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# **Aid, Development and English Language Teaching**

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## **Abstract**

The past few decades have seen the ascendancy of English as the global language of business and international interaction and as a result it has come to be viewed in the minds of many policy makers as fundamental to development. Accordingly English language instruction programmes have increasingly been integrated into development programmes both at a domestic recipient and international donor level. These programmes are frequently framed within the paradigms of empowerment and capacity building yet little readily accessible research seems to be available regarding the practical role English language aid programmes may play in these processes with most examination seeming to be centred either on discourse debate or cost/benefit analysis of programmes.

This thesis endeavours to examine the perceptions of recipients and providers regarding the provision of English language instruction programmes. It finds that despite a provider focus on institutional capacity building extrinsic, primarily economic, considerations ensure that there is a strong recipient demand for these programmes. It also finds that, even with an increasing provider desire to use participatory paradigms, programme parameters are still largely determined by providers due to their control of funds. By reason of this the efficacy of English language instruction in promoting recipient empowerment and capacity building remains open to question.

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## Glossary of acronyms used in this research

CUPELS	(The Massey University) Centre for University Preparation English Language Studies
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EIT	Eastern Institute of Technology
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELTO	English Language Training for Officials
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
EPTB	English Proficiency Test Battery
ETLC	English Target Language Community
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
JET	Japan Exchange and Teaching (Programme)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TNC	Transnational Corporation
VSA	Volunteer Service Abroad
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

## **Introduction**

English language instruction and study programmes have been a part of the aid scene for many years. Many aid organisations, both large and small, government attached or privately funded, provide English language scholarship programmes. These programmes frequently include residence in an English Language Target Community (ELTC) as a crucial component but many programmes are not just conceived of within a solely linguistic framework. Increasingly English language instruction is becoming viewed as an integral tool to both empower sections of society and enable a society's capacity for development. Despite this rising prevalence it seems at times that much of this paradigm is based more upon anecdotal evidence and supposition than applied research into if English Language Teaching (ELT) programmes, whether they be English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)<sup>i</sup>, actually contribute towards the developmental goals of empowerment and capacity building.

### The growth of the participatory paradigm

Within the modern development context ELT aid programmes have increasingly come to be framed within the wider aid paradigms of participation, empowerment and capacity building. Therefore in order to attempt to understand how English Language Teaching (ELT) might fit within the current aid and development sector a wider examination needs to be of these paradigms which now dominate much of development planning and thinking.

Participation, empowerment and capacity building were not always the 'buzzwords' they are today. In fact if one went back about forty years policy-makers and theoreticians generally tended to regard development as a process which followed a predictable and linear route (Zachariah, 1997:478). Development was a course of action predicated upon the idea that economic expansion was the way to eradicate poverty and, in the interest of efficiency, was to be determined and primarily delivered by foreign experts (Long, 2001:5).

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<sup>i</sup> In English language teaching EFL is commonly held to refer to the teaching of English in a non-native English environment such as Thailand whilst ESOL is the teaching of English in a native English environment such as New Zealand.



However, during the 1950s and '60s there was a growing recognition, especially amongst field practitioners, that focusing on macroeconomic goals was not resulting in sustainable changes in the lives of the poor and vulnerable. Many came to the realisation that, contrary to expectations, monetary benefits from modernisation were not 'trickling down' sufficiently to the poor to deliver them from their poverty (Kaplan, 1999:4; Riddell, 197:453-4). This awareness gradually pushed development theory and practice away from the idea of the primacy of the economic. Instead theorists, led to a large extent by practitioners' field observations, came to the view that the answer lay with "the exercise of popular agency in relation to development" (Hickey and Mohan, 2004:3). Development needed to be a multi-dimensional development process "oriented towards local actors" (Pieterse, 1998:368) as such a change was envisioned as enabling the disempowered and the excluded of a society to "participate in, negotiate with, change and hold accountable institutions that affect their well-being" (Klugman, 2002:3) thereby accomplishing sustainable positive change in their circumstances (Stephenson, 1994:225; Long, 2001:7)

Consequently, and with the prodding of practitioners, aid organisations increasingly came to envisage empowerment and capacity building as vital tools in the fight to end the traps of dependency and poverty. The poor were no longer to be perceived as peripheral, passive recipients whose primary (if not only) role was to be as "objects of grandiose schemes" (Mohan, 2002:50). Instead recipients were to be provided with the tools required to enable them "to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives" (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:8) so that they would be empowered with "a capability to be autonomous" (De-Shalit, 2004:804).

Indeed so persuasive has the concept of participation turned out to be that, even though initially associated with the schools of 'alternative development' on the periphery of core development practice and theory, it has achieved mainstream status. In fact so influential has the paradigm of participation become that almost all international development organisations espouse the stance that development and aid are of little worth if they do not promote local capacity and empowerment (Kaplan, 1999:1). Yet for many providers these paradigms are "both an end and a means of achieving other goals" (Stern, Dethier and Rogers, 2005:99) and the notion of seeking to facilitate people's ability to "make qualitative differences to ... [power]

imbalances,” (Taylor, 1995:171) has proved increasingly attractive to policy makers and organisations even though wide divergences exist in the framing of visions and goals.

### Education, language and the rise of English

Despite conceptual differences, most development actors generally are in agreement as to the importance of education. Education to its proponents is an integral and a vital component in any empowerment and poverty reduction strategy. It is seen as the vector whereby economic potential – be it societal or individual - can be unleashed to produce healthy, productive societies (James, 1998:3-5). Accordingly many developing countries and development agencies have tended to focus upon the acquisition of basic education skills<sup>ii</sup> as a means of facilitating the development process. The Commission for Africa typifies this attitude and classifies education as a prime area for major investment (Commission for Africa, 2005:12).

Yet such blanket adoption of “[w]estern views of education ... throughout the world as a part of ‘modernisation’ and ‘development’” (Kobayashi, 1997:665) has had an unintended effect in that it has eased the supplanting of local languages in the classroom by non-indigenous tongues. Language is not apolitical and is an integral part of ethnic identity. Consequently the process of language choice is often fraught with socio-political difficulties and for many post-colonial countries the choice of the official language of instruction has been profoundly influenced by history and prey to political and economic preferences.

Many post-colonial countries were ‘artificial’ constructs created as a result of European political and economic concerns rather than local linguistic and ethnic realities. Faced with a plethora of competing languages new nation states were faced with the dilemma of whether to reject the language of the colonial past, as Burma/Myanmar did, or, as was the case in India, to retain it. In cases such as India the privileging of an indigenous language was seen to exacerbate underlying ethnic division and discord. Therefore in order to prevent conflict the colonial language was retained as the language of power - even though attempts may have been made to

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<sup>ii</sup> Principal goals among these being universal literacy and numeracy.

curtail its position of primacy - as it was viewed as the 'least worst option'. The retention of the colonial language as the language of official power has however meant that mastery of these languages is a keystone to success and social advancement and intriguingly, as can be seen in Figure 1 below, in some post-colonial countries such as Pakistan it has actually been incorporated into the task of nation building (Mosse, 2005:39).

(Source: O'Shea, 2006:1)

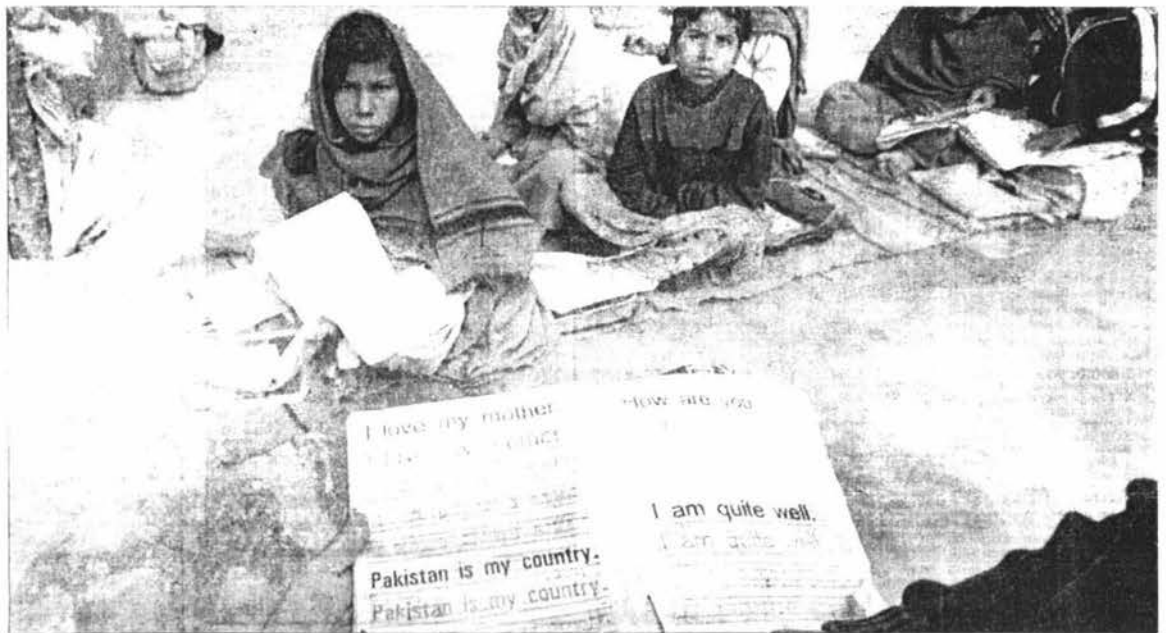


Figure 1 English to promote national identity

### English and development politics

Over the past few decades the comparative status of metropolitan languages has changed with English progressively displacing previous colonial languages of power. Countries which have no historic or geographic connections with the English language have come to view the development of English language skills as being so integral to development that its instruction has become a prime element in their education curricula<sup>iii</sup> (Mosse, 2005:108). For Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:x) this is of great concern as he views such ascendancy as facilitating cultural genocide. To him language is an integral vector in the transmission of cultural traditions and thus the displacement of indigenous languages abets the suppression of local cultural

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<sup>iii</sup> Laos is a good example of this shift.

conventions and perhaps even their eventual supplanting. Williams (2003:39) however adopts a more political viewpoint and for him this “linguistic hegemony” has merely enabled the replacement of the overt exploitation of colonisation with more subtle abuse. Metropolitan languages are an imperially imposed evil directly linked to Western development and not only cause the perpetuation of “an unequal relationship between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ societies ... [but also create] ... new forms of inequality within societies” (ibid).

Whilst such critical analysis is in many ways creditable the condemnation of English as an instrument of domination can frequently feel like the ‘easy option’ as it assumes an inextricable link between the spread of metropolitan languages (of which English is currently almost undoubtedly the most expansive) and the demise of indigenous languages and culture. It seems that much of this sort of criticism is agenda driven and ignores the dynamic nature of people’s relationship with language. English is not automatically a language of repression and the promotion of indigenous linguistic pluralism does not inherently create equality and empowerment for those at the sharp end of society (Ricento, 2000:2). Imperialist experiences and language repression are not limited solely to European languages and as can be seen in China and Burma/Myanmar an ‘indigenous’ language or dialect can just as easily be an agent of repression, oppression and homogenisation.

#### ELT for empowerment and capacity building

Language spread, like religion, has always followed dominance and “is by its very nature ... always a reflection of power – political, technological, economic, cultural [and] religious” (Crystal, 2004:3) and English acquisition has acquired status as a sign of modernism and progress. Development has ceased to be just tied to vernacular literacy and as a consequence ELT programmes have increasingly been integrated into development aid strategies. In many ways aid and development agencies can be seen as being active promoters of this process for English has become the *de facto* operational language for many large-scale aid providers. There seems an unacknowledged acceptance on the part of many multi-national providers that the accurate delivery of a project requires locals to acquire English language skills (Mosse, 2005:108).

ELT has become big business even though neither providers nor recipients can seemingly articulate exactly how the development of English language skills “relates to a poverty-alleviating strategy” (VSO, 2004; 4). Some of this lack of examination can perhaps be attributed to the fact that for all funded aid actions politics are an ever present reality both for recipients and donors. ELT development programmes are equally tied to wider political and economic goals - whether stated or unstated. In the case of the New Zealand Agency for International Development’s (NZAID) English Training for Officials (ELTO) programme historically one of the programme’s principal stated aims was the promotion of “greater awareness and appreciation of New Zealand in the regions [thus] laying the basis for positive and cooperative relationships” (O’Sullivan and Huong, 2002:1). While this emphasis has receded many providers and funders still persist in viewing English language instruction as the “single best way to build positive, lasting relationships [and] ... a more favourable view ...as a result of their studies” (De Lotbiniere, 2007:3) rather than as a tool to empower and enable the recipient.

There is an apparent increasingly pervasive feeling amongst both donors and recipients that those who lack English language skills either face falling behind or even worse being ‘doomed’ to the lower strata of society. Yet ironically there are indications that the promotion of English as a medium of instruction may actually aggravate the problems of disadvantaged sections of societies. Recent research suggests that policies which push second-language-medium education can, rather than empowering people, actually work against wider educational attainment (Moore, 2005:1). Such problems are identified as being especially severe for members of ethnic minorities who commonly struggle to achieve educational proficiency because they lack access to adequate schooling and, due to afore mentioned nationalistic political reasons, must grapple with a language of instruction which is essentially foreign to their vernacular tongue (ibid). An added concern is that if ELT programme control falls either directly or indirectly to those already in positions of power and authority then there is a real possibility that programme placement will merely reflect and perpetuate a society’s status quo rather than aiding the empowerment of the disadvantaged sections of that society (ELTO Review, 2002:20).



Nevertheless to a large extent much of the debate over the pros and cons of English language education is superfluous. Organisations, both profit and non-profit, simply see themselves as responding to the wishes of their ‘clients’ however they may be defined. The reality is that, for whatever reason, English language skills have come to be seen as a ‘prerequisite’ to a better life both at personal and professional levels. In fact in many countries such is the dominance of English in the realms of education and research that there is a strong sense that English language ability is an essential precondition for success in these areas and over “social advancement in general” (Stroud, 2003:17).

Other impetuses for people’s desire for English language acquisition are even more pragmatic. Although often either derided or criticised by those opposing globalisation, one does not need to travel far to witness that the vision of the comfortable consumerism of the ‘American Dream’ is something that profoundly motivates people (Baker, 1996:55). With English increasingly being used by Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and tourists as their language of communication, the ability to communicate in English has effectively become, or is at least perceived to be, a ‘precondition’ for people in developing countries to making a decent living.

### Research relevance

As a result of the forces mentioned previously English is progressively forming an integral part of the development dialogue with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) noting that ELT is “so crucial to international development that ... a fixed element of the UK overseas aid programme ... [has been] specifically set aside to support it” (VSO position paper<sup>iv</sup>, 2004:10). If one examines many of these programmes it soon becomes apparent that empowerment and capacity building are a frequent focus. Yet there appears to be a dichotomy in the interface between the large personal and financial investment that all parties put into ELT and the benefits derived from those efforts. It is therefore somewhat surprising to discover how little available literature\* seems to actually examine the relationship between English language instruction programmes and these development paradigms. This seeming lack of scrutiny of English language instruction programmes is even more remarkable given that many

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<sup>iv</sup> The VSO paper omits any figures regarding the amount of funds EFL programmes receive.

organisations such as Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) and NZAID have had long standing commitments to such programmes.

Although ELT programmes are often actively promoted it would seem that with many communities and individuals facing pressing issues regarding the provision of such basic needs as clean water there are questions over the efficacy of the use of EFL for development. In fact at times it almost seems that the confidence in the positive nature of provision of ELT programmes is based more upon faith than demonstrable fact. As an experienced teacher of English as a Second Language my assessment is that the primary reason for this state of affairs is that English language learning does not lend itself readily to scientific measurability. Equally this lack of research could be due to the perception that ELT programmes fall between two disciplines - Development Studies and Linguistics - which appear to have very little cross-fertilisation between them. When these factors are combined with wider issues involved in trying to quantifiably measure change in abstract concepts such as empowerment it is easy to see why research on this issue apparently lacks the breadth and depth it would seem to require.

Yet aid and development programmes operate in a world which requires definitive measurable delivery outcomes. In view of the increasingly ubiquitousness of English in the development field and the prevalent belief on behalf of both providers and recipients as to the benefits of English language instruction there would seem to be a definite need to examine ELT aid programmes in a way other than by using the standard cost/benefit analysis model. To this end this thesis research has sought the opinions and assessments of participants and instructors involved with the provision of ELT programmes in order to examine the following research questions:

- What is the perceived role of ELT in development?
- How do participants and providers view the acquisition of English language skills in reference to individual empowerment and capacity building?
- How are ELT aid programmes which involve a period of immersion in an English Target Language Community (ELTC) perceived to fit into the wider developmental paradigms of empowerment and capacity building?

- If ELT programmes are to be an integral part of empowerment and capacity building policies and strategies how might they be made more responsive and relevant?

By gathering this data this thesis seeks to ascertain what points of convergence and difference there might be both between recipients and providers and between provider administrators and English language instructors with the aim of helping to inform the future design and provision of present and future ELT programmes.

### Methodology

In order to obtain a more holistic view of provider and recipient views of English Language Teaching programmes a mixed research methodology of quantitative and qualitative methods was sought. To this end it was originally envisioned that the research would include:

- field observation of an EFL aid programme
- the use of a questionnaire to elicit participant views on the English language and ELT programmes
- the conducting of semi-structured interviews with providers and instructors of ELT programmes to obtain their viewpoints

It was anticipated that the adoption of these research methods would create a responsive, flexible and reflective research project in which comparisons could be made between in-country programmes and those which entail learning in an ELTC context. To accomplish this aim the participant questionnaire and the questions for the semi-structured interviews were formulated so that they could be used both during the envisaged fieldwork and in the New Zealand based part of the research.

Although a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods was sought the research primarily focused on the use of quantitative research tools due to my belief that language acquisition and feelings of empowerment, despite efforts to submit them to scientifically measurable tests and statistics, remain primarily personal and subjective. Bearing this in mind the interviews and survey questions were designed to provide a platform which would enable the participants to present their own ideas and



personal impressions regarding English and its place in the development context. The hope was that this would illuminate my key research questions and consequently enable me to construct a general narrative on the conceptualisation and characterisation of the role of ELT programmes in the aid and development area.

### Chapter outline

This thesis has been divided into the following broad chapters:

Chapter One examines the present dominance of the empowerment and capacity building paradigms within aid discourse.

Chapter Two explores education as a part of empowerment and capacity building strategies and how, despite the politics of discourse, English language instruction has grown in importance and is now seen by many as being an integral part of education and development strategies.

Chapter Three gives a more detailed overview of the methods used in this research and looks at some of the issues involved in attempting to apply the research design.

Chapter Four presents the research findings and has been divided into two broad areas. The first focuses on results from the questionnaire administered to programme participants within New Zealand. The second deals primarily with information gathered from interviews with ELT programme instructors and administrators.

Chapter Five discusses the research data gathered in more depth.

The Conclusion attempts to evaluate ELT as an effective vector for empowerment and capacity building.

### Overview

This introduction has outlined how a large number of aid organisations view empowerment and capacity building as fundamental constituents in the development process and as a result promote such programmes within their armoury of projects. Education is envisaged as an integral element of these two broad paradigms as it is

viewed as being a powerful agent in facilitating social change by giving individuals and communities enhanced capacity for independent action and autonomous choice. The seemingly unstoppable global expansion and importance of the English language has, despite vigorous debate over whether European models are effective for those with differing socio-cultural background and ethos (Zachariah, 1997:pp478-81; Aoki et al, 2002: pp233-5), meant that English language acquisition has increasingly entered into the development and educational equation.

As a consequence ELT programmes have increasingly found their way into aid programmes. Donors and recipients have, despite criticism that the provision of ELT aid programmes perpetuates the current political, cultural and economic world system, seemingly surrendered to a tacit belief that increasing the English language abilities of societies will ensure “benefits will flow on” (personal e-mail communication from NGO official, 2006<sup>v</sup>). This research will examine this proposition and, by means of the administering of questionnaires and conducting of interviews, endeavour to discover what role providers and participants perceive ELT programmes play in the context of recipient empowerment and capacity building strategies. Although in no way definitive, it is hoped that any results from this research will help to inform aid organisations and practitioners (both government and non-governmental) in the design of suitably sensitive and responsive English aid programmes.

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<sup>v</sup> To ensure confidentiality the exact source of this communication has been not named.

## Chapter One

### Empowerment and Capacity Building

#### Participation and empowerment

*I'm a great one  
For giving people their due  
But you have to draw the line sometime*

The Queen's English  
The Muttonbirds

#### The acceptance of the empowerment concept

Since their inception aid organisations have sought to promote well-being and alleviate social disadvantage. However, both the identification of issues and solutions and the promotion of projects tended to be predicated upon a donor-dictated agenda which was often decided upon without any real reference to recipients' opinions. Nonetheless practitioners increasingly came to realise that this practice was not producing the projected developmental results or sustainable social change. In an attempt to address these concerns the paradigmatic focus of programmes has generally shifted to a promotion of recipient empowerment and the building of recipient societies' internal capacity.

The concepts of participation and empowerment are not recent constructs. As early as the 1950s and '60s there were aid workers in the field who had come to the conclusion that "[p]overty and powerlessness are two sides of the same coin" (Smith, 2005:41) and that established modes of aid delivery were not accomplishing their aims (Rahnema, 1992:117). There was a palpable sense that there needed to be "more to development than aid and its management" (Panday, 2002:73) and the goal was to find a way out of the seemingly intractable cycle of poor results and uptakes of projects and programmes. This aspiration fed the development of the various fields of alternative development where practitioners sought to achieve success by working

with recipients as active participating partners rather than as mere passive receivers (Friedmann, 1992:31). Yet many practitioners found their desire to provide a platform more responsive to recipients' needs was initially frustrated. Practitioners became aware that their ability to influence delivery was primarily limited to those areas over which they had most control<sup>i</sup> due to resistance from a number of those involved in aid management and theory who objected that participant involvement was a distracting departure from the business of development (Brohman, 1996:218; Mohan, 2002:51).

Nonetheless practitioners increasingly came to the conclusion that development should be predicated upon facilitating the growth

of awareness and consciousness such that people are able to take control of their own lives and circumstances, and exert responsibility and purpose with respect to their future ... [for if] a development intervention does not succeed in this, then it can hardly be said to be developmental (Kaplan, 1999:7).

The premise took hold that solving the problems of inequity and underdevelopment necessitated empowering the poor to gain access to the resources they needed to improve their lives and livelihoods (Brohman, 1996:264). Empowerment came to be seen as "the central piece of any participatory manual" (Lopes, 2002:128) rather than as a radical construct or solution and over time became increasingly established in the mainstream of development theory and practice (Desai, 2002:117).

Such has been the dominance of this idea that empowerment has in effect become the 'new orthodoxy' in the development area (Weissberg, 1999:5) with many agencies perceiving the promotion of participatory practices and empowerment to be a "threshold condition for local development" (Pieterse, 1998:368). As a result project proposals have increasingly been required to be framed in terms of aiding community and individual empowerment as this is seen as a way to both raise a project's positive profile and to promote its chances of success (Edwards, 1989:133-5; Fukuda-Parr et al, 2002:3; Lopes, 2002:137). Yet the sheer popularity of the terminology of empowerment has resulted in almost every organisation being able to sign up to it (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:351; Brohman, 1996:265; Rahnema, 1992:116-122).

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<sup>i</sup> For example the targeting of delivery mechanisms (Brohman, 1996:218).

Consequently empowerment has seemingly become the repository of a “cacophony ... of every remedial idea imaginable, many inherently contradictory” (Weissberg, 1999:123) and the absence of an agreed authoritative definition in the development context has meant that the whole paradigm of empowerment has become “more overtly problematic than ever” (Mayo and Craig, 1995:1). The lack of clarity surrounding the term has to Lopes “contributed to the confused nature of many development interventions” (2002:125) and thus it has become just as vital to comprehend the other person’s understanding of empowerment as to be able to clearly characterise one’s own personal conception (Mohan, 2002:50).

### The politics of empowerment

Nonetheless, for all its many interpretations, empowerment is still a concept that challenges and can cause disquiet amongst those in positions of privilege and authority – be they politicians, government workers or even aid providers. The reason for this unease is undoubtedly due to the fact that the empowerment paradigm links the provision of aid with the redistribution of power within societies (Panday, 2002:70; Edwards, 1989:134). Since the 1990s this interpretation of empowerment as the transformation of existing “social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps which cause social exclusion” (Hickey and Mohan, 2004:13) has been enthusiastically embraced by much of the aid and development community as “the new liberation” (Pearson, 2005:163).

However, for Weissberg (1999:128) the whole idea of empowering all society’s members is nonsensical and providers need to be conscious of the fact that “*all* empowerments are ... limited ... and success *must* come in the context of constrained power” (ibid). Recipient societies are not homogenous entities and no change takes place in a political vacuum. All societies have their own particular power structures (Eade and Williams, 1995:13; Williams, 2004:92-105) and “[i]ntervention processes are imbedded in, and generate, social processes” (Long, N., 2001:88). Empowerment’s emphasis upon self-help, self-reliance and priming of the processes of social change means that it is intimately “connected to the building and exercise of power for social change” (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:37) and thus those in authority can see empowerment as a suspiciously seditious concept to be either challenged or

co-opted (Malik and Wagle, 2002:92; Desai, 2002:120; Panday, 2002:70; Edwards, 1989:134).

Yet providers sometimes seem to ignore the fact that adopting an interventionist empowerment programme paradigm confronts “aspects of power, authority and legitimation” (Long, N., 2001:88) and can be “highly controversial and ... cut to the heart of highly sensitive [socio-political] issues” (Lopes, 2002:128). Many of those in positions of authority in recipient societies view power as a ‘zero sum game’ and therefore see any success disadvantaged people may gain in increasing their decision making power as a concomitant loss of their prestige and privilege (Weissberg, 1999:128). Thus the equating of empowerment with the necessity for social change runs the risk of turning empowerment into a highly intrusive, political and potentially conflict-ridden methodology (De Janvry and Sadoulet, 1993 quoted in Brohman, 1996:265). In fact in some situations the promotion of empowerment is “likely to reflect and exacerbate cultural differences and conflict between social groups” (Long, N., 2001:88) and thus “the harder the donors try for results under adverse conditions, the worse the situation may become” (Panday, 2002:71).

### Overview

Empowerment strategies and theories are conceived of in a multitude of ways and are therefore often by their very nature contradictory (Rahnema, 1992:122-3). Nevertheless for many organisations and popular movements within the aid and development field empowerment is seen both to give ordinary people the “capacity to bring about change” (Eade and Williams, 1995:13) and to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of development interventions (De-Shalit, 2004:804; Lopes, 2002:130). Consequently the empowerment paradigm has become a guiding principle as a “thesis of development as transformation [which] emphasizes the process as much as the product” (Malik and Wagle, 2002:97).

To some theorists and providers “empowerment comes close to the notion of development as fulfilment of human potentials and capabilities” (Ghai 1981:218 quoted in Brohman, 1996:265) yet, by assigning a powerless status upon the recipient, empowerment can actually been seen to dis-empower (Brohman, 1996:220-225) because it assumes that “A has the secret formula of a power to which B has to be



initiated“(Rahnema, 1992:123). Indeed the whole concept of empowering people through strategic intervention is viewed as inherently incongruous by Ellerman (2002:43) as “[a]utonomy cannot be externally supplied”. Furthermore to Long (2001:89) empowerment lays itself open to the charge of being just a politically correct expression of post-colonialist paternalism and traditional aid and development status structures whereby outside experts come ‘riding to the rescue’ of the “powerless and less discerning local folk”. For Rahnema (1992:123) empowerment is nothing more than a revised version of state power and it is therefore it is vital as Long, C. (2001:88) states to closely scrutinise “whose interpretations or models ... prevail ... and how and why they do so”. Many commentators and practitioners however seek to side-step this whole political minefield by preferring to view empowerment as being a personal process. As a result this has meant that the construct of empowerment as an endeavour which enables people’s individual and collective autonomous capacity is probably the one which informs and influences development practice most substantially (Lopes, 2002:128; Rowlands, 1998 in Melkote and Steeves, 2001:36; Stern, Dethier and Rogers, 2005:99).

### Building internal capacity

*All you little countries  
All you little towers of Babel  
Well you better wake up,  
and shape up, and earn  
your place on the team*

‘The Queen’s English’

The Muttonbirds

### The rise of capacity building as an aid paradigm

Much like empowerment the underlying reasons for capacity building’s rise in popularity appears, as James (1998:1-5) and Panday (2002:77) suggest, to derive from dissatisfactions and frustrations over the seeming inability of traditional meta-theories to ‘deliver the goods’. However, just as with empowerment, it can seem that, even though capacity building has developed into a fundamental for aid and development,

it is a concept that lacks any exactitude (Panday, 2002:68; James, 1998:xv-xvi; Eade and Williams, 1995:331, Kaplan, 1999:1; Malik, 2002:27). In fact capacity building as a model has broadened so much in its theoretical scope that the reader is often left confused as to what capacity building actually is – let alone what it may entail (Stern, Dethier and Rogers, 2005:99; James, 1998: xv-xvi; Lopes 2002:126).

Historically an integral part of development strategies has been the drive by donors to improve a society's capacity and thus for Panday (2002:61) and Brown (2002:vii) capacity building is as old as the 'aid age' itself. With prevalent development theories being primarily predicated upon Eurocentric economic indicators the lack of modern socio-economic structures in developing countries was identified as the major brake on economic growth and primary cause of economic stagnation (Brohman, 1996:227). Consequently capacity building was typically conceived of in terms which sought to replace traditional structures with a more 'efficient' modern model, most often one based on the donor's (James, 1998:7). As Brown (2002, vii) notes rather than being viewed as a viable alternative to be strengthened and more usefully and efficiently utilised, the common view, as represented in Figure 2 below, was that traditional structures were anachronistic and required alteration or replacement in order to transform recipient social systems into vibrant, competitive, modern nations.

(Source: Malik, 2002:31)

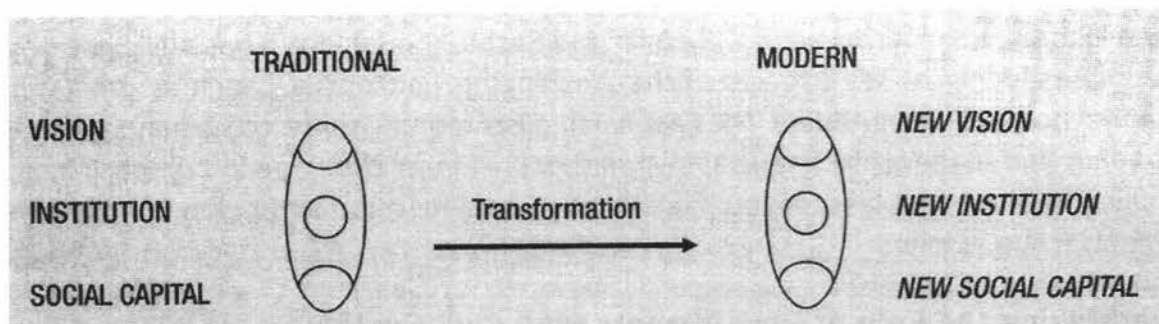


Figure 2 A simplified diagrammatical representation of donor conceptualisation of change.

As Stiglitz (1998 cited in Malik, 2002:31) states, this bias against indigenous socio-cultural traditions ignores the fact that traditional societal structures often have “high levels of organisational and social capital [even] though this may not be in the form



that facilitates change". The partiality on the part of providers for imported organisational structures was exacerbated by the fact that donors and agencies generally lacked local linguistic skills and thus continued to function within their home metropolitan linguistic terms of reference. Largely cut off from the cultural insights into indigenous concerns and social structures that knowledge of a local language can allow many aid providers therefore tended to pass over indigenous institutions and structures. Instead of utilising these local constructions, which are as Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik (2002:8) observe in effect a particular society's intrinsic capacity developed over generations to fit the area's socio-cultural and environmental conditions, donors by and large perceived the transformation process illustrated in Figure 2 as the rational way to stimulate swift economic growth.

Consequently a donor-directed drive to build internal capacity to enable "the ability of institutions to identify and solve development problems" (UNDP cited in Malik, 2002:27) came to be seen as the logical way to maximise modernisation and forward progress (Eade and Williams, 1995:331). Nevertheless it soon became apparent that projected results were not being realised and, much as has been the case with empowerment, a link was made to the need to enable people to "make qualitative differences to ... [power] imbalances" (Taylor, 1995:171). Increasingly the development sector has taken the view that capacity building can only be understood within a wider context of community engagement and the promotion of sustainable positive social change (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:8; Panday, 2002:74; Stephenson, 1994:225) as these capacities are considered "crucial to the development of civil society ... [and] social justice" (Eade and Williams, 1995:331).

Despite the rise in this ethos, many agencies and governments still seem to carry an implicit credence in the benefits of donor/market driven modernisation. The rationale appears to be that only by embracing Northern structures can developing countries ultimately unleash the economic potential currently inhibited by existing traditional structures and thereby create dynamic, productive societies which can readily compete in a global market (James, 1998:4). The fact that methodologies imported by agencies may be neither the most appropriate and efficacious nor truly empowering and sustainable tends to be dismissed and in reality for many developing countries modernising capacity building is less a choice and more a set condition of aid. This

being so it therefore becomes of paramount importance who determines which “capacities are key to development” (Malik, 2002:28).

### The complexities and contradictions of capacity building

Even with the shift in focus away from doing things for developing countries and their people to the paradigm of working with them progress towards sustainable self-sufficiency still seems to be elusive. For the great majority of developing countries it seems that capacity building interventions manifest a disturbing tendency to be both costly and donor-driven (Brown, 2002:vii; Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:4). To Brohman (1996:242) a possible hypothesis for this seeming paradox is that there has been a lack of recognition in project planning that, due to organisational problems or a lack of basic capacity on which to build, local institutions have been unable to cope by themselves. Equally significantly aid organisations may, despite achieving their immediate development goals, merely ultimately succeed in undercutting local capacity for, because they offer “competitive remuneration ... whereas governments are unable to pay their staff living wages” (Mkandawire, 2002:161), skilled workers opt to work for them rather than for indigenous agencies (Commission for Africa, 2005:30).

In many ways capacity building can be seen as a contradictory concept in that it requires local ownership of the programme whilst at the same time being instigated and supported by outside intervention (Lopes, 2002:140). Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik (2002:4) even question whether, rather than promoting self-reliance, capacity building programmes intrinsically merely serve “to heighten dependence on foreign experts”. This criticism has been strengthened by the fact that capacity building programmes are increasingly conceived of as a “means *and* the end to innovation” (Stephenson, 1994: 227). Such a paradigmatic approach has caused criticism that the development industry persists in “creat[ing] *objects* out of development initiatives rather than *partners*” (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:11) and is merely a “methodology for interventions” (James, 1998:7). To McMichael (1996:33-4; 42-3) and Stephenson (1994: 227) capacity building is merely another manifestation of the ‘development project’ while for Mohan (2002:53) capacity building is inherently compromised because providers retain control over “the bulk of the finances and ...

[thus] de facto veto power”. Although usually done with the best of purposes<sup>ii</sup> the preservation of provider power precludes any real chance of local ‘buy-in’ and perpetuates the donor’s status and advantage. Thus, despite the best intentions of field staff, the perception of capacity building programmes can be “asymmetric, discontinuous and distorted” (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:11) persists leading critics such as Mkandawire to see such programmes as nothing more than a way for “foreign experts to become more firmly entrenched in the policy-making institutions of ...[the] state” (2002:161).

### The stresses of programme placement

Aid, despite being a ‘feel good’ political paradigm, is almost inevitably intimately intermixed with the donor’s own domestic issues (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:11) and the developed world tends to view countries or regions in economic terms and as a pool of untapped resources (both human and physical) and markets. Thus the assumption is that the primary need for developing countries is people trained and skilled in globally marketable tools. In practice the provision of capital is often made conditional on countries and societies transforming themselves to fit the globally dominant models in the shortest possible timeframe<sup>iii</sup> (McMichael, 1996: 33-4; 42-3).

Ramesh (2006) argues that the socio-political processes that result from the capacity building and empowerment programmes that donors promote often exacerbate inherent internal social strife, conflicts and division rather than resolving them. Development theory is, as Chambers (2005:68) notes like all theory, intrinsically normative with the result that existing societal subtleties, such as the impact of clan loyalties, can be downplayed or disregarded in an organisation’s search for an answer which satisfies their constituency and fulfils their preferred methodological approach (Ellerman, 2002:44). Given that many developing nations’ societies are already under stress from rapid change, programmes, especially those with wider socio-political aims, can simply further complicate an already complex societal situation as customs and traditional systems bend and break under external pressures (James, 1998:2; Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:9).

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<sup>ii</sup> Most frequently to avoid issues of diversion of resources.

<sup>iii</sup> In effect echoing the 1950’s Modernisationist ethos of ‘picking winners’.

Nevertheless not all the problems of developing countries can be laid at the feet of the developed world. Recipients are an essential component in the making or breaking of any programme and the attitude of those who are in positions of authority is crucial. If they feel under threat elites can employ subtle hindrances, such as a lack of alacrity in the authorisation for programmes and projects, or more overt interventions, such as threats to withdraw accreditation, to derail or realign programmes to protect their privilege (Malik and Wagle, 2002:92). Equally programmes can run into difficulties with local elites due to their being “wary of taking full ownership if they believe this will create more work and possibly deprive them of some of the perks they use to supplement their often meagre salaries” (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:9). Whilst such attitudes do not necessarily denote a predisposition for large-scale deceit and duplicity they can create an atmosphere which encourages the use of programme resources for personal preferment and payback. In such environments donors can do little even if programmes are transparently funded and implemented with the net result that programme delivery may be ineffective and/or inappropriate (Panday, 2002:78).

#### Education to enable empowerment and capacity building

Of all the capacity building and empowerment constituents it is a neglect of education that is most often identified as the major factor hampering the expansion of countries’ internal capacity and drive to develop (Mkandawire, 2002:162; Commission for Africa, 2005:13). As a result educational aid forms a “very substantial proportion of international development assistance” (Williams, 1997:126). Yet most travellers in developing countries have met highly educated and skilled individuals who are either unemployed or underemployed. These people (and more often than not their extended families) frequently make great sacrifices to attain qualifications but then find that “in the midst of poverty, skill shortages and illiteracy ... there is no obvious and suitable work” (Bridger and Winpenny, 1983:86). In point of fact many developing countries, through conflict or poverty, may actually lack the ability to absorb skilled people into the productive workforce (Commission for Africa, 2005:30) which means that in order to survive people are faced with limited choices: remaining idle, taking unrelated or patently unsuitable jobs or, as shown in Figure 3, furthering their education and/or career outside their home country (Commission for Africa, 2005:30).

(Source: Balakrishnan and Man, 2007)

The percentage of university graduates who emigrate from their home country  
2000 figures

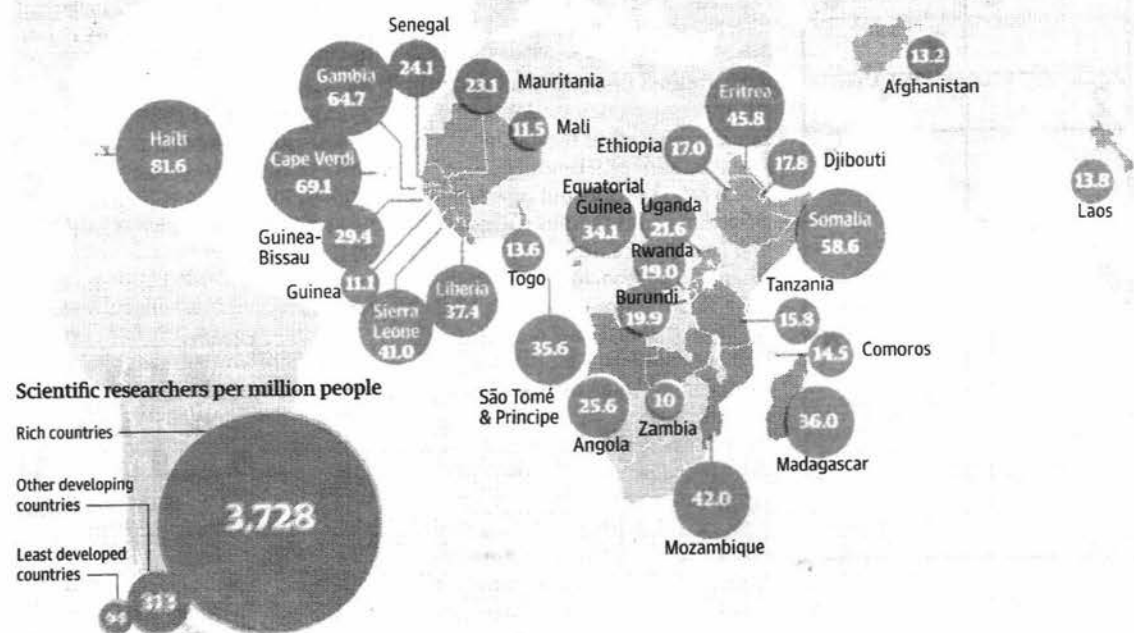


Figure 3 The percentage of university graduates who emigrate from their home country<sup>iv</sup>.

There is an obvious dichotomy in pursuing education as a tool to promote capacity building because as Gore (quoted in Balakrishnan and Man, 2007) states

“[t]he least developed countries have a huge problem when it comes to expanding their productive employment. It is no use just investing in human capital without policies which develop employment opportunities to encourage workers to stay.”

The cause of a person’s motivation to move abroad can be rooted in their home country’s internal conditions and, as can be seen in Figure 3, the percentage of graduates who emigrate from countries such as Haiti and The Gambia which suffer from profound poverty and political conflicts is proportionally large. On the other hand it can be seen that Afghanistan, which, of the countries shown, is arguably the one most affected by such conditions has one of the lowest rates of graduate emigration. However, it must be pointed out that Afghanistan lacks the strong colonial linguistic

<sup>iv</sup> Due to faults in the quality of the original newspaper copy it has been impossible to achieve clarity in this illustration. The figures in the bottom left hand of the figure are: “Rich Countries – 3,728, Other Developing Countries – 313, Least Developed Countries – 94”.



legacy of states such as Madagascar and Sierra Leone which have retained the old colonial metropolitan tongue as their language of instruction - especially in higher education. This policy which has meant that graduates from these have potential opportunities open to them in the country of their former imperial master and while such a situation is undoubtedly advantageous for the end migration country the fact that, as Figure 3 shows, many graduates from the developing world leave their homes taking their vital skills with them undermines the whole capacity building paradigm (Cummings, 1997:83; Singh, 1993:29). There would seem to be little point in providing capacity building education and skills training programmes to build local capacity if, as Figure 3 demonstrates, it then encourages a 'brain drain' of those very talents (Mkandawire, 2002:162-3; Bridger and Winpenny, 1987:87)<sup>v</sup>.

However, governments in many developing countries suffer from a lack of adequate funds which means that authorities must prioritise their educational spending. They must decide between providing basic education for their populace and financing research. They do not tend to have the luxury of choosing both and therefore for many of the most talented of their citizens the most attractive course is to leave their home for countries which can afford to invest in research with the net result that as Figure 3 demonstrates developed countries continue to dominate the research field. The fact that so many of the countries shown in Figure 3 are suffering from this 'brain drain' are also in the lower echelons of the U.N.'s development rankings is concerning for these countries are the ones which most require the development of indigenous expertise. Nonetheless migration issues defy easy solutions because for many developing countries (and perhaps even more importantly for their citizens) the foreign exchange remittances from its trained citizens abroad can form a substantial proportion of the country's revenue base (Bridger and Winpenny, 1987:87). All the same if the effectiveness of capacity building programmes depends on the extent to which trained personnel can be retained and managed efficiently on a long-term basis then the problem remains whether those programmes predicated upon the transmission of Northern skills are a truly effective use of funds.

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<sup>v</sup> A study by the UN Conference on Trade and Development calculates that in 2004 one million educated people emigrated from least developed countries (LDCs) – a loss of 15% (Balakrishnan and Man, 2007).

### Overview

The world is now highly interconnected financially, intellectually and culturally and the modern world, even if people choose to reject it, is an inescapable force. It is probably rather naïve and disingenuous to imagine that aid programmes can be disassociated from the donor's own agenda and practitioners often find themselves caught in the middle of competing demands. It has therefore become a matter of pressing concern to ascertain how a process of self-sufficiency can be facilitated within the paradigms of capacity building and empowerment.

Yet much of the development community has declined to examine the effectiveness of capacity building projects or to truly question the rationales behind such programmes, which have tended to remain task driven and specific. Programmes are frequently formulated in terms of modernisation and the conception of the recipient as “an empty vessel waiting to be filled” (Lopes, 2002:134) has remained. If the aim of capacity building is to really give recipients “the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives” (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes & Malik, 2002:8), then there is a dichotomy between the objective of autonomy and the reality of the asymmetrical aid relationship. Capacity development programmes still allow the donor to set the agenda and assert a “thinking monopoly” because the technology and expertise are often provided by overseas experts and teachers - frequently in a foreign language (Lopes, 2002:137; Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik, 2002:11). As a result recipients can be seen to become tied into a subconscious subservience to the Northern dominated world system and accordingly become even more reliant upon outside help and expertise than they were before the intervention (Fukuda-Parr et al, 2002:3; James, 1998:2; McMichael, 1996:33-4; 42-3; Ellerman, 2002:43).

Even so capacity building is widely viewed to be a positive developmental starting point due to its aim of seeking an holistic approach (both in policy and management areas) to developmental problems and issues (James, 1998:xvi, 3-9). To its proponents capacity building is not “a task that can be organised like a capital project” (Panday, 2002:81) but rather is causally correlated to the “contribution of policy to direct positive development” (James, 1998:5) that, rather than being under the purview of Northern nations, “economic and social development is the responsibility of governments and the people of developing countries” (Panday, 2002:74). Integral to

this strategy is education because, whether it simply seeks to stimulate a person's ability to read and write or to create a pool of graduates to drive a nation's international competitiveness, education is seen to place people on the path to progress by empowering them and their societies with the ability to "direct their destinies ... whenever and wherever necessary" (ibid:xvii).



## **Chapter Two**

### **Education**

#### **The need to know**

*And when I look up ahead  
I can only see one world  
And it's a world without interpreters and phrasebooks  
‘The Queen’s English’  
The Muttonbirds*

#### **Education as a development paradigm**

Education programmes are probably one of the least contentious types of aid programme (Eade and Williams, 1995:364)<sup>i</sup>. Conventional economic wisdom views education as an integral part of modern development finding “an inextricably intertwined relationship between broad-based primary schooling and economic development” (Berman, 1997:141). However, education is not cheap and is often one of the largest budgetary items for governments and individuals (Williams, 1997:119). As a result educational assistance programmes frequently form a “very substantial proportion of international development assistance” (ibid:126) provided by agencies.

The linking of education and development - especially economic - is not recent<sup>ii</sup> and a substantial majority of development theory, whether it be Marxist or Neo-Liberal inclined, sees “powerful linkages between education, economic growth, and national development” (Berman, 1997:141; Zachariah, 1997:478). Lack of participation in education is viewed by commentators such as Bowden (2002:405) as “*the* major hindrance to development”<sup>iii</sup>. Educational attainment is perceived as such an intrinsically valuable output that in 2000 the ‘Every Child in School’ initiative was

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<sup>i</sup> The UN identifies the right to education as one of the fundamental human rights.

<sup>ii</sup> It is an integral component of Modernisation Theory (Pennycook, 1994:43).

<sup>iii</sup> The International Labour Organisation (ILO) calculates that the introduction of universal education and the ensuing elimination of child labour could increase global economic benefits by around US\$5,16bn (cited in Balakrishnan, 2006:2006).

launched by the UN and the World Bank to get the 113 million primary school-age children who for financial reasons were not in school into the classroom (Smith, 2005: 35; Balakrishnan, 2006:29; Appleton and Teal, 1998:2; McGinn and Cummings, 1997:38).

Ironically such widespread agreement has led to an oversupply of programmes and instead of promoting an integrated and directed programme approach providers at times overwhelm recipients with a surfeit of programmes<sup>iv</sup>. What is more, as all providers have constituencies to satisfy, recipients can be confronted with possibly competing and contradictory agendas and consequently a highly fractious and fractured teaching and administrative environment (Stephenson, 1994:229). Yet such a situation is not necessarily the recipe for what might at first appear to be chaos. Recipient societies are not passive, perpetually malleable, grateful ‘victims’: rather they are living, learning, organic entities. Thus the competition between providers may actually serve to empower recipients by giving them the ability to ‘shop around’ for the best deal and actively choose the techniques and technologies they consider will be most advantageous for their future (Long, N., 2001:13).

#### The complexities and complications of calculating education’s contributions

Education is seen as the vector whereby regions can build capacity to operate in a competitive world (Bridger and Winpenny, 1987:86) and therefore operational issues are frequently framed as “a gap or lack or deficit problem ... amenable to policy and program interventions” (Zachariah, 1997:478). States and donors have generally persisted in pursuing “the modernization paradigm [as it seems] to offer the most efficient answers, in the short term at least” (Hayhoe, 1997:752) and this has meant that education programmes are usually conceived of as just another quantifiable commodity (Eade and Williams, 1995:355). This functional perspective sees education as a “fairly linear and self-explanatory process” (Zachariah, 1997:478) which can be evaluated in “conventional measures of economic output ... [and] the costs of producing the outcomes” (Appleton and Teal, 1998:2).

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<sup>iv</sup> In the period between 1983 and 1990 The Gambia had to deal with 34 education projects funded by 13 different agencies (Stephenson, 1994:229).

Yet exposure to knowledge does not follow a set of predictable empirical rules. Education is a “wide-ranging collection of constituencies ... each ... in principle capable of further empowerment” (Weissberg, 1999:124) and serves as a “gateway to [accessing] other economic, cultural and social resources” (Stroud, 2003:17). However, any developmental outcomes attributable to educational programmes frequently manifest themselves in a totally different form from that intended by policy planners, theorists and programme designers (Weissberg, 1999:124). Therefore, despite an apparent desire on the part of many bureaucrats, politicians and academics to apply to education the same sorts of accounting procedures applicable to industry, education interventions remain to a large extent essentially non-measurable.

#### Education as a developmental aid

In fact there is actually very little empirical certainty “about effective [education] policy interventions that will make a difference in ... alleviat[ing] poverty” (Zachariah, 1997:479). Any ‘input-to-output’ development ratio solely applicable to education is not immediately apparent as the factors that create the conditions of poverty are complex and may well remain after intervention (Bridger and Winpenny, 1987:87; Eade and Williams, 1995:364). Nevertheless in the minds of many policy makers and advisors there is a clear equation between education levels and the ability of a region to transform itself from a commodity producer (and the relatively low economic returns that entails) to that of a higher return, value-added economy (Mallea, n.d.:15).

This assumption is somewhat understandable given the developmental example of Japan<sup>v</sup> which became the first non-European dominated nation to achieve parity with European powers<sup>vi</sup>. A fundamental element in the Japanese transformation was the reforming or replacing of indigenous educational systems by Western predicated pedagogical models in order to access technology (Hayhoe, 1997:752). Therefore for many newly industrialising countries, in Asia in particular, development has become

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<sup>v</sup> And since the 1980’s by the examples of the ‘Tiger economies’ of East Asia which followed a similar developmental trajectory.

<sup>vi</sup> This became apparent with the defeat of Imperial Russia in the 1905 Japan-Russian War.

closely associated with the provision “of a westernised educational system” (Brohman, 1996:22) which has literacy and numeracy at its heart<sup>vii</sup>.

Yet the role of education in development remains far from proven. Education paradigms, like those of development theory generally, are highly normative and considerable debate remains over how educational funding and resources should best be spent (Chambers, 2005:68; Bridger and Winpenny, 1983:86). The inherent power asymmetry in the relationship between donor and recipient<sup>viii</sup> can cause policy to be set by donor requirements rather than being situated within the parameters of the recipient community’s wider developmental goals (Riddell, 1997:463; ODA 1990:10 cited in Al-Samarrai et al, 2002:10).

All the same lack of education is generally viewed in development circles as a major poverty trap and in the absence of certain data providers and policy makers have tended to follow routes that have apparently brought rewards for others (Smith, 2005:35). The lack of basic education is seen as the “major barrier within the development field, especially for ... local participation” (Ribeiro, 2002:178). The prevailing view seems to be that “if there’s crap education, nothing is going to change” (Ryan, 2006 quoted in Aglionby, 2006:29) with most providers remaining firmly convinced that “to be illiterate in the twenty-first century is truly to be blind to much of what the world has to offer” (Smith, 2005:34). Numeracy and literacy are envisioned as tools enabling recipients to “become engines of their own development” (Obeng and Harford, 2002:vii). Equally they are seen as “key elements [in the growth] of adequate human capital” (UN Millennium Project, 2005<sup>ix</sup>) because “people cannot perform as citizens [if] their access to information is hampered because they lack literacy” (Obeng and Harford, 2002:vii). With those lacking basic education usually predominating in the lower socio-economic groups it is easy to see why education provision is perceived as potentially “one of the most powerful instruments societies have for reducing deprivation and vulnerability” (Aoki et al, 2002:233).

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<sup>vii</sup> This is especially so in the Tertiary system where Western systems have become the ‘gold standard’ (Altbach, 1997:635)

<sup>viii</sup> See the previous chapter for a fuller discussion of this point

<sup>ix</sup> “Why goals are important; Section seven – Why progress is so mixed” (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

### Education as a constituent of empowerment

For many poor countries the primary aim of education continues to be the “formation of human capital” (Bridger and Winpenny, 1983:86). It is generally perceived that the state’s engagement and intervention is required, both financially and logistically, in order to ensure that ‘useful’ capacity building skills such as engineering and English language skills are targeted - even though they may lack relevance to the everyday needs and situations of local people (Sawyer, n.d. in Obeng and Harford, 2002:vii; Hayhoe, 1997:752; Long, 2001:189-191). However, despite this predilection, there is an increasing awareness among recipients and donors that education is not a cure-all for the problems of the disadvantaged because as Zachariah (1997:43) shows in Figure 4 knowledge is a social construction created by a complex multiplicity of surrounding “... social, situational, cultural and institutional factors” (Long, 2001:189).

Source: (Zachariah, 1997:473)

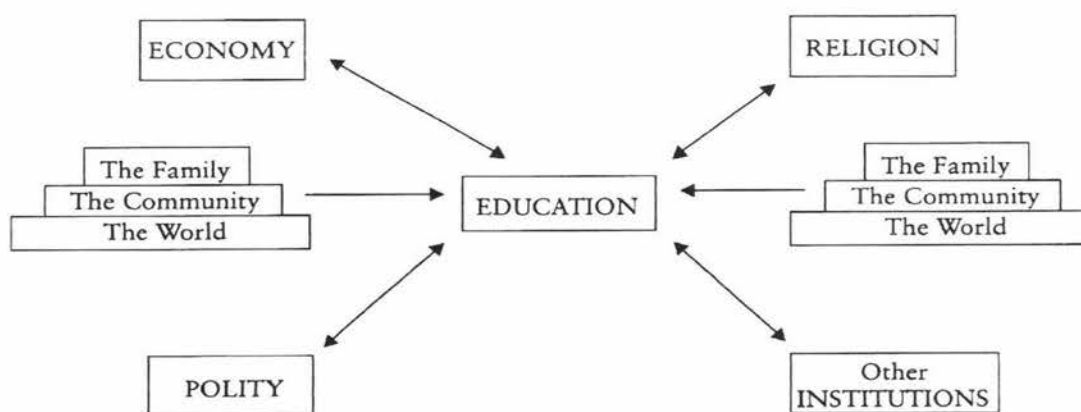


Figure 4 A view of how education interacts with the major institutions of a society.

Due to this realisation aid programmes in recent years have more and more viewed education as an integral element of “a wider social project towards the reinvigoration and radicalisation of original democratic principles” (Guilherme, 2002:30). However, any social changes set in motion by educational empowerment programmes are frequently neither wholly rational nor predictable - especially when they cut across wider social issues and cause discomfort to authorities (Crooks and Crewes, 1995:65; Al-Samarrai et al, 2002:3). As Figure 4 illustrates, the process of learning is expressive of and intertwined with broader societal interactions between the integral

institutions of a culture such as family and religion (Zachariah, 1997:478). Educational aid programmes may generate wider social tensions and create a climate which actively works against their goals or even causes social conflict (Ramesh, 2006:5). A literacy programme ostensibly aimed at improving reading rates and enthusiastically embraced by authorities may well disguise other less splendid motives such as aiding the widespread dissemination of propaganda and messages of hate to promote the persecution of vulnerable groups (Bridger & Winpenny, 1987:87).

The degradation and destruction of indigenous networks in the rush to execute exogenous changes can lead to a disastrous breakdown in civic society but recipients often have little choice other than to follow Western pedagogical models and methodologies. Donors are increasingly under pressure, often legally binding, to justify to their constituency/ies the expenditure of what are frequently public funds (Hayhoe, 1997:752). They need data which can be measured against a familiar benchmark and this data is most easily obtained by requiring recipients to follow donor models which focus upon literacy as a “defining symbol of modernity” (Williams, 1997:126). However, adopting such an approach can be problematic. Statistics generated, such as levels of literacy and the number of students in schools, may be ‘massaged’ for political purposes or to gain greater access to aid and loans from Western dominated institutions. In the same way reliance on such statistics can lead to inaccurate programme evaluations with the end result being inappropriate and inefficient expenditure of aid (Bridger and Winpenny, 1987:87).

The objective of a comprehensive application of European empirical paradigms to facilitate development also ignores the important fact that for many indigenous groups oral learning systems have pre-eminence. These home-grown systems play a crucial cultural role in holding local societies together; often acting as the means by which traditional values and vital local knowledge, for example land and resource management, are transmitted and maintained (James, 1998:2). They are in essence a society’s inherent indigenous capacity (Eade and Williams, 1995:365). They are an integral part of social capital and have the potential to be “a powerful aid to development analysis” (Lall, 2002:103) as building on existing, socially cohesive structures can strengthen a community’s economic performance (McAslan, 2002:140). Yet, even though they are the vector whereby “the systematic knowledge



accumulated in the tribe's long-term experience" (Dasgupta, 1993:105) is promoted and maintained, indigenous education networks have been disregarded, or even worse actively discriminated against, by most policy makers as not being 'real education' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:390; Torff, 1997:710). To a large degree these attitudes can be seen to derive from a fundamentally different conception of the nature and function of education between the actors. For many aboriginal, non-metropolitan communities education is not a linear, empirical procedure with clearly defined roles for the participants as it is in the West. Rather it is a process in which a wide variety of adults in the community undertake the role of teacher (Zachariah, 1997:473) with the aim of facilitating "the set of process leading to a child's acquisition of full adult membership in the community" (Dasgupta, 1993:105).

#### Education as a civic teaching tool

Historically concern for security and promotion of civic nationalism has been, and remains still, a major motivator for educational investment in the post-colonial context of developing nations (Hayhoe, 1997:752). Many, if not most, post-colonial states were artificial constructs and frequently made no ethnic or linguistic sense. Their national boundaries more often than not were predicated upon Northern political and commercial ends than local realities and thus upon independence new rulers were frequently faced with the challenge of how to meld competing, perhaps even antipathetic, clan and linguistic factions together into a manageable nation.

To achieve their nation-building agenda authorities co-opted education. Control over the education process, curricula and language of instruction in such 'fragile states' was deemed crucial (Gopinathan, 1997:590) as "[l]earning priorities are sensitive to socio-political contexts" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:641). Education, far from being a neutral construct was, and still is, viewed as a vital part of the process of legitimisation (Bridger & Winpenny, 1987:87). It is also seen to be a critical means of engaging those who otherwise may have remained disaffected (Aglionby, 2006:29) in that

the explicit and hidden curriculum ... [in education helps to] build in young citizens a set of values, assumptions of national character, and destiny that binds state and family/individual (Gopinathan, 1997:590).

The uptake of schooling in a society is heavily influenced by “[c]hanges in social systems, in which educational provision is embedded” (Crooks and Crewes, 1995:65) and the need for education to perform a civic function such as that described by Gopinathan (1997:590) has effectively meant that any push for a primary indigenous language has been precluded. In order to further a sense of unification and nationalism many multi-ethnic nations have, as shown in Figure 1<sup>x</sup> ‘English to promote national identity’, retained languages such as English as their post-colonial language of learning and instruction (Long, 2001:88-9). Any agitation for linguistic change is often viewed as

one of those concepts ... taken over from the developed world, without any consideration for the social and economic condition of underdeveloped countries; and most certainly without any consideration for the task of nation-building which now confronts these countries (Mansour, 1993:79).

However, with those at the bottom lacking the means to afford the specialist instruction needed to continue their education, the ‘promotion’ of a non-indigenous European language has allowed authorities to perpetuate the present social status quo (Rahman, 2001:242). Given the focus on education’s role as a “means for overcoming other social inequalities” (OECD website, 2003), it is therefore understandable that education programmes have increasingly focused on the provision of language programmes to those who would otherwise lack the means to participate.

### Overview

Education systems and programmes tend to be mediated as much by perceptions as by true needs and as a result all “[e]ducational interventions are predicated ... on a particular conception of what knowledge is and how learning takes place” (Torff, 1997:708). The promotion of a system which copies a European style of empirical modelling of knowledge and retains non-native metropolitan languages is highly problematic. Equally the continuing belief that Western education processes are the path for “equipping disadvantaged individuals with the means to contribute to and benefit from economic growth” (Aoki et al, 2002:233) has meant that the concept of ‘human capital’ has not really disappeared from development (Zachariah, 1997:480).

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<sup>x</sup> See page 4.



As a result, even though achievement of literacy is not a guarantor of an increase in wealth, happiness or the attainment of substantial, sustainable changes in a person's life (Bowden, 2002:405; Bridger and Winpenny, 1987:87), the "fear of illiteracy account[s] for the widespread aim of achieving universal primary education" (Bridger and Winpenny, 1983:86).

Educational aid programmes which "induc[e] a top-down, centre-outward process of capitalist development" (Brohman, 1996:22) are often supported because they help to "solidify the ... influence of ... [the] modernising elite" (ibid). The underpinning rationale would appear to be that education, by placing a person on the road to higher future incomes and status, will endow citizens with a feeling of investment in the state and state structures (Zachariah, 1997:475; Williams, 1997:126). As an end result education is often bound to a highly structured and hierarchical system "directly linked to certification ... leading to prospects for self- or remunerated employment" (Zachariah, 1997:472) in which resources are often disproportionately directed "to secondary and higher education for the few" (Eade and Williams, 1995:355).

In recent years an increasing number of aid providers have begun to recognise that culture shapes the course of development and that education has a social reproduction function (Torff 1997:71; Zachariah, 1997:471). For individuals and communities informal indigenous knowledge networks, even though they may not fit comfortably within the educational ideological parameters of providers, are increasingly being seen as being just as, if not more, important as imported structures. There is a recognition that if local knowledge systems are displaced there are very likely to be wider societal and developmental consequences. This recognition has not however spelt the end of the privileging of Western models (Malik and Wagle, 2002:85). The retention of the methodology, content and the language of instruction of Western educational structures by indigenous elites (although it might be with misgivings) has meant that, even if only on a subconscious level, the pre-eminence of European culture, concerns and values continues to be endorsed (Phillipson, 2000:91-94; Long, 2001:88-9). Indeed, as the expansion of English language aid programmes demonstrates, this process can be seen as continuing apace.

## English is the answer?

*“The Queen’s English was good enough for Jesus Christ  
And it’s good enough for me”*

‘The Queen’s English’

The Muttonbirds

The past few decades have seen such a rapid expansion of English internationally that now it “has become a universal global currency” (McCrum, 2006:17) and the world *lingua franca* (Fulcher, 2007:5). However, many regions, especially those with no historical links to the English language, face difficulties due to access to English language skills and resources. Accordingly English language aid programmes have been developed to ensure that these areas “will be able to compete at the international level ... in every area” (Qasi, 2006 quoted in O’Shea, 2006:1)

## English and the British Empire

The current pre-eminence of English as the idiom of development and progress has never been inevitable. Its dominant position in people’s perceptions as a “passport to the modern world” (Ricento, 2000:2) has instead been down to a combination of historical factors and luck (Crystal, 2003:10). “Language expansion is always the expression of expansion at another level – military, socio-economic, religious or cultural” (Mansour, 1993:30-1) and English assumed its initial importance and influence by ‘riding on the coattails’ of the expansion of the British Empire. As English was the key to advancement in administration, education and trade in colonies the ability to adequately operate in it therefore determined a person’s career prospects and social status (Obeng, 2002:8).

In many colonies authorities employed English language education as a vector whereby the local populace, and especially local elites, could be inculcated with a sense of identification with the governing colonial status quo. Indigenous languages were seen as a potential anti-colonial rallying point for communities and the cultures they linguistically represented. In order to check any movement towards regional

independence indigenous languages were therefore ridiculed as being inferior and suppressed<sup>xi</sup> with the consequence that many in independence movements viewed European languages, such as English, as the “building blocks of ... [a] linguistic prison” (Duke, 2006: 30). English became “intimately bound up with colonialism ... [and its] discourses” (Pennycook, 1998:28) and therefore upon independence, countries such as Burma/Myanmar and Malaysia sought to replace it with what was envisioned as being an empowering indigenous tongue.

The use of English as an instructional vehicle was especially frowned upon as it was perceived to impart a feeling of inferiority to indigenous populations and an ensuing sense of dependency upon the coloniser (Duke, 2006: 30). As a result considerable energy and resources went into promoting literacy programmes which focused upon the acquisition of a national indigenous language. However, language matters are intimately tied to cultural identity and those who did not belong to the privileged indigenous language group perceived themselves to be substantively disadvantaged and deprived of the power of natural expression (Singh, 1993:27). The replacement of English as the language of power by one particular local language provided a fertile ground for those seeking to exploit existing internal inter-communal tensions for their own agendas and in many situations simmering socio-linguistic resentment found expression in the explosion of previously suppressed ethnic tensions (ibid). In an effort to avoid such internecine conflict, many countries judged it better to retain (or in a number of cases to revert to) the tongue of their former colonial masters as the language of government and power for, when faced with a plethora of competing vernaculars, colonial languages were perceived to be non-partial and value neutral tongues that everyone must struggle equally to master (Crystal, 2003:145).

### The global rise of English in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a profound linguistic transformation became apparent. English became increasingly dominant as the key to international discourse and advancement both on an individual and societal level leaving indigenous languages effectively in the position of competing “for the second best slot” (Singh, 1993:27). The reasons for this change have been multifarious and reflective of

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<sup>xi</sup> This was especially so in school settings where corporal punishment was a frequent consequence of using a ‘native’ language (Duke, 2006:30).

complex international interchanges but without a doubt a primary cause has been the English language's relationship with the USA (Crystal, 2004:10; Fulcher, 2007:5).

The USA was the only World War II combatant to emerge financially, politically and militarily stronger. The other pre-war powers emerged exhausted and in inexorable retreat both geographically and linguistically since language usage is "always a reflection of power – political, technological, economic, cultural [and] religious" (Crystal, 2004:2). The collapse of the Soviet block in the late 1980s saw Russian, the English language's one remaining major geo-political rival, peter out as a competitor. Thus, with the USA as the world's sole remaining superpower, the English language assumed a default position of pre-eminence as the modern language of the powerful and the knowledgeable (Mazrui, 1975 cited in Altbach, 1997:635; Dasgupta, 1993:75).

#### English and the discourse of dominance

The link between language, knowledge and power is well-established and the development of English language skills is now widely considered vital to advancement and global competitiveness (Guilherme, 2002:12; Dasgupta, 1993:75) and "imperative for any country wishing to access the global community for economic development" (McKay, 2002:17). Nonetheless the almost exponential expansion and worldwide penetration of English during the last decades has led to concerns that the increasing use of English in development has created a self-perpetuating process ensuring the continuation of a dependency on Western systems (Pennycook, 1994:21-2). The concern is that, as "[l]anguage and culture are inexorably intertwined ... [and] reflect and reinforce our cultural patterns and value systems" (Byrne, 1980:19), by promoting English Language Teaching (ELT) indigenous policy makers have effectively abdicated their socio-cultural responsibilities because

an average Western researcher approach[es] ... language and education planning ... with a bias similar to the religious bias ... [of] Christian missionary educators (Singh, 1993:30).

The cultural and economic dominance of English has meant that it has come to be seen as essential in accessing knowledge, power and wealth (Dasgupta, 1993:143;

O'Shea, 2006:1, McKay, 2002:17-18; Fulcher, 2007:5), a process reinforced by its widespread adoption of the English language as "an international language ... used to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (McKay, 2002:38). Yet there is an apprehension that its "connection to social and economic power within and between nations ... and the various forces that are shaping the modern world" (Pennycook, 1994:23) merely reinforces a wider reciprocal "relationship between 'English'[sic] and ... discourses of capitalism, democracy, education [and] development ... that is both historical and contemporary" (ibid). For Goudge (2003:202) this process

unwittingly support[s] the increasing effects of Western culture – from acting as a role model to a quite explicit insistence that progress can only be made once everyone understands and speaks English.

In fact, rather than being challenged by developing nations, English language attainment has seemingly become in the minds of many policy makers the "key to the future" (O'Shea, 2006:1). With its speakers controlling the "discourse that defines development goals ... [and] allocates and deploys the resources to meet these targets" (Dasgupta, 1993:166) many policy makers and institutions consider it "imperative that economic recovery should go hand in hand with the raising of the standards of English" (Brock-Utne, 2000:124) thereby effectively ceding control over the development process to English (Dasgupta, 1993:219).

#### The potential of English to empower

In many developing countries however external considerations are less important than the reality of internal conditions. Countries, such as Pakistan, have a tradition of English educated managerial elites served by indigenous vernacular-instructed underclasses (Dasgupta, 1993:167) and in these countries lack of English language skills can easily "ration access to political institutions of power" (Tollefson, 1991:9). In these contexts an apparent causal linkage can be drawn between access to English language instruction and "control over social advancement in general" (Stroud, 2003:17) with those who lack sufficient language skills deemed at risk of being 'doomed' to the lower strata of society (Rahman, 2001:243; Tollefson, 1991:8; Stroud, 2003:17).

Accordingly, many development agencies and providers have come to see the provision of English language instruction as an integral part of a complete empowerment strategy<sup>xii</sup>. The appraisal appears to be that supplying English language instruction will empower those at the lower end of the social scale who are often those most affected by political and policy decisions with the ability to make themselves heard. English language instruction has hence moved from the periphery of development to being an increasingly integral part of strategies to promote social change at both individual and community level (Dasgupta, 1993:79). Yet this activist mindset appears to have engendered a reluctance to examine the inherent campaigning agenda within these programmes which, as with empowerment projects generally, often presupposes a right on the part of the provider to make judgement as to whether a society is ‘fair and equitable’ and to mediate the direction undertaken and type of change to be promoted (ibid).

#### The impact on the indigenous

The provision of ELT as part of an empowerment and capacity building strategy also crucially tends to ignore the fact that those who are most disadvantaged and disempowered tend to be from linguistic minorities which

first have to learn to speak the official language of the country ... which may be entirely unrelated to the language spoken by everyone around [them] (Smith, 2005:34).

These groups are already effectively endeavouring to learn in a ‘foreign’ language and thus any decision to support government policies endorsing English language education runs quite antithetically to the whole concept of empowerment and may even threaten indigenous ethnic identity (Smith, 2005:34; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:x)

The identification of the problematic nature of the use of non-indigenous, metropolitan tongues as the language of formal instruction is not new. In fact as far back as 1904 colonial authorities in India were of the opinion that,

English has no place, and should have no place in the scheme of primary education ... until [a child] has made some progress in the primary stages of instruction and has received a thorough grounding in his mother tongue

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<sup>xii</sup> In the UK “a fixed element of the ... overseas aid programme ... [is] specifically set aside to support it (VSO position paper, 2004:10)



(Lord Curzon's Educational Policy in India of 1904 as quoted in Prukait (n.d.), cited in Singh, 1993:22).

Yet there still seems to be no real consensus of opinion, even amongst academics in developing countries, as to the virtues or otherwise of placing primacy upon a person's mother tongue (Brock-Utne, 2002:129). Despite indications that instruction in non-indigenous languages actually works against wider educational attainment English has increasingly taken a position of primacy as the means of regional education (Moore, 2005:1; McLaughlin, 1997:89; Runawery et al, 1982:251; Pennycook, 1994:23; Sutherland, 2006:33). If truth be told any attempts to shift to instruction in indigenous tongues are more than likely to be seen as an imposition by the government and met with confusion and hostility by locals (Brock-Utne, 2001:125; Mansour, 1993:79).

#### The English language industry

The fact that many governments – including New Zealand – now have specific strategies and funding to promote the expansion of the English education export industry has meant that the projection of ELT as a

completely free-floating, half-humanitarian, technologically perfectable profession, separated or separable from not only other language-related issues but also from economic and political concerns (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:xxii)

has largely been left unchallenged. Naturally the English language industry has not chosen to oppose such a perception and a vast and growing global English as a Foreign Language (EFL) industry has arisen to cater for the mounting demand for English language instruction (Tollefson, 1991:7; Crystal, 2003:112)<sup>xiii</sup>. As noted previously in this chapter education has become all about having a certificate or qualification and increasingly this has meant one containing proof of English linguistic competency – preferably from an English language institution (Sutherland, 2006:33).

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<sup>xiii</sup> The British Council alone estimates that it earned over £164m in the year 2006 from its teaching and educational services (Ford, 2006:1).



As a result the demand for English assessment instruments has increased exponentially<sup>xiv</sup>. Such language assessment instruments are however primarily business concerns, usually integrally intertwined with academic contractors in the developed world, with quite pronounced professional agendas and marketing strategies (personal experience). Of these English language assessment instruments TOEFL, TOEIC and IELTS<sup>xv</sup> dominate the global market. TOEFL and TOEIC are products devised by Educational Testing Services with TOEFL being the oldest of these ‘big three’. It has been around since 1964, whereas TOEIC was created in the mid 70’s at Princeton, New Jersey, USA in response to requests from the Japanese Ministry of Trade and Industry (Gilfert, 1996:1). TOEIC is unusual as a language assessment tool in that until 2006 it was a straight multi-choice test limited to assessing listening and reading comprehension. Nevertheless despite its limitations and somewhat atypical approach TOEIC continues to dominate the English assessment market in Japan. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that its methodological approach very much reflects Japan’s traditional grammar translation English pedagogical tradition which conceives of English primarily as a capacity building tool to enable access to written technical information.

IELTS on the other hand differs from TOEFL and TOEIC in that it is a British based assessment built upon the English Proficiency Test Battery (EPTB) which “the British Council [used] in its overseas recruitment operation” (IELTS website, 2006) and from its inauguration has placed equal weight upon both productive and receptive language skills<sup>xvi</sup>. The growth of English as an international language coupled with the consequent increase in emphasis placed upon communicative competency has meant IELTS has been well placed to garner an increasing market prominence. As can be seen from Figure 5 below IELTS band achievement has become an ever more decisive factor in terms of education, immigration and professional registration and within much of Asia/ Oceania success or failure in IELTS tests can have a profound influence upon a person’s educational opportunities and career prospects. Moreover such has been the success of the IELTS testing system that aid programmes such as

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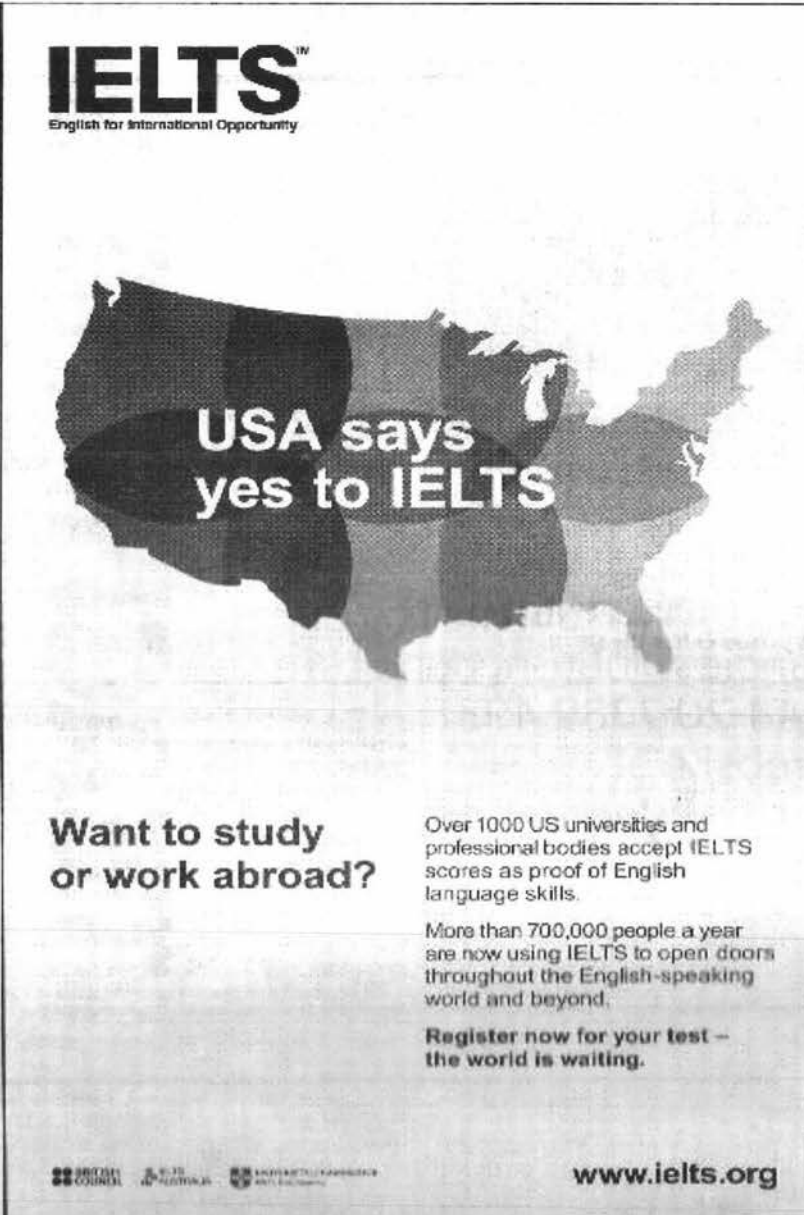
<sup>xiv</sup> More than 120,000 seven to twelve year olds took the Cambridge Young Learners English (YLE) tests on a single day in September, 2006 in China (Wilson, 2006:1).

<sup>xv</sup> Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

<sup>xvi</sup> In the English language teaching field speaking and writing are viewed as productive skills and reading and listening as receptive.

NZAID's ELTO programme increasingly use it as both a selection standard and an assessment of overall progress.

Source: (*Learning English, The Guardian Weekly*; May 25, 2007)



**IELTS™**  
English for International Opportunity

**USA says  
yes to IELTS**

**Want to study  
or work abroad?**

Over 1000 US universities and professional bodies accept IELTS scores as proof of English language skills.

More than 700,000 people a year are now using IELTS to open doors throughout the English-speaking world and beyond.

**Register now for your test –  
the world is waiting.**

BRITISH COUNCIL IELTS AUSTRALIA UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IELTS

[www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

Figure 5 IELTS advertisement

### English acquisition as a tool for personal advancement

Few learners “wish to be poets in the new language” (Byrne, 1980:40) and for most learners the motivation for English acquisition is firmly tied to extrinsic concerns such as educational opportunities, job prospects, immigration matters or simply because the

school curriculum requires them to do so (Harmer, 1991:1). The reality is that for most learners English is “the language of development and jobs [because if] you want to get ahead ... English is the ticket” (Bartoli quoted in Blanc, 2007). The desire for the projected comfortable materialistic consumerism of the ‘American Dream’ acts as a major motivator for those learning the English language (Baker, 1996:55; Dasgupta, 1993:167) and the rise of English as the *de facto* language of international transactions has meant that those with English language skills can “chase dollar jobs in Silicon Valley” (Iliaiah (n.d.) cited in Ramesh, 2006).

English has become established as a “status symbol, often rewarded with better pay” (O’Shea, 2006:1) and a ‘passport’ to a better life (Mahoob, 2002:30-1). The reality is that despite concerns that it is creating

an isolated and rootless elite infected by individualism, over-identifying with the West, hence ignorant and scornful of (or in any case cut off from) their own societies (Foster-Carter 1985:182 cited in Cooper, 1989:181),

increased English language skills frequently equate to employment prospects and advancement. The tourism sector provides a perfect example of this process because, with English being the *de facto lingua franca* of international travel, English communicative competency has become a necessary job seeker skill. It allows locals to obtain work in the formal sector (such as hotels, tourist businesses and transport) or to participate in the semi-formal sector (for example small scale home-stays, stall holders and horse-cart drivers) (Gupta, 2005:2) and, by offering the chance to earn foreign currency, affords protection against domestic inflation and, perhaps most significantly in countries such as Myanmar, provides the means by which requests can be ‘facilitated’ (personal experience and observation).

### English in education

As a consequence, even though many writers view the use of English as the language of instruction to be based on fallacious “received wisdom” (Wilson, 2006:1), the demand for English has accelerated “for business and practical reasons” (Richmond et al, 2007:49). Due to its dominant role as the language of technicality<sup>xvii</sup> (Dasgupta, 1993:142; Gupta, 2005:5; Crystal, 2003:117) and the perception that English “serv[es]

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<sup>xvii</sup> The fact that “around 80% of homepages on the World Wide Web are in ‘some kind of English’ ” (McCrum, 2006:17) has undoubtedly further reinforced this association.

a vast array of specific purposes ... [and is] the medium for countless discourse communities” (McKay, 2002:97) even countries such as Malaysia which followed post-independence policies of indigenous language promotion now actively promote the learning of English within the school curricula (Richmond et al, 2007:49). English language instruction has effectively become firmly associated in people’s minds with quality education (O’Shea, 2006:1) and it sometimes seems that policy makers have become convinced that English instruction is a prerequisite for producing

[a]n educated workforce able to operate in the international language ... [thereby providing an] economic advantage, a stronger platform for development and ... useful evidence [that] they are making progress (Wilson, 2006:1).

So pervasive has the fear of falling behind in the global competitiveness stakes become that, despite concerns over the “implications of the domination of English, of the Anglo-American academic systems and patterns of ownership of the international knowledge networks” (Mazurui, 1975 cited in Altbach, 1997:635), governments are racing to introduce English earlier and earlier into the schooling process. English is perceived to be a vital piece of equipment in the development toolkit with many of those involved in development “emphasis[ing] the financial, political, [sic] and socio-economic advantages” (Brock-Utne, 2001:115). Consequently many countries, such as China, which have little actual historical tradition of everyday English interaction now include it as an essential element in their educational assessment process (personal experience).

Given this importance placed upon English acquisition it is therefore natural that parents want “their children to get on the boat early and stay there” (Fu, 1987:29 in Pennycook, 1994:23). Yet, as noted previously, ELT is primarily a commercial industry. Parents often have to make great sacrifices in order to secure instruction for their children but due to the costs involved English language instruction is frequently beyond the reach of those in lower socio-economic circumstances. Furthermore, in an education system that emphasises English language skills, learners from less privileged vernacular backgrounds face additional hurdles. Lacking the historical links and access to English language instruction of elites, learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds continually need to deal with the issues arising from cultural

dynamics and learning discourse and it is this, rather than lack of actual structural knowledge of English, that can form the biggest stumbling block to effective English medium learning (McLaughlin, 1997:89; Mahoob, 2002:31).

In response to this state of affairs aid providers have increasingly advocated ELT aid policies and programmes which ‘level the playing field’ for the disadvantaged sections of the populace (VSO position paper, 2004:3). Yet, as many ELT programmes are run in partnership with governments, they are almost inevitably prey to wider socio-political realities. Even though a programme may not actually be run in a hands-on way by the government or its agents, those with influence may still view programme participation as a patronage tool to exploit for personal positioning (Crooks and Crewes, 1995:71). Thus, in a system skewed to “the privileges of ... an English language education” (Mahoob, 2002:31), the ELT programmes, instead of being a means of advancement for the disadvantaged, may merely serve as a gate-keeping mechanism to re-empower elites (Brock-Utne, 2001:115; Bray, 1997:110-111).

### Overview

Within development and linguistics circles there has been, and still is, much highly political discourse-based debate over the role of ELT both generally and in development strategy and theory in particular. This state of affairs has been exacerbated by the fact that many aid-reliant countries in the wake of loan restructuring have found themselves in the situation where donors have assumed a greater role as a decider of the direction of educational expenditure. The feeling is that English “remain[s] foreign for the majority of ordinary people, for whom development is intended” (King’ei, 1999:1) and therefore, rather than enabling indigenous people to determine their own destinies, permits outsiders to be positioned to “control the intellectual destiny of ... [local] children” (Brock-Utne, 2002:121). Moreover for many it seems that the privileging of English (especially in the educational context) has created a legacy “so all-pervading that it [has] affected, or in some cases paralysed any subsequent policy decisions” (Mansour, 1993:77).

Whilst such discourse driven critical approaches are undoubtedly valuable they can also appear somewhat agenda driven and predisposed to adopting deterministic

stances. Education is a ‘long game’ and the role of the English language as a tool for capacity building and empowerment “can only be fully appreciated if ... other factors are brought into focus” (Mansour, 1993:30-1). Any alteration in circumstances may be both subtle and hidden from outsiders but it seems nevertheless that, even without much in the way of proof of its effectiveness, English acquisition has become an imperative for many development actors. Consequently the number of English language aid programmes continues to grow apace with providers persisting in basing their ELT strategies upon a belief in the role of English in a ‘trickle down’ process of national development and empowerment (Dasgupta, 1993:215; McKay, 2002:17) despite there being “no research data to confirm this” (personal e-mail communication from an aid provider, 2006)<sup>xviii</sup>.

It is easy to criticise providers for promoting English as an instructional tool “without suggesting how it relates to a poverty-alleviating strategy” (VSO report, 2004:3). Yet language policies are “always socially situated and continually evolving” (Ricento, 2000:2). The on-the-ground reality is that in developing countries many people have a strong instrumental desire to learn English due to its dominance in international institutions, knowledge and business and it is this ‘client demand’ that ELT aid and development programmes seek to answer.

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<sup>xviii</sup> To ensure confidentiality the exact source of this communication has been not named.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Preface**

The rationales behind this research project's design are dealt with in this chapter and an overview is also given regarding the methodology used. This chapter also examines the projected and actual use made of the research instruments and how, due to circumstances beyond my control, the focus of the research design had to be substantively altered. Subsequent to this section a brief explanation is given regarding the choice of research participants along with an account of the application of those research methods that were able to be undertaken.

The aim of this research has been to investigate in what ways dedicated English Language Teaching (ELT) aid projects may fit into the current popular developmental paradigms of empowerment and capacity building. This research does not seek to provide any sort of definitive answer as to the role ELT may play in these processes but instead endeavours to examine participants' views and perceptions centred on the following overarching research questions:

- What is the perceived role of ELT in development?
- How do participants and providers view the acquisition of English language skills in reference to individual empowerment and capacity building?
- How are ELT aid programmes which involve a period of immersion in an English Target Language Community (ELTC) perceived to fit into the wider developmental paradigms of empowerment and capacity building?
- If ELT programmes are to be an integral part of empowerment and capacity building policies and strategies how might they be made more responsive and relevant?



### Background

As noted in the preceding chapters, empowerment, capacity building and learning, for all their currency and popularity within development, are fundamentally very individual and personal processes. Learning is an abstract concept that varies from person to person often producing “unanticipated outcomes that are intangible” (Torres (n.d.) cited in Guijt, 2000:204). Consequently the educational process cannot be concretely quantified as one would measure the number of trees planted or the length of road built (Smith, 1989 cited in Weir & Roberts, 1994:20). Even highly experienced ELT aid practitioners struggle “to specify the economic and social impact of ELT aid” (Weir and Roberts, 1994:22-3) and even if such an attempt is made there is the risk that it “may have little credibility, given the complexity of intervening variables” (ibid:22).

Nevertheless, with the large-scale increase of programmes which view ELT as a vector for the promotion of empowerment and capacity building the apparent lack of readily available published research seems somewhat anomalous. This lack is perhaps understandable given the aforementioned abstract nature of language acquisition, empowerment and capacity building. However, even allowing for the fact that concentrating on “measurable, behavioral [sic] objectives ... of what it is that programmes or projects can and should achieve is not without its limitations” (Weir & Roberts, 1994:21), aid projects need to “compare intended outputs and objectives against their actual achievement” (Alderson, 1986, in Weir and Roberts, 1994:20) in order to ensure that resources are utilised most effectively.

### The research design

Any accurate evaluation of an English Language Teaching (ELT) programme’s impact, whether it be in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment<sup>i</sup> or in an English Target Language Community (ETLC)<sup>ii</sup>, would likely require a longitudinal qualitative study. This sort of study is beyond both the compass and resources of this research. This project has instead aimed to use a mixed research method combining aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a small ‘snapshot’ of

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<sup>i</sup> EFL is used to indicate English instruction in a non-English speaking environment.

<sup>ii</sup> This designation is taken from Harmer (1991:1) and specifies a native English speaking country context.

participant and provider opinions. To this end three main research instruments were proposed for use in this research:

- Observation of a case study in Laos
- A questionnaire to be administered to ELT programme participants within the Lao observational case study and to participants on ELTC programmes in New Zealand
- Interviews to be conducted with provider and recipient administrators and instructors within New Zealand and Laos

The key reason for choosing these instruments was that they have the benefit (and perhaps the possible drawback) of being “the most frequently used in both developmental and accountability-oriented evaluations” (Weir & Roberts, 1994:25) and are therefore well-tested<sup>iii</sup>. Equally, because concepts such as empowerment, capacity building and learning tend to be very impressionistic and individual-specific, the projected use of the above three methods was to help triangulate<sup>iv</sup> any findings as triangulation is commonly held to improve the ability to make measurements and, when diverse indicators are used, to increase the reliability of the research findings (Neuman, 1997:151).

### Field case study

The proposed fieldwork section of the research was intended to contain an integrated use of observation, the administering of a questionnaire and some semi-structured interviews in a ‘learning loop’ with each of these methods complementing and helping to inform the direction and design of the others. The choice to use an observational case study as a research tool was made for a number of reasons; the foremost being that, as I have never taught on an in-country EFL aid programme, it was envisaged that observing a programme in situ would enable me to gain some sort of grounding as to the intrinsic issues and dynamics at ‘the sharp end’ (Broughton & Hampshire, 1997:64).

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<sup>iii</sup> An important consideration for a first-time researcher such as myself.

<sup>iv</sup> “[T]he application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (Denzin, 1997:318).

An integral part of the projected field research was to be the administering of a questionnaire to course participants. It was envisaged that this questionnaire would, as much as possible, have the same format as one to be administered to participants on English language programmes in New Zealand with a similar arrangement to be adhered to regarding any interviews undertaken. The questionnaire was fashioned to be both flexible enough to allow for adaptation according to my evaluation of circumstances, situations and the participants and to facilitate comparisons between the perceptions of those involved in an in-country EFL setting (Laos) and those in an ETLC; in this case New Zealand.

The choice of site for my proposed fieldwork was made in consultation with my supervisors with the following issues taken into account:

- *A society and area which had no direct colonial English history*

A major concern was to try to avoid areas that had any strong previous links with the English language because a British colonial history almost inevitably means that English acquisition has become freighted with connotations of power and privilege (Kishwar, 210-221, Hameso, 1-13, Rahman, 242-261).

- *Accessibility*

As I am working full-time as an English language teacher accessibility to the fieldwork area was an area of major concern. The maximum length of any observation period would be effectively restricted to the length of my annual leave - a period of four weeks - therefore any location that was isolated or for which transport was intermittent and/or unreliable could not be considered.

- *A willing provider*

Obtaining informed consent and cooperation is an ethical research imperative no matter where one may be. Just as critically all field work requires the cooperation of those being observed because, even if permission has been officially obtained, should there be conflict or non-cooperation from participants data can be concealed or provided with no context or explanation which may ultimately lead to an incomplete and unsatisfactory (if not outright failed) research project.

- *Some knowledge of the area on my part*

This point was one of personal preference on my part as I felt that if I had some experience of the area some of the awe and awkwardness of ‘strangeness’ would be lessened thereby allowing me to be more concise and complete in my observations. Equally important was the presupposition on my part that previous experience and awareness of some of the cultural and societal issues of a locale would enable interactions with locals involved in programmes (either as participants or administrators) to be more relaxed thereby hopefully facilitating the flow of information.

After taking the above points into consideration Laos was chosen as the proposed fieldwork site because:

- Laos’ colonial experience was French and after the communist victory the country was, by and large, shut off from western influence until the opening of the Friendship Bridge in the 1990s.
- The programme to be observed was in the Laos/Thailand border area (with the possibility of a supplementary study in the Lao capital Vientiane) thus travel, although by no means simple, would not be overly problematic.
- The particular programme involved and its in-country contact were known to both my supervisors who kindly facilitated an introduction for me. Most crucially the provider, when approached, appeared to be interested in my project and readily agreed to participate
- I have been to the South East Asia area a number of times and, when apprised of my proposed research, a number of former students resident in the neighbouring Thai border area volunteered their assistance.

### The best laid plans ...

All research is prey to chance however and even the best laid plans can go ‘pear-shaped’. Unfortunately this is exactly what happened to my proposed field work. The following narrative details this development and provides some speculation and supposition on my part as to the reasons why my plans did not eventuate.

After the decision was made regarding the proposed location for my fieldwork I proceeded in June 2006 to get in touch with the person in charge of the programme in Laos that I was proposing to observe. They were very helpful and welcoming and, as it was necessary to secure official approval for my proposed project in Laos, provided me with the name of a Lao government official to contact. Upon receipt of this official's contact details I proceeded to e-mail and fax an outline of the research proposal to the official along with the timeframe I needed to adhere to. Throughout the next couple of months I kept in regular contact with my Lao programme connection who very kindly sought to help me with the processing of my application. There was however a marked lack of correspondence on the part of the Lao authorities and in the absence of any acknowledgement from the Lao authorities a number of follow-up reminders and prompts were sent in the ensuing weeks to the Lao government contact official.

Eventually, after sending yet another prompt, I received in late July 2006 a communication from my programme contact. I have reproduced below the relevant section which I think ably describes the situation<sup>v</sup>.

*Hi Brett,*

*I'm afraid the news is not fantastic - I have just spoken to Mr. \*\*\*\*\* and he was rather uncertain as to what had become of your initial request. He explained that he sent it to another department, the Asia Pacific Division, as he thought your research topic was not really related to his department. They in turn apparently passed it on to the Department of Cooperation (as in development cooperation, to the person in charge of NZ I think). Now this is where it gets confusing – Mr. \*\*\*\*\* is not sure whether it is still being processed, or whether it has been mislaid altogether. Apparently he followed up with the guy from the Asia-Pacific division, who remembered it quite clearly, but says he passed it on to the Dept of Cooperation (or perhaps the Ministry of Education) - but the guy at the Dept Coop says he never received it.*

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<sup>v</sup> All names and identifying information have been removed for confidentiality reasons.

*So... his suggestion was that you resend it (your original request) to him (Mr. \*\*\*\*\*) by fax and he will pass it on again to make sure that someone has it. His fax number is (and I presume this is the same as the last one I gave you) 00-856-.....*

*I'm sorry about this (as is Mr. \*\*\*\*\*), and I do hope the wheels start cranking for you soon!*

Upon receipt of this communication I immediately dispatched another copy of my proposal by both e-mail and fax<sup>vi</sup> as I considered the opportunity to conduct fieldwork to be a necessary element of my projected research. However, by September 2007, despite both myself and my programme contact doing our best, I had still received no answer to my request. It was at this point that I needed to make a choice as to whether to keep pursuing the matter and, due to time strictures, I reluctantly decided I would have to forgo my proposed fieldwork.

### Reflections on the process

Based upon personal experiences in dealings with bureaucracies in South East Asia and discussions with various people who have worked in Laos I suspect my difficulty in obtaining permission for my fieldwork was most probably due to bureaucratic inertia. I have since been informed by people familiar with government departments in this area that powerful political connections would have encouraged the processing of my application or alternately that my difficulties could have been solved if I, or someone on my behalf, had 'facilitated' my application; both not uncommon solutions to problems in many countries. It was also suggested that I should simply go over as a tourist and then do my fieldwork once I arrived. However, as tempting as this seemed, I considered this course of action to be a 'non-starter' ethically because my presence would have placed the people I would have been working with in an unacceptable position and possibly even have put their programme at risk.

Once it became clear that approval for my observation case study would fail to materialise it was obvious that my research design needed to be amended to take

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<sup>vi</sup> Even this proved problematic as it took four days for my e-mails and faxes to get through and be acknowledged.



account of the enforced changes. Fortunately as noted previously New Zealand based research centred on participant questionnaires and provider interviews was always planned as an integral part of the overall research design. Therefore, in response to the situation I found myself in, these components were developed and enhanced in order to enable them to assume the role of being the main information gathering instruments for my study. The following sections detail how these instruments were constructed and implemented.

### Participant questionnaires

The use of a questionnaire was intended to be an integral part of this research project right from the initial planning stages. The information sought through the questionnaire can be divided into two principle fields:

- i. baseline data such as age, gender and education of EFL programme participants.
- ii. participants' opinions and reflective comments regarding English learning and how they viewed it in terms of their life opportunities: that is reasons for learning English, status of English, the relevance of English in their home-country context.

The original objective was to administer the same questionnaire in both Laos and New Zealand programme environments in order to test the perceptions of those involved in an ELT programme in a non-native English speaking setting against those who were involved in a New Zealand ELTC programme. The rationale behind the adoption of this process was that it would permit comparisons to be carried out between programmes and thus enable some wider inferences to be made regarding such programmes (Broughton & Hampshire, 1997:73). However, as noted previously it became necessary to shift the focus of the study from one based upon comparison between in-country and ETLC programmes to one centred more upon the comparison between providers' and recipients' viewpoints in a New Zealand ETLC context. Fortunately I found that the comparative methodology originally envisaged was still valid because as they had originally been framed with a New Zealand ETLC component in mind the research questions lent themselves readily to this change.



### *Survey structure*

Both versions of the questionnaire<sup>vii</sup> used in this research are based upon McDermott's (2004) survey and on participant evaluation questionnaires employed by the Japanese government sponsored Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. Both sources have been extensively adapted for the purposes of this research with the former primarily drawn upon as a reference source for questions and the JET programme questionnaires used as a survey template. An important factor in the design of the questionnaire was that its structure should appear both concise and non-intimidating to potential participants as it would be administered to programme participants from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds and English language ability levels.

To this end the questionnaire was configured so as to contain both closed/guided yes/no, closed choices, ranking questions and more open, unstructured prompts which sought the respondents' own evaluations and impressions. The questionnaire has as a result been constructed so that the first section of the survey deals primarily with generic quantitative information followed by a mixture of yes/no, multi-choice and ranking exercises with the more opinion based questions situated towards the questionnaire's end. It was hoped that the initial more structured section would enable the participants to make a reasonably comfortable transition to the later more evaluative open-ended qualitative (What do you think ...?) questions as well as stimulating their thoughts regarding English acquisition and status. The choice of this pattern was reinforced by feedback from a trial of the questionnaire which demonstrated that this type of configuration was one that the respondents found familiar, less intimidating and more 'user-friendly'. It will be noted that many of the qualitative, evaluative questions have been framed in a somewhat more subjective manner than the normal 'neutral' research question form. The use of such question wording was a deliberate choice made after consultation with my supervisors for it was anticipated that the use of provocative prompts would potentially stimulate stronger and hopefully more honest responses from the participants.

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<sup>vii</sup> See Appendices 3 and 4.

### Choice of survey participants

The questionnaire was administered to two groups of EFL learners at the Massey University Centre for University Preparation and English Language Studies (CUPELS) and to a group of learners on the English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) programme who were studying at the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT). Both CUPELS groups were dominated by Thais involved in the education field whilst those on the ELTO programme were professional public servants who, although they were also from Asian countries, came from more varied ethnic backgrounds. I have been involved in the ELT profession as a teacher and International English Language Teaching System (IELTS) examiner for many years and these groups were chosen because I judged that they were representative of participants on New Zealand ELTC resident capacity building courses<sup>viii</sup>.

### Administration sequence

A draft form of the questionnaire was provided to both my supervisors and to colleagues who had experience in conducting surveys. Upon receipt of their feedback a number of amendments were made before finally administering a trial survey. The trialling process and later responses to the questionnaire also drew attention to some concerns and as a result some adjustments were instituted to the questionnaire between its two administrations<sup>ix</sup>.

Before administering the questionnaire to the groups studying at CUPELS approval was sought from the centre's director. Upon receiving this, teachers who had members of the possible survey groups in their classes were approached and the research project outlined to them. The teachers were then asked to allow me to enter their classrooms in order to explain my research to the students and request their participation.

Once this consent was obtained I provided potential participants in the class with a printed information sheet and consent form<sup>x</sup>. Time was also taken at this stage to

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<sup>viii</sup> It must be emphasised that none of the CUPELS participants were, or ever had been, students of mine as during their time at CUPELS I was teaching on a quite distinct programme from theirs.

<sup>ix</sup> See Appendices 3 and 4.

<sup>x</sup> Appendices 1 and 2a respectively.

carefully explain verbally the research project and their rights if they chose to take part in the research. It was stressed that all responses were at their own discretion and that they could answer as many or a few questions as they wished. After I answered any questions the students were then asked to consider whether they would like to participate. It was emphasised that no decision needed to be made 'on the spot' and questionnaires were made available for those who thought they might wish to participate to take away and consider.

The rationale behind taking the approach outlined above was to ensure that by allowing the students time to contemplate whether or not they wanted to take part no student would feel pressured into participating. It was also considered that giving participants the option to answer the questionnaire at their leisure would allow them time, space and privacy to consider their responses and, where necessary, to consult dictionaries. It is accepted that the fact that the survey process was conducted in English placed restrictions on the participants' responses because, as can be seen in the following chapter, as English language learners most of them had some issues with expressing themselves with precision in English. Nevertheless this procedural constraint was necessary as I had neither the linguistic abilities nor the resources to provide questionnaires in the participants' first language or to translate their responses.

The process of questionnaire administration to the ELTO group was essentially the same as that detailed above. Permission was first sought from the administrator of the programme with a research outline and copy of the questionnaire provided in order to enable the administrator to make a considered response. Once any resultant queries were answered and authorization was obtained the group's programme instructor was provided with a copy of the administration sequence I wished followed. Following feedback I am quite satisfied that, despite my not being present, the same questionnaire administration procedure was adhered to with the ELTO group as that followed with the CUPELS groups detailed above.

### Interviews

Interviews were from the outset proposed as an integral part of my thesis research<sup>xi</sup>. The plan was to conduct interviews with field practitioners, administrators, instructors and programme participants both in Laos and New Zealand as part of the aforementioned process of triangulating information. It was envisaged that, as with the questionnaire, a common question base would be utilised to enable divergent perceptions to be exposed. Of equal importance was the consideration that the interview format should have sufficient flexibility to allow the following up of any points of interest which arose.

The interviews were designed to follow a semi-structured format with prompts coming from a list of pre-prepared questions<sup>xii</sup>. This method was chosen as it was both “less time-consuming than either informal or topic focused interview[s]” (Broughton & Hampshire, 1997:61) and, as noted previously, would allow enough flexibility to explore any items of interest which arose in the course of the interview. After consultation with my supervisors the decision was made not to tape any interviews but to instead rely upon the use of notes. The reasons for adopting this procedure were primarily of a practical nature with the use of notes seen to have the benefit of minimising both the chances of any technical problems and the amount of gear needed (both areas of concern when working as intended in the field in Laos). It must be noted though that, for reasons previously detailed<sup>xiii</sup>, it was not possible to conduct interviews with those on in-country EFL programmes and thus all the interviews conducted were with providers, instructors and administrators based in New Zealand. However, despite this change the choice to not tape interviews was retained. While it is acknowledged that such an approach has potential pitfalls it must be emphasised that extensive notes were taken at the time of the interview and then promptly reviewed after the completion of the interview.

### Interview construction

As with the survey, the interview question structure is adapted from McDermott (2004) but with questions modified, expanded and added to so as to explore the

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<sup>xi</sup> See ‘The research design’.

<sup>xii</sup> Appendix 5.

<sup>xiii</sup> See ‘The best laid plans ...’

interview participants' personal reflections, underpinning philosophies, ELT course content and aims. The interview questions went through the same trialling process as the survey questionnaire<sup>xiv</sup> and, as a result of feedback, underwent changes where it was judged beneficial. The most significant of these changes was that the interview questions were grouped into six general key information areas in order to provide a more logical structure to the interview process<sup>xv</sup>. This layout was not rigid though and the questions primarily formed a reference base to ensure that the major research issues were covered. However, as the direction of the interview was subject to changes in response to the replies of the interviewee, many times not all question areas were encompassed nor were all the questions in a section asked during the course of an interview.

### *Choice of interview participants*

Prior to the beginning of the research I had already forged some contacts with a number of people involved - past and present - on a range of different English aid language programmes whom I considered could be potential interview participants. Due to my initial planning being informed by the prospect of fieldwork in Laos<sup>xvi</sup> my preliminary choice of interview participants was based upon those who had participated on EFL programmes in Asia - especially within the South East Asia context. The rationale behind this choice was that it was projected that a data base of issues and information could be formed which would assist and inform any following fieldwork.

Although the choice of interview participants was initially made from a group of colleagues and friends who had been involved in EFL aid programmes I found, as the study progressed, that a 'snowball' effect began to manifest itself whereby a person contacted would then recommend others whom they considered could usefully contribute to the research. This facet was one of the really pleasing and motivating experiences of the research process but also highlighted the inherently small and inter-related character of the ELT and development fields within the New Zealand context.

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<sup>xiv</sup> See 'Administration sequence'.

<sup>xv</sup> See Appendix 5.

<sup>xvi</sup> See 'The research design'.

This ‘referral system’, although extremely helpful, had however the potential to become somewhat of a ‘double-edged sword’. This is because the interviewees involved in one specific programme were extremely accommodating and helpful and therefore as time progressed my research became more and more centred on a particular provider and one of its programmes. In order to avoid any resultant repercussions for the wider research design interviewees were therefore encouraged to use their wider ELT and development programme experiences to explore the broader issues raised by the interview questions. The use of a semi-structured interview format was very helpful in facilitating this process as it enabled the ‘tailoring’ of both questions and the course of the interview in response to the interviewees’ answers.

### *Interview process*

The interview arrangement most commonly used in this research was the personal one-on-one meeting because these are recognised generally as being “easier to manage than group interviews” (Broughton & Hampshire, 1997:61). However, telephone and group interviews were also used and in one case, due to distance and time pressures, the interview questions were responded to in written form. Nonetheless no matter which set-up was used all potential interview participants were provided with an information sheet giving a brief overview of my research background and intentions, a copy of the interview questions and a consent form<sup>xvii</sup> before any agreement to participate was sought.

Interviews were usually arranged with participants via correspondence (primarily by way of e-mail) with the emphasis being, as much as was feasible, upon the participant having the choice of when, where and how any interview would be conducted. The expectation was that adopting this sort of approach would minimise any inconvenience to potential interviewees and thereby hopefully encourage them to participate. It was also anticipated that providing copies of the interview questions would permit participants to prepare themselves and to seek permission to participate where necessary with the result that those interviewed would feel more at ease to provide information.

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<sup>xvii</sup> See Appendices 1, 5, 2a and 2b respectively.



Before each interview commenced the nature and background of this study and the rights of participants as detailed in the information sheet<sup>xviii</sup> and the consent form<sup>xix</sup> were verbally explained. Upon acknowledgement that the potential participant clearly understood their rights they were then asked whether they wished to continue with the interview process and, if this was the case, whether they wished to sign the consent form. Unexpectedly most declined to sign being content with giving verbal consent. One participant did however express a desire to alter the wording of the provided consent form in order to cover a concern they had. This was readily agreed to but with the proviso that a copy of their amended consent form<sup>xx</sup> be returned to me.

The amount of control taken by myself as researcher over the direction of each interview varied because my overriding aim was to facilitate a flexible and responsive interview process. To this end each individual interview was tailored to the participant, with the interviewee - as much as was possible within the parameters of the research design - determining the direction of the discussion. As explained earlier, the set interview questions<sup>xxi</sup> were mostly used as an occasional prompt to either encourage the interviewee to further explore an issue that arose or to redirect them if the interview started to veer too far away from the research subject. Nevertheless it must be noted that, in order to enable some degree of comparability when it came to data analysis, care was taken within each interview to cover the same broad issues relating to the research questions.

### Overview

My research experiences illustrate a number of factors which frequently influence field work; namely the issue of time constraints and how difficult it can be, especially when you are not in the country, to deal with overseas government departments and bureaucracy particularly when working in a different socio-linguistic environment. Laos is not unique when it comes to requiring official approval for field research proposals. Given the fact that - apart from the consideration of the desirability of allowing possibly intrusive activities - much aid and development input tends to be tied to the potentially politically sensitive field of foreign relations such requirements

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<sup>xviii</sup> Appendix 1.

<sup>xix</sup> Appendix 2a.

<sup>xx</sup> Appendix 2b.

<sup>xxi</sup> See Appendix 5



are quite understandable. However, I would in the future be more considered when dealing with countries such as Laos which operate a highly hierarchical, single-party state political environment as such milieus tend to discourage personal initiative and cause government officials to be risk averse with the consequence that decision-making processes are slow, highly bureaucratic and somewhat opaque.

My experiences reinforce the tremendous importance of retaining project flexibility and the necessity of designing a 'back-up' plan for any research project in case of problems. The problems encountered in regard to my proposed fieldwork necessitated a change of my research methods and a greater reliance upon the use of qualitative methods - especially semi-structured interviews. The research has also become somewhat narrower in scope than originally envisioned with a more restricted choice of participants and as a consequence this thesis has become centred much more upon the experiences and perceptions of programme providers and recipients within the New Zealand context.

Nevertheless the fact that the possibility of adverse eventualities was taken into account in the research design meant that I was able to retain my overall research focus on the functional dynamics and issues for ELT aid programmes in empowerment and capacity building strategies. I also found the use of the research methods adopted to be highly successful in engaging the study participants with the result that the issues encompassed in my research questions were explored in a quite wide-ranging fashion enabling information that had not been foreseen came to light. The next chapter will detail some representative conceptions, opinions and experiences presented by the providers and recipients who participated in this study and in Chapter Five these responses will be explored in more depth with some of the commonalities and divergences both between and amongst groups being further discussed.

## Chapter Four

### Research responses

The aim of this research has been to ascertain provider and participant views regarding the role English Language Teaching (ELT) aid programmes, particularly those which involve a period of residency in an English Target Language Community (ETLC), in reference to the promotion of the paradigms of empowerment and capacity building. This chapter presents and describes the data gathered during the research process and as explained in the previous methodology section, is derived from two main sources: a questionnaire<sup>i</sup> administered to English language learners on New Zealand ELT resident programmes and semi-structured interviews<sup>ii</sup> conducted with selected programme administrators and instructors. It should be noted that a number of the questions in the participant questionnaire, especially in the section dealing with the participants' employment, were designed with the prospect of fieldwork in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment but for reasons discussed in the previous chapter were ultimately only administered to participants on ELT courses in New Zealand<sup>iii</sup>.

The information gathered during the research process has been collated in this chapter in two broad sections: 'Participant responses' and 'Provider interviews'. The data provided by ELT programme participants in response to the questionnaire is dealt with in the 'Participant responses' section and the information garnered from interviews with those involved in the provision of ELT programmes in the 'Provider interviews' section. This structure has been adopted in order to enable contrasts and concurrences between responses to be more easily ascertained. In the interests of ensuring confidentiality, none of those who answered the questionnaire or who were interviewed have been named and any information which would enable their identification has been withheld. Additionally as some information was provided 'off the record' it has not been directly referred to and has instead only been utilised to give breadth to the interpretation of responses that were able to be made use of. More

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<sup>i</sup> See Appendices 3 and 4 for the questionnaire.

<sup>ii</sup> See Appendix 5 for the interview question base.

<sup>iii</sup> See Chapter 3; The best laid plans ...?

in-depth interpretation of the research data submitted in this chapter will be handled in Chapter Five ‘Research observations and reflections’.

### Participant questionnaire responses

The questionnaire section of this chapter deals with responses from learners participating in ELT courses in New Zealand. As discussed in Chapter Three ‘Methodology’ the questionnaire was aimed at eliciting data relating to both the participants’ backgrounds and their opinions regarding the role of English in their home context. The objective was to determine the participants’ attitudes towards English both at a personal level and in terms of its perceived position in their home institutions. To this end the questionnaire was constructed so as to contain both closed/guided responses (i.e. yes/no, closed choices, numbering) and more open, unstructured prompts which aimed to elicit the respondents’ evaluations and impressions in their own words.

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire has been presented in the form of tables whilst the qualitative data provided by the participants’ longer written responses has been primarily utilised to illustrate this data<sup>iv</sup>. The wording used within the tables is presented as in the questionnaire and no attempt has been made to either correct or amend the participants’ longer written responses which have been reproduced as provided - including all errors in English. It was felt that adopting this course would help to illustrate some of the language problems and difficulties faced by the participants when learning English. I also considered that any attempt on my part to edit the participants’ responses would stifle the participants’ individual voices and most importantly that the imposition of my own interpretation of their replies ran the risk of possibly altering the respondents’ intended meaning.

As part of the research process some alterations were made to the question format resulting in two slightly different questionnaire versions being administered: one to ELT programme participants at the Massey University Centre for University Preparation and English Language Studies (CUPELS) and the other to those studying

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<sup>iv</sup> The comments in this section are quite distinct from, and should not be confused with, information obtained from interviews with providers which is dealt with in the subsequent ‘Provider interviews’ section.

at the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT)<sup>v</sup>. The CUPELS participants were dominated by two main cohorts: one being Thai university lecturers and the other employees of the Thai Ministry of Education. The respondents in the EIT group were all involved in NZAID’s English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) programme. In total there were 37 questionnaire respondents; 23 from CUPELS and 14 from EIT. Where possible the participants’ responses have been aggregated but where amalgamation has not been deemed feasible separate tabulations of the CUPELS and EIT participants’ replies are provided<sup>vi</sup>. The questions in the initial section of the survey which deal with the age, gender, education and occupation of the participants were designed to provide a broad profile of the respondents in order to inform the process of interpreting their responses.

*Age and Gender*

As programme providers often include equity and empowerment goals in their programme design and participation strategies the initial section of the survey was designed to provide a breakdown of the age and gender composition of the programme participants who took part in this research.

**Table 1: Age** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

<b>Less than 20</b>	<b>20 - 30</b>	<b>31 - 40</b>	<b>41 - 50</b>	<b>More than 50</b>
0	12	18	5	2

It can be seen from Table 1 above that the overall respondent age grouping was reasonably well-spread. There is however a fairly pronounced weighting towards the under 40 age groups with the number of participants over 40 tailing off noticeably<sup>vii</sup>. This weighting perhaps indicates that those within the 20-30 and 31-40 age groups look at the improvement of their English skills as one participant phrased it as a way “to have added value in looking for a job and career”<sup>viii</sup>. However, the reason for this

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<sup>v</sup> See Chapter 3 ‘Administration sequence’ and Appendices 3 and 4.  
<sup>vi</sup> See Appendices 6 and 7 for the respective individual tabulation of responses of the two groups.  
<sup>vii</sup> As evidenced in appendices 6 and 7 this pattern holds for both the CUPELS and ELTO participant groups.  
<sup>viii</sup> As stated earlier in this chapter all the quotes in this section are taken from written participant responses to the questionnaire and have been reproduced as written; including all spelling and grammar errors.

weighting may equally be that the participants’ employers and/or programme providers consider that, as they potentially have more work years left, this younger age grouping is considered a more ‘cost-effective’ group to place on programmes.

**Table 2: Gender** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

Male	Female
10	27

As Table 2 illustrates the ratio of male to female participants on the surveyed programmes ran 3 to 1 in favour of females with the CUPELS’ groups especially showing a greater gender bias in favour of women<sup>ix</sup>. The reasons for this are probably multifarious but could possibly reflect the application of a programme aim to promote gender equity. This supposition would seem to be credible regarding the ELTO programme as it was remarked during the course of interviews with providers involved with this programme that the promotion of gender equity was one of its goals. However, judging from some of the responses provided by the participants at CUPELS a probable reason for the preponderance of women in their cohort was that in Thailand there is an increasing tendency for both the fields of education and English language teaching to be female dominated<sup>x</sup>.

*Participant education and English language education levels*

This section of the questionnaire was designed to establish the participants’ educational background and their English language experience in an attempt to identify any correlation between educational attainment levels and English language acquisition levels. A person’s level of education can often be a strong indicator of their socio-economic status and as McLaughlin (1997:89) notes access to English language instruction is often uneven and unequal in many societies in the developing world<sup>xi</sup>. Therefore the results from this section were envisioned to help establish if, as Wilson (2006:1) argues, English plays a part in determining a participant’s perceived socio-economic standing and if it may perform any alterations to it.

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<sup>ix</sup> See Appendices 6 and 7.  
<sup>x</sup> If this is indeed so then it reflects the current pattern in New Zealand education (New Zealand Ministry of Education website, 2006).  
<sup>xi</sup> See Chapter Two; ‘English in education’ for further discussion of this point.

**Table 3: Participant education attainment level** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

*What is your highest level of education achieved?*

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
0	0	37

Table 3 above shows that all participants in this research had achieved a tertiary level of education. While this result can be ascribed to the fact that the survey groups were composed of those who could be classified as being belonging to the professional classes<sup>xii</sup> this result when viewed in conjunction with the data in Table 4 below, which reveals that all bar one of the respondents had studied English before coming to New Zealand, seems to strongly support Bartoli’s (quoted in Blanc, 2007) and O’Shea’s (2006:1) contention that English is seen to be an integral element in empowering a person’s professional progression.

**Table 4: Previous English language study** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

*Have you ever studied English before this course?*

Yes	No	No Response
35	1	1

The almost complete unanimity of positive participant responses in Table 4 seems to underline the perceptual importance of English globally (McCrum, 2006:17; Fulcher, 2007:5) with one participant noting that even though “now, it’s<sup>xiii</sup> not much helpful but if I want to be growth in my career, English language skills are necessary”. In order to better gauge the impact that ELT has had in non-native English speaking societies the participants were also asked to indicate at which educational level they had studied English. The responses in Table 5 below show that English has obviously formed a part - perhaps even a compulsory element - of most respondents’ schooling. The fact that the vast majority of participants had studied English in a tertiary institution provides support for O’Shea’s (2006) and Mazuri’s (1975, cited in Altbach, 1997:635) contentions that English has attained a dominance as the language of discourse in higher education.

<sup>xii</sup> See Chapter Three for a discussion of the reasons for this bias.  
<sup>xiii</sup> i.e. The English language.



**Table 5: Participants place of English language study (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)<sup>xiv</sup>**

*Where did you study English?*

Primary School	Secondary School	Tertiary	Private Lessons	No Response
14	22	28	20	2

As shown in Tables 4 and 5 almost all participants appear to have had some English instruction and it is striking that Table 5 indicates that a significant proportion of participants had had English language instruction as part of their primary schooling. This result would seem to bear out the proposition that English acquisition is seen as being so vital for both personal advancement and societal development that it is indeed being introduced as early as possible into the learning process<sup>xv</sup>. This finding combined with the fact that many of the participants had considered the acquisition of English language skills important enough to go to the expense of taking private language lessons point to the fact that there is a strong perception that, as two of the participants put it, “people in the country use English as second languages is gain benefit” and “can tak advantage in their ability”.

It is evident when looking at the overall number of responses that some of the participants have checked more than one of the provided options and have probably studied English in more than one ELT setting. This possibility was taken into account in the questionnaire design and in order to more fully ascertain the participants’ individual exposure to English they were asked a follow-up question. As can be seen in Tables 6 and 7 the wording of this follow-up survey question differs between the ELTO and CUPELS groups. The reason for this alteration was because after reflection and advice from my supervisors the word ‘study’ was considered to have too great an academic flavour and could therefore preclude the participants’ reflection on their actual historical English language usage. Nevertheless, even allowing for the difference in the survey question construction, Tables 6 and 7 illustrate an apparent gap between the ELTO and CUPELS respondents’ English exposure. Table 6 shows that most of the ELTO participants were comparatively new to learning English as a second language with most having studied it for less than 5 years. In contrast Table 7

<sup>xiv</sup> Some multiple responses were provided.

<sup>xv</sup> See Chapter Two; ‘English in education’.



demonstrates that, even although there is a significant spread in responses, the great majority of the CUPELS participants had been using English for more than 5 years<sup>xvi</sup>.

**Table 6: Length of time in participants have studied English** (ELTO participants only)

*How long have you studied English?*

Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	More than 5 years
2	1	2	0	2	2	5

**Table 7: Length of time in participants have used English** (CUPELS participants only)

*How long have you used English?*

1-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	> 20 years	Other response
3	3	4	4	4	4

This difference in length of English language exposure can potentially be subscribed to the differing historical national political backgrounds of the two groups<sup>xvii</sup>. The CUPELS group’s home countries have histories of political, military and economic interaction with the English speaking countries whilst the ELTO group members were drawn from nations such as Vietnam and Laos whose historical relationship with the English language is far more problematic. However, irrespective of the cause the results presented in Tables 6 and 7 would seem to provide some statistical support for the proposition that ELT aid programmes such as NZAID’s ELTO programme are required in order to help those in areas with less historical English language exposure to ‘catch up’<sup>xviii</sup>.

Employment

One of the aims of this thesis is to examine how participants and providers view the acquisition of English language skills in reference to individual empowerment and capacity building and a person’s employment is integral to evaluation of these

<sup>xvi</sup> See Appendix 6.  
<sup>xvii</sup> See Appendices 6 and 7.  
<sup>xviii</sup> See Chapter Two; ‘Overview’.

matters. It would seem logical to assume that if a person has found employment in a sector such as tourism or aid and development this will exert a discernable impact on an individual's motivation to learn English. This section of the questionnaire was therefore designed to explore the nature of the participants' job or jobs and their income sources in order to ascertain what influence they may have had on the participants' English language acquisition pattern.

As discussed in Chapter One many people in developing countries, including government employees, take supplementary jobs in order to supplement and diversify their income stream. In areas experiencing economic uncertainty or upheaval such tactics are sensible stratagems as they help to ameliorate the effects of economic disruption. It is noticeable however that all 14 of the ELTO respondents (Table 8) identified themselves as government employees. Although 18 of the 23 CUPELS participants also identified themselves as working for the government Table 9 demonstrates a much wider variety of responses than the ELTO group and it seems likely that the participants in the CUPELS group undertook secondary employment. The divergence between the two cohorts can probably be explained by the nature of the ELT programmes they were on. The ELTO programme is, as noted before, a dedicated capacity building aid programme whose specific aim is to improve government workers' English language skills. To get onto the course, participants first have to go through a competitive nomination process in their home country which is then followed by a separate provider selection procedure. Accordingly it seems reasonable to suppose this selection system provides a strong disincentive for participants to admit to any secondary employment if they wish to be on the programme.

It is intriguing to note however that at least half of the ELTO group responded positively to survey question 8<sup>xix</sup> which asked if they had more than one way of earning money. It is possible that due to the question's placement some participants may have misunderstood the question but given the overall pattern of responses it would seem that a number of the ELTO programme participants may indeed have alternate income streams. Although I would have liked to have explored this area

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<sup>xix</sup> See Appendix 3.

further circumstances unfortunately did not allow me to so consequently it remains a topic for future research.

**Table 8: Employment (ELTO participants only)<sup>xx</sup>**

<b>Own boss</b>	<b>Work for another person</b>	<b>In a private company</b>	<b>For the government</b>	<b>For an aid organisation</b>	<b>No response or other</b>
0	0	0	14	0	0

**Table 9: Employment (CUPELS participants only)<sup>xxi</sup>**

<b>Own boss</b>	<b>Work for another person</b>	<b>In a private company</b>	<b>For the government</b>	<b>For an aid organisation</b>	<b>No response or other</b>
3	6	2	18	2	3

As noted previously 18 of the CUPELS participants categorized themselves as governmental employees yet with there being 16 responses stating that the participant took on non-governmental employment it would seem that work outside the government employment is a significant factor for this group. It is not known if any outside work was officially sanctioned and considering the highly qualified nature of the participants it is remarkable that only two participants stated they worked in the aid area. This result would appear to indicate an area for future research as it would be interesting to ascertain whether Thai academic elite are hesitant to become involved in this field because they perceive financial rewards in the private sector to be greater or whether their lack of involvement is instead due to their being passed over by agencies in favour of candidates who have a greater degree of English fluency.

### English in careers

The more qualitative questions<sup>xxii</sup> in this section gave the participants the chance to provide written remarks regarding the role of English in careers. It was envisaged that any participant responses would add depth to the employment data presented in the previous section and, even though one respondent stated that they had “no idea”, most participants took advantage of the opportunity to provide comments. From the

<sup>xx</sup> Multiple answers were provided.

<sup>xxi</sup> Multiple answers were provided.

<sup>xxii</sup> See Appendices 3 and 4.

answers provided it seems that the participants' prime motivation for learning English is firmly extrinsic as English was felt to be a career essential. This attitude was especially apparent in the CUPELS participants' answers. To them the acquisition of English language skills was crucial to career opportunities because in their workplaces they "have courses that need to teach in English" and that English ability allowed them "to conduct research, read textbooks and present papers at international conferences" and "taking the grant to study in PhD programme"<sup>xxiii</sup>.

Participants perceived that possessing English was an employment advantage and they supported the proposition that those who had worked to acquire English language abilities should have enhanced promotion chances and better remuneration because as one stated "they effort to get English skill". One participant presented a longer explanation explaining that "it is not a unfair advantages in my opinion because they spend a lot of time to learn English. And you have the choise if you want to improve your skills or you only want to know the English which is taught in the school." On the other hand there was also an awareness on the part of a number of participants that placing employment primacy upon English ability was flawed because "to become professional it does not only need can communicate in English, but also must have good knowledge & skills in their field".

Judging by the questionnaire responses it seems that some participants perceive that, as examined in Chapter Two, English has come to be a disempowering *de facto* gate-keeping mechanism, especially in careers. The premium placed upon English language skills was felt to deny equal access to professional pathways because "English skills doesn't show intelligence skill at all, but it just shows person can communicate with foreigner" and therefore that "people should not be evaluated by only English language skill but it should consider in their knowledge and performance". Others also felt that preferential treatment for English users was unjustified as "all the people don't use English at work. Only one part use English" and that the importance placed upon English language ability in the employment process should "depends on the requirement of company for example, if employer wants just a driver, he might not choose a person who good Eng but doesn't have a

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<sup>xxiii</sup> As stated previously all quotes provided in the 'Participant responses' section are as written by the participants.

driver licence". Significantly one participant also voiced concerns over the value placed upon English language skills in careers because "there is inequality in access to English study. Some people study overseas, the others study in home countries and if English is necessary, the government should do something to guarantee access to English study."

### *Job satisfaction*

Job satisfaction can make a tremendous difference to staff retention and, due to the continual loss of institutional knowledge and skills, without such retention any capacity building strategy becomes by-and-large moot<sup>xxiv</sup>. Any judgements regarding job satisfaction are by their very nature highly personal and therefore this section of the questionnaire used open-ended questions to elicit the participants' opinions and feelings regarding their employment. As with the 'English in careers' this section is based primarily upon the participants' written remarks and although presented as written they have in the interests of clarity been grouped into two broad categories - status and group dynamics.

### *Status*

The participants surveyed generally agreed that their jobs conferred "good status in the society and the community" on them because "in community always accept person who is in high position". This attitude was especially apparent in the responses from the CUPLES groups with it being noted that "teacher or Lecturer in Thailand usually gets respect from people in society". However, within the ELTO group there appears to be divergence between those who held comparatively higher status positions such as diplomats and those who had jobs which could be characterised as being of a somewhat lower status, for example secretaries, with the former group generally expressing more job contentment.

Most participants expressed a strong liking for their jobs with those who held more prominent positions generally expressing the most satisfaction in their work. Some respondents however expressed discontent with one stating that they were dissatisfied because they "earn too low income". However, the economic argument was not

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<sup>xxiv</sup> See Chapter One; 'Building capacity' for a fuller discussion of this point.

common and generally less material reasons such as “low knowledge in general, lack English, no empowerment” were presented by those respondents who felt dissatisfaction. Such responses are significant in that they show an awareness amongst the participants of the empowerment concept on a personal level and possibly point to wider employment and job environment issues that may need to be addressed if ELT capacity building programmes are to perform an empowerment function.

### *Group dynamics*

The topic of group dynamics was examined in the questionnaire as such matters can assume great significance in the work environment. Group dynamics can assume even greater importance on ELTC residential courses as participants are thrown together in close proximity in a stressful foreign environment, sometimes for a relatively long length of time.

The vast majority of the ELTO group reported that they favoured working as a group with a general feeling that “to fulfil my duties is cooperation” and a belief that “... teamwork is better than individual”. One respondent stated that they favoured working alone as it meant that they “could make more decision and have own responsibility” but the rest preferred a group dynamic with responses such as “I’m not happy to work alone”, “I like team work” and “I can get support from others” being typical. Such feedback could conceivably be ascribed to an expression of an aspect of the participants’ particular work cultures and/or home socio-cultural environment. Given that Western societies favour a more individualistic approach to classroom learning the comparative unanimity of participant responses would seem to make a case for further investigation of this topic if ELT programmes wish to be truly empowering to participants.

### *Learner English use perceptions*

Participants were asked to assess their English language level because generally speaking the more comfortable a learner feels in regard to a language skill the more empowered they will feel to use that skill. It is notable that Table 10 demonstrates that most respondents, regardless of their background, rated their English level as being comparatively low, with none feeling themselves to be either skilful or near native users. Although the reasons for the participants’ English skills assessments



undoubtedly vary from person to person it would be interesting to explore how much of the participants’ discomfort derived from the variety of English being taught in the participants’ home countries differing from the New Zealand accent and usage. The lack of linguistic comfort on behalf of the learner can result in poor communicative capacity and language uptake and in order to enhance the ELTC programme participants’ language acquisition this issue is one that would bear further scrutiny.

**Table 10: Participant self-assessment of English ability** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

*How would you rate your English level?*

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Skilful	Near native user	No response
1	26	9	0	0	1

If one looks at Tables 11 and 12 it appears that respondents in both groups found the productive language skills of speaking and writing to be the ones they were most uncomfortable with and found most problematic. However, even though both groups by and large exhibited similar broad trends there are notable differences between the CUPELS and ELTO groups regarding their comfort with the written word. As can be seen from Table 11 the majority of the CUPELS group felt either comfortable or fairly comfortable when it came to reading while the ELTO group, as shown in Table 12, obviously found it much less so. This difference could be reflective of the fact that, as stated previously, those in the CUPELS groups are heavily involved in academic pursuits and therefore were perhaps more conversant with reading English because the information is in English when they “read the textbook or the information on the Internet”<sup>xxv</sup>.

<sup>xxv</sup> See Chapter Two; ‘English is the answer’ for discussion of the English language’s dominance of academic literature and the Internet.



**Table 11: Learner use perceptions (CUPELS participants only)***How do you feel when ...*

	<b>Comfortable 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Uncomfortable 5</b>
<b>you speak English?</b>	2	3	10	7	1
<b>English is spoken to you?</b>	1	7	11	2	2
<b>you write English?</b>	3	6	3	8	3
<b>you read English?</b>	7	9	3	3	1

**Table 12: Learner use perceptions (ELTO participants only)***How do you feel when ...*

	<b>Comfortable 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Uncomfortable 5</b>
<b>you speak English?</b>	0	3	7	1	3
<b>English is spoken to you?</b>	1	2	7	2	2
<b>you write English?</b>	0	2	5	4	3
<b>you read English?</b>	0	4	8	0	2

*English skill use<sup>xxvi</sup>*

This section of the questionnaire asked the participants to examine which English language skills they used most both in the work environment and on a more general day to day level because if ELT capacity building programmes are to be relevant to the task of building institutional capacity then they should seek to improve and build on those skills most used and necessary for the participants' home environment and task fulfilment. It is evident from the data presented in Tables 13 and 14 below that

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<sup>xxvi</sup> See also 'Employment' and 'Rationales for learning English' in this chapter as many of the matters covered in these sections overlap.

even though for one respondent aural and oral English were crucial because the participant “worked in multinational companies that tends to have multinational clients” written skills dominate in most participants’ workplaces because as another respondent remarked “in my office there is no foreigner”.

**Table 13: English skill used most at work** (ELTO participants only) <sup>xxvii</sup>

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	No response
6	4	7	1	1

**Table 14: English skill used least at work** (ELTO participants only) <sup>xxviii</sup>

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	No response
4	1	2	3	4

For the vast majority of participants English usage was reported to be limited to when they “need to look for some information from many English textbooks and the internet”. However, it is notable when comparing the participants’ comments and the information presented in Tables 13 and 14 with that in Table 15 below that there is a marked difference between the English skills the participants identify as being those they use most in their work and those the participants state they use the most on a day to day basis. It seems somewhat anomalous that despite the apparent importance of reading and writing in the participants work environment shown by Table 13 that speaking and listening are identified in Table 15 as the skills most used on a day to day basis.

**Table 15: Day to day English skill usage** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants) <sup>xxix</sup>

*Which English skill do you use the most day to day?*

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	All	No response/ Other
5	14	11	14	1	4

When the participants’ written explanations for their choices are examined it seems apparent that because they state they are “surrounded by English speaking people” and therefore must “use in conversation with another person” that the participants

<sup>xxvii</sup> There were some answers which applied the same rating to more than one skill.

<sup>xxviii</sup> As above.

<sup>xxix</sup> Some multiple answers were provided.

have probably framed their answers within the context of being resident in an English Target Language Community (ETLC). This sort of ELTC contextual influence on the participants’ perceptions could also be reflected in Tables 16 and 17 below which show the difficulty and importance rating participants gave to each English language skill.

As can be seen in Table 16 participants generally appear to feel that speaking is not overly problematic with only two of them rating it as either difficult or very difficult. However, despite Tables 13 and 14 demonstrating that for a significant number of the respondents writing was the skill most used at work 7 of 14 participants felt it was either difficult or very difficult. This latter result is unsurprising to me because as an experienced ELT instructor and IELTS examiner I have observed that of all the English language skills writing - especially the style of academic writing the participants were studying on their courses - is the skill that learners tend to struggle the most to achieve an adequate mastery over due to its high level of error intolerance.

**Table 16: English skills difficulty rating (ELTO participants only)**

*English skills. Please indicate how you rate each skill*

	<b>Not Difficult 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Very Difficult 5</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Writing</b>	0	1	4	2	5	2
<b>Speaking</b>	0	2	8	1	1	2
<b>Reading</b>	0	2	6	1	3	2
<b>Listening</b>	0	2	3	1	6	2

However, it is also significant that Table 16 shows that six of the ELTO participants placed listening in the very difficult category. This result may possibly be due to the somewhat overwhelming nature of being placed in an ELTC such as New Zealand and to the participants’ lack of familiarity with the New Zealand accent which differs in both sound and speed from the globally predominant West Coast American and Middle England accents the participants had most probably been exposed to in their home countries. My experience as an ELT teacher shows that listening is a skill which usually shows good improvement over a comparatively short period for learners in an immersive ELTC environment but if an ELTC component is to be an

integral part of ELT course provision then the impact of the New Zealand accent on programme participants may well need further investigation.

**Table 17: English skills importance rating** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

*English skills: Please indicate how you rate each skill*

	<b>Very Important 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Not Important 5</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Writing</b>	23	7	4	1	0	1
<b>Speaking</b>	29	6	0	0	0	1
<b>Reading</b>	15	15	5	0	0	1
<b>Listening</b>	26	8	1	0	0	1

The impact of living in a New Zealand ELTC would also seem to be expressed in Tables 17 and 18 which demonstrate that speaking dominates overall in the participants’ perceptions of importance with 30 of the participants rating speaking as either very important or important. It is remarkable however that even though when one looks back at Table 13 reading has the highest response (7) for ‘The skill most used at work’ it has a significantly lower overall rating in the ‘Very Important’ category in Table 17. As can be seen in Table 18 below reading has also been ranked considerably behind the other skills when participants were asked to chose the English skill they would most like to improve while a clear majority identified speaking as the English language skill they most wanted to enhance.

**Table 18: Participant’s English skill improvement focus** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)<sup>xxx</sup>

*Which English skill would you most like to improve?*

<b>Writing</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>No response/ Other</b>
15	27	6	14	2

A possible explanation for this result is that, as reading is a common and widely used skill in their work, the participants felt better versed in it. Their greater level of familiarity may therefore have caused reading to recede in perceptual importance compared to those skills the participants were less accustomed to. Nevertheless the

<sup>xxx</sup> Some multiple answers were provided.

disparity in the results between the English skills used in the participants' work environment and those the participants most wanted to improve highlights a potential issue with the use of immersion in ELT programmes. Although by no means conclusive the results obtained for this thesis provide some support for the hypothesis that even though ELT immersion programmes in ELTCs apparently hasten language acquisition they can skew the participants' needs assessments. The need to operate within an ELTC context can sway learners' perceptions and being resident in New Zealand may well have caused the research respondents to become focused upon improving the English language skills they required to answer their immediate day-to-day ELTC linguistic needs rather than those called for in their work thereby undercutting one of the underpinning rationales for ELT capacity building programmes. Given the provider and recipient partiality for ELTC immersion programmes this would seem an area for further research and a possible way would be to compare information obtained in New Zealand with that gathered from ELT programme participants in a non-native English speaking environment.

### *Background beliefs*

Learning is not a separate, stand-alone process but rather, as examined in Chapter Two, is integrally intertwined with the learner's wider attitudes, motivations and experiences. "Understanding how human beings feel and respond and believe and value is an exceedingly important aspect ... of second language acquisition" (Brown, 2000: 144) and therefore when trying to measure the aims and effectiveness of ELT programmes it is essential to remember that English acquisition takes place within the parameters of the learner's socio-cultural experiences. A participant's particular background beliefs and socio-cultural environment can wield great influence upon a learner's desire to exert effort in attempting to acquire a language (ibid). To gain some insight into the participants' background beliefs the questionnaire sought the participants' standpoints on broader social mores and ways of behaving because, as one participant noted, "we can't measure people with only English skills but we need to indicate people in the other way; ability for working, honesty".

**Table 19: Socio-cultural rankings** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

*Please indicate how important you think each of the following is:*

	<b>Very Important 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Neutral 3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Not Important 5</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Education</b>	27	5	0	0	0	0
<b>Effort/ Hard Work</b>	15	13	5	0	0	0
<b>Status/Success</b>	11	14	6	0	0	1
<b>Community</b>	8	14	8	1	0	1
<b>Money</b>	5	17	6	2	0	1
<b>Cultural Pride/ Tradition</b>	3	14	12	1	0	2

Bearing in mind that, as noted in Table 3 (Participant education attainment level) all the participants responded that they had received a tertiary education it is therefore not surprising to note that all the respondents ranked education as either very important or important. It is also perhaps to be expected that ‘Effort/ Hard Work’ gained the second highest overall importance ranking with 28 of the 33 respondents ranking it as either very important or important. However, it is striking that given the somewhat community based nature of capacity building programmes that ‘Cultural Pride/Tradition’ had the lowest number of participants ranking it as very important and the highest as neutral while over two-thirds of participants placed considerable value on what could be perceived as being rather individualistic and materialistic concerns such as ‘Status/Success’ and ‘Money’. This finding is somewhat at odds with many of the post-colonial discourse arguments regarding the spread of English<sup>xxxi</sup> and a number of Western presuppositions regarding the relative importance of the community in Asian societies. However, the participants’ weighting of responses could well be indicative of the fact that most of them come from highly competitive societal backgrounds or it may merely be a manifestation of the participants’ sense of socio-cultural security.

*Participant rationales for learning English*

Learner rationales for studying English are rarely straightforward and simple therefore this section of the questionnaire required respondents to use a combination of closed ranking exercises and open ended qualitative questions in order to articulate their

<sup>xxxi</sup> See Chapter Two; ‘English and the discourse of dominance’.

reasons for taking on the task of learning English. Bearing this mixed method in mind examination of Table 20’s data (‘Participants’ usage of English outside of work) and that of Tables 21 and 22 (Three most important reasons for learning English) has been performed in conjunction with the information gathered through the survey’s evaluative questions<sup>xxxii</sup>.

**Table 20: Participants’ English usage outside of work** (both CUPELS and ELTO participants)

*Do you use English outside of work?*

Yes	No	No response/ Other
16	5	2

Table 20 above shows that 16 out of the 23 respondents stated that they use English outside of work situations and consulting their written responses shows that the primary cause for this was the need to facilitate communicative contacts such as “chat with my friends who are living abroad” or to interact with “my relatives come from USA and stayed in my home”. It is highly probable that the participants engaging with others in English on such a personal level has helped to create a positive mindset on their part towards learning English as it has graphically demonstrated a practical and personal use for English. Nevertheless it must be noted that even though the majority of participants appear to use English outside of work for personal reasons Tables 21 and 22 below support the data presented in the preceding ‘English in careers’ section that job considerations still dominate the participants’ reasons for studying English with responses such as “easy to find a job (English ability is an advantage)” and “if you influent in English you would be recognised from the boss” being typical.

**Table 21: Three most important reasons for studying English** (CUPELS participants only)

Job	Compul-sory	Hobby/ Person-al	To Commun-icate	English is Internation-al language	Use of Internet	Study	Travel	Teach-ing	Other
17	2	3	13	3	4	9	2	1	4

<sup>xxxii</sup> See Appendices 3 and 4 for the full questionnaire.



**Table 22: Three most important reasons for studying English (ELTO participants only)**

<b>Job/ Career</b>	<b>Compul- -sory</b>	<b>Hobby/ Person- -al</b>	<b>To Commun- -icate</b>	<b>English is Interna- -tional language</b>	<b>To help country</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Travel/ Work abroad</b>	<b>Earn more Money</b>	<b>Other/ no respon- -se</b>
13	1	5	2	2	2	3	3	5	1

Nevertheless there is a noticeable deviation between the CUPELS and ELTO groups’ responses regarding the roles communicative and study related causes played in their decision to study English. Table 21 shows that, behind job considerations, the most commonly given grounds for learning English given by the respondents from the CUPELS group was the desire (or need) “to communicate with a foreigner” with the need to learn English for study not far behind. On the other hand the degree of frequency of these two responses is comparatively much lower in the ELTO group and for them earning more money and hobby/personal causes are more commonly stated rationales for learning English.

A potential explanation for this discrepancy between the two groups’ responses may lie in their makeup. As noted previously, the CUPELS group was dominated by participants whose background was in academia and as one stated for them “English is a tool to have access to global knowledge and information”. Such a finding supports Dasgupta’s (2006:1) proposition that for those involved in research and study English has assumed a *de facto* role as a universal language because, as two of the CUPELS group put it, it enables “communication, especially with native and non-native English people” and allows people “to communicate with people who speak different language”. On the other hand the ELTO group came, as noted previously, from historically more restricted societies where they were primarily involved in local government and consequently they may have had fewer opportunities for international interactions.

It is significant that the responses of the members of both groupings indicate that the participants have access to modern technology such as the Internet and travel opportunities. This factor points to the participants in both groups belonging to what could be characterised as privileged elites of their societies and that they therefore

may be somewhat removed from the reality of everyday life of most people in their home countries. It could be argued that such an issue is perhaps of less importance in terms of the nature of the capacity building programmes the respondents were participating on yet such matters have do have a wider significance if ELT programmes are going to be used as part of an empowerment strategy.

Ultimately second language learning and usage is “an affective domain [that] is difficult to describe scientifically [as there are a] large number of variables ... in considering the emotional side of human behaviour in the ... process” (Brown, 2000:142). However, the perceptual side of ELT teaching and learning has often tended to be ignored or down-played by policy makers in favour of a more measurable cost/benefit approach to programmes even though the research responses indicate that being in a New Zealand ELTC environment had had a considerable impact upon the participants’ and their linguistic priorities. In order to explore these issues a number of interviews were sought with providers to establish what role they viewed ELT programmes had and should play in empowerment and capacity building development strategies.

### Provider interviews

The information in this portion of the chapter was predominantly obtained from semi-structured interviews with those involved in ELT programme provision and as such differs from the preceding ‘Participant questionnaire responses’ which is based upon the administration of a written questionnaire given to participants on ELT programmes in New Zealand. The major reason for this deviation in data gathering means was that it was assumed that any interviews to be conducted with those involved in ELT programme provision would be with either native or near-native level speakers of English. Due to the presumed greater English language resource of those involved it was considered that oral interviews would facilitate a more flexible research interaction and permit a greater communication of information. For reasons discussed in Chapter Three an active decision was made not to use a tape recorder in the interviews and therefore little in the way of direct quotes from participants has been provided. Instead I have concentrated on preserving and presenting the general intent and tenor of the participants’ opinions, feelings and considerations as communicated to me during the course of the interviews regarding the role of ELT

programmes in development generally and empowerment and capacity building strategies specifically.

A total of ten interviews were undertaken with providers. Eight of these interviews were carried out on a one-to-one, face-to-face basis. Of the remaining two one was conducted via the telephone with the other taking the form of a group interview. Also included in this section is information from one respondent who was unable to participate in a personal interview but kindly provided written answers to the interview questions. The data gathered has where possible been presented in the broad 'topic' sections delineated in the interview question prompt sheet<sup>xxxiii</sup> but it should be noted that, due to the adoption of a semi-structured interview format, a number of interviewees embraced a wide-ranging number of issues in their responses. Consequently it has been deemed neither feasible nor desirable to attempt to impose too rigid a demarcation to the interviewees' responses.

As noted previously as a result of a combination of unplanned circumstances most of those interviewed were involved with one particular agency and with a specific ELT programme run by that agency<sup>xxxiv</sup>. Consequently the findings presented in this section are somewhat dominated by issues related to the workings of that particular agency and one of its programmes in particular. To protect participant confidentiality direct, identifiable interview quotes or examples have been avoided and instead the information provided has been paraphrased.

The overwhelming majority of the interviewees had been engaged in the aid and development area for a number of years and for some participation in the administration and application of aid and development programmes was part of their chosen career path. The programmes the interviewees had been involved with varied greatly in size, scale and aims, running the gamut from those organized by small private NGOs right through to programmes administered by large multi-national organisations such as the UN. Most of those interviewed had worked with a number of different providers and tended to be involved in specific projects for just a few years at a stretch. It is notable though that a number of administrators who took part in

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<sup>xxxiii</sup> See Appendix 5.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> See Chapter Three 'Choice of interview participants'.

these interviews had been involved with particular projects for a large number of years: in some cases even from a project's inception. All interviewees had been (and in many cases were still) involved in either the administration or provision of ELT programmes and had often been employed on various programmes run by the same provider. Significantly, given the traditional role of charity run programmes, only one interviewee identified themselves as an unpaid volunteer<sup>xxxv</sup>.

### *Background to ELT programmes and associated project issues*

Judging by the information provided by the interviewees the trend for ELT aid programmes seems to have started earlier in Commonwealth areas than in areas which lacked strong historical ties to English. However, it was felt that there was a perceptible expansion of ELT programmes, geographically and numerically, around the mid 1980s. A number of those interviewed believed this growth was reflective of wider received global realities and imperatives which had caused English to increasingly be perceived as a vital tool to help countries advocate and advance their interests in regional and international fora.

Earlier ELT aid programmes seem to have concentrated upon providing native-speaker models to local learners (usually in form of the provision of native-English speaking teachers and instructors) with no overt emphasis upon empowerment or capacity building as underpinning paradigms. It was reported that, rather than being designed in such a way as to enable their integration into wider regional development programmes and policies, these earlier programmes were usually conceived of as stand-alone projects<sup>xxxvi</sup>. A suggested reason for this was that initial ELT programmes were usually run in response to particular requests from individual schools or institutions and therefore tended to focus upon answering short-term 'site specific' educational needs and goals such as improving exam pass rates.

It was generally felt amongst those interviewed that recipients viewed ELT programmes as an investment in the future - especially for their children. However, a number of interview participants, both administrators and instructors, mentioned their

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<sup>xxxv</sup> A number of the interviewees had however taken substantial income cuts in order to participate on particular projects.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> In a number of cases programmes appear to have even lacked a proper reporting structure.

discomfort at discovering that the local authorities' demand for their presence sometimes seemed to be principally motivated by a desire for the reflected prestige and monetary benefits that the presence of a foreign aid worker brought. In fact in one case the aid worker involved suspected that the main reason the local authority had requested their presence was in order to help the local offices write aid requests in English.

There was a sense on the part of some of those interviewed that at times considerations over prestige and money led to those in authority obstructing any rationalisation of programmes with each official wanting to 'protect their patch'. A number of the administrators and instructors expressed concern that many times there appeared to be a great deal of duplication between programmes and it was felt that this issue came to the fore especially when larger development players were involved. An illustration of this lack of synchronization was given by one of the interviewees who had been working in the Pacific region and involved an agency from the USA. This agency had - without any real consultation with other aid organisations already involved in the region - made a donation to the area's education department that far exceeded the department's typical annual budget. It was felt by the interviewee that the American agency's intervention rather than helping had had the effect of skewing planning thereby undermining - if not rendering irrelevant - much of the consultative development work other agencies had already achieved.

Almost all those interviewed provided examples of similar sorts of agency overlap and lack of consultation between programmes. There was a general sentiment amongst those interviewed that providers at times seemed to look upon each other as competing contractors rather than as cooperative colleagues. It was felt that the lack of harmonization between providers and consideration of local circumstances was a root cause of a waste of resources which, with more coordination, could have been used more effectively. By way of example one interviewee presented the case of a Northern government agency project to construct a school library in a South East Asian country. The project successfully attained its construction goal but did so without altering the building specifications to suit the local tropical climate. As a consequence, due to heat and humidity, the library was too uncomfortable to be used without expensive air conditioning and thus after a grand opening/handover ceremony



it stood unused. The building was nevertheless considered such a prestige project that guests to the area were regularly escorted around this show-piece but with the building's air-conditioning specially switched on for their visit.

Those interviewed acknowledged that, although programme duplication and lack of coordination was generally frustrating, trying to get various agencies to work together was like 'trying to herd cats'. One interviewee made the observation that such competition between agencies might not necessarily be entirely negative as it empowered the recipient with the ability to 'shop around' for the deal which best suited them. On the other hand there was concern expressed that, in situations where choices were available, the efficiency and effectiveness of projects appeared to vary according to how far the project area was from centres of control. It was felt by a number of the interviewees who had worked in the field that autonomy of choice for recipient authorities had sometimes led to project choice being determined by the desires of elites rather than being based upon the requirement that the chosen project best fulfilled the needs of a locality.

Nonetheless, the general impression gathered during the course of the interview process was that the growth of consultative procedures was supported by providers as a means to increase the chances of ensuring a programme's sustainability. Those interviewees involved in New Zealand-derived programmes considered that the programmes they were involved in had a good focus and it was asserted that programme targets and goals were more and more being decided upon in conjunction and consultation with the recipient authorities. Significantly some programmes administered by private NGOs were noted to be exceptions to the trend towards a consultative partnership with local authorities. The explanation for this divergence appears to lie in the nature of the NGO programmes as their goals were often at odds with the local establishment. This fact meant that it was necessary for those involved to keep a low profile for if the programmes had come to the notice of area authorities there would have been serious implications for those involved – especially if they happened to be locals.

Even though consultative processes were perceived to be integral to the empowerment and capacity building programme aims, it was stated by many of those interviewed



that providers had put in place procedures to ensure continued ‘correct’ – that is the provider’s - programme placement and direction. A number of interviewees remarked that in cases where recipient authorities had sought to shift programme aims and emphasis away from those the provider had signed up to and onto sectors preferred by recipients<sup>xxxvii</sup> providers tended to view such changes as being potentially detrimental to programme aims. Although such attitudes are perhaps understandable given the providers’ need to deliver on their programme aims such a stance is somewhat at odds with the proposal that ELT programmes be empowering and responsive to recipient capacity building requirements.

### *Empowerment and capacity building*

Empowerment and capacity building are widely used terms in development and aid circles and ELT provision has increasingly been incorporated into policies which seek to promote these paradigms. Since a major focus of this thesis is the role ELT plays in these strategies participants were invited to define what empowerment and capacity building meant to them. There was considerable variation in the answers to this question with many of the interviewees having to pause and give some thought to their responses. In fact there was even some disagreement over the use of the term capacity building with some respondents preferring the phrase capability building instead because capacity was perceived as being more an institutional pupil/teacher dynamic whereas capability was seen to be more empowering and inclusive of the individual. However, despite divergences in terminology there did appear from the interviewees’ responses to be a general agreement that capacity/capability building was a continuum of processes which should ultimately lead to recipients being empowered to do things independently rather than relying upon outside interventions.

When asked about the role of ELT in empowerment a number of ELT programme instructors had reservations. The instructors reasoned that the process of English instruction could be both disempowering and de-motivating for many individual participants because learners who enjoyed a high standing in their home communities were placed in a situation where they suffered a loss of status due to their struggle to communicate to a perceived required English language level. Yet there was also a

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<sup>xxxvii</sup> The two sectors most commonly mentioned were tourism and industry.

feeling that this state of affairs changed over time and that, as learners became increasingly able to communicate progressively more complex ideas in English, a sense of empowerment was indeed gradually engendered.

There was a significant divergence between those involved in programme administration and those ELT professionals working as instructors on programmes regarding the positioning of ELT provision which was perhaps indicative of differing underpinning ELT philosophies. For those involved in instruction ELT programmes were viewed more in terms of an individual, inter-personal process of learner-instructor engagement in which language acquisition is an intrinsically personal process. On the other hand, although the personal aspect was not ignored, those more involved in the provision and administration of programme tended to focus less upon individualistic concerns and more on ELT provision within wider developmental paradigms and philosophies such as empowerment. However, it was interesting to note that the apparently most authentic use of ELT as an educational empowerment tool given during the course of the interviews included no evident involvement of any outside agency. In that particular case English classes rather than being designed and determined by an external authority were organised by displaced persons within refugee camps in their own capacity. The classes were free and open to anyone who wished to participate with the programme direction primarily determined by its participants' requests.

#### *Programme philosophies and rationales*

There was a strong perception amongst those involved in administration and in ELT instruction that programme philosophies and rationales had altered as a consequence of feedback from those involved. It was felt that providers had largely looked to reposition ELT programmes away from being initiatives which restricted themselves to straight-forward linguistic goals and that now the dominant guiding programme principle was to incorporate English language instruction into a philosophy which looked to use ELT to promote wider developmental objectives. However, this redefinition of purpose generated some disquiet amongst a number of the interviewees over the implications and suitability of using ELT as vector for the promotion of other agendas - especially those that might be socially alien or culturally anathema to

recipients<sup>xxxviii</sup>. Although some of those interviewed saw the situation as having improved others expressed unease that many programmes still seemed to primarily echo donor agenda and the demands of elites rather than reflecting the desires and needs of local people.

Overall there seemed to be little identification by most of those interviewed of present overt government, either donor or recipient, interference in the running of programmes. It was generally felt that the positioning of programmes as an extension of foreign policy and trade aims had receded in recent years and that the ensuing greater autonomy had allowed useful changes to be initiated which enabled providers to address their aims more effectively. Nevertheless it was considered that as financial constraints on the functional aspects of programmes were still the major impediment to the sustainable success of ELT programmes there remained the potential for ‘interference’ from authorities and outside players in how programmes were delivered and assessed.

### *Functional aspects of programmes*

The way a programme functions is inevitably interrelated with both its design and delivery. Therefore if the role of ELT programmes in the wider development paradigms of empowerment and capacity building is to be examined the functional aspects of programmes need to be taken into account. For ease of presentation these functional aspects have been divided into three broad strands in the following section: personnel matters, use of assessments and resource issues.

### *Personnel matters*

The programmes looked at during the interviews generally required potential participants to go through some sort of selection process - frequently from both their home authorities and the donor. There was a fairly universal acknowledgement from the interviewees that, with English ability increasingly becoming an apparent means for career preferment, the use of selection procedures had caused some ‘gate-keeping’ issues. Such issues were regarded as being especially apparent when information and/or selection procedures were under the control of one particular organisation or

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<sup>xxxviii</sup> See ‘Chapter One; The politics of empowerment’ for further discussion of this point.

branch of government. Both instructors and administrators viewed such concentration of control as having led to either a bias in the overall profile of the learners or to the ‘wrong’ type of candidate being selected with consequent impacts upon participant ‘failure’ rates. A number of those interviewed did see such issues as declining but the prevailing view was that this decline was mostly due to the provider having assumed more control over candidate choice and selection criteria.

Most programmes sought to provide trained ELT personnel as instructors or advisors – usually sourced from outside the provider agency. NGOs, especially those that were smaller, were more likely than government connected agencies to utilise native English speaker volunteers. Consequently on those programmes an instructor might have had teacher training and experience but not possess specific ELT training. It is worth noting that in all the EFL programmes looked at in this research few of those involved in programme provision seemed to hold qualifications and have experience in both the ELT instruction and Development sectors.

### *Use of assessments*

As mentioned in Chapter Two<sup>xxxix</sup> assessment instruments have assumed an increasing importance in measuring English learning outcomes and those interviewed noted that the same was true for ELT aid programmes. Most of the programmes mentioned used benchmark criteria and, although in some cases this was primarily a provider requirement, the implementation of course assessments and selection procedures was usually carried out with the agreement of recipient authorities. This is not to say that all programmes used English competency assessment criteria. Some programmes, especially those run by smaller NGOs, due to their goals tended to focus on specific non-linguistic assessment criteria.

A major reason given by those interviewed for the use of English assessment instruments was the need to achieve best practice in the delivery of ELT programmes by restricting programme participants to a more particular English language proficiency band. For instructors the lack of an adequate language assessment prior to programme placement was perceived to be problematic as it meant that the instructor

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<sup>xxxix</sup> See Chapter Two, ‘The English industry’.

could potentially be working with learners with a wide variety of aptitude levels. In the case of New Zealand English Target Language Community (ELTC) based programmes it was noted that standardised language tests<sup>xi</sup> were utilised in order to ensure that participants had an English competency level which was up to the task of coping with courses which dealt with abstract topics such as governance and education methodology. Administrators also placed a high degree of importance upon English competency assessment instruments as such assessments were perceived to provide both quantifiable programme output data and act as an aid to prevent gate-keeping issues<sup>xii</sup>. Given this consensus of support for assessments it is therefore not surprising that many programmes required participants to present some form of documentation showing improvements in their English competency upon completion of their course.

Nevertheless a number of interviewees stated that many in-country ELT programmes they had been involved with preferred to eschew formalised language assessment instruments such as IELTS and instead followed a skills transfer model in which in-service training was used as an integral part of the teaching process. Those who had been engaged on such programmes felt that the shifting of outcome focus away from English achievement assessment had had positive effects such as reduced stress for the participants and instructors. The fact that English acquisition ceased to be an end in itself meant that, rather than being pressured into teaching to a test, instructors felt they were more empowered to concentrate upon the transmission of skills and content. What is more some interviewees felt the removal of an English focus better facilitated the fulfilment of a local empowerment agenda as it enabled the recruitment of a greater cross-section of potential participants.

### *Resource issues*

Major issues identified by almost all the interviewees involved the difficulty in accessing appropriate learning materials for programmes and the major cost in both time and money involved in the acquisition and preparation of instruction materials. To resolve these issues providers frequently utilised donated texts and textbooks but some of those interviewed expressed the opinion that the problem was not really

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<sup>xi</sup> IELTS was the most commonly used English proficiency assessment instrument.

<sup>xii</sup> See Chapter Two, 'English is the answer?'.

finding resources which dealt with the ‘nuts and bolts’ of teaching the English language, such as grammar and vocabulary. Rather the view was that the difficulty lay in trying to source contextually appropriate texts.

This concern was primarily based upon unease over the nature of the content and linguistic context of the generally available textbooks<sup>xlii</sup> with texts often felt to reflect the socio-economic and cultural perspective of the source country rather than the project circumstances. Many instructors stated that, where possible, they tended to amend existing texts and in some cases instructors took such decisions upon themselves. However, in a number of instances this process was officially encouraged and in at least two situations mentioned those involved in programme design and delivery had been working cooperatively with local organisations on creating their own bespoke textbooks. In these instances it was suggested that the adoption of a localised approach seemed to be paying off with evidence being garnered that the ELT materials generated had engendered better learner engagement and thus facilitated greater language acquisition.

Religiously predicated projects however appeared to largely ignore socio-cultural matters. From the information provided<sup>xliii</sup> it seems that this was not due to any overt discrimination but rather because the primary focus was upon other imperatives such as providing preachers with the English language skills required to proselytise. Although those involved in the administering and instructing of such programmes were apparently genuinely caring such disregard of wider socio-cultural aspects does highlight a problematic aspect of projects – especially narrowly predicated ones – which seek to induce some sort of societal change. In these cases ELT programmes, rather than being a means whereby locals can empower their communities, can instead be seen as a vector which enables the implementation of an exogenous socio-cultural construction and as a consequence disempowers local communities by devaluing indigenous social capacity structures.

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<sup>xlii</sup> In the SE Asian and Pacific context Thailand and Australia were identified as the usual source of texts.

<sup>xliii</sup> The programme example given during the interviews can not be directly identified as it would potentially place its participants in difficulties due to the nature of the regime in the country where the programme is active.



*ELT provision and the community*

It was generally felt by the interviewees that local involvement in programmes was desirable as it was felt that this facilitated access to local networks which could help to ensure a project's sustainability. Yet it is significant that although in many cases the identification of initial aims and the structural set-up of programmes were conducted in consultation with the area authorities there was often very little wider local community involvement. There was a feeling on the part of some of the instructors and administrators interviewed that the reason for this apparent discrepancy between provider aims for public participation and the actual functional arrangements of programmes was due to local socio-political conditions which often militated against any application of notions of local empowerment and community input to programmes. One interviewee observed that participation was not a straightforward concept in many project areas as community involvement and consultation often ran contrary to the authoritarian tendencies and systems in place in many recipient countries. It was also remarked that, in the wider interests of the provider and their projects, in many areas it was deemed better not to directly challenge local authorities. Nonetheless it was felt that there was a general enthusiasm to learn English on the part of people in programme areas and that once locals felt comfortable with a project they were likely to become involved in its on-going evaluation even though their participation could well be constrained within set parameters.

A number of interviewees voiced concerns that although ELT programmes are increasingly framed within the development paradigms of local empowerment and capacity building there was the potential for conflict caused by clashes between indigenous socio-cultural learning systems and aid programmes which were based upon Northern pedagogical paradigms. The possibility of such discord was viewed as being especially likely where ELT programmes operated in areas where a traditionally oral or pre-literate culture was predominant. It was felt that in this sort of context ELT programmes could, much as had happened in countries such as New Zealand and Australia, potentially progressively 'crowd out' indigenous tongues.

On the other hand a number of interviewees viewed discourse anxieties over English placing pressure on local cultures as being more of an issue for aid workers than for

local communities. In fact some of the interviewees who had worked in field situations perceived little apparent concern on the part of local people over the possible implications on local languages of the use of English for instruction. It was speculated that for local people English was a sign of modernity and seen as the key to a promising modern future for both the community and their children. Indigenous languages on the other hand, although an integral part of community life, were seen by locals as a feature which would maintain the area's 'backwardness' in the global arena. Consequently many communities opposed the withdrawal of English as the linguistic medium of instruction seeing any 'demotion' of English in favour of local tongues as creating a profound problem for the future progress of local children.

### Programme outcomes

The centrality of ensuring that the provider did not take ownership of a programme was stressed by a number of those interviewed. However, it was also stated that there was a concurrent need for the provider to retain enough control to ensure the proper operation and governance of the programme/project. Those who had experience in the field commonly thought that these somewhat competing demands had great potential for creating tension but the general assessment was that not all tensions were solely the result of provider demands and expectation.

A couple of interviewees expressed their belief that even though most capacity building projects and programmes aim to enable the phasing out of outside input in some areas the local authorities actually actively sought the continuance of external involvement. The interviewees' impression was that this seeming desire for dependency was primarily due to economic considerations in that the flow of aid monies and the presence of aid workers living a comparatively lavish lifestyle had injected a large amount of capital into the local economy. Accordingly the threat of withdrawal of external economic inputs created fears over a possible regional economic 'collapse' back to pre-project conditions. However, it was noted by the interviewees that such apprehensions appeared to be mostly held by those in positions of influence and status in area hierarchies who would, in all probability, be the ones most affected by any external agency withdrawal.

Most interviewees, despite some reservations due to experiences on the ground, considered that the aims of the ELT programmes they had been involved with had been worthwhile overall and were of some developmental value. However, there was a fairly broad agreement among those interviewed that assessments of the effectiveness of the various programmes altered according to the criteria applied to a programme. It was felt that assessing ELT programmes by standard financial assessment tools such as cost/benefit analysis was inappropriate because such raw 'nuts and bolts' economic assessment systems were considered to lack the flexibility needed for them to be adequate measures of aid programmes. A number of interviewees pointed out that positive programme results, especially those relating to New Zealand resident programmes, could not just be measured in terms of successful achievement of set English assessment levels. Rather it was felt that less overt outcomes such as an increased awareness of other countries and cultures amongst participants and the alteration of the attitudes of those who interacted with participants were equally valid and important. There was also a fair degree of concurrence amongst the interview participants that the upkeep and retention of skills was an important aspect in assessing any programme effectiveness but how that could be effectively facilitated was an area of uncertainty<sup>xliv</sup>. A number of participants expressed the opinion that any proper evaluation of the effectiveness of ELT as a capacity building and empowerment tool required longitudinal study and research in order to see how many of the past participants had become regular English users and in what context.

### Overview

This thesis research has undertaken to examine provider and recipient perceptions regarding the role of ELT programmes in the promotion of the development paradigms of empowerment and capacity building. To achieve this objective two main research methods were used:

- questionnaires which contained both closed response and open ended evaluative questions administered to participants on New Zealand residential ELT programmes

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<sup>xliv</sup> One interviewee mentioned that the creation of English refresher course was being considered although whether these would be in-country or within New Zealand was as yet undecided.

- semi-structured interviews conducted with programme administrators and instructors who had been involved in the provision of ELT aid programmes

The decision to administer questionnaires to ELT programme participants was made due to both time considerations and because my experience as an ELT instructor led me to believe that, as English was not the participants' first language, the use of guided written research prompts would provide potential research respondents with a greater feeling of security. It was thought that the use of a written questionnaire would increase the chances of participants contributing to the research as they could answer the questions at their own pace and without the intimidating need for instantaneous language processing that participating in an interview requires. The choice to conduct semi-structured interviews with ELT programme administrators and instructors was made because I assumed that those interviewed would be either native or near-native English speakers and therefore that the adoption of this research method would create a research environment which would be flexible enough to enable the interviewees to explore both wider empowerment and capacity building programme issues and matters more specific to ELT programmes.

When reviewing the research responses it seems that although they have only comparatively recently been incorporated into wider development strategies the provision of ELT programmes is supported by both recipients and providers. Both programme participants and providers involved in this research appear to share a strong positive perception regarding the provision of ELT programmes. This position seems to be based upon the opinion that the increasing use of English as the medium of international discourse means that communities and individuals lacking adequate English language skills will be at a discernable disadvantage. The research results support the proposition that, even though programme administrators and instructors generally envisage more of an institutional capacity building basis for ELT programmes, ELT programme participants' rationales for enhancing their English language skills are primarily centred on personal career objectives.

However, despite the apparent focus on the enhancement of English language skills for employment reasons, it seems from the questionnaire responses that the ELT programme participants who took part in this research place more emphasis upon the

enhancement of the language skills which help to their need to fulfil their day-to-day linguistic needs in the New Zealand ELTC environment than on improving the skills they use most in their home working environment. As this is somewhat at odds with the use of ELT programmes to promote institutional capacity building it would seem that, in order to achieve some sort of synergy between provider and participant perceptions and priorities, an in-depth participatory evaluation and examination of the learners' attitudes and desires would be desirable when considering the design and application of ELT programmes which involve a period of immersion in an ETLC. Such a study could conceivably form part of a wider examination to determine if ELT programmes, especially those which include a period of immersion in an ETLC environment such as New Zealand, are indeed relevant and responsive to recipient needs for, as the next chapter attests, there are a number of issues which require further examination if ELT programmes are to truly facilitate empowerment and capacity building strategies.

## Chapter Five

### Research observations and reflections

#### The role of English language teaching in development

There appears to be a general acceptance on the part of both the programme participants and providers who took part in the research for this thesis of the OECD's view that education programmes are integral to the promotion of social mobility and justice (OECD website, 2003). Both participants and providers also seem to share Wilson's (2006:1) opinion that English language skills are integral in promoting development because, as McKay (2002:38) and Dasgupta (1993:75) contend, the English language dominates in international interactions. The rationale appears to be that with the increasing movement towards inter-related regional markets the expansion of English linguistic skills will enable recipients to be competitive in the international market place and that this in its turn will stimulate broader development with a resultant filtering down of benefits to wider society (Quasi, n.d., quoted in O'Shea, 2006:1; Dasgupta, 1993:215; McKay, 2002:17).

#### ELT programmes as part of empowerment and capacity building strategies

It is clear from the comments made by providers during the course of the interviews that the focus of the programmes most referred to in this research was the promotion of institutional capacity building. However, it is notable that the questionnaire responses reveal that most participants tended to look at the enhancement of English language skills primarily in terms of personal positioning rather than as Aoki et al (2002:233) envisage as a vector to tackle empowerment and poverty issues. It was not possible for reasons of time and socio-cultural sensitivity to properly examine the participants' reasons for this attitude and is a possible area for future study.

A number of providers who had been involved in fieldwork commented programme providers often omitted any overt mention of an empowerment component in programmes because, as Lopes (2002:128) points out, participation and empowerment strategies are inherently controversial and sensitive and that the whole concept of participation and political empowerment as envisaged by Western aid often had little



local historical basis. Moreover some of those involved in programme provision viewed the promotion of empowerment as being potentially detrimental because due to local socio-political considerations it could lead to persecution, imprisonment or even personal physical harm for locals in a number of recipient societies. This is not to say that declared empowerment considerations were totally lacking in the programmes examined and it was apparent during the interviews that providers regarded matters such as the promotion of gender equity to be fundamental for the ELT programmes mentioned. However, the providers interviewed for this thesis generally seemed to consider that giving an ELT programme an official capacity building focus offered it a greater chance of achieving sustainable success and that the promotion of empowerment could be achieved in a more subtle manner through the involvement of the provider in administration of programmes.

One of the underlying considerations behind the construction of capacity building English language instruction programmes has been the thought that countries which historically do not have a strong English language tradition are at a discernable disadvantage in development terms. Mansour (1993:30-1) contends that access to English language instruction is by no means uniform and the participants' responses detailed in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 ('Previous English language study', 'Participants' place of English language study', 'Length of time participants have studied English' and 'Length of time participants have used English' respectively) in the previous chapter would seem to bear this out. It is notable that the programme participants from countries such as Laos and Vietnam which until comparatively recently were allied to ideologies opposed to English language dominated systems, generally indicated in their questionnaires that they had a lower exposure to English than those from countries such as Thailand which had a longer history of engagement with English speakers. It was stated by the participants and providers involved in this research that there is a strong instrumental demand within recipient countries for ELT programmes and if such a disparity is apparent between elites then there must be concerns over ELT access to less advantaged sections of recipient societies.

Crooks and Crewes (1995:71) state that provider and recipient socio-political considerations are an integral aspect of sanctioned aid provision and there was an evident awareness amongst the research participants that EFL programmes can, as

Brock-Utne (2001:115) contends, act a 'gate-keeping' mechanism to perpetuate current privileged elites. The providers interviewed for this research reported that the programmes they were involved in recognised this possibility and had endeavoured to put in place processes and procedures to protect against such an eventuality. Nevertheless all the EFL programme participants who took part in this research appeared to hold positions of comparative status within their communities. It would seem from the comments of the providers interviewed that the reason for this participant profile weighting is because providers often make a deliberate decision to follow elite-led vision of development. This decision would seem to be based upon the rationale that as those in the elite have, or will have, access to the levers of power improving their English language skills will facilitate wider developmental effects (Quasi, n.d., quoted in O'Shea, 2006:1; Dasgupta, 1993:215; McKay, 2002:17). Conversely, a concentration of ELT resources on elites, although seemingly cost effective, seems to undercut any use of ELT programmes for empowerment.

#### Learner rationales for English course participation

It is apparent from the research results that, as Mahoob (2002:1) asserts, participants perceive that English language ability has a profound impact on their professional career. However, as explained in Chapter Three, my research has been primarily focused upon ELT course participants in New Zealand tertiary institutions who could be characterised as belonging to the professional classes and therefore such attitudes may just be representative of the particular participant sample. Yet significantly even though only three participants indicated in Tables 21 and 22 'Three most important reasons for studying English' that they were taking English courses because it was compulsory a number of the participants stated that they disliked learning English and felt disempowered by being forced to invest fairly substantially in English language lessons. A number of the participants indicated that they felt constrained to learn English and in some cases stated that their superiors had played an active part in their decision to study English. This result lends weight to O'Shea's (2006:1) and Brock-Utne's (2000:124) observations that authorities in recipient societies view the promotion of a skilled English speaking professional elite as a progressive strategy for their economies. It also supports Bridger and Winpenny's (1983:86) contention that the modernisation paradigm, with its concentration on the formation of human capital, is still a factor in the educational aid sphere.

The feeling that adequate English language skills were a job requirement was especially apparent in the questionnaire responses from the group attending the Massey University Centre for University Preparation and English Language Studies (CUPELS). This result would seem to reflect the fact that English has become firmly associated with quality higher education due to its dominance of English as the medium of international academic discourse and research (Gupta, 2005:5; McKay, 2002:97; O'Shea, 2006:1). This is probably due in no small part to the ascendancy of imported Northern/Western educational models (Dasgupta, 1993:142; Crystal, 2003:117; Altbach, 1997:635) and it is particularly striking that, even though only one participant in the group attending CUPELS was an actual teacher of English, a surprisingly high number of those who worked in Thai universities reported that they taught their course in English and that for their research to be considered of true value it had to be published in English.

Judging by the responses from the English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) programme participants there also seems to be a high demand for enhanced English skills for those in government administration. This finding seems to harmonize well with the ELTO programme's focus on ELT as a vector to aid institutional capacity building but it is apparent from the data in Table 22 'Three most important reasons for studying English' that the ELTO participants' rationales for English course participation were primarily based upon reasons related to personal advancement. It would appear that, as Mahoob, 2002:30-1, Byrne, 1980:40 and Zachariah, 1997:472 argue, participants tend to define ELT programmes principally in terms of achieving some sort of certification which will enhance their potential employment prospects. While such a focus on the part of participants is understandable it does have the potential to conflict with wider capacity building aims because, as Cummings (1997:83) and Singh (1993:29) point out, many certifications can provide participants with the means to seek a more remunerative position outside their home institutional environment. The providers interviewed noted this possibility and stated that to counteract this programmes such as the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) scholarships had put in place a requirement that the recipient had to return to work in their home country for a set period of time as prerequisite for scholarship acceptance. Such a setting of requirements is on the surface a good way for providers to ensure that programme capacity building aims are advanced but such

stipulations can also be seen as a disempowering device as they deliberately restrict recipient choices.

#### Participant and provider partnership

The providers interviewed for this thesis commonly voiced support for a strengthened partnership between the provider and recipient. This supports Weisberg's (1999:5) contention that participatory processes have become prevalent in the development field but there would appear to be an element of provider self-interest in the embracing of participant empowerment strategies. The main rationale presented by the interviewees for adopting a participatory paradigm was that it was envisioned that such an approach promoted the chances of local uptake and enabling sustainable change (Lopes, 2002:137). There was however a general acceptance on the part of those interviewed that in-country recipient realities often militated against any genuine application of participatory practices. It was apparent during the interviews that those involved in ELT programme provision were conscious of the fact that, as Rahnema (1992:123) and Long (2001:89) contend, interventions are inherently susceptible to socio-political contexts and therefore they accepted that many times a degree of 'trade-off' was required.

Although many of the providers interviewed regarded local official participation as an integral element for the long-term functioning of programmes concern was expressed that the allowance of a large degree of recipient autonomy ran the risk of seriously compromising programme integrity. There was a feeling that the removal of provider oversight allowed an increased potential for the propagation of poor programme governance in recipient communities with the most common examples noted being the diversion of funds and the promotion of particular factions. Furthermore some interviewees who had worked in the field were of the opinion that there was reluctance on the part of some providers to directly challenge recipients over issues due to pressure to retain the recipient's goodwill. It was felt that in order to ensure that programmes worked towards defined developmental goals in a transparent manner greater provider involvement in programme management was needed and it is notable that the programmes most mentioned in this research had enhanced provider input in the choice of programme participants and the implementation of programme goals.

A preference on the part of providers to retain programme control in order to ensure the project goals they had signed up to are being 'properly' pursued is understandable but in practice it appears to have meant that providers tended to view requests from recipients vis-à-vis the sharing of supervision and (re)formation of programme goals with resistance. As Mohan (2002:53) and Long (2001:89) note the fact that the donor controls the purse strings perpetuates an inherently imbalanced donor/recipient relationship and it was reported that in a number of cases providers had persisted with their own particular overall foci even though recipients had requested changes in order to make the programme more reflective of the recipient's own development aims and context. The reluctance to permit recipients to have the power to change programme direction raises doubts whether the innate power asymmetry within the donor/recipient aid relationship can admit the use of ELT programmes as coherent components in capacity building and empowerment strategies (Jenkins, 2002:487).

#### Socio-cultural suitability of programme provision

There was an evident awareness on the part of the interviewees that capacity building interventions can, as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:641) asserts, perpetuate a paternalistic patronage relationship. As such a power dynamic is manifestly at odds with the conception of ELT programmes as a means for empowerment and capacity building a number of the administrators and instructors interviewed observed that providers should be mindful of the specific cultural intricacies of the recipient society. However, it is noticeable that, rather than questioning the underpinning rationales of the use of ELT programmes in pursuit of exogenous empowerment strategies, participants and providers alike tended to identify socio-cultural issues primarily in terms of particular practical problems such as the appropriacy of materials. All the same, many of those interviewed recognised that a concentration on issues such as gender equity was probably more indicative of provider preoccupations than a true reflection of primary recipient concerns.

It may well be that a bias towards the pursuit of provider paradigms is inevitable for ELT programmes given the fact that donors look upon education, including English language instruction, as a vector for social change defined by and predicated upon Western theoretical concepts (Bowden, 2002:405). None of the providers interviewed directly addressed Dasgupta's (1993:219) and Goudge's (2003:202) concerns that the



promotion of English has led to its dominance of the discourse of development and significantly the programme participants involved in this research, although cognisant of cultural discourse issues such as those Torff (1997:708) raises, did not appear to evince a great deal of overt concern over discourse matters. It is equally striking that, despite the participants' responses showing that some obviously felt somewhat ambivalent regarding the role that English had assumed in their surroundings, the overall pattern of responses seems to support Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:xxii) contention that ELT is still widely viewed as being a value-neutral entity beneficial to the development and empowerment process. ELT programme participants appear to regard socio-cultural discourse concerns as being somewhat irrelevant to their English language learning and it was noted by some of the providers that any attempt to tamper with English provision was generally viewed in a negative light by local people. To writers such as Foster-Carter (1985:182 cited in Cooper, 1989:181) this sort of response is reflective of a colonial linguistic mindset but it was put forward by one of the interviewees that this attitude on the part of recipients was probably not due to a devaluation by local people of their indigenous tongue. Rather it was thought that their apparent attitude was a result of the local people taking their mother tongue for granted owing to it being their language of everyday household discourse.

Many of the interviewees noted that in a number of areas they worked in NGO programmes featured quite strongly and were steadily increasing their presence. The reasons put forward for this, although somewhat varied, were mostly based upon the fact that NGOs are perceived to be flexible, innovative and therefore more able to ensure more accurate aid delivery (Desai, 2002:496). However, it was also observed by those who had worked in the field that many NGOs had quite set and specific agendas which could, as Goudge (2003:202) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:390) argue, lead to local customs and social constructs being degraded and discouraged in preference to modernisations favoured by the provider. Some projects, especially those such as the religiously predicated programme discussed in the previous chapter, even appear to largely ignore socio-cultural considerations. While the use of ELT for evangelical purposes provides both an ironical as well as literal expression of Singh's (1993:30) criticism of Western researcher pedagogical approaches to ELT it also graphically illustrates how aid programmes by presupposing that recipient societies require provider induced change have the potential to become a vector to devalue and



disempower indigenous social systems and their attendant support structures (Long, 2001:89).

### Programme functioning and funding

As Brown (2000:142) notes, English acquisition is more an emotional process than a rational one. There is therefore a need to recognise, as Bridger and Winpenny (1987:87) assert, that conventional input/output measurement mechanisms may not be the most appropriate ones for evaluating ELT programmes. Yet it is striking that although those involved in the administration of English language aid programmes were trained and qualified in the delivery of aid and development they generally lacked formal ELT qualifications. Equally the ELT instructors on programmes referred to during the course of the research for this thesis although they often possessed significant ELT teaching experience and qualifications<sup>i</sup> appear to have possessed little in the way of development field credentials. Although the lack of formal theoretical cross-over between the fields of development and ELT was not noted to have caused any particular challenges in the functioning of programmes it would seem that the lack of cross-discipline knowledge and shared experience by those involved in ELT programme provision has the potential to create 'blind-spots' in ensuring best-practice in programme functioning, especially in areas such as issue identification, goals setting and programme assessment.

It was evident during the interviews that there exists a mutual esteem between administrators and instructors regarding their respective skills but despite this collegial respect, there were marked differences that came through in the interviews regarding programme functioning. Material provision is a case in point. As noted in the previous chapter the administrators' main concern appeared to be the need to ensure programme cost effectiveness and therefore the use of mass-produced, off-the-shelf English instruction texts produced in either Australia or Thailand was favoured for programmes because these texts are cheaper to source than the comparatively expensive, long-term investment required to create a bespoke textbook. Instructors on the other hand tended to be more focused on answering individual learner-centred issues and, even though they recognised that mass-produced textbooks would have

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<sup>i</sup> One of the NGO programmes examined was however reliant upon volunteers who, although qualified teachers, mostly lacked EFL qualifications.

probably formed the base of the participants' formative English learning experiences in school, considered it more appropriate to create site-specific materials. However, even though a number of instructors interviewed had reservations regarding the suitability of materials due to the educational process being perceived to be firmly encompassed within the wider context of recipient socio-cultural interplay (Zachariah 1997:473; 478; Pennycook, 1994:23; Crooks and Crewes, 1995:65) it was acknowledged that budget considerations meant that non site-specific materials usually had to be utilised by ELT programmes.

Awareness of budgetary constraints is important because continued project support and funding is often contingent upon the production of positive proof of the cost effectiveness of programmes<sup>ii</sup> (Hayhoe, 1997:752). However, if it becomes the overall focus of ELT administration, as can tend to happen in the implementation of a cost-based analysis administrative approach, conflicts can arise. Many of those interviewed believed such issues to be exacerbated when government agencies were involved because, as Fukuda-Parr, Lopes and Malik (2002:11) state, their financial demands sometimes led to decisions being determined by monetary matters rather than by considerations of local suitability and sustainability.

The fact that funding issues were noted by the interviewees as a major area of concern for all programmes examined would seem to emphasise that providers should work in co-operation both with other agencies and with recipients. Yet a number of interviewees considered that providers, rather than viewing development assistance and EFL provision as a cooperative recipient-centred process, seemed at times to be in competition. Intriguingly one opinion given during the interviews was that such competition was perhaps actually empowering for recipients in that it allowed the recipient to hunt around for the best deal. However, it was also observed that because, as Malik and Wagle (2002:92) and Riddel (1997:463) state, funding and function issues derive just as much from recipients as from providers the oversupply of providers and programmes ran the risk of encouraging recipient authorities to pick programmes according to which offered the most for them personally rather than those which were contextually most suitable for the locale.

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<sup>ii</sup> See Chapter Two.

It is evident from the research responses that many of the programmes mentioned during the course of the research for this thesis sought to utilise local people and indigenous structures and had where practicable had shifted away from the provision of 'overseas ELT experts' for the classroom. In a number of cases, such as with members of the CUPELS groups, this had meant a shift in focus to the upgrading of the English language skills of local teacher trainers in order to facilitate the better delivery of English language instruction methodology to teachers of English in their home regions. Nevertheless, even though such changes seem to fall firmly within empowerment and capacity building paradigms, it must be remembered that the methodology promoted by these programmes still falls firmly within Western derived pedagogy. This being so then questions must be raised as to whether ELT programmes, especially those which use immersion in an English Target Language Community as a teaching methodology, are still as Dasgupta (1993:166) contends at core an outside imposition rather than a responsive and relevant means of empowering local people and their institutions.

#### New Zealand based ELT courses

As detailed in the previous chapter the majority of programmes considered in depth in this thesis included a period of immersion in a New Zealand ELTC. The ELT programme participants who took part in this thesis research were all on New Zealand English Target Language Community (ELTC) immersion ELT programmes and underwent a period of English language instruction at either CUPELS or the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT). Immersion methodology is based on the belief that "fluency in second language performance is due to what we have acquired, not to what we have learned" (Krashen, 1981 cited in Brown, 2000:278) and in ELT immersion is used to describe a process whereby the learner is placed in a native-speaking target language environment.

It is evident from their respective responses that participants placed great value on the ELTC component of the programmes and that practitioners viewed immersion as being both highly motivational for participants and a pedagogically sound methodology. On the face of it immersion seems eminently logical in that by placing the learner in a 'sink or swim' language environment the learner will be forced to use the target language and that the resultant vast array of practical language experiences

they have will aid their language confidence and acquisition. Yet immersion remains a source of some debate amongst ESOL theorists and teachers (Brown, 2000:280-1) and programmes which utilise it are fundamentally predicated upon the idea that recipients require a near native language fluency. It is striking that, as Table 10 'Participant self-assessment of English ability' shows, despite a large number of the participants having used and studied English for a considerable time in their home countries (over twenty years in some cases) all rated their English language competency level as being comparatively low and somewhat inadequate. This apparently contradictory result may have more to do with a sense of linguistic insecurity on the part of the non-native English speaker when placed within a native-speaking environment than being due to any real lack of linguistic knowledge and could well derive from the participants being unprepared for the distinctive New Zealand accent and idiom<sup>iii</sup>.

A language learner's immediate need in an ELTC environment is to acquire the socio-linguistic means to interact with those around them and achieve satisfactory outcomes in everyday situations (Judd, 1999:152). It would seem probable that this explains why the data in Table 17 'English skills importance rating' and Table 18 'Participants' English skill improvement focus' shows that the participants' skills learning priority was primarily on oral and aural skills rather than the skills which, according to Table 13 'English skill most used at work' and Table 14 'English skill least used at work', appear to be of the greatest utility in their home surroundings. These results, although in need of further research, call into question the role of immersive ETLC programmes in empowerment and capacity building strategies, especially when one considers that for the majority of the programme participants their future English language interactions will not be with native English speakers from New Zealand.

#### Assessing English skills achievement

A learner's evaluation of their needs influences their motivation and application and it was evident from a number of instructor comments that ESOL instructors felt placed

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<sup>iii</sup> Difficulties with the New Zealand accent are not just confined to non-native English speakers as native English speakers from the USA frequently find the New Zealand accent and associated idioms tricky (personal experience)

in the difficult position of addressing the immediate perceived needs of the learners whilst at the same time attempting to fulfil set programme outcomes which usually included the attainment of a prescribed level of English language competency. All the programmes examined in the course of this research had measurement criteria built into their programme design although the choice of criteria varied quite significantly between programmes. Those programmes examined in this research whose funds came from the public purse mostly required the use of international English proficiency tests (of which IELTS was the one most overwhelming used) to produce quantifiable outcomes while some of the NGO run programmes, such as those which were religiously based or based upon a skills transfer model, eschewed standard English language assessment tools in favour of more subject specific appraisals.

The administrators interviewed generally agreed that the use of English language assessment tools was of value with the main reason given for this support being that the use of assessments was seen to help to ensure a lessening of the chances of the socio-political patronage pressures influencing participant selection (Crooks and Crewes, 1995:71). It was also evident that even though Bridger and Winpenny (1987:87) argue that the applicability of an 'input-to-output' ratio in education is not immediately apparent administrators also tended to consider assessments as a critical administrative tool for regulating programme parameters and providing quantitative feedback to funders. Instructors on the other hand preferred to view English proficiency assessments as a means of providing language teaching benchmarks and as a way to enable more accurate student placement. As observed in the previous chapter<sup>iv</sup> the instructors interviewed were particularly concerned that without proper placement programmes, and in particular those which had content related to more abstract subjects such as law, could be very problematic for learners with inadequate English. Instructors also felt that without the use of assessments there would be too wide a variance of levels within an English language class and that this would be stressful and less than satisfactory for both learners and instructors.

It would seem from the data provided by the participants in response to the section which dealt with their rationales for learning English that programme participants

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<sup>iv</sup> See 'Functional aspects of the programmes'.



obviously felt substantial pressure to succeed. This anxiety is understandable given the reported importance achieving a certified level of English had for their careers (Sutherland, 2006:33; Zachariah, 1997:472) but instructors observed that the pressure the participants felt meant they often became preoccupied with assessments such as IELTS to the detriment of their wider learning. Nevertheless the providers interviewed felt strongly that assessment levels should be retained. Indeed in some cases providers stated that assessment criteria had actually been tightened. That this was done, despite the fact that some of the interviewees noted that a number of recipients - both on a private and official level - asked that English entry requirements be relaxed, provides support for Dasgupta's (1993:166) and Mohan's (2002:53) contention that the provider's control of the finances has perpetuated an inherent power disparity between players which undercuts the promotion of partnership and empowerment paradigms in programmes.

### Overview

The providers involved in the interviews for this research were well qualified in their particular fields but there appeared to be a lack of cross-over of knowledge between those involved in administration and those working as ELT instructors. Nevertheless the research done for this thesis demonstrates that there is a general consensus on the part of both providers and recipients that, due to the dominance it has developed over international economic and intellectual life, English plays an important role in development. It is also striking that neither the recipients nor providers involved in this thesis research seemed to question the provision of ELT aid programmes and viewed a period of immersion in an ELTC positively.

However, the use of immersion in a New Zealand ELTC raises a number of issues. The fact that participants are placed in an academic environment which is predicated upon teaching Western based education, business and governance methodologies presupposes that participants will need to adapt to Western/Northern ways of doing things which may not be entirely appropriate to their home socio-cultural environment. It was also noticeable that many of the programmes considered in this thesis appeared to primarily cater for groups which could be characterised as recipient country elites. Both these circumstances seems to be somewhat at odds with empowerment promotion strategies and lend weight to Brohman's (1996:22) and



Stiglitz's (1998 cited in Malik, 2002:31) views that, despite the growth in participatory practices, ELT programmes continue to be conceived of as a means to influence the growth of a modernising leadership which looks to the West for its models.

Even though participant and provider apparently agree on the importance of ELT programmes there was a significant divergence in their supporting rationales for ELT. Judging by the research data participants see a central part of the ELT programme process as being the obtaining of certification of their English language competence because English acquisition is principally viewed as an instrumental means to achieve greater personal wealth, status and professional advancement. Even though providers preferred to focus on 'big picture' concerns such as institutional capacity building the centrality of 'passing' assessments has likely been reinforced by their using such tools for programme monitoring and participant selection. The use of provider determined assessments for such purposes can be seen as providing a further demonstration of the asymmetrical nature of aid as they reinforce the ability of the provider to 'call the shots' and if ELT programmes are to be an integral part of empowerment and capacity building strategies then such issues need to be addressed. The following chapter will try to assess how ELT programmes might be made them more responsive and relevant to recipient needs while at the same time assisting in the providers' aims of promoting empowerment and capacity building.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

*And if you don't know*

*Please and Thank you*

*Well you better learn*

'The Queen's English'

The Muttonbirds

Over the past few decades there has been a recognition that top-down led development has failed to deliver sustainable change to many sections of recipient societies. As noted in Chapter One the plight of the poor and disadvantaged was of especial concern to practitioners. They perceived that these sectors of society whom they viewed as being most in need of help were in fact being by-passed by mainstream aid and development management. This concern caused some providers to search for a more effective aid delivery mechanism by involving local people to participate in programme goal setting and delivery. The apparent success of their trials saw participatory practices, especially in the forms of empowerment and capacity building paradigms, progressively come to dominate the aid and development fields (Lopes, 2002:128).

As mentioned in Chapter Two education has long been promoted as an integral part of the empowerment and capacity building strategies as it is seen to empower recipients with "a capability to be autonomous" (De-Shalit, 2004:804) and enable them to unleash their economic potential – be it societal or individual (James, 1998:3-5). However, with the dominance of English as the global language of business, technology and much international discourse English acquisition has in recent years come to be seen as a necessary personal and institutional condition for development (Mosse, 2005:108). As the satirical Muttonbirds' song, 'The Queen's English', which has been used at the start of the major chapter subsection headings for Chapters One, Two and Conclusions indicates the global dominance of English has led to a popular assumption – especially by native English speakers - that English language

acquisition is a necessary pre-condition to participation in the modern world. Similarly a great many speakers of other languages see English as being their passport to greater personal opportunities and this has consequently generated a rapid global expansion of an ELT industry to cater for the demand for English language instruction. Providers also appear to be part of this consensus regarding the importance of English language skills, increasingly envisaging it as an efficient means of inducing change in existing socio-economic structures and a crucial constituent in capacity building (Stroud, 2003:17). As a result English Language Teaching (ELT) programmes which have been a small part of aid provision for many years have, despite reservations over their potential impact on indigenous language and culture, become an expanding and increasingly important part of the developmental capacity building and empowerment strategies for many aid agencies.

Yet despite the increasing provision of ELT as part of development programmes there appears to be a striking lack of readily available research evaluating the role of ELT programmes in promoting empowerment and capacity building aid strategies. It seems that much of the support for ELT programmes in development is, as noted in Chapter Two, based primarily upon a presupposition that the enhancement of English language skills will effect a 'trickle down' process of national development and empowerment (Dasgupta, 1993:215; McKay, 2002:17). Even more surprising is that there appears to have been little actual examination of the opinions of providers and participants actively involved in such programmes as to the actual efficacy of ELT programmes in delivering these developmental outcomes. Most of literature dealing with ELT programmes seems to either centre on functionalities using cost/benefit analysis models or on wider discourse debates, both areas which are probably more reflective of provider concerns than of recipient requirements.

As an experienced teacher of English to speakers of other languages I have had considerable contact with English language learners and instructors and the lack of examination of participant and provider perceptions and rationales regarding ELT provision has struck me as being somewhat anomalous. Language learning is a profoundly personal process influenced by a wide range of socio-cultural variables (Brown, 2000:144) and therefore this thesis research has sought to explore the perceptions and opinions of those most directly involved in ELT programmes: the

participants and providers. To this end the following research questions were constructed:

- What is the perceived role of ELT in development?
- How do participants and providers view the acquisition of English language skills in reference to individual empowerment and capacity building?
- How are ELT aid programmes which involve a period of immersion in an English Target Language Community (ELTC) perceived to fit into the wider developmental paradigms of empowerment and capacity building?
- If ELT programmes are to be an integral part of empowerment and capacity building policies and strategies how might they be made more responsive and relevant?

In order to explore the views of participants on New Zealand resident ELT courses a questionnaire with closed choice and open evaluative questions which encouraged the participants to make personal appraisals was constructed. A questionnaire was favoured for the participants due to the consideration that, as they were English language learners of various levels, the use of a written research tool would remove the stress of a spoken language interview situation and allow them the flexibility of time to consider their responses. However, as it was presupposed that the providers would be either native or near native speakers it was considered that the more flexible nature of an interview would permit a greater freedom to explore issues.

The data obtained from these main research methods indicates that:

- Despite the arguments of King'ei (1999:1) and Mansour (1993:77) presented in Chapter Two both participants and providers view ELT courses as being positive in a developmental sense.
- ELT provision is perceived by providers as providing local people with the means to advocate and interact on a global scale and therefore the focus of ELT programmes tends to be on the building of institutional capacity. On the other hand ELT course participants' English learning rationales had a primarily personal empowerment focus.
- Both ELT programme providers and participants view the use of immersion in an ETLC positively and there is great demand for places on ELT programmes

which involve living and studying in New Zealand. However, ELT views the use of immersion methodology as a means to encourage language acquisition whereas capacity building and empowerment programmes tend to see it as a stepping stone to enable recipients to pursue other undertakings, such as study in the provider country, which are the primary focus of empowerment and capacity building programmes.

- Programme direction still seems to be principally under the purview of providers due to their role as funders. A more participant inclusive approach which looks to empower recipients with the ability to set standards and make changes to programme parameters would help to enable ELT programmes to be more responsive and relevant to recipients.

#### The difficulties in assessment use

Providers are under pressure to show evidence of 'value for money' in the form of successful outcomes or face the reduction or loss of funding (Hayhoe, 1997:752) even though learning, especially language learning, cannot be reduced to a simple cost benefit ratio the way infrastructure projects can (Crooks and Crewes, 1995:13-14; Wier and Roberts, 1994:13). This consideration appears to be especially important for programmes and agencies who either work in partnership with or are answerable to governments with ELT programmes facing pressure to provide quantitative data that they have achieved positive success in promoting development strategies. Accordingly, as noted in Chapters Four and Five, programme evaluations have by-and-large remained based upon a Northern competitive capitalist cost/benefit analysis model. Whilst a functional slant on efficient use of resources is not in itself a bad thing the need to provide proof that ELT programmes are achieving success has meant that assessments remain popular with planners and policy makers the majority of whom do not appear to come from trained teaching backgrounds and seemingly have little or no real experience of the classroom - let alone of teaching English as a second language.

In the case of the New Zealand based programmes which have formed the core of this research the assessment instrument adopted was IELTS which is seen as a standardised, value neutral test. Nevertheless assessment tools such as IELTS are imperfect as they carry their own problematic presuppositions. They ensure that

providers retain *de facto* control over programme through aspects such as participant entry and are fundamentally predicated on dis-empowering native-speaker models which privilege a particular form of English. There is also an assumption inherent in the use of assessments that the attainment of a set level of English assessment directly correlates to wider achievement - for example that a Band 6 score in IELTS<sup>i</sup> enables a person to cope in a New Zealand university environment. However, assessment tools such as IELTS are by their very nature generalised and therefore cannot gauge a candidate's general ability to work within wider parameters such as those required by academic institutions.

However, the reality is that although alternatives to assessments as a marker of achievement may seem an attractive option there is a discernable lack of desire on the part of learners for alternatives. Successful programme design needs to acknowledge the personal circumstances of participants and it would seem that for participants on ELT courses procuring a certification of their English level attainment is of very high importance. As O'Shea (2006:1) points out English has become firmly associated with the idea of quality education and obtaining certification of English language attainment can open the door to a great number of personal opportunities, such as study scholarships. Consequently ELT course participants are often under a high degree of stress and anxiety as they attempt to achieve a level of English (especially written English) that many native speakers struggle with. Moreover the need to achieve in assessments can cause participants to become preoccupied with this one course aspect and as a result tensions can be created in the learner/instructor relationship over course direction, content, and delivery. Instructors and programme designers of ELT programmes therefore face the challenge of finding an English instruction framework which best responds to recipient needs whilst at the same time ensuring that the programme is still relevant to the paradigmatic and methodological needs of providers.

### The socio-political context of programmes

Many recipient societies are undergoing large-scale, rapid economic changes and have fiercely competitive job markets. It would appear from the participants'

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<sup>i</sup> IELTS test results are reported in bands rather than marks or grades.



responses that these changes have meant that many people from these societies look to secure multiple modes of earning money. In most developing countries English ability is understood to empower an individual with greater marketability. It is also viewed as a sign of modernity and, due to globalisation, is perceived to be necessary for increased organisational effectiveness by both ELT programme recipients and providers. Being offered a placement on an officially sanctioned ELT course appears to be seen by recipients as an affirmation of approval by authorities and a chance for a participant to put their career on the 'fast-track'. Consequently places on ELT programmes, especially those which include a residence component in an English Target Language Community (ELTC), are highly sought after.

It is apparent however that this situation has created a number of problems, especially in the field of participant selection, with ELT programme providers at times finding themselves under pressure to relinquish control of placements and programmes to local authorities. While such a ceding of power may chime well with participation paradigms it can potentially endanger ELT programme empowerment strategies. Many recipient societies are hierarchical and based upon personal connections and thus control over course participation can be a way of promoting patronage. As noted in Chapter Five the majority of programmes looked at during the course of the research sought to avoid such issues by providers progressively taking more control over the programme process. This strategy, although eminently logical, does however illustrate a wider dilemma in the development field between the ideal of empowering a recipient to be autonomous and the provider's desire to pursue paradigmatic aims.

Providers however are not immune from the use of ELT programmes for wider political aims and as remarked in the Introduction to this thesis ELT has historically been used as a foreign affairs tool to secure a recipient elite sympathetic to the provider (O'Sullivan and Huong, 2002:1). The providers interviewed stated that this conception had faded in recent years due to the securing of better and more independent funding for agencies in New Zealand but nonetheless there is reportedly still a strong undercurrent in some quarters to utilise New Zealand ELTC resident programmes to cultivate a 'cadre of friends' from recipient countries' elite for future interactions. It is possible, in the foreign policy context, to see such a model as a potentially positive vector towards international engagement but it is pedagogically

problematic as the need to generate a positive experience for participants can, as O'Sullivan and Huong (*ibid*) argue, mean that aspects such as climate and regional interest assume as much importance as instructional issues in ELT programme designs.

Such an approach can, as Foster-Carter (1985:182 cited in Cooper, 1989:181) and Long (2001:88-9) contend, also be seen as a disempowering neo-colonialist construction of an elite more dependent upon the provider and less in tune with the participants' socio-political environment. This perspective is seemingly reinforced by the comments of the participants studying at the Massey University Centre for University Preparation and English Language Studies (CUPELS) regarding perceptions of the academic standings of their home country institutions compared to Northern institutions. Although it can be argued that such perceptions merely reflect the realities of funding and a difference in depth to the respective research cultures such attitudes, especially when examined in light of the ELT programme participants' comments that research published in their local language is apparently considered of less value than that done in English, seemingly endorse Mazuri (1975, cited in Altbach, 1997:635) contention that there is an unspoken assertion that learning in a developed country is of greater status and value. Such a conception is damaging in developmental terms because it can, as discussed in Chapter Two, encourage the emigration of those who have skills thereby undermining any attempts to build a country's internal capacity.

Most countries have local institutions and providers which can perhaps answer English language instruction needs more efficiently than externally based providers and institutions. If the aim of ELT programmes is to truly improve a region's internal capacity it would then seem more cost effective to improve the educational facilities within that region. Adopting such an approach could also potentially empower more people from the area with learning. Many of those who come from less economically advantageous backgrounds in developing countries lack the means to pursue their studies and the lower costs associated with in-country programmes could enhance empowerment strategies by allowing greater subsidisation for participants from less privileged backgrounds.

### The New Zealand context

New Zealand is a comparatively small player in international aid and development (UNDP website, 2005) and, as most aid agencies lack trained specialist English language teaching staff, ELT instruction has as, stated in Chapters Four and Five, consequently tended to be ‘farmed out’ to professional ELT providers. As noted in Chapter Five this has meant that New Zealand ELTC programme instructors have as a rule been language teachers attached to tertiary institutions. Whilst this practice has ensured a high degree of professionalism it has on the other hand meant that those involved with the teaching of participants have more often than not have lacked a background in development issues.

The practice of using professional English language instructors has meant that immersion methodology has retained an influential role in ELT aid programmes. However, it appears from the participants’ responses to the questionnaire’s linguistic skills focus questions that residence in an English immersive environment has caused the participants’ immediate instruction needs to revolve around answering their day-to-day linguistic needs. This can lead to difficulties in achieving an adequate programme balance as teaching materials run the real risk of emphasizing English skills and patterns that, although very useful in the New Zealand environment, lack much reference to the participants’ home environment. Yet judging by interviews conducted there does not seem to have been a lot of consideration given to the fact that New Zealand English is very much a minority variety in world terms and is frequently at variance with the more dominant US or UK English varieties participants have been probably been exposed to in their home environments. Given this, and the fact that for most participants the majority of their English interactions will be with other non-native users, it would therefore seem apposite to question whether immersion in a New Zealand English Target Language Community (ELTC) environment is the most rewarding path and relevant practice for participants and providers to follow.

Correct curricula design and choice of texts are a vital part of any successful ELT programme as they enable the learner to engage with their subject thereby promoting the learning process. It is noticeable that even though a participant’s personal learning methodologies are fundamentally formed by their own socio-cultural learning

experiences (Brown, 2000: 144) the New Zealand resident ELT programmes examined during this research are designed to work within a Western literate teaching methodology which emphasises autonomous learning, independence and critical thought. Instructors are thus in the position of being caught in the middle of competing demands with potentially detrimental implications for the participant's learning. If a participant comes from a society which traditionally emphasises oral cooperative knowledge systems rather than the Western competitive literate learning culture then placing them in a pedagogical situation which may be anathema and alien to them is dis-empowering and ultimately self-defeating.

### Can ELT programmes be a responsive and relevant part of development?

As noted in Chapter Two the provision of ELT aid programmes raises the risk of negative implications for the empowerment of indigenous language speakers, especially if they are minority tongues within the recipient society (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:x). However, it seems from both provider and participant responses presented in Chapter Four that local people apparently do not view the encroachment of English as an existent threat to their culture. Instead English has, as Wilson (2006:1) argues, seemingly become synonymous in participants' minds with progress and development whereas indigenous languages have become (even if subconsciously) associated with backwardness. As Mahoob (2002:31) states in such situations systems can become skewed and thus, unless precautionary steps are taken to preserve them, local languages may become so devalued that they die out within a few generations – or even more quickly if they are unwritten.

The provision of ELT programmes may also serve to preserve a privileged English speaking elite and the fact that, as illustrated by Table 3 'Participant education attainment level' in Chapter Four, the two participant groups surveyed for this research were all educated to a tertiary level would seem to exemplify this concern quite well. Although it can be argued that the selection of such groups fits well within capacity building development strategies it also appears to point to the fact that many ELT aid programmes, especially those with an ETLC component, primarily cater for a select few. This being so it could be argued that any discernable role such ELT programmes may play in empowerment of minority groups would seem to be limited to say the least. With this in mind it would appear that a balance needs to be found

between the use of English as a tool for development and advancement and the pressing need to ensure that it does not dis-empower and crowd out indigenous socio-linguistic constructs. Although finding answers to this matter is by no means simple it would seem to be essential if ELT programmes are to be part of empowerment strategies. To this end the examination of language policies of countries such as New Zealand which are seeking to empower and revitalise indigenous languages could be potentially rewarding sectors to search for possible answers.

It appears from the research responses that the use of immersion in ELT is largely left unchallenged by providers and participants who both appear to view a period of immersion in an ETLC as an integral and desirable part of ELT programmes. The reasons for this support vary but it appears that for providers immersion is regarded as filling an important methodological niche and because, as noted in Chapter Four, 'Background to ELT programmes and associated programme issues', aid provision has a 'competitive' nature and an ELTC component is seen as an attraction which can raise the provider's profile and potentially increase their 'market share'. Nevertheless it is evident from the questionnaire responses that participants also placed a premium upon having a New Zealand ETLC immersion component in programmes although how much of this enthusiasm was generated by considerations of ELT methodological considerations and how much by the lure of subsidised travel to another country is an area which could bear more scrutiny.

The perceived success of programmes was to a large degree predicated on the attainment of provider ideological goals and associated assessment criteria which, despite it being stated in the provider interviews in Chapter Four that participatory practices were prominent in programmes, meant that a substantial degree of retention provider control was required. Whereas the desire on the part of providers to fulfil particular aims can be understood the maintenance of such sway over programmes does raise legitimate questions regarding whether ELT programmes can indeed fulfil the empowerment and capacity building paradigm of enabling recipients to set their own agendas and make their own autonomous decisions (Brown, 2002:vii). As noted in the 'Programme funding and functioning' section in the previous chapter a more inclusive approach which looks to empower recipients with the ability to set standards and makes changes to programme parameters would seem to be necessary. However,



for such an approach to be successful providers would be required to combine forces and coordinate their programmes and, as noted in the Chapter Four, 'Provider interviews', this may well be just 'too big an ask' given the size and the overlapping nature of the aid industry.

Even if this issue could be resolved a more fundamental difficulty regarding the role of ELT in development and wider capacity building and empowerment strategies needs to be examined. The conditions of underdevelopment are complex and as Ricento (2000:2) points out language policies and priorities are grounded in local conditions which often militate against future planning and it was notable that some interviewee responses showed they had reservations about spending money on ELT courses (especially those that involved residence in New Zealand) when many fundamental capacity needs in recipient societies were still inadequately addressed. English language skills are only an advantage in a market place which suffers from a scarcity of them and even countries such as India with a skilled English speaking workforce suffer chronic problems of poverty and inequity (O'Shea, 2006:1). If ELT programmes are to be made more relevant and responsive to recipients then closer examination needs to be given to local needs and circumstances. It would seem that a more effectual approach to promote community and individual empowerment and capacity building would be to provide more broadly based programmes in the participants' home countries rather than teaching a few select participants in a New Zealand setting. For ELT programmes to fulfil their projected empowerment and capacity building outcomes then, given the different expectations and demands of learners and providers noted in Chapter Four, it would seem apposite that providers take more note of recipient identified needs and closely examine whether the course content truly encourages the development of the requisite language skills that participants need to enhance empowerment and capacity building in their home environment.



**Appendix 1****Information Sheet**

Dear participant,

I am employed as a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL) at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand and am currently studying for my Masters of Philosophy (Development Studies).

I am doing research for my Masters' thesis on the role of English Language aid programmes and how they may contribute to empowerment and capacity building and would like to invite you to participate in this research. I am particularly interested in your experiences and ideas related to this topic. If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and possibly, if you agree to, to participate in a follow-up interview.

This study is not funded or sponsored by any organisation or department; neither do I have any affiliation with any group or society which may prejudice my research findings. Although confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed every effort will be made to ensure that any information you supply will be confidential to me and that you would not be able to be identified in any report or publication that is prepared from this study. You would also have the opportunity to review and comment on all materials provided by you if you so wish.

**Appendix 2a****CONSENT FORM**

I ..... have read the Information Sheet and/ or have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that neither my name nor any information that could be used to identify me will be used without my permission.

*(The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project).*

I ..... agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signed** .....

**Name** ..... **Date** .....

**Appendix 2b****CONSENT FORM**

I ..... have read the Information Sheet and/ or have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that neither my name nor any information that could be used to identify me will be used without my permission.

I understand that I will have the opportunity to review and comment on all materials provided by me.

*(The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project).*

I ..... agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signed** .....

**Name** ..... **Date** .....

### **Appendix 3:- Questionnaire for ELTO participants**

All answers to this questionnaire are confidential and will remain so. If there is any question you feel uncomfortable answering you do not have to answer it.

Please indicate the appropriate answer

**1. Age**

- ☐ Less than 20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ More than 50

**2. Gender**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**3. Highest level of education achieved**

- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Tertiary

**4. Marital Status**

- ☐ Never been married
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

**5. Please indicate all of the options below which are true for you**

- ☐ I am my own boss
- ☐ I work for another person
- ☐ I work in a private company
- ☐ I work for the government
- ☐ I work for an aid organisation

**6. What is your main job?**

**7. Are you the main money earner in your household?**

Yes No

**8. Do you have more than one way of earning money?**

Yes No

**9. What is your main means of earning a living?**

**10. How long have you been doing your current job? (If you have more than one job please answer regarding your main job)**

**11. I find my job**

- ☐ Interesting and rewarding
- ☐ Okay
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Boring and dissatisfying

**Why?**

**12. Do you feel English is helpful for your job?**

**Why?**

**13. Do you work alone or with others?**

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ With others

**14. Do you prefer to work alone or with others?**

**Why?**

**15. Do you feel your job gives you status in your community?**

**Why?**

**16. Reasons for studying English (please mark all that apply)**

- ☐ For my work
- ☐ To advance my career
- ☐ For social reasons
- ☐ I am expected to
- ☐ It was recommended that I take this course
- ☐ I am interested in the English language
- ☐ I am interested in the culture of English speakers
- ☐ I wish to work/ live overseas
- ☐ I can earn more money if I know English
- ☐ I can help my country
- ☐ I can help my community

**17. Please in the spaces below list the three (3) most important reasons for you learning English**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**18. Have you ever studied English before this course?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**19. Where did you study English?**

- ☐ Primary school
- ☐ Secondary school
- ☐ Tertiary (i.e. college, university)
- ☐ Private lessons

**20. How long have you studied English?**

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

**21. How would you rate your English level?**

- ☐ Beginner
- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ Advanced
- ☐ Skilful
- ☐ Near native user

**22. English at work**

- ☐ I use English every day
- ☐ I use English most days
- ☐ I use English once or twice a week
- ☐ I use English a few times a month
- ☐ I almost never use English



**23. Please rank from 1 to 4 the English skills according to how much you use them at your work. (1 you use the most, 4 the least)**

- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Listening

**24. Which English language skill would you most like to improve?**

- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Listening

**Why?**

**25. English skills: Please indicate how you rate each skill**

☐ **Writing**

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

Not Difficult		Difficult		Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

☐ **Speaking**

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

Not Difficult		Difficult		Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

☐ **Reading**

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

Not Difficult		Difficult		Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

☐ **Listening**

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

Not Difficult		Difficult		Very Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

**26. How do you feel when you speak English?**

Comfortable				Uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

27. How do you feel when English is spoken to you?

Comfortable				Uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

28. How do you feel when you write English?

Comfortable				Uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

29. How do you feel when you read English?

Comfortable				Uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

30. Which English language skill do you use the most day to day?

Why?

31. Please indicate how important you think each of the following is:

○ Education

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

○ Effort/ Hard work

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

○ Respect/ Honor

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

○ Morals/ Honesty

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

○ Success

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

○ Community

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

○ Family

Very Important		Important		Not Important
1	2	3	4	5

☐ **Status**

Very Important12Important34Not Important5

☐ **Money**

Very Important12Important34Not Important5

☐ **Cultural Pride/ Tradition**

Very Important12Important34Not Important5

☐ **Independence**

Very Important12Important34Not Important5

☐ **Working as a team**

Very Important12Important34Not Important5

Any other comments:

All information in this questionnaire is confidential and will remain so. However, in case I need to contact you in the future would you please write your name below:

Please indicate below if you would be willing and able to participate further in this research by being interviewed

- ☐ Yes, I would be willing to be interviewed
- ☐ No, I do not wish to participate further

Thank you for your participation in this research.

**Appendix 4: - Questionnaire for CUPELS participants**

All answers to this questionnaire are *confidential* and will remain so. If there is any question you feel uncomfortable answering you do not have to answer it.

**The English language and you**

**1. Age**

- ☐ Less than 20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ More than 50

**2. Gender**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**3. Where do you come from?**

**4. Please indicate how important you think each of the following is:**

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
<b>Education</b>					
<b>Effort/ Hard work</b>					
<b>Community</b>					
<b>Status/ Success</b>					
<b>Money</b>					
<b>Cultural Pride/ Tradition</b>					

**5. What is your highest level of education achieved**

- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Tertiary

**6. Has going to your school/ college been good for your career?**

**Why?**

**7. Have you ever studied English before this course?**

**Why?**

**8. Where did you study English?** (e.g. Primary school, Secondary school, Tertiary (i.e. college, university), private lessons)

**9. What are three (3) most important reasons for you for studying English**

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Why are these reasons important?**

**10. How long have you used English?**

**11. How would you rate your English level?**

- ☐ Beginner
- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ Advanced
- ☐ Skilful
- ☐ Near native user

**12. Do you use English outside of work?**

**When?**

**13. Do you feel that too much importance is placed upon English?**

**Why?**

**14. Which English language skill would you most like to improve?**

**Why?**

**15. English skills: Please indicate how you rate each skill**

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
<b>Writing</b>					
<b>Speaking</b>					
<b>Reading</b>					
<b>Listening</b>					

**16. Which English language skill do you use the most day to day?****Why?****17. How do you feel when ...**

	Comfortable 1	2	3	4	Uncomfortable 5
<b>you speak English?</b>					
<b>English is spoken to you?</b>					
<b>you write English?</b>					
<b>you read English?</b>					

**18. Please indicate all of the options below which are true for you**

- ☐ I am my own boss
- ☐ I work for another person
- ☐ I work in a private company
- ☐ I work for the government
- ☐ I work for an aid organisation

**19. What is your job?****20. Are you the main money earner in your household? (if your answer is no; who is the main money earner?)****21. How long have you been doing your job? (If you have more than one job please answer regarding your main job)**



**22. Do you enjoy your job?**

**Why?**

**23. Do you feel your job gives you status in your community?**

**Why?**

**24. How often do you use English at work?**

**25. Do you feel English is helpful for your job?**

**Why?**

**26. Do you feel that having English is necessary for you to do well in your career?**

**Why?**

**27. Do you feel that people who can use English should have preference for jobs over those who have skills but no English ability?**

**Is this fair?**

**Why?**

**28. Do you feel being able to use English gives people unfair advantages and helps them progress more quickly in their career?**

**Is this fair?**

**Why?**

**Any other comments:**

If you would be willing and able to participate further in this research by being interviewed would you please write your name below:

---

Thank you for your participation in this research.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Interview questions for programme administrators and instructors**

#### Section 1 – Historical background and project provision issues

1. Who initiated the programme?
2. What is the need the programme has been designed to answer?
3. How long has the programme been operating?
4. Have you been personally involved in the programme?
5. What are the project's aims?
6. Have changes been made as the course has progressed? If so who initiated these?
7. How would characterise the official response to the programme?

#### Section 2- Functional aspects of the programme

##### *Students:*

1. What is the student profile? (i.e. age, gender, first language, English proficiency level)
2. Are there entry criteria that participants must fulfil?
3. How and who makes the decisions as to the choice of participants?

##### *Staff:*

4. What is the ethnic/ national background of the teaching staff?
5. How would you characterise the teaching staff?

##### *Course:*

6. What is the duration of the course?
7. Describe the way the programme is delivered.
8. What is the skill balance for the course?
9. Are there suitable course materials available?
10. What forms of assessment are used? How were these decided upon?

##### *Funding:*

11. How is the project funded?
12. Is the funding adequate?

### Section 3 - English language related outcomes

1. What does the programme aim to achieve in terms of English language skills outcomes?
2. Is there a curriculum for the course? If so, how and who participated in its design?
3. Are there any constraints upon choice of course materials?
4. Are the programme's objectives worthwhile/ realistic?

### Section 4 – Programme philosophies & rationales

1. Where, when and how is the programme delivered? Explain the rationale for these choices.
2. What are the programme's teaching and learning philosophies?
3. What does the programme aim to achieve in terms of other outcomes i.e. empowerment/ capacity building?
4. How were these programme aims arrived at?
5. Has there been any conflict over the identification of needs?
6. What are the main constraints upon delivery of the programme?
7. Are the programme's objectives worthwhile/ realistic?
8. Do you consider the programme to be effective?

### Section 5 - Community involvement

1. How would you define the educational and capacity needs of the community?
2. Has there been any conflict over the identification of needs?
3. What educational response has been appropriate for these needs?
4. Does the programme have community support?
5. How much input and participation does the community have into the programme?
6. How would characterise the official response to the programme?
7. What are the positive and negative effects of the operational context?
8. Do you consider the programme to be effective?

### Section 6 – Outcomes/ the future

1. What difference has this programme had on both community and individual level?
2. Has this made any difference to community support?
3. How would the programme's effectiveness best be measured?

4. Could you suggest appropriate ways to evaluate the quality and impact of the programme?
5. Would you support continuation of the programme? Why?
6. Is there a strategic plan for the programme?
7. Would you like to make any changes? If so why? Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the programme?

## **Appendix 6**

### **Questionnaire responses from ELTO participants**

#### **Age**

Less than 20	20 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	More than 50
0	5	6	3	

#### **Gender**

Male	Female
5	9

#### **What is your highest level of education achieved?**

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
0	0	12

#### **Marital status**

Never married	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed
5	9	0	0	0

#### **Employment** (multiple answers were accepted)

own boss	work for another person	in a private company	for the government	for an aid organisation	No response or other
0	0	0	14	0	0

#### **I find my job**

Interesting & rewarding	Okay	Difficult	Boring and dissatisfying
5	8	1	0

#### **Do you work alone or with others?**

Alone	With others
0	14



**What are three (3) most important reasons for you for studying English?** (some multiple responses)

Job/ Career	Compul- sory	Hobby/ Personal	To Commun- icate	English is Internat- ional language	To help country	Study	Travel/ Work abroad	Earn more Money	Other/ no response
13	1	5	2	2	2	3	3	5	1

**Have you ever studied English before this course?**

Yes	No	No Response
13	0	1

**Where did you study English?** (some multiple responses)

Primary School	Secondary School	Tertiary	Private Lessons	No Response
1	2	7	6	0

**How long have you studied English?**

Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	More than 5 years
2	1	2	0	2	2	5

**How would you rate your English level?**

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Skilful	Near native user	No response
0	11	3	0	0	0

**Do you use English at work?**

Every day	Most days	Once or twice a week	A few times a month	Almost never
4	3	5	1	0

**English skill used most at work** (there were some answers which applied the same number to more than one skill)

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	No response
6	4	7	1	1

**English skill used least at work**

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	No response
4	1	2	3	4

**Which English skill would you most like to improve? (some multiple responses)**

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	No response/ Other
8	11	4	5	0

**English skills: Please indicate how you rate each skill**

	Very Important 1	2	3	4	Not Important 5	No Response
<b>Writing</b>	10	3	0	0	0	1
<b>Speaking</b>	11	2	0	0	0	1
<b>Reading</b>	5	5	3	0	0	1
<b>Listening</b>	7	5	1	0	0	1

**English skills: Please indicate how you rate each skill**

	Not Difficult 1	2	3	4	Very Difficult 5	No Response
<b>Writing</b>	0	1	4	2	5	2
<b>Speaking</b>	0	2	8	1	1	2
<b>Reading</b>	0	2	6	1	3	2
<b>Listening</b>	0	2	3	1	6	2

**How do you feel when ...**

	Comfortable 1	2	3	4	Uncomfortable 5
<b>you speak English?</b>	0	3	7	1	3
<b>English is spoken to you?</b>	1	2	7	2	2
<b>you write English?</b>	0	2	5	4	3
<b>you read English?</b>	0	4	8	0	2

**Which English skill do you use the most day to day? (some multiple responses)**

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	All	No response/ Other
2	4	3	4	1	3

**Please indicate how important you think each of the following is:**

	Very Important 1	2	3	4	Not Important 5	No Response
<b>Education</b>	13	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Effort/ Hard work</b>	6	5	3	0	0	0
<b>Respect/ Honour</b>	4	4	5	0	0	1
<b>Morals/ Honesty</b>	7	3	3	0	0	1
<b>Success</b>	5	6	2	0	0	1
<b>Community</b>	5	6	2	0	0	1
<b>Family</b>	10	1	2	0	0	1
<b>Status</b>	2	6	5	0	0	1
<b>Money</b>	2	7	2	1	0	1
<b>Cultural Pride/ Tradition</b>	2	6	4	0	0	2
<b>Independence</b>	7	6	0	0	0	1
<b>Working as a team</b>	5	4	4	0	0	1

## Appendix 7

### Questionnaire responses from CUPELS participants

#### Age

Less than 20	20 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	More than 50
0	7	12	2	2

#### Gender

Male	Female
5	18

#### Where do you come from?

Thailand	Japan	Korea	Indonesia	Germany
18	2	1	1	1

#### Please indicate how important you think each of the following is:

Thai participant in NZ responses:

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
<b>Education</b>	0	0	0	4	14
<b>Effort/ Hard work</b>	0	0	2	7	9
<b>Community</b>	0	1	6	8	3
<b>Status/ Success</b>	0	0	4	8	6
<b>Money</b>	0	1	4	10	3
<b>Cultural Pride/Tradition</b>	0	1	8	8	1

Japanese participant in NZ responses:

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
<b>Education</b>	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Effort/ Hard work</b>	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Community</b>	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Status/Success</b>	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Money</b>	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Cultural Pride/Tradition</b>	1	1	0	0	0

Korean participant in NZ responses:

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
Education	0	0	0	0	1
Effort/ Hard work	0	0	0	1	0
Community	0	0	0	0	1
Status/Success	0	0	0	1	0
Money	0	0	1	0	0
Cultural Pride/Tradition	0	0	0	0	1

Indonesian participant in NZ responses:

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
Education	0	0	0	1	0
Effort/ Hard work	0	0	0	1	0
Community	0	0	1	0	0
Status/Success	0	0	1	0	0
Money	0	0	1	0	0
Cultural Pride/Tradition	0	0	1	0	0

German participant in NZ responses:

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
Education	0	0	0	0	1
Effort/ Hard work	0	0	0	1	0
Community	0	0	0	0	1
Status/Success	0	0	1	0	0
Money	0	0	1	0	0
Cultural Pride/Tradition	0	0	1	0	0

What is your highest level of education achieved?

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
0	0	23

**Have you ever studied English before this course?**

Yes	No
22	1

**Where did you study English?**

Primary School	Secondary School	Tertiary	Private Lessons	No Response
13	20	21	14	2

**What are three (3) most important reasons for you for studying English?**

Job	Compulsory	Hobby/ Personal	To Communi- cate	English is International language	Use Of Inter- net	Study	Travel	Teaching	Other
17	2	3	13	3	4	9	2	1	4

**How long have you used English?**

1-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	> 20 years	Other response
3	3	4	4	4	4

**How would you rate your English level?**

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Skilful	Near native user	No response
1	15	6	0	0	1

**Do you use English outside of work?**

Yes	No	No response/Other
16	5	2

**Employment** (multiple answers were accepted)

own boss	work for another person	in a private company	for the government	for an aid organisation	No response or other
3	6	2	18	2	3

**Which English skill would you most like to improve?** (some multiple responses)

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	No response/ Other
7	16	2	9	2

**English skills: Please indicate how you rate each skill (1 no response)**

	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Very Important 5
<b>Writing</b>	0	1	4	4	13
<b>Speaking</b>	0	0	0	4	18
<b>Reading</b>	0	0	2	10	10
<b>Listening</b>	0	0	0	3	19

**Which English skill do you use the most day to day? (some multiple responses)**

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	No response/ Other
3	10	8	10	1

**How do you feel when ...**

	Comfortable 1	2	3	4	Uncomfortable 5
<b>you speak English</b>	2	3	10	7	1
<b>English is spoken to you?</b>	1	7	11	2	2
<b>you write English</b>	3	6	3	8	3
<b>you read English?</b>	7	9	3	3	1



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