme
English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of the

6.10 Olivia

Olivia smiles as she enters the room. She speaks slowly, and articulates her words clearly. She looked quite serious at first but as she started reflecting on her learning experiences, particularly making smoothies in her English class, she seemed to soften. She seemed to open up at this point, giving her opinions and expressing how she felt at the time of the events she was recalling. Olivia has a very mature outlook, quietly confident and portraying a sense of self-assuredness. She is very honest about what she likes and what she does not. As the first interview continues the conversation becomes more natural, and more relaxed. I need to keep checking that we are talking about the topics as we are both digressing. Afterwards, we continue talking as we walk to the city centre together.

6.10.1 Before international study in Britain

Olivia was born in Anhui, which is slightly west of the centre of China. From a very small village, up until the age of 4 years she used only the regional language.

'I communicate in Mandarin, but I know the regional language because I was born in a small village and people here speak our local language. But when I was aged 4, I moved into the centre of the city, so people there only speak Mandarin...and I didn't speak the local language anymore. Before I moved to the city I didn't know how to speak Mandarin.'

In primary school, there were some aspects of language learning that Olivia enjoyed.

'...for English I think maybe pronunciation...and I remember that we had a class teaching us how to make a smoothie...and the teacher asked us to bring some tools and some fruits and he taught us how to make smoothies in English...I thought it was really interesting...Yes, compared to mathematics (laughs).'

However, there were aspects that Olivia did not like, for example, reciting Chinese articles from both contemporary and ancient times that could be a paragraph of 100 characters.

'For Chinese we always needed to recite some articles and we needed to recite exactly what is said, so it's really difficult for me because every word needs to be the same... sometimes we recited the

articles from the ancient times. I think it was easier compared to the articles we recited from contemporary times. For English, I think remembering the words ... it was not interesting and sometimes our exam was maybe too strange for us. It was too keen on grammar and sometimes when foreign people would do our English exam they were also confused about the answers.'

There was little doubt of the importance of learning English at school, as it was compulsory. *'...we have no choice because it's a major course for us and actually Chinese, Maths and English are the same core lessons, so they tend to be really important for our performance.'*

According to Olivia, the importance of language study in general was the facilitation of communication.

'I think it's communication...because when we've got the skills of a language we can communicate with others really freely and it's also a good chance to learn their language ...sometimes we want to buy some things so we can see the website very clearly...I think it's really interesting.'

As time went on and Olivia progressed through her school years, the significance of learning English at school became even clearer.

'Erm I think it's important because if we didn't ... most of the time when we applied for a job or we found an internship, employers will check that you can speak fluently in English and also if we wanted to study forward ...which is most of (what) the Chinese students choose...if we don't have any knowledge about English, it will be hard for us to apply for a good job...apply to a good university.'

Then she decided after 4 years of employment in the compliance department of a stock market security company in Shanghai that she would return to study.

'It was not really hard ..I can't say it's really stressful because first we have really regular work times... but I think if you do one thing for 4 years it's kind of boring and if I want to have a promotion in my career it's really necessary to get a master's degree and yeah.'

Olivia's decision to study abroad and not in China was due to a number of factors.

'...no, there are several reasons...because our entrance exam is really difficult and if I want to apply for a Chinese university it always takes 2 or 3 years. And most importantly, I also thought it would be boring if I studied in China. Because I worked in Shanghai for a very long time and I don't think there is any other place that will interest me in China. So, the first and only choice is outside China. I think after 4 years' work, it's time to have a break and I really want to live in a different place...living a different life routine...and know more about the foreign world.'

A lot of the knowledge Olivia had about England was from British TV dramas. She likened her own personality to the concept of a British character.

'Before I come here I knew England mostly from the dramas because I really like the dramas on BBC or ITV...they are really short and they contain a lot of stories and I thought compared to the America, Britain really has a long, long history and there are many interesting things here...and also I think the personality of the British is similar to me...they are cold outside but have a very warm heart...ok...they don't want others to always bother them, so they want to keep alone ...'

Olivia studied Finance and Law as an undergraduate, however, decided to focus on Law for her master's. It was an agent that recommended the university, and she admits that she did not know a great deal about Sheffield.

'Actually, I didn't know much about Sheffield before...it was also the agent who chose this university for me (laughs). I did do some research on the website and it's one of the 5 red brick universities and I also knew it had a great contribution to engineering and a very famous car...er Rolls Royce ...yeah and well I knew nothing more. But I am very happy because the males are more than females (laughs). The first place I wanted was Edinburgh, and Glasgow ... but it's better for me to choose England... I nearly considered London...Durham, and Bristol...I really wanted to go to Bristol...and Southampton ...but I didn't want to go to Manchester.'

While the agency dealt with the applications and online registrations, Olivia was responsible for supplying the references, personal statements and meeting the English language requirement.

'Erm...there are too many things but most of them were prepared by my agency. I just need to follow her guide. Yeah, she needed some basic materials and I provided them... like what happened to me, or like ...some stories or my reference or my personal statement. So, I need to provide my information to her, and she prepared it for me and also there is an online registration...she did that for me. I needed to prepare the language for myself...the agency was only responsible for my application.'

She would need an IELTS score of 6.5 to join a pre-sessional course for a Law master's degree and knew that her weakest area was writing. Therefore, she needed to organise her language preparation for the IELTS exam.

'No ...no, I didn't do a course...I had a course online at the end for writing because I always got 5.5 and it never improved so I got an online course...and for the rest I didn't have a course ...I just had books to practise. As I have mentioned before, I worked and I didn't have enough time to prepare for my IELTS exam and didn't get quite high enough marks at that time and when I (eventually) got 7.0 all pre-sessional courses were closed so I chose to be here.'

6.10.2 International study

6.10.2.1 Becoming an international student

Although she has not started her master's course, Olivia is expecting study in the UK to be significantly different to what she is accustomed to.

'I just had the pre-sessional course, I haven't had my lecture...so, I think in my undergraduate course ...I think I really did too many courses...I only had at least one day off from Monday to Friday and another time it was full of classes but I didn't really think carefully, and we didn't need to prepare much before the class. But when I have my Masters...although I haven't started my course here... I have had some news from a student who studied here before and she told me that we only have 4 classes per week, and we have a really long reading list before we start our course. So, I think it's quite different...we have more time to arrange our own time...you can choose to read or not.'

The social and home environment when she studied in China is not like the situation she is in now, and since that time she has also lived alone in Shanghai for 2 years.

'In China we had 4 girls living in the same room but not a flat so it's a really close relationship although it is not really convenient. And for the social life, we also have a students' union and I joined the students union ...and I also participated in some activities but maybe they are not really attractive to me ...and I was not really social at that time.'

Olivia is also much more enthusiastic about the social activities here than when she was studying in China.

'er...about the social activities I think the teaching centre really arranged colourful activities for us and I tried to join some of them and yeah I think it's really interesting and I think it's a good way to get to know more friends. If we want to join them, you can find foreign students if you go to a place with a certain aim. When I come to that activity I want to meet at least (one) foreign girl.'

She booked her UK accommodation in China and only found out upon arrival to the flat that she would be sharing with 4 Chinese students.

'Although I live in the same flat, we have different rooms so I have a personal room. You know we have WeChat in China, we have a small chat group (here) and some of us will have a Hot Pot. This is more of a socialising activity to relieve homesickness with a traditional meal than to find something or somewhere to eat. I think they (the Chinese shops and restaurants) will make our life more convenient because it's more similar to our living patterns in China. But it's not a good thing for us to get a deeper experience about local life. I may take the restaurant as an example. As soon as we find

those restaurants are near...every meal...every lunch... my friend and I will choose a Chinese restaurant. So, it means that we haven't eaten a western meal once...although I have lived here for more than one month...I think (it's) kind of terrible. Although British food may not be really tasty for us, we have come to a foreign country... it's really important to know what they're eating...yeah.'

6.10.2.2. Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

Meeting foreign and/or local people is one thing that Olivia hopes to do. On arrival in Sheffield, one of the things she noticed was the large number of Chinese students. Though she was aware of this before travelling to the city Olivia does not see this as posing a problem.

'I have to be honest, the news on the website says that Chinese are everywhere in Sheffield and they nearly occupy the vicinity ... it says this. But, I think it really is not a problem. Also, there are some statistics on the website, and it says that still more than half of the students come from the European Union, is that right? And only less than half, maybe 30% come from outside the European Union, so I think maybe we are too concerned about the number of Chinese students because we always want to get together and it's really easy for us to talk in Chinese. But if you really have a way to go outside ...it's still really easy for us to find a foreign friend. I think it (the university's setting) is not really a good thing if we want to know more about the local culture...there are too many Chinese restaurants... but I have to say I don't think it's really a problem ...we are still in England. We need to do more... things in contact (with) others... more often. I think it's really difficult for Chinese, besides the number of Chinese people, the biggest problem for us is to conquer ourselves and be more open and willing to make new friends.'

It is the view of Olivia that many Chinese international students look for a guanxi when they arrive in Britain. But the social group does not necessarily have to be with other Chinese students.

'I think...when students come to Britain. If they are looking for 'guanxi' ... we are looking for friendship, we are looking to be close to some people. Yes, I have seen it...the most common one is we find some Chinese friends here to have a good relationship. But I also met a guy who just graduated this year, he had a really good relationship with the local people because he is good at playing tennis and he joined a tennis club and they are all locals...so they had a good relationship and he also joined because he could learn some local language from (the city). He met a German guy and this German guy invited him to his party and he just got to meet many friends in this way. So, no matter which kind of friend you are looking for, a Chinese, a foreign one, everyone needs a friend'

According to Olivia, it only becomes problematic when the guanxi has only Chinese international students.

'because when you have a problem you just ask your friends and ask them in Chinese ... and when you are doing your work ...and when you prepare your presentation ...you just work with them'

6.10.3. After the pre-sessional

After the pre-sessional course, Olivia's progress in English has stagnated, though she remains positive.

'...after the language course we don't have English class anymore and I haven't made some new friends yet...so just the old friends and we had a trip to Scotland but with all Chinese friends so I know...I don't have much time to speak English during this time. I think it's a real pity...but I have to look forward.'

Reflecting on the interaction practices during her pre-sessional course, Olivia believes that there should be more institutional intervention to create more opportunities for interaction in English.

'The one is I think we need to ...if we give the Chinese students the right to choose... they need to interact first. Like in the pre-sessional course, we should not put all Chinese together, maybe we can mix them...some from other cities.'

She also has suggestions of how interaction could be promoted once students have finished their pre-sessional programmes.

'And in the academic course when we have a group, the teacher or the lecturer can set some rules like the group can't be all Chinese or from one nation. It maybe isn't sensible for the British culture; you might think the students have their own right to choose but sometimes it will be better if we don't have this right. Another thing I think about is to set some good examples, I mean, I know some guys...they are not Chinese, but they are Asian people. In some terms, we have similar problems but they are quite good in their study life in Britain and they have got scholarships and they do a really good job in all kinds of activities. So, maybe we need to learn more stories about them and we can say ... "wow" our future can be like this'

6.10.4 Discussion

6.10.4.1. Personal and social interaction

Olivia admits that spending a lot of time with fellow Chinese students has resulted in not really experiencing the 'foreign world' she thought she would. 'Studentification' (Hubbard, 2009) has

created a linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014) around the university and student accommodation has created an environment that is more reminiscent of student life in China than study abroad. In agreement with findings from Bamber (2013), Olivia admits that meeting up with fellow Chinese international students to eat traditional Chinese meals in restaurants is more for the psychosocial benefit of feeling part of a community and to alleviate feelings of homesickness, rather than to simply find a place to eat. Therefore, in regard to Olivia's narrative, neither the linguistic landscape nor the number of fellow Chinese international students on her programme have been conducive to interaction or engagement using English, despite the intention to change her life once she had left China for the U.K.

She believes an inherent shyness is a possible cause for intercultural interaction difficulties. Though the students that are likely to suffer from this, in Olivia's view, are all Asian students. This broad generalisation may be based on a thick description of CHC cultural influence (Chen, 2015) and the impact this may have of communication styles. However, Olivia views the social activities organised by the language centre as a positive way to overcome her perceived cultural interaction anxieties, thus promoting the intergroup contact that Wu and Hammond (2011) state rarely occurs without institutional-led intervention or management. Olivia believes this institutional intervention should extend to how students are allocated to classes to optimise student diversity and improve interaction in English. She also views the number of Chinese international students at the university as 'a majority minority' (Bond, 2019, p658) when compared to other nationalities represented at the university. With more than half of the students coming from the European Union, Olivia believes Britain provides the opportunity to meet other nationalities. However, she also states that Chinese international students must actively seek to do this and be prepared to go beyond the university environment.

6.10.4.2. Continuity

A key learning experience for Olivia was the memory of a task-based learning task (TBL) where the pupils had to follow instructions of how to make a smoothie in English. TBL is recognised as a communicative language teaching approach (Willis, 1996), However, when the approach to language learning focused on grammar acquisition and rote learning vocabulary, Olivia found it increased the level of difficulty when it was applied to Chinese, and was simply confusing when

it was applied to English. Although Ellis (1996) and Bax (2003) criticised the heavy emphasis of the CLT approaches to communication over context based instruction as an ideal which is more suited to Western pedagogies; Olivia stated this was the most interesting and enjoyable aspect of their English language learning. This has continued on her pre-sessional course as she has gained practice in academic communicative activities such as seminars.

6.10.4.3. Situation/place

After having worked for 4 years, one reason to study abroad was to experience a new culture (Counsell, 2011). However, Olivia would also require the skills and qualifications to compete in the job market, which would include English interaction skills and a master's degree (Xiang and Shen, 2009). This may explain Olivia's positive attitude towards actively seeking opportunities for interaction within her environment in Sheffield. In light of environmental factors discussed in 5.10.4.1, her narrative implies that Olivia is aiming more towards an existential internationalisation (Tian and Lowe, 2009) which is supported by the other international students at the university. This has been labelled an 'international postgraduate culture' (Wu and Hammond, 2011, p435) where rather than attempts to integrate with home or local students, international students interact through a shared use of L2 English.

Jennifer

25 years old from Hunan

Time spent in the UK at the time of the 1st interview: 2 weeks

Academic Department: Oncology -
Reproductive Science

Pathway: 6 weeks pre-session course
before starting postgraduate programme

English level IELTS equivalent: At the start of
the course 5.5, at the time of interviews 5.5,

6.11 Jennifer

Jennifer is early and waiting in the reception for me. She looks very professional and dressed for an interview. She looks and sounds both confident and assertive. Jennifer is very expressive, in her gestures and her intonation. She asks a lot of questions. Our small talk is about Brexit rather than the weather, and what this could mean for a potential internship. Her responses are quick, and very fluent. She's opinionated but very likeable, she smiles and laughs when she senses irony in things we discuss.

6.11.1 Before international study in Britain

Jennifer is from Hunan province in China, though she studied her undergraduate degree in Hainan - which she describes as the tropical, and most southern point in China.

'I studied my bachelor's degree in Hainan which is located in the most southern China which is a tropical province. I studied Clinical Medicine there, I'm here for a master's degree in reproductive science...and I hope to do my training here. And after a few years when I get more experience, I will go back. Residency training...but, I've heard it's very hard...it's even hard for a European, especially for non-European...'

English at school was a subject that was more endured than enjoyed. Yet, it carried so much importance as a core subject along with Maths and Chinese, which was a major factor in whether you could advance to your next level of education.

'Well, I think most of us ...you can say ...most of us suffered from studying English. Because it's compulsory ...it's one of our tests that have to do well to graduate to another level of education. Yeah, because it's a very important part of the score...but for me as you can see my pronunciation is...a little bit better than the majority of Chinese so I think I did have the better time of studying English because of the positive feedback. But overall it wasn't very good (laughs). I think mostly it's the way that we have been taught in schools, in the education system. Teachers are focusing on the

grammar and vocabulary which we don't even study for our Chinese language which makes it very boring and makes no sense. And we don't use that at all, so we learn and forget it and learn and forget it...there are many useless words.'

Her clear and accurate pronunciation is accredited to an inherent skill of mimicry and phonation.

'Erm I think first of all it's natural/unlearnt...I do sing a little bit well so it's the way I mimic pronunciation and how to pronounce it. And secondly, I watch a lot of US movies, American movies and I pay attention to the word pronunciation. When I was in college as an undergraduate, I tried to speak to foreigners. I think it's very hard to improve pronunciation because when you use it, you will get a better sense for it. I don't know if this is true but for me the more you use it, the more you will feel like you will pronounce it better.'

At university in China, Jennifer had the opportunity to transfer into their first international class using English as a medium of instruction (EMI).

'I was in a full Chinese language class for my third year then I transferred to an international class, so I stayed there for 2 and a half years. But it was a very embarrassing situation I guess...because none of the teachers spoke English well. I probably can say it's even worse than me. So, when I transferred to the international class most of the time I just studied by myself. I didn't even go to class, so I don't think that's good. But the only advantage that I got from those 2 and a half years is my English skills, but I did lose some time for studying medicine for academic study.'

Jennifer believed this was due to the dynamics of the international class coupled with the teaching approach adopted.

'There were many students from Pakistan, and Jordan, yeah... and some African students that came to China, especially to study medicine. So, in our class there are seventeen Chinese students plus 12 Pakistani students and 1 Jordanian. It was quite weird. I don't judge Muslims but...they were keen to live in their own community ...they don't interact with others...they don't speak English. They can speak Chinese a little bit socially, but they don't understand any academic words...Chinese medical words. That's their requirement...that's what they want... they want the teachers and students to do...teach and communicate in English, but it doesn't happen. The mode and the method are all 'Chinese way'...they just try to use English...because those teachers don't even have experience of a western education system. Yeah, it was basically very easy to acclimatise to it as there is no big change to the environment...it's not okay. But the way they just teach people...they actually got stuck when they were speaking so they laughed on the stage (in the lecture). So, I escaped almost the majority of my classes...I didn't go there.'

The final internship year brought with it an increased awareness of the importance of English for career prospects. The three months in the University of Utah in the United States were very different from the internship at the Military Hospital. Observing the doctors in the U.S made gaining employment outside China attractive.

'I had an exchange programme in my fifth year, my internship year. I went to the University of Utah medical school and I spent 3 months there and so I experienced a totally different system. I realised that doctors are well respected, and with very high salaries and a totally different kind of life. So, that makes me want to work abroad as a doctor. And second, when I was doing my internship in Beijing, a very large army hospital. Doctors there like ... compared to other doctors in other areas, are well respected but it's not like what I saw in the US. As an intern, if you have an undergraduate degree it's like nothing in this area but if they see you can speak in English well ...like can understand English materials very well...they'll be like 'Oh!' And all the important research and experiments were conducted by Westerners, so I think it's important for reading articles, literature and doing research and communicating with other people from other countries... especially the US.'

However, there was never any question of not continuing to study, especially in her discipline.

'I think for most students, studying abroad is the best choice. But it's like the cost stops most of us...it's very expensive. So, I was going to apply for a master's degree in China, but I felt like our system it's... I can't...I don't want to ...how do I say...there were many changes in the medical system...we didn't used to have residency training before but these days starting from 2012 or 2013 they decided to do residency training and it's part of the master's degree. It is combined with the master's degree. So, when you graduate from the master's postgraduate...you will have 4 certificates: residency, postgraduate, and doctor's licensing, and what's the other one ..but so you will have 4 licences. But it just can't compare to when you come back from the US. In their residency, they get paid a very high salary but when you do residency (in China) you are overworked... so at the same time if you have a better course why not choose that one. Yeah...and really ... after many years you just can't be more competitive than others. So, at the same time if you have a better course why not choose that one.'

Yet, Jennifer did not choose to study in America due to lack of a TOEIC score. She was offered a scholarship to study at the University of Queensland, Australia, however a change in staffing at the time of her graduation led to the application to a British university.

'Yes...as I said earlier I went to the US in the fifth year, but before I didn't even think about studying abroad. By the time I was going to graduate, there was a programme my university had with the University of Queensland Technology, a university in Australia. So, I was going to do a master's there, sponsored by our university. I graduated from medical school last year in 2016 and I was going to Australia. But by the time I graduated, the professor had quit her job so she said she could introduce

me to another professor ... but I just think maybe I just didn't want to go there. I think Australia is like...if you think about the reputation of the medical systems in the world, an academic career, the US goes to the top and maybe followed by the UK...so I chose like that...maybe it's not like scientific ranking but like in my head...it's like that (laugh). I discussed this with my family, and I thought about it...the first option is the US but I didn't have a TOEIC score and the second option is England and then Australia. So, I applied for England.'

Although she had made the decision to study in the UK, Jennifer would still need to convince her parents that this was the best option for her.

'My parents didn't want me to be somewhere very far from them...even though I'm not the only child...but they don't want you to be very far ...too far to reach. They don't speak English and they might know that...they probably know that... I might get a better future in a way. They are happy that I'm studying in a more developed country but they're also worried and that I'm not going back. Yeah...and if something happened they might not be able to help...so it's like half and half.'

Though, what was discussed, would be justifying the cost of study abroad. For her father, it was the expense and the distance to travel for just one year to acquire a master's degree in the UK.

'Yeah...like they had to worry about the expenses and distance... but they can't stop me...(laughs). Erm...yes I think...like my mother she actually felt happy about it...I'm able to study abroad. But my father said 'a year...it is just a year for a master's degree...if you finish your master's degree and you come back it's useless...and it's not cost effective. And so that means I have to do my PhD here, which is like a longer time period so either way it's not good for him. I have one big brother...only two children. He basically said nothing...he did not agree with the plan even though my parents are paying the expenses, but he didn't say anything. which I'm grateful for. He didn't say he did not agree with it and he didn't show any signs of disagreement. I think he doesn't care about it...'if that's what you want and that's your parents' money'...so. But parents will care about it...like you are using money ...maybe your brother's money... So, yeah but they just say that...but they didn't really mean that I have to pay it back...(laugh).'

Although Jennifer had taken the IELTS exam before she left China, as she had not done an actual course, she still had to improve her writing skills before starting her Master's in Britain.

'No, I did not ... so that's why I didn't score enough. It's like ...my listening is 8.5, reading 8.0, speaking is 6.0 and writing 5.5. Because ..it's a requirement for applying for the licensing examination, at least 7.5... I think in my case I need to get 8.0.'

Jennifer would need to find a university course with a pre-sessional so she could improve her writing to start her master's. She sought the advice of agents to help her choose the institution.

'They don't care...the student might come from anywhere...the agent is like... 'how many clients will I get?'... they just care about the number of clients...erm and ...it's kind of common sense that nobody will come back to agents if they had one. But they would avoid certain bad sides...disadvantages ... they would not mention if they received the huge [society] of Chinese here...like they would say if you ask them directly... 'it's not that much' or 'it's the same everywhere'... I haven't been to any other universities so...I can't compare the (name) to Leeds or one of those...but I think it's understandable these strategies are used.'

6.11.2 International study

6.11.2.1. Becoming an international student

Though Jennifer knew very little about the city of Sheffield before she arrived, she knew that the city had a lot of Chinese students.

'I know nothing about city Sheffield... (laughs) so I went to research about Sheffield. So, our searching system (similar to Google) stated that Sheffield is full of Chinese. Yeah...everywhere...(laughs) it's full of Chinese and it's kind of the end of the top 100 so...people were talking bad points about Sheffield...and it's like commercialising education ...excepting many many Chinese students for making money...making profits. Before I came here, we had a WeChat group...similar to WhatsApp ...yeah so there were already over 1000 (members) in the group. I think it's made for students coming to Sheffield ... but you can see or you can tell if there were any graduates. But, after I came here... it's much more than I thought it could be...it's even more than 1000 yeah...so I wasn't that surprised but still a little bit surprised.'

There is little to compare in terms of life as a student in China and life as a student in England for Jennifer.

'Erm...almost everything is different from the place that you live in, like the dormitory...we live in a dormitory in our country which is cheaper. Here, it's like more expensive and ...eating habits...we can eat in our university owned cafe... own restaurants. Yeah...but it's like if you've ever been in China ...it's like a very huge restaurant and serves cheaper food. We can actually support all the staff and students that live on campus...erm but here ...you have to cook...otherwise you won't get food (laughs). Even though there are many Chinese restaurants, even some Western, you know foreign restaurants are using Chinese logos...advertising boards? They are attracting Chinese students because we don't cook. Most Chinese students learnt how to cook here. But I know how to cook because when I was in China I rented a little flat outside of campus because in China we had 6 people in a room so bunk beds. It was ... not crowded but I was just bothered by the different schedules...like some people stay up very often very late at night. Stay up very late...so, like it would

influence my resting schedule, my sleeping schedule... I won't rest well and I won't be effective at studying time...so I decided to move out.'

Jennifer is aware there are Chinese businesses in Sheffield and has eaten in the Chinese restaurants here.

'I've been here...I did go to some Chinese stores... shops. Yes...it will affect my speaking status ...it will have a negative impact on my speaking skills. It's like ...like sometimes you need something to push yourself to learn English. So, if there are no... not many Chinese restaurants and Chinese shops, you have to go to those local (ones) which gives you more options to speak English. But, since they are there and I prefer those foods, I will go there...yeah.'

6.11.2.2 Interaction as an international pre-sessional student

Jennifer believes that although some Chinese international students have certain motives for interacting with other Chinese students, they would like to form friendships with different nationalities.

'I don't know if it's a Chinese thing...or just my roommates... because people or the Chinese boys they come here and within a week...maybe it's just male culture...they are hunting for girls ...it's maybe a good ground for making friends. Yes, I think...it would if you have a Chinese girlfriend or boyfriend...like you just stick with them every day. If you make a foreign friend ...yes I mean if they had a choice I think they would prefer foreigners...I think almost everybody is so aware of the situation with their English, they need to learn it but there are too many Chinese...and for the foreigners... they are not quite sure that they are happy to be their friends or they are just not good enough chances to make them friends...they would love to.'

However, in Jennifer's view, language proficiency and fear of embarrassment stop Chinese international students from interacting in English.

'...the major reason is the language...if they feel comfortable speaking English I don't think there'll be that question...language is the primary reason. IELTS is different...it's like...even I got my speaking 5.5 but as you see I'm even better than some 7, so IELTS is not... erm so comfortable...they might feel like if they say something wrong they worry that they might say something inaccurate...and people will laugh at them...right...saving face. Yes...it's everybody...saving face is not just with foreigners...it's with Chinese as well. Yes, that's the other reason... but I think for people coming here they understand and almost all of us...is aware of that (saving face) ...so I think the major reason is the result of language'

In addition to 'saving face', the lesson content does not always support interaction.

'However, not all aspects of the course were as useful, listening is like rubbish...because the teacher has been playing some very short clips...recordings and then ask us to write down what we have heard...it's like too easy and it's not even ...it's not useful...and speaking...as you can imagine it's like almost all Chinese in a classroom...in a group so you can't avoid speaking Chinese and especially when the question is undiscussable...I mean there is nothing to discuss...it's like describe your hometown to your friend or something...and I can't think of anything'

6.11.3. After the pre-sessional

The number of Chinese students at the university has become even more apparent for Jennifer since finishing the pre-sessional course.

'I was on the floor for registration and it was full of Chinese. If I am a foreigner who needs to register on this floor, I would be wondering if I am in the wrong place. But I don't think that I've been speaking more English...so that's what I'm trying to do...speak more...that's why I found a volunteer job...but I think for general people I think they speak more Chinese than English here..... you can imagine why when they graduate they still cannot speak good English.'

Jennifer believes it is the university's responsibility to address the lack of student diversity. *'...we come for this different way of thinking and different experiences... we don't need another China here... the first thing they should do is be strict on their roles, on their gaps, or cut offs. No, not just language level...or even language ...every way...every aspect...they should be stricter...I think Sheffield is really lowering the standard. Yeah...yeah I think so...almost 99% I think they want more interaction with other students on the campus'*

6.11.4 Discussion

6.11.4.1. Personal and social interaction

In terms of personal factors influencing Jennifer's interactions in English, she accredits her good pronunciation skills, which she acquired from mimicking accents in songs and films, to her success. This may have given Jennifer the confidence to actively seek interactions with non-Chinese students at her university in China. She does not appear to have the apprehension about inter-group as reported by participants in Schweisfurth and Gu (2009). It could relate to how she perceived herself in comparison to the non-Chinese students at her university. She would not be considered 'the foreign student' in this context, so may have felt on a higher status than the other Chinese students who did not have comparable pronunciation skills, as her skills were 'a little bit better than the majority of Chinese'. If this is representative to how

Jennifer perceived herself then she may have felt she met Allport's Integrated Contact theory's equality condition (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2005) for successful intergroup contact, at least in terms of her production of English being equal to the 'foreign' students at her university. The social influences impacting her English interaction practices are closely associated to geographic and situation factors which will be discussed in **6.11.4.3**.

6.11.4.2. Continuity

Jennifer's narrative indicates that the most significant past experience to influence her English interactions was as a student in an international EMI class. Lueg and Lueg (2015) claim participation in EMI programmes can increase cultural capital and distinguish an individual from other graduates as it is also considered 'linguistic capital' (Lueg and Lueg, 2015, p 7). This is 'linguistic' as the academic language used separates individuals or groups from those of different social and cultural backgrounds that do not use this type of language. In Jennifer's case, it would be the other students on regular programmes at her university conducted in Chinese. The research found that EMI students were more self-confident than their non-EMI peers in their ability to achieve higher grades, and better understand basic and complex concepts. This self-confidence led to a belief held by the EMI students of also performing better in both exams and coursework than their non-EMI counterparts (Menendez et al, 2018). Although Jennifer's narrative reflects her self-confidence in her English communication skills, she stated that her subject knowledge suffered as a result of the quality of teaching on the EMI programme. Macaro et al, 2018, made similar observations.

The monolingual demographic of the EMI participants in the Jiang et al (2019) allowed the teaching staff to adopt code-switching strategies to avoid misunderstandings of content. However, this would not be possible at Jennifer's university as she did not believe the international (non-Chinese) students on her course had a strong enough competency to deal with subject specific vocabulary in Chinese for a code switching strategy to work. She also described a 'Chinese way' of teaching which is more geared towards lectures resulting in a lack of student/teacher interaction. Jiang et al (2019) attributed this approach to the lack of confidence in English language level in both the teachers and the students.

6.11.4.3. Situation/place

An exchange student programme in an American hospital resulted in the realisation that English language communications skills could provide a promising future for Jennifer, equating to what Xiang and Shen's (2009) refer to as human capital where it is not only the foreign degree, but the cultural experience that adds value. This confirmed her ideas on the benefits study abroad would bring to her. However, the one-year duration of a master's may not be sufficient in terms of the amount of cultural experience (Counsell, 2011) so Jennifer is considering securing her human capital by continuing on to doctoral studies for a further 4 years.

Jennifer admits she knew very little about Sheffield or the university before she arrived. Most of the information she had came from a Chinese website, which stated that the university had a large Chinese population. The comments on the website were largely negative, which supports Knight's (2011) claim that it is a myth that an international reputation or the presence of international students is a proxy of quality. She claims that if employers feel students coming from Sheffield do not have high English language proficiency, the value of any potential employee from this university is reduced. Jennifer also refers to the changing status or value of an international higher education. As having a foreign postgraduate is more common, the ranking of the institution is now more important than ever, a conclusion drawn in Cebolla-Boado et al (2018).

It is a concern for Jennifer that the large numbers of Chinese students at the university will limit her interaction with home students (Andrade, 2006) and impact her development of English. This was highlighted during the registration event for her postgraduate course, where she noted many of her new peers would be Chinese. Jennifer spoke of her search for voluntary work to counter the lack of interaction in English she is expecting on starting her postgraduate studies. However, it should be noted that participants in Bamber (2013) also initially wanted more contact with the wider community at the start of their programmes, but this intention did not materialise during their studies in Britain.

6.12 Summary of key discussion points by participant

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) framework provided the structure and guidance to interpret the extensive learning experiences of the participants (an overview of key discussion points is presented in table 7). As the basis of the framework uses Dewey's (1938) experience continuum, the categories of personal and social interaction, continuity and situation/place occasionally merged or had fuzzy borders as a 'personal' experience could also be an experience which represents a specific past action or a place. For this reason, in the following paragraphs, the summary will consider all aspects of the framework collectively.

Table 7: An overview of key discussion points by participant

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>Jack</i> | Personal and social interaction | Parental influence Matching the achievements of peers in China Loneliness in Sheffield No time to communicate with non-Chinese peers |
| | Continuity | Self-doubt in English and future academic performance Continued focus on language acquisition over interaction |
| | Situation/place | Issues with education system in China |
| <i>Lina</i> | Personal and social interaction | No English communication practice at school or university in China Job at an airport change her view of English as a means of communication CLT approach in UK increased language production Increased and wider communication English since starting the pre-sessional |
| | Continuity | Shift in identity as language learner to language user. Access to different perspectives |
| | Situation/place | Use/knowledge of English provides access to globalised world Active approach to learning |
| <i>Hannah</i> | Personal and social interaction | Interaction affected by large numbers of Chinese international students Apprehension to interact with wider community Prefers interaction with other international students |
| | Continuity | Technicist approach to language learning until meeting the language requirement for the International College Believes longer time in U.K (undergraduate degree) would have |

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | enhanced her interaction skills and her future employability |
| | Situation/place | Britain changed her attitude to English May need the support of a guanxi for her postgraduate studies Teaching in Britain could benefit from a 'cultural synergy approach' |
| <i>Charley</i> | Personal and social interaction | Parental concern over university ranking Not an internationalised environment To maintain interaction in English she must distance herself from other Chinese students Has made some connections with non- European non Chinese international students May need to join a guanxi for support during postgraduate |
| | Continuity | Move to Beijing and more cosmopolitan environment saw use of English for interaction |
| | Situation/place | Philippines and in Manchester - continued language development and interaction skills More difficult on pre-sessional, need to find environment conducive to interacting in English |
| <i>Ewan</i> | Personal and social interaction | English was his weakness subject at school and university and did not want to dedicate time to study Feels it is natural to communicate to fellow Chinese students on pre-sessional in Chinese |
| | Continuity | He attends his classes, speak English in class, but is not motivated to speak English out of class as he does not see the need to He will use minimal English in his future career |
| | Situation/place | No interaction in English in China Cultural/travel incentive to develop English, but not necessarily for interaction in English |
| <i>Stella</i> | Personal and social interaction | Negatives experiences of learning English in China Interaction skills in English not really a priority in her future studies or career Sense of obligation to communicate in Chinese with fellow Chinese students |
| | Continuity | Many of her friends in China chose to study in Britain Interaction in English limited to the classroom |
| | Situation/place | No interaction in English in China and had hoped for a different experience in Sheffield Needs time for adjustment but enjoys the self-directed learning focus as opposed to her exam-driven context |
| <i>Joanne</i> | Personal and social interaction | More focus on learning English than interacting in English Has had unsuccessful attempts at interaction in English with other international students and the wider community |

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | Increasing interaction in Chinese with other Chinese international students |
| | Continuity | English language development still similar to her experience in China No real authentic interaction in English Has sought support of her Chinese international student peers Not likely that she will need to interact in English in her future career |
| | Situation/place | Student life in Sheffield very similar to student life in China Difficulty maintaining interactions in English with her Chinese classmates Feels the need to join/find a guanxi in Sheffield |
| <i>Elsa</i> | Personal and social interaction | Speaking in English always viewed as a challenge not helped by teaching approach in China Communicating in Chinese with class seen as a necessary 'social occurrence' Sees a need for relationships with fellow Chinese students in Britain |
| | Continuity | Had very good English grades with the exception of speaking No English communication skills training at school or university |
| | Situation/place | Could adapt to the CLT approach in Britain and experience exchanging ideas Still needs to adapt other teaching approach such as TEL in Britain |
| <i>Olivia</i> | Personal and social interaction | Has spent a lot of time with fellow Chinese students since arriving in Britain Believes Asian students are inherently shy but should find ways to interact in English as Chinese international students are 'only' the majority minority at the university |
| | Continuity | Experienced TBL in China CLT approach on pre-sessional has provided practice in academic communicative activities |
| | Situation/place | Worked for 4 years and then wanted to experience a new culture Positive attitude to seeking environment to communicate in English |
| <i>Jennifer</i> | Personal and social interaction | Good English pronunciation provided confidence to seek English interaction opportunities in China |
| | Continuity | Student of an EMI class at her university in China but felt her subject content knowledge suffered during this period |
| | Situation/place | Had an exchange programme in America which reinforced importance of English interaction skills for future career Believes the number of international students at an institution can negatively impact a future employer's view of the value of graduate Concerned that the high number of Chinese international students will impact her English interaction so looking to volunteer in the wider community |

The intention of this research is to present individual perspectives and experiences, and avoid essentialism. Therefore, in providing a summary, there is the danger of generalising information across participants. Any reference to 'participants' in subsequent paragraphs refers to the information which was provided by at least one of the ten participants of the study, and no attempt has been made to attach this information to all Chinese international students. In summarising the discussion of the narratives, nor is the intention to state that all Chinese international students have had or will have the experiences discussed. The purpose is to attempt to understand the context within which the participants had the experiences.

The narratives revealed that for most of the participants, there was a strong focus on grammar and vocabulary memorising during the English language learning experiences in China at school and university. However, this technicist approach to English language teaching and learning (Reagan, 2004) was experienced only by some participants. Other participants experienced a task-based learning (TBL), which focused on communication and other practical activities that engaged them such as English film. A significant impact raised by most students was that the English lessons were compulsory, even in primary school which was probably due to policy changes which resulted in the Law on Language Use of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Guojia Tongyong Yuyan Wenzhi Fa*) on the 31st October 2000 (Lam, 2005). This would have impacted all participants due to their current age range of between 21 and 27 years, who would all have had compulsory English language classes at some stage of the mandatory schooling. The participants can see the value of English for longer term goals, including higher education (Xiang and Shen, 2009) and future careers (Counsell, 2011) now that they are adults and in higher education. However, as children, for some participants, the narratives state that they experienced difficulties connecting the value of English to their everyday lives. This was also dependent on the extent of exposure to English as children or young people.

The participants from larger, more cosmopolitan cities were in more contact with English language culture, and had more contact with non-Chinese people than other participants. As a result, as English was the language of communication, these participants could relate past learning of English at school or university to their existing context. This supports a rejection of

the broad descriptions of how CHC influence impacts on communication styles (Chen, 2015; Durkin, 2008; O'Dwyer, 2017; Park, 2011). As it is not possible to assess the influence of CHC on any individual, without information about the individual's previous and current experiences.

All of the participants were on a pre-session course for entry on to either pre-master's programmes at The International College, or postgraduate programmes at The University of Sheffield. All participants had a language proficiency deficit that prevented direct entry onto postgraduate programmes, as no participants chose the pre-session programme to solely acclimatise into British Higher Education. Though some participants found that some discussion topics were superficial, the participants did not state that they believed the pre-session was less linguistically challenging due to the linguistic competence of their peers, a finding from Pearson (2020a). They felt they generally benefited from the CLT approach to teaching and learning, and seminar and presentation training and practice. However, the most frequent comment was that communicating in English to other Chinese speakers felt unnatural or uncomfortable with some of the participants associating the environment to contexts from past learning experiences in China. Yet, this only tended to occur when all members of a discussion or seminar group were Chinese. If only one non-Chinese student were present, the participants stated that interaction would be geared towards inclusivity, and communicating ideas would include all those present - which would be in English.

For all participants, most interaction in English occurred in the pre-session class. The linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2014) may offer the participants the familiar amenities when they first arrive in Britain, with restaurants and shops providing home comforts. However, these facilities are not what is preventing interaction with the wider community or other non-Chinese students. Participants, who sought more diverse interaction experiences, have utilised university services through the Students' Union to join conversation and sports clubs. However, these students have been on longer pre-sessionals that occur during the academic year so have had access to these facilities. The consequence of this is that there are few opportunities for intergroup contact and the development of the communicative repertoire (Rymes, 2014) necessary for successful communication once the academic year begins. This may go beyond the 'speaking for academic purposes' training the participants have received on the pre-

sessional programmes and more towards intercultural training and development (Wu and Hammond, 2011; Lamie and Issit, 2005).

As the pre-sessional programmes occur during the summer until the beginning of the next academic year, the lack of contact with other students, and growing apprehension about interacting with other students has seen many of the participants look to other Chinese international students for both social and academic support through membership to a *guanxi*. This lack of a socio-cultural component on the pre-sessionals (Lamie and Issit, 2005) may be the reason for the limited interaction in English. These participants have discovered the social aspect of living in Britain with the other pre-sessional Chinese students and through communicating in Chinese. Although, a few of the participants have commented on the induction events for undergraduates to acclimate to higher education studies. The participants who have attended registration events, did not mention knowledge of or attendance to any other events organised by the university which may have provided the opportunity to interact with future peers on their programmes.

The literature refers to a cultural synergy (Zhou et al, 2008) and a middle way (Durkin, 2008), to acculturate international students to different pedagogies, but it is questionable to what extent adopting a teaching and learning approach somewhere between what is traditionally expected in Britain, and what is expected for tertiary level studies in China, will improve intergroup and intercultural interaction in British higher education. From the conceptualisation of internationalisation in higher education and how this manifests on pre-sessional programmes, the objective appears to solely focus on academic skills development to bridge the language deficit only. There is little evidence from the narratives that suggest any attempt has been made to bridge the social and cultural gap that may lie between the participants and their peers on their future postgraduate programmes. The above issues have resulted in minimal interaction in English for the participants in this study, and little evidence that the participants have developed or are developing an L2 communicative repertoire, to navigate through interaction during their postgraduate studies at a British university.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In this final chapter, I offer conclusions based on my findings from the narratives of the 10 participants in this study. As the key focus of this research is to present the individual, often muted, voices of Chinese international students' experience of higher education in Britain, the findings will first be presented according to each individual participant. This challenges the tendency in extant literature to treat Chinese international students as one homogeneous group, without due attention paid to individual experience or context. These experiences and therefore the individual, will be influenced by past learning experiences which will impact on current practices, which will influence future experiences - hence the adoption of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) framework which adopts Dewey's (1938) experience continuum to structure, interpret and present the experiences of the active agents involved. This is of particular relevance as much of the extant literature, which often essentialises the experiences of Chinese international students studying in higher education, paints a picture of these students as passive agents who demonstrate little volition towards interaction with peers on their university courses in Britain. Rather than the context, environment or even language proficiency issues, assumed cultural influences over communication styles and behaviour of students from CHC contexts are held responsible for the negative issues raised concerning interaction difficulties across student groups. These views are attributed to an individual's behaviour without consideration of past and present experiences, personal and social interaction practices, or factors which result in an individual choosing to initiate or maintain interactions with other groups, or not. This is then said to be the cause of difficulties relating to intergroup contact issues between home-status students and NESB students in general, although the literature does focus on Chinese international students - which is also the largest nation presented among international students.

7.1 Research aims

The aim of this research was to understand the interaction practices of 10 Chinese international students during their pre-sessional courses at The University of Sheffield. This was to establish which factors influenced or hindered interaction in English in an

internationalised higher education environment with a high percentage of Chinese L1 speakers. The methodological approach of Narrative Analysis through Narrative Cognition produced 10 individual narratives of the participants' learning experiences of English. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) provided the theoretical structure of the narrative analysis. To support this, data was generated from the reflections of the participants' past and current experiences of learning English, and from projections of their future English language needs. The narratives contextualise both the challenges and the triumphs the participants experienced during their time on pre-sessional courses. It also revealed their anticipated preparedness for successful interaction in English when the participants start their postgraduate degrees at the same university.

7.2 Research significance and contributions

The significance of this study is its unique approach to internationalisation in British higher education and its impact on L2 English interaction practices of Chinese international pre-sessional students. Internationalisation literature that looks at higher education does not focus attention on pre-sessional students. This is because they may be considered temporary or transitional members, but my position is that these graduates will imminently join this student body. Pre-sessional literature which focuses on interaction practices has focused on students' current interaction practices but has not considered the significance of their previous language learning environments, or how these environments may have impacted on their current practices or may impact their future practices when they start their postgraduate programmes.

My study goes beyond other research on internationalisation and pre-sessional programmes who could also claim that they provide subjective perspectives of higher education. It does this by offering a multi-dimensional approach to the question of how personal, social, and environmental factors influence interaction in English for Chinese pre-sessional students studying in Britain by looking at the previous experiences outside their current higher education context that shaped their current practice. According to Dewey's (1938) acclaimed educational theory of experience, past experiences will directly impact on both current and future learning. Applying this theory in accordance with the three-dimensional narrative

inquiry space (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000) has resulted in the development of an innovative methodological perspective from which to examine the impact of internationalisation on learning experiences for the pre-sessional sector of higher education studies.

My study is distinct as it analyses the unique life experiences that led to current attitudes towards English language learning and interaction. A further distinction from other studies is that through these reflective accounts structured by the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, a more comprehensive conceptualisation of the impact of the internationalisation of higher education can be achieved. This synthesises the philosophical and economic dimensions of internationalisation (Lumby and Foskett, 2016) with existential, personally transformative internationalisation (Tian and Lowe, 2009). In doing so, this study represents a holistic, person-centred approach that conceptualises the individual internationalisation experienced by these participants and possibly other pre-sessional students. Future studies could and should focus beyond categorisations that homogenise learners according to their cultural heritage or country of origin, and examine the wider factors and environments which shape individual experiences of interaction in English.

Chapter 1 provided the rationale for examining the personal, social and environmental aspects of the learning experiences of the participants. This included a brief systematic review of the existing pre-sessional literature (up to the point of submission). There was, however, limited relevant pre-sessional research for my research context of the interaction practices of Chinese international students in Britain. None of the studies considered their participants' attitude towards English learning or the amount or type of interaction experience before starting the pre-sessional programmes. My study addresses this gap in the research and suggests that further research on individual learning experiences (both past and present) would be valuable to establish whether the development of English interaction skills is a desired outcome for international students. This is a response to how internationalisation in higher education has been conceptualised, and the possibly outdated claims that foreign students choose study abroad to integrate or assimilate into the host or receiving countries' system or society. The myths of internationalisation (Knight, 2011) or whether institutions assume a philosophical or economic perspective (Lumby and Foskett, 2016) creates more of an 'us' and 'them' dyad as it

proliferates somewhat imperialist or colonist values that one group - home-status students, take precedence over the international students at the university. According to this perspective, the responsibility to create a more unified student body within the internationalised context is unilaterally and unjustly placed solely in the hands of NESB international students rather than a mutual effort by all sharing the environment.

To some extent, in preparing students to enter this environment, the pre-sessional programme forms part of this neoliberal market-driven movement (Flowerdew in Hyland et al, 2019). The students on the programme are provided with training on the academic aspects of higher education in Britain but are not adequately provided with an environment in which to experience (if they choose to) interaction with other students. This environment is not conducive to developing the interaction skills they may need for their postgraduate studies, and the higher education institution does not provide provision to promote a united and interactional international student body. The review of the pre-sessional literature demonstrates that there is limited research or debate on these issues that further confirmed my belief that this area of both higher education research and pre-sessional research was significantly underrepresented.

Of the wealth of research on Chinese international students in British higher education institutions, a significant amount of research examines the presumed problems this group of students face interacting in the higher education environment in Britain (Watkins and Biggs, 1996; Liu, 2009; Li et al, 2010; Shaheen (2016)). It was apparent that this represented an area where research informed the analysis of the transitional period from when international students arrive in Britain to the start of the postgraduate programmes. However, there is little research, by comparison, which inquires into Chinese international students in Britain on pre-sessionals preparing to join this environment.

Chapter 2 - the Literature Review, locates my research within the context of studies focusing on the internationalisation of higher education, as it specifically reports on those who have been directly affected by its internationalisation. For the participants, the effects or impact of internationalisation may have first become apparent when English became a compulsory

school subject in China. The participants report that success in these English language exams in China, could be the deciding factors of whether a student could pass the entrance exam for both undergraduate (the Gaokao) and postgraduate (the Kaoyan) study, attend a prestigious university in China, and subsequently find fulfilling employment. For the participants in my study, a higher education experience in Britain was viewed as the gateway to better employment opportunities for some, travel for some, and future study or research for others - none of which may have been possible without the internationalisation of higher education in both China and Britain. Whether the participants had decided to continue their education at home or abroad, English language skills would represent a currency via which the participants could navigate their paths through higher education and future employment.

7.3 Thesis summary

To situate my research the review starts by examining the key factors influencing the higher education environment, and consequently, the interaction practices of the participants' interaction in English and development of an L2 communicative repertoire. The topics under discussion in chapter 2 were internationalisation in higher education and L2 English interaction, Chinese international students at British universities, the conceptualisation of language, the problematisation of the 'English Language Problem' in British higher education, and finally the effectiveness of pre-sessionals in the development of a L2 communicative repertoire. Chapter 3 provided a description of the theoretical framework underpinning this research, the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) and provides the rationale for this methodological choice. Chapter 4 demonstrates the alignment of the constructivist-interpretive perspective adopted in this qualitative research with the methodological choice of Narrative Inquiry. It also explained the rationale for applying Narrative analysis as the method and details the research procedure from conducting semi-structured interviews to transcribing the transcripts to produce the 10 distinct narratives of the participants' learning experiences. To contextualise the learning environment within which the narratives are presented, chapter 6 provides an overview of the pre-sessional programmes provided by The University of Sheffield. Following this in chapter 6, the narratives were

presented and discussed, according to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework.

7.4 Reflections on research findings to address research questions

The next section of this thesis presents a reflection of the emerging themes and the extent to which the research questions have been effectively addressed. As the intention of this research is to prioritise the individual participant voices, the following is organised according to how the data generated from each participant addresses each research question. The data explicitly demonstrates how the three dimensions of personal and social interaction, continuity, and situation or place explored in this narrative inquiry space has influenced the level and type of L2 English interaction of the participants. The substantive theme across the narrative accounts is that the amount of experience and exposure to the use of English as a communicative function (and not just a taught subject at school or university) before coming to Britain impacted on the participants' levels of confidence in interacting in English during their pre-session programmes. Those participants who had experienced the use of English as a communicative interaction tool in China were more likely to seek opportunities to communicate in English in Britain. However, the participants who had little experience or exposure to English other than at their educational institutions did not seek opportunities to communicate in English outside of their pre-session programmes. Participants with less experience interacting in English in China had a tendency to concentrate their language development focus on advancing their academic skills.

Applying a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space to this research project effectively addresses the overarching research question posed. The subsidiary questions facilitated the participants' reflections on how past and current experiences impacted their confidence to engage in English and the volition to seek opportunities outside of the language class to increase and diversify communication in English. The other evident theme is that there is a social obligation to communicate in Chinese with other Chinese international students. This is the main factor influencing the amount of Chinese spoken outside the language classroom during the pre-session programmes. Due to this expectation to communicate in Chinese to

fellow Chinese students, the participants believe that university should provide more opportunities for pre-sessional Chinese students to interact with other non-Chinese international students to promote more interaction in English.

7.4.1 Subsidiary Research Question 1 - How did events which preceded the study abroad programme impact on 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' current interaction practices and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

Jack finished university in China and prepared to join the pre-sessional programme in Britain. With the support of his parents, particularly the disappointments experienced by his father concerning career progression due to his own English language skills, Jack was aware that improving his English language skills was a gateway to academic success. He also felt he was competing with his peer group in China who had started on their career paths and, unlike him, were growing more financially independent. The result of which is that Jack had quite a narrow focus for his English language development in Britain, so far. This focus has been on the academic aspects of language development through reading, watching TED talks, and talking more or less exclusively with his teachers in English, but not seeking opportunities to increase interaction with his peers.

Lina finished university and found employment at the local airport. It was not until her jobs took her to the larger cities of Shanghai and Beijing, that she experienced interactions in English. This may have influenced her decision to change career path to consider employment in Global Journalism that led to the pre-sessional course in Britain. When Lina started the pre-sessional, she had some experience of interacting in English from her airport job. The CLT approach on the pre-sessional has provided the opportunity to further develop both her confidence and her English language skills to support continued interaction in English in Britain.

Hannah had no experience of interacting in English before moving to Britain and her decision to study abroad was career driven. Like many of her friends in China, Hannah believed the experiences gained from obtaining a degree from a British university could improve job opportunities in the future. If she had been able to do a 3-year undergraduate degree abroad,

this would have been even more advantageous. Hannah does not mention interaction in English being a pull-factor for wanting to study abroad. Her focus on interacting in English does not occur until she has completed the pre-sessional and has started her pre-master's at The International College. She claims that after completing the proficiency exams, she feels she can now concentrate on real English to communicate. Hannah had already spent 7 months in Britain before she felt ready to start working towards interacting in English.

Charley's first experiences of interacting in English came when her family moved from Chongqing to Beijing. The foreigners in Beijing, and social and cultural activities resulted in communication and interaction in English. This continued in the Philippines and in Manchester. Her past experiences provided the opportunities for English interaction and possibly increased her confidence to seek out future opportunities to interact in English.

Ewan was not actively engaged in his English language development in China. Even the knowledge that more time spent studying English could secure his place on a master's course in China, was not sufficient motivation for him to dedicate the time required at university to improve his English. It is possible that Ewan had ulterior motives for not wanting to study his master's in China as this led to the possibility of travelling abroad. While Ewan did not express any interest in developing English to facilitate interaction overseas, he viewed it as a gateway to experience or at least see other cultures and environments. Interacting in English is still not on his list of priorities now he is studying in Britain, although his participation in class is much more active.

Stella - Other than school and university in China, Stella had minimal exposure to English before starting her pre-sessional course in Sheffield. Her friends had applied to study abroad, and she had read about various research projects at foreign universities that had interested her. Further developing her English language skills or interacting in English had not been given as reasons why she decided to do her master's in Britain. Furthermore, Stella does not stress or attach the importance of developing these skills on the pre-sessional or for future studies.

Joanne - Learning English and English language studies have represented a point of stress for Joanne, and her proficiency in English has prevented her from academic and travel

opportunities in the past. Yet, despite having a stable though demanding job in China, she returned to English language study at weekends and in the evening, in order to secure a place on the pre-sessional course in Britain to start her master's. She had no experience of interacting in English in China nor was she able to prepare for spoken aspects of the English exam which secured her place on the pre-sessional. Her inexperience, coupled with anxiety about her spoken English skills, have resulted in unsuccessful attempts to continue interactions in English on her pre-sessional course.

Elsa - The decision to change her master's studies from Chinese Language and Literature to Accounting and Finance at university in China, rather than a low English language proficiency in the Gaokao (postgraduate university entrance exam in China), resulted in Elsa's decision to study abroad. However, to study abroad Elsa would still need to increase her English language speaking score to study at master's level in Britain. Elsa attributes the lack of opportunity to practise her English oral skills to her repeated failure to meet the desired proficiency level. She is mindful of the financial expense to her parents of her study abroad experience and stated that she did not want to waste the opportunities presented in Britain for interaction.

Olivia's experiences of TBL in her English classes in China may have instilled the importance of language for communication purposes. As she had lived and worked in Shanghai for a number of years, when she decided to return to full-time education, she knew she wanted to study outside China. With her enjoyment of British film and what she describes as an affinity with British personality characteristics, Olivia felt she had some knowledge of what to expect in Britain. Although she did not comment on actual real-life interactions in English while she was in China. After living alone in Shanghai, she welcomed the opportunity in her chosen social environments in Britain to interact in English.

Jennifer has had experience interacting in English at university in China and during an internship in the United States. She is confident in her level of spoken English. Her experiences on EMI programmes and in America have shown her the importance of the environment on developing her English interaction skills.

7.4.2 Subsidiary Research Question 2 - What are the current interaction practices of 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional academic English programmes at a British university?

Jack's interaction practices on the pre-sessional were mainly in his classes. Time after class was usually spent in his accommodation, but he had not formed close friendships with his roommates. Interaction in English would be transactional English, which he felt he still needed to develop as most of his focus had been on developing his academic skills for study.

Although Lina feels that there is a social commitment to spending time with fellow Chinese international students, she has sought opportunities to practise her English interaction skills outside the classroom and outside of the language centre. She has utilised the social clubs organised by the Students' Union.

Hannah has joined social clubs organised by the Students' Union, and communicates regularly with her boyfriend in English, although he has now returned to Japan. She shares her university accommodation with 3 other Chinese international students with most interaction in the evenings and at weekends in Chinese.

Charley's narrative states that she has less interaction in English on her pre-sessional course than she did when she was doing a General English course in Manchester. She spends her weekends in Manchester with a previous classmate from her General English course and interaction is in English.

Ewan - Communication in English only occurs in the classroom for Ewan. Out of class, if Ewan is communicating with another Chinese person, he will be speaking Chinese. His narrative does not give much detail about his social activities after class apart from having meals with other Chinese students, communicating in Chinese.

Stella interacts in English during class as there are only a few Chinese students, after class and at the weekend if she is not in the library, she usually socialises with other Chinese

international students. She would interact with her American housemate in English, but she has recently returned home to the United States.

Joanne's narrative states that she has had to make the effort to communicate in English during class, as she often slips into speaking Chinese when she is seated with other Chinese students. She has made attempts to interact in English with her roommates in her university accommodation, though admits this was a challenge. She has also tried to have interactions in British pubs. She has joined a gym, though the staff there are Chinese, so communication is in Chinese.

Elsa - The general interaction among her peers on the pre-sessional is in Chinese, which Elsa believes is because of the demographics of the course.

Olivia has participated in some of the social activities provided by the language centre since starting her pre-sessional course, which she views as a good opportunity for interaction in English. She is sharing her university accommodation with 4 other Chinese international students, so there is a lot of socialising such as eating at restaurants, which results in interacting in Chinese.

Jennifer does not provide examples of her interactions, though talks about practices of other Chinese international students. She is currently looking for volunteer work in Britain so she can practise her English oral communication skills as she feels there is not enough practice on the pre-sessional programme.

7.4.3 Subsidiary Research Question 3 - To what extent can pre-sessional academic English programmes aid the development of an L2 communicative repertoire?

Jack - Pre-sessionals need to provide more functional language to develop an L2 communicative repertoire as Jack felt that even after the pre-sessional, he was not confident in day-to-day transactional English or how to manage negotiations in a social context.

Lina - Information and provision of more social and conversation clubs from the Students' Union have facilitated a more international experience where she can develop her L2 communicative repertoire to explore her own, and wider ideas and issues.

Hannah felt apprehensive about interacting with local or home students but felt more at ease with other international students as they would be using their language in common which would be English. These are the interactions that will develop her L2 communicative repertoire.

Charley aspires to develop meaningful relationships with other international students, creating a more international environment for herself in which she can further develop her existing L2 communicative repertoire.

Ewan believes that seminar and discussion practice creates a comfortable environment for Chinese students to communicate with each other in English. This may improve his interaction skills in English. He did not state that he would be working towards developing an L2 communicative repertoire.

Stella believes Chinese students need to connect with their own cultural group and that the pre-sessional courses could facilitate this. So, students feel more confident about working towards developing an L2 communicative repertoire.

Joanne stated that creating opportunities outside the class where students must speak in English would result in the development of their interaction skills and development of an L2 communicative repertoire.

Elsa believes that the pre-sessional programmes should support developing connections across international student groups. This would improve the study abroad experience and provide opportunities for developing an L2 communicative repertoire.

Olivia states that the pre-sessional courses should support the creation of a guanxi or social network groups with a mix of international students. This would result in more interactions in English.

Jennifer believes the pre-sessionals should facilitate intergroup contact with other nationalities, which analyse and discuss the 'saving face' issue.

7.4.4 Overarching Research Question - How has the 'internationalisation' of higher education influenced 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' L2 interaction, and development of a L2 communicative repertoire?

Jack - This is twofold - while the internationalisation of HE has allowed Jack to face his anxieties about English, it may also be the consequential impact internationalisation has had on language learning and the importance of English for academic and career development that may have been at the root of the anxieties.

Lina - The internationalisation of HE has resulted in a possible career change, continued higher education, an emerging L2 communicative repertoire, and an intercultural experience which includes intergroup interaction.

Hannah - The internationalisation HE may not have resulted (so far) in a developing L2 communicative repertoire but has changed Hannah's previously negative views on English language study to a more positive attitude on the value of English language development, on both a personal and academic, and possibly future occupational level.

Charley - Internationalisation facilitated Charley's earlier start to developing an L2 communicative repertoire and situated her in an environment for intercultural communication skills experience in the Philippines and Manchester. Although in her current situation, internationalisation of HE may have stalled her immediate development due to the lack of diversity on her pre-sessional course.

Ewan - Internationalisation of HE may have facilitated Ewan's objective of experiencing a new culture in Britain. Although his social interaction may not currently develop into an L2 communicative repertoire, he is now more engaged in his English classes and is communicating in English during his lessons.

Stella - the internationalisation of HE has provided Stella with the opportunity to situate herself in a position to work towards improving her English language skills for future academic endeavours. Her level of interaction in English and the development of an L2 communicative repertoire may be currently negatively impacted by lack of diversity on her pre-sessional course and in her university accommodation due to her perceived duty to communicate in Chinese. However, this did not stop her from forming an intercultural relationship when situational factors permitted.

Joanne - The Internationalisation of HE presented Joanne with the possibility for academic development but her English language proficiency at the time prevented her from taking advantage of the opportunity. Despite this, her resilience to work towards overcoming her anxiety regarding performing and interacting in English has led her to the pre-sessional course where she has repeated her attempts to interact in English. The lack of diversity of the pre-sessional may result in relapses in her interaction anxiety but this has not prevented her from confronting her fears in the past.

Elsa - The internationalisation of HE could be considered as presenting a lifeline to Elsa when her plans to change discipline were unsuccessful. Although, the current context may not be providing Elsa with the environment she needs to develop an L2 communicative repertoire at the speed or to the extent that she may have hoped for.

Olivia - Internationalisation of HE has accommodated Olivia's decision to leave unsatisfactory employment in pursuit of experiencing a new culture. This internationalisation has created a context where Olivia can make the choice to develop an L2 communicative repertoire, as she believes it is a choice as to whether the lack of diversity on her pre-sessional course aids or hinders the levels or opportunities for interaction in English.

Jennifer - The internationalisation of HE has already given Jennifer the experience of intercultural interaction and to some extent an internationalised education through her participation on the EMI programme at her university in China. Although her academic expectations may not have been met in this situation; her English communication skills developed. She also had the opportunity to further develop her L2 communicative repertoire in the United States during her internship. This may be the cause of her dissatisfaction at her current context as the lack of diversity, she feels, is regressing the advancement she has made in these two international experiences.

7.5 Limitations

There were some limitations to this study that I was unable to address, as these were mainly language issues. Firstly, not being able to source or read literature written in Chinese. Although I attempted to review a range of literature by Chinese researchers, there is still the risk that some key research may have been omitted. I have also taken into consideration that first language Chinese texts may have provided a less Westernised perspective of the phenomenon.

Secondly, I did not present the option to participants of using their L1 if they had difficulty explaining a concept. This could have been translated by an L1 or bilingual speaker and verified in the member checking as the narratives were being constructed. However, I did not want to add another layer or filter between the interpretation of what the participants had said and my understanding. I wanted to limit the negotiation of the intended meaning between the participant and the researcher/narrator, as they would represent the visible contributors to the narratives. I perhaps selfishly wanted to reassure the participants that I was able to grasp their intended meaning as I had spent time getting to know them. For future research involving participants with whom I do not share an L1, I may choose to involve an interpreter from the initial contact phase. This may add even more reliability in the construction of the narratives.

Although the narratives underwent member checking to ensure that what was produced was an accurate portrayal of the participants' perspective, there was still the risk of the participants saving face by saying what they believed a member of university staff wanted to hear. This could be in order to be respectful of my position as a teacher. This position has been made overt throughout the research process. In addition to this, steps were taken to apply a personal ethical code of practice and fulfil the evaluative criteria for rigorous qualitative research. The hope is that these measures have countered the risk mentioned above, and the participants fully understood that their position as participants and any contribution to this study (adversarial or otherwise) would not have any negative impact.

The limitations regarding the method procedures in this study should be taken as recommendations for future research of this nature. As all the participants were at the institution where I taught with some participants in my classes, I was able to observe their behaviour in class while in the UK. However, I did not include the data or comments from these observations. The reason for this decision was I was not able to unobtrusively observe all current interactions of the participants, as this would also include out of class interactions with peers. In addition, I was not able to consider the data drawn from these observations with interaction practices before they arrived in the UK, to assess any developments.

If the scope allowed for a more longitudinal study, where I could document the experiences from when the decision to study abroad had been taken through to graduation from the university; or even to the stage where the graduates were looking or had gained employment, this would have added to the quality and richness of the data generated. Another suggestion, which would add to the quality of the data generated, would be to recruit more participants from a wider range of disciplines. While in an ideal situation, maintaining a high level of engagement should be desired in all university programmes, the amount of interaction between students may vary across different disciplines. A more representative range of participants would better inform agencies seeking to improve opportunities for more diverse intergroup interaction within their disciplines.

7.6 Implications

7.6.1 Further reflections on the framework

Using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework to examine current issues in education provides a more holistic representation of the personal, social and temporal factors involved in learning. This approach has previously been adopted in higher education research and internationalisation research but has not been applied to interaction practices on pre-sessional courses or Chinese international pre-sessional students preparing to enter British higher education institutions. Pre-sessional research which focuses on interaction practices have taken a case study approach (Xin and Jiayi, 2017) or action research approaches (Burnapp, 2006; Skinner, 2010), or questionnaires (Cunningham, 2014; Robson, 2015), which while offering a personal perspective, do not factor past learning experiences and the impact these may have on current and future practices. They also tend to mostly focus on current events and environments. My research is distinct as it allows the participants to explore their past learning experiences. This is useful in two ways. The first is that the participants can reflect on their learning experiences and evaluate their relationship with English. They are able to self-analyse their behavioural patterns to inform themselves on how best they learn and what conditions have been conducive to their personal and social development. With the focus of this research being interaction in English and the development of an L2 communicative repertoire, the participants were able to look at their practices, with the power of retrospection. This created awareness of their successful interactions as well as consideration of the factors that hindered interaction in English.

The second way is that this approach informs both pre-sessional and higher education pedagogy by presenting the factors the students attribute to successful interaction. The narratives have provided information from students about how they are or are not interacting with their peers, rather than the observation from an outsider, even if that outsider is a teacher working in the same higher education environment. This information can be utilised to create positive conditions for interaction that should assist in the development of an L2 communicative repertoire to facilitate independent interactions out of the language classroom.

7.6.2 Practical implications

The practical implication of my research is that the narratives support the call to readdress and reject paradigmatic assumptions of cultural influence on an individual's behaviour and practices. This is even more relevant when the assumptions categorise and label groups of individuals according to outdated or simply incorrect presumptions about how someone should behave due to the perceived membership to a particular ethnic or cultural, and essentialised homogeneous grouping. Problematising these assumptions provides the space for the individual's voice and actions to be considered before anything else, rather than the noise of the assumption overpowering and overshadowing individual acts of volition. This is not to categorically state that culture and traditions will not impact learning. However, any consideration of assumptions should serve to cautiously and mindfully create debate with the purpose of establishing an open dialogue and creating the opportunity for this dialogue to assess the possible impact culture has on any given individual or context. This practical implication may appear somewhat theoretical in nature. However, this is the first pragmatic step towards practical considerations on ways to improve and promote interaction practices for all sharing an internationalised higher education environment.

7.7 Recommendations

The recommendations are for strategies to improve more intergroup contact to create more opportunities for interaction in English, and for the Chinese pre-sessional students to be provided with the opportunity to develop an L2 English communicative repertoire. The narratives reveal that if there is at least one non-Chinese student in a group, communication is much more likely to be in English. Therefore, there is a need for more diversity on pre-sessional courses, even if that means providing free or concession fee places to non-Chinese international students. This could be justifiable as international and home students already pay different fees for university education. The suggestion is to have a percentage of places held for non-Chinese students in each class. These could include other international students who would like academic skills training before starting their masters, trainee English language teachers acting as interlocutors for interaction practice and seminar discussions, undergraduate students considering masters study (preferably TESOL) who can be on campus,

volunteer student helpers or other university students through positions created by a university's job vacancy programmes or services along with other responsibilities on the pre-sessional social programme.

Improving intergroup interaction should not be the sole responsibility of the NESB students in general and the Chinese international students more specifically. As stated, largely uncontested assumptions on cultural influence impacting on behaviour and communication styles is presented as a dichotomy with each side categorised according to outdated ideologies and mindsets. To address this, there should be an institutional authority-led intervention that aims to provide the space and training in intercultural and intergroup interaction. The intention is to replace preconceived ideas of cultural influence with intercultural communication experience. The purpose of which would not be to force or presume that intergroup interaction was an objective for international students choosing to study abroad, and participation should be geared towards providing the opportunity for successful interaction on campus. If individuals choose to develop multicultural social circles, then this would be on their own volition.

The institution-led campus-based intervention could take a number of forms including extending the induction programmes provided to undergraduate students during the Fresher's week to include the postgraduate students. This would be implemented so all students could benefit from a more comprehensive introduction to higher education. Universities could have pre-programme courses designed to initiate intergroup contact across the student body, which focuses on the type and level of interaction required at either undergraduate or postgraduate level. These would involve activities with learning outcomes directed at addressing and problematising societal assumptions to promote overall inclusivity across the campus. Workshop or seminar styled sessions could incorporate aspects of the three-dimensional narrative space where students are encouraged to retell and reflect on their past learning experiences and projections for their future learning or career paths. This could be organised at faculty or department level so the participants on these programmes have a common point of interest. Although this type of authority intervention would require planning, funding and resources, these should be incorporated into the degree programmes as a component of the

fundamental training required for active participation in an internationalised higher education context.

7.8 Suggestions for future research

As stated above in 7.5, one of the limitations of my study was not gaining first-hand experience of interaction practices in all of the classroom and social contexts of the participants.

Therefore, future research that obtains observational data on the classroom and social contexts of pre-sessional students should better contextualise any narratives of their learning experiences. This would provide valuable information on the effectiveness of particular tasks in the classroom and of the support required to enhance interaction practices. Observation of the social contexts before, between and after scheduled class times would provide data on social groupings and the adequacy of amenities and facilities in promoting interaction across different users of the educational environment where learning takes place. To fully explore these learning contexts of the participants, future research should also contain longitudinal observational data that examines the interaction practices of students from the pre-sessional programmes through to their postgraduate degree courses. This would also more effectively assess the pedagogical approaches adopted and the impact the learning environment of pre-sessional programmes had on their interaction practices on their degree programmes.

Turning to the wider implications of my study, future research should examine the attitudes towards interacting in an internationalised higher education environment from more sectors of the student body. By extending the focus, the onus on interaction will not be centred on the efforts made by the NESB international students. Data generated from this future research could lead to pedagogical inquiry at an institutional level to look at ways to promote interaction across all students and staff sharing the internationalised campus. This type of institutional intervention as outlined in the recommendations above would introduce programmes that value the diverse contributions of the individual to re-conceptualise what study in an internationalised setting represents. Research-informed initiatives, such as applying the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space to increase awareness of the personal, social and environmental factors that influence the practices of an individual, will challenge the

paradigmatic assumptions based on culture and ethnicity which essentialise learners and may misinterpret objectives for study in an internationalised higher education context.

7.9 Final thoughts

The doctoral progress has been a long and at times difficult journey. However, it has confirmed my personal and professional commitment to understanding the learning contexts of the students I have shared an environment with for over 20 years. The students change and contexts evolve, and this process has encouraged me to question and problematise my assumptions to both learn from and adapt to the dynamism that an internationalised higher education context represents.

Accepting critique, once I eventually recovered from the disappointment of not getting it perfect with my first attempt was beneficial, and I have developed into a researcher. Education issues will be multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, and these require scrutiny. The examiners' comments helped me to question not only my existing assumptions but those so longstanding that even as an experienced teacher, are too readily accepted as the norm or standard. As I stated in the introduction of the thesis, I wanted to challenge the assumptions of an individual's performance that are often based on essentialist views of what being a member of a particular culture represents. I hope that this is something this thesis has achieved. Academically, I am able to better appreciate research as an invaluable contribution that constructs a better understanding of social reality. As a teaching professional, it has also enabled me to share certain skills and techniques that will benefit my students at the university. I can also share, in hindsight, which things or academic practices to possibly avoid. Thus, first-hand experience of the research process has developed my skills to reflect on my practice, while questioning and problematizing the presumptions and assumptions I held previously. Reflection is now integral to all aspects of my teaching and learning. On an equally personal level, becoming a researcher has taught me how to scrutinise the information I receive from people and a range of different sources, in view of understanding perspectives that differ from my own.

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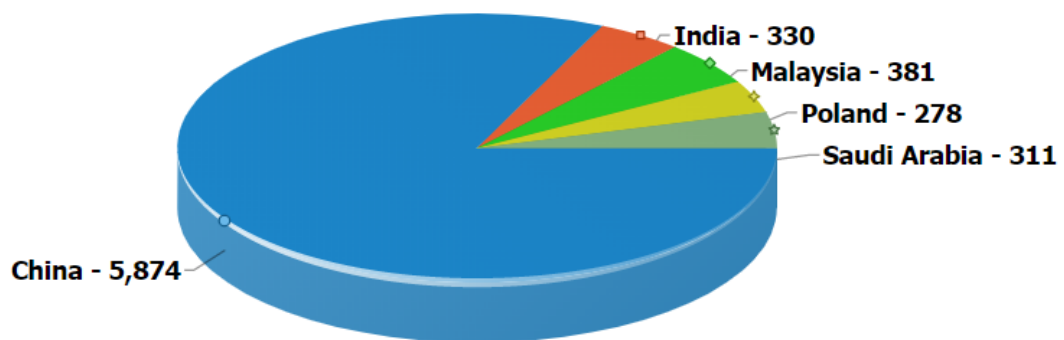
Appendix 1: Student Populations - applications from 2014-2017 from The University of Sheffield Annual Report 2017-2018.



Student Populations - applications from 2014-2017 from The University of Sheffield Annual Report 2017-2018. See <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/finance/annual-report-financial-statements>

Appendix 2: Student Population The University of Sheffield 2019 Figures Top Five Largest Nation Groups

Top 5 Largest National Group (2019)



Student Population The University of Sheffield 2019 Figures Top Five Largest Nation Groups - <https://apex-live.shef.ac.uk/pls/apex/f?p=136%3A1> accessed 6th August 2020

Appendix 3: Images of Chinese Businesses in Sheffield City Centre





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 英国注册牙医

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Appendix 4: Evaluative Criteria for Rigorous Qualitative Research

| Establishing Credibility | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| Technique | Definition | Example in this research project | Compatibility in this research project |
| Prolonged Engagement | Spending sufficient time in the field to learn or understand the culture, social setting, or phenomenon of interest. This involves spending adequate time observing various aspects of a setting, speaking with a range of people, and developing relationships and rapport with members of the culture. Development of rapport and trust facilitates understanding and co-construction of meaning between researcher and members of a setting. | I have experience of the social setting from the perspective of a teacher, spending between 3 to 6 months observing and familiarising myself with the educational setting and conducting interviews with the participants through the method of Narrative Inquiry, so I will gain experience from the perspective of a researcher. | Yes |
| Persistent Observation | According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) while prolonged engagement will provide the scope necessary for good qualitative research, persistent observation to see the phenomenon in practice will provide the depth of inquiry to identify the elements of the phenomenon most relevant to the inquiry. | see Prolonged Engagement | Yes |
| Triangulation | Although the use of triangulation may come under criticism for one not having sufficient confidence in one particular method over another, Lincoln and Guba (1994) state that this multimethod, multisource or multiperspective adoption can act as a means to evaluate the validity or verification of a research project. adopting more than one approach, method or analysis will highlight blind spots that the using of one source may cause, thus providing a more vigorous inquiry. | I intend to use the method of Narrative Analysis to construct an emplotted narrative as I intend to construct the 'story' that led to the present outcome and consider the impact of past events on the present and future expectations or visions of the participants, This method is generally associated with qualitative research. | No The qualitative approach to research lies at the heart of this project as the objective is to provide the accounts of the international students selected to better understand their experience and to add to the emerging body of literature that focuses on these individual experiences. |
| Peer Briefing | presenting aspects of the research to a disinterested member would open the research up for analysis of preconceptions and to consolidate the researcher's positionality in terms of the data generated and its subsequent analysis. | | No Although peer briefing may offer a valuable critique of my positionality and a pilot of the study could be presented to a disinterested member, the findings and conclusions drawn - due to the subjective nature of the inquiry - could vary significantly with a different group of participants. (However, see <i>Reflexivity in Techniques to establish Confirmability</i>). |
| Negative case analysis | searching through the data for deviant or negative cases that do not appear to support the patterns or themes of the majority of cases. This evaluative function will open the research up for revision, broadening or deepening the patterns that have emerged from the data analysis. | | No There will not be a 'negative or deviant' case' scenario as with this subjectivist perspective different patterns and themes are likely to occur. The deviant case scenario would be that all accounts and individual reactions to events are identical. |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Technique Referential adequacy | Definition leaving a portion of the data unanalysed. The remaining data is then analysed, and the preliminary findings of the analysed data is used as a means to test the validity of the findings on the unanalysed data | Example in this research project | Compatibility in this research project No (see above) |
| Member checking | <p>testing the data, analytical categories, interpretations and conclusions with the members of the group from whom the data was originally obtained.</p> <p>Positives: opportunity to understand and assess the participants intentions through their actions, opportunity for participants to correct errors, opportunity for participants to make additions, opportunity for participants to publicly state or verify what is in the report, an opportunity for the researcher to summarize preliminary findings, opportunity for participants to assess the adequacy of data and preliminary findings.</p> <p>Negatives: relies on the assumption that is a 'fixed truth', could lead to confusion rather than confirmation as participants may change their mind, the participant may disagree with the researcher and the question of whose view prevails arises, the researcher and the participants may have different stories to tell and these views may be conflicting, participants may regret telling stories and may wish to remove them to save face, participants may not be in the best position to check the data, the participants checking may involve just pleasing the researcher</p> | <p>Yes (to a larger extent)</p> <p>The Narrative Analysis method, and the constructivist-interpretivist perspective of this study we allow for the co-creation of data between me as the researcher and the participants.</p> <p>Revision and negotiation of meaning will provide the final construct. As there is no 'fixed truth' the changes and adaptations during revision will be documented. More significantly, if a participant wishes to remove a part of the data I will reflect on this decision and the participant can withdraw at any stage of the process.</p> | Yes |
| Techniques for establishing transferability | | | |
| Technique Thick description | Definition describing the phenomenon in sufficient detail, a detailed analysis of the fieldwork, and contextualising the cultural and social aspects of the phenomenon | Example in this research project Yes This is imperative to the success of the research project as its aim is to offer a greater understanding of the impact of social and cultural aspects on the participants of the study. Multiple interviews and contact during the duration of the study is at the core at understanding how these aspects influence the current situation. | Suitability in this research project Yes |

| Technique | Definition | Example in this research project | Suitability in this research project |
|---------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| triangulation | see triangulation above | | |
| Reflexibility | attending systematically to the construction of knowledge - especially to the effect on the researcher - at every stage of the research process, design research that includes multiple investigators to foster dialogue and divergent understanding of the study situation, developing a reflexive journal where the researcher records methodological decisions and the reasons for them, reporting research perspectives, positions, values and beliefs in manuscripts and other publications. | Yes Especially as a method to address issues of research ethics and power relation (see paragraph on Research Ethic and Power Relations below) | |

| Techniques for establishing dependability | | |
|--|---|--|
| Technique | Definition | Example in this research project |
| Inquiry audit | <p>having an independent researcher examine the process and product of the research study to evaluate its accuracy and whether or not the findings, interpretations and the conclusions support the data.</p> <p>Positives: the opportunity to challenge the process, product and conclusions that would provide a summary of the preliminary findings, assessment of the data and preliminary results, providing important feedback leading to additional data gathering and more robust, better articulated findings and results.</p> <p>Negatives: relies on the assumption that there is a 'fixed truth' and in the interpretivist perspective understanding in co-created and there is no objective of truth or reality that can be compared, can lead to confusion and misunderstanding as an independent researcher cannot have the level of knowledge of the researcher embedded in the context, there could be a disagreement of views and the question of whose view prevails arises.</p> | <p>No</p> <p>(see negatives in the definition)</p> |
| Techniques for establishing confirmability | | |
| Technique | Definition | Example in this research project |
| Confirmability audit | see inquiry audit | No (see inquiry audit) |
| audit trail | a transparent description of the research steps taken to be used as a record of what was done in the research, including raw data (e.g. field notes), data reduction, data reconstruction and synthesis products (e.g. the structuring of themes), process notes (methodological, trustworthiness, audit trail notes), materials relating to intentions, dispositions and expectations, instrumental development information (e.g. pilot forms, preliminary schedules, observation formats). | <p>Yes</p> <p>The constructivist-interpretivist perspective for this Narrative Inquiry relies on the transparency of the research steps to corroborate the co-created data. For this research to be ethical, and to develop relationships of trust necessary to generate the data in the first instance transparency and clear articulation of the process will be paramount to the successful execution of this research.</p> |

| Technique | Definition | Example in this research project | Suitability in this research project |
|---------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| triangulation | see triangulation above | | |
| Reflexibility | attending systematically to the construction of knowledge - especially to the effect on the researcher - at every stage of the research process, design research that includes multiple investigators to foster dialogue and divergent understanding of the study situation, developing a reflexive journal where the researcher records methodological decisions and the reasons for them, reporting research perspectives, positions, values and beliefs in manuscripts and other publications. | Yes Especially as a method to address issues of research ethics and power relation (see paragraph on Research Ethic and Power Relations below) | |

Adapted from Cohen D, Crabtree B. "Qualitative Research Guidelines Project." July 2006.

<http://www.qualres.org/HomeRefl-3703.html>. Downloaded 07/02/16 at 19.25

Appendix 5: Ethics Approval Confirmation



Downloaded: 12/12/2016

Approved: 02/12/2016

Heather Lynne Wilson

Registration number: 120238008

School of Education

Programme: Education (PhD/Education PT) - EDUR41

Dear Heather Lynne

PROJECT TITLE: A Narrative Inquiry of one group of Chinese International Students

Preparing for University Study in Britain

APPLICATION: Reference Number 011978

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 02/12/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

University research ethics application form 011978 (dated 10/11/2016).

Participant information sheet 1024976 version 1 (10/11/2016).

Participant consent form 1024977 version 1 (10/11/2016).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

Clarity will be needed in order that potential participants understand that their participation / responses will not have any implications for any future University / study visa application; If students choose not to participate from the outset, or subsequently withdraw will they still be required (for their course of study) to attend the sessions that may be filmed/observed. Might this cause stress/anxiety?

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt

Ethics Administrator

School of Education

Appendix 6: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

A Narrative Inquiry of one group of Chinese International Students Preparing for University Study in Britain

You are being invited to take part in a research project that is about Chinese international students that have come to Sheffield to improve their English so they can get a place at a British university. Before you decide if you would like to be part of the research project it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please email: Heather.L.Wilson@sheffield.ac.uk. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

1. What is the project's purpose?

Sheffield is the fifth largest recruiter of international students in Britain and many of these students come from China. For some programmes here at the centre all of the class members are Chinese students trying to improve their English. The aim of this study is to learn about what it is like to leave your home town in China to study in Britain and the effects of these environments on your language development. It will consist of three interviews over three academic terms which will be recorded and transcribed. The final version of the transcript will be checked and agreed by you before it is used in the research project. Participation in the research project will be between nine and twelve months (9 -12 months).

2. Why have I been chosen?

This email has been sent to all Chinese students studying at the centre who are planning to study a postgraduate degree in Britain. This is why you have received this email.

3. Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and that refusal to agree to participate will have no negative result on you. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting you or your studies at the centre in any way. You do not have to give a reason if you decide not to participate further.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be involved for between 9 to 12 months. We will meet up once a term every term for approximately 20-30 minutes for a recorded interview and then one more time to check that I have recorded what you said accurately (this will be anonymous of course and your name will not appear on any versions). The location of the interviews will be on the university campus

and will be informal semi-structured interviews, so basically I will use the questions to have topics to talk about but we do not need to follow them.

5. What do I have to do?

So, all you have to do is turn up at the agreed time and the agreed place to talk about events up to coming to England to go to university in Britain.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and possible benefits of taking part?

There are no real disadvantages however we may talk about things back at home that could be uncomfortable if the experience was negative. Any information you give will be completely anonymous so that no-one will know who said what. Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project you may find talking about your experience helps you become more focused in what you want to achieve in the centre. It is also an opportunity to get some extra language practice. Please be aware this research is for The University of Sheffield School of Education, and participation is entirely voluntary and will have no bearing on grades from the ELTC or study visa applications

7. Will I be recorded and who will hear it?

The audio and/or video recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

8. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

If the research study stops earlier than expected then a detailed explanation will be given to all participants.

9. What if something goes wrong?

If something goes wrong or you are unhappy with the research project please contact me and let me know if I can improve the situation. If I am unable to do this then please contact my supervisor Dr David Hyatt (d.hyatt@sheffield.ac.uk).

10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

Before the research start I must receive written consent that you agree to participate in the study and you give permission to allow restricted access to information collected about you in the course of the project. This consent will also state that all information provided from you will be anonymous so your name will not appear and it is completely confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. **You also have the right to refuse to participate in the research, at any time. You have the right to withdraw from the**

research, without having to give a reason.

11. What will happen to the results of the research project?

Once the results are published which will be from January 2020 you can obtain a copy of the published paper online. Due to the nature of this research it is very likely that other researchers may find the data collected to be useful in answering future research questions. We will ask for your explicit consent for your data to be shared in this way and if you agree, we will ensure that the data collected about you remains anonymous and confidential.

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield Ethics Review Procedure. The University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

For further information please contact:

Ms Heather Wilson
English Language Teaching Centre
The University of Sheffield
78 Hoyle Street
Sheffield, S3 7LG

Tel. [+44 114 222 4930](tel:+441142224930)/1780
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/eltc>

Dr David Hyatt
Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
Senate Award Fellow for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
Director Doctorate in Education (EdD) Part 2
Director EdD Language Learning and Teaching
Director Singapore Programme

School of Education
University of Sheffield
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

Tel: +44 (0)114 222 8126

All participants will be given a copy of the information sheet and, if appropriate, a signed consent form to keep.

Many thanks in advance for your help and cooperation.

Appendix 7: Participants Consent Form

Title of Research Project: A Narrative Inquiry of one group of Chinese International Students Preparing for University Study in Britain

Name of Researcher: Ms Heather Wilson

Participant Identification Number for this project: _____ **Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated [08/11/16] explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

Date

Signature

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix 8: Participant Recruitment Poster

Are you a Chinese International student preparing to study at a British university?



Do you have around 20 minutes to spare this Friday 10th at 1pm?

I'm looking for around 20 students to talk about their experience. All levels welcome and a great opportunity to have a little fluency practice.

This study has been approved by The University of Sheffield departmental ethics committee and the University of Sheffield ELTC. For further information, please email either myself at Heather.L.Wilson@sheffield.ac.uk or Dr David Hyatt at d.hyatt@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 9: Research Questions-Interview Question Cues Matrix

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Main overarching research question; How has the 'internationalisation' of higher education influenced 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' L2 interaction, and development of a L2 communicative repertoire? | | | |
| Discussion topics to address overarching research question | Subsidiary question 1 | Subsidiary question 2 | Subsidiary question 3 |
| Temporal - continuity | Past - Before study abroad | Present - During pre-sessional study | Future - Effectiveness of pre-sessional for future interaction in English |
| Personal and social interaction | Personal and social interaction | Personal and social interaction | Personal and social interaction |
| Place | Place - China | Place - Britain | Place - Britain and China? |
| Internationalisation and impact on developing L2 English | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Chinese international students in British higher education | | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Presumed paradigmatic differences between Western and Eastern learning and communication styles | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Impact of culture on interaction practices | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Impact of internationalisation on interaction practices | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>Subsidiary research question 1: How did events which preceded the study abroad programme impact on 10 pre-sessional Chinese international students' current interaction practices and development of a L2 communicative repertoire? (first interview?)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about where you are from in China. 2. The locations that you live in now, have your families always lived there, or did they come from different areas in China? 3. Does anyone in your family also or only speak a regional minority language? 4. How much exposure did you have to English? 5. How did you feel about studying 'language' in China/ (both English and Chinese)? 6. What did/didn't you enjoy about studying language in China? 7. How would you value language study? | | | |

8. Why did you decide to study abroad?
9. How did you prepare for study abroad?
10. What did you know about England or city X or the university before you arrived?

Subsidiary Research Question 2: What are the current interaction practices of 10 Chinese international students on pre-sessional academic English programmes at a British university? (second interview?)

1. What were your thoughts when you arrived in X?
2. How do you think the presence of Chinese businesses affects your communication and interaction skills?
3. Can you compare the life of a student in China and a student in Britain?
4. How much does the culture affect students when they come to Britain to study?
5. The University is 'international'. What does this statement mean to you?
6. How do you feel about the large numbers of Chinese students at The University?
7. How do the numbers of Chinese students affect your communication skills?
8. How much English and how much Chinese do you speak here, now?

Subsidiary Research question 3: To what extent do pre-sessional academic English programmes aid the development of an L2 communicative repertoire? (third interview?)

1. How do you feel about your progress since our last meeting?
2. Do you think the type or amount of communication has changed since we last met?
3. Has anything else changed? Plans for the future/study programme?
4. Regarding the communicative style of teaching at the centre, how prepared are you for your future academic study?

5. Is being a graduate from a British university more than the actual experience or qualifications, a powerful tool for future employment? Why/why not?
6. What could British universities do to improve interaction and engagement for its Chinese international students?
7. Next steps and use of English

Appendix 10: Sample of participant transcript

Interview 1 Participant X

| | | | |
|-------|---|---|--|
| | R | I'm interested in finding out about how students arrived in England more what they were thinking and events and experiences leading up to coming to Britain. So just to start very generally I've got some questions but I won't ask all of these...tell me a little bit about yourself. Where are you from in China? What do you study? That will do for now | |
| | P | Well I'm from the (name of place in China), you know? | |
| | R | No, how do I spell that? | |
| | P | Shanxi | |
| | R | Ok so where is that? | |
| | P | It's in the middle part of China...above Hunan and the (...) province | |
| | R | Ok that will help me a little bit and give a rough idea...ok | |
| | P | ...and I'm studying...I will study Management in September as my Master's degree | |
| | R | What did you study before for your undergraduate... | |
| | P | Actually I changed my major. I was studying Chinese language and literature (laughs) | |
| | R | Wow...okay...so why change? | |
| | P | Because I think my previous major is not the job hunting choice is limited...most of my classmates became teachers or work for government..erm and I don't think..I don't want to be a teacher...so I think maybe learning something new...give me some...give me some new possibilities | |
| | R | Yeah, new possibilities, opportunities. So, why did you choose to study China language and literature? | |
| 02.53 | P | Because I love literature...when I was very young and ...when I was in primary school I spent a lot of time reading novels and all kinds of book and I live to read....so maybe I think in my thoughts maybe the Chinese language and literature I can read more books and my Chinese score was good in high school so we ..I can have my advantages to develop better so I choose the major but actually I don't know how to say...I don't get too much to learn during my university... | |
| | R | OK, why do you think that? Why do you feel that? | |
| | P | Erm...because some of my ...our classes for example the history of Chinese literature we to [sic] study the Chinese literature from all periods from ancient times to modern times and you need to ...except for | |

| | | | |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| | | <p>simply reciting the concept... you have to give some comments and give a review of something...I think it should be subjective...it should be my opinion but the teacher told us to pass the exam you should recite things given by the teacher or authorities because they want us to learn it that way...so we have to ...and I hate that so I didn't actually learn very well...</p> | |
| 05.45 to 06.26 | R | <p>No, I understand when I studied history as an undergraduate students...and education...</p> | <p>I talk about my undergraduate studies ... to build a rapport with the new participant</p> |
| | R | <p>...so, let's go back to when you were a school child, so you were at school...so not high school maybe younger erm...we'll go for these two questions so what did you enjoy the most about studying English at school? What did you enjoy the most English and Chinese I think? So, 2 questions what did you enjoy the most about English? What did you enjoy the most about Chinese at school?</p> | |
| | P | <p>Erm ...English, Chinese, two of my ...these two are my best subject when I was at school...I think they are quite similar to some extent erm...sorry let me think...er...I don't know maybe I have a talent in language ...I just love reading..In Chinese I just love reading so maybe it's more easier to understand an article than the others...and writing in Chinese is also enjoyable for me at that time...so erm...because I have my ...when I was a schoolchild at that time I didn't have an imagination so I really enjoyed Chinese classes for English...can I just say I loved to watch English movies...they are really fascinating for me...to..because when I was young they were still English movies on the TV too, and there are really...they did have some masterpieces so...</p> | |
| 19.41 | R | <p>OK...so for example which were your favourite movies? Or one that you can remember at least?</p> | |
| | P | <p>Erm....Pride and Prejudice, erm...Titanic...very very early...long years ago...erm The Mummy...</p> | |
| | R | <p>What about about...what did you enjoy the least? So, what didn't you enjoy about the language classes? If there was anything</p> | |
| | P | <p>....erm...the least enjoy....erm maybe when I learn new articles in our textbooks are some of them are important and will appear in the test paper and we have to recite them...recite them in front of my parents to let them examine...it's a task assigned by the school....</p> | |
| | R | <p>Ok...yeah...so, I'll ask you this question and then I'll go back a little bit. So, what would you say is the importance of language study for you? What does it mean to you?</p> | |

| | | | |
|-------|----|--|--|
| | P | That's the reason why I'm here now....English learning...er...it's importance...you mean from my own perspective?..... ..When I was a school child and English was my advantage because I got good marks in that subject...and somehow it got me entrance into a good high school and university and the importance...it gives me a new view to see the world... | |
| 12.56 | R | Ok...that's super...Ok I'm going to ask you a little bit more about you...I've got the Google map here so you're from? | |
| | P | here... | |
| | R | From here? | |
| | P. | Yes, it's famous for coal production... | |
| | R | Ah...famous for coal production...so in this area is there a regional or minority language? | |
| | P | Yes, there is a dialect...but I can't speak any of them because my parents come from different places in Shanxi province so..yes...so they won't understand either if they don't their dialect. | |
| | R | Ok so your father has a dialect, your mother has a dialect, but they don't know each others? | |
| | P | It's not 'don't know' it's....actually in the north part of China the dialect is quite close to Mandarin, so and in my city most of the citizens live in the city and not the suburbs and speak Mandarin... | |
| | R | What about grandparents...are the from the same area? | |
| | P | You mean they came from...do you mean my mother's parents or my father's parents? | |
| 14.34 | R | Both, either...what do you know about them? | |
| | P | I live in the city Tiguang it's the capital city of Shanxi province...and my father and his parents live at the suburb of Tiguang city...yes and my mother is from the southern part of Shanxi province...near to Si'an...my mother when she does her Chinese 'gaokao' to enter university in Tiguang city so she moved...after her graduation...it was about late 1980's at that time there is still a policy to ...I don't know how to say...distribute the job when you graduate through the nation | |
| 15.50 | R | So, what does that mean? | |
| | P | So, it's..she my motheris this word right distribute?...dispatched to a national company in haiyang city so she left there at that time..and met my father... he is a colleague and finally they married. | |
| | R | So, ...we'll move on a little bit now...when you arrived in Sheffield what did you think? What were your first thoughts? | |

| | | | |
|-------|---|---|--|
| | P | My first thought is wow...the streets and the scenery are totally different from what I see in my city or in Beijing..when I...because there are hardly skyscrapers here and most of the...there are some beautiful houses and the air is fresh and the sky is blue...just like what I can see from English movies.. | |
| | R | So, when you arrived at the airport...what was going on in your head? What were you thinking when you got off the plane, you walked through Manchester, what were you thinking? | |
| | P | ...erm..I remember at that time I just opened my eyes to see everything I can see in my view and to remember because it's really refreshing after several hours flight...erm...maybe I was thinking ...someone told England at that time is was colder than my home town and I thought yes...that is actually...maybe the first day I thought all in mind is excitement | |
| | R | Did you come to England alone? Did you have a friend to travel with..anyone? | |
| | P | No. I only met my friends when i arrived in Manchester and I departure from Si'an and it was me alone | |
| | R | OK, so...what did you know about England or Sheffield or the university before you arrived? You spoke about the films before but what other information or what other knowledge did you have? | |
| | P | I searched Sheffield online when I was thinking which university to choose and er..I think Sheffield is quite an ideal place for me because erm...it's not too northern and it won't be so cold in winter and the cost of living here maybe is not as high as other places like London, Birmingham, and I knew there were alot of mountains here, and the football here is famous | |
| | R | Are you a football fan? | |
| | P | No (laughs) but I will..I go to see a match last week in the Hillsborough stadium..Sheffield Wednesday and another team I can't remember the name.. | |
| | R | ...yes I remember I think my sister went... | |
| 20.21 | P | Actually it's my first time to see a live match | |
| | R | ...what did you think? How did you feel? | |
| | P | Before so excited...on the tram coming back to Sheffield some one was singing, dancing you know...(laughs) | |
| | R | Football is very serious here | |
| | P | In the UK people are more excited about football than basketball | |
| | R | Erm...yeah...a lot of people enjoy basketball but football so | |

| | | | |
|-------|---|---|--|
| | | traditional...for some people it's part of their life...22.06-22.29 What did you expect in terms of the number of Chinese students? So, when you arrived at your accommodation, after you walked around the city, when you started your course...did you expect the number of Chinese students that we have? | |
| | P | Actually, the number of Chinese students is more than I expected...in my class for English language course erm they are all Chinese and 2 are from Taiwan...and we at break we speak Chinese it's really bad for us to improve our English...erm.. I think maybe it's because it's a pre-class...I don't know the percentage of Chinese students when ...after September | |
| | R | What would you like? Would you be happy with more or less? | |
| | P | I think less is better...erm..if we want to really...if we want an environment we Chinese we will come back to China and er...people tend to stay in their comfort zone and it's of course easier to speak the Chinese than with the local citizen so maybe I can always hear Chinese in the street, in the classroom, everywhere so... | |
| 25.00 | R | How does that make you feel? That you hear a lot of Chinese here | |
| | P | I just think is it what you want you spend so much tuition fee to come here, so I..unless for the necessary social occurrence I try my best to avoid speaking Chinese... | |
| | R | Yes, I understand...I'm going to move on I do have some pictures to show you 25.49-25.55 These are more about the time you made the decision to study in Britain and why and also about your life as a student in Britain for the last 5 weeks and to compare that with your life as a student in China...so where did you or your parents get information? You said you got the information from the internet about Sheffield? | |
| | p | Just in the process of comparing.. | |
| | R | OK...did you go to an agency? Did they organise it for you? Or did you do it independently? | |
| | P | Er...at the year I graduate I took part in the exam to ...for Master's degree in China...there was an exam but I failed..there is a gap between my score and the line...so I was...so I was considering about to..prepare for one more year or to go abroad to study..and my parents thought maybe to get your Master's in the UK is good because it's...you can not only get your degree but also it's only one year...actually most ..many Chinese students choose the UK just because of the short time...erm...so it's my mum who searched the internet at first and ...she found a programme held by CUF...the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing there's a programme...a pre-Master's degree before you go abroad and they can help you to apply for it...the universities...so before I came here I stayed in Beijing for one year...and that time I got my IELTS score and I finished my application and made my decision to go to Sheffield. | |

| | | | |
|-------|---|--|--|
| 28.48 | R | Ok..so did you live in Beijing alone or on campus or... | |
| | P | Yes, living in the school's dormitory with 3 other students... | |
| | R | Erm...how did you feel when you didn't get the place in the Chinese university? | |
| | P | Erm...my major was Chinese language and literature and my exam is actually I want to...the degree I wanted to get ...the Master's degree I wanted to get in China is Accounting, so I took the exam for Accounting , and it's because I get ..I don't know what to do after my graduation and I wanted to change my area into Business and Financial things and so I changed my goal in the exam and I prepare for the exam for half a year and I...the university I wanted to go to was in Hubei province in ..a top 5 university for Finance and Economics, and er...but Accounting is very hard..it's a hard major in China and the students taking exams for it is just increasing and my score was a 5 score gap between my....erm because the line turned up for 12. | |
| 31.29 | R | Yeah, I understand...but considering it wasn't your subject you did very well... | |
| | P | Thank you... | |
| | R | Well done...were you very disappointed that you had to change and consider England or? | |
| | P | Actually, not really (laughs) ...because at that time I don't really have a specific plan for my future when I ...but in the graduation year I just think about whether to study law or finance as my Master's degree...so because as you see I don't have specific plans.. | |
| | R | That's okay...er so...okay let's do another ...I might ask you another question about that...erm...so the next question was how did you prepare but you told me more or less, you went to Beijing and you did a pre-Master's course...erm was...some of the students I have spoken to didn't get there place on the master's course in China because of English language erm so it wasn't that they changed subject it was more the same subject but they did not do well in English. Did you need to do more work for English to get your place here? | |
| 33.29 | P | You mean in the year in Beijing?...yes we had classes teaching us about IELTS speaking, listening., writing and reading in the first half year in Beijing and where most of us take IELTS test at that time. Actually my IELTS score is 7.0...but the reason why I had to take language classes was because my speaking was 5.5...yes...my listening is 8.0, my writing is 7.0, and my reading is 7.5... | |
| | R | That's really good... | |
| | P | I still have to be here.. | |
| | R | So, how did you find the course? Because I can imagine that your level | |

| | | | |
|-------|---|---|--|
| | | was much higher than lots of the other students | |
| | P | Because my weakness is at speaking so I erm...I try to speak more but another weakness is that my voice is slow or weak, and it's hard for me to get heard above other students if I give a presentation or if I'm on stage and my teacher told me I should open my mouth when speaking..maybe I have improved a little in the 5 weeks.. | |
| | R | I would definitely say you are higher than 5.5, easily | |
| | P | But, I took IELTS test 3 times they are all 5.5...so I kind of gave up and just took the classes.. | |
| | R | So, why do you think your speaking didn't develop to the same level as your reading, or listening or writing? | |
| | P | Because we just don't have enough opportunities to speak...erm...in China the education of English just to have a good...to ..if you perform good in an exam then people will regard your English as good, and maybe our education system ignores the importance of speaking, we do listening, we do writing and we do reading but there is no chance to do speaking. Who speaks to you? The teacher? There is [sic] too many students, your classmates? They'll just think you are crazy..(laughs)..and erm they did have...there were some foreign students in school but the same reason you don't have enough chance to speak to them.. | |
| 38.09 | R | So, where were the foreign students from? | |
| | P | oh..I mean foreign teachers... | |
| | R | Oh foreign teachers...ok...let's move on a little bit now...you made the decision to go to Britain...how did you say goodbye to your friends and family? | |
| | P | Say goodbye? You mean after I came her? | |
| | R | Just before. Did you have a party? What did they say to you? Just before travelling to Sheffield | |
| | P | Er...from my classmates or from British? | |
| | R | More...when you were in Beijing did you go home before you came...so either in Beijing or when you returned to Shanxi, what did you say to your friends? What did they say to you before you travelled? | |
| | P | Bye (laughs) | |
| | R | What were they doing? Were they studying in China? | |
| | P | Er...you mean who? | |
| | R | This question here is more how did you say goodbye to those that were close to you? | |

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| | P | Bye! See you later | |
| | R | What were your friends plans? Were they staying in China? Were they staying in the UK? Or America? | |
| | P | I just mentioned that I have 3 roommates in Beijing and they all came to the UK now, one is in Aston University, one is in Strathclyde, and another is in ...sorry I forgot | |
| | R | Do you meet each other? Do you still talk now? | |
| | P | Plenty...In the gap when I finish my language class there is more than 10 days gap my now ...my temporary accommodation on the 2nd September.. | |
| | R | Wow...so the course finishes, and the accommodation finishes | |
| | P | and my next year accommodation starts on the 16th September... | |
| | R | So what are you going to do for 2 weeks? | |
| | P | I have to find my friends in Birmingham, the one in Aston university, she also has a gap...maybe we can travel around the UK and then go to Scotland to find another friend. | |
| | R | That sounds like fun...yeah lovely...so, how di your parents feel when you all decided that England would be better...did you think about Australia, or America? | |
| | P | Erm, yes I was considering...I thought about Australia once...I applied for a university in Australia and I got an offer but finally I decided to go to the UK | |
| | R | What made you decide the UK and not Australia? | |
| | P | Sorry... | |
| | R | What helped you make the decision between Australia and the UK? Why did you choose Britain and not Australia? | |
| | P | Erm...to get a Master's degree in Australia I had to take 2 years and the tuition fee is quite expensive...but about 5-600,000 RMB and er...because I'm an adult now I dn't want my parents to pay such a big amount for me | |
| | R | You said before that you could...it was possible that you could have studied for another year in China and then have taken the exam the university again...but you didn't want to...is the time important? Is the fact that it's 2 years in Australia and maybe you would need to study or prepare one more year in China before starting the course, but you could come to Britain to do the exam in 6 weeks and then 1 year...is the time important? Or why is it important?8.0 for listening | |
| | P | I don't think it's important but my parents do...erm...they think age is | |

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| | | important for a girl and er...also they said ...I think the Chinese society has a stereotype about the girls ages, they think that if you are above 28 you are it is not easy for you to find a boyfriend or find a job because you are too old...and the companies will think she will be pregnant soon and there is invisible discrimination in the recruiting procedure. Does this happen in the UK? | |
| 45.30 | R | Yes...it's I can't say it's less but if you can prove that somebody has discriminated against you for that reason then the company would be in trouble but it happens... | |
| | P | They can just say that you not eligible for our company | |
| | R | Exactly...so to prove it would be very very difficult but if you look at the numbers of or you compare male and female directors and promotion then the figure is not balanced...so there must be a reason so yes it occurs here too...Ok...I might ask you about that if we meet again next time because you are not the only student who has told me that... so how would you compare your life as a student in China and a student in Britain? | |
| | P | I can speak in 2 aspects...from life I am living alone ...totally alone now and I have to cook for myself not like in China there is a cuisine on campus so you just like can buy food there but in the Uk if you buy food everyday, your money will be running out , so you have to buy the raw materials to cook by yourself...and because I ...I never cooked before I came to the Uk, it's totally new area for me so I had to look up the recipe on line and follow the guidelines and do my cooking | |
| 48.15 | R | Do you ask your mom for help? | |
| | P | Yeah, sometimes...but it's too...the time difference it's hard to ask and sometimes the results of my cooking is terrible but I have to eat it because there is no time and it's so energy consuming you have to wash the dishes afterwards...but now I've improved..yes | |
| | R | I was going to ask are you getting better?...So, by the end of your Master's you will be an expert at cooking it will be fine | |
| | P | And since I'm living alone I have to ..I have got to remember the things I have to do...in China I can ask my friends, my roommates..they can tell me we have a meeting or classes later, now I have to check it all by myself and to wake up by myself but fortunately there has only been one time I became late...(laughs) | |
| 50.00 | R | Do you prefer it? I mean what other things can you compare? | |
| | P | There are also many differences in the classes, er...let me think...when the teacher can walk around in the class, in the front there is a blackboard, and there is also...he an also stick paper on the wall to write anywhere...so we have to turn our heads with his steps...and he has so much time for brainstorm and group work, pair work to talk, to | |

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| | | communicate and exchange our ideas...it 's all I can think of now | |
| | R | That's fine...I trying to think of my next question now...so what aspects or parts do you prefer? So, aspects from China, and aspects of Britain? If you could choose the good parts? | |
| | P | In education? | |
| | R | Yeah | |
| | R | Or the way...the life of students whether it's living or studies... | |
| | P | Er...only the good thing? | |
| | R | Or bad I don't mind | |
| | P | (laugh)I don't know is there a limited or a limited area of the University of Sheffield? ...the places I do classes are quite far away from the place I am living so I have to walk about 25 minutes everyday and I have to climb mountains, I think it's a little bit time consuming so if the ...so, I think...in China there's a campus area and you don't need to walk very long to arrive at your destination...I think it's a good point of the Chinese campus...er...and... | |
| | R | That's okay we can talk about some other stuff maybe later or another time... | |
| | P | I've thought of one...in the Uk we use Google Drive and Google classroom as an assistant, maybe it gives us a more direct way to interact with our teacher...in China we have Wechat but most of the time the teacher is not inside room...in this group...so in the UK the teacher can release his what he wants to tell us in an announcement in Google classroom and we can just follow it...it's a simplification of the procedure | |
| | R | Yeah...it's much more simplified | |
| | P | ...and ..but another bad point is we have to check our mailbox everyday but also the tasks are in our mailbox and in, not only on campus but in the UK I think you British use mailbox too much (laugh) you just the most communication is by mailbox...and in China we don't use mailbox too much | mailbox=email |
| 55.53-56.23 | R | Yes, it is a bit of a problem because what we've done | |
| | P | I receive a lot of advertising emails everyday... | |
| | R | So, what I'm going to ask you now is a couple of pictures...a couple of picture I've got here, a supermarket, a couple of supermarkets, we got a couple of restaurants, I think that's on West street, that's on the Moor I think, this one is by the ELTC, and that's a restaurant, it's got Karaoke, all | |

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| | | of these are in Sheffield...so the question is do you use them? How do you feel about them? Do you use them? | |
| 57.24 | P | I have only to this (points a picture of the supermarket) if I want buy some specific materials, er..in Chinese cuisine there is some special materials and not used in the Western cuisine culture, er...I think British don't eat rice too much, right? | |
| | R | It's more popular now but yeah... | |
| | P | There ...er...I made a purchase there one time to buy some necessary products for my cooking but other things I think I can find them in Tesco, Tesco is enough for me now... | |
| | r | What a about the restaurants? | |
| | P | I think since you are in Britain, you should get accustomed to the local view or you...because there is still one year to go...I think you missed one, there's a new beef noodle restaurant opposite the Diamond,...it's newly opened I heard that ... I've been there once... | |
| | R | Is it good? | |
| | P | Yes...but it's quite expensive...6.5 pounds for a bowl of noodles...but there is a lot of beef so...may I ask ...do British, the local British go to this oriental restaurant or supermarket | |
| 01.00.10 - 01.00.10.23 | R | Now if you have somebody who is interested in cooking | |
| | P | The price of this store is higher than other stores and there is a on line shops for Chinese products and if I want to do something only available with in China, I would do...make the purchase on line | |
| 01.00.52 - 01.01.24 | R | Yeah, well that's it they are here to make money...but there are things in here that you can find in Tesco or if you go to the market in the city centre there will be smaller shops that will sell the same... | |
| | P | In fact I haven't been a local restaurant except fish and chips...I don't know is there any restaurant in Sheffield | |
| 01.01.37 - 01.03.55 | R | Erm yeah I mean what you do ...a Google search... ..What I wanted to ask you about these is do you thin the presence of these businesses in Sheffield could affect your communication and interaction skills/ | |
| | P | Er...I don't think so...it's that serious because it's...you don't go to this place everyday...just in ...you only go to this place in need and er...you don't speak too much when you are shopping...the key point is to speak less Chinese with your classmates...these stores are not the ones to | 01.05.07 |

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| | | blame...okay... | |
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Interview 2 Participant X

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| 00.37 | R | The first talk that we had was quite general ...a little bit about you...this one is more about two parts, one the time you left China and arrived here, the preparation and the second part is more about life in Sheffield...or study in Sheffield | |
| | P | The Diamond (laugh) | |
| | R | Yes, the diamond that's it.the first one...where did you or your parents get information about the university from? | |
| | P | You mean Sheffield university...or other universities? | |
| | R | In general...in Britain? | |
| | P | In Britain, normally my parents get information from their friends, and maybe the daughter or son of their friends, currently studying are/is studying in some university in Britain..so maybe they will tell us about the quality of the university, but I mainly get information about the university from the internet...the rank...the world rank... | |
| | R | The world ranking order...So do many of your parents' friends have children that go to university in Britain? | |
| | P | Not..I think the majority of them are studying in America but maybe the second proportion are studying in Britain...mainly in Manchester...at Manchester | |
| | R | Very near | |
| | P | yeah | |
| | R | Did you think about America? | |
| | P | America is my first choice when I was in the second year of my Bachelor I was thinking, I thought about maybe...you know transfer to America to study my Bachelor from the second year ..yeah when I was at that time | |
| | R | So what changed? What changed your mind? Why didn't you go? | |
| | P | Because you mean at that time? | |
| | R | Yeah...so why not America? | |
| | P | I think the reason why I did not go ...after careful thinking I thought I was not that mature at that time...so I decided to go abroad after graduation...why I | |

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| | | choose Britain cos it's easier here because if I went to America they asked me to take 2 exams, 1 is the language exam, the TOEFL and the other I forgot idiomat(??) | |
| | R | So, what is that one...is that one like | |
| | P | My friend told it is very hard...very difficult and I..there was time I tried to study TOEFL and I found TOEFL is more difficult to the IELTS | |
| | R | I've heard that a lot...are you okay here? Are you comfortable here?...So how did you prepare or get organised for Britain? So, did you need to take a language course? Did you need to organise accommodation? Do you do to an agent? What did you do to get organised? | |
| | P | Get organised? Yeah I studied in a language school for IELTS and I asked an agency to get some information about how to apply and they basically they will tell us the schedule.. time schedule of the application of the university. When I was in that time I got the basic information maybe from the agency. But the agency in China, the price is crazy, the price is crazy, so at last I applied by myself. They ...how to say...the price is crazy but they didn't do well. | |
| 07.05 | R | So, you may as well do it yourself...yeah. So, the language course for IELTS was that after you graduated? | |
| | P | Actually before, I graduated I took a course in Beijing but I didn't get..I didn't learn much from that course I wasted my time I didn't pass IELTS and I go to another country to study IELTS | |
| | R | So, where were you before? In Manchester? | |
| | P | Well actually in the Phillipines...because Phillipines is near to China and the second language of them is English and the price is very cheap...and the English environment is better than China and very good, very good. I went there for 2 months to study English | |
| | R | OK so after graduation you went to the Phillipines and you did...How long did you study in a day? Was it a full-time course? | |
| 08.42 | P | Yeah, full-time course. And one to one. | |
| | R | Wow so...one to one course | |
| | P | Yes, one to one course and the tuition fee includes accommodation, includes three meals of a day and includes your course fee | |
| | R | That's very good | |
| | P | Yes, but the weekdays...on the weekdays you can not go outside, you just can stay at the school, they provide everything for you. You know for IELTS we have 4 sections and four sections everyday I..when I was in the Phillipines everyday I had different teachers, everyday I had teacher who are responsible for my four sections...four teachers four sections, one to | |

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| | | one. They check my work everyday, very ...they were very responsible for my tasks. | |
| 10.05 | R | Wow. That was hard...it seems like a lot of study | |
| | P | Yes, and I can ..I had a big improvement when I was in the Philippines because the environment...the English environment is better than China...normally I speak English everyday | |
| | R | So, how did you find out ? How did you know about these...the course in Philippines? | |
| | P | The thing is...(whispers) You know in China i think, very ...how to say very few people know that I think in my my school just me ...but many Korean and Japanese they went there to study because the price is much cheaper than in korea or Japan and I learnt that information from my Japanese friend, I learnt that information | |
| | R | That's amazing...it's a good way to learn | |
| | P | I know...don't tell anyone else | |
| | R | No, I won't tell anyone...laughter...after that did you return to China before coming here? | |
| 11.38 | P | Yes, I need to do my visa | |
| | R | Did you ever plan to stay to do a Master's in China? | |
| | P | No, because if I study in China they will...I will spend 3 years to finish my Master's degree | |
| | R | Is that too long? | |
| | P | No, that's too long and yeah...no | |
| | R | We might talk about that later but not now...so when you were leaving to come to the uk how did you say goodbye to your family and friends? Did you have a party, a celebration? What did they say to you? | |
| 12.31 | P | No, because I travelled a lot, they get used to that. I went to the airport just by myself | |
| | R | Ok..oh wow...Okay but you are used to it...bring your bag and off you go. What about...I think we mentioned this earlier...what about your close friends. So, are your close friends in China or are they in Britain? In Manchester, for example? | |
| 13.05 | P | My close friends are studying at different countries. | |
| | R | Ok how many different countries? | |
| | P | America, and Manchester, and one in London, and one in Japan...so it's hard for us to meet each other (laughs) | |

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| | R | So, when you first told your parents that you were moving to Britain what did they think? What did they say? | |
| | P | How much money do you need? (laughs)...Yeah, how much money do you need? When and what's the major you have applied? And which city in Britain? ...And why did you choose this city? And they will check the rank because Chinese parents..very..put the emphasis on the ranking...of the ranking of the university so they ask the ranking in the world. | |
| | R | Did they ask you why England? | |
| | P | Why England? Because in China normally if you want to go abroad and study normally we will decide between America and Britain, so America ..no. | |
| 14.57 | R | So, you are now a student in Britain, before you were a student in China. How do you compare the life of a student in China and a student in Britain? What is similar, what is different? | |
| | P | Different...the life...what aspects of life? | |
| | R | So, in terms of study, in terms of living accommodation, in terms of social activities | |
| | P | Social activities...I think I like the accommodation in the ...how to say...because I really like the accommodation...the accommodation environment in Britain because in China we go university, the university will decide where we'll live and they will decide randomly who will be your roommates...we have no choice we can just share the same environment with 4 or 6 strangers...yeah and you cannot change...even if you have conflicts with your roommates...I don't like that and yeah...and when I was in my first year ...you have no choice you just cannot...the university tells you you cannot live outside, you can just live in the accommodation...you cannot live at your home...even your home...you just...if you don't live in the accommodation which the university provides you will be 'fired' | |
| 17.05 | R | You'll be expelled | |
| | P | expelled | |
| | R | Yeah...usually for school, universities or education ... | |
| | P | Yeah, we are adults why... | |
| | R | wow...okay | |
| | P | Yeah, I like ...I really don't like that because I had a conflict with my roommate ...I don't like them but I have no choice... | |
| | R | You had to live together... | |
| | P | Yes, we had to live together...even if we had conflicts...it's...yeah...it's and I really like it cos now I don't like live with others...living with others so I choose a studio, just me and I really like it and I think it can make me have | |

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| | | ..it can make me have a good mood to prepare my studies. I have more individual time and for the social...social...social? | |
| 18.26 | R | Mixing with other people, communicating with friends... | |
| | P | Erm...I like...i'm satisfied with the social environment in Britain because as an international student I can ...I have met many students from different countries...normally they have an open mind...yeah and they don't judge you...yeah...because I like this environment because in my country , in China...we have a culture we people are likely judge others...yeah...and erm life in Britain...but I don't like the food (laugh)...I don't like the food but there are many Chinese restaurant so it's okay for me...nothing else. | |
| 19.48 | R | That's okay...that's lovely...lovely long response...Let's just move a bit closer because it's getting noisy...Erm so...how do you feel about the numbers of Chinese students at the university? | |
| | P | (laughs) I'm shocked. | |
| | R | I was going to ask...did you know about it before? | |
| | P | I know in Britain there are many Chinese students but I cannot imagine...oh so many...too many...I cannot imagine because yesterday I met a girl who is from Information School and she told me she is Russian...because currently I am in the Journalism department and I know in the Journalism department there are many Chinese students but she told me in her class there is 90% Chinese (in the) Information School...I think there are a lot of Chinese students in Sheffield...even in West street, every time I am in West street I hear Chinese language ... | |
| | R | Around you? | |
| 21.30 | P | Yeah, around. Even in the Tesco, even at Tesco...yeah... | |
| | R | Do you think? Or how will the numbers of Chinese student...how will this affect your communication? So, more the level, the development of your English? The amount of English you speak? | |
| | P | I think...erm...I think it depends on the personality of the people because erm take me as an example I ...normally choose my friends so I have many foreign friends, the huge numbers of Chinese students don't affect my communication skills... | |
| | R | OK, so the university is international...what does this mean to you? | |
| 22.49 | P | International? | |
| | R | So you often see notices and signs that say 'we are international'? | |
| | P | Many different countries' students...different nationalities in this university | |
| | R | So if you think about your programmes, the course, does it feel 'international' when you are in class? | |

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| | P | (laughs)all Chinese...laughs...erm, for this pre sessional course, for this pre sessional course I haven't felt the international environment because all Chinese... | |
| | R | If you knew...I was going to show you some pictures but I don't need to , we've spoken about the shops and the restaurant before, so just one last question...do you think if you knew that there were so many Chinese students on your course, on your programme, would you choose a different place? | |
| | P | But, you cannot know. Basically, you cannot know after you came here...right? | |
| | R | Right. Hypothetically? Imagine...if you had the chance, the opportunity to change...would you still choose Sheffield? | |
| | P | I have no choice because, even if I went to another university there are still many Chinese students, yeah. I cannot choose because actually I had offers from other universities and I checked like ...the Manchester university, like the UCL and maybe the University of Leeds, York, you know the universities such as these, there are many Chinese students, we choose those universities by the rank, yeah... | |
| | R | Rank...not the number of students | |
| | P | We cannot choose, because I know some ...I know there is a university in Manchester, Stamford, Sanford... | |
| 26.0 | R | Erm...yeah I know which one you mean...what's it called... | |
| | P | I cannot....Sanford right? | |
| | R | Salford. That's right I couldn't remember | |
| | P | I didn't know this university when I was in China, but this university a few Chinese students but it's not a good university for us ...for our thinking...for the majority of Chinese students this university is not good because of the rank, but er I know this university has very few Chinese, very few Chinese but no-one goes there, even (though) we know this information because after we graduate from British university when we go back to China people, our family, my friends, my family and employers in the society, they just focus on the rank of the university, so ...you understand? | |
| | R | Yeah...there is little choice, you must go for a good ranking university... | |
| | P | Yes, and the language I know...some of my parents' friends daughter or son even they graduated, they lived one year in Britain, they cannot speak fluent English, but they got the degree from a good university in Britain and that's what they want. So, I think that's the number...you understand (whispers) | |
| | R | Yes I understand, thank you for explaining... | 28 min 26 |

Interview 3 Participant X

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| 29.06 | R | <p>So, I'm going to move on to a couple of the topics and ask you what you think about them...some of these questions won't be relevant because our meeting...this meeting was a bit longer than the last one, the original one I did with the first group...</p> <p>I know that you should be starting your Masters very soon...are you in intro week now...</p> <p>How does it feel so far? What are your thoughts about it?</p> | |
| 29.32 | P | I was on the floor for registration and full of Chinese...so I felt like if I am a foreigner that I need to register on this floor I will be wondering if I am in the wrong place... | |
| | R | In China for example? | |
| | P | Right...there all Chinese students...wow... | |
| | R | And the MA is in..Reproductive Science... | |
| | P | It's just a general registration for the whole school... | |
| | R | And how did that make you feel? Did you think..why am I here or did you think oh well? | |
| | P | <p>You know last night...me and roommates were talking about ...One of my roommates went to a ...to Cambridge and other cities and then they have been comparing the UK and China...so like they made a conclusion that...that China is much better than the UK in every way...it's like...the one way that Britain is better than China..addict(?)</p> <p>politeness...People here are very polite and they will say sorry, excuse me everytime...when they like pass by otr touch anybody but so and the other conclusion that they make that...they found the reason that Britain is sliding down is because people are not as diligent as people in China...</p> | |
| | R | Ok for example... | |
| 31.20 | P | Get up late and so I mean work late..work's starting late ...and leave early...and many days off...it's like everybody is enjoying their life... | |
| | R | Did you agree with your colleagues...Are you thinking...I can understand why.... | |
| | P | Yeah, I can understand...because that's the general state...and everytime I wanted to work out with somebody so that this volunteering thing...I get in contact with this | |

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| | | person and he will be leaving...and a week later there's another person and she's like..one day she's here and two days not...and it's like three days or two days in a week... | |
| | R | And does this happen in China? | |
| | P | No, people even work everyday...so and we...and the work day begins early and until 6 or 5 pm...yeah and it's very efficient...and one of my roommates, he was going to buy some alcohol in a department...or somewhere so he is over 25 but he did not bring his passport...so he asked the cashier if he can buy it without a passport and he said 'no'...so one of his friends had a passport so he bought one bottle of alcohol from the cashier...and like my roommate was trying to give his bottle to the person...so asks him to pay for the bottle but the cashier said 'no'...it's like so my roommate said I don't know him he just wants to buy it...so the cashier said no..no...so they went out and the person with the passport came inside again and got the bottle...and the cashier said no...he said it's just unbelievablehe used the word stupid... | |
| 33.52 | R | I think there are ...without making excuses...erm you have probably heard...Britain is quite famous for people drinking and getting drunk...but Scotland is...the alcohol limit is lower than England...so they are stricter... | |
| | P | I can't remember if it's Scotland...it's somewhere... | |
| | R | It's happened to me....and it wasn't a compliment.... | |
| 35.09 | R | Ok so...erm | |
| | P | Another thing I did agree with them in some ways...like financial or management, technology I think China in a way of using them is much better...but for research I don't agree with them...because Chinese like...it's like growing very fast...it's like everybody like short-sighted about money ..so I do prefer it here...I can slow down and focus on and maybe I can get the atmosphere to focus on a subject without hearing about house...cars...and other stuff.. | |
| | R | So, ...are these your roommates...you share a flat together... | |
| | P | Roommates..last night we had a talk til 2 ...1 o'clock...I usually sleep before 12 so... | |
| | R | Well it's a new thing...it's the beginning of Intro week so...emotion will be ...not high but there...So, this question because it wasn't that long ago that I saw you ...has anything changed in terms of the communication that you | |

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| | | have been having? Have you been speaking more English? Or less English? | |
| 36.46 | P | I don't think that I've been speaking more English but...so that's what I'm trying to do...speak more...that's why I found a volunteer job...but I think for general people I think they generally speak more Chinese than English here... ... you can imagine that ...they graduate they still cannot speak good English | |
| | R | I am going to ...has anything else changed...are you still planning to do your volunteer work...further | |
| | P | Yeah...nothing has changed.. | |
| | | | |
| 40.29 | R | You said society, so would you say that the amount of Chinese students in this city has created more or less another community or another society within the university culture? ...No | |
| | P | ..No...maybe I shouldn't use the 'society' word...they should be like ...there has been a shift too quickly...it's one year so people will go straight...it's 1 year ..if people were staying here for a longer time period I think they would probably do (a society) but most of them probably 90% of them just do 1 year and they'll go back to China | |
| | R | So. because it is so short term they are...? ...ok I'll move on a little bit...if something else comes up I may ask you... ...So, at the centre including the pre-sessional course that you have just finished...the style of teaching is a communicative approach...so we get the students to talk to each other, we talk a lot...did the communicative approach prepare you for academic study? Do you feel prepared for what will happen when you start your course? | |
| 42.11 | P | So, there is feedback for the English language teaching course...it's like what I wrote on the feedback..so I think...personally think the most important..the most effective useful part for me was the academic writing...so...I ...for clinical medicine we do papers...we don't do it ...it's not part of our credit but ..I learnt how to write and to avoid plagiarism..but that's important for me...because i've been reading it but I haven't done one before...otherwise listening is like rubbish...because the teacher has been playing some very short clips...er...recordings and ask us to write down what we have heard...it's like too easy and it's not even ...it's not useful...and speaking...as you can | Q2 |

| | | | |
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| | | <p>imagine it's like almost all Chinese in a classroom...in a group so you can't avoid speaking Chinese and especially when the question is undiscussable...I mean there is nothing to discuss...</p> <p>...</p> | |
| 43.41 | R | Can you think of an example? | |
| | P | Erm, ...let me think...maybe just those question are too abstract not...it's like describe your hometown to your friend or something...I can't think of something... | |
| | R | One comment I had from one of the participants very early...they said that they didn't feel the topics for discussion were serious enough...there was nothing to get...involved about... | |
| | P | Yeah...yeah | |
| | R | So, one of things that I read about is the idea or the fact that you are a graduate from a British university is a powerful tool for employment in China when you go back. What is more important...is it the level of qualification that you get abroad or just the fact that you have studied? | Q3 |
| 45.23 | P | I think for now studying abroad is not that much valuable than 10 years ago...it's like 20 years ago if you go abroad it's like wow...undoubtedly you will suddenly be a very good person or something...erm but for now it's not...the level of degree matters and the university...which university you go ...you attend matters as well...I think that's the most important thing probably...above the level..in some way...not all of them...so it depends on...there is erm a subject ranking if you go to the top university for your subject... | |
| | R | Yeah...so...I know (name) is very big for architecture and engineering so if you came here for that...ok | |
| | | ... | |
| | P | ...but as far as the as I mentioned ...as there have been very many Chinese students here the value for studying at (name of university) will decline...suddenly... | |
| | R | ...so the more , the higher numbers of Chinese students here will actually make it ...less valuable when you return | |
| | P | ...less valuable... | |
| | R | Why do you think that is? | |
| | P... | because...erm ...it's like it's not going to ...it's like in maybe...some of the employers have seen many students | |

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| | | graduate form (name) didn't even speak good English...yeah I mean that's one side...that's one reason...and...so if there had been more choices there you will have less likelihood of being accepted...selected something like that..it's like one of my roommates he had been working in Shanghai, so he said he did not want to do a Masters degree but like almost everybody around him has had a abroad (foreign) degree so he thinks that he probably needs to a Masters somewhere...but it's not...those people he thinks it's like rubbish...they have been...they just have been investing in...because they just studied abroad because their family is rich but for themselves there are not even good enough... | |
| 48.45 | R | Yeah...yeah.....erm why do you think that some students might find it difficult to interact? | Q5 |
| 49.39 | P | I think the major reason is the language...if they feel comfortable speaking English I don't think there'll be that question...language is the primary reason... | |
| | R | You say feel comfortable though in the ideal situation they have got the IELTS level to start the programme so they should have the level... | |
| | P | Yeah...but I think IELTS is different...it's like...even I got my speaking 5.5 but as you see I even better than some 7 so IELTS is not erm so comfortable...they might feel like if they say something wrong ...it will ...they worry that they might say something inaccurate...and people will laugh at them... | |
| | R | ...so it's about not getting embarrassed or saving face... | |
| | P | Right...saving face... | |
| | R | Is that a big thing...would it be the same in speaking up in class in China...or is it just the language...the different language? | |
| | P | Yes, that's another reason as well... but I think for people coming here they understand and almost all of us...is aware of that...so I think the major reason relies on language... | |
| | R | Would it be...saving face or not being embarrassed in front of your Chinese peers... ...it's not the whole group it's It's for everybody in that lecture room... | |
| | P | ...yes... ...it's everybody...saving face is not just for foreigners...and Chinese as well ...right... | |

| | | | |
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| | R | Ok I follow... ..these may be the reasons why Chinese students may struggle when they get to British universities. What do you think? | Q4 |
| 54.08 | P | I'm like er...I think that's probably yes for the situation...I personally think for now the major reason is ...how much they understand from the lecture and how much they understand about the course...and they even can't understand the content...how could they come up with some disagreements...so I think that's the main reason...and you..it's not unusual to find many students recording the lecture...yeah so even by the time they graduate they won't understand what is said in the class... | |
| | R | ...so the style of teaching in China where I've heard and I've read ...it's more passive so...would you say it is students or which would you say...is it more the language or more the adjustment from one style to the other that stops or prevents Chinese students from interacting as much | |
| 55.52 | P | As far as I am concerned I think language is prior to the cultural adjustments... | |
| | R | So, there is this idea that when Chinese students come to the UK they interact more with their...other Chinese students because of their forming of 'guanxi' and it's important to do this....what are your thoughts on that? Do you agree? Why? Why not? | |
| 57.01 | P | I do agree with that because 'guanxi' is important in China...because that's why we do things efficiently because if you have 'guanxi' you would be much faster than the people who don't have that...so, erm...like you need 'guanxi' for everything...if you need to ...if you lost your ID...and but I think it's much better now...I lost my ID ...my family didn't use any 'guanxi' but my ID was replaced within 1 week...but before some places use an ID as one example...so maybe not an iD...so it's like...let me think of another example.... | Q6 |
| | R | How would that work here? How would a student...get a network? | |
| | P | Oh you want to know how it works here...but...or should I say how 'guanxi' matters in China...? It's like if you want to get a franchise...so if you know somebody in the commercial branch or bureau...it's like fast...days...and safe and fast...but if you go to the normal process it will take a very long time and they will censor many documents...especially when you want open a hollow company for some other function...and so that's a big thing...but there are many small businesses like that need | |

| | | | |
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| | | 'guanxi' so it works is like...I don't know if it's a Chinese...or just my roommates because people or the Chinese boys they come here within a week...maybe it's just men culture...they are having, hunting for girls ...Chinese it's the same and girls are having matching...it's maybe a good ground for making friends... | |
| 59.55 | R | OK...so...is the focus on forming a 'guanxi'? Do you think that prevents interaction with non Chinese students in the university? | |
| | P | Yes, I think..it would if you have a Chinese girlfriend or boyfriend...like you just stick with them everyday if you a make a foreign friend yes I think in that sense... | |
| | R | Do you think this is also related to the fact students are only here for one year/ Do you think that stops students from making or forming...maybe even forming a 'guanxi' with non Chinese students...from their courses , from their ... | |
| | P | No, no...I mean if they had a choice I think they would prefer foreigners..I think almost everybody is so aware of the situation with their English, they need to learn it but they have been too many Chinese...and foreigners they are not quite sure that they are happy to be their friends or they are just not good...not enough chances to make them friends...they would love to... | |
| | R | ...but circumstances... | |
| | | | |
| 01.10:00 | P | Speaking of that...if you see...if you use the example of people staying in the (name) for one year...nothing has changed...they eat food outside...what they do in China...they have never cooked...and they will never learn how to cook...it's the same nothing's changed...especially for people ...even though they are in (name of building) high building, vey expensive student accommodation...for people living there...I don't think they need to...they want to change...it's just my thoughts...and there are probably some people living on their own but it does not last for enough time for them to change here...change deeply...they can change back easily...it's not even change them...it's just an adjustment...there adjusting but not enough to make like substantial change ...1 year...maybe 3 to 4 years yeah... | |
| | R | ...do you think that the British university education system needs to change to cater for the large number of Chinese students that we have? Do you think we should be teaching | Q9 |

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| | | in maybe a more Eastern ...more Chinese style of education? | |
| 01.12:09 | P | No...absolutely not...we come for this different way of thinking and different experience..we don't need another China here... | |
| | R | How do you think, in terms of communication and interaction, how do you think the university system in the UK could change for the better to encourage more interaction for Chinese students? What could they do? Or can they do anything/ - that might be the question | |
| 01.13:06 | P | I really don't know...it's probably...the first thing they should do is being strict their roles on their gaps or cut offs.. | |
| | R | What in terms of language level? | |
| | P | No, not language level...even language ...every way...every aspect...they should stricter...I think (name) here is really lowering down the standard... | |
| | R | Do you think Chinese international students at (name)...do you think they want to interact more? | |
| | P | Yeah...yeah I think so...almost 99% I think... | |

Appendix 11: Sample of narrative account used for member checking with participants

Jack

Before Study Abroad

The importance or significance of English language learning was introduced to Jack by his parents at the age of 3.

“Primary school?...before I went to primary school, my mother took me to...took me to an English teaching organisation to learn...listen to some English...I think it's very boring (laughter)..3 years old...but I just remember ‘Daddy’, ‘Mommy’ like this...these words (laughter)...My parents, especially my father thought English is very important because my father is a doctor and he also has a doctor's degree....so...but in China...English is comparing with whole study process. My father wants to go to the very famous university in China to keep studying medicine because of his English level didn't arrive at ... he spent a lot of time to pass the exam..so he think let me know about language English knowledge when I was a child is very important he hopes I could have a more easily career... I don't know how to say...career route not like him”

Though from 9 nine years of age Jack states he was already aware that it was an important school subject, comparative to Mathematics and Chinese, with Science and Arts at the level below.

“In our primary school? Erm...I remember when I was 9 years old... and English already become very important course to test...before we have English class but not very important but from 9 years it's become very important until now...I think mathematics and Chinese...same level...same level and other arts and scientist subjects another level but the three of them is the most important...Chinese, Mathematics and English.”

By the time Jack became a university student this had become even more apparent as issues with Chinese higher education developed. If Jack wished to try the higher education system in another country then improving his level of English was imperative. This would be a challenge as Jack admits that English was his weakest subject.

“Er..yes...cos..well university student(s) I found I wanted to do other country...to keep study(ing) because I think ...especially Chinese higher education system (it has) some problems I don't like it so I want to try other countries education so I had to improve my English level because my English is the most poor subject of everything. I'm good at Chinese, I'm good at Mathematics, I'm good at History and Politics, even Physics(ical)...Biology but apart from English”

With the decision to study abroad made, an agent organised the university offer where on supplying information concerning which majors Jack was given 4 choices of institution.

The preparation to study abroad would be divided into the emotional and practical.

“From 2 years ago ...almost 3 years ago I start to prepare the IELTS exam and I have to submit my exam result in my university and also decide which university I will go to and this summer...last summer holiday I was preparing visa information...and my parents almost didn't give any suggestions I just make my own decision and I just let me do something like give me some money in the bank and I need an account I need money to save and I could get a visa. I think not very difficult because you know a lot of Chinese people before into Britain so they have their (inaudible) could give me ..according to some rules...so not not very difficult but complicated. Almost my whole summer holiday I just do one thing and say goodbye to them. Because in China I have a lot of friends in my hometown I have a lot of friends and in my university I also have a lot of friends and I very early told them I will go to the UK...so they have preparation about me will go but you know last year I just graduated from university or during the whole holiday I have nothing to do, just travelling with my friends and especially my grandfather he's older so I will worry about his health, so during this time I have a lot of communication with him so at the same time I('m) also with my friends who travel a lot of places in China”.

For Jack, telling his parents of the decision to study in the UK would be a happy event that would instill pride in his parents. It would be a way of confronting fears for all concerned that had developed over Jack's English language learning, as in an academic sense Jack viewed his English language proficiency as a weakness that would have an impact on future academic and career prospects. His parents regarded the decision to study in England as possibly the most difficult course in overcoming his language anxieties as he would have to pass the proficiency exam to study at university, would need to try to assimilate into the local environment and communicate with people. Although Jack was not as confident as his father, he explained that his parents wish was for him to have a local or community based relationship network as maintaining this type of contact with your college has an important value and is financially significant for the neighbourhood or local area.

“... because before I (was) very scared about learning English because it was my weakness but , so I have a huge, brave(ry) to go to the UK, because they think it's the most difficult route in my ...there are a lot of options but I choose the most difficult way so I have to overcome a lot of difficulties, for example pass IELTS and try to fit in the local environment, try to use English to communicate with, other people. I told you before, the first time I went to Sheffield I can't speak with anyone, so they're also a little worried about me, whether I could overcome this difficulty. I think, yes, but they are also proud of me. (I can) make this decision and hope in the future I could overcome anything and get a Master's degree and even my father hopes (I) could get a doctor's degree (laughter) but it's hard for me...he suggested I could go back to China to study a doctor's degree...because some financial problem and some financial reason nearby my...You know, in China, the relation between our college is very important, they want to me to have a local relation cycle so they want me to come back to China to keep studying”.

In terms of leaving friends, Jack stated that they were a little sad, as the distance between China and the U.K would involve costly flights and short holiday periods would mean that they would not see him. Jack also stated that he was reluctant to go back to China at the moment (for a holiday). He explained he felt it just would not be good for him as he had not yet acquired sufficient knowledge from the U.K. This would cause him to feel 'awkward' when comparing what he has done to the achievements of his peers/friends in China, such as, having their own businesses, cars, apartments or attending good universities in China. Going 'home' to China for a holiday is viewed as a waste of time until Jack feels that he has made sufficient progress.

"Sometimes they feel a little sad because that means it's hard for me and hard for them to see me again because the airplane ticket is very expensive, not only this but also holidays not long enough for me to come back to China, and another reason is that I think I don't get a lot of knowledge from the UK so I don't want to come back because later it's awkward. I think a lot of my friends in China have huge achievements, I have before told...I have a friend we are the best and he's already a businessman, he has his own self...he has his self car and apartment so I also want to have some achievement and my university classmates also into a very good university in China, like in Beijing you know in Beijing there are a lot of famous universities, so I want to have some achievement and come back...so not waste my time like this..."

Britain

Although there are large numbers of Chinese students on campus, Jack has noticed a pattern to their behaviour. Chinese students were not really visible during the daytime, at the newest, and possibly largest, library and study centre on the campus. Yet, in the evening and at night the same building was full of Chinese students. Jack attributes this to an ethic of working hard to overcome the obstacles facing the Chinese international students.

"I think I find it very interesting in the daylight in the (name of the library) most of the students are I think is local or British student but in ...at night I found a lot of people are Chinese. Because of some timetable...and I think the Chinese people...I think they really work hard because at the same time on one hand they have to overcome the language problem and the education system is totally different and at the same time to pass the exam in all of their subjects and they have to spend more...more time on study so I think...for me I think it is good because I think Chinese students are very happy that a British university could give any Chinese student the opportunity ...to go to their country to study because in our generation have a huge burden in the future... so everyone wants to improve themselves. So if they have the opportunity they would like to continue study and the parents including my parents also very support(ive) for us to go to other country to broaden our horizons ...it's very important. So, I think it's good news for me."

According to Jack the 'most significant difference' is the living arrangements for students in Britain. Having your own flat or studio apartment is the negotiation between the privacy, which is welcomed, and loneliness which is not. Having no one to talk to apart from brief exchanges in the kitchen makes Jack feel that the other students are 'too busy' to chat. In China, the situation is the reverse with lots of people willing to talk and participant 1 wanting the space to have some time alone.

"...sometimes I have more freedom, I have more privacy but on the other hand some times I will feel loneliness...I feel lonely because no-one could talk with me and just sometimes we share(the) kitchen but I think my roommate are busy so don't have enough time to talk and sometimes in China I think a lot of people want to talk to me, I want to (be) quiet, I want to do something by myself. But in Britain I find no-one could bother me (laughter) and sometimes I just ...whether I want to or not I just could do my...do something by myself...although I will give my ...get in touch with my best friend, he's in Scotland...sometimes we will spend time to play computer games together (laughter) and share our emotions sometimes I...I will do some application to get into touch with my family and other friends in China, but you know the time is so ...you know already it's 12pm here in China nowadays...now so I have a lot of class during Monday to ...from Monday to Friday, so during this time I don't have enough time to talk with them so generally choose the weekend to communicate with them."

In comparing teaching styles in China and Britain, the most prominent difference is the student teacher ratio. Jack commented that class sizes in China could be anything from between 100 to 200 students for each teacher. Microphones and large screens are in use, however, the size of the lecture theatre or class is such that at times the students cannot hear the teacher or read the slides on the screen. Even though very 'professional' in their subject area, the teacher will only focus on the 'good' students.

"In China, the most problem in the university is there is a lot of students so comparing with students, the teachers are not enough. So, almost every time our huge..it is a very huge ... classroom almost 100 people or 200 people and just one teacher they need a microphone and very huge screen...some people far the platform, they can't hear the teacher speaking and they sometimes they even can't read the slides sometimes. So, sometimes the teacher can just focus on the good students and sometimes they will ignore other students like me, so, I don't have a lot of opportunities to talk with my teacher. Even (if) they are very good they are very professional about their area but they just can't focus on part of the students. So, I think the UK, everyone has a tutor and they have more opportunity to talk with their teacher. So, sometimes teachers can help you do a lot of things, but in China sometimes just different teachers have different function to do it."

Teachers tend to have more specific roles, some will give students the opportunity to do a presentation during the course, while others will only do a final exam. This system is particularly difficult for Jack.

“Some teacher will give you an opportunity to do presentations but some teacher just ask you to get/didn't give you any task, just final exam...it depends on different teachers, but I think I am not happy about the Chinese university because my memory is not good even if my presentation is really good, and my essay is also very good, but sometimes I have to attend an exam and during this exam they require us to write a lot of details...I can't remember it directly and clearly some ...I didn't get a very high score but I think my level is not very poor so sometimes I feel very disappointed about this so I chose to choose the UK..to continue study”.

He also believes that on his Master's programme, class sizes will be smaller and there will be group work.

“I'm not sure in the future when I go into university to do Master's but I think maybe the classroom is not very big and I have not a lot of classmates. There will be a lot of group work and not just according to the exam and hopefully..I hope even the exam not just tests your memory...I think it's very bad just (to) test your memory...sometimes my classmates when they finish the exam they can't remember anything but they can have a good score. I think it's not very fair for me so I think they (will) have different ways to test you.”

When asked how he felt about starting his Master's Jack explained he was experiencing a range of emotions.

“ I think at that moment I feel a little tired but the most important thing I worry about in the future (is if) I can finish my homework on time and have a good perfect homework ... a little nervous, a little excited, and a little exhausted”.

Current Interaction and Engagement

On the topic of friendships, Jack stated that recently he had formed a new friendship in England, with a Chinese undergraduate student.

“Oh yes recently I met a friend, my new friend, he just study in...not Master's, just a Bachelor's... he lives in South West of China and I live in the North West of China, but the province is not very far from me and him, so I think he is very interesting. We find we have a lot of common things, for example, I like writing I said before, I like writing poems and novels, he also likes this ...so we have a lot of topics (we) could talk (about), so I think this is really interesting, especially (as) he lives in Sheffield, sometimes we can study together or do something together.”

Although both students are from China, participant 1 refers to the fact that they are from different areas in China albeit not far in distance, they are distinct in accent and dialect. Though communication with this friend is usually in Mandarin Chinese, Jack adjusts his language to accommodate the regional differences between himself and his new friend.

“Generally, if they are Chinese of course we speak Chinese, and you know, sometimes I use an accent different because different regions of China, the people have different accents so sometimes it's totally different, especially (as) he's in SouthEast of China there (is) some local language even like a foreign language, the different like German and English, so sometimes it's very interesting if you listen careful(ly) you can distinguish where someone is from, so it's very interesting. You know, in China there (is a) standard accent...but the (inaudible)...different region people have different (inaudible), and sometimes we use different words in different regions, expressing the same thing. So you know I think in Britain, in the UK it (is) also like this... Scotland people, and Sheffield, and Ireland and Wales, sometimes they expressing the same thing but not use the same word. I think, in Sheffield they also tell me to 'eat here' or 'take away' but in London they say 'eat in' or 'eat out', just like that...so because my university (was) located in North, North West of China, I could imitate their accent.”

Yet, there does not seem to be the same connections with any English students or other nationalities from his previous class. Restraints, such as the amount of time available after the main morning classes to have free time to talk to one another (as the students have different classes in the afternoon), act as an obstacle in making better connections with the different nationalities in the class. “Yes, erm other nationalities, in the (name of language centre) there are some classmates from different countries. Sometimes we talk together but we don't have enough time to communicate, especially when the class (is) over. Sometimes we use different communication so I sometimes recommend him or her (to) use Chinese applications... also they will introduce us to use Facebook and Whatsapp...something like this. So, sometimes I could communicate with them but we didn't have an appointment. But I know other Chinese people have foreign friends. I think I don't like to make lots of friends and sometimes we become friends because we are lucky. So, maybe not everyone (has) this opportunity to get different friends if we don't have the same hobby. I (need) to think about what I need to say, so sometimes ... maybe I feel very awkward.”

This lack of close friendships is one of the most difficult aspects of living in England. Jack will communicate with friends and family (in China) online but the different time zones are a problem.

“I think the most difficult part about living in England is weather, because I like sun and hate wind...hate wind and cloud(s)...(laughter)...and then it's not just the weather also friends. Because you know I said before I don't have a lot of friends in the UK and sometimes I just have to use (a) smartphone to communicate with my friends online and with my friends who are in China. You know sometimes because of the time, we have different times so sometimes it's very hard for me. So, sometimes I feel lonely but sometimes I think it can be overcome because compared with talk(ing) with people, playing with other people...sometimes I would like to read some books, just (by) myself. So, for example, I will play computer games just (by) myself so I think it will be fine. But sometimes I will miss my parents,

miss my other family members, miss my friends, so I will use smartphone to talk (to) them. I think it's really difficult but nowadays I think...er you know...I (have) already (gone) to (name of pathway centre) I think maybe in the future I also need to overcome a lot of academic problems. I don't know how to write a standard English essay and my new classmates almost all of them are Chinese but some of (them) come from South Korea, and Hong Kong. You know we can also speak Chinese but the culture is different and (with) Singapore, and other South Asian countries. I think it's really interesting because I have a lot of cultures crushed (together)...but it's very interesting. There are sometimes (when) we have to use English to communicate so I think in (the) future I (will) have more opportunity to talk with other people, other countries' people."

The English language classes at the centre were considered useful as participant 1 owes achieving the IELTS scores to progress onto the international college a result of his time spent on this programme and living in England.

"You know I live in Sheffield alone, so sometimes I need to buy something so I have to talk ...when I first came to Sheffield sometimes I went to (the) market. I remember once I want to buy insoles but I don't know how to spell it, how to pronounce it...so when ...before I went into the store I use my smartphone to check ...checking a long time....and trying to read it. I think I can read it ...but there are different words in my dictionary so I don't...I'm not sure which one is the best choice (laughter). So, I chose the ones they don't know...so I choose other words (laughter) so I just show them my dictionary...I think it's very interesting. Sometimes I have to travel with my friends, so during this time we sometimes need to ask the train station staff where is the platform, which platform I need to go, and what is the timetable and how much (is) this ticket...or something like this...or sometimes I need to ask the bus driver I told them our destination and I ask him when arrive here please tell us. So, it's very interesting because you have to use English and sometimes you know in (the name of the language centre) I will catch every opportunity to speak English, as much as possible, especially in the class. I think I'm very motivated to speak English, I think it's very useful because before I came to the UK, my spoken English is very poor but nowadays I already got 6.5 (IELTS). So, I think it's a huge improvement...and sometimes (when it's)just me alone studying at home I choose to watch English.lectures...such as TED. I think it's very interesting ... different kinds of topic and these topics I could use on my academic in the future. I also could use these words on generally speaking. But I think comparing talking with you [the researcher] to talking with strangers...I am still very scared and careful because I think I didn't get too much living language. I just know some academic words so sometimes I know it but I don't know how to express it, so I think I also need to improve this in the future."

While improvements in listening and writing are believed to be the result of more overt language training, he relates the communicative style of teaching and continued interaction with classmates to inadvertently improving his speaking skills.

“I think Listening has improved...and speaking has improved and also writing has improved... before I told you...my writing was just 5.0 but nowadays I got 5.5 and I think in the future I could get 6.0/6.5 but maybe I will not attend any IELTS exam but it does not mean I didn't do more practice about writing. Definitely, it's very helpful because I already passed the IELTS exam because of the last term study at the (name of language centre), because including you give me a lot of suggestions about how to improve and during this time I also worked very hard to improve myself, especially listening. I listen (to) a lot of IELTS topics and during this time I think I start to fit the tones of English. I can catch the meaning of the English. Before, I sometimes will (be) very nervous and sometimes my concentration has some problems but I think I already have a lot of improvement. Because at the (name of center) I had lots of opportunity to communicate with other people. With my classmates, with my teacher, and during this time, my listening and my writing, speaking has improved, not on purpose (unintentionally).”

Study at the pathways college is different. Jack described the topics under focus at the language centre as 'normal' where everyone could contribute to discussions. However, he feels at the pathways college some students have no idea what the topics are about, so when the teacher asks students to discuss an issue with each other, they cannot complete the task.

“I think there are a lot of differences, because in the (name of centre) there are a lot of opportunities to talk with my classmates and I think the topic is very normal and every topic we have something to say. Plus you know, in (name of institution) we have a class named Social Science, some people they don't know the meaning of this. So, the teacher asks us to talk with each other sometimes we have no idea about this topic...sometimes we can't follow the teacher...the teacher just talk to themselves so sometimes we can't follow it. In the (name of language centre), teachers just give a little homework and this homework is not very difficult to do. But (the name of the institution) some homework is a big job. Our essay writing teacher requires us to submit an outline of an essay, and for this essay we need to read some articles and find some references and have our own opinion and to write it down and check it, find some/if there is any logical problem. It's a very great job.”

Jack believes this to be a consequence of the range of subject area backgrounds of the students in this (pathways college) class.

“I think it's because they have different subjects...I think I can know it because my major is politics and economics and my hobby is reading and working with different type of lecture articles, so I can follow it. But sometimes some words I don't know what the meaning is but I can follow the teacher's ideas. All of us have to enter the same class so we have different majors. Sometimes, for example,

we talk about feminism...I think there are a lot of arguments when we talk about feminists and some Chinese students think the British culture is totally different from China, especially feminism and the social system. This, we have a lot of arguments or sometimes we have a lot of clash(es)...they don't agree with our teachers and the teachers point sometimes...I think it's very interesting that we use different ways to think about one thing ...we have different traditions sometimes.”

Jack offers an example of people in Europe or America who may view freedom as common sense. However, for some in Asia, the country is one large family and everyone has a role thus a type of connection - therefore not 'free' of each other. For Jack it is difficult to say whether one method is good, or the other is bad as they are different perceptions about the same thing. When asked if these different ways of thinking will impact on his studies at the university, Jack is not worried.

“I think it's not very difficult for me because before I already knew ... my English is very poor but I know a lot of history about Europe, about America, about their country and I know the UK's political system so I think I can follow their ideas. Sometimes I think I hold the objective opinion about this thing, I think that I can catch on...I'm not a very traditional ...Chinese (person), so I think it's okay for me.”

Looking Ahead

English will definitely have a role in the two career paths under consideration for Jack. One possible option is a career in journalism where English would serve as an international language to interview and correspond with foreigners/non-Chinese.

“...there are a lot of areas I need to use English for example as a journalist sometimes I would interview people from other countries and ...you know English is an international language so almost every countries' people know it. So, sometimes I could use English to talk with them...and in China, they also need a journalist who has a high level of English and if ...in the future I start, continue to study in Politics I will have to read a lot of academic articles English academic articles and I will write some essays to try to get published in some English journals. So if I think of what career in the future I have, I will have to use English and I think it's very useful, especially in China.”

Jack views English as an international language known worldwide, with China in need of journalists who have a high level of competence in the language. During a work experience placement in a media company, the journalists who had studied in the UK proved more popular than others due to their stronger command of English.

“Two years ago I went to Hanan province, it's a very beautiful island in China ...to work in a media company and I found it very interesting. There are journalists who work (there), he studied in the UK before and he became very popular because his English is very good. He can interview people from other countries and he also could use both Chinese and English to write reports and he has more

opportunities than other journalists, other journalists who are just good at Chinese. So, that's why I choose to study abroad."

Appendix 12: An overview of pre-masters programme at TUoS International College

See pages 20 - 24

https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/95d47d95-36b6-00af-a24c-b886ecdfc4a2/1827ccb5-e4a7-424a-8b12-d4431f670eeb/University_of_Sheffield_International_College_Brochure_2022.pdf
accessed on May 5th 2022

Appendix 13: PAE Course handbook
See pages 7 - 11
[Copy of PAE-STUDENT-HANDBOOK1-2015-2016.pdf](#)

Appendix 13: International Summer School 2016 Pre-sessional 10-week Student Handbook

See pages 8 - 14

[ISS16 PS10 Student Handbook](#)

Appendix 14: The ELTC Learning and Teaching ethos

ELTC Mission Statement

To promote the highest-quality English language education and student experience, informed by scholarship and best practice, in a collaborative, inclusive, encouraging and pro-active environment within the wider University community.

ELTC Values

We value: openness; diversity; partnership; equability; sustainability; excellence in academic standards; and innovation. We value learning through doing and mutually-supportive developmental relationships. Our values are underpinned by a global and local outlook, reflecting the University mission.

The ELTC Learning & Teaching Ethos

Learning and teaching practices will be underpinned by a set of principles (outlined below) to help teachers identify and deploy appropriate resources, approaches and strategies when planning and managing learning experiences across different programmes.

We believe that effective pedagogy:

1. equips students with both academic and generic skills that will enable them to be active participants in their communities and have the opportunity to develop other key competencies such as problem solving, analytical and critical thinking skills.
2. is learning-centred and promotes active engagement, with the choice of resources and tasks being relevant to the learners, and involving a high level of learner engagement.
3. helps learners interact with others and build relationships, which encourages the creation of communities of learning, and benefit from the mutual construction of knowledge.
4. encourages self-directed learning and learner independence, which recognises the significance of informal learning by creating opportunities for them to learn outside the classroom.

5. encourages learners to reflect on their performance, and that of others, to help them develop a sense of quality within their own academic and professional contexts.
6. is constructively aligned so that formal and informal assessment are congruent with learning outcomes and learning processes, and the relationship between them is reciprocal.
7. uses different forms of feedback both formative and summative, as tools for learning, based on a clear set of principles.
8. makes effective use of technology to provide a wide range of different stimuli and learning options, contributing to learner autonomy and development of digital literacy.
9. values student diversity and acknowledges the importance of prior experience and learning, while taking into consideration the personal and cultural experiences of different groups of learners.

Approved by ELTC Executive Board on 26 January 2017

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