Beyond understanding: Intercultural teacher empathy in the teaching of English

as an additional language

Margaret Louise McAlinden

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother Mary Gallagher who was unable to pursue her dreams of being a scholar despite her potential, and who planted in me the seeds of patience and empathy.

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First I give my gratitude, thanks and appreciation to the participants in the study who gave up their valuable time to talk to me about their work as English language teachers. It was a pleasure and a privilege to listen to their experiences of teaching. Without their contribution to this study, there would be no thesis.

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Abstract

The dominant paradigm of monolingualism and monoculturalism in the context of the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of students in all sectors of Australian education has brought pressure to bear on educators to develop interculturality. This study focuses on empathy as an important, but neglected, aspect of interculturality. The study interprets the beliefs, experiences and meanings that a group of English language teachers associated with empathy and the complex multilingual, multicultural setting in which they work.

The setting for the research was an English language pathway program for international students situated in a public institute of higher education in Australia. The data were gathered through group and individual interviews with ten English language teachers. The study design was informed by an interpretivist perspective and adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach that viewed the related literature as data. The data were analysed using grounded theory processes and procedures.

The findings are presented in the form of five theoretical propositions that together form a tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy and English language teaching. These findings show that empathy was an emotional phenomenon for the participants in the study and was intrinsic to their identities as interculturally effective teachers. Empathy ameliorated the negative emotions and conflicts that resulted from the miscommunications and misunderstandings that were a feature of participants' intercultural encounters with students. The dominant discourse of humanism in the fields of education and English language teaching had agency in the participants' constructions and conceptualisations of themselves as empathic, interculturally effective teachers. Traces of othering were also evident in the English language teacher discourse of the study.

The study has implications for theory, practice, and for future research. Through pre-service and in-service learning opportunities, teachers need to be permitted to acknowledge that teaching is an emotional experience, and that negative emotions are as significant as positive ones, particularly in multilingual, multicultural settings. Teachers who teach multilingual, multicultural classes need to be supported to develop analytic tools which encourage them to adopt and develop a critical approach to their identity, practices and beliefs as teachers. Further qualitative research may serve to strengthen the theoretical propositions developed in this study.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces the research topic, and the aims and purpose of a qualitative study that sought to develop theory related to teacher empathy and interculturality. The study generated five theoretical propositions which together form a tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia.

This introductory chapter is divided into three sections. The first section contextualises the study aims and purpose within the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in Australian education that calls for educators to be interculturally competent. Pointing to the existing research on empathy, the second section outlines why it is important to explore empathy from within the qualitative research paradigm. A final section introduces the research questions, the method and the setting illustrating how the methodological and epistemological underpinnings of the study enabled an exploration of empathy that fitted the study topic, purpose and aims.

Global and Local Changes

The global population has never been more mobile; the number of people living, working and studying overseas has never been greater, resulting in people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds increasingly coming into contact with each other in their daily lives (Kramsch, 1998; Sercu, 2005; Stone, 2006). Australia is no exception to this, with a population of approximately 3.3 million people for whom English is an additional language (EAL) (Department of Health and Aging, 2012).

There is also an international EAL student population in Australia that has grown in both number and diversity throughout most of the past three decades. At the time the data for the current study were gathered over 214 nationalities made up the international student population in Australian institutions of higher education (Australian Education International [AEI], 2008), compared with 113 in 1985 (Linacre, 2007). Despite a recent and unprecedented downturn in student visa applications, international student numbers in Australia have grown rapidly over previous successive years. In 2008, an all-time high of 543,898 international students (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009) were recorded as being enrolled in educational activities in Australia compared with 30,000 in 1985 (Linacre, 2007). An even greater number was evident by the end of 2009; official statistics in May 2009 indicated a growth of 17% over 2008 data (AEI, 2009). Of these students, the vast majority use and study English as an additional language.

International student numbers.

Despite a recent and dramatic downturn of enrolments in the English language sector in Australia (-20% in 2010 according to AEI, 2012) and the predicted downturn in enrolments in related sectors of international education in Australia, during the data collection period of the current study, the percentage of international students enrolled in higher education constituted 37.7% of the total student population. This was the highest number for any single education sector in Australia at that time (AEI, 2008), and represented the highest number of international students ever enrolled in Australian higher education institutions.

Although educators in higher education institutions such as universities have always participated in an international exchange of knowledge and ideas across national boundaries and cultures, the situation of increasing numbers and diversity places far more demands on educators in Australia to be interculturally competent than ever before. As student numbers and diversity have grown, concerns have been raised that educators in these settings may not be equipped to provide international students with an appropriate educational experience (Bodycott & Walker, 2000), as Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010) explained:

> [T]he massification and the internationalisation of Australian higher education have meant that student diversity has increased and therefore effective teaching must be able to manage and address such diversity. (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010, p. 119)

Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010) found that changes to student diversity in higher education in Australia remain largely ignored in the criteria to judge effective university teaching. This diversity relates not only to the increase in the number of international students, but also to increases in the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds including EAL migrants and Aboriginal Australians; a result of recent government initiatives to create more equitable participation in higher education (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent, & Scales, 2008).

Few Australian educators who work in higher education (and other areas of education) have taught, or lived outside their own national context (Haigh, 2002), most are monolingual in English due to the status quo of monolingualism and monoculturalism (Clyne, 2005; Coleman, 2012, Lo Bianco, 2009; Ozolins, 1993), and few teacher training courses in Australia address intercultural, multilingual or multicultural education (Leeman & Reid, 2006). Thus, Australian academics, teachers and institutions may not be sufficiently prepared to meet the demands that increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse groups of learners places on them as teachers

(Haigh, 2002; Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010; Wallace & Dunn, 2004; Whitfield, Klug, &, Whitney, 2007).

A changing student body.

The choice of topic for the study was also influenced by a situation that occurred in the researcher's workplace; an English language program located in a public institute of higher education in Australia. Until 2005, there had been very few Arabic speaking students from the Middle East studying English on the program. However, between 2005 and 2007, the number of students from Saudi Arabia rose from around one or two students in total at any given time to constitute approximately one third of the total student population. Official statistics at that time showed a national growth of 111% in the number of students from Saudi Arabia enrolled on English language programs in Australia between 2004 and 2005 (English Australia [EA], 2006).

This situation occurred within a local and international context in which there had been a significant and ongoing rise in public prejudice against Muslims that had started soon after the attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the United States of America (USA) in 2001, and which gathered momentum in Australia after the Bali bombings in 2002 (Casimiro, Hancock, & Northcote, 2007; Tissot, 2011; Volk, 2009). The rise in international students from Saudi Arabia in Australia can be attributed to the dramatic tightening of international student visa regulations in the USA that led to a significant reduction in the number of visas being granted to international students from Muslim countries after the 2001 and 2002 attacks (Forbes & Hamilton, 2004). This situation led to a corresponding increase in the number of international student visas being granted to students from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries in Australia.

The dramatic increase in students from Saudi Arabia caused significant disruption and emotional disturbance to many of the teachers employed on the English language program. Very few teachers on the program had experience teaching students from the Middle East. As the number of Saudi Arabian students increased in classes, the teachers began to talk and complain about a variety of issues that they perceived to be related specifically to students from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. The complaints often included derogatory and discriminatory comments that were related implicitly and explicitly to students' Islamic dress, levels of literacy, cultural and religious values, practices and beliefs, as well as to classroom behaviour. The students came to be collectively known and referred to as either 'the Saudis', or as 'Arabic students' by many of the teachers who worked on the program.

Chapter One: Introduction

The number of complaints about Arabic speaking students to course managers increased noticeably between 2004 and 2005 and as a result, the then Director of Studies set up a counselling session for teachers that was facilitated by a multi-faith officer as well as a workshop on 'students from the Middle East'. The researcher was teaching on the program at that time and attended both the counselling session and the workshop. The researcher believed that these interventions served to validate and reinforce the teachers' prejudices against students. In these interventions, the Arabic speaking students were constructed as a homogenous group to which particular beliefs, behaviours and practices were attributed that were in direct opposition to Anglo-Australian beliefs, values and practices.

The situation outlined above occurred prior to the onset of the study reported on in this thesis. By the time the data collection period commenced in 2007, there were fewer complaints from teachers about students from the Middle East. However, the researcher noted prejudice and stereotyping of Arabic speaking students in her daily interactions with colleagues. The researcher also observed that some of her colleagues adapted more readily to the new cohort of students and had fewer prejudices against them, and were less likely to resort to stereotypes. This workplace situation suggested that there might be an association between what English language teachers feel and believe in relation to their culturally and linguistically diverse students and their experience and knowledge of particular cultures.

The situations outlined above, that is, a) the increasing number and diversity of international students in Australia, b) the subsequent demands on educators who work in the various sectors of Australian international education to be interculturally competent, and c) teachers' responses to students from Saudi Arabia in the researcher's workplace contributed to the identification of teacher emotion and intercultural competence as a broad area of concern.

The Research Topic
The identification of the research topic of 'empathy' derived from an initial search of the literature on emotion in the related areas of English language teaching and applied linguistics that identified a gap in the research. When combined with the contextual issues outlined, the identification of this gap led to a preliminary exploration of the related literature on empathy in the fields of education and psychology. This process identified and explored a number of key concepts outlined next that informed the research aims and questions of the study described in this thesis.

Defining empathy.

The field of psychology is a rich source of quantitative studies on empathy, but there are very few studies on teacher empathy and in particular, no studies have explored English language teachers' experiences and perspectives on empathy. The dominant research methods and methodologies employed in the study of empathy within the fields of psychology and educational psychology are mainly quantitative, and there is concern that quantitative research approaches constrain the way that empathy can be conceptualised, defined, and studied. Although research within the quantitative paradigm provides some key definitions of the term empathy, quantitative research methods require constructs to be clearly defined and delimited; a requirement that has proven to be extremely problematic when researching the phenomenon of empathy. The term is very difficult to define (Duan & Hill, 1996; Gladstein, 1987; Wispé, 1987), and there are almost as many definitions of the term empathy as there are research studies. This situation influenced the selection of the research topic, the choice of research design and the aims of the current study. The section to follow defines and discusses the key terms and concepts related to the research topic.

Intercultural or cross-cultural.

Although there is a distinction between the label *intercultural* as relating to or involving different cultures, and *cross-cultural* as combining or contrasting two or more cultures, within the empirical and theoretical literature related to the study of empathy in intercultural settings, there are a number of terms that appear to refer to the same phenomenon. *Ethnocultural empathy* is common in the field of counselling psychology (Wang et al., 2003); *cultural empathy* is commonly cited in the area of intercultural communication (De Turk, 2001; Deardorff, 2006), and *cross-cultural empathy* (Haigh, 2002) is most common in the field of international education. All three of these terms are used in the literature to refer to communication between people who do not share the same cultural backgrounds.

The terms *cross-cultural* and *intercultural* are most commonly used in academic and everyday discourses (Stone, 2006), and within the literature reviewed for the current study these two terms were the ones most commonly used and were interchangeable (Gundara, 2008; Kramsch, 1998; Stone, 2006). Of the two terms, *cross-cultural* is more common in the fields of English language teaching and applied linguistics and is more commonly used than the term *intercultural* (British National Corpus, 2009).

Despite the predominance of the term *cross-cultural* in the related literature, and its status as the most commonly used term in British English, the term cross-cultural was rejected as it is generally

used in relation to the idea of combining or comparing two or more cultures. The term intercultural was preferred as it pertains more to the conception of communication occurring *between* people. The prefix *inter* brings to the concepts of competence and empathy the idea of joint engagement, thus emphasising the social nature of both intercultural competence and empathy. The term *intercultural* is used in this thesis to qualify the concepts of empathy and competence as they pertain to social settings and social encounters involving communication between people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who use English as a lingua franca (ELF), or who use English as an additional language (EAL).

English as an additional language.

The acronyms ESL (English as a *second* language), EFL (English as a *foreign* language), and ENL (English as a *native* language) are currently still widely used in the field of English language teaching. However, the term English as an *additional language* is used in this thesis as it is a better fit with the research aims and approach than ESL or EFL. EAL attempts to counter the ideological bias towards the so-called 'standard' varieties of English most commonly spoken by white, middle class people in Britain, Australia and North America (BANA) inherent in the ESL/EFL/ENL trichotomy. When used in the trichotomy of ESL/EFL/ENL, the acronym ESL combines to reinforce an inaccurate and ideologically laden view of the study and use of English that fails to incorporate the current use of *Englishes* globally. Over a decade ago, Nayar (1997) reconceptualised the English as a SL/FL/NL trichotomy by calling for the use of the label *English as an additional language* instead of as a *second language* (after Judd, 1987) explaining that:

> The label *second language* typifies the Anglocentricity of the discourse of applied linguistics and language teaching in today's world. The dominance of the Anglocentric discourse makes monolingualism the norm (and English speakers are Euro-America's, if not the world's, most entrenched literate monolinguals), and because an additional language cannot be anything more than a SL to an English speaker, so it is seen for the others. (Nayar, 1997, p. 12)

Many English language learners speak more than one language in addition to English and as English is one of the main languages that students use to communicate in their daily lives during their stay in Australia, English is not a second language for them in any ordinal sense. More importantly, however, was the adoption of terms English as an additional language to counter the dominant discourse of monolingualism and monoculturalism in English in the context of English language teaching and applied linguistics in Britain, Australia and North America that is discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Diversity.

The cultural and linguistic *diversity* referred to in this thesis is not understood as being relative to the 'dominant culture'. Diversity refers to differences in language and/or culture that may cause challenges to communication. Notwithstanding the hegemonic status of the English language as *the* global lingua franca, within intercultural encounters, there are many possibilities for miscommunication and misunderstandings to occur. Miscommunications and misunderstanding are a natural and expected outcome of intercultural encounters and it is through this process that *intercultural competence* or *interculturality* is meditated.

Intercultural competence/interculturality.

It is generally thought that the more that is *known about* different cultures, the better able people will be to communicate *across cultures* successfully. This way of thinking about communication and culture has led to cultural comparison being a dominant paradigm in cross-cultural and intercultural research as well as in everyday life in multicultural contexts. By identifying different cultures, often by national, religious or 'racial' boundaries, researchers and laypeople label and assign particular ways of being to particular groups often in opposition to each other.

Yet culture may not be an immutable, stable, homogenous entity that is bounded by national, religious, or racial categories. Culture can also be viewed as socially constructed through and within particular contexts and cannot be understood as an independent entity; as Abdallah-Pretcielle (2006, p. 475) points out, culture needs "to be contextualised in terms of social, political and communication-based realities". Thus, in this thesis culture refers to behaviours, beliefs and values that are socially constructed within a social group rather than something that is prescribed or attributed to a particular group. Holliday (1999) argues that the standard view of culture as referring to nation states or nationalities serves only to define the essential features of a group. As an alternative he proposes the "small culture" (p. 237) paradigm in which the notion of culture does not serve as a tool to identify and differentiate one group from another, but which refers to cohesive behaviour within any "small" social grouping and which is not subordinate to "large cultures". In this conception, culture is considered dynamic, plural and relational, and is viewed as both social practice and process (Holliday, 1999).

Like culture, intercultural competence or interculturality can also be conceptualised as a dialectical process characterised by changes in people's beliefs, assumptions, emotional responses, and practices through social interaction. Within this conceptualisation interculturality and language are viewed as intertwined, constantly evolving, social practices (Gudykunst, 1998; Kramsch, 1998; Stier, 2006; Zoreda, 1997). Change is a desired outcome of this process, and it

is precipitated in intercultural encounters when there is reflection on negative emotions that are experienced in the form of disruption, disturbance and stress (Otten, 2003). Although Otten (2003) acknowledges the role of negative emotion in the process of intercultural competence, he also advocates for the minimisation of opportunities in which negative emotions arise. Emotional and cognitive disturbances are to be expected as an integral part of the process of interculturality (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993).

The process of interculturality has prosocial outcomes: a) it leads people to interact in intercultural situations in a "positive and effective" way (Otten, 2003, p. 15); b), it transforms an ethnocentric perspective to an ethnorelative one (Bennet, 1993 as cited in Otten, 2003), and c) it enables people to communicate successfully in intercultural encounters (Deardorff, 2006). Interculturality refers to both an outcome and a process in relation to intercultural encounters, and it is a desirable, but not necessarily a predictable outcome, of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Intercultural empathy.

Research studies suggest that there is an association between enhanced empathy and teachers who teach in culturally and linguistically diverse settings (Cooper, 2004; McAllister & Irvine, 2002). Teachers who teach in diverse educational settings may be more likely to demonstrate intercultural competence than teachers who work in predominantly monolingual, monocultural settings. Empathy has also been associated with the process and outcomes of interculturality; the ability to view one's own culture from the viewpoint of an outsider is considered an integral element of intercultural competence/interculturality (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Deardorff, 2006; Haigh, 2002; Kramsch, 2006; 2011; McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

The significance of empathy.

> Empathy is the spark of human concern for others. The glue that makes social life
> possible. (Hoffman, 2001, p. 3)

English language teaching is intercultural by nature, and teaching and learning, like all human activity, always involves emotion and emotional understanding (Hargreaves, 1998). Emotions determine the quality of people's lives, and empathy has been cited as a means through which emotions can be accessed and turned on (Arnold, 2005; Ekman, 2003). Empathy has long been considered as significant in teaching and learning (Hoffman, 2001), and has also been associated with intercultural competence in the related fields of English language teaching and applied linguistics (Arnold, 1999; Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Sercu, 2005; Stier, 2006). Arnold (1999)

considers empathy to be one of the most important contributors to the "harmonious coexistence of individuals in society" (p. 19). Despite this, the study of teacher emotion and empathy has been neglected (McAllister & Irvine, 2002; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), particularly in the related fields of English language teaching and second language acquisition (Arnold, 1999). Very few studies have explored teacher empathy and/or the emotional experience of teachers who work in multilingual, multicultural educational settings. No theories of teacher empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language have been developed.

The significance of the study.

The current study sought to understand English language teachers perspectives on empathy. The study provides a tentative constructivist grounded theory of *intercultural teacher empathy* in the form of five theoretical propositions. By illustrating and evaluating what the teachers believed about empathy as it manifested in their daily working lives, the findings of the study point to the significance of empathy in teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse educational settings. The study found evidence of *othering* in the data, and by applying a critical lens to this evidence, the findings indicate the influences on English language teachers' conceptualisations of English language learners in Australia. The study outlines the significance that the participants in the study placed on being empathic, interculturally effective teachers, but also illustrates the complexities, contradictions and potential dangers of empathy and related phenomenon, such as caring, in settings where unequal power relations are inherent.

This study contributes to current understandings of teacher empathy in educational settings in Australia and provides knowledge to inform the professional learning and practice of teachers who teach in multilingual, multicultural contexts. Intercultural teacher empathy is an important means through which teachers can be empowered to explore and possibly ameliorate some of the prevailing beliefs and practices in the various sectors of Australian education.

The section to follow introduces the specific research aims and central research questions of the study as well as outlines the methodology used to explore the research questions.

The Research Aims and Design

The study aimed to develop theory related to empathy and English language teaching critically (Kubota, 2002), abductively and creatively (Charmaz, 2006; Richardson & Kramer, 2006). To achieve this, the study explored English language teachers' perceptions of empathy and employed a qualitative research approach. The aims of the study were twofold; one was the practical goal to understand more about an important, but neglected, phenomenon that was

suggested to be integral to the process of intercultural competence; the other was to develop theory related to teacher empathy and emotion that would be relevant, resonant and useful to educators who work in multilingual, multicultural educational settings.

The research questions.

In order to achieve these research aims, a set of initial research questions was developed:

1. How do English as an additional language (EAL) teachers define/conceptualise empathy?

2. What do EAL teachers believe about the role of (teacher) empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia?

3. What meanings do EAL teachers give to (teacher) empathy and examples of empathic practice in their daily working lives?

4. What factors, if any, influence EAL teachers' conceptions of empathy?

The research method.

The study was located within the qualitative paradigm and *constructivist* grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006) methods and methodology were used to achieve the aims of the study. Data were gathered via group and individual interviews with ten English language teachers who worked on the same English language program. Five theoretical propositions were developed from the interpretation of the data by using the research approach outlined in this thesis.

A constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006) derived from orthodox grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) guided the data collection and analysis for this study. A constructivist grounded theory approach was considered the most suitable approach to adopt in order to achieve the aims of the study for a number of reasons. The study did not aim to test a hypothesis about teacher empathy; moreover, no theory had been uncovered in the preliminary literature review of the substantive area, so it was appropriate to adopt a method that is specifically designed to develop theory. In addition, as noted earlier in this chapter, there was no research into teacher empathy in the field of English language teaching, which was an ideal situation from which to derive a grounded theory (Charmaz, 2004, 2006; Glaser, 1992, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As a research approach, constructivist grounded theory offered a *method* that included a set of guidelines,

practices and analytic tools that could be applied by a novice researcher, and a *methodology* that was aligned with the epistemological and ontological aims of the study.

Grounded theory method offers clear guidelines from which theory can be generated (Charmaz, 2006; Punch, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The data collection and analysis procedures of grounded theory method employed in the study were creative, iterative, cyclical, simultaneous and sequential. Figure 1.1 depicts the key elements of this process showing how the data collection and analysis of the current study were interrelated and driven by each other:
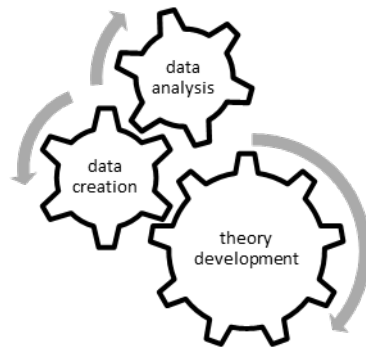
Figure 1.1. Gathering and analysing data and developing theory was a cyclical, iterative process.

The methods included: the gathering of data through intensive group and individual interviewing of participants who would supply the richest information (Merriam, 1988), the coding and categorising of the data through open coding, selective coding and constant comparison of the data memo-writing, theoretical sampling, theoretical sorting and theoretical writing (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). NVivo, a code and retrieve qualitative research software was used to maintain an audit trail and to organise and manage the data. A detailed discussion and explication of these methods and methodology are presented in Chapter Four of this thesis.

The research approach.

The study was conceptualised within the qualitative research paradigm. Within this paradigm, reality is viewed as intersubjective; people create reality as they reflect on, interact with and respond to others (Prus, 1996). Experience, thought and speech about reality are considered to be a function of the particular conceptual framework in which people live (Charmaz, 2002). What people say is not necessarily considered to be a true reflection of their actual beliefs or experiences, nor is it necessary that what people say be considered as fact. It was not an intention of the study to chart reality or to accept that what people say and do mirrors reality;

rather, the study aimed to construct an interpretation of the accounts of the lived experience of the teachers who participated in this study.

The view of reality as a social construction is part of an interpretivist paradigm which forms the basis of symbolic interactionism; the main theoretical perspective from which the study was carried out. This research perspective evolved out of the interpretive tradition; a tradition that arose in reaction to positivism arguing that positivism had failed to account for the human production of meaning and action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Prus, 1996). At the heart of symbolic interactionism lies the acknowledgment of the complex nature of human behaviour (Schwandt, 2000). Knowledge is *made* or *constructed* rather than found or discovered, it is constantly changing, and is "partial and local rather than general and universal" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197). Meanings are not fixed in such a way that they can be discovered; they are socially derived through interaction and negotiation. The meanings that people attribute to particular people, objects and concepts form a basis from which people understand, respond and relate to others (Schwandt, 2000).

The research setting.

The vast majority of international students in Australia undertake English language tuition before embarking on their higher education (HE), vocational educational training (VET) or other courses (AEI, 2006), thus the English language teaching sector was an appropriate context in which to gather data to accomplish the research goals of the current study. Locating the study in this sector enabled the recruitment of suitable participants.

ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) is the acronym used to refer to English language teaching programs within the international education sector in Australia. English language programs generally provide tuition in English language to adults who are in Australia to study, travel, live or work, or a combination of any or all of these. The English language sector is a significant sector of Australian international education in terms of numbers, revenue and diversity and it is accountable to a number of regulatory bodies.

In Australia, English language programs are located in both public and private universities as well as technical colleges and other private institutions (Senior, 2006). Regardless of where they are located, these programs must aim to maintain the same quality and standards as laid out by the regulatory bodies. Government departments, industry and non-industry bodies set, monitor and regulate standards for the provision of English language education to international students in Australia through a combination of government legislation, accreditation and registration. English

language centres, colleges and schools using the acronym ELICOS must be accredited by the National English Language Teaching Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) and be registered under the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). Participants were recruited from an accredited English language program located in a public educational institution.

Potential issues of the setting.

"There can be no more overtly normative challenges to educational systems, educators, and the state other than how they manage their cultural and linguistic others" (Luke, 2004, p. 28). The discipline of English language teaching has faced many criticisms in the past two decades that challenge its integrity and values and its capacity to uphold ideals and standards of equity and social justice with which it identifies. The field has been charged with being ethnocentric and colonial, promoting the language, customs and values of so-called 'native' English speaking nations including Britain, North America, Canada and Australia while discriminating against other nations, languages and users of English (Kandiah, 1998; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Kubota, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Ricento, 2005; Widin, 2010).

These criticisms are supported by a growing body of evidence that illustrates a prevailing ideology of "native-speakerism" in English language teaching (Holliday, 2006, p. 385). In English language teaching and related areas, 'native' speaker teachers are valued above local, bilingual teachers regardless of their qualifications and teaching experience. In Hong Kong, native speakers from countries like Australia without qualifications or experience were found to be more employable and better paid than local English language teachers who were better qualified and more experienced (Kirkpatrick, 2007a). English language teaching materials and teacher resources constitute part of a very lucrative global market that almost exclusively promotes the culture and varieties of English commonly used as a first (L1) and only language by white, middle class native speakers of English in BANA (Britain, Australia & North America) (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Criticism is also directed at the imposition of 'English only' or monolingual policies in English language classes despite pedagogical and ideological concerns being raised over a decade ago by sociologists (see for example, Auerbach, 1997). Research has illustrated that an English only policy is based on untested assumptions; it is methodologically unsound and reinforces the inequities that pervade the field of English language teaching (Norton & Toohey, 2004; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In opposition to the continuing trend for English only, advocates of a critical pedagogy provide a strong case not merely to permit the use of a learners' first language

(L1) in English language lessons, but also to acknowledge the value of L1 as a learning tool. These researchers advocate that English language teachers actively seek to legitimise the use of L1 in English language teaching and learning (Inbar-Lourie, 2010). English only compounds the disempowerment that learners of English already commonly experience, reinforcing inequities by devaluing the learners' L1 and its significance in language acquisition.

From the early stages of the study, the researcher had some concerns that the choice of setting for the study might not provide the data associated with interculturality and empathy called for by the research aims. However, the theoretical and purposive selection of participants ensured that the study aims could be achieved. The researcher's awareness of the potential issues in the field provided an additional perspective from which the data could be viewed. The research context and setting and these related issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two and Chapter Four of this thesis.

The research participants.

It is desirable for English language teachers to have experienced first-hand what it is like to live, work or study in contexts where English is not the main language of communication. Overseas teaching experience is thought to enhance teachers' intercultural competence and ability to teach English and is therefore a desirable, if not essential experience for teachers to have. For these reasons, an English language program was an appropriate setting from which to recruit participants and gather data.

Ten teachers in total were recruited to participate in the study. Of these teachers, six were migrants from Singapore, Sri Lanka, Japan, Ireland, England and New Zealand and four were born in Australia. All but one of the participants had studied an additional language to varying degrees of proficiency, two had come to Australia as international students and seven had taught English in contexts were English was not the main language of communication for substantial periods. All the teachers considered English to be either their first language and/or or the language in which they were most proficient.

Group and individual interviews.

A rough framework was devised from which to group the participants and to direct the interviews and analysis. Participants were grouped into one of three groups according to length of teaching experience, knowledge of languages other than English, and/or length of time spent living, working or studying in contexts where English was not the main or dominant language of communication. This selection and grouping of participants occurred as the data were analysed.

By the end of the data collection and analysis process, data had been gathered from a total of ten participants who were divided loosely into three groups. These groupings were theoretically driven, but the groupings were not intended to be viewed as definitive classifications of the participants for the specific purpose of comparison. The groupings served to produce rich data in the group interviews as well as enabled the researcher to explore possible divergences and convergences in the data gathered from each group.

After the group interview, each group member was interviewed individually followed by further group and individual group interviews driven by analytical and theoretical concerns. Each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder and notes were taken. The interview data were reviewed and analysed before each subsequent interview took place. These processes and procedures are explained in further detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Format of Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine more chapters (hyperlinks in Chapter One and Chapter Ten assist readers to navigate the various chapters of the e-thesis). Chapter Two to follow discusses the international, national and local context of English language teaching. Chapter Three presents the preliminary literature review that was conducted before the data for the study were collected. It provides an historical overview of the term empathy, reviews a number of relevant studies relating to empathy in education, and outlines the main theoretical and conceptual notions associated with the study topic and research design. Chapter Four discusses the research methodology and describes in detail the data collection and analysis processes and procedures from which the theoretical propositions of the study were developed. Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine present the findings of the study in the form of five tentative theoretical propositions that together form a theory of intercultural teacher empathy. Chapter Ten presents a summary of the key findings of the study, discusses the parameters of the study, and presents the implications of the key findings for theory, practice and further research.

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Chapter Two: The International, National and Local Context

Introduction

This chapter introduces and discusses the international, national and local context of English language and international education. It suggests that historical, political, and ideological influences including the broadly uncontested status and spread of English have driven and continue to influence the global supply and demand of English language education and higher education in English nationally and internationally.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section describes the main aspects of the international context thought to influence English language and international education in Australia. Discussing the status and spread of English as a global language, it outlines the global growth in demand for higher education in English and English language education. This is followed by a discussion of the national situation that outlines and identifies some of the key drivers of English language and international education in Australia. The third section describes the English language program where the study participants and researcher worked with particular reference to the period when the data were gathered.

The International Context

While there have been ongoing fluctuations in international student numbers in Britain, North America and Australia over the past few decades, the number of globally mobile students seeking a tertiary education in English has increased dramatically overall. Since the 1980s, the number of international students in North America has doubled, the number in Britain has quadrupled (Findlay, King, Smith, Geddes, & Skeldon, 2012) and the number in Australia has grown ten-fold (Linacre, 2007).

> **The status and spread of English as a global language.**
>
> > You can say that the spread of language just happened in the natural way of things, or that somebody, some persons known or unknown, did the spreading. If you take the first position you might look at a range of possible environmental factors which act upon the internal stability of the language itself. If you adopt the second position, it is but a step to argue that the spreading was deliberate, that people conspired to spread it, motivated by colonial ambition. (Widdowson, 1997, p. 136)

As a language that has no sole owner, and whose use is not restricted to particular countries, or other bodies, Crystal (2003) declares English to be *the* global language. From the perspective of

most so-called 'native' speakers of English, the status of English as a global language is unquestionable. English is the first language to have spread to such an extent globally (Gil, 2011), it is the language of international politics, business, education, entertainment, media, the arts and technology (Guilherme, 2007; Widin, 2010), and it is studied by more people than any other language (Clyne & Sharifian, 2008; Phillipson, 2009). However, questions have been raised about the spread of English relating to its power, status and purpose, and the drivers and impact of this globally.

The status of 'native' varieties of English.

When English is conceptualised and referred to as a global language in the context of English language teaching, it is usually done uncritically, and as Widdowson (1997) points out "it is a matter of pride, and profit, for those who speak the language as natives" (p. 135). Kachru's influential geographical model of the use and spread of English attempted to problematise the ownership of English through the development of the concept of *World Englishes*. The model categorises the use of English internationally by dividing the English-using world into three concentric circles; the so-called inner, outer and expanding circles (Kachru, 1992).

According to Kachru (1992), the *inner circle* includes 'native' English speaking countries such as North America, Canada and Australia provide the 'norm' to which all other varieties of English conform. The *outer circle* consists of former colonies such as India, Kenya and Nigeria where 'nativised' varieties of English are either the official language or are widely used such as the use of English in Singapore. The model is completed by the *expanding circle* which includes the Middle East, and parts of Asia, Europe and Central America where the use of English is expanding rapidly in areas such as academia, business and the media (Kachru, 1992; Phillipson, 2009).

Kachru's model problematised the global dominance of the English language. The model introduced a critical understanding of English as a neo-colonial artefact, which proposed that native varieties and speakers of English are ideologically and historically located within the *privileged centre* with all other varieties of English and speakers of other languages on *the periphery* and in binary opposition to English as a native language (Kandiah, 1998). This positioning of 'native' varieties of English as the standard to which to all other varieties of English are compared, creates and maintains the status quo wherein *the other* is "radically silenced and subjugated by their relegation to the margins" (Kandiah, 1998, p. 83).

The Kachruvian model used in the discussion to follow provides a framework to discuss the different conceptions, uses and users of English that prevail. However, the positioning of so-called 'non-native' varieties of English in the model might unintentionally serve to reinforce the status and power of native varieties of English. The model categorises the English used in outer circle countries as 'non-native' when English may in fact be the first language used at home and in daily life as Murray and Christison explain (2011). Moreover, the model implies that English is the sole language in use within particular geographical and national boundaries; which is clearly not the case. The model has some flaws, but it is significant as it questions the dominance of 'inner circle' English and as such it is an appropriate framework to discuss the ongoing concerns associated with the spread of English that are significant to the context of the current study.

Jenkins (2000) proposes that the terms *native speaker* and *non-native speaker* are discriminatory, cause offence and are not appropriate. The term 'non-native' measures people against "an unrealistic and irrelevant standard" (Jenkins, 2000, p. 9) and ensures that non-native speakers do not have equal rights to the language. Jenkins (2000) rejects the substitution of the term native speaker for expert or fluent user as discriminatory arguing that terms such as these imply that all other users are deficit in some way. As an alternative Jenkins (2000) proposes the term "monolingual English speaker" (p. 9) to replace the term *native speaker* when referring to people who are proficient only in English. Jenkins suggests that that the term "bilingual English speaker" is used to refer to native English speakers who speak another language fluently as well as to refer to "non-native speakers who speak English fluently" (2000, p. 9).

Jenkins' (2000) intention is to counter the use of terms that may serve to construct and reinforce an unjust, ideological positioning of some speakers of English over others and for that it cannot be faulted. In particular, the use of the word *monolingual* to describe most native speakers is appealing as it reveals the hidden linguistic deficit of many monolingual 'native' speakers of English in Britain, Australia and North America. The researcher acknowledges the inherent bias in the 'native'-speaker/'non-native' speaker dichotomy, but for the purpose of this thesis it was necessary to use these terms at times to discuss the prevailing views of English and English language teaching within the context of the current study. In acknowledgement of the positioning of these terms, they are placed in inverted commas upon first use in each chapter of this thesis. When the terms are deemed no longer relevant to the discussion they are replaced by other less ideologically biased terms including *expert* or *proficient user* (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2004) and *monolingual* or *bilingual L1 and L2* speakers of English (Jenkins, 2000).

Which English?

In 1997 Widdowson asked: "What actually does it mean to say that English is an international language? What, more generally, does it mean to talk about language spread?" (p. 136). There remains a widespread and common misconception that English is the most widely spoken native or first language (L1) in the world. If the definition of a global language is based on the number of L1 speakers of a language then Chinese would be the definitive global language, with over one billion L1 speakers of one or more varieties of Chinese worldwide compared with 400 million L1 speakers of English (Gil, 2011). Moreover, the total number and growth of monolingual speakers of English globally is far outweighed by the total number and growth of bilingual speakers. There are more than one billion users and learners of English as an additional language worldwide (Clyne & Sharifian, 2008). In addition, it is estimated that 80% of all English language teachers worldwide are bilingual (Canagarajah, 2005). Despite this, the English language is generally considered the property of inner circle, monolingual speakers of English, with standard British, North American and Australian English still widely viewed as the norm to which all other varieties and dialects of English are to be benchmarked against and to which all English language learners and bilingual users of English ought to aspire.

Linguistic imperialism and English language teaching.

> The term native user is discursively constituted and created for whatever purpose
> is at hand. (Kandiah, 1998, p. 83)

Kandiah (1998) points out that the preeminent position of native-speaker English in the field of English language teaching serves a purpose. English language teaching and learning is not as neutral or disconnected from culture, history and ideologies as many in the field consider it to be. There are clear global and national trends that privilege inner circle native-speaker varieties of English in the teaching of English and which equally discriminate against non-native speaker varieties and speakers of English. This is evident in the positioning of native-speaker varieties of English in English language teaching publications and resources internationally (Pegrum, 2004). It is also evident in the recruitment and employment of monolingual, white, native English speakers with no teaching qualifications over qualified, multilingual or bilingual English language teachers globally (Kirkpatrick, 2006, 2007a; Kubota, 2002; Selvi, 2011).

The widespread goal of native-speaker-like competence in English as the goal of English language teaching has been criticised as a neo-colonial ideology (Canagarajah, 2005; Tarone, 2005). This ideology is further reinforced by second language acquisition research that seeks to account for the inability of English language learners to achieve the goal of native-like

competence (Canagarajah, 2005). Canagarajah (2005) points out that these aims and beliefs about the value of 'native' speaker English are outdated and are no longer relevant to English language teaching, particularly when one considers that over 80% of all English language teachers globally are bilingual or multilingual. However, this ideology prevails in English language teaching and education in English globally and is reinforced through the proliferation of research and teaching materials published by inner circle countries and the preference for models and teachers of English from BANA (Britain, Australia and North America).

The belief that proficiency in a BANA standard of English is the goal of learning English as an additional language is evident in the discourse and practice of English language teaching globally. Matsuda (2003) exposes the dominance of inner circle varieties of English in English language teaching in schools and universities in Japan arguing that "teaching inner circle English in Japan neglects the real linguistic needs of the learners, eclipses their education about the history and politics of English, and fails to empower them with ownership of English" (Matsuda, 2003, p. 721). Another study (Pegrum, 2004) analysed the discourse of advertisements for English language teaching courses and products in a number of internationally prominent English language teaching publications. Pegrum illustrates the wholesale promotion of and ubiquitous references to inner circle varieties of English and concluded that in these publications "Englishes from beyond the inner circle are generally silent" (Pegrum, 2004, p. 4).

The subordination of non-native varieties and users of English is evident in the beliefs and practices of English language teaching. English language learners are typically assessed on the criteria of *fluency* in relation to spoken English with *native-like* fluency being explicitly stated as a goal of language acquisition and language assessment (Tarone, 2005). This goal cannot be pedagogically justified as very few language learners attain or need to attain native-like fluency or proficiency (Tarone, 2005). Why would English language teachers and researchers want to set unattainable learning goals? Why do the vast majority of English language teaching materials published by inner circle countries provide native speaker models of English language and culture, and why do such materials continue to proliferate globally?

The legacy of colonialism.

One possible answer to these questions is that this situation is a legacy of colonialism (Pennycook, 1998; Ricento, 2005). English language teaching and the spread of English is not neutral or disconnected from culture and history – it has its roots in colonisation (Phillipson, 2009; Kandiah, 1998). English language teaching serves to reinforce the privileged status of native-speaker English as the global standard to ensure the dominance of 'native' speaker language,

beliefs and values. If non-native speakers and learners of English are evaluated against native speaker norms, then the "mythic norm of the White ideal English speaker" (Grant & Lee, 2009, p. 44) is reinforced, ensuring the symbolic capital of native speaker English and its ongoing privilege, status and commercial value internationally. This broadly uncontested norm ensures that other established and emergent varieties and users of English are discriminated against, marginalised and subordinated (Ricento, 2005).

Othering.

Colonisation by native English speaking countries has been criticised for the process of *othering* of colonised countries and individuals; that is, essentialist (racist) conceptualisations, marginalisation and subordination of cultural and linguistic difference (Pennycook, 1998). English language teaching has been identified as a key site wherein the colonial discourses of othering continue (Palfreyman, 2005). Palfreyman (2005) found that English language teachers defined learners in relation to perceived inferiorities in learner backgrounds and represented and positioned learner backgrounds as "the converse of everything key to TESOL professional discourses" (2005, p. 222).

Pennycook (1998) was one of the first to suggest that the racism inherent in colonialism continues in English language teaching in the post-colonial era. The injustices of colonialism can be seen in the spread of English as a global language as it serves to construct and reinforce the racial and cultural superiority of monolingual English speaking individuals and countries (Kubota, 2002). There are clear biases against non-native speakers in the universal preference for native speaker teachers of English in the field (Kirkpatrick, 2006; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005) as well as in the prevailing deficit view of learners of English among English language teachers in inner circle countries such as Australia (Coleman, 2012). The dominant beliefs and practices within the field of English language teaching are not emancipatory or even benign as many practitioners in the field consider them to be; they are neo-colonial in that they are grounded in British and American colonialism (Kandiah, 1998; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Kubota, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Ricento, 2005; Widin, 2010).

An alternative discourse.

Many linguists and applied linguists now have serious concerns about the inequity of a situation in which not only has one language more legitimacy and spread than others worldwide, but one in which particular varieties of English are considered less legitimate than others. Many acknowledge the inherent bias in the construction of standard varieties of English and in the hegemonic status of English more generally which reinforces and maintains global inequalities in

order to ensure the continuing global dominance of English speaking countries politically, ideologically and economically (Guilherme, 2007; Pennycook, 1998; Widin, 2010). In the context of the marginalisation and subordination of established and emergent non-native varieties of English, countering these forces through the foregrounding the linguistic plurality of English is now becoming an important goal for linguists and applied linguists.

> *English as a lingua franca.*

Academics in the ex-colonies of India and Sri Lanka have led the way in detaching the use of English in these contexts from its historical colonial roots. As Kandiah (2001, p. 103) explains "many of the former colonies have taken hold of English-transforming it to make it able to express the meanings that matter most to them". This movement has led to the recognition, evolution and study of new varieties of English in the field of applied linguistics (Kirkpatrick, 2007b). Within this Kachruvian paradigm, a new way of talking about language use and acquisition is emerging as terms such as *intelligibility* (Kandiah, 2001), start to replace the term *native-like fluency*, *expert user* (Selvi, 2011) is proposed instead of *non-native speaker, Englishes* (Kachru, 1992) challenges the paradigm of *English,* and *functional proficiency* (Kirkpatrick, 2011) is preferred over *native speaker competence.*

In calling for a plurality in conceptions of English, applied linguists suggest that it is more appropriate to view English as a global "common language" (Crystal, 2003, p. 11) or a *lingua franca* (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). A lingua franca is generally understood to be a language that is used as a common language between people who do not share the same first language. There is now a growing interest in the use of English as a lingua franca, as well as in world Englishes and learner Englishes. Researchers have compiled lexical and grammatical databases of English as a lingua franca, of world Englishes, such as the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) and of learner Englishes (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). The aim of such studies is not merely to document the linguistic forms that occur, but to learn more about how these varieties function in achieving meaning (Seidlhofer, 2008).

The shift away from native speaker English in corpus linguistics is considered a step in the right direction (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2004). While applied linguists have yet to dethrone the standard models of English that prevail in research and teaching, by identifying commonalities of grammar and lexis of English in use as a common language, applied linguists aim to legitimise the established and emergent varieties of English. Researchers of English as a lingua franca are concerned with exploring language variation; in particular they want to learn more about how non-native speakers use English to communicate (Seidlhofer, 2008).

Within the English as a lingua franca paradigm, there should be no linguistic norm or standard from which to compare the use of English: "norms are not fixed […] variation is the norm", the norm is therefore "unstable, negotiated, continually shifting and changing" (Seidlhofer, 2008, p. 33.4). Successful communication occurs without the need for users to replicate native speaker behaviour by conforming to prescribed norms. Researchers in this area are not concerned with determining how far established norms should be conformed to, but with how "people from diverse linguacultural backgrounds appropriate and adapt English for their own communicative purposes" (Seidlhofer, 2008, p. 33.4). Framing the study and use of English in this way, is an attempt to counter the dominant paradigm of the ideal, native speaker norm by legitimising other so-called peripheral varieties (and speakers) of English through the relocation and decentralisation of inner circle varieties of English.

The terms *English* and *English language teachers* as they were used in this current study defer to the intrinsic instability, variation and plurality of language. The goal of research, teaching and learning English as an additional language ought to be successful communication in the particular contexts of use, not the ability to conform to a prescribed standard of beliefs, use and behaviour. Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that in the context of English language teaching in Australia the vast majority of teachers are monolingual users of English and there is a broad consensus that teaching and learning goals focus on native-speaker norms and behaviours.

Finally, it is acknowledged that the use of English as a common language also has its roots in British colonies in the latter part of the 16th century (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). Although the notions of world Englishes and English as a global lingua franca are generally considered to be rooted in a desire to legitimise the many varieties and users of English, this postcolonial aim of conceptualising English as *the world's language* may still serve to maintain and reinforce the dominance or global hegemony and spread of Anglo-American language and culture.

The growth of English language education.

It is in the context of the spread of English worldwide and the privileged status of English as a global language that the field of English language teaching owes its continuing existence. Many countries in which English is taught and used as an additional language increasingly include English language education in the school curriculum (Guilherme, 2007). It is also becoming more common for English to be the language of instruction in both private and public educational institutions in many outer and expanding circle countries. Moreover, increasing numbers of globally mobile students are seeking higher education in English (Ziguras, 2011).

While an increasing number of countries are providing English language education from primary school onwards, there is also a growing demand for higher education conducted in English. Of the total population of globally mobile students, more than half (1.38 million) choose to study in countries where higher education is conducted in English (Ziguras, 2011). The most popular countries for international students are North America, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. These countries currently share almost 50% of the global international student market (Lasanowski, 2011).

This growth in international education has been significantly influenced by the ongoing decreases in government funding of institutes of higher education and the deregulation and privatisation of higher education in countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. As a result, there have been unprecedented increases in international student numbers in these countries as well as increased competition between educational institutions on a national and international level (Findlay et al., 2012). The status of English as a global language is a key factor in determining where students choose to study. Alongside reduced government spending on higher education in Australia, there has been an unprecedented increase in international students in Australia. This situation has led to significant financial rewards for Australia and the so-called 'internationalisation' of Australian universities. The next section introduces and describes the context and factors that influence the English language education sector of Australian international education. It presents an overview and discussion of trends in international student numbers and English language learners in Australia.

The National Context

As noted earlier in this chapter, the spread of English and English language education creates and maintains individual and national perceptions of the privilege and social and economic capital derived from being able to communicate in English. This situation has its roots in British and American colonisation, or more explicitly the continuing "discourses of colonialism" (Kubota, 2002, p. 85). These discourses serve to produce and sustain the post-colonial or neo-colonial linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) that privileges English as a global and 'native' language. This situation is evidenced by a number of research studies that points to the ongoing discrimination against bilingual users and teachers of English (Clark, 2008; Kubota, 2004; Norton, 2000; Selvi, 2011; Widin, 2010).

Within Australian education, internationalisation is generally seen as "a process of increasing the export market of Australian education" (Widin, 2010, p. 10). This is evidenced in the rapid and continuing growth of international student numbers in Australia. Widin (2010) believes that

internationalisation serves to deepen inequality by privileging and valuing education in some contexts while devaluing it in others.

In this thesis the term *internationalisation* refers to all international educational activities conducted within or through private and public Australian educational institutions both onshore and offshore. The term *international student* refers to students who hold an Australian student visa while the term domestic student refers to students who hold Australian citizenship or permanent residency. In terms of the variety of Englishes spoken, both these groups comprise of speakers of a wide variety of Englishes and include monolingual and bilingual students who use English as a first or additional language with varying degrees of proficiency.

International student numbers.

The total number of domestic and international students participating in higher education in Australia rose from 957,000 to 1.2 million between 2005 and 2010 (ABS, 2012). During this period, international student numbers grew at a faster rate than domestic numbers until the well-publicised downturn that occurred in 2009. International student numbers have changed dramatically since the late 1960s in Australia. In 1968, there were approximately 12,000 international students in Australia 7,500 of who were enrolled on a university course (ABS, 1970). In 2011, there were 426,740 international students in Australia with 226,420 enrolled on higher education courses (AEI, 2012). Currently, Australia is estimated to have the highest proportion of international students of any country in the world (Adams, Banks, & Olsen, 2011). According to Adams et al. (2011) higher education is Australia's third largest export with up to 15% of all revenue generated by Australian higher education institutions derived from onshore international education. This constituted an income that was estimated to be $16.3 billion in 2010-11 (ABS, 2011). This situation did not occur by accident.

Historical influences.

Alongside the growth in student mobility and the desire for higher education in English globally, local pressures brought to bear on Australian universities since the 1970s have encouraged universities to expand international student numbers. The first significant increase in international student numbers in Australia coincided with a change in government policy in the late 1970s that saw the introduction of fees for international students for the first time. Subsequent further pressures on universities from successive governments that concurrently reduced overall funding and tied funding to remaining student numbers (Meyer, 2012) fuelled the growth in international student numbers in Australia triggering a corresponding and significant expansion of English language education in Australia.

The English language sector.

The English language sector accommodates the largest number of international students among all study pathway courses in Australia. A 2006 study of international student study pathways from 2002 to 2005 showed that almost 70% of international students enrolled on an accredited English language course at some time during their stay in Australia (AEI, 2006). In 2007, there were close to 140,000 enrolments in English language courses in Australia. Despite a recent and continuing downturn in the number of international students studying English, the English language teaching sector remains a significant sector in Australian education in terms of student numbers and financial contribution to the national economy.

Monolingualism and monoculturalism in Australian education.

Historical and ongoing global and local migration means that not everyone speaks English as a native or even second language in countries like Australia (Coleman, 2012; Widin, 2010). There are over 350 languages other than English in use regularly in Australian homes (Lo Bianco, 2009). Despite this, the global status of English produces and reinforces a status quo of monolingualism among L1 speakers of English and creates social inequities based on language and culture. For example, recent research illustrates that migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are among the most disadvantaged and socially excluded in Australia (Boese & Phillips, 2011). Notwithstanding the successive waves of migration that resulted in the ideological re-conceptualisations of Australian society as *multicultural* that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, politically and ideological, Australia remains attached to a monolingual, Anglo-centric, colonial positioning.

Multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s can be described as political and ideological, aiming to promote and encourage social justice, social inclusion, and linguistic and cultural diversity (Ho, 1990). The growing acknowledgement and defining of Australia as a multicultural and multilingual society between the 1970s and 1980s occurred alongside the debate around language (Clyne, 2007; Ingram, 1999; Ozolins, 1993).

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, conceptualisations of the term multiculturalism became increasingly pragmatic as it was tied to national security, social cohesion and to a unified national identity. Boese and Phillips (2011) propose that the ideological underpinnings and efficacy of the term have been deliberately eroded. They point to the Howard government's deliberate silencing of the term, the past and present core funding reductions to related services, and the absence of multiculturalism from the current government's social inclusion agenda.

Currently, within Australian society and the education system, the term multiculturalism is commonly used pragmatically or descriptively not ideologically as it was in its earlier manifestation; that is, the mere presence of people from diverse cultures is what defines a classroom or context as multicultural. Within a pragmatic view of multiculturalism, culture is generally viewed as monolithic; that is, all members of a group share the same habits, beliefs and values. Typically, in Australian schools and educational institutes, multiculturalism is 'celebrated' or 'taught' through displays of students from 'non-Anglo' backgrounds wearing traditional clothing, playing traditional instruments, dancing and preparing non-Anglo food. Conceptions and celebrations of multiculturalism locate and reinforce the status of all other cultures in opposition to, and outside, the dominant and privileged culture.

Australia has long been considered a multicultural society. Despite this, there is little evidence that the religious, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Australian population is accommodated in the curriculum, resources or practices within most sectors of the Australian education system. Coleman (2012) found that educational policies in Australia continue to marginalise multiculturalism, and multilingualism, favouring English monolingualism and monoculturalism instead. In this context, migrant and refugees who speak languages other than English are *othered* (Hatoss, 2012), and for those who participate in formal education, their first language is typically viewed as an impediment to learning English (Coleman, 2012). The status quo within Australian schools is to view linguistic diversity as harmful to literacy in English; a view that was found to be maintained and reinforced by the English language teachers who participated in Coleman's study (2012).

Teachers and languages in Australia.

Most school teachers in Australia are born in Australia, they are usually monolingual, and have rarely learnt an additional language (Coleman, 2012); even English language teachers are typically monolingual (Widin, 2010). This is not surprising given that less than 20% of the Australian population have facility in a second language (ABS, 2012a). Second language education in senior secondary and tertiary education has been in decline since the 1960s; with fewer than 20% of school children in Australia studying a language other than English and even fewer beyond year 10 (ABS, 2012). Of those that do study a second language, the majority are likely to have existing knowledge of a second or additional language (Scarino, Elder, Iwashita, Kim, Kohler, & Scrimgeour, 2011). This status quo of monolingualism and monoculturalism in English among Australian teachers, and the locally born population more broadly, is compounded

by a lack of political and public will to ensure that Australians have at least some facility in a second language.

National language policies.

> A deep and persistent malaise afflicts language education in Australia. (Lo Bianco, 2009, p. 1)

There have been numerous calls over the past few decades for the implementation of a national language policy with the aim of reducing inequalities by ensuring that all monolingual, English speaking Australians develop a better understanding and appreciation of national and regional diversity through the study of an additional language. For example, the 1980s saw a period of national debate on language policy and a senate inquiry that resulted in a report published in 1984 and the subsequent creation of two policies that were intended to address the concerns raised by the debate (Ozolins, 1993). The 1984 report recommended a national approach to language policy that was underpinned by competence in English, the learning of additional languages, the maintenance and development of languages other than English (LOTE) and the provision of services in other languages.

The 1984 report formed the basis of the National Policy on Languages [NPL] (Lo Bianco, 1987). The NPL emphasised the need to establish measures to ensure that the Australian population developed the language and communication skills needed for the future (Ingram, 1999). This period of debate and policy making in the 1980s culminated in the announcement of the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) in 1991 which aimed to promote language and literacy for all Australians (Clyne, 2003). This policy is still considered by many to be the de facto national policy on languages. The ALLP highlighted the need for all Australians to learn a second language; it noted the significant contribution of languages other than English to the nation's cultural vitality; and emphasised that Australians needed to be develop intercultural competence.

Both the NPL and the ALLP advocated for bilingualism and the provision of English as a second or additional language education. In doing so they explicitly endorsed intercultural competence as a desired outcome and essential capacity for all Australians. Bilingualism and the learning of additional languages were viewed as gateways to intercultural competence. The NPL (1987) for example, pointed out that only half of all Australian children studied a language other than English and only 12% of final year high school students were taking a language as a subject of study compared with 40% in the 1960s (Ozolins, 1993).

Twenty years later a national summit on languages was convened by the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Group of Eight (GoE) universities in response to concerns that second language education in Australia was in crisis (Group of Eight, 2007). The summit report reiterated the key policy areas of the 1980s and 1990 declaring that little had changed since that time and that as a result second language education was in crisis. The summit reported on surveys that showed Australian school students spent less time studying a second language than students in all other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. It pointed out that the percentage of year 12 students graduating with a second language had hovered between and 12% and 13% since the 1980s with as few as 5% of all students studying an Asian language, falling far short of the goals of the NPL and NLLP to achieve at least 20% (Group of Eight, 2007).

However, there are some recent signs that the situation in schools might be changing under the Gillard government. For example, a National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) was introduced in 2009. The program aimed to increase opportunities for young Australians to learn more about the languages and cultures of China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea. A recent government commissioned report (Scarino, et al., 2011) into Asian language education achievements in Australia after the implementation of the NALSSP found that learner background was a key variable in achievement. Students who had prior first or background knowledge and experience of a language did better than those who had none. It also found that the mode and intensity of instruction also had an impact on learner achievement, for example; achievement was greater among students who participated in study abroad, bilingual and other programs in which there were multiple opportunities to be exposed to the target language. The findings of the NALSSP study align with other second language acquisition research that point to learner differences and exposure to the target language as key variables in languages learning outcomes (Ellis, 1994). However, the study did not incorporate cultural understanding, intercultural competence or other related phenomenon that experts consider integral to current conceptions of language (Lo Bianco, 2003).

Summary.

The dominance of English as a global language, the push to a user pays higher education system, and the decline in government and public will to encourage second language education in Australia have led to a status quo whereby English is the only language of most educators. Combined with this is the erosion of ideological multiculturalism as a driver of social inclusion exemplified by the current inadequate provision of English language education for migrants and

refugees (Boese & Phillips, 2011). It is in this context that English language education for international students in Australia is expanding and providing a significant source of revenue for Australia.

English Language Education in Australia

The section to follow outlines the English language education sector in Australia. It outlines the past and current situation illustrating key features of the sector including the financial and ideological influences. These drivers relate to the status and positioning of English language teaching in Australia. In particular, the economic imperative of most English language providers as private businesses has significant influence on the organisational, employment and educational practices of these providers.

In 2010, approximately 44% of all international students commencing higher education study had undertaken an English language course (AEI, 2012b). English language programs were set up in the 1960s to deliver English language education to government sponsored international students in order to prepare them for a university degree or diploma course (Yuen, 2005). At that time, and for some years to come, there were few intensive English courses in Australia, most of which were located in higher education institutions.

It was not until 1986 when the Australian government changed student visa rules to attract full-fee paying international students to Australia that the sector started to expand rapidly (Ingram, 2004). In the years that followed the English language sector grew dramatically and despite the recent downturn in international student numbers, overall it remains the third biggest sector of Australian international education in terms of enrolments and income generated (AEI, 2012a). However, global flows of students are typically influenced by economic and political circumstances and as circumstances change so do student numbers, often in a sudden and dramatic manner. As a profit-making education sector, the English language sector is particularly vulnerable to changes in international student numbers.

Historical fluctuations.

During the Asian economic crisis that occurred between 1998 and 1999, the number of students enrolled on English language courses in Australia fell by around 40% resulting in a dramatic downturn in profits that caused significant job losses and program closures across the sector (EA, 2000). This was followed around a decade later by a period of significant and sustained growth with increases in international student numbers year on year and overall. This increase has been attributed to a number of factors including the tightening of US student visa requirements post

9/11 (Forbes & Hamilton, 2004), and a concurrent loosening in the Australian student visa requirements.

The recent crisis.

Data published this year shows that the number of international students enrolled on English language courses has been in decline since 2009 and is continuing to fall (AEI, 2012). This ongoing decrease in student numbers has been attributed to the cumulative effect of multiple factors leading to the situation being described as 'perfect storm' by many commentators.

While there has been a corresponding increase in enrolments by students on working, holiday and other types of visas (AEI, 2012a), this has only compensated in a small way for the decreases seen over the same period in student visas. Moreover, the increase has less impact on overall revenue for international and higher education because students on holiday and other types of visas enrol for much shorter periods of study than those who are on student visas (AEI, 2012a).

English language providers.

English language courses in Australia are varied in terms of courses offerings, costs and quality. They are designed and delivered to meet the needs of three groups of learners of English; migrants, refugees and international students. Adult migrants and refugees enrol on free part-time or full-time English language courses offered by local government-run institutes such as the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) which is offered through TAFE. Child migrants and refugees usually learn English language in schools or in intensive language centres located in local primary and high schools.

All international students on student visas are required to engage in full-time study to meet their student visa requirements. In contrast to migrant or refugee background learners, international students pay full fees and usually enrol on courses delivered by privately run intensive English language centres, colleges and schools. Few government-run institutions offer English language courses to international students in Australia with the exception of a few technical colleges and universities including the workplace of the researcher and the teachers who participated in the current study.

According to English Australia (2012), there are 199 registered English language providers in Australia, of these approximately 100 are EA member colleges. Eighty percent of all international students in Australia enrol on an English language course delivered by an EA member college. Several national government and non-government bodies, registers and agencies have

responsibilities for setting, maintaining, monitoring and regulating the quality and standards of English language programs in Australia as follows:

- ❖ The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
- ❖ The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- ❖ The Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)
- ❖ The National English Language Accreditation Scheme (NEAS)
- ❖ English Australia (EA)

The quality and standards of English language pathway delivered by higher education providers are regulated by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Vocational education and training courses and providers, including all other English language programs are regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). In addition, all English language courses delivered to international students on student visas in Australia need to be registered with the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). There are currently 27 such registered programs in Australia delivered by higher education providers (EA, 2012) including the program where the participants in the current study were employed.

Funding.

English language providers do not receive government funding and operate mostly as private, profit-making businesses, although there are a few publicly run, self-funding programs located in public educational institutions. The vast majority of English language programs are either small to medium sized privately owned and run schools and centres, or large private colleges and centres located in institutes of higher education owned and run by local and international companies. In terms of the income that it generates, the English language sector has been a significant sector of international education in Australia for a number of decades. However, unlike other sectors of international education in Australia that are government-funded, as a self-funded sector it is arguably more vulnerable to fluctuating student numbers that result from global and local economic and political changes.

Employment conditions for teachers.

As a primarily profit-making sector of Australian education, the English language sector has to adapt to survive in an uncertain landscape. The majority of English language teachers are employed on part-time, casual contracts or short, fixed-term contracts. Permanent contracts are

rare and are usually only offered with positions of responsibility, thus limiting the retention of teachers who wish to work full-time and/or have a career as an English language teacher. There is also the flipside to this situation that occurs when student numbers increase suddenly and dramatically. When this happens, teaching staff can be in short supply and managers and coordinators may have only a few days in which to identify and employ more teachers. Situations like these place additional pressure on existing staff who are often requested to increase their teaching hours, teach classes that are over capacity as well as be obligated to help new teachers who often know very little about the courses they are about to teach.

Due to the continual uncertainties about student numbers, middle managers under instruction from senior managers, marketing departments and employers need to employ compensatory management strategies to maintain profits or financial viability and to attract students. This has a significant impact on the overall standards and quality of English language courses in Australia as well as the general work conditions for teachers. These include weekly student intakes, last minute decisions to hire or fire teachers, poor terms and conditions for teachers, mixed level classes, changes to the employment status and conditions of employment of teachers that often disadvantage teachers and the firing of teachers because they become too expensive as they gain further qualifications and teaching experience (Murray & Christison, 2011).

The Research Setting

The registered provider of the English language program where the participants and researcher were employed is a large educational institution in terms of overall student numbers (including onshore and offshore). It also has the largest proportion of onshore international students of any educational institution in the state where it was located. The institution is structured into a number of different areas and delivers courses across a wide range of subject areas and qualification levels.

Like all students who enrol on further or higher education in Australia, international students who enrol on courses at the institution where the study participants were employed need to demonstrate that they have met the English language proficiency entry requirements. In 2012, over 50 courses, exams and certificates were used to demonstrate proficiency in English language in order to gain entry to the various courses at the institution. Proficiency in English is demonstrated through the successful completion of a wide range of English language education courses and exams recognised at a state, national and international level including the tertiary entrance exams, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the General Certificate of Education (GCSE) as well as numerous other courses and exams.

The English language program.

The institution has been delivering pre-tertiary English language education to migrant and international students for over 40 years. During this time the status and location of the English language program has evolved from a small, self-funding English language centre to a section of a much larger area delivering a wide variety of language related courses with an emphasis on delivering innovative, high quality English language education at a tertiary and pre-tertiary level.

The English language program and associated courses and activities have a recurrent budget of around $10m and the area employs around 40 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff and around 16 FTE admin staff although this does fluctuate considerably depending on student numbers. The program has always been self-funding and typically makes significant financial contributions to the financial surplus of the institution. For example, in 2007, the overall net profit of the program constituted around 90% of the total surplus of the area where the program was located. Despite this, at the start of the current study a restructure was initiated in order to increase the profitability and viability of the English language program.

In 2007 when the initial group interview occurred and field notes were initiated, the program was located in a department of the institution. The department delivered numerous English language courses, a foundation course, English language tests, and certificate, diploma and degree courses. The English language courses were coordinated by academic staff who were qualified at a master's level or above in a language related subject, and the programs were led by staff who were qualified to a doctoral level and who had strong teaching and research records in the fields of applied linguistics and English language teaching.

During the data collection period the English language program and other associated programs underwent a series of reviews that led to significant restructuring and repositioning of English language programs within the institution. In 2009, significant changes to the strategic location and direction of the English language program were implemented which eventually led to changes to the structure and content of courses, the timetable, the daily operations, as well as changes to the status, terms and conditions of employment for teachers who worked on the English language program. These changes eventually led to a dramatic turnover in staff as well as a significant change to the staffing profile outlined next.

After the review process, the English language courses were relocated to a new English language centre. This restructure involved not only a strategic relocation and rebranding of the English language programs, but a total organisational restructure. The restructure included

changes to the daily operations, processes and procedures, including significant changes to the status of English language teaching in the institution. The changes were most prominently reflected in the reduced terms and conditions of employment for teachers employed on the program and the appointment of a senior manager with no research credentials. A dramatic change to the staff profile occurred as a result of this restructure.

In July 2007, there were seventeen permanent academic staff members in the department who had a significant role in the English language programs. Of this group, all had teaching qualifications, five held both masters and doctoral level qualifications, a further ten held masters level qualifications, and five were enrolled on doctorates in related subject areas. Of these, two were recipients of research grants, one had published an award-winning book on English language teaching with Cambridge University Press and ten had been classified as research active in the previous year according to the institute's research measurements. All the staff had facility in one or more languages in addition to English, several were bilingual and many were expert users of a second language. All but three were born outside Australia, and all had lived and worked in countries where English was not the main language of communication for significant periods. In addition to these permanent academic staff members, there were five part-time and 18 full-time sessional academic staff members employed to teach on the English language program. Many of the sessional staff also had facility in a second language and had lived and worked in contexts in which English was not the main language of communication.

By 2010, there were no permanent teaching staff members teaching on the English language programs. Over half had taken redundancies offered because of the restructure, several had relocated to another department as part of the restructure, three had been seconded to other areas of the institution, and one had left the institution. Currently, there are no permanent staff members working on the English language program. All staff, including the senior managers and program coordinators are currently employed on fixed term or casual, teaching only contracts under employment arrangements implemented in 2010. Currently, none of the teaching staff or managers in the area has a qualification above master's level and none are research active. Many have first degrees unrelated to language, and teaching staff are being atypically recruited after having completing a four week English language teaching course. The number of staff who have facility in a second language is not known, but given the increase in the employment of recently qualified teachers and the decrease in teaching staff with higher qualifications in language related subjects, there may be fewer teachers who have facility in an additional language. Of the group of approximately thirty-one staff who were involved in the English

language program in 2007 when the data collection for the current study commenced, only three continue to be associated with the program in 2012.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted key aspects of the international, national and local contexts relevant to the current study. It has suggested that there are political, ideological and historical forces which have led to the growth in and status of English and has demonstrated how native speaking countries like Australia may benefit from this situation. It has pointed to the discourses and practices of colonialism and neo-colonialism that may be at play in the spread and status of English and in the related fields of English language teaching and applied linguistics. As the chapter closed, it outlined a number of significant changes in the workplace of the participants that occurred over the data collection period. While it is hard to determine the extent to which the local context influenced the data gathered for the current study, the changes to the workplace of the study participants illustrate the erosion of standards, particularly in relation to teachers' skills and expertise that commercial practices may have on English language teaching programs in Australia.

Chapter Three: The Preliminary Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the preliminary literature that occurred before the data for the current study were gathered and analysed. The process of this preliminary literature review was sequential, chronological, and iterative. It commenced before the research proposal for the study was accepted, and it was completed before the first data set was gathered and analysed. As the data were analysed and the findings of the study were being written up, the preliminary literature was taken into consideration and further literature was sought. The concurrent literature is presented and discussed in conjunction with the findings of the study in Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine of this thesis.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section discusses the rationale for the approach to the literature review and describes the literature review process. The second section reviews significant literature on 'empathy' in the fields of aesthetics, philosophy and psychology. The third section reviews the related research in the fields of second language acquisition and English language teaching, and the fourth section reviews a number of relevant studies in the field of education. The fifth section discusses concerns about the study of empathy and the final section presents the key concepts that formed the conceptual framework of the study.

Approaching the Literature

In the very early stages of the current study an *orthodox* grounded theory approach to the literature was adopted (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It was thought that this approach would best achieve the aim of the study, which was to develop theory related to the phenomenon of empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia. However, an orthodox grounded theory approach required the literature to be reviewed subsequent to the initial data collection. From an orthodox grounded theory perspective, if the literature is reviewed prior to the data collection it biases the researcher and constrains, inhibits, contaminates and stifles the analytic process and prevents the emergence of a 'pure' grounded theory (Glaser, 1992; 2003). Although the concerns of orthodox grounded theory proponents were identified in the proposal for this study, a constructivist grounded theory methodology was employed prior to the start of the data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006). This allowed a relatively comprehensive literature review to be conducted on the key concept of empathy before the data collection commenced without compromising the rigour of the study.

Within the constructivist research perspective, researcher bias is assumed regardless of whether the researcher has reviewed the related literature or not. The researcher is required to acknowledge the way in which their experience, knowledge and assumptions shape and influence the research process. No researcher, not even a novice, comes to a study as a 'blank slate', nor is it desirable that they do so. Research may be less productive if the research questions are formulated and the methodology is selected from a completely naive position (Charmaz, 2006).

Overview of the literature review process.

The initial review of the literature assisted with the identification of a research problem by establishing a gap in the literature related to emotion and empathy in the related fields of English language teaching and second language acquisition. The preliminary review identified that teacher emotion was under-researched and that there were no studies on teacher empathy in these fields. This lack of related research led to a review of the literature on empathy in the fields of psychology and philosophy. This preliminary review provided insight into why and how empathy had been studied and theorised historically, and highlighted a number of significant definitions and conceptualisations of empathy. It also pointed to methodological issues with the conceptualisation and study of empathy. As the study progressed, the literature formed a secondary source of data to develop and enhance the theoretical direction of the data collection and analysis of the current study. In particular, the literature assisted with the formulation of questions to ask about the data as well as to identify and explore the relationship between emerging codes and categories.

Empathy in Western Philosophy, Psychotherapy and Psychology

Emotion has been long been viewed as deficit within Western scientific and philosophical thought (Oatley, Keltner, & Jenkins, 2006); and has been inaccurately portrayed as irrational, subjective, primitive and against reason (Damasio, 1994). Despite this, empathy is a significant, much debated, and diversely defined phenomenon that has generated a vast amount of conceptual and empirical literature as illustrated by Eisenburg and Strayer (1987a), Gladstein, (1987), Jahoda (2005), Verducci, (2000), and Wispé (1987). This section presents an overview of the history of the term empathy and describes key conceptualisations and studies in the fields of philosophy and psychology. This section illustrates the lack of consistency in defining and labelling empathy within and between several related disciplines and introduces a number of terms that have been used to describe the phenomenon of empathy to date. Presenting key theories and concepts related to the study of empathy, this section illustrates that empathy was considered a key concept in these fields because it brings observers closer to understanding the thoughts,

attitudes, values, behaviour or feelings of others. However, the different philosophical and theoretical approaches to the study of empathy have resulted in various definitions and explanations of empathy which reflect the lack of consensus among researchers about what constitutes empathy and how it should be studied.

A way of responding to objects.

From its earliest inception, empathy was central to one of the great puzzles of 20th century Western philosophical and psychological thought (Jahoda, 2005). Empathy was "key to the problem that had long concerned philosophers and later psychologists – namely, how we come to know other people's minds" (Jahoda, 2005, p. 155). To date, the concept of empathy continues to be very influential in philosophy as well as in many areas of psychology including psychotherapy, and developmental, social and personality psychology.

Within a European framework, the English word *empathy* can be traced as far back as the early 20th century through the field of psychology. It is widely believed that the origin of the term lies in late 19th century German aesthetics, philosophy and psychology where it was known as *einfühlung*, literally, *feeling with* (Koss, 2006; Verducci, 2000; Wispé, 1987;1991). This German word is generally believed to have been associated with the field of aesthetics and refers to the psychological experience of projecting one's feelings into an object as a means of aesthetic appreciation (Jahoda, 2005; Verducci, 2000; Wispé, 1987).

Nowadays, it is commonly agreed that the term *einfühlung* made its transition into the English language through Edward Tichener in 1909 (Jahoda, 2005; Verducci, 2000; Wispé, 1987; 1991). Tichener drew on the Greek word *empatheia* (in suffering or passion) to coin the term empathy (Jahoda, 2005). Tichener (1924) used the term to describe various phenomena including, "a natural tendency to feel oneself into what we perceive or imagine", and a "process of humanising objects, of reading or feeling ourselves into them" (p. 417).

A way of knowing other minds.

The theory of empathy in which feelings are absorbed and created in relation to objects then expanded beyond a way of knowing objects, into a theory of how people know other people (Koss, 2006). The theory of empathy evolved to refer to a way of understanding people and was adopted and explored further by a number of influential psychotherapists including Sigmund Freud, Carl Rogers and Roger Kohut (Gladstein, 1987; Wispé, 1987).

In psychotherapy, empathy is central to a psychoanalyst's understanding of clients in particular and of psychological phenomena in general. Empathy enables the psychoanalyst to have an

objective understanding of the client's 'inner world'. Freud (as cited in Verducci, 2000) conceived of empathy as a way of understanding or knowing others. References to empathy can be found throughout Freud's writings (Eisenburg & Strayer, 1987), and Freud credited empathy with being central to a therapist's understanding of what is "inherently foreign to us in the experiences of others" (Freud, 1921 as cited in Wispé, 1987).

Like Freud, Rogers (1957, 1975) also attributed great significance to empathy in therapeutic relationships. Rogers' (1957) detailed definition placed empathy centre stage in the field of psychotherapy:

> The way of being with another person which is termed empathic has several facets. It means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever, that he/she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments, sensing meanings of which he/she is scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover the feelings of which he/she is totally unaware, since this would be too threatening. It includes communicating your sensings of his/her world as you look with unfrightened eyes at elements of which the individual is fearful. It means frequently checking with him/her as to the accuracy of your sensings and being guided by the responses you receive. You are a confident companion to the person in his/her inner world. By pointing to the possible meanings in the flow of his/her experiencing you help the person to focus on this useful type of referent, to experience the meanings more fully, and to move forward in the experiencing. To be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay side the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter another's world without prejudice. In some sense it means that you lay aside yourself and this can only be done by a person secure enough in himself that he knows he will not get lost in what may turn out to be the strange bizarre world of the other, and can comfortably return to his own world when he wishes. (Rogers, 1957, p. 3)

Rogers was the first to investigate empathy persistently within an objective, researchable framework from which conclusions of great general significance emerged (Eisenburg & Strayer, 1987a), and which "provided the most complete and insightful description of empathy to date" (Wispé, 1987, p. 29). For Rogers, empathy was a clearly definable process through which the therapist was able to gain an accurate, empathic understanding of the client's experience: "[T]o

sense the client's private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing the "as if" quality – this is empathy" (1957, p. 829). Empathy changes others for the better and is a necessary and sufficient condition in the facilitation of psychological change. Rogers (1975) emphasised that it was the condition of *being empathic* which led to change. Rogers was not alone in positioning empathy centrally within the psychotherapeutic process.

Kohut's (1978) seminal work conceptualised empathy in a similar way to Rogers (1957, 1975), arguing that empathy was a "ubiquitous and fundamental human capacity" (p. 81). Kohut (1978) used the term "vicarious introspection" (p. 207) to describe a process in which we "think ourselves" into the inner world of another and feel as if we were that person in order to observe a "psychological fact" (p. 208). Kohut (1978) perceived empathy as both useful within the psychotherapeutic relationship, and as a research tool; empathy was an "experience-near mode of observation" (p. 212). Kohut's (1978) use of the term *experience-near* has been adopted by many researchers, perhaps most famously by the anthropologist Geertz (1974) who endorsed the use of terms that were familiar to research participants:

> An experience-near concept is, roughly, one which an individual […] might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others. An experience-distant concept is one which various types of specialists […] employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims. (p. 28)

More recently, the linguist Wierzbicka (1999) has also recommended that all scholarly research related to the language of emotion utilise experience-near concepts and words that are universally understood such as *think* and *feel*. Like Rogers, Kohut (1978) believed that empathy enabled a person to acquire objective knowledge about the inner life of another person, and that empathy was an essential aspect of effective psychoanalysis. In the practice of psychotherapy, empathy was regarded as central to the psychoanalyst's capacity to understand clients and psychological phenomena in general. In the clinical context, empathy enabled the psychotherapist to form an objective understanding of the client's inner world.

A way of knowing self from other.

The association between empathy and human social development has been debated for centuries (Eisenburg & Strayer, 1987). Empathy figured significantly in investigations of prosocial human behaviour that took place within the branches of developmental, social and personality psychology from the 1960s onwards.

The field of developmental psychology is concerned with investigating the psychological changes that take place during the human life span, while personality psychology aims to understand the individual or self. Several influential researchers and thinkers in these areas of psychology have developed conceptions of empathy. There is general acknowledgement that the complex nature of the phenomenon means that it is extremely difficult to define (Duan & Hill, 1996; Gladstein, 1987; Wispé, 1987; Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004); however, there is considerable agreement about the significance of empathy in human social interaction.

According to developmental psychologists, empathy evolves in and from psychological phenomena that are particular to the relationship between infant and caregiver. Klein (1986) noted the significance of empathy in early childhood development and claimed that empathy was associated with what she termed, "projective identification" (p. 183); an unconscious primitive defence mechanism triggered by anxiety. Through projective identification, reviled aspects of the self are rejected through association or projection of these aspects of the self onto others whereby the projector dissociates herself from particular aspects of the self and the associated feelings by attributing them to others (Segal, 2004). Klein's conception of empathy is echoed in some later theories and research findings that suggest empathy is not always benign (Cooper, 2004). However, the overwhelming view of empathy is that it is a prosocial phenomenon (see Roberts & Strayer, 1996) and it has been associated with altruism (see Hoffman, 1991). It seems unlikely that projective identification can be reconciled with empathy. Richmond (2004), proposes that unlike projective identification, empathy requires a distinction to be made between the self and others.

Sullivan's (1962) influential investigation into the mother-child relationship explains primitive empathy as a, "prototaxically experienced flow of feeling from mother to child" (p. 85). In this process, the child subconsciously or intuitively apprehends the anxiety of the mother and, in order to avoid the anxious feeling, the child creates a self, which then enables her/him to avoid the negative feelings of the mother. Sullivan (1962) theorised that personality resides between people as interacting subjects and that empathy is fundamental to human social development. Sullivan's work was the catalyst for researchers to begin to investigate empathy as a developmental and interpersonal phenomenon (Verducci, 2000).

Feshbach (1982, 1987) was deeply concerned with the impact of parental attitudes on child behaviour and outcomes, and developed a widely used Empathy Test (ET) for children. Feshbach (1987) defined empathy in opposition to the more cognitive definitions that dominated

the field at the time. According to Feshbach (1987), empathy was, "a shared emotional response that is contingent upon cognitive factors" (p. 272). Feshbach (1987) believed that a parent who lacks empathy is less emotionally involved with his or her children and therefore less capable of meeting their needs.

Empathy is considered to be developmental; it constantly evolves from infancy and only reaches its mature form in adulthood when a complete sense of self and other is experienced (Staub, 1987; Hoffman, 1990). Hoffman (1990, p. 151) in his "development scheme for empathic distress" labels particular types of empathy in each stage of the development of empathy ranging from *global* empathy to *mature* empathy. Mature empathy is defined "not as an exact match of another's feelings but as an affective response more appropriate to the other's situation than to one's own" (Hoffman, 1990, p. 157). Central to this theory of empathy is the capacity of the mature empathiser to separate and recognise their own feelings from those of others: "[M]ature empathizers know that the affect aroused in them is due to stimulus events impinging on someone else, and they have an idea of what that person is feeling" (Hoffman, 1990, p. 153).

Empathy as a cognitive process.

Although empathy was difficult to quantify and measure, researchers persisted in delimiting empathy in order that it fit the positivistic model of research that dominated the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s (Verducci, 2000; Wispé, 1987). This led to a split, which continues to date, between researchers who conceive of empathy as a mainly *cognitive* process and those who consider it primarily *affective* in nature. The idea that empathy involves an affective response of one person to the situation of another person has been central to many studies of empathy, yet far greater attention has been focused on the study of empathy as a cognitive phenomenon within psychology (Wispé, 1987). The underpinnings of the cognitive paradigm state that intrapersonal social phenomena such as memory, perception and action are a result of mental functions, processes and states.

Within the school of social cognition, empathy has been perceived of as an ability to understand the thoughts, feelings or intentions of others (Eisenburg & Strayer, 1987) with a focus on the cognitive process of understanding and perceiving others. In the early years of psychoanalysis, empathy was also understood in a similar way and was commonly described as, "primarily a cognitive phenomenon characterised by detachment" (Verducci, 2000, p. 72). Citing the work of Sigmund Freud, Theodore Reik and Robert Fleiss, Verducci (2000) emphasises the way in which these psychotherapists privileged cognition over affect in defining empathy.

Measuring empathy.

Within the field of cognitive psychology, empathy has been studied primarily as a quantifiable phenomenon and a remarkable number of instruments have been devised to measure empathy, none more prolific than the Hogan Empathy Scale (HES) (Hogan, 1969). One of the most widely used and extensively tested measures of empathy to date (Ellis, 1994; Froman & Peloquin, 2001; Greif & Hogan,1973; Hogan, 1969), the HES measures empathy as a disposition or trait which involves, "the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another's condition or state of mind without actually experiencing that person's feelings" (Hogan, 1969, p. 307). The ontological and epistemological assumptions on which the HES were based necessitated that empathy was conceived of and studied as a trait or disposition that does not change over time and which does not vary from person to person; that is, empathy has a concrete, stable existence.

The HES was developed on the inference that the term empathy refers to a relatively discrete social phenomenon that is, "recognisable in the experience of laymen and psychologists alike" (Hogan, 1969, p. 309). In Hogan's study, data were obtained to develop criteria for an empathy scale by asking participants to conceive of, "a highly empathic man" (1969, p. 308). Participants were then asked to select 50 items from a 100-item Q-sort descriptor. Q-sort is a common research methodology in the field of psychology that is used to investigate how people think about something. Q-sort reduces data to a set of common or shared ways of thinking about phenomena. Two groups of study participants were then rated on the proposed items for the empathy scale. The first group consisted of one hundred military officers, the second group comprised of 45 research scientists and 66 student engineers. Participants from both groups were categorised into 'high' and 'low' empathy groups, and their responses were then compared on a range of other scales in order to select the most discriminating items to construct the final 64-item scale (Froman & Peloquin, 2001; Hogan, 1973). Addressing questions about its validity a few years later Hogan (1973) concluded that the scale was valid and reliable as a means to determine an empathic disposition, stating that high scorers on the scale were, "socially acute and sensitive to nuances in interpersonal behaviour" (1973, p. 315).

Since the time of its development, the HES has been used extensively across many disciplines including second language acquisition with no concerns about its validity and reliability (Ellis, 1994; Greif & Hogan, 1973; Krashen, 1981). However, concerns have been raised about its continued use as an instrument to measure empathy as a trait. In their longitudinal quantitative study of empathy with occupational therapy students, Froman and Peloquin (2001) found that the

reliability estimates for the HES as a measure of an empathic disposition were unstable and did not replicate previous estimates:

> The basic foundational psychometric estimates of internal consistency of the EM [Empathy Measure] fall well below those recommended for instruments used in research studies. The lack of even modest stability raises questions about conceptualizing the construct as a trait when measured with the EM. (Froman & Peloquin, 2001, p. 571)

The most reliable instruments may not bear scrutiny by researchers working from within the same research perspective. Moreover, some quantitative researchers have challenged the standard practice to study empathy as a unidimensional phenomenon in psychology. For example, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980) incorporated various components of empathy including perspective taking and emotionality. In validating this measure of empathy, Davis (1983) determined empathy to be a multidimensional construct that was defined as a *reaction* to the observed experiences of others. Davis (1983) found empathy to be a *variety of reactions* that were related to interpersonal functioning, self-esteem and sensitivity to others.

After years of research within the field of psychology, a number of key reviews concluded that a new approach to the study of empathy was required (Duan & Hill, 1996; Gladstein, 1987; Verducci, 2000).

Types of empathy.

In a review of the study of empathy in psychology, Gladstein (1987) concluded that very little was known about empathy; there was a distinct lack of empirical evidence to support the claims about empathy. In concluding the review, Gladstein (1987) presented a taxonomy of empathy in which 18 types of empathy were identified. Gladstein (1987) concluded that as a multi-component phenomenon, the nature of empathy cannot be studied, proposing instead that, "various kinds of empathy" (p.180) be studied. Gladstein (1987) also suggested that to reduce the confusion between cognitive and affective conceptions of empathy, the term "cognitive empathy" (p. 180) be used to refer to a process in which someone takes on the perspective of others while "affective empathy" (p.180) be utilised to denote a process in which one person experiences the emotional response of others.

Like Gladstein, Duan and Hill (1996) also found that empathy studies had been characterised by a, "multitude of theoretical positions and inconsistent, even confusing results" (p. 262). Duan and Hill (1996) challenged many of the measures of empathy including those which employed self-

report and observer ratings arguing that "the lack of specification and organisation of the different views of empathy has led to theoretical confusion, methodological difficulties, inconsistent findings, and neglected areas of research in the field" (p. 269). They cited numerous arguments in the literature about the inseparability of cognitive and affective elements of empathy arguing that these two distinct conceptions of empathy should be avoided. Instead they proposed the use of the term *intellectual empathy* to refer to the cognitive process and *empathic emotions* to refer to the affective aspects of empathic experience. Duan and Hill (1996) concluded that more effort is needed to understand how these two key aspects of empathy "may exist separately, coexist or influence each other" (p. 263).

Verducci (2000), in reviewing the conceptual history of empathy, stated that the only thing one can conclude about the history of empathy was that it involved a "constellation of empathies" (p. 65). Unlike Gladstein (1987), Verducci (2000) steered away from numbering and labelling these phenomena. Verducci (2000) suggested a transformation of research approaches, calling for researchers to explore, "conceptions" (p. 66) of empathy rather than definitions and to study empathy as a constellation of phenomena rather than as a single phenomenon. Verducci (2000) also called for conceptions of empathy to focus less on creating a distinction between cognitive or affective empathy and the favouring of one over the other.

On sympathy.

Most researchers view *empathy* and *sympathy* as two distinct, subjectively experienced phenomena, but they acknowledge that in everyday use and in the scholarly discourse, the two terms are frequently and easily confused (Eisenburg & Strayer, 1987; Duan & Hill, 1996; Wispé, 1991). Wispé (1991) attempted to resolve this issue by clarifying the English and German words that are synonymous with sympathy, such as *empathy* and *einfühlung.* Wispé (1991, p.78) argued that *einfühlung* was not sympathy, positing that through *empathy/einfühlung*, "we relate the imagined moments of our past experiences and make inferences about the other person's feelings".

The term sympathy has a much longer conceptual history in the English language than the term empathy (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004: Jahoda, 2005) and there is consensus and a clear preference among researchers and laypersons alike to view empathy and sympathy as separate phenomena. Yet these terms share a historical and conceptual relationship that is not generally acknowledged. Before the inception of the term empathy, the term sympathy was used to describe the phenomenon that is now commonly referred to as empathy (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Jahoda, 2005; Wispé, 1991). The term sympathy dominated the discourse

until the German word *einfühlung*, meaning "to feel one's way into" (Wispé, 1991, p. 61), was translated into the English language as empathy in the late 1900s (Jahoda, 2005). Jahoda (2005) argues that the term empathy was coined on the false belief that the concept of sympathy differed in meaning from the meaning of the word *einfühlung*. The word empathy was widely adopted and has replaced sympathy in both everyday use and in psychological studies; thus, relegating sympathy to a lesser status (Gladstein, 1987; Jahoda, 2005).

Psychological theories of sympathy emphasise that sympathy must involve both the 'seeing' and the 'feeling' of negative emotions: "the sufferer 'feels', while the sympathiser 'sees', 'hears' and 'imagines'" (Wispé, 1991, p. 58). The theory of sympathy states that the sympathiser does not access the feelings of the other person. The sympathiser infers; that is, they are able to perceive and imagine what the other is feeling. Wispé (1991, p. 58) points to the paradox of the concept of sympathy by questioning "how the consciousness of one person can experience the pain of another person with whom there is no direct connection". Wispé (1991) placed the psychological difference between 'seeing' and 'feeling' as central to the paradox of sympathy by asking: "is 'seeing' pain comparable to 'feeling' pain?" (p. 60). This paradox reflects to some extent the conceptual tensions between the cognitive and the affective domains in the study and theory of empathy. Other studies conceptualise sympathy as an emotional subset of empathy (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Sympathy is an observer's emotional response to the distress of another person that creates a desire within the observer to do something to alleviate the suffering, as Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) explain:

> The observer may not actually act on this desire, but at the very least the observer has the emotion of wanting to take appropriate action to reduce the other's distress. (p. 164)

Similarly, Decety and Chaminade (2003) found that empathy and sympathy overlap defining sympathy as:

> An affective response that frequently stems from empathy and consists of feelings of concern for the distressed or needy other person, rather than feeling the same emotion as the other person, which is closer to empathy. (p.127)

The current study adopts the position of researchers such as Wispé (1987, 1991) and Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004). It also acknowledges that the meanings attributed to these two terms are based on a set of ontological assumptions and judgments. Even when viewed from within the same research paradigm, there is no consensus about the meaning of the two terms or

the differences between them (Jahoda, 2005). Although an attempt was made in the current study to clarify the meaning of the two terms, distinguishing between these two terms was beyond the scope of the current study. The distinction was not a major issue of concern during the collection and analyses of the data; therefore, it was not pursued beyond a brief exploration of the conceptual confusion.

This section has traced the development of the theory of empathy from its earliest inception in German aesthetics through the various fields of psychology. It has identified some key definitions of empathy and has illustrated some issues with the study of empathy. The next section outlines and reviews the relevant research literature in the fields of English language teaching and second language acquisition. It identifies the most significant related studies and defines the gap in the literature that suggested a need for research into empathy.

Affect in English Language Learning

A search within the research literature in the fields of English language teaching and second language acquisition revealed no studies related to the emotional experience of teaching English as an additional language. More specifically, no studies of teacher empathy were found in these areas although a considerable amount of research was uncovered that investigated student affect. Research on emotion in the related fields of English language teaching and second language acquisition was dominated by quantitative research approaches. The literature reviewed in this section is evaluated and discussed according to the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the quantitative research paradigm.

Student emotion.

Scovel (2000) states that of all the variables which impact on the process of second language acquisition, emotions are understood the least. Despite this, research on learner emotion has demonstrated strong correlations between language learning and negative affective variables such as anxiety, stress and depression. Krashen (1981) found that learner anxiety had a significant effect on language acquisition. Stevick's (1980) studies on anxiety led him to conclude that materials and techniques were rendered inadequate by negative affective reactions and that successful language acquisition depends more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom than it does on materials and methods. Significant investigations into how negative emotions might be overcome in language learning through positive affective phenomena, particularly empathy, have also been conducted. Brown (1973) found that learner empathy leads to greater language proficiency. Empathic capacity is essential to a learner's ability to acquire a second language (Schumann, 1975). Guiora, Beit-Hallahmi, Brannon, Dull, &

Scovel (1972) also support the claim that learner empathy is an essential variable in language acquisition.

Individual learner differences.

Within the field of second language acquisition, it is generally accepted that good learners employ techniques to manage emotions which in turn enhance the learning process (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Strong correlations between language learning outcomes and negative affective variables including empathy have been demonstrated by quantitative studies into student emotion and language acquisition (Arnold, 1999). These correlations have been found mainly in the research on individual differences and learning, which investigates why learners vary in how quickly they learn and why they fail to achieve proficiency (Ellis, 1994). This research suggests that affective factors have a significant impact on language learning and that emotion is of "crucial importance in accounting for individual differences in learning outcomes" (Ellis, 1994, p. 483).

Ego permeability and empathy.

One of the most significant and influential studies into the role of empathy in language learning tested the hypothesis that pronunciation ability is influenced by permeability of ego boundaries through the administering of alcohol (Guiora, et al., 1972). The study found that learning a new language was akin to taking on a new identity. Pronunciation was cited as the most salient aspect of the language ego as it was the hardest to acquire and the most difficult to lose or change which made it the most critical to self-representation. Guiora et al. (1972) proposed that individual differences in the ability to pronounce a second language should respect individual differences in empathic ability because, "empathic capacity was also dependent upon the ability to partially and temporarily give up one's separateness of identity" (p. 422). The findings of the study confirmed the researchers' hypothesis, and the study concluded that permeability in the language ego observed in the study was a reflection of the ego boundaries in general and of empathic capacity in particular.

Thus, while learner emotion had been established as important to language acquisition in the field of second language acquisition, the preliminary literature review did not locate any studies that explored teacher empathy or emotion.

Empathy in Education

The preliminary literature review also established that there was a lack of research into teacher empathy in all education sectors including higher education. However, a number of relevant studies in the areas of early childhood education and moral education in secondary school teaching were identified and reviewed. These studies drew on key conceptual and theoretical

literature from the field of psychology and pointed to the significance of empathy in interpersonal relationships. In the early childhood education literature, the concepts of "empathic attunement" (Arnold, 2005, p. 49) and "inter-subjective relatedness" (p. 50) raised questions about conceptualising empathy as a trait or disposition. As the empirical data for the current study were gathered and analysed, these concepts reinforced the idea that empathy was a process that resides between people as they relate to each other. Although the current study focussed on empathy in mature adults, the study was concerned with factors that might influence the development of intercultural teacher empathy and intercultural competence. In addition, the relevant studies reviewed in the area of secondary education identified that empathy can be developed in teachers who teach in diverse contexts (McAllister & Irvine, 2002) and that empathy involves caring about students over time (Cooper, 2004).

Empathy in early childhood.

Within early childhood education, empathy is viewed as being intrinsically linked to the social and personal development of children (Hoffman, 2001; Knight, 1989); thus, the contexts in which people develop empathy may impact empathic capacity. Early empathic interactions lay down templates which form a, "unified sense of a core self and a core other" (Arnold, 2005, p. 45), forming the foundations upon which people build relationships with others. Arnold (2005) explains the importance of "empathic attunement" (p. 49) in early learning, emotional development and socialisation:

> The degree to which the major affect states are encoded in the baby's brain influences the development of their core relatedness. That sense of core relatedness is the basis for the development of inter-subjective relatedness. (Arnold, 2005, p. 45)

This view of empathy is rooted in psychological research findings and theories by developmental and social psychologists such as Sullivan (1962), Klein (1986) and Feshbach (1982, 1987) mentioned previously in this chapter. The concepts of empathic attunement and inter-subjective relatedness were considered important elements of empathy in all these studies.

Teacher empathy.

The preliminary literature review found no studies on teacher empathy in the fields of English language teaching, second language acquisition or higher education. However, some relevant studies of empathy in the field of education were located during the preliminary literature review and moral education was identified as the main area of empathy research in education (Hoffman, 2001). Studies of empathy in this area have been concerned mainly with exploring if and how

empathy can be taught to students (see Meek, 1957; Sutherland, 1986; Hatcher, Nadeau, Walsh, & Reynols, 1994) although there are a few studies of teacher empathy. For example, educational psychologists Tettegah and Anderson (2007) conducted a study into pre-service teacher empathy. The study employed the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980) and self-reported responses to a simulation involving a racist exchange between two children in a school setting. The study found that over 50% of the participants expressed low levels of empathy and concluded that the development of empathy in pre-service teachers is essential.

A number of relevant and significant qualitative studies on teacher empathy and moral education in secondary education in the United States and the United Kingdom were also located. Cooper (2004) conducted a study of the role of empathy in teacher-pupil relationships and its relevance to moral modelling. Cooper (2004) identified and labelled a number of key types of empathy in the student-teacher relationship ranging from, "profound empathy" (p. 13) to, "feigned empathy" (p. 17), defining empathy in a general, multidimensional way as:

> […] a quality shown by individuals which enables them to accept others for who they are, to feel and perceive situations from their perspective and to take a constructive and long-term attitude towards the advancement of their situation by searching for solutions to meet their needs. (p. 14)

Cooper (2004) expanded significantly on previous definitions of empathy, in particular in relation to the time frame of empathy which had previously only been viewed as occurring in instances. According to Cooper (2004), empathy involves a commitment to helping over time that is indicative of a high level of human concern for others; empathy is a morally and emotionally charged phenomenon that enables teachers to care for and help others. Cooper's qualitative study was based on grounded theory methods and used a combination of in-depth interviews and observations with sixteen "empathic" (p. 15) teachers and student teachers. Cooper (2004) found empathy to be a:

> […] rich and varied phenomenon which showed itself to different degrees and extents in different contexts. Empathy has powerful effects not only on relationships and behaviour but is also fundamental to high quality learning. (p. 15)

Although Cooper's (2004) study showed that the teachers did what they said they did, she concluded that the high moral aims of teachers were subverted and constrained by the economic and commercial considerations that dominated management concerns in the state school system

in the United Kingdom (UK). The findings of the study illustrate the importance of affect in teacher-student interaction and learning, and emphasised that empathy develops over time and is influenced by context.

Another study (McAllister & Irvine, 2002) found that high school teachers in the United States of America (USA) believed empathy to be an important factor in working effectively with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The study involved an experimental type approach in which 34 high school teachers participated in a professional learning program which assisted them to work effectively with culturally diverse students. Data were collected through pre and post interviews with the teachers and via a report completed at the end of a professional learning program. This study highlights the strategies and contexts teacher educators can use to foster empathy among teachers. The study found that empathy was an implicit part of being a caring, supportive and responsive teacher.

The preliminary literature review established that teacher empathy was an important, but neglected phenomenon in educational settings. The review suggested the need for an Australian study that explored teacher empathy in multilingual, multicultural educational settings.

Concerns about Empathy

The preliminary review of the related literature raised a number of concerns about the study and conceptualisation of empathy. The current study did not aim to resolve these issues, but it did take them into consideration while exploring the significance of empathy in intercultural understanding. These concerns relate to the ambiguity of the concept of empathy and the status of empathy as a prosocial human behaviour associated with altruism.

> **A slippery concept.**

> I note with a certain envy that my difficulty in describing the process of psychological comprehension adequately does not exist for many psychologists. Faced with my problem, the expression "empathy" readily occurs to their minds and flows from their pens. Indeed this expression sounds so full of meaning that people willingly overlook its ambiguity. To speak of empathy has on occasion been as senseless as to discuss sitting in a box without distinguishing whether one means a compartment in a theater, the driver's seat or a big case. The word empathy sometimes means one thing, sometimes another, until now it does not mean anything. (Reik, 1948, p. 356-357)

Empathy is an ambiguous concept (Harrington, 2001; Jahoda, 2005; Knight, 1989) that is difficult to define. It has been described as "a broad, somewhat slippery concept" (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987, p.3) with "no stable meaning" (Verducci, 2000, p.64). To some, it is a *disposition or trait* (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Hogan, 1969; Kozeki & Berghammer, 1992; McAllister, 2002) while to others it is a *capacity* (Arnold, 2005; Decety & Jackson, 2004; Guiora et al., 1972; Richmond, 2004), an *emotion* (Sutherland, 1986), or a *process* (Rogers, 1957). This variety of conceptions means that there was no one definitive definition of empathy on which to base the current study. Thus, one goal of the current study was to develop a definition of empathy.

A prosocial behaviour.

Empathy may not always be benign; interpersonal concern can be vicarious. People can display empathy, but be acting in their own interests. For example, Cooper's (2004) study of teacher empathy identified several types of empathy including feigned empathy. This pseudo-empathy, involves showing the signs of empathy such as smiling and being pleasant, but lacks sincerity and may well be self-serving (Cooper, 2004). Richmond (2004) argues that not everyone has the capacity to be empathically engaged: "instances of empathy can be more or less benign"; that is, there can be, "defective instances" (p. 256) of empathy.

Richmond (2004) also argues that the psychoanalytical account of empathy uses an inappropriate framework to account for, and evaluate empathy, which underplays its affective features in order to classify empathy within the model of interpersonal psychological understanding. Richmond (2004) suggests that this approach ignores the role of empathy both within the "psychologies of the people involved or about non-epistemological aspects of its contribution to interpersonal relationships" (p. 259).

The dangers of empathy.

Another concern relates to the assumption that, through empathy, it is possible to actually perceive and understand the reality of others. Arnold (2005) argues that it is not possible to know another based on individually experienced thoughts and feelings. Similarly, Richmond (2004) expresses strong opposition to the conceptualisation of empathy as a phenomenon in which one person enters the world of another; suggesting instead that through empathy, a person *takes up* the other person's point of view. There is also the danger of teachers assuming that they know and understand their culturally and linguistically diverse students that may lead to a paradox of appropriation (McAllister & Irvine, 2002) within which one's own experience is conflated with others, thereby erasing distinctions between the experiences of the self and others. The literature reviewed suggests that empathy might not necessarily be a reliable means of gaining information

about what is going on in other people's lives and that expressions of empathy should not be taken at face value.

The preliminary literature review illustrated the difficulties of researching the phenomenon of empathy. Moreover, the vast amount of research on empathy conducted mainly within the quantitative research paradigm and the lack of qualitative studies of empathy suggested that a different approach to the study of empathy might be appropriate.

Key Concepts

The initial review of the literature also served to identify a set of key concepts that formed a tentative conceptual framework. These key concepts, illustrated in Figure 3.0, informed and influenced the research design and data analysis of the current study:

The Language of
Emotion as Experience-
Near
(Wierzbicka, 1999; 2003)

Creative Understanding
(Kramsch, 1993;
Bakhtin, 2004)

Interculturality (Sercu,
2005; Stier, 2006)

Theory as Creative
Understanding
(Charmaz, 2006)

Languaculture
(Risager, 2005)

Them and Us
Positioning
(Kubota,1999; 2000)

The Third Space
(Bhabha, 1990;
Kramsch, 1993, 1997)
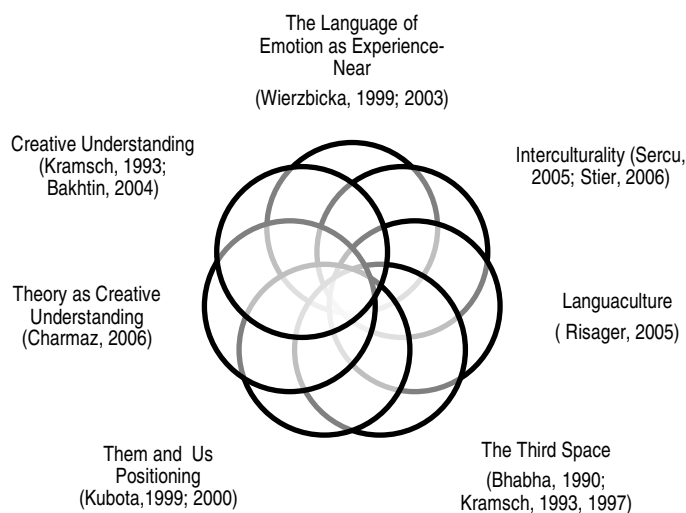
Figure 3.0. Key terms and concepts informing the research design and data analysis.

Theory.

Within the grounded theory and second language acquisition discourse the term *theory* is an unresolved notion resulting in competing versions located at various points on a continuum of perspectives (Charmaz, 2000). This continuum ranges from positivistic notions of theory in which theory is a statement of relationships between abstract concepts that aims to explain and predict and which emphasises generality and universality. For example, the conception of theory expounded by Glaser and Strauss (1967) views theory as verifiable, irrefutable fact. At the other end of this continuum is an interpretive perspective that emphasises theory as a process of an imaginative understanding (Charmaz, 2006) and as an exploration of social action (Schumann, 1975).

The aim of theory from an interpretive perspective is to develop an interpretation that need not be verifiable (Popper, 1972). In the current study, the term theory is understood in the interpretive sense and acknowledges the subjectivity of the act of theorising; theory development is a creative, abductive and critical process (Charmaz, 2006; Richardson & Kramer, 2006). According to Charmaz (2006, p. 186), abductive theory development is:

> A type of reasoning that begins by examining data after scrutiny of these data, entertains all possible explanations for the observed data, and then forms hypotheses to confirm or disconfirm until the researchers arrives at the most plausible interpretation of the observed data.

This conception of theory defers to the co-constructed nature of the reality referred to by a theory. The flexibility of theory building within a constructivist framework enables theory to be understood from a variety of perspectives or in relation to other fields of inquiry (Schumann, 1975).

Languaculture.

This study conceptualises language as a constrained, yet variable, social practice derived via culture, through which culture can be expressed. Culture is relational and plural; it is not useful therefore to describe one individual or group through a single cultural label (Agar, 1996) although the current study acknowledges that it is common practice to do so. The term *languaculture* foregrounds the dialectical nature and ever-present interaction between language and culture which occurs when people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact and communicate.

> Human culture always includes language, and human language cannot be thought without culture. Linguistic practice is always embedded in, and in interaction with, some cultural, meaningful context. (Risager, 2005, p. 190)

Risager (2005, p. 185 after Agar, 1996) advocates for the term "languaculture", or "culture in language" to tie the two separate words *language* and *culture* together in order to resolve the problem of language as either separable from culture (therefore culture-free) or inseparable (therefore culture-bound). Risager (2005) argues against the absolute inseparability of language and culture in intercultural understanding stating that, "there are dimensions of culture that are bound to a specific language (languaculture), and there are dimensions that are not, for instance musical traditions or architectural styles" (p. 190). For intercultural understanding and learning to occur, one must be aware of both the primacy of languaculture in creating individual meaning as well as its mutability.

Intercultural competence/interculturality.

Many descriptions of *interculturality* include a range of "content-competencies" (Stier, 2006, p. 6) which involve knowing about others in terms of home culture, history, language, values and norms. However, much of this cultural knowledge is derived from reductions or stereotypes, both positive and negative (Stier, 2006). Knowing others in terms of content competencies does not necessarily assist with communication; other competencies are more important. According to Sercu (2005), interculturality requires a wide range of characteristics and competencies including the following abilities: to see the self from outside; to see the world through others' eyes; to cope with uncertainty; as well as to have the understanding that an individual cannot be reduced to collective identities. Interculturality "involves being willing to negotiate meaning where they sense cross-cultural misunderstanding", and "an understanding that cultural modes differ and that they pervade our outlook on life and communication with others" (Sercu, 2005, p. 2).

Thus, culture is both an individual and a shared phenomenon that is expressed through ways of behaving, thinking, feeling, and speaking. These different ways of being have been labelled "cultural scripts" (Wierzbicka, 2003, p. xvi). When people who have different cultural scripts encounter each other, emotional and cognitive disturbances often occur (Otten, 2003). The field of cross-cultural communication has sought ways of mitigating these disturbances through interculturality.

The third space.

According to Bhabha (1990), the *third space* is a new space that can emerge though intercultural encounters. The notion of the third space was born out of a desire to prevent the engulfing and homogenisation of culture that may occur as the interface between two distinct languacultures grows. Within this space, ideological divisions and differences are revalued, and irreducible differences explored. Meaning can be renegotiated at the interstices where two languacultures meet, as Kramsch (1993) explains:

> Through dialogue and the search for each other's understanding, each person tries
> to see the world through the other's eyes without losing sight of him/herself. The
> goal is not a balance of opposites, or a moderate pluralism of opinions but a
> paradoxical, irreducible, confrontation that may change one in the process. (p.
> 231)

Although Kramsch (1993) conceptualises this space in terms of language learners, this notion lends itself readily to all intercultural encounters and it is used in the current study to understand English language teachers' encounters with English language learners. When people from

different languacultures communicate, meaning is negotiated through an interpretive process; each individual has varying degrees of awareness in relation to this intersection and the rules and codes of language and culture are renegotiated as boundaries are explored and traversed. Through this process there is disruption; "our horizons might be displaced as we attempt to understand the other" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 83). How English language teachers conceptualised and negotiated meaning at this intersection was significant to the current study.

Creative understanding.

Kramsch (1993) calls for an exploration of the boundaries *between* cultures rather than the creation of bridges *across* cultures. Kramsch (1993) warn against the conceptualisation of intercultural communication as a process of creating bridges or seeking mutual understanding. This way of viewing intercultural communication is a product of an underlying "conservative, ethnocentric pedagogy" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 228). The positioning of empathy as an essential element in intercultural communication has been criticised as post-colonial (see Min, 2001). A Bakhtinian perspective of intercultural communication rejects empathy as a post-colonial notion which assumes that it is necessary to become other(s) in order to understand other(s). Instead, the idea of *creative understanding* which is based on the Russian concept *vzhivanie* (living into) is preferred. Through *vzhivanie*, argues Bakhtin (2004) one retains one's "outsidedness" (p. 7); that is, one remains distinct from others, "the place of another is entered while maintaining our own place and outsidedness; the self is not abandoned nor its viewpoint" (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 7). It is important to consider the variety of ways in which empathy is not only defined, but also conceptualised and positioned, and the current study noted that empathy has sometimes been rejected as a means of *becoming* other.

Them and us positioning.

> Between the 'cultural zero', meaning the ignorance or negation of the cultural
> dimension of education, and the 'cultural all', meaning an overemphasis on culture
> as the determining factor of behavior and learning, the margin for manouvering is
> narrow. (Abdallah-Pretcielle, 2006, p. 476)

Research methodologists warn against the *us and them* positioning that can occur when teaching and researching in intercultural contexts (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997). Studies conducted in intercultural contexts may encourage the rejection of the uniqueness of each individual through *othering* and generalities (Min, 2001). Moreover, conceptualising and framing research in terms of self-and-other can serve unintentionally to reinforce, and support, unequal power relations that are inherent in a wide variety of research and educational contexts.

Othering in the fields of English language teaching, second language acquisition and applied linguistics may serve to legitimise and maintain the respective power relations of superior and inferior in these settings (Kubota, 2002, 2004). Kubota (2002) argues that institutionalised inequalities and injustices that influence English language teaching need to be explored. These include essentialist representations of different cultural and racial groups in course books and the widespread discrimination against multilingual English language teachers (Kubota, 2002).

The selection of participants who were bicultural and/or multilingual, who had studied an additional language, and/or who had lived, worked and studied overseas was a deliberate strategy in the current study. The study set out to explore empathy; a phenomenon that may ameliorate othering and other discriminatory practices in diverse educational settings. The preclusion of cultural stereotyping was the preferred position in the current study. However, at times participants expressed essentialist conceptions of English language learners. Interventions to preclude othering were not attempted as this was incongruent with the study methodology. Evidence of othering in the data were viewed critically and explored for convergences and divergences, but they were not challenged during the research interviews. It was not the intention of the current study to ameliorate othering through the research process. However, conducting research in a field where othering might be evident has served to provide further evidence of the process of othering as well as providing opportunities to learn more about such practices.

The language of empathy and emotion.

> Everyone knows what an emotion is, until asked to give a definition (Damasio,
> 1994, p. 145)

Researchers should not rely on terms that refer to emotional phenomenon such empathy as being universally understood (Wierzbicka, 1999a). The opacity of the term empathy was problematic in a study that sought to gather and interpret accounts of lived emotional experience. The way empathy was defined, expressed (verbally and non-verbally), experienced, and the attitudes that participants had towards empathy and other emotional constructs were not universal; they were bound up in their cultural scripts.

In social linguistics, words like empathy are "conceptual artefacts" (Wierzbicka, 2003, p. xviii). Words related to emotion do not translate readily across languacultures, and "using them as analytic tools inevitably involves imposing an Anglo perspective on other languages and cultures" (Wierzbicka, 2003, p. xviii). Wierzbicka (1999) argues that as a classificatory term that is firmly entrenched in scholarly and non-scholarly educated discourse that is far from everyday

experience, the term empathy should be avoided. Studies involving complex, culture specific "fluid phenomenon" (Wierzbicka, 1999, p. 3) such as empathy, should use inverted commas to acknowledge and problematise this fluidity.

There are significant issues with defining and conceptualising empathy, and this thesis does not assume that a shared everyday understanding of the term empathy exists even in Australian English. However, the term is widely recognised in monolingual English speaking contexts, if not widely understood or used, and it is in widespread use among social science researchers. The term was cautiously adopted as the central concept of the study as there is no other English word available to refer to the central research topic. In this thesis, empathy is placed in inverted commas upon first mention in each chapter in acknowledgment of these issues.

With these issues in mind, the current study also attempted to create an understanding of empathy that it might have some relevance to, and resonate with, both monolingual and bilingual educators in Australia and elsewhere who work in multilingual, multicultural settings. When gathering and analysing the data for the current study, lexical and conceptual universals were used where possible. The study incorporated universal semantic primes from Wierzbicka's (2003) Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) (see Table 3.1) to substitute words rooted in the academic Anglo-English discourse of the field of study during the collection, interpretation, and analysis of the data and in the writing up the findings of the current study. These universal primes are solid, experience-near, concepts such as *think*, *feel* and *do* that have been empirically identified as universal human concepts and which are expressed in basic words that exist in all languages (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2007, Wierzbicka, 1999, 2003).

Table 3.1. *English exponents of universal semantic primes.*

CATEGORIES	ENGLISH EXPONENTS OF UNIVERSAL SEMANTIC PRIMES
substantives	I, you, someone/person, people, something/thing, body
relational substantives	kind, part
determiners	this, the same, other
quantifiers	one, two, some, all, many/much
evaluators	good, bad
descriptors	big, small
mental/experiential predicates	think, know, want, feel, see, hear
speech	say, words, true
actions and events	do, happen, move
existence and possession	there is/exist, have
life and death	live, die

time	when/time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time, moment
space	where/place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside, touch (contact)
logical concepts	not, maybe, can, because, if
intensifier, augmentor	very, more
similarity	like/way

Note: Reprinted from "Semantic primes and cultural scripts in language learning and intercultural communication", by Goddard, C., & Wierzbicka, A. (2007), In Palmer and Sharifian (eds.), Applied cultural linguistics: Implications for second language learning and intercultural communication, p. 3. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007) note that the exponents listed may have multiple meanings and can differ from language to language, but state that as a semantic prime each word has one meaning. Goddard and Wierzbicka (2007) also propose that semantic primes need to be used in conjunction with universal grammatical patterns, or syntactic frames (see Table 3.2) to reductively paraphrase complex, culturally laden concepts and experiences.

Table 3.2. *Syntactic frames for four universal semantic primes.*

Do: X does something	**Happen**: something happens
X does something to someone	Something happens to someone
X does something to someone with something	Something happens somewhere
Say: X says something	**Feel**: X feels something
X says something to someone	X feels something because something happens
X says something about something	X feels something because something happens to someone
X says: " — — — "	

Note: Adapted from "Semantic primes and cultural scripts in language learning and intercultural communication", by Goddard, C., & Wierzbicka, A. (2007), In Palmer and Sharifian (eds.) Applied cultural linguistics: Implications for second language learning and intercultural communication, p. 4. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Conclusion

The preliminary literature review suggested that empathy was clearly a significant phenomenon in human social relations, yet the meaning of the term is neither stable nor certain. Definitions of empathy are highly subjective involving the psychological and epistemological assumptions of quantitative research methods. Moreover, the distinction between cognitive and affective conceptions of empathy has led to a call for research into different *types* of empathy. The vast majority of the research on empathy in psychology is underpinned by positivistic epistemological beliefs that conceptualises empathy as a measurable trait or disposition. These studies of empathy point to the value of empathy in human social interaction, yet the underlying ontological

assumptions of these studies have limited the possibility of understanding empathy in new and different ways.

The prevailing definitions and research methodologies explore empathy in much the same way that a physical object or a chemical reaction might be studied; that is, by isolating and breaking it down into its constituent parts. People are different from objects; therefore human behaviour and experience needs a methodology that accounts for this difference. Moreover, using quantitative approaches to measure and label interpersonal phenomenon is based on a scientific model that assumes empathy to have a concrete existence. Empathy is an "unobservable internal process" (Jahoda, 2005, p. 162) yet quantitative research approaches have created the impression that empathy has a concrete existence.

In culturally and linguistically diverse educational contexts, empathy in general and its association with teacher intercultural competence in particular, is clearly under-researched. The current study aimed to develop theory related to the phenomenon of empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia. The study was driven by a need to understand more about the little known emotional aspects of the processes of interculturality and empathy in educational settings as well as to explore the factors which influence English language teachers' experiences of empathy in their daily working lives. The conceptual framework outlined in this preliminary literature review was incorporated into the theoretical renderings of the data and served as analytic and practical tools from which to guide the collection and interpretation of the data.

The preliminary literature review uncovered a range of established theoretical perspectives on empathy that informed the data interpretation and enabled an exploration of a number of possible theoretical directions. The research approach and research questions of the current study presented in Chapter Four to follow were derived from the researcher's scrutiny and interpretation of the literature.

Chapter Four: The Research Approach and Methods

Introduction

This chapter renders visible the research design and data collection and analysis processes and procedures of the current study. Within this chapter, a method is conceived of as a "set of techniques or procedures designed to produce a certain kind of knowledge" (Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005) whereas a methodology is the "design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of method to desired outcomes" (Crotty, 1998, p.3 as cited in Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005, p. 735). The aims of the current study were met by utilising a qualitative research methodology underpinned by a conceptual framework that located the current study firmly within the qualitative paradigm. Only grounded theory strategies that fitted this framework were adopted. The approach to writing this methodology chapter was driven by two ideas. Firstly, researchers within the qualitative paradigm should aim to give as full an account of the research process as possible, and secondly, the writing up of the study should reflect the assumptions about knowledge and reality that underpin the study.

This section is divided into four main sections. The first section explains the research methodology and presents the central and guiding research questions. The second section discusses the research setting, introduces the research participants and discusses the ethical considerations. The final two sections of the chapter explicate the key constructivist grounded theory research processes and procedures used to gather and analyse the data.

The Research Methodology

Grounded theory is one of the most widely used qualitative research approaches, and is at the forefront of the "qualitative revolution" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. ix). However, the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the approach had not been fully explicated until quite recently (see Bunch, 2004; Byrant, 2003; Charmaz, 2000; 2006). The current study adopted a *constructivist grounded theory* approach to inform and guide the collection and analysis of data (Charmaz, 2000; 2002; 2004; 2006). This approach provided a set of principles and practices within a conceptual framework that was consistent with the qualitative research paradigm. Constructivist grounded theory is a reformulation of grounded theory methodology and is better aligned with the conceptions of knowledge and reality that underpin the qualitative paradigm than other versions of grounded theory (Byrant, 2003; Charmaz, 2006).

There are two main accounts of grounded theory common within the qualitative research paradigm. On one side, grounded theory is labelled *orthodox, traditional, objectivist or original* while on the other side the terms *constructivist or evolved* grounded theory have been used.

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Within these accounts, grounded theory method is underpinned by a range of ontological and epistemological assumptions that range from positivist to constructivist.

Objectivist grounded theory.

Objectivist grounded theory methodology was created by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss while conducting a study of the terminally ill (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Both Glaser and Strauss were members of the Social Interactionism Society that prescribed to Blumer's tenets of interpreting social processes (Byrant, 2003). All research is shaped by the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. The objectivist approach to grounded theory, while rooted in the interpretive perspective of symbolic interactionism, is informed by the positivist, objectivist view of reality that was prevalent at the time of its earliest application. Glaser and Strauss took divergent paths and Glaser's view is closest to traditional positivism while Strauss, along with his student Corbin, took a more post-positivist turn and incorporated elements of both positivist and constructivist worldviews. Charmaz (2000) criticises both conceptualisations of grounded theory for being "imbued with positivism, with its objectivist underpinnings" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 509).

Contradictions are apparent between the original grounded theory approach and that of the interpretive perspective from which it was derived (Byrant, 2003; Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Hall & Callery, 2001). An objectivist grounded theory approach does not aim to understand phenomena from the point of view of those who experience it. Glaser and Strauss (1967) contended that the aim of grounded theory method was to discover theory from reality by the use of various techniques such as passive, non-structured interviewing and the constant comparative method. Glaser (1978, 1992, 2003) argues that these specific techniques minimise researcher bias and enhance researcher objectivity and lead to theory that is shaped by reality as found. This objectivist version of grounded theory insists on an external, knowable reality, in direct contradiction to the interpretivist conception of meaning as a social product from which the original approach was derived. Byrant (2003, para. 7) labels Glaser's positioning of grounded theory methodology, "unreconstructed positivism".

Strauss and Corbin's (1990) conception of grounded theory methodology adopts similar positivistic ontological conceptions to that of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978; 2003) which presuppose that, a) there is an objective reality, b) data collection can be unbiased and, c) the use of a prescribed set of technical procedures enables theory verification. However, Strauss and Corbin (1990) do acknowledge the importance of giving voice to research participants and acknowledge that participants' views of reality may conflict with those of researchers. Strauss

and Corbin's approach can be described as post-positivist as it has elements of both a positivist and constructivist worldview (Byrant, 2003).

The early versions of grounded theory method are underpinned by a positivist view of scientific research. Within this paradigm, a knowable external reality is assumed and the neutrality of the researcher is taken for granted; no issues of representation exist. This situation has led to a reformulation of the grounded theory methodology. A constructivist approach to grounded theory approach locates the method of the current study firmly within the qualitative research paradigm in the 21st century.

Constructivist grounded theory.

The stated aim of constructivist grounded theory is to reformulate original grounded theory methodology to match the conceptions of knowledge and reality that are predominant within the qualitative paradigm (Charmaz, 2000; 2006). While applying many of the strategies of original grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory is underpinned by a view of knowledge as relative to a particular conceptual framework; i.e., there is no objective reality. Truths are relative, multiple and subject to redefinition (Charmaz, 2004). In a constructivist grounded theory approach, the data are *constructions* that are formed from reconstructions of lived experience.

The current study adhered to a set of guidelines, general principles and practices for employing a constructivist grounded theory as recommended by Charmaz (2006). Many of these practices and principles were derived from earlier versions of grounded theory and included theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, the constant comparative method, coding, categorising, and memoing. The research procedures and processes were iterative, cyclical and simultaneous, but for the purposes of clarity, they are presented in this section as sequential. However, later sections of this chapter attempt to represent the non-linear, iterative nature of the research processes and procedures of the current study.

Measures of rigor apply to all the various conceptions of grounded theory methodology regardless of the view of reality and knowledge that underpins each variation. This includes the way in which a constructivist grounded theory needs to be judged.

Judging a constructivist grounded theory.

The grounded theory discourse defines the term *theory* on a continuum of perspectives (Charmaz, 2006) which range from positivistic notions of theory to interpretivist perspectives that emphasise theory as interpretation rather than explanation. The current study viewed theorising as an activity that was shaped by the researcher and the research issue. Theory was developed

from the study of phenomenon in one particular situational context; people were studied in context and the theory is best understood in relation to this (Herzog, 2005). The theoretical propositions are rooted in the interpretivist tradition and were derived from the co-constructed data of shared knowledge, experience and relationships and reflect the research context, the participants and the researcher. The propositions were rendered through an interpretive, iterative, and reflexive process and they should be judged according to the extent to which they conform to the tradition within which they were created (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) strongly recommends utilising Glaser's (1978) criteria of *fit, work, relevance* and *modifiability* to consider how a theory is rendered by the data.

Fit.

The propositions that were developed from the current study can be judged according to the extent they are seen to *fit* the data. The propositions must explain the data rather than the data fitting into existing concepts. Any existing concepts had to earn their place in the analysis. Fit was enhanced in the current study by keeping close to the data through the use of the constant comparative method and by the use of in-vivo coding where possible. Fit was also enhanced by the researcher's experience and knowledge as an English language teacher. Excerpts from the data presented in this thesis serve to demonstrate how closely and well this criterion of fit was met by the current study. English language teachers and teachers who teach in other sectors of Australian education are well placed to consider the extent to which the findings of this study are faithful to the substantive area. They are also in a position to judge the extent to which the findings are transferable to other educational settings.

Work.

Theoretical propositions that emerge from the use of grounded theory methods should also *work*; that is, they must interpret the various patterns of behaviour in the area of inquiry and present an account for how the main concerns of the study were resolved. The findings outlined in this thesis were developed from an interpretation of the perspectives of a group of English language teachers who had both shared and individual understandings and experiences of empathy. The study findings are an interpretation and reflection of what was going on in the daily working lives of the study participants. The study identified and interpreted patterns of understanding and meaning in participant accounts of their experience of empathy.

Relevance.

This criterion refers to a theory that is of some significance to practitioners in the substantive area. The previous criteria of *fit* and *work* relate closely to this criterion. The constructivist

grounded theory approach supported the formation of tentative theoretical propositions that were close to the realities of the working lives of the study participants as described and interpreted. The findings also reflect the personal and professional contexts and issues that influenced the beliefs and practices of the participants.

Modifiability.

The fourth and final criterion refers to the degree of *modifiability* of the theoretical propositions. The extent to which the findings can incorporate changing realities and new data is an important criterion to evaluate the findings of the current study. The modifiability of the findings can be judged when further research is conducted and data from other settings are incorporated into the tentative theoretical propositions in order to strengthen or challenge the findings of the current study.

The research process.

The use of constructivist grounded theory methods led to a systematic yet flexible, non-linear research process. This process was characterised by the collection and analysis of data and the literature review occurring simultaneously rather than in stages. The use of the term *stages* does not accurately describe the processes and procedures of the current study as there were no stages in any linear sense as the term implies. The research processes and procedures used in the current study included theoretical sampling, the gathering of rich data through intensive interviewing, the coding and categorising of the data through open, selective and theoretical coding as well as theoretical writing.

The central research questions.

Appropriate research questions and a data collection method to "get beneath the surface of social and subjective life" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 13) were combined to achieve the aims of the current study which was to create theory abductively, creatively and critically (Charmaz, 2006; Richardson & Kramer, 2006). According to Charmaz (2006), 'rich' data is detailed and focused and reveals the views, feelings, intentions and actions of people. The gathering of rich data was not for replication purposes, but in order to achieve an insider's view of the phenomena under investigation (Charmaz, 2004). The research questions were designed to gain an understanding of how participants experienced empathy. The research questions and data collection methods enabled the researcher to learn what was important to participants by listening to their viewpoints and by analysing how they presented their viewpoints. The central and guiding research questions were created to achieve these aims, and a method of data collection was chosen that could be used as a "tool to enhance seeing" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 15).

Chapter Four: The Research Approach and Methods

A number of issues were taken into account in constructing the central research questions. One issue was the existence of multiple competing definitions of the term empathy in the literature. The term 'empathy' is "a broad, somewhat slippery concept" (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987, p.3) and remains a fluid construct in terms of definition and classification. The study aimed to create a definition of empathy that would be relevant to the study context and resonate with English language teachers and other educators. The meaning of the term empathy could not be taken for granted. The second issue was the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the qualitative research paradigm. In constructing the central research questions, the participants' definitions of social life were as important as the actual phenomenon under investigation (O' Donoghue, 2007). The central research questions were developed to address these issues and to achieve the study aims:

1. How do English as an additional language (EAL) teachers define/conceptualise empathy?

2. What do EAL teachers believe about the role of (teacher) empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia?

The central research questions also aimed to uncover the meanings that English language teachers attributed to examples of empathy and explore the factors, if any, which influenced teacher conceptions of empathy by posing the following questions:

3. What meanings do EAL teachers give to (teacher) empathy and examples of empathic practice in their daily working lives?

4. What factors, if any, influence EAL teachers' conceptions of empathy?

Further questions were developed from the central research questions to guide the data collection:

1. What are the EAL teachers' beliefs about the role that empathy plays in English language teaching?

> *a) Do these beliefs change in different settings and with different students?*

> *b) What factors, if any, are these beliefs shaped by?*

2. What examples of teacher empathy occur in EAL teachers' daily working lives?

    a) What are the factors which lead up to and precede an example of teacher empathy?

    b) What factors prevent/inhibit teacher empathy?

3. What phenomena are present when teacher empathy occurs?

    a) What do participants do to practice empathy?

These research questions evolved and underwent significant reformulation as the study progressed.

The Research Setting

The data for the current study were gathered via group and individual interviews with a group of English language teachers who were employed on an accredited English language program located within a public institution of higher education in Australia. The research setting for the study was practical, accessible and most importantly it provided data that represented teachers' lived experiences of the phenomenon of empathy in a culturally and linguistically diverse educational setting. An English language program was chosen because intercultural empathy was likely to be more evident in this particular setting than in other settings given the intercultural nature of English language teaching. This enabled access to a range of participants including key informants who were most likely to be able to provide data that would best answer the central research questions.

The English language program is located on the main grounds of the institution, which has a large intake of multilingual, international students. The English language program was established in 1972 to meet the needs of increasing numbers of international students who required English language instruction in order to gain entry to the higher education courses offered by the institution. Students who were enrolled on the English language program with the specific intention of gaining entry to a bridging, degree, diploma or certificate course were classified as *pathway* students. English language bridging courses provide undergraduate and postgraduate students direct entry to degree courses while diploma or certificate courses provide direct entry to either the first or second year of an undergraduate degree course.

    Student numbers and backgrounds.

When the first group interview was conducted in 2007, there had been a recent and significant change in the student cohort. The change was an unplanned, unpredicted and dramatic increase in the number of sponsored, pathway students from Saudi Arabia. These students were

government employees who had been sponsored to come to Australia to gain further qualifications. There was also a marked increase in the number of sponsored students from Libya, Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries at the same time. Within this period, a national downturn of international students had also occurred. This resulted in a less diverse cohort of students in terms of study purposes and languages spoken. When the data collection commenced in 2007, there were approximately 300 students enrolled on the English language program, 41% of students spoke Arabic as a first language, 20% spoke Mandarin and/or Cantonese, 11% spoke Korean and the remaining 27% spoke other languages including Thai, Vietnamese and Japanese.

The courses.

Like most English language programs in Australia, the program offered a range of English language courses at different levels broadly categorised as either *general* or *academic* English. The courses were intensive involving a minimum of twenty hours of language instruction per week. Each ten-week course was divided into two five-week periods. At orientation, students were tested and then registered for a course based on the results of the placement test. All pathway students who tested at an intermediate level of English or lower were required to complete the general English course up to an intermediate level before they were able to enrol on an academic English course.

General English.

General English refers broadly to the everyday English needed to live, travel or work in English speaking contexts. General English courses were available from an elementary level of English to an upper intermediate level at the time the data were gathered. The general English syllabus was skills-based and provided students with instruction in the traditional four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The course materials comprised of a combination of textbooks, teacher produced worksheets and reading texts taken from books, magazines and newspapers.

English for academic purposes.

The vast majority of students enrolled on the English language program were pathway students who were required to complete an academic English course. Academic English refers to the kind of English typically used in higher education settings in Australia including the English used in lectures, textbooks and for assignments. The academic English program consisted of three ten-week courses that ranged from an intermediate to an advanced level of English. Like the general English syllabus, the academic English syllabus was skills-based with class time divided more or less equally between the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The majority of

Mandarin and Cantonese speaking students on the program usually started with an academic English course because at that time visa regulations required international students from China and Hong Kong to achieve a band five or above in the International English Language Testing Scheme (IELTS) before they were granted a student visa. This resulted in mostly Mandarin and/or Cantonese speaking students being enrolled on the academic English courses. During the data collection period, the majority of students in the lower level general English classes were from the Middle East while the higher level academic English classes comprised mainly of students from China and Hong Kong.

The curriculum.

The curriculum of the English language courses changed according to trends within English language teaching, which were mainly course book-led. Course materials were comprised of a combination of published course books and other materials as well as teacher produced materials. The curriculum was underpinned by a communicative/task based approach. *Communicative* language teaching emerged in the 1960s to become the favoured method of English language teachers in Britain, Australia, North America and Canada. Not surprisingly, it is the main approach to which trainee teachers on English language teacher training courses in Australia, North America, Canada and Britain are exposed. More of an approach than a method, it is influenced by the socio-cultural turn in the field of second language acquisition (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995) and favours certain pedagogical and methodological principles over others. The basic principles underling the approach is that learners should be able to use language to engage in social contexts. Communicative language teaching favours learner-centred lessons over teacher-centred lessons, communicative tasks over the rote learning of rules, and inductive teaching and learning strategies over deductive ones. The communicative approach is characterised by a humanistic, methodologically eclectic *approach* as opposed to a *method* which has a single prescribed set of procedures and processes. Meaning making is favoured over grammatical accuracy and 'knowing about' language: An approach which results in lessons that consist of a series of communicative tasks or activities designed to assist learners to practice and acquire language. It is common practice for English language teachers in Australia and other contexts in which communicative language teaching is the favoured approach to provide opportunities for learners to interact in a variety of ways during a lesson. For example, students might be grouped or paired according to gender, first language or level of proficiency in order to practice the target language or skills.

Assessment and pathways.

At the time the data were collected, many of the students on the program were considered to be high stakes students; that is, many were government sponsored pathway students who needed to gain entry to a bridging, degree, diploma or certificate course at the institution. Students enrolled on academic English courses on the English language program were assessed on a regular basis by a combination of in-class tasks and end-of-course tests in order to establish if they had achieved the required level of English to gain entry to their next course. Tests on the program were benchmarked against the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

The participants.

A total of ten English language teachers participated in the current study, all of whom were employed to teach on the same English language program. The various accreditation bodies required that all English language teachers employed on accredited English language programs in Australia must have the minimum requirements of a recognised degree or equivalent and a recognised English language teaching qualification with a practicum component. Teachers also needed to have a minimum of two years teaching experience. All but one of the participants held a degree plus an English language teaching qualification. All of the study participants had a minimum of two years of experience teaching English as an additional language and most had many more years of teaching experience.

Selecting and grouping participants.

Participants were selected from a single setting in order to avoid contextual issues from a range of different settings impeding the data collection and analysis. The recruitment of participants from a single setting also enhanced the rigour of the data collection and analysis because the researcher's knowledge of the setting and participants was useful in the selection and grouping of participants. The participants were selected in groups of three or four teachers who knew each other and who were comfortable being interviewed together. The groupings were also theoretically driven, but the groupings were not intended to be viewed as definitive classifications of the participants for the specific purpose of comparison. Each group differed loosely from the other in terms of intercultural experience including exposure to languages other than English, length of experience as an English language teacher in Australia and overseas as well as formative experiences that were characterised by intercultural encounters. A description of the significant features of each group of participants follows.

Group A consisted of three female English language teachers, Mikki, Nadia and Poppy. All three of these participants were born overseas and this group were the most *multilingual and*

multicultural English language teachers when compared to other teachers on the program. All three participants were raised in bilingual/multilingual households/contexts and all three used one or more languages in addition to English with varying degrees of proficiency. Poppy was born and grew up in Sri Lanka and Nadia was born and grew up in Singapore. Both Nadia and Poppy moved to Australia in early adulthood as international students. Mikki had moved to Australia from Japan as a young child and had been raised in Australia, but she had returned to Japan to live, work and study in early adulthood. Nadia had six years of full-time experience as an English language teacher in Australia, Mikki had three years of part-time experience including six months in Japan, and Poppy had six years of experience as a part-time English language teacher in Australia. Nadia and Mikki were enrolled on master's degrees. All three teachers were employed as sessional teachers. Mikki and Poppy were employed part-time and Nadia was employed full-time.

Group B consisted of three female (Leena, Jane and Silvia) teachers and one male English language teacher (Niren). These participants were *the most experienced* English language teachers employed on the program in terms of length of teaching experience. Niren had been teaching English for 30 years. Leena had been a teacher for 14 years. Both Silvia and Jane had been teaching for 15 years. All four participants were born in contexts where English was the main language of communication and had grown up in English monolingual households. Leena Jane and Niren had experience teaching English in Japan. Leena had also taught English in Vietnam. Silvia had taught in Papua New Guinea and Hungary. Niren had also taught English in Kuwait and had grown up in Tanzania. Both Jane and Niren held master's degrees in the field of applied linguistics and Silvia held a master's degree in the field of education. Niren and Jane were employed on permanent contracts while Leena and Silvia were employed as sessional teachers. Niren was the only teacher in this group who worked full-time.

Group C consisted of one female (Katie) and two male teachers (Harris and Anthony). The participants in this group were the most *inexperienced* English language teachers when compared to other teachers on the program. Katie and Anthony had two years teaching experience while Harris had four years of experience. None of these participants had overseas teaching experience. All three participants were born in Australia. Harris had studied Japanese as an additional language and Anthony had spent some time studying Spanish. Katie had never studied an additional language. All three teachers were employed on sessional contracts, and all three teachers worked full-time.

My relationship with the participants.

I was employed as an English language teacher on an ongoing contract on the same English language program as all the participants, and I had co-taught with many of them. Some of the teachers had worked on the program for many more years than I had, while others were relatively new to the program in comparison to me. I have shared some of the highs and lows of daily life and work with these teachers and I have knowledge of their personal and professional lives as they do of mine. In keeping with the research approach, it was important for me to share my own thoughts and beliefs about the topics under discussion during the research process in order to avoid adopting the position of an outsider.

There were competing identities and power dynamics at play in my interactions with participants. My own competing identities as a researcher, a teacher, and as a colleague sometimes impinged on the data collection process. For example, I became aware that during the individual interviews the closer I attended to the discussion as a teacher and a colleague, the less focused I became on the theoretical potential of what participants were saying. I attempted to accommodate each participant during the interview by mirroring the words that they used and the ideas that they expressed. At the same time, there were theoretical directions that I wanted to pursue as well as ideas that needed clarification or further explanation. Sometimes, I failed to notice the potential theoretical significance of what the participant had said as I was too involved in the actual conversation. When I was transcribing the interviews, I noticed that at times I had not probed further or sought clarification, and had missed opportunities to gain a better and deeper understanding of what the participant had meant. I was also aware that sometimes when I did seek clarification, I had a tendency to go off on theoretical tangents that may have been irrelevant or confusing to participants.

Ethical considerations.

In a study of a single setting, confidentiality cannot be fully guaranteed; however, the following measures helped to protect the confidentiality rights of the study participants. Approaches to potential participants were discreet, participants' real names were not used and information pertaining to the institution was either changed or omitted to limit opportunities for readers who may be familiar with the setting from identifying individual participants. For example, the specific geographic location of the institution was not made visible. The institution was not named and efforts were made to ensure that the institution was indistinguishable from other similar institutions in Australia. The data were gathered as discreetly as possible and no general call outs for participants occurred.

The data collection did not commence until approval was granted by the ethics committee of the University of Western Australia. Verbal consent was obtained from participants initially, then each participant was provided with a copy of the information sheet and letter of consent (see Appendix One) to read and sign before data collection commenced. It was made clear that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time; this was reiterated during the various stages of the study.

In addition to the issues of confidentiality and consent, other concerns relating to power, equality and the value of the research to participants needed to be addressed in this study. These concerns were addressed through the methodology and through the positioning of the researcher as a co-creator of data; no position of privilege was assumed by the researcher and this was reflected in the way in which the data collection and analysis were carried out. Relational ethical considerations were important. The interview process was negotiated and participants were deferred to when deciding the time, place and length of the interviews. Participants' perspectives were respected; judgments and disbelief were suspended during the interviews and the researcher was respectful and appreciative of the trust, time and contributions of participants.

Data Collection Methods

In a constructivist grounded theory approach, methods are tools that offer "reasons and routes", but not "recipes" (Charmaz, 2004). Sufficient data needed to be gathered using a method that would achieve the aims of the current study. Interviews are widely used in research in social sciences by both quantitative and qualitative researchers to understand participants' perspectives, and are broadly considered to be an excellent way of creating rich descriptive data, particularly in relation to opaque phenomena such as empathy that do not lend themselves to direct observation (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1990; Punch, 1998).

As a research methodology, qualitative interviewing was a complex undertaking. There was a lot to consider in choosing the interview as the main data collection method and there was a lot to learn about the qualitative research interview process. I tried to compensate for my lack of experience as a research interviewer by paying close attention to, and reflecting on, the key principles and issues of in-depth interviewing when I was interviewing participants as well as when I was taking field notes or transcribing and reviewing the data.

Types of inteviews.

Within the research methodology literature, the interview ranges from the *structured* interview; a systematic approach to interviewing characterised by the standardisation of certain basic

features, to the *unstructured* or *in-depth* interview which is neither systematic nor standardised. The structured or standardised interview is aligned with positivist ontological assumptions (Schaeffer & Maynard, 2003) whereas the unstructured or in-depth interview is aligned much more closely with the qualitative paradigm.

The in-depth or unstructured interview creates an opportunity for open-ended detailed responses (Patton, 2002) and is typically defined as a type of *conversation*. It is a professional conversation (Kvale, 1996), an unfolding story that is conversational in style (Charmaz, 2000), a special kind of conversation (Warren, Barnes-Brus, Burgess, Wiebold-Lippisch, Hackney, Harkness et al., 2003), a speech event guided by conversational turn-taking (Mishler, 1991), a free-flowing conversation (Burns, 2000), and a conversation with a purpose (Burgess, 1998).

Techniques and procedures from many types of interviews were used during the data collection process of the current study including structured, semi-structured and unstructured group and individual interviews. While most of the individual interviews were unstructured or semi-structured, structured interview procedures were employed in the background interviews and during the group and individual interviews when specific information was needed. Before each group interview a structured background interview took place with each participant. This was then followed by a semi-structured group interview and in-depth individual interviews with each participant. Each individual interview started with a discussion and clarification of ideas that had emerged from the group interview. Further in-depth interviews were then conducted with participants as required.

Issues.

> Interviewing is rather like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of
> people do it, and yet behind each closed door there is a world of secrets. (Oakley
> 1981, p. 41).

A good researcher needs to be rigorous, honest, fair and demonstrate integrity (Kvale, 1996) and to be aware of potential problems (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956). Using any kind of interview to gather data is not without methodological, ideological and ethical concerns. Methodological concerns led to the qualitative interview becoming a common-place feature of everyday life stem from the interview being viewed as simple and self-evident (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). The widespread use of interviews within the so-called 'the interview society' (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997) has also resulted in an undeserved privileging of data gathered from interviews in social science research (Atkinson, 2005; Hammersley, 2003; Silverman, 1998).

Methodological concerns have also been raised about the positivist assumptions that underpin the use of the interview by qualitative researchers in the social sciences (Fontana & Frey 2000; Oakley, 1998; Reinharz & Chase, 2001). Concerns have also been raised about the lack of understanding of the interview as a speech event (Silverman, 2004; Zussman, 2004) as well as the failure of many researchers to consider the location of the interview in the data interpretation (Herzog, 2005; Zussman, 2004). There are also issues related to the type of knowledge that the interview as a data collection method generates. Fontana and Frey (2000) argue that the institutionalisation of the norms of interviewing has led to the false belief that the interview produces true and accurate pictures of participants' selves and lives. Feminists argue that the interview is a masculine methodology that evolved from a positivist, paternalistic ideology and is therefore unsuited to the qualitative paradigm (Oakley, 1981; Reinharz & Chase, 2001). Others argue that the interview can perpetuate social inequalities and is in itself a projection of the social inequalities that exist within society (Briggs, 2001).

The status attributed to the interview data in the current study needed to be consistent with the ontological and epistemological orientation of the study. Adopting an approach to interviews that was underpinned by a sensitivity and awareness of the concerns about the interview as a research methodology was essential to the qualitative approach of the study. Unstructured interview techniques and procedures underpinned by a feminist-constructivist perspective (see Oakley, 1981, 1998; Reinharz & Chase, 2001) guided the interview processes and procedures in this study. Where possible, the aim was to allow for a mutually negotiated control of the interview process as well as to generate a range of open-ended responses.

Group interviews.

The group interview or focused interview emerged out of sociological research into radio audiences in the 1940s by Merton and Lazarfeld, and it has informed the qualitative research interview ever since. This type of interview focuses on the subjective experiences of participants, and was originally used to test hypotheses (Merton et al., 1956). The group interview can be approached from wide ranging and oppositional perspectives. Feminist researchers choose group interviews as a collectivist approach to data collection and as a means to advance social justice for women. Group interviews allowed data to be collectively constructed and enabled access a range of viewpoints in one interview. In the current study, each new data collection period started with a group interview guided by the question:

What is empathy?

I knew that the questions I asked and the comments I made during the interviews would impact on what participants said and what they did not say. For this reason, I followed a structured interview approach during the initial group interview. I provided the first group with a list of questions and asked them to try to answer all the questions in any order that they wished. I sat close to the group, took notes and listened. The following interview extract illustrates one of the strategies I employed to prevent my biases from unduly influencing the data while still enabling rich data to be gathered. As group A discussed the meaning of the term empathy, I noticed that Nadia had repeated the word *understanding* several times, so I asked an unscheduled question to explore the relationship between empathy and understanding. I wanted to explore the association between the concept of intercultural understanding and participants' meanings of empathy, particularly in the light of the conceptual divide between cognitive and affective empathy that I had uncovered during the preliminary literature review. I minimised the impact of my own preconceptions on this unscheduled question by basing the question directly on what Nadia had said. I also achieved this by mirroring her words and by keeping the question as short as possible.

> Nadia: Understanding that when a student doesn't speak there could be many reasons, cultural. Maybe they just had a bad day or something has happened in their lives. So, there is a lot of understanding towards that person.

> Researcher: *Could understanding also mean empathy?* (Unscheduled question)

> Poppy: One aspect of it would be understanding, isn't it?

> Mikki: I don't think that you can have empathy without understanding, but at the same time just understanding isn't empathy either. You know empathy goes one step further than that I think. Sort of, your emotions are involved whereas understanding mentally, you are involved, so you try and understand. I guess you can emotionally understand as well, but you rationalise. I could understand and still be angry and upset, but empathy goes beyond that and says okay, I see it and I am going to treat them kindly rather than in any other way. For me empathy goes beyond understanding.

> Poppy: Empathy has an aspect of emotion in it as well. We can understand clinically, but not get involved whereas with empathy there is a sense of feeling.

> Mikki: Yes, that is what I think as well, absolutely.

Based on the participants' responses to my unscheduled question, I had probed successfully and had established that participants' conceptions of empathy included emotion.

Unstructured interviewing techniques.

The unstructured qualitative interview is one of most popular ways to gather data in studies that seek to understand the lives of people (Warren, 2004). It is a way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of phenomena and constructions of reality (Punch, 1998). I needed to develop interviewing skills, techniques and draw on qualities that allowed quality data to be gathered (Punch, 1998). I had to learn to compose, ask and frame questions in a way that enabled the participants to sense the meaning. These questioning techniques included mirroring, encouraging, contrasting and probing (Burns, 2000). As a researcher, I treated participants' ideas with genuine interest, acceptance and respect (Kvale, 1996) and I guided the interview further by asking conceptual questions without stopping the flow of the interview (Kvale, 1996) as illustrated in the previous extract from group interview A.

In addition to developing a set of interviewing skills and techniques, I needed to form an understand of participants' worlds (Dilley, 2004) as well as to acknowledge that words were only part of the message (Burns, 2000). I attended to what was said, but I was also aware of the feeling behind what was being said. I was aware of the non-verbal clues such as tone of voice, eye contact and body language and reflected on these in the data analysis (Burns, 2000). I spent time reflecting on my interviewing skills and making changes to my technique, particularly in the early stages of data collection and during transcription as illustrated:

> **26/10/2007:** Before the individual interview with Nadia, I reviewed the transcription of the group A interview and put together a schedule for the first individual interview. I wanted to confirm the definition of empathy that was discussed and to see if there was anything else that Nadia wanted to add. I noticed that she had not said as much as the other participants and seemed less confident of her ideas than Mikki and Poppy. The interview with Nadia took place in my office and I adhered quite closely to the schedule asking most of the questions that I had wanted to. My interviewing technique still seems to be lacking. I was not sensitive enough to what was being said nor did I probe her responses deeply enough. During the interview I had a tendency to respond a lot to what Nadia says even to the point where I think I am interfering with her response too much. I think I am leading the discussion too much.

As an interviewer, I needed to create an atmosphere in which participants were able to respond comfortably, accurately and honestly to my questions (Patton, 2002). The closeness of the relationships that I had with participants resulted in many of the individual interviews having similar characteristics to personal in-depth discussions or conversations. On the whole, participants expressed their viewpoints and recounted their experiences freely, sincerely and in good will. They were not reluctant to contradict or challenge some of the questions that I asked or comments that I made. Participants were not reluctant to add or seek clarification when I asked questions that were unclear, or to challenge my questioning technique as illustrated in the following interview extract:

> Researcher: So, you were talking before about empathy, could you go on to further define this construct intercultural empathy? Could you add anything, would you add anything more to an understanding of empathy, if we are looking at what intercultural empathy is?

> Leena: Or cross cultural empathy. Could you ask that again?

> Silvia : In English, in formal standard British English. (with emphasis and laughing)

> Researcher: I don't speak formal standard British English. (all laughing)

My relationship with the participants and my workplace knowledge as well as my own preconceptions and assumptions influenced the research processes and procedures. Although it is not possible to show exactly how this influence manifested in the study, the research processes and procedures outlined in this thesis provide some indication of this. A sincere attempt was made to be aware of and reduce the influence of my own biases and assumptions where possible, particularly during the data collection and analysis. However, it is not possible to know the exact detail and extent to which my assumptions and relationships with participants had an effect on the research process as there were always elements of these of which I remained unaware.

Reflective memoing.

Memos were used to record and reflect on the research process during the study. These notes were both typed and hand-written. Memoing supported reflexivity by providing opportunities to think and reflect on important aspects of the data collection and analysis. This included being aware of and responding to issues in the research setting and research interviews that may have

influenced the quality of the data (Herzog, 2005), such as participants' relationship to the research setting, and to my position as a researcher and colleague.

The memo dated 11/10/07 illustrates the concerns that I had about the quality of the interview data. Nadia was a sessional teacher who had been working full-time on the program for about nine years at the time the interview was conducted. I had known Nadia as a colleague for the previous six or seven years and we had co-taught classes many times. I considered Nadia to be quite introverted; she rarely spoke at staff meetings or participated in professional discussions about classes or students. Nadia was often hesitant, particularly when asked to give an opinion on a topic, so I did have some concerns about inviting her to participate in the study, but as one of a limited number of teachers who were considered to fit into the groupings required for the study, she was invited and had agreed to participate. In the group interview, Nadia spoke for less time than the other participants and as illustrated, prior to the individual interview, I had been quite concerned that the data gathered would not be of sufficient depth or quantity to be useful:

> **11/10/07:** Nadia was really quiet in the group interview. I kept trying to prompt her,
> but kept getting really short answers. When I was transcribing the data, I thought
> that this was partly my poor interviewing technique; I will aim for more open-ended
> questions in the individual interview.

While it was anticipated that the general setting and the specific location of the study would influence the data (Herzog, 2005; Zussman, 2004), it was not possible to state the extent of the influence. Both the micro-location such as the choice of room in which the interview was conducted and the macro elements of location such as the English language program positioning within the institution influenced the data collection and analysis. The choice of the interview location was not only about convenience and comfort, but it also indicated the attitude of participants to the research setting, the research process and the researcher. The memo dated 21/06/08 illustrates how issues arose in relation to this and how they were considered and managed.

> **21/06/08:** Niren did not appear to be too keen on participating in the study, but did
> agree. When organising the location of the group interview Niren was instrumental
> in deciding on the day, time and location of the interview which took place on a
> Friday afternoon on a balcony area of a staff room. This second group interview
> lacked some of the depth and reflexivity of the first group interview and the quality
> of the recording was poor due to the background noise. I am worried about the
> individual interview with Niren – will the data be sincere? I think Niren is ambivalent

about participating and I feel that he is trying to take control of the process, but not sure why. Is it a gender issue?

Niren was a long term, full-time, experienced male teacher who was a permanent employee of the institution. Niren had held a senior position on the English language program and had been replaced when a new senior manager had taken over about ten years earlier. Niren had applied for a promotion about five years prior to the interview taking place, but had been turned down. From comments that Niren made to me and other colleagues, I considered him to be disenfranchised and disillusioned with the institution. This manifested in not only what he said about the management of the institution, but also in how he approached his teaching duties. For as long as I can recall, Niren did not spend time preparing his courses. He would arrive at work a short time before his classes commenced and left work immediately after classes had finished. There were other contextual factors and personal matters may also have had an impact on Niren's attitude to his workplace.

I had invited Niren to participate in the study because he was one of the most experienced teachers on the program and I believed that he would have a lot to say about intercultural encounters with students, but for the reasons stated above I was a little concerned that he would not take the study seriously. As illustrated in the memo above, Niren was instrumental in the choice of the location of the group interview which I thought was unsuitable. It was noisy, we were interrupted by other teaching staff, and the recording was not as clear as other group interviews that had been conducted in a closed office. Niren also had a lot of control over a number of important conditions of his individual interview including the choice of venue for the interview. The memo dated 20/09/08 is an account of some of the concerns that I noted when listening to Niren's individual interview:

> **20/09/08:** I feel that there are issues of power at play in my interactions with Niren. The location of the individual interview was decided on against my better judgement. Niren shares an office with Poppy and I didn't think that there would be sufficient privacy. All of the previous interview locations had been decided on by mutual agreement, and all but one had taken place in my office with the door closed and a notice informing people not to enter was placed on the door. This interview took place with the door of the office open, and a phone rang a few times during the interview. At certain points during the interview, Niren expressed disdain for research and academic study and objected to the use of the term empathy. Initially, this individual interview was difficult and I felt anxious about the sincerity of

the data. At times, the questions were answered with very short answers and Niren appeared to be disinterested. His attitude influenced how I asked the questions and which questions I asked. However, some parts of the interview went well and he responded better to some questions than others. I worked hard to reduce the tension by deferring to Niren. I think the direction of this interview was determined to a large extent by Niren. It didn't feel like a co-construction, I didn't ask all the questions that I wanted to. I am a bit concerned about the sincerity of these data.

Despite my concerns, the quality of the data gathered from the individual interviews with both Nadia and Niren were actually much better than I had expected. I found myself quite astonished when Nadia spoke in great detail and provided me with lots of information about her thoughts and feelings in relation to her teaching. Upon reviewing and transcribing Niren's individual interview, I found a lot of data that I considered sufficient in depth and detail.

The interview schedules and questions.

The research methodology called for theoretical pacing to encourage theory development. In a grounded theory approach, researchers are encouraged to take time to think and move between data collection and analysis. In the current study, theoretical pacing helped to prevent data overwhelm and ensured that the data had been sufficiently analysed before additional data were gathered. The data were gathered through group and individual interviews with participants over a period of 48 months; there were four main data collection periods as illustrated in Figure 4.1:

Group Interview A 25/05/07	Mikki 17/09/07	Nadia 23/10/07	Poppy 19/11/07	
Group Interview B 06/06/08	Leena 20/06/08	Silvia 03/07/08	Niren 11/09/08	Leena 29/10/2008
Group Interview C 17/06/09	Katie 18/05/09	Anthony 22/06/09	Harris A 23/06/09	Harris B 25/06/09
Individual interviews 2011	Poppy GA 15/06/2011	Katie GC 15/07/2011	Harris GC 05/08/2011	Jane GB 02/08/02011
Group Interview B 2011	Silvia & Leena 29/04/2011			

Figure 4.1. Interview timeline.

The duration of the interviews varied considerably ranging from thirty-five minutes to two hours and twenty two minutes. Most interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. In total, approximately twenty-three hours of interview data were recorded. Each new set of data was gathered when the data from the previous interview had been reviewed and coded. By late 2010, four core categories had emerged and four tentative theoretical propositions had been drafted. A further period of data collection occurred in 2011 as a major new theme emerged.

Recording questions.

An aide memoir or interview schedule (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1990) was used to prompt the interview questions as well to recall conceptualisations and insights from previous interviews and data analysis. Interview questions were formed from theoretical concerns, and questions were often changed for each subsequent interview. Individual interview schedules were based on the preceding group or individual interview, sometimes using transcript extracts, data analysis and the emergent themes to prompt discussion. The same schedule was used for each of the group interviews although each group interview also allowed for, and contained, unscheduled questions and comments. Examples of group and individual interview schedules can be viewed in Appendices Four and Five of this thesis.

Recording interviews.

Each interview was recorded with a digital voice recorder in order to keep a full and accurate record. Researcher accounts of the interviews in the form of field notes were kept, and pre and post reflections on any relevant, unspoken aspects of the interview process were also noted. Poppy's first in-depth interview was not recorded because I had unintentionally switched off the recorder. This resulted in the loss of a significant amount of valuable data. Although the field notes that had been taken during this interview were analysed and Poppy agreed to be interviewed again so that I could clarify and verify the remaining data, valuable data were still lost.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis started in the early stages of data collection and the resulting analysis guided further data collection. The data analysis was guided by the methods first described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which were then developed further by Glaser (2002, 2003) and more recently by (Charmaz, 2006). This iterative, non-linear process included the key coding strategies of open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding and concurrent theoretical writing. This section aims to illustrate these key data analysis processes and procedures of the study. It starts with a summary and introduction to the key data analysis

methods, it then illustrates and explains the data analysis processes and procedures using screen captures and models generated from NVivo.

Coding.

The key method used to interpret the data started with the open coding of the raw data. Open coding involved applying labels to the data in order to sort the different data from one another. The data gathered via the initial group interview were analysed and labelled word by word, line by line, sentence by sentence or phrase by phrase (see Glaser, 1978) to explore participants definitions of empathy. The initial data analysis found considerable convergences between participants' conceptions of empathy. The process of open coding was quick and intuitive, and the labels applied were mainly descriptive. Open coding served to categorise and organise the data for further comparison. These coded data were then compared to explore their theoretical potential.

As the comparison of the coded data commenced, the coding became more selective and analytical. At this point dynamic, conceptual labels were applied to the data. Where possible, gerunds were used to create labels to reflect the conceptualisation of the data as actions (Charmaz, 2006). These labels captured the meanings and actions of participants in their own words. Memos in the form of hand-written notes or word-processed documents were also created during this process to record critical and theoretical rendering of the coded data as well as to enable the researcher to reflect on the research process. During this process, further data were gathered and the literature was consulted to refine ideas by seeking convergences and inconsistencies. Coded data were grouped, categorised, compared and abstracted further to develop the properties (sub-categories) of these codes. Through this iterative process, key themes were developed.

Coding reports of the emergent themes were generated in NVivo and the results were printed out. From these documents, the coded data were then further analysed. The language of the coded data was explored in an attempt to uncover and challenge the hidden assumptions in participant accounts of their beliefs and experiences of empathy (Charmaz, 2006). The language that participants used reflected the views and values that they held. Tentative core categories were developed through these processes and procedures. Additional data were then gathered and coded selectively for the emerging core categories only. The core categories as they were prior to the writing up of the initial findings are outlined next:

1. RELATING (shared experiences)
2. OBSERVING (looking for signs)
3. EMPATHISING (thinking, feeling and doing)
   a. THINKING (beliefs)
   b. FEELING (emotional responses)
   c. DOING (professional practice)

Questioning the data.

Connections between the data coded under these core categories were then identified. Tentative propositions were then developed through the comparison of the data coded under these core categories and the related literature by asking questions such as:

What theoretical category do these data indicate?

What are the properties of this coded data?

What does the literature say about this interpretation?

What does the use of language tell me about the participants?

When a core category was identified as having theoretically potential, the writing up of theoretical propositions commenced.

Theoretical writing.

The writing process was as much a part of the theory construction as the data analysis and was viewed as a "method of knowing" (Richardson, 2003, p. 379). At this stage, the literature was used when needed to further explore and develop the core categories and propositions conceptually and theoretically. Thus, the writing process involved concurrent data analysis, memo writing, reviewing the literature, and the selection of data extracts that would best exemplify the theoretical rendering of the data. The writing process did not move forward in a linear way; it was iterative and involved the continual comparison and review of core categories and their properties. This writing process was a process characterised by re-interpretation and re-construction. As the data were gathered and coded, theoretical writing in the form of memos also occurred.

Theoretical memoing.

As literature pertaining to the emerging concepts was accessed, memos were created to compare theoretical ideas from the literature with those that were emerging from the data

analysis. These memos were preliminary analytic notes that arose about the data. Memos were written before, during and/or after an interview or coding session or while reviewing the literature and data concurrently. The notes ranged from a few words scribbled down during an interview to a page or so that was written up during or after the coding of the data. An example of a theoretical memo is illustrated below:

> **1/02/09**: Kramsch 1993 p 228 calls for an understanding of the boundaries between cultures rather than building bridges. I know that I put this in the proposal, but my understanding was different and I used it to suggest that in communicating with any other person we do so on the third space, neither from my own or the others viewpoint, but a third viewpoint, this comes from Kramsch (p. 208) who suggest ways to get out of 'the cycle of perceptions and misperceptions' (p. 209). She suggests we should take on both an insiders and an outsider's view (p. 210). Is this the third space? Is it possible to do this?Taking up the perspective of another was in Roger's 1957 definition of empathy. I think this is related to what Kramsch is saying. Kramsch says that it is commonly understood that we get to know ourselves and others through the eyes of others. But what do we really know about students? How do we traverse a third space if there are unequal power relations?

Theoretical sensitivity.

All researchers bring preconceptions and assumptions to the research process that may influence the research processes and procedures, particularly the data analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It was important that that I examined and noted my preconceptions and assumptions. In the current study this was achieved by an approach to the data informed by Glaser's notion of theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1978). During the data analysis process, I continually examined my thoughts and beliefs about empathy and other aspects of the research topic and setting. I tried to keep an open mind about the topic and I was not attached to particular conceptions of empathy. I actively avoided conscious theorising about empathy until most of the data had been coded and the propositions were being drafted.

Theoretical sensitivity encourages theoretical agnosticism through examination, speculation, reconceptualisation and reflexivity. From the onset of the study, I acknowledged that I was particularly interested in the role of emotion in teaching and learning. I remained cognisant of this predilection during data collection and analysis. I took time to examine and note my assumptions and preferences in relation to empathy before the data collection commenced. In doing this, I acknowledged my bias towards emotion during the research interviews, particularly when

gathering data on participants' definitions of empathy. In the initial interviews, it was crucial that the participants' perspectives on empathy were foregrounded and a space was created to support participants to freely express and explore their beliefs about empathy. I was careful not to refer to the cognitive and affective divide during the group interviews, and I did not intervene in the group discussions unless it was to mirror, seek clarification or to probe further.

Storing and coding the data.

NVivo is a code and retrieve computer software program compatible with grounded theory processes and procedures (Punch, 2005). NVivo was used to manage, store and code the data for the current study. In the initial stages of the study, NVivo was used to store and open code the raw data in order to facilitate data analysis. As the data were analysed, they were organised according to concepts, categories and properties of the developing core categories. All data collected through the group and individual interviews were recorded and/or transcribed (see Appendices Two and Three for transcript extracts) and stored in the data base to contribute to the overall consistency and transparency of the study. The use of NVivo ensured that an audit trail was created during the study. NVivo provided a very effective way to view the data, and create codes and categories. However, a major shortcoming of NVivo was that once categories had been changed and/or deleted, or data were recoded, there was no record of the previous coding or categories. In order to compensate for this, at critical points during the study, I saved a different version of the NVivo file in order to retain previous codes and categories as well as creating screenshots of the data at various points during the study. In this way, a detailed record was kept of the coding processes and procedures that led to the emergence of the core categories. A representation of these processes and procedures is presented in the following sections.

Open coding in NVivo.

As a first step, open coding was used to code the data from the first group interview. In this initial stage, the data were fractured through a comprehensive analysis that involved almost every word of the interview being transcribed and coded. In subsequent stages, as theoretical leads were followed and data were transcribed and coded according to the emerging themes, categories and theoretical direction of the analysis, this approach was less important. The initial stage of description and conceptualisation the data was done freely without comparison of the coded data and was assisted by the creation of codes within *free* nodes in NVivo. Within NVivo a free node is a category of data that has no clear logical connection with other existing codes and does not easily fit into a hierarchical structure. Simple, descriptive codes were used as the data were coded as free nodes. Where possible, the data were coded in-vivo; that is, using the actual

words of participants. Figure 4.2 shows data coded in-vivo, and illustrates how the open coded

data and their related codes could be viewed simultaneously in NVivo.
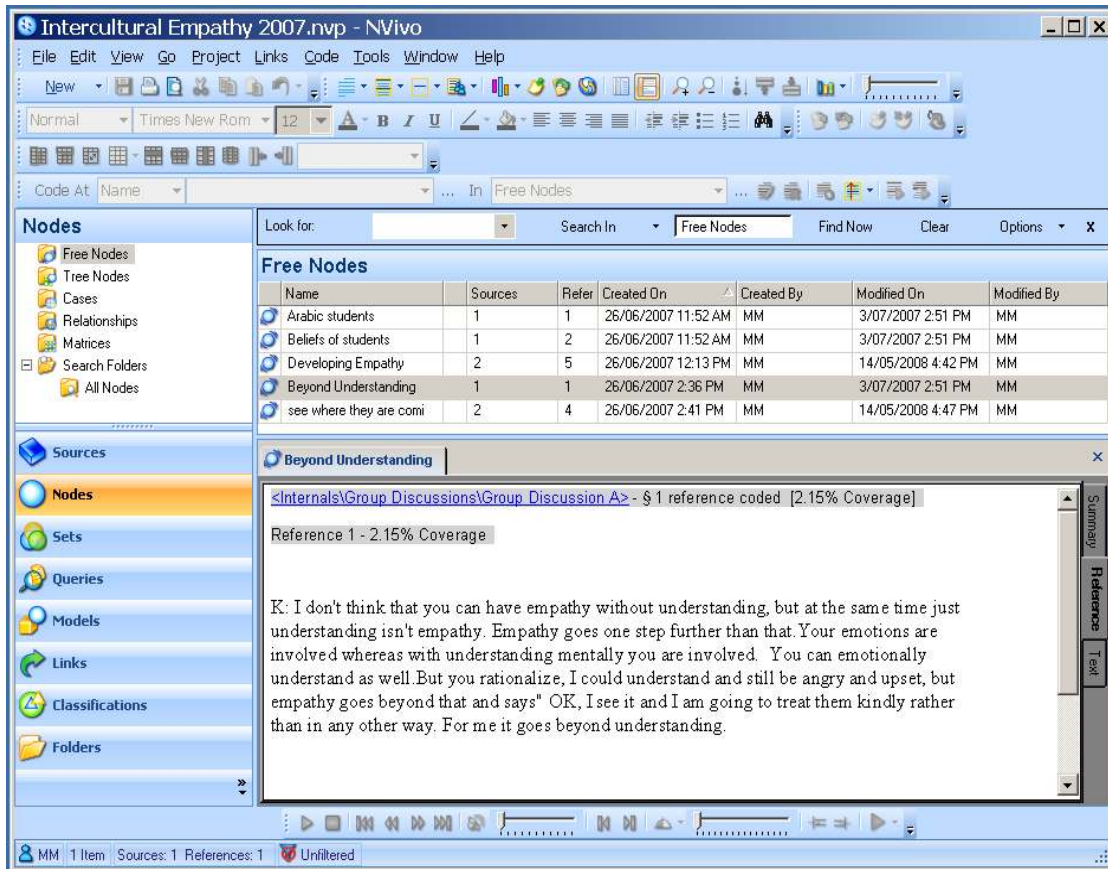
Figure 4.2. Free nodes in NVivo. Initial nodes created during the open coding of the group interview A data in NVivo.

Selective coding in NVivo.

Free nodes that started to emerge as theoretically significant or frequent were then promoted to

tree nodes as either a *parent* or a *child* node. In NVivo a tree node is the name given to codes

that are organised in a hierarchical structure moving from a general category at the top (parent

node) to more specific categories below (child nodes). As shown in Figure 4.3, the data from the

first group interview were coded and categorised as tree nodes that were either a general

category, or as a related but more specific category. In Figure 4.3, the early parent node/core

category labelled *aspects of teacher empathy,* can be viewed alongside its associated child

nodes/core categories labelled *knowing, motivation, seeing, tolerance,* and *understanding*

respectively.
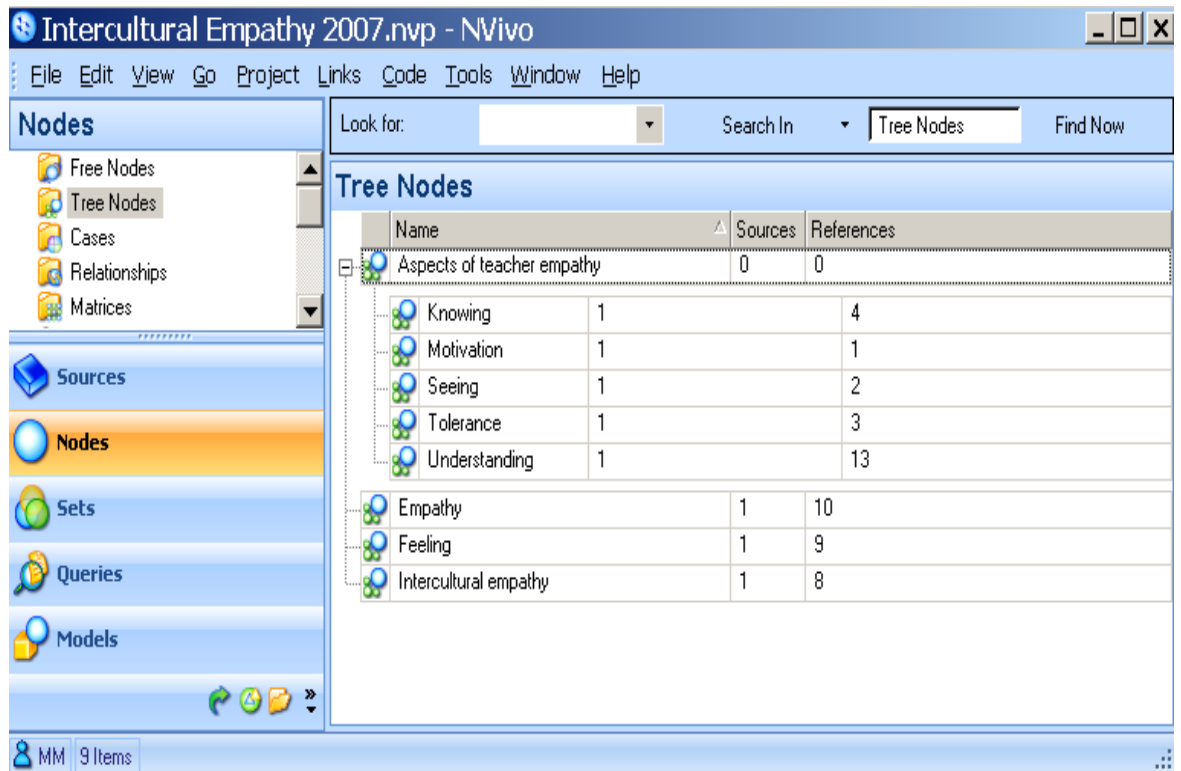
Figure 4.3. Selective coding in tree nodes. Initial core categories and related sub-categories as selective coding began.

Comparing the data.

Models were also generated in NVivo to explore and compare the emerging codes and categories. Throughout the study, models with direct links to the coded data, as illustrated in Figure 4.4, assisted with the review and comparison of codes. In the model illustrated in Figure 4.4, the parent node labelled *conditions required for empathy,* and its associated child nodes were viewed and explored further.
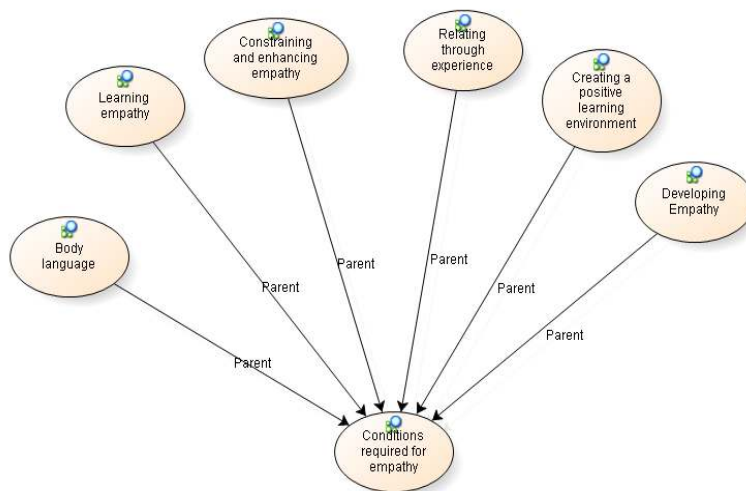
Figure 4.4. Models in NVivo. Models were generated to view and compare parent and child nodes .

These models allowed the codes to be viewed easily for further comparison as each code had a direct link to the coded data. Data were reviewed by placing the cursor over the code and clicking once which then displayed all the data labelled under the particular code in a separate window. This helped with the review and comparison of the coded data whereby the coded data might be renamed, or merged with other codes to develop the core categories and theoretical propositions. Each theoretical proposition was developed from similar processes.

The Emergence of the Core Categories

This section provides a representation of the processes and procedures through which three of the five core categories of the study were developed. This representative of the data analysis processes and procedures aims to render this process as transparently as possible. In order to represent the process and procedures of analysis accurately, this section was written as the of data analysis occurred.

Core categories of Proposition One.

Figure 4.5 represents the initial codes and categories developed as the first data were open coded during the initial analysis that led to the emergence of Proposition One.
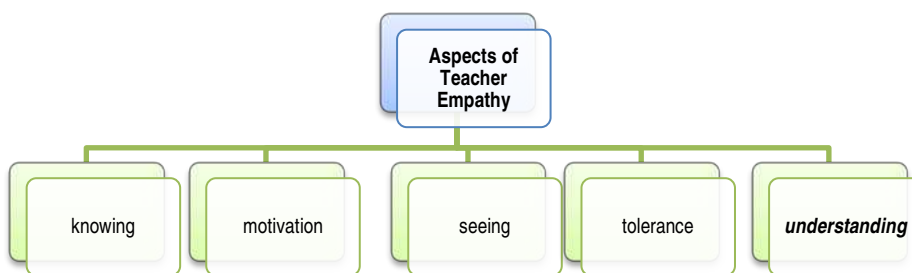
Figure 4.5. Developing the core categories of Proposition One. Initial low inference sub-categories and core categories were compared and analysed.

These initial core and sub-categories were considered to be low-inference (Punch, 2005) and served to summarise the data during the initial coding. These data were re-interpreted and re-categorised through the subsequent review and comparison of the data coded under the core categories by asking questions such as:

What is the data an example of?
What does the data represent?
What category or property of a category does it indicate?
What do these data mean?

During this process, the child node labelled *understanding* highlighted in Figure 4.5 was re-labelled *understanding through experience*, and it was then re-categorised under the new core category labelled *conditions required for empathy* as new data were gathered and coded as illustrated in Figure 4.6.
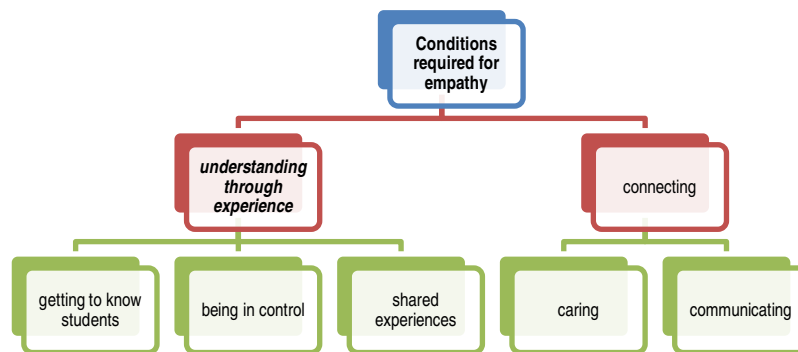
Figure 4.6. Developing the core categories of proposition one. Fracturing and re-coding of data led to new core and sub-categories.

As illustrated in Figure 4.7, the first core category of Proposition One, which was labelled *relating*, was developed as I continued to analyse these data as outlined. As I questioned what these data were saying about teacher empathy, I compared these data with other data sets and the related literature, and I observed and noted convergences and divergences between the coded data.
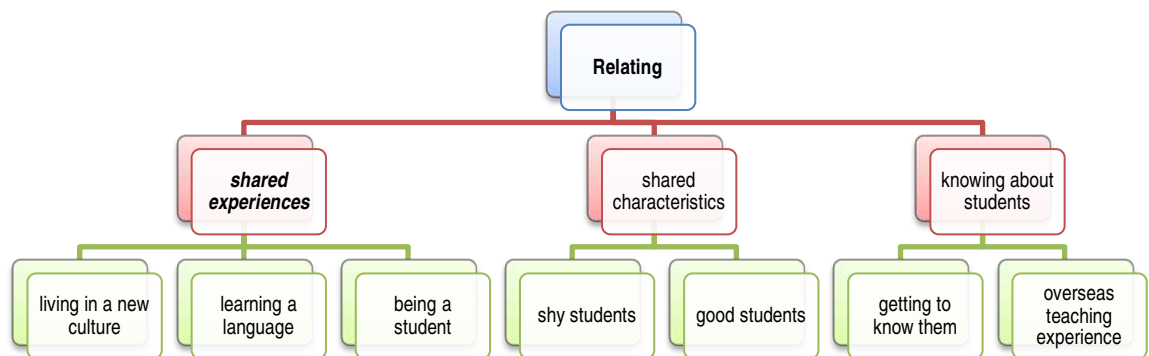
Figure 4.7. Re-conceptualisation and re-structuring of data. The first core category and related sub-categories of Proposition One were developed.

As highlighted in Figure 4.7, the child node labelled *shared experiences* was one of the first data sets to be re-categorised and reconceptualised under the core category labelled *relating*. This conceptual label was developed as the data were organised and analysed at a more conceptual level alongside the concurrent literature review. The code for this core category was created

when the word *relate* was noticed to have high mention in the data coded at the child node labelled *shared experiences,* an example of which is highlighted in the following data extract:

> You know just for a student coming in newly, the size of this place is just so huge everything can be a bit mind boggling at the start. I can really **relate** to that.
> (Poppy, group A)

After this, the parent node labelled *feeling* (Figure 4.8) was re-coded and compared with the other emergent codes and categories in the core category labelled *relating* as well as to the related literature. At this stage of the analysis, data related associated with the concept of sympathy were coded separately as illustrated in Figure 4.8.
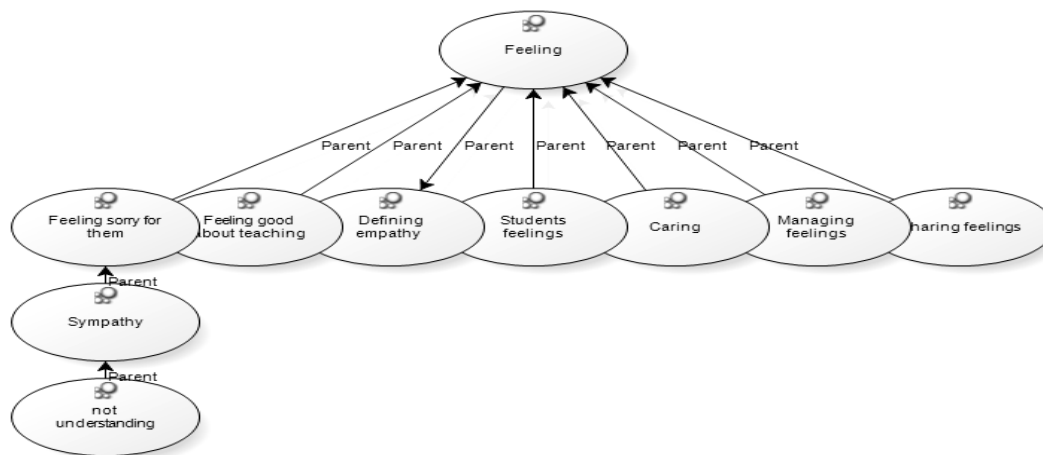
Figure 4.8. The second core category and related sub-categories from which Propositon One was developed. The model also illustrates how data related to the concept of sympathy were initially labelled and grouped together.

As a result of these processes and procedures, the data set labelled *feeling* and its associated codes and categories were reconceptualised and were re-coded and re-labelled as illustrated in Figure 4.9. The use of a plural noun to re-label these data at this stage of the analysis brought the researcher closer to participants' lived emotional experience as English language teachers.
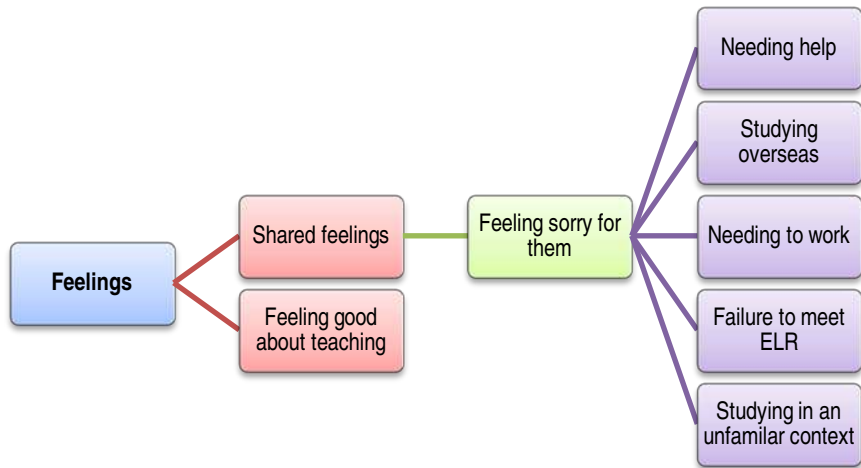
Figure 4.9. Developing Proposition One: Re-labelling the core category assisted in viewing the data as lived emotional experience.

The significance of the data labelled under the code labelled *feelings* had been identified at an earlier stage when it had been conceptualised as a child node under the low inference core category labelled *defining empathy* as shown in the model (Figure 4.10). This model illustrates the previous hierarchy in which the category labelled *feeling* was subordinate.
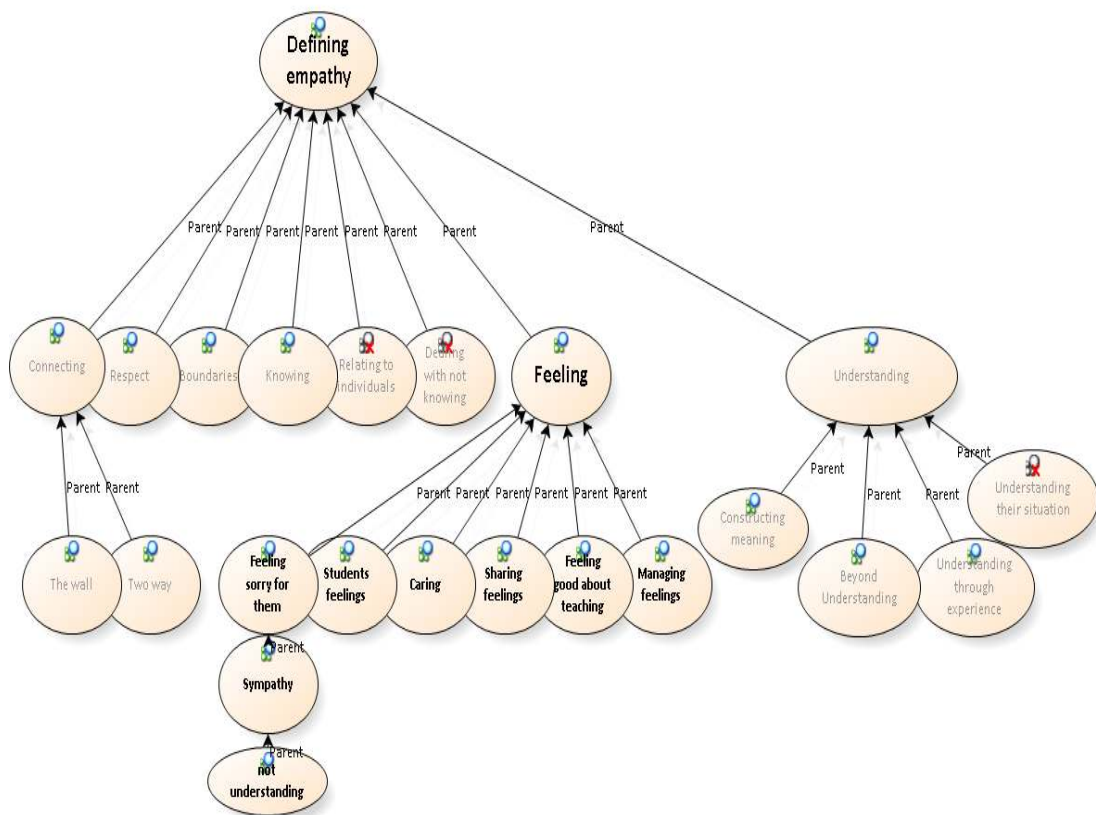
Figure 4.10. Initial codes and categories: *Feeling* is conceptualised as a sub-category of the core category labelled *defining empathy*.

As demonstrated, the data analysis process involved the constant comparison of coded data and involved re-coding and reconceptualisation of the coded data. The writing up of these codes and categories with reference to the related literature was the final stage in the process which led to the development of Proposition One.

Core categories of Proposition Three.

Proposition Three was also developed from a process that involved the constant comparison of data which were coded within a parent node. This process started by analytical coding of the parent node labelled *understanding* that was located under the major descriptive category labelled *defining empathy* as highlighted in the model (Figure 4.11).
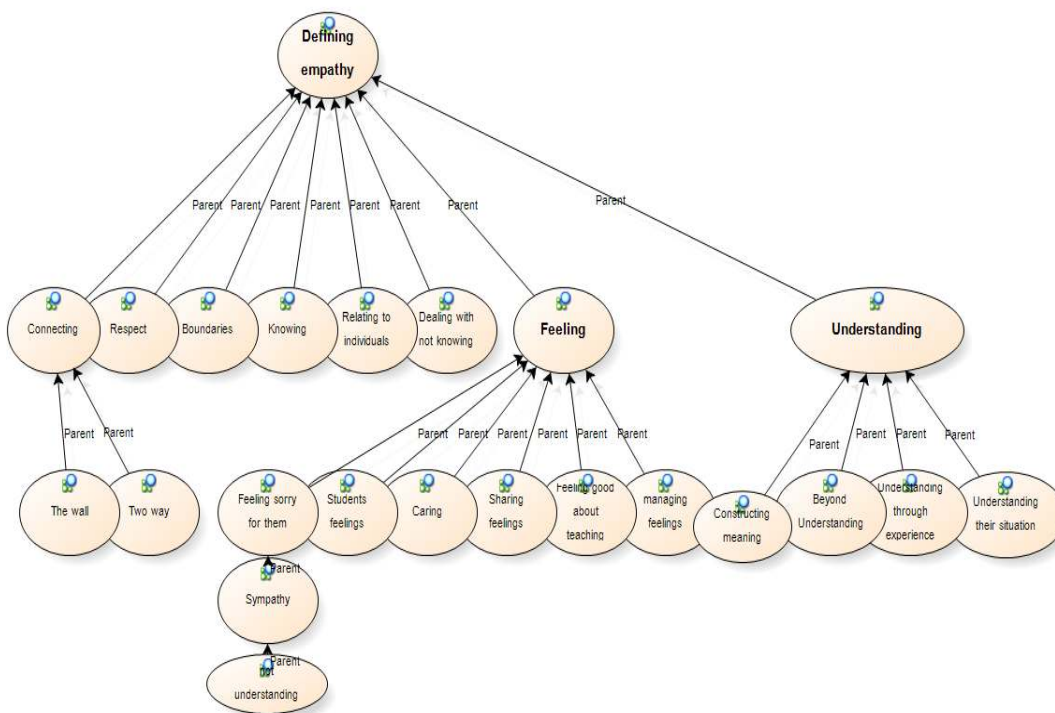
Figure 4.11. Comparing the coded data. The data labelled *understanding* were compared with the data labelled 'feeling' and the core category labelled *defining empathy*.

The parent node labelled *defining empathy* was divided and re-coded as additional data were gathered and analysed. During this process, the parent node labelled *understanding* was moved down a level to become a child node. As more data were gathered and coded, the child node labelled *understanding* became a sub-category of the core category labelled *defining empathy*. The data coded under the label *understanding* were then analysed further by comparing each data set with the other as illustrated in Figure 4.12.
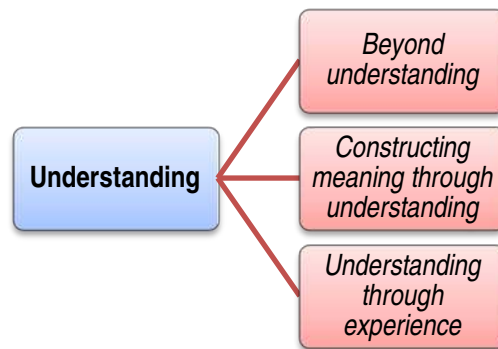
Figure 4.12.   Fracturing the parent node labelled *understanding*. New categories were formed as additional data were added.

From this, a number of new sub-categories emerged and a new core category was developed labelled *understanding departure points* as shown in Figure 4.13.

Understanding Departure Points
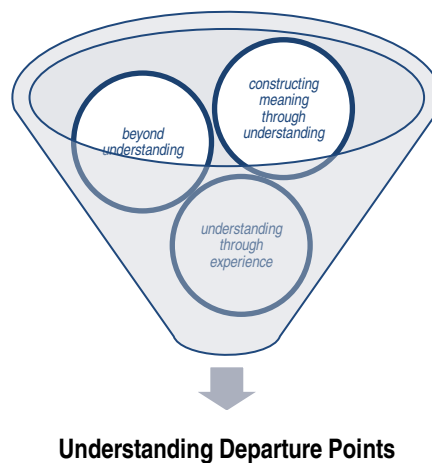
Figure 4.13. Developing a new core category. Data are compared and contrasted to explore key themes.

Data coded under these two core categories were then grouped under the re-labelled core categories *knowing* and *understanding* respectively. Further analysis of these data sets occurred as the process of writing up these findings began and further literature was reviewed.

This chapter concludes with an explication of the processes and procedures which led to the emergence of the final proposition presented in this thesis. This process included the use of a specific analytical framework that served to support the analysis of the data gathered in the later stages of the study.

Core categories of Proposition Five.

Adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach required the current study to explore the tensions between the participants, meanings and the researcher's interpretations. Charmaz

(2006) suggests that data needs to be questioned and the resulting interpretations challenged. As the study progressed, some underlying contradictions and inconsistencies were observed in the data associated with the role and identity of English language teachers presented by the participants in the study. In order to explore these tensions further, an 'analytic lens' (Gee, 2000) was adopted that incorporated the key concepts of 'discourse' and 'identity' and which utilised elements of 'critical discourse analysis' (Clark, 2008; Fairclough, 2003, 1998).

This analytic lens was used to analyse the emerging core category labelled *being an effective teacher* illustrated in Figure 4.14:

Figure 4.14: Participants' self-reported practices. Core category and sub-categories of Proposition Five demonstrate actions that were associated with being empathic.

Like the core categories of other propositions, the core category labelled *being an effective teacher* was also developed from the grounded theory processes and procedures outlined in the current chapter. This core category constituted a wide range of descriptive codes as illustrated in Figure 4.14 above. As these data were analysed further, additional related literature was consulted and these data were viewed as 'teacher discourse' and were then interpreted as 'language in use' which included an exploration of the data for "educational clichés" (Alsup, 2006, p. xii).

Critical discourse analysis.

Communication in language can be both intended and unintended (Schirato & Yell, 2000), but meaning is never rendered or constructed without bias, and it is "always political" (Schirato & Yell, 2000, p. 21). In constructing Proposition Five, a critical discourse approach to the data analysis aimed to explore and uncover how the data as text realised power and ideology and created and maintained inequalities. Proposition Five was developed through a process that involved an interpretation of the empirical data which was informed by a critical discourse analysis of the lexical and grammatical phenomena in the data.

Clark (2008) and Fairclough (1992, 2003) explain that language in use can also be used to explore how people express their identities. A significant element of language in use is 'modality' and the interpretation of the interview data as teacher discourse focused mainly on elements of modality. Modality refers to the degree of certainty or confidence that a speaker has about a belief or proposition (Wesson & Pulford, 2009) and is linguistically expressed in a number of ways. Most commonly, modality is expressed through modal verbs such as *could*, *might*, and *should*. For example, the use of the word *should* expressed a high affinity or obligation to a participant's about being an effective teacher whereas the use of *might* suggested a lower affinity with that belief. Modality is also expressed through adverbs such as *probably*, *maybe*, or *possibly* as well as through expressions such as *I think* or *sort of*. Modality may also include the use of verb forms and verb tenses and the repetition of particular words. For example, the present simple tense can be used to express an idea as a universal truth or as timeless (Clark, 2008).

>   *Educational clichés.*

Analysis of the common words and phrases in the data coded under the core category labelled *being an effective teacher* also helped to interpret the data. The identification of "educational clichés" (Alsup, 2006, p. xii) illustrated how phenomenon associated with English language teacher identity were assigned, adopted or claimed by the participants in the study. Further, this analysis of educational clichés provided a critical insight into some of the more commonly held beliefs of the participants as a community of practice.

During this process, all the raw data were revisited and recoded. As these data were analysed further, additional interviews were conducted to extend and explore the new conceptual codes that were emerging. These data were interpreted and coded with the use of the analytic lens as the findings were written up. New conceptual codes emerged from this process and new interpretations of the data emerged. The core category labelled *being an interculturally effective teacher* and its related sub-categories are illustrated in Figure 4.15.
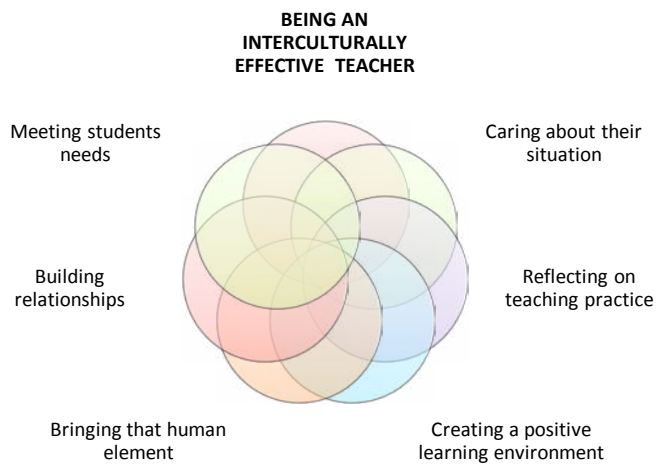
Figure 4.15. Being an interculturally effective teacher. Key categories that were associated with teacher empathy.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how a constructivist grounded theory approach which incorporated grounded theory processes and procedures was used to achieve the aims of the study. The chapter has rendered visible the research methods utilised in the data collection and analysis as well as illustrated how the complexities of qualitative research were negotiated. It has shown how the data were analysed and it has represented these processes and procedures as transparently as possible by using examples and models developed during this process and descriptions of the process recorded as the study was in progress. The following chapters present and discuss the findings that were generated from these processes and procedures.

Introduction

> Positive responses create an emotional bank account that can absorb relational
> difficulties that occur along the way. (Mendes, 2003, p. 53)

While the importance of 'empathy' in human social development and moral behaviour is well established is the field of psychology, little is understood about empathy and teacher emotion and in English language teaching. One aim of the current study was to address this gap in the related literature by asking the question: *What meanings do EAL teachers give to (teacher) empathy and examples of empathic practice in their daily working lives?*

This chapter presents the first of five theoretical propositions that were developed during the current study. This chapter is divided into two sections each of which explicate one of the two related core categories labelled *relating* and *feeling* respectively. Using data extracts as sub-headings, each section presents and discusses the core categories and related sub-propositions of Proposition One. This chapter shows how, when viewed within the framework of the current study, *affective response* is a core constituent of intercultural teacher empathy as illustrated in Figure 5.1:
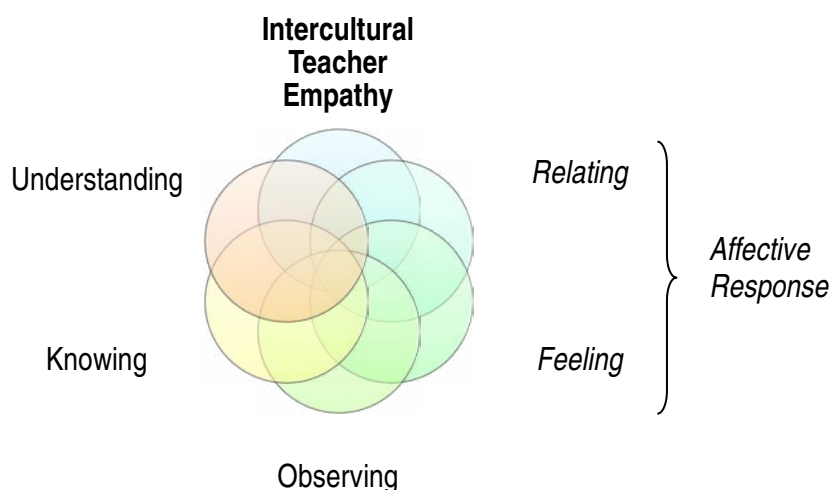
Figure 5.1. Affective response: Core constituents of intercultural teacher empathy.

       Proposition One.
The first proposition states that:

*English language teachers create and maintain emotional connections to their culturally and linguistically diverse students through the affective responses of **relating** and **feeling**.*

This proposition was developed from two core categories labelled *relating* and *feeling*. Figure 5.1 illustrates the core and sub-categories from which the first proposition emerged:
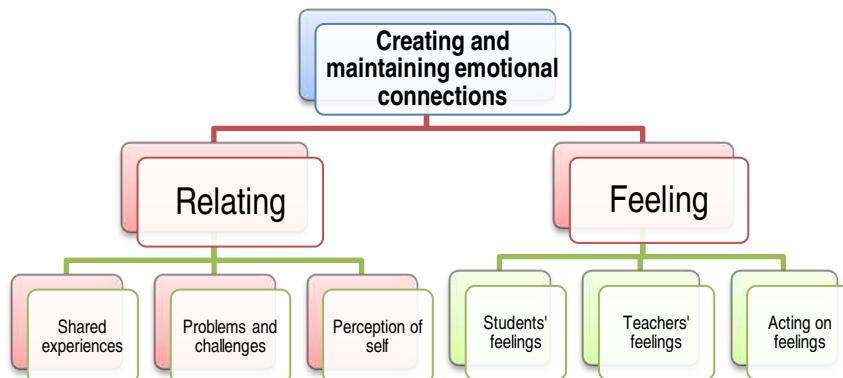
Figure 5.2. Core categories and sub-categories of Proposition One.

The sub-propositions.
Proposition One was developed from four sub-propositions:

a) English language teachers relate more strongly to students with whom they have shared experiences;

b) English language teachers relate more strongly to students whom they perceive to have difficulties or face challenges;

c) Empathy is associated with English language teachers' emotional responses to their students;

d) Teacher empathy involves noticing and responding to students' negative feelings.

Relating

> [H]ow I try to get that empathy is, I do it directly. I find out what is the closest
> shared belief, or situation, or cultural aspect that I can connect with, and I identify
> with them through that. (Anthony, group C)

This first section illustrates that the participants in the study created and maintained emotional connections to their students by relating to students. This section introduces the core category of *relating* as it was rendered in the data and describes the sub-categories and codes from which the core category was developed.

I empathise in that way because I can relate to it (Nadia, group A).
This sub-section discusses the sub-propositions of the first core category which state that:

a) *English language teachers relate more strongly to students with whom they have shared experiences;*

b) *English language teachers relate more strongly to students to whom they perceive to have difficulties or face challenges.*

Relating was one of the first core categories developed from the analysis of the data. Proposition One emerged through the analysis of data associated with this core category. The word *relate* was used to label this core conceptual category. For the purposes of the current study study, the term relate is defined as: Having a cognitive and affective understanding of a situation or a person because the situation has personal meaning or relevance. This study found that the participants in the study believed that they related to their students through:

- Shared experience;
- Problems and challenges that students faced;
- Perceptions of themselves and students.

These ways of relating were viewed as 'lenses' through which the participants in the study interpreted, related and responded to their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Figure 5.3 illustrates some of these related concepts by a reductive paraphrasing of the data that draws on Wierzbicka's (1999, 2003) and Goddard and Wierzbicka's (2007) Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM):

Relating

• **Problems and Challenges***: Learning a language*
You feel bad because something happened.
I feel bad because something happened to you.
I want to help you.

• **Shared Experiences***: Being a parent*
You are a father.
I am a father.
I know how you feel because I am a father.

• **Perception of Self***: Being a shy person*
You feel something because you are afraid to speak somewhere.
I know how you feel because I am afraid to speak somewhere.
I want to help you.

Figure 5.3. Semantic explications using NSM to illustrate the data interpretation.

Participants believed that their personal experiences provided a means through they could relate to the feelings, thoughts and actions of students. They believed that they related more strongly to learners with whom they had *shared experiences* than they did to other students. These shared experiences included; studying in an Australian higher education institution as an overseas student, moving to and living in an unfamiliar culture, and making mistakes in a language learning situation. That is not to argue that there was homogeneity in the personal and professional experiences of the study participants. The experiences that participants described were varied and the examples that are provided in this thesis should be viewed as particular and unique to each individual teacher.

I went through a similar thing (Poppy, group A).

Analysis of the data suggested that participants associated their capacity to empathise with students with their personal and professional experiences living, studying and teaching in overseas. Poppy (group A) came to Australia in her early 20s from Sri Lanka as an international student to do an undergraduate degree. Poppy believed that through her experience as an international student she was able to identify with and relate to her students:

> Because I did my degree here while working, so I'm very empathetic with the students studying in X. And you know, having to go sit in the library for hours, trying to get access to the labs, and stuff like that because I went through a similar thing [...] you know just for a student coming in newly, the size of this place is just so huge. Everything can be a bit mind boggling at the start. I can really relate to that. (Poppy, group A)

Poppy explained how her personal experience as an international student was relevant to her work as an English language teacher. She explained how she used her own experience as an international student to help her students feel less anxious about their move to Australia. Poppy wanted students to know that she had been in a similar situation. She believed that she was able to help them to adapt to study and life in an unfamiliar culture. In the first lesson of a new course she told her students that she had been an international student. She encouraged her students to talk to her not only about learning English, but also about the challenges that they faced living in Australia:

> I communicate that [I was an overseas student] to them right from the word go. In my first day, I talk to them and introduce myself and I tell them that I've been a student here and I know what it is like [...] I think it helps. (Poppy, group A)

Leena, who had lived and worked as an English language teacher in both Japan and Vietnam, believed that her overseas teaching experience had enabled her to relate more strongly students. Leena associated her experience with her capacity to empathise with students:

> If you can live in a country, it's much more three dimensional, you know. You see all facets of the culture not just isolated incidents like you do when you have students in your classroom for the first time. But, definitely there's a greater empathy there because of that. (Leena, group B)

I know what it is like (Nadia, group A).

When talking about the difficulties that students experienced settling in to Australia, participants who had lived, studied and worked overseas described and imagined with confidence how students felt. In the following extract, Nadia, who had moved to Australia from Singapore in her early twenties to study in Australia, described some of the many challenges that she believed students faced when settling in to Australia:

> I know what it is like to go to a foreign country and have to adjust to everything. Even the simple things like the weather, not knowing where to go to find something [...] So, yea, I guess I empathise in that way because I can relate to it. (Nadia, group A)

Participants who had learnt an additional language also believed that their experience as a language learner helped them to relate to the difficulties that their students faced in trying to learn and use English as an additional language. Mikki, who was bilingual in Japanese and English, attributed her own experience of learning Japanese to her capacity to relate to students:

> I felt the frustration; I mean I've been brought up bilingually, so Japanese hasn't been an issue as far as conversational use, but in things such as politics or economics, it was just such a struggle, if I go from English to Japanese, and getting just tongue tied. (Mikki, group A)

Anthony, who learnt Spanish from his father while growing up and who had lived in to Spain for a year to study Spanish described how he felt learning Spanish:

> I know how tiring it is to be surrounded by another language and to be living within that language group. It is an exhaustion I hadn't felt elsewhere. It is a mental and physical exhaustion. I think teachers who haven't had that experience may lack a bit of empathy. (Anthony, group C)

Another teacher, Harris, recalled his experience learning Japanese:

> As much as I hated being totally out of my depth trying to learn the Japanese
> script, it really shows you how difficult it is. And as Anthony said in the group
> interview, how mentally draining it is too. (Harris, group C)

Harris said that his experience of learning Japanese informed his teaching approach and helped him to identify with his students. He discussed his language learning experiences with his students to make them aware that he acknowledges that it was difficult to learn a language:

> Often, I tell them about my experiences learning Japanese to tell them that it is not
> easy. So they can see that I am identifying with them. (Harris, group C)

Participants also believed that their capacity to empathise was associated with what they had learnt through seeing their family members learning and using English as an additional language. Anthony's father had migrated from Spain to Australia in the 1960s. According to Anthony, his father spoke very little English and was unable to read and write in Spanish. Anthony described how the experience of seeing his father being discriminated against and struggle to use English influenced his capacity to be empathic towards his students:

> [J]ust observing how he was treated; how people assumed a lack of English
> language was a lack of intelligence. How he was spoken down to, and also his
> stress at not being able to read road maps, not being able to read instructions on
> bottles. So, he is pretty much illiterate in terms of his English, but at the same time
> he is self-educated. He follows Australian politics; he could challenge anyone here
> who I work with. His knowledge of the intricacies of what is happening is incredible
> [...] so just seeing that made me aware. (Anthony, group C)

These findings reflect to some extent the findings of a study of teacher empathy in the field of education. McAllister and Irvine's (2002) investigation into the role of empathy in teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds showed that simulated intercultural experiences developed intercultural competence which included trainee teachers' ability to empathise with learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The study concluded that living in cultures that differ from one's own may facilitate teachers' ability to relate to and identify with students with whom they do not share the same languaculture. Moreover, brain imaging studies (Singer, 2006) show that one person's empathic response to another person's pain is higher when they know the sufferer compared with their response to the suffering

of a person with whom they are not familiar. Unfamiliar may mean someone with whom they have no acquaintance or it may also refer to someone with whom they do not share the same languaculture.

The findings of the current study suggest that participants who had lived and worked in overseas in contexts where they did not share the same languaculture or who had experience of studying an additional language believed that they were more capable of empathising with learners as a result of these experiences. This was also true of bilingual participants as well as for participants who had experienced family members struggle to adopt a new languaculture. Analysis of these data suggested that these experiences enabled teachers to create a closer relationship and have level of familiarity with students which then enabled teacher empathy to manifest.

Aspects of this first sub-proposition also converge with, and diverge from, long established psychoanalytical and psychological perspectives of empathy explored in the preliminary literature review and which underpin many of the principles of a humanistic pedagogy. While the psychotherapeutic relationship has many differences from the teacher-student relationship, the research and theories from this area have informed researchers in the fields of English language teaching, and second language acquisition not only because there are many similarities in terms of human social interaction, but also because the insights from psychology and psychotherapy are useful to pedagogical practice.

Freud, Rogers and Kohut all argued that through empathy, psychotherapists were able to imagine what it was like to be in the situation of their clients, which included the capacity to understand clients' feelings, thoughts, values and beliefs. Rogers (1957, 1975), for example, placed great emphasis on the psychologist's empathic understanding. Empathy was the means through which the psychoanalyst was able to experience an accurate understanding of the client's experience; "[…] to sense the client's private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing the "as if" quality – this is empathy" (Rogers, 1957, p. 829).

Similarly, Kohut believed that empathy enabled psychoanalysts to acquire objective knowledge about the inner life of other people. Kohut (1978) perceived empathy to be a central part of the process through which psychoanalysts were able to perceive and feel the unobservable "inner world" of clients (p. 208):

> The inner world cannot be observed with the aid of our sensory organs. Our thoughts, wishes, feelings and fantasies cannot be seen, smelled, heard, or touched. They have no existence in physical space, and yet they are real, and we can observe them as they occur in time: through introspection in ourselves, and through empathy (i.e., vicarious introspection) in others. (Kohut, 1978, pp. 206-208)

Like Rogers and Kohut, many of the teachers who participated in the study believed that empathy helped them to gain access to their students' feelings. Through the lens of *shared experiences*, the participants were able to empathise, and an *emotional connection* was formed and maintained which helped participants to relate to their students.

The analysis suggested that the participants in the study believed that they were able to create and maintain emotional connections by relating to their students through shared experiences, without which they would be less able to relate to their students. In contrast, Freud, Rogers and Kohut assumed that one need not have had similar experiences to others in order to empathise. Freud viewed empathy as a means by which a psychologist can understand that which is "inherently foreign" in others (Freud, 1921 as cited in Wispé, 1987, p. 25).

The next sub-section describes a second sub-category of the core category labelled *relating.* It explores how participants related to their students through the lens of *self.*

Relating through self.

Analysis of data coded and categorised under this second sub-category illustrated that the participants in the study believed that they were better able to create and maintain emotional connections to those students whom they viewed through the lens of self which included:

– Personal characteristics and beliefs about students;
– Roles and responsibilities in society.

When participants viewed students through these lenses, they believed that they were more motivated and inclined to help students, and they were also more likely to notice and respond to students' feelings.

We relate to people who are more similar to us (Nadia, group A).

The teachers who participated in the study believed that they related more easily to students whom they saw as similar to them. By perceiving students as similar to themselves, they

identified with students and related more easily to them. Nadia described how she related to shy students because she identified as a shy person:

> Researcher: Do you find it easier to empathise with some students more than others?
>
> Nadia: I guess those who are more like you (me), personality wise. I guess we relate to people who are more similar to us whereas if someone is really different it is harder to relate to them.
>
> R: You talked about empathising with students who are more like you.
>
> N: Only in the sense that you know them a bit better, you see yourself in them [...] say shyer students because I used to be so shy at school; I would not say a thing in class, and whenever a teacher would ask for responses I would never volunteer an answer, never. And if I got called upon I would hate it. (Nadia, group A)

Nadia believed that she related to students with whom she had shared personal characteristics. A classic psychoanalytical interpretation of this scenario (Freud & Sprott, 1967) might suggest that Nadia was using the classroom and the students as a means to both re-enact and attempt to resolve her own childhood trauma. Through identifying with students whom she perceived as shy, Nadia identified with her childhood self; through this process she was able to be kind to her students and to her past self. It would be less significant if Nadia only thought about the situation of shy learners and sympathised with them. It was through relating to her students that Nadia was able to help:

> So, I can totally empathise with students who are shy and I would never put a student on the spot. (Nadia, group A)

In this example, Nadia changed her classroom practice; instead of calling on students individually in the class when eliciting ideas or checking understanding, she called on the group as a whole. In doing so, she wanted to ensure that shy students did not have to speak in front of the whole class. Through this change to classroom practice, Nadia expressed awareness and sensitivity to students' feelings.

You have to deal with your family first (Silvia, group B).

Some of the participants were parents; therefore, it was not surprising that these participants believed that their experiences as parents helped them to relate to students who were also

parents. Silvia, a mother of two, who had been studying for her Master's degree in education while living in Papua New Guinea when her first child was born, expressed that she was aware of the difficulties of managing work and taking care of children, especially when living in an unfamiliar culture. Silvia acknowledged that many of her students had other responsibilities in addition to their study, and that sometimes these responsibilities took precedence over attending classes:

> I've got students with children and one of them said yesterday afternoon: My four
> year old has toothache and I must leave early to take her to the dentist. And I
> thought yea, ok, that's just one of those things. You are here to study, but you have
> to deal with your family first. (Silvia, group B)

Leena, who was also the mother of two young children, identified her experience as a parent to be a common ground from which she could relate to students when she had a limited experience of their culture:

> The Saudi students are very family oriented, so they all know about being a
> husband or wife or having been a father, or a mother, so that is another connection
> that I can make with them. (Leena, group B)

Anthony, who was also a parent of two young children, described how he had helped a student who was having difficulty concentrating in class. Anthony compared himself to the student, and identified similarities between himself and the student. These shared characteristics, including the ages and numbers of children that they had, were a means through which Anthony was able to relate to this student:

> I have a student at the moment from Kurdistan, and he is a similar age to me. I am
> 34, he is 35, he has a couple of kids like me, and he is a very committed student,
> he is good in class, but I can see he drifts off quite a bit in class. (Anthony, group
> C)

Anthony believed that he had noticed and responded to this student in particular because he could identify with him as a parent. Anthony had noticed that the student was having difficulty concentrating during class and had indicated to the student that he was concerned. Anthony had asked the student if he was having any difficulties and he believed that he was able to help and relate to the student better because he was a parent:

He wanted me to empathise with him. He wanted me to understand that he wasn't

showing any disrespect, he wasn't bored. For example, he told me, and that gave

me an understanding of where he is at and where his head space is and what he

must be feeling because I am a parent as well. (Anthony, group C)

Summary.

The findings thus far indicate that the participants believed that empathy was associated with being able to connect and relate to students. In particular, the personal experiences of the study participants formed an 'empathic lens' through which they identified with their students. Relational theory in psychotherapy posits that people have an innate capacity to intuit the intentions of others with whom they engage (Layton, 2008). Through *identification*, a "process of connection" one has the ability "to see one's self in the other, and mirrored by the other, while recognising that the other exists with their own capacities and needs for identification" (Layton, 2008).

This first section has shown that relating to students was an important aspect of intercultural teacher empathy as illustrated in Figure 4.2. Through the emotional connections that participants created and maintained by relating to and identifying with students, the participants believed that they were better able to understand and help their students. The next section discusses *feeling*, the second core category of Proposition One.

Feeling

Drawing on both the data from the current study and the research literature, this section provides an overview of the core category labelled *feeling*. It suggests that emotional response is integral to the model of intercultural teacher empathy presented in this thesis. Utilising extracts from the data as sub-headings, this section illustrates each of the sub-propositions c) and d), showing how participants created and maintained emotional connections to their students through affective response:

c) Empathy is associated with English language teachers' emotional responses to their students;

d) Teacher empathy involves noticing and responding to students' negative feelings.

The first part of this section discusses the difference between the terms *feeling* and *emotion* and provides an explanation for the labelling of the core category. Next, it describes what the participants in the study thought and believed about the relationship between teacher empathy and students' feelings, illustrating how participants attended to their own and their students'

feelings in relation to this. The final part of this section discusses the influence of the humanistic tradition on participants' beliefs about empathy and the teaching and learning of English as an additional language.

Feeling or emotion?

In a qualitative study which depended on people's words as a data source, the interpretation of data related to the phenomenon commonly referred to as 'emotion' was problematic. Emotion is notoriously difficult to study and define (Gallois, 1993). Within the academic discourses of Australian, American, Canadian and British English, the concept of emotion, despite being the favoured term by academics and researchers, encompasses a wide range of phenomena and there is continuing disagreement as to what constitutes emotion. This problem has resulted in multiple competing definitions of the term emotion in both the research literature and in everyday discourse (Arnold, 1999; Scovel, 2000; Weirzbicka; 1999).

The term emotion has become less appropriate as Western academia becomes less Anglocentric and more open to other ways of knowing and understanding. Wierzbicka (1999a) challenges the preference of the term *emotion* over the term *feeling* by demonstrating that the favouring of the term emotion is underpinned by the false belief that the term emotion is objective and therefore measurable while feeling is subjective and therefore cannot be measured. Instead she calls for the use of the term feeling, arguing that, "while the concept of 'feeling' is universal and can be safely used in the investigation of human experience and human nature, the concept of 'emotion' is culture-bound, and cannot be similarly relied on" (1999a, p. 25).

In many of the attempts to define emotion, researchers have attempted to elucidate a distinction between the terms feeling and emotion. Damasio (2004), for example, creates a distinction between emotions as changes in body state in response to a situation, and feelings as perceptions of these changes. In everyday usage, however, these terms are often used to refer to the same phenomenon; that is, the group of concepts that refer to specific feeling states such as fear, anger or sadness.

For these reasons, the term *feeling* was used to describe a major sub-set of coded data, and for the purposes of this chapter, it is considered to refer to phenomena related to the experiencing of internal subjective sensations which "people think, talk and interpret in terms of conceptualisations provided by their language and culture"(Wierzbicka, 1999, p. 28). This meaning includes, a) the feelings common to the everyday discourse of Australian English which include sadness, anger and fear, b) a reference to cognition or thinking particularly in relation to

the feeling words common in everyday speech, and c) a reference to bodily sensations or affective responses which include changes to these that one is aware of in a range of everyday situations.

This problem of usage, definition and interpretation was evident in the empirical data gathered for the current study. Participants commonly used the terms emotion and feeling and other related forms of these words interchangeably and ambiguously as illustrated in the data extract:

> In some ways we have to distance ourselves emotionally even though we feel something for them, we can't let it be an overwhelming sort of feeling, so while we feel it at that moment, it is not something that stays with us. (Nadia, group A)

In this extract, Nadia explained that she believed that she had to keep an emotional distance from her students although she did feel something for the students. She also explained that at times her feelings were overwhelming. It was not possible to know to which particular feelings Nadia was referring. This issue was identified in the early stages of the study and a conceptual framework that adopted a semantic metalanguage (Wierzbicka, 1999) served to address this problem if it arose. In this study, where possible, "solid, experience-near, yet universal concepts" (Wierzbicka, 1999, p. 23) such as *think* and *feel* were used to assist with the collection, coding and analysis of data that referred to "experience-distant: concepts such as 'empathy' and 'emotion'" (Geertz as cited in Wierzbicka, 1999). By asking questions that used these terms, it was easier to communicate with and develop shared understandings with participants. For example, Nadia uses semantic universals and daily experiences to describe her feelings for students:

> If they have made the grade they want, you obviously share their happiness. And if they can't get into a course that they need to go in, you feel bad for them. (Nadia, group A)

It was on the basis of these issues that the gerund *feeling* was chosen to label the second core category of Proposition One.

Students' feelings.

Research into student affect has had considerable influence on what English language teachers think and believe about English language teaching and learning. For example, it is now generally accepted that there is a correlation between improved memory and recall of new language in learners who are engaged and emotionally open (Thornbury & Meddings, 2001, p. 25). It has

also been shown that positive emotions relax students and lowers their 'affective filter' thus creating the conditions necessary for optimal language acquisition (Krashen 1981). It is broadly accepted that negative emotional states such as anxiety can adversely affect language learning potential (Arnold, 1999; Brown, 1972; Horwitz, 1995; MacIntyre, 2002; Stevick, 1990; Zheng, 2008). Most, if not all, of the teachers interviewed in the study freely expressed theories similar to those found in the humanistic tradition of English language teaching, all of which converge on the central idea that the emotional state of students has a strong influence on language acquisition.

You understand how they feel and you feel bad for them (Leena, group B).

In everyday life and in research, feelings are often categorised as either positive or negative, and until very recently it has been common for researchers in the social sciences to focus their attention on investigating and ameliorating negative feelings such as anxiety or stress. The findings of the current study indicated that the study participants were also more concerned about negative feelings than they were with positive ones. The participants often talked about how they noticed and responded to students' negative feelings. When they were describing situations in which they believed empathy to be present, they often described situations in which a student was feeling bad and needed help or support. The situations most commonly mentioned were students working, students having to meet the English language requirements of their next course, the effects of studying and living in an unfamiliar cultural context and students having to take care of family members.

Participants acknowledged that there were some situations that were beyond their control. In these situations, they believed that they were unable to help and they felt bad for their students. Although participants were unable to do anything to change the situation, sometimes they did attempt to change how students felt. Participants employed a number of strategies to change how students felt including adapting their teaching approach and their attitude to students.

As mentioned previously, all the participants interviewed for the study taught on a pathway program. This meant that their students were "high stakes" students. Many of the students they taught had limited time and financial resources to complete their studies in Australia. The participants were aware of the pressure that students were under to meet the English language entry requirements of their next course and were sensitive to the emotional and psychological states of their students. For example, many of the participants expressed their emotional involvement in their students' progress. Participants believed that they related to how their students felt when they succeeded as well as when they failed. Nadia explained how she felt

when her students failed or succeeded in meeting the English language entry requirements of their next course:

> You know if they have made the grade they want, you obviously share their happiness. And if they can't get into a course that they are meant to go into, you feel bad for them. Just shared emotions I guess. (Nadia, group A)

When describing the difficulties and hardships that their students faced, participants described a range of tiring, stressful, anxiety inducing situations that students might experience. They described the ways in which these situations impacted on student learning. When students had a part-time job there were a number of negative consequences which included students being tired during classes, being absent from classes and students failing to complete learning tasks both at home and in class. Nadia described how working affected her students:

> If they're working there is not much you can do about that, if they are working and they are tired, you do feel for them because it must be hard working and studying [...] So you empathise in that way, you understand and you know, why is he or she looking so exhausted in my class and not being enthusiastic. (Nadia, group A)

The participants also referred to the emotional and psychological stress that students experienced because of the pressure to meet the English language requirements in order to enter their next course of study within a certain time frame. Participants believed that in some cases this resulted in students behaving in ways that were detrimental to their learning of English such as cheating in exams or plagiarising assessed tasks. Participants also expressed concern about the negative emotions that students experienced when they did not reach the level of English they needed within a specific timeframe:

> I felt their frustration – it's such a struggle. (Mikki, group A)

Another participant explained that she was aware that students felt bad when they had not achieved the test results that they needed to gain entry to their next course of study:

> You know they are upset. (Nadia, group A)

Poppy explained how she felt knowing how hard it was for students to learn a language:

> I feel bad for them realising how hard it is. (Poppy, group A)

As noted in a previous extract, Nadia was aware that some of the students in her class had to work part time in order to contribute to their living costs. When they fell asleep in class, arrived late or failed to complete tasks she explained that she responded emotionally:

> I noticed you know when they started a part time job they come to class looking
> really, really tired. And you know, you ask them what is going on. If they're working
> there is not much you can do about that, if they are working and they are tired. But
> you do feel for them because it must be hard working and studying. (Nadia, group
> A)

Participants also said that they felt bad when students were enrolled on courses that were not suitable for them. At orientation all new students on the English language program sat a placement test to establish their level of English language proficiency. However, financial considerations sometimes resulted in students at different levels of proficiency in English being grouped together in order to ensure a financially viable student-teacher ratio. Participants demonstrated concern for the progress of students whom they judged to be in the "wrong level". They felt bad when students were not able to meet the English language requirements of their next course:

> I know that they are not going to make it and I feel sad for them. (Nadia, group A)

Poppy felt bad because her students were in the wrong level and she thought that they would be unable to learn:

> It's just horrible to think that they are going to spend the next 20 weeks here and
> not achieve much. (Poppy, group A)

Mikki explained how some of her students felt because they were in the wrong level. She explained that they could not understand the lessons and were unable to participate because their English was at such as low level compared to the rest of the class:

> They are just baffled when you ask them a simple question [...] they are
> embarrassed [...] or they just go blank and they can't interact. (Mikki, group A)

I am drawing on the feelings that I went through (Anthony, group C).

Participants believed that they were able to understand and interpret what students felt by drawing on their own emotionally upsetting experiences. The participants in the study explained that sometimes they felt the same feelings as their students, particularly when they perceived a

situation to be emotionally disturbing. Mikki, who lived and worked in Japan for several years as a young adult, described how she had felt the same frustrations as students when learning another language:

> Do I feel his frustrations? Sometimes I do. Sometimes I have cringeful moments when someone else is making an absolute mess of themselves. (Mikki, group A)

Mikki was confident that she knew how her students felt by explaining how she had felt at times when learning to become a translator:

> I went to interpreting school and it was such a struggle [...] to go from English to Japanese and getting tongue tied and using these ridiculous words [...] the rest of the students were like almost gasping in horror and I just felt so embarrassed and I know the embarrassment that comes when everyone else know something that you don't. (Mikki, group A)

When Mikki interpreted that her students were emotionally upset she took action and attempted to create a learning situation that was more conducive:

> Trying to take that embarrassment out and making them feel comfortable so that they are ready to learn. (Mikki, group A)

These findings indicate that participants viewed student emotion as having an impact on learning outcomes. Viewing student emotion as a significant factor in language acquisition motivated many of the participants to notice how students were feeling and to do something to help particularly when they perceived that students were feeling bad:

> There have been particular students that have been going through some difficult times. And they have wanted to talk. And I would stay back and we would just sit and talk about schoolwork or what was happening in their life. And that I would actually give them time, and I will talk and try and help them that way. (Katie, group C)

Participant explanations of how they responded to students' feelings can be viewed as a process which involved the teacher's perception that a student was feeling bad, the teacher noticing and then responding to the situation as illustrated in Figure 5. 4.
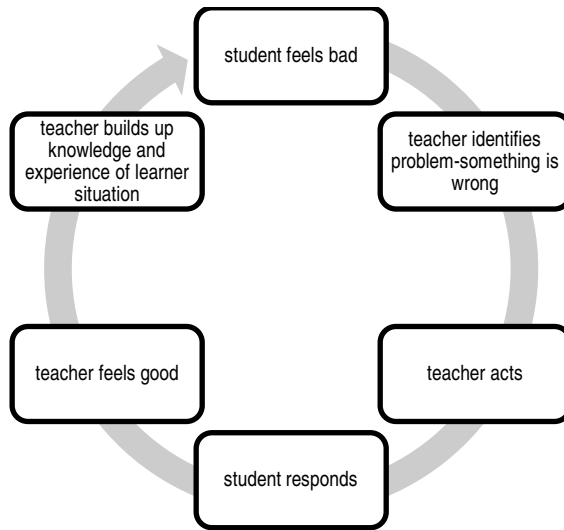
Figure 5.4. Noticing and responding to students' negative feelings.

This process converges with the theory of sympathy introduced in Chapter Three of this thesis (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004, Decety & Chaminade, 2003, Wispé, 1991) which states that sympathy is an observer's emotional response to the distress of another person that creates a desire within the observer to do something to alleviate the suffering.   Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004) propose that sympathy is a "special subset" (p. 163) of empathy as illustrated in Figure 5.5:
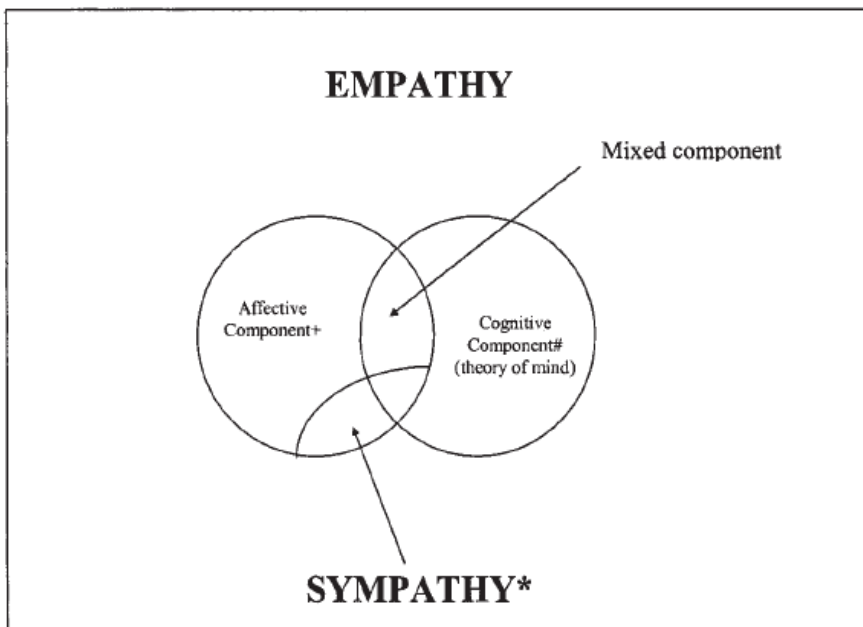
Figure 5.5. Model of empathy showing sympathy as a special case of the affective component of empathy. (Adapted from The empathy quotient: An investigation of adults with Asperger Syndrome. Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, Vol. 34, p. 165. Copyright 2004 by Springer. Reprinted with permission.)

Chapter Five: Creating and Maintaining Emotional Connections

As noted in Chapter Three, most researchers consider empathy and sympathy to be two separate and distinct phenomena. In contrast, the findings of the current study suggest that sympathy was subsumed within participants' understandings and experiences of empathy. As illustrated in this chapter, participant conceptions and examples of intercultural empathy included examples of phenomenon that Wispé (1991) and others define and label as *sympathy*. The analysis suggests that sympathy was neither a distinct concept nor a subset of intercultural teacher empathy. The analysis subsumed phenomenon that researchers typically define as sympathy into the theory of intercultural teacher empathy because, in general, participants did not distinguish between teacher empathy and teacher sympathy. It should be noted however that when specifically asked to define empathy, participants did believe that there was a definitional distinction between the two terms although they were unclear about what the difference was.

That could be me (Niren, group B).

Participants believed that they understood the situation of students and believed that they would feel the same if they were in the same situation. The participants in the study imagined themselves to be in the same situation as their students. Niren talked about how, by imagining what he wanted from a teacher, he found it easier to teach, and he was more motivated to do a good job:

> I look at the students I always think: That could be me' sitting there [...] the good thing about that is, it makes you do better than you would do, you don't just go through the motions. I better do this well, because if I was there I would want to, you know, to learn [...] so you put yourself in their shoes and then everything becomes easy, you know, easier to do, clearer. (Niren, group B)

Mikki was confident that she knew what her students were feeling and she understood why they felt as they did:

> You understand the added burden, they have got their wife here, their kids here and they are studying, and if they are not doing well then that loss of face [...] then there is nothing good in their life [...] but I would feel exactly the same. (Mikki, group A)

In contrast to these findings, Harrington (2001) argues that it is not necessary to have experienced something in order to understand it. He argues that wanting to experience the world as someone else does can lead to a poorer understanding of the other person's situation and detracts from the uniqueness of each individual's experience:

> In all understanding of other persons, groups or forms of life, we have to imagine how others might think and act differently from ourselves in analogous situations but with different values, motives and beliefs. If, however, it is taken as an ability actually to feel others' experiences as states in ourselves, problems arise. To understand another's feelings is not the same as directly to experience those feelings. (Harrington, 2001, p 28)

In contrast to Harrington (2001), the findings of the current study suggest that the participants in the study believed that they could feel and experience what their students felt; they related to their students and felt as they did.

A humanistic response.

The significance that participants attributed to the emotional and psychological states of students was influenced by the communicative approach to English language teaching. Attending to affective factors is integral to the communicative approach which has humanistic principles as a central tenet. Humanism encourages practitioners to take the whole person into account when making methodological and pedagogical choices (Stevick, 1990). Within this approach, personal identity, self-knowledge, cognition and feelings are given central stage when considering how and what to teach, alongside the skills and knowledge required to teach language (Harmer, 2007).

The humanistic approach might best be considered in relation to the context and culture in which it is located. That is, it should be viewed as being derived from an Anglo-centric perspective and should be examined critically, particularly when applied in relation to learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. When participants felt and responded to students as a consequence of a belief in a humanistic pedagogy and their actions had a positive effect on learners, they associated this with teacher empathy. However, the communicative approach with its humanistic and Anglo-centric underpinnings also has its critics. Liu (1998) and Alptekin, (2002) warn of the cultural bias towards North America, Britain and Australia (NABA) embedded in the communicative approach. Kirkpatrick (2007) cites numerous examples of inappropriate methodological choices that are made by English language teachers who adhere uncritically to a humanistic approach, and give little consideration to the context in which teaching and learning takes place. A humanistic conception of English language learners, as it currently stands, assumes that all learners have a fixed and coherent core identity rather than one that is dynamic and changing over time and social space (Norton, 2000, 2008). Language teaching and learning is a social practice; the language learner is not detached from and uninfluenced by the larger social structures that surround her or him:

> It is argued that the extent to which a language learner speaks or is silent, and writes, reads, or resists had much to do with the extent to which the learner is valued in any given institution or community. Language is thus theorized not only as a linguistic system, but also a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated. (Norton, 2008, p. 45)

Conclusion

The findings outlined in this chapter suggest that for the participants in the study, intercultural teacher empathy was associated with affective response; that is, how participants related, felt and enacted their feelings in relation to the feelings and situations of their students. Using examples from the data to illustrate how participants related and responded to students, this chapter has indicated the significance of affective response in the daily working daily lives of English language teachers. The proposition presented in this chapter is the first of three propositions which together constitute the foundations of a tentative, integrative, socio-emotional model of intercultural teacher empathy.

Chapter Six to follow presents the third core category labelled *observing* in the form of a second theoretical proposition which suggests that through intercultural empathy, participants observed and responded to the non-verbal cues of their students, which helped them to understand, engage with and respond to their students.

Chapter Six: Getting Visual Cues

Introduction

> You can see by people's faces, how they react to each other, if there is something
> to do, the manner in which they do it with their partner, all that gives you cues as to
> what is really going on, and you have got to be a bit sensitive to it. (Niren, group
> B)

> When we see a bodily expression of emotion, we immediately know what specific
> action is associated with a particular emotion, leaving little need for interpretation
> of the signal. (de Gelder, 2006, p. 242)

This chapter presents the second theoretical proposition that was developed from an interpretation of the data coded under the core category labelled *observing*. Analysis of data coded under this core category contributed to the development of the integrative socio-emotional model of intercultural teacher 'empathy' introduced in Chapter Five.

Proposition Two.
The second proposition states that:

English language teachers gain knowledge of the feelings and thoughts of their students through **observing** *and interpreting student emotional facial expression and emotional body language which prompts the teachers to act.*

Figure 6.1 illustrates the core categories and related sub-categories from which the second proposition was developed.
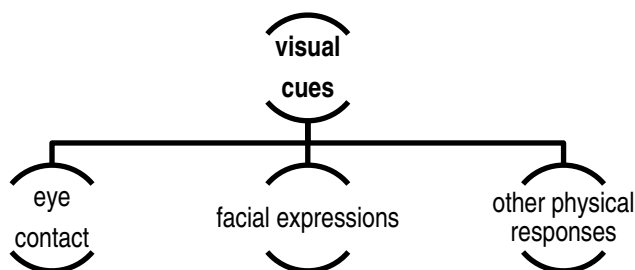
Figure 6.1. Observing and interpreting non-verbal cues (visual cues). Participants noticed and interpreted students' eye contact, facial expression and other physical responses.

Chapter Six: Getting Visual Cues

In this chapter, the terms *emotional facial expression* and *emotional body language* refer to the range of facial and bodily cues including eye contact and posture that the participants in the study interpreted as indicators of their students' emotional states.

The sub-propositions.
The second proposition was developed from the following sub-propositions:

a) English language teachers notice the emotional facial expression and the emotional body language of their students;

b) Observation and interpretation of students' emotional facial expression and emotional body language helps English language teachers to identify when students need help, or are not engaged;

c) English language teachers pay attention to and monitor their students' non-verbal cues during lessons;

d) English language teachers express confidence in the accuracy of their interpretation of students' non-verbal cues, but may not always be correct in their interpretations.

This chapter discusses what the participants in the study believed about their observations and interpretations of the non-verbal cues of their students. It suggests that participants believed that their observations and interpretations of student emotional facial expression and emotional body language were associated with intercultural teacher empathy. Juxtaposed examples from the research literature and the empirical data illustrate what the participants in the study believed about noticing, interpreting and utilising students' non-verbal cues in their daily working lives.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section discusses the central idea of the proposition that the participants believed that they were able to know what their students felt and thought through observation and interpretation of student emotional expression and emotional body language with reference to *theory of mind* (ToM). The second section shows that participants considered student visual cues to be an important means through which they were able to interpret how their students responded to the learning situation. The third section suggests that for the participants in the study, teacher empathy involved not only the observation of visual cues, but it also involved teacher action. The fourth section illustrates that participants with significant intercultural experience expressed confidence in the accuracy of their interpretations of students' emotional body language and facial expression.

Knowing Students' Minds

As noted in Chapter Four, since its earliest inception empathy was thought to be central to "how we come to know other people's minds" (Lipps, 1907 as cited in Jahoda, 2005, p. 155) and has been incorporated into many theories of empathy in the fields of psychotherapy and cognitive psychology. More recently, brain imaging studies investigating the *ToM* have provided new insights into how people are able to know what is going on in the minds of others. Theory of mind proposes that through *social cognition* people are able to draw unique inferences about unobservable mental states (desires, intentions, goals, beliefs, knowledge, emotions) of other people (Adolphs, 2009; Baron-Cohen, 2006; Singer, 2006). Jackendorff (2006) defines *social cognition* as an ability to understand and engage in social interactions in the context of culture and social institutions.

ToM and empathy.

ToM has driven many investigations into facial expression in the areas of social, developmental and cognitive psychology (Ekman, 1999) as well as brain imaging studies in neuroscience (Adolphs, 2009; de Gelder, 2006; de Vignemont & Singer, 2006; LeDoux, 2000). These studies have made a significant contribution to understanding how emotion is expressed, perceived, processed and responded to particularly with regard to non-linguistic communication (LeDoux, 2000). For some cognitive neuroscientists such as Singer (2006), ToM and empathy are two separate capacities that share similar features, but which develop at different times and in different regions of the brain. Singer's (2006) review of the neuronal basis of empathy concluded that people's capacity to represent the beliefs and intentions of others (ToM) is associated with the lateral temporal lobe and pre-frontal structures which are among the last areas of the brain to develop to full maturity while people's ability to share the feelings of others (empathy) is associated with the limbic structures of the brain which develop much earlier. Others argue that mature empathy involves both ToM and shared feelings (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Baron-Cohen (2006, p. 536) considers ToM to be "just one 'fraction' of empathy". The second theoretical proposition was derived from analysis of the data associated with participants' beliefs that they gained insight into students' thoughts and emotions through observation and interpretation of students' visual cues.

Getting Visual Clues

Analysis of the data suggested that the participants in the study noticed both the emotional facial expressions and the *emotional body language* of their students. In the following data extract, an experienced teacher explained the importance of emotional body language and imagined what it would be like to teach in the absence of visual cues:

> The body is open, so they don't have to say something, but they need to nod or give some sort of response back to me, so that I can continue to work on that. There has to be that feedback in order for me to, because I can't operate if it is just one way. I can't continue to like, if I ask for, or give a topic out and I ask for a response, if I get nothing back, where do I go with that, what do I do, how do I operate? How do I judge where to go from there? (Leena, group B)

There is a considerable body of research related to the significance of *facial* expression in non-verbal communication, particularly in relation to feelings. More recently, investigations in the area of cognitive and affective neuroscience have also investigated *bodily* expression of feeling. It is now generally accepted that bodily expression of feeling is as familiar to people as facial expression and that the brain processes body language as quickly and effectively as it does facial expression (de Gelder, 2006).

Participants in the study believed that body language and facial expression indicated the feelings, and to a certain extent, the thoughts of their students. They acknowledged the importance of being able to read facial expressions in order to understand student emotion:

> If you can't read someone's face it is really hard to know, hard to guess what they are thinking or guess how they are feeling. (Silvia, group B)

Participants believed that they were able to identify non-verbal cues which indicated that they had created and maintained a classroom environment that was conducive to language learning:

> If their eyes are bright and sparkly and they are smiling and their skin is clear, you know and they are enthusiastic, and they can't wait to get on with the task then you can be pretty sure that if you explain clearly enough what you want them to do, they'll have a go at it. (Silvia, group B)

Noticing students' reactions.

Niren provided a detailed description of a range of non-verbal interactions which indicated to him how students were feeling and what they were thinking during lessons. He described how he observed the facial expressions of his students. He explained how he noticed how the students interacted with each other and how they reacted to classroom activities.   It was through observation and reflection that he was able to make inferences about what was occurring:

> You can see by people's faces, how they react to each other. If there is something
> to do, the manner in which they do it with their partner. All that gives you cues as to
> what is really going on. (Niren, group B)

In some cases as participants noticed and interpreted students' visual cues, they recalled similar situations from their own lives which helped them to infer meaning from the situation. These experiences, which were described in considerable detail in Chapter Four, formed a constituent part of intercultural teacher empathy as they provided a stepping stone from which participants believed that they were better able to understand what their students felt and thought.

Participants believed that students' emotional states were expressed through emotional facial expression and emotional body language. Observing student visual cues was associated with the creation and maintenance of an effective learning environment. Participants explained that they paid attention to and monitored their students' non-verbal cues throughout their lessons because they were important indicators of student interest and understanding. Niren explained the importance of monitoring for visual cues that indicated to him what students were thinking and feeling:

> It's all part of the messages that they give you. I use that all the time in class
> because all the time you are not just giving them information, all the time you are
> monitoring, if they are understanding it, if they are interested in it. (Niren, group B)

Participants believed that their observations and interpretations of student visual cues was an important aspect of teacher empathy. As illustrated, the participants in the study believed that emotional facial expression and emotional body language were the same for each student, regardless of their cultural background; that is, they were universal. Analysis of the empirical data in the current study converged with and diverged from the research into facial expression across cultures. Participants' beliefs about the universality of facial expression converged with Ekman's well-known and often cited research (1972, 2003) which resulted in broad acceptance of the idea that emotional facial expressions were universal rather than culturally determined. This substantive theory states that all humans can experience and recognise six basic universal emotional states (happiness, surprise, fear, disgust, anger, and sadness) that are communicated using the same facial expressions; that is, these emotions are hardwired in evolutionary biological terms (Ekman, 1972, 2003). However, research has called into question Ekman's findings.

Wierzbicka (1999) shows that certain feeling concepts are specific to particular cultures. While acknowledging that more simple concepts such as *feel* are universal, she argues that not all

languacultures have words for what were considered by Ekman to be basic emotions such as sadness, anger and fear. The range of feelings identified and researched by Ekman are particular to English speaking cultures and therefore fail to account for "lexical diversity" (Wierzbicka, 1999, p. 24). Cross-cultural studies of recognition of facial expressions (Jack, Blais, Scheepers, Schyns, & Caldara, 2009; Jack, Garrod, Caldara, & Schyns, 2012; Jack, Caldara, & Schyns, 2012) provide further support to this argument. Jack et al. (2009) found that some groups of people were unable to reliably distinguish facial expression of feelings that were commonly held to be universal such as fear and disgust. The study compared two groups of people from different languacultures. Jack et al. (2009) concluded that the results of the study "question the universality of human facial expressions of emotion, highlighting their true complexity, with critical consequences for cross-cultural communication and globalisation" (Jack et al., 2009, p. 1543). A more recent study by Jack, Garrod, Caldara and Schyns (2012) that compared the mental representations of basic facial expressions of two distinct cultural groups concluded that the six basic emotions are not universal; they are culture-specific.

Observing classroom behaviour.

The analysis suggested that participants believed that their observation and interpretation of student facial expression and body language helped them as teachers to identify when students had problems or when students were not engaged. Sometimes the problems to which participants referred were related specifically to learning, while at other times the participants referred to personal problems of students. The participants believed that this process of observation and interpretation was instrumental in helping them to make professional judgements that enhanced language learning. Through observation of their students throughout lessons, the participants actively monitored student body language and facial expressions to check that they were engaged:

> When they are doing something I never ever just sit down at the table and start just
> doing something, and not watch what is happening, I am always present, I'll either
> sit on the edge of my table [...] I'm there observing what is going on and I will see if
> someone is not engaged. (Katie, group C)

Through this practice, participants believed that they were able to identify when learners were not engaged:

> I'll monitor it and see how it goes just to make sure that everyone knows what they
> are doing for a start. So you need to be watching, so everyone understands, and
> they are running with it. And then, from that point, I'll step back when it is in its

> progress, and I will watch and see what happens and go from there. And if there is
> a group that I think are having problems, I will go up quietly to that group. (Katie,
> group C)

Silvia explained what she had noticed about one student in her class:

> We have got one student at the moment, a Chinese guy, sidles into the classroom,
> sits down, looks down, has difficulty making eye contact, doesn't look around at the
> other students [...] I'm actually quite worried. (Silvia, group B)

Participants also said that they needed to do something when they noticed that students needed help or were not engaged. The second section presents data suggests that participants believed that empathy involved acting on the visual cues from their students in order to create a positive learning environment.

Empathy Prompts Action

Participants' observations and interpretations of students' non-verbal cues were often followed by an emotional and cognitive reflection that led in many cases to some form of *action*. Behavioural research in the field of developmental psychology and more recent neuroscientific research (de Vignemont & Singer, 2006) suggest that empathy involves observation, reflection, and action in relation to others' feelings and should no longer be considered as an automatic response to the observation of emotional cues as it has been commonly considered. Participants' interpretations of student emotional facial expression and emotional body language helped them to understand if an activity had engaged students which then informed their teaching practice. Participants depended on their interpretation of students' non-verbal cues to direct their classroom practice as Niren explained:

> And of course, if you get the cues that people are not interested in that you quickly
> finish that, and go on to the next thing. (Niren, group B)

Poppy described how her interpretation of the non-verbal cues of two students prompted her to change a set of guidelines for an oral presentation that the students were required to do:

> They had to do this presentation, so while I was telling them what they had to do, I
> said you are required to this and this. And then I said, when you make a
> presentation you come out to the front of the class and you speak to the rest of the
> class. And I just saw the girls, not a word was said, not a word was spoken, but I
> just saw the two girls who were seated opposite each other looking up at each

> other, they just glanced at each other, there was nothing on the face to show what
>
> they were thinking. (Poppy, group A)

Poppy responded to a barely perceptible movement of two female students from Saudi Arabia. She then made a decision to change the guidelines for the oral presentations:

> So, without missing a beat, I went on to say that in the presentation, it is all about
>
> making it clear to the other people who are listening, so I don't care where you
>
> present it from. If you like to you can present from your desk. If you like, you can
>
> be seated, you can be standing, or you can come up in front. And I just left it at
>
> that. (Poppy, group A)

Poppy said that she was not certain what had prompted her do this. She told me that "there was nothing on the face to show what they were thinking". According to Poppy, as a result of her actions, these particular students were better able to cope with giving an oral presentation in front of male students, which was something that they had never done before. She had then asked her co-teacher with whom she shared the teaching of that particular class to accommodate the students in the same way. She believed that her intervention had led to a more supportive learning experience for these particular students. Poppy did not know that for cultural reasons, standing up and giving a presentation in front of male students was difficult for these students; instead she relied on her interpretation of visual cues. Although the initial observation that Poppy made could be described as automatic, Poppy was able to reflect on what she had seen almost instantaneously, which then prompted her to act.

The discovery of mirror neurones provides compelling evidence that empathic response is generated when humans observe movement or emotion in another person (Adolphs, 2009; Iacoboni, 2009; Rizzolatti, 2005). Neural mirroring is an automatic process that does not involve inference or verbal processing (Fogassi & Ferrari, 2011).

There is also evidence that mirror neurones may be activated when the observer is not consciously aware of an emotional display in others. Harrison, Wilson and Critchley (2007) found that a micro-facial expression that was not being consciously observed caused an emotional reaction in an observer and that this was more evident in participants who scored more highly on an empathy scale. The micro-facial expression was the dilation of the pupil which was measured when the participants in the experiment were shown images of faces expressing sadness, fear, disgust and surprise (Harrison et al., 2007). In the situation described by Poppy and other

participants, the observation of emotional cues included the interpretation of micro-bodily expressions which helped teachers to know when students were distressed or not engaged.

Lack of eye contact.

In another interview, Mikki described how she was able to not only understand, but also to respond to a Japanese student's negative feeling about her teaching approach. She interpreted a lack of eye contact and the presence of facial and bodily tension during an initial lesson as an indication that the student was feeling frustrated with her attempts and methods to engage him:

> I could ask him a question in English like: Did you enjoy your time in America? And
> he would just freeze up. And if I pushed him, he would get really frustrated [...] I
> certainly knew where he was coming from. He was blocked up and wasn't making
> eye contact and he was very rigid in his face, getting all tense...body language.
> (Mikki, group A)

Mikki's inferences resulted in deliberate action. Like Poppy, Mikki decided to change her teaching approach and reassured the student rather than pushing him to speak:

> So the first day when I did ask those questions he just froze up and I said: That's
> ok, we are just new here everyone gets shy and I am sure as we get talking, you
> know, things will start to flow naturally … Yea that sort of thing. Later on trying to
> find topics that he was interested in. I mean I thought that that was a fairly general
> question about living in the States, but he likes sport and he is quite willing to be
> little bit more vocal now. (Mikki, group A)

As noted previously, the analysis suggests that participants' observation and interpretation of the non-verbal cues of students was associated with the creation and maintenance of a positive learning environment. It assisted participants to identify emotional disruptions among groups and in individual students that may have had an adverse influence on student learning. Anthony believed that he recognised emotional cues which indicated to him when a student was feeling bad. In the interview extract Anthony explained how he had intuited that a particular student had a serious problem:

> I saw that he was thinking about something else. He looked preoccupied, he would
> regularly drift away. He would take time to register that you were talking to him. He
> often spoke in a quiet voice. He would look out the window while others were
> looking at the teacher or at their papers. He looked sad. He seemed distant.
> (Anthony, group C)

Chapter Six: Getting Visual Cues

Without any direct interaction or verbal communication with the student, Anthony guessed that the student had a problem that was making it very difficult for him to engage during class. The student disclosed the issue to Anthony and Anthony was able to then direct the student to appropriate support services. Anthony believed that he gained knowledge of the student's internal emotional and psychological state through intuitive observation and interpretation of non-verbal emotional cues.

Participants' interpretations of student visual cues illustrated in this chapter appear to lie at various points along a proposed continuum of the theories of the socio-emotional brain, which range from entirely automatic responses or processes to controlled (reflective) processes (Adolphs, 2009; Keysers & Gazzola, 2007). At one extreme, there can be instinctive, intuitive responses to emotional facial expressions and emotional body language which enable people to infer the emotional state of others without verbal communication or little contextual information (Keysers & Gazzola, 2007) such as the situations described by Poppy and Anthony. Closer to the other end of the continuum are reflective processes described in the literature in which "explicit knowledge about the inner life of others is the product of reflecting upon the states of others" (Keysers & Gazzola, 2007, p. 195) such as outlined in the situation recounted by Mikki. In situations like these "we must browse consciously through what we know about the country and culture" and reflect on this in order to understand and respond (Keysers & Gazzola, 2007, p. 195).

Analysis of the data suggested that participants who had significant intercultural experience had developed intercultural empathy and were therefore better able to negotiate meaning with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds even when they had little direct experience with a particular languaculture.

Experienced Teachers
Analysis of the data indicated that some participants did have a greater capacity to notice and interpret the non-verbal cues of students. Moreover, the participants in the study who were the most experienced English language teachers were confident that their interpretation of student non-verbal behaviour was accurate. In the following extract, Silvia explained what she did to establish how much students could understand in English and explained how visual cues helped her to judge students' level of understanding in English:

> I ask how long they have been here, and I get them talking. And I listen to them
> and then I say: How much did you understand? And I try and get some feedback,

> and all the time you are getting visual clues, cues back from students, they are
> nodding or they are looking blank. (Silvia, group B).

In another extract from group interview B, Silvia and Niren, both very experienced teachers in terms of length of years and variety of learners and contexts they have taught in, explained that they believed that "being experienced" made it easier for them to empathise with learners:

> Silvia: You consider the students' situation and as you become more experienced,
> more in control of the actual teaching, you can put your feelers out [...] and have
> that empathy.

> Niren: With experience you learn to read a group [...] you are more in control and
> you know the cues and the signs. (Group interview B)

Another teacher Mikki, who was bilingual in English and Japanese, explained how she had developed intercultural empathy:

> Mikki: When I was a kid in school, I remember another kid from Vietnam and I
> couldn't understand what he was saying and I remember thinking: Why can't he
> pronounce the words? Through time, you realise what it means to not understand
> or be able to communicate. What really helped was the Mandarin lesson I did on
> CELTA. It's been an important exercise in my life. (Mikki, group A)

Children develop empathy as they grow and learn to relate to the people around them. Empathy evolves in and from psychological phenomenon and is essential to human development (Marcia, 1987; Sullivan 1962; Feshback 1987; Richmond 2004). It is only when a complete sense of self and other is experienced that empathy reaches its mature form (Hoffman, 2001). The analysis of data from the current study suggest that intercultural experience was a key requirement in the development of intercultural teacher empathy; participants who were exposed to intercultural encounters from an early age or over many years of teaching experience were confident that they were able to empathise with their culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Different cultures feedback in certain ways (Leena, group B).

More experienced participants also expressed the view that non-verbal expressions of emotional states might differ across languacultures. Leena believed that there were differences between how students from different cultural backgrounds expressed themselves non-verbally. When she perceived the differences between herself and students as greater and more difficult to negotiate, she conceptualised the intercultural differences as a deficit in students' capacity to communicate:

> Different cultures feedback in certain ways and so you are missing those cues that
> you are looking for. So, this last group of Chinese students I have had being
> difficult in that respect, because there is just nothing. You are waiting for some sort
> of nod of the head or some sort of feedback and it is not there. You just find it
> difficult to go on. It's like a wall. (Leena, group B)

Leena's interpretation is supported by findings from a research study that investigated monolingual inner circle English speakers interpretations of the non-verbal behaviour of English language learners from China learning English in New Zealand. The study found that although the Chinese students displayed intense eye contact, they were less likely to display signs that indicated engagement to inner circle English speakers such as nodding and smiling (Kuśmierczyk, 2011). As she continued, Leena attributed the lack of facial expression and body language to a deficit in the students' Chinese cultural backgrounds:

> We expect something back whereas in their culture they have never been
> expected to give anything back, they have not been asked to give their opinion. I
> think that it may have something to have to do with the way that they have been
> taught, that a response is not required of them. (Leena, group B)

In a follow up interview, Leena referred to the situation outlined in the previous two data extracts and explained that her understanding of Chinese students' non-verbal cues might have been influenced by her own cultural schema. Leena believed that her cultural schema was influenced by her Māori cultural identity which she believed enabled her to accurately interpret and infer meaning from the non-verbal cues of students from Saudi Arabia whom she perceived to be "very emotional":

> In the past we talked about Chinese students, how I had difficulty relating to
> Chinese students because of the body language, the eye contact, things like that
> which really threw me because there was no physical response. Maybe that is to
> do with my cultural heritage or my way of dealing with people, but I found it more
> difficult to empathise with students that didn't show a lot of emotion compared to
> students, I mean, Saudi students are very emotional, so that wasn't a problem.
> (Leena, group B)

Leena believed that it was difficult for her to empathise with Chinese students because of their lack of emotional expression. Moreover, because she did not observe visual cues or signs of emotion, she assumed that Chinese students were less emotional than Saudi Arabian students.

She was more confident of her interpretations of Saudi Arabian students' emotional facial expression and body language because she believed that she experienced and expressed emotion in a similar way to them. Leena believed that she had some kind of advantage, which might be akin to an in-group advantage, which helped her to observe and interpret the emotional cues of students from Saudi Arabia.

The in-group advantage hypothesis derives from cross-cultural studies of emotion in which higher recognition rates of emotional display have been observed between people from the same languacultures (Beaupré & Hess, 2005). Beaupré & Hess, (2005) posit that the accurate interpretation of emotion by people who share the same languaculture is associated with culturally similar ways of encoding emotion and may also be related to facial physiognomy. They explain that prominent eyebrows may enable frowns and other expressions of anger to be detected. It is not possible to establish whether Leena, who self-identified as an Australian-Māori, was more accurate in her interpretation of the emotional expressions of Saudi Arabian students than she was in her interpretation of Chinese students. However, China is not a monoculture, nor is Saudi Arabia. For example, a survey of emotion established that expressions of emotion differed between people from Hui, Uighur, Mongolian, Tibetan ethnic groups, and Han backgrounds in China (Lu & Wang, 2012). If English language teachers rely on national boundaries to interpret student emotional expression, they may be misrepresenting students. Moreover, if they assume that their interpretations are accurate and act in response to their interpretations, they may be acting on incorrect information which may result in inappropriate responses.

Although research into the study of emotion across cultures has established that there are similarities and differences between how emotion is perceived, expressed and experienced in different Asian languacultures (Matsumoto, 2001), there has also been corresponding trend for research into expressions of emotion in Southeast Asia to juxtapose emotionlessness and hyper-emotionality (Boellstorff & Lindquist, 2004). This trend needs to be viewed in the context of the Western academic discourse and its culturally embedded ways of seeing and knowing which implicitly rely on dichotomies as a way of knowing. Leena's views of Chinese students can be viewed as constructed from within this discourse.

Kramsch (2011) reconceptualises the third place as a *process* of meaning-making in intercultural encounters that *transcends* national languages and cultures, yet participants in the current study referred to learner differences in non-verbal expression of emotion in terms of national languages

and cultures. Although there is strong evidence to suggest that people express meaning non-verbally across cultures differently and that cultural differences in emotional facial expression and body language may differ between people from the same national group (Kuśmierczyk, 2011; Matsumoto, 2001, Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Weirzbicka, 1999), analysis of the data for the current study suggested that participants were largely unaware of this. Moreover, participants' beliefs that they were able to perceive differences between students' expressions of emotional states did not mean that their interpretations of these expressions of emotion were accurate.

However, in some cases the research literature converges with the study participants' interpretations of students' non-verbal behaviour. Another experienced teacher, Silvia, explained a type of non-verbal behaviour that she associated with students from Japan:

> In 1997, I remember having a group of about 12 Japanese girls for an afternoon class and we had a video to watch, but it was way beyond them, and they couldn't cope. They just closed their eyes and tuned out and I thought Australian kids wouldn't do that. (Silvia, group B)

Silvia's response to this situation was influenced by her observations of and conversations with Japanese students as an English language teacher over many years. Silvia believed that not maintaining eye contact or slumping during lessons was a cultural behaviour. She was not offended by this behaviour because she understood that it was culturally derived. She advised her students that the behaviour was not appropriate:

> If you start to doze in our culture, that implies that either you don't like the culture or you don't like the person, or you don't understand the material. (Silvia, group B).

Silvia was confident that the behaviour that she had observed was generally true for all Asian students and more specifically that the behaviour was broadly acceptable in Japan:

> Researcher: Do you think that that is acceptable then in Japan? You think that students can sleep at the desk?
>
> Silvia: Yes I do. The students tell me that they have all these hours at school and they have to go to cram school in the evening and they have to do this and this and this. And I don't see how they can possible stay attentive for 10 hours a day. (Silvia, group B)

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Silvia did not have direct experience of Japanese society and culture, but she was confident that her beliefs were correct and that she was able to interpret this particular behaviour as culturally-specific and could then respond in a more sensitive way. Another interview explored Niren's beliefs about the cues that he picked up from Japanese students:

> Researcher: Do you think there are universals there, or are you picking up on cultural cues that are particular to particular people?
>
> Niren: You do, and that comes while they are here, and in the afternoon, they will all be asleep or painting their nails in class. I remember Professor X used to talk about that, X was one of the best teachers ever, but he used to have the whole class of Japanese students asleep, and he is such a great speaker and teacher, it just shows you. (Niren, group B)

Niren and Silvia's interpretations converge with research on sleep culture in Japan. In Japan, a society where study often takes precedence over sleep, *inemuri,* or falling asleep in public spaces, is common during class time in schools and universities and is tolerated by teachers because they know that students study hard and are exhausted (Steger, 2006).

The term inemuri is different from other types of sleep, it is a kind of quasi-sleep:

> Its main characteristic is that the sleeper is present in a situation that is meant for something other than sleep. In that way, inemuri is a sociologically distinct form of sleep and has to be differentiated not only from night-time sleep, but also from siesta or napping on a sofa. (Steger, 2006, p. 203)

Steger (2006) found that inemuri was widespread among Japanese school children and was widely tolerated.

Studies in the area of intercultural learning provide insight into the association between exposure to other cultures and intercultural competence that enabled accurate interpretation of non-verbal cues. Molinsky, Krabbenhoft, Ambady and Choi (2006) show that through implicit learning and exposure to other cultures, people are able to develop expertise in judgement and interpretation of non-verbal gestures and behaviour even without having direct experience of a culture. Despite the likelihood that people from different cultures behave and express emotion in different ways and that languaculture is not bounded by nationality, on the whole, the participants in the study

believed that they were able to accurately interpret the non-verbal cues of their students. This was the case for all participants even those who had limited intercultural experiences and/or English language teaching experience.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a second theoretical proposition developed from an analysis of data which articulates the idea that the participants in the study believed that they gained knowledge of the feelings and thoughts of their culturally and linguistically diverse students through observation and interpretation of student emotional facial expression and emotional body language. The analysis presented in this chapter suggested that there was an association between participants' intercultural experiences including teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds throughout their working lives and their ability to notice and understand the non-verbal cues of students. This second proposition suggests that a practice that is taken for granted by many English language teachers was associated with the powerful and complex phenomena of empathy.

Although research is increasingly showing that non-verbal markers of feelings are much more culturally diverse than was once thought, the data coded under the core category *observing* illustrate that the participants with many years of teaching experience both in Australia and overseas, believed that they negotiated meaning successfully with their students through observation and interpretation of student visual cues. Many of the participants in the study claimed that they depended on these non-verbal cues to 'know' what their students felt and thought while participating in language learning activities. Participants believed that their interpretation of visual cues led to the creation, maintenance and development of an effective language learning environment. Analysis of these data also suggested that English language teachers developed intercultural empathy without having had direct experience of other cultures. The findings also provide evidence that English language teachers may be able to accurately interpret the meaning of student emotional facial expression and emotional body language, but warn of the dangers of assuming that non-verbal emotional expression is universal or that nationality implies cultural and linguistic homogeneity. These findings converge with the discovery of mirror neurones which support the theory of empathy as a way of knowing other minds:

> Neural mirroring solves the "problem of other minds" (how we can access and understand the minds of others) and makes intersubjectivity possible, thus facilitating social behaviour. (Adolphs, 2009, p. 653)

Thus, these findings illustrate that the participants' empathic response to non-verbal emotional expression was automatic, unconscious and instantaneous in some situations while in other situations it involved conscious effort and reflexivity. In particular, the findings showed that familiarity with a particular languaculture enhanced accurate interpretation, but familiarity and experience were not necessary or sufficient conditions for empathic response. The findings also illustrated that empathy involved a response to teachers' interpretation of students' emotional facial expression and emotional body language, but this response was inconsistent and raised questions about why participants responded in some situations, but not in others.

The next chapter presents the third proposition developed from the core categories of data labelled *knowing* and *understanding*.

Chapter Seven: Beyond Just Understanding

Introduction

> I don't think that you can have empathy without understanding, but at the same
> time just understanding isn't empathy either [...] For me, empathy goes beyond
> understanding. (Mikki, group A)

> I think it [empathy] provides a lot of the grounding for a lot of my work; a lot of the
> way I approach teaching; as I said before, it is possibly that knowledge and
> understanding that is building those bridges. (Leena, group B)

This chapter presents the third theoretical proposition which articulates the association between
understanding, *knowledge* and 'empathy'. In doing so, the current chapter further develops the
model of intercultural teacher empathy discussed in the previous chapters.

Proposition Three.

The third proposition states that:

*Although English language learners experience and respond to the learning situation in ways that
may be unexpected and difficult for English language teachers to understand, teachers are able
to traverse these difficulties through intercultural **understanding** and **knowledge**, which helps
them to accommodate, respond and adapt to the needs of learners.*

When considered in relation to Propositions One and Two of this thesis respectively, this third
proposition constitutes a tentative answer to the central research questions numbered one, two
and three summarised in Figure 7.1.

1. How do EAL teachers conceptualise empathy?

2. What do EAL teachers believe about the role of empathy?

3, What meanings do EAL teachers give to empathy and examples of empathic practice?

4. What factors, if any, influence EAL teachers' conceptions of empathy?
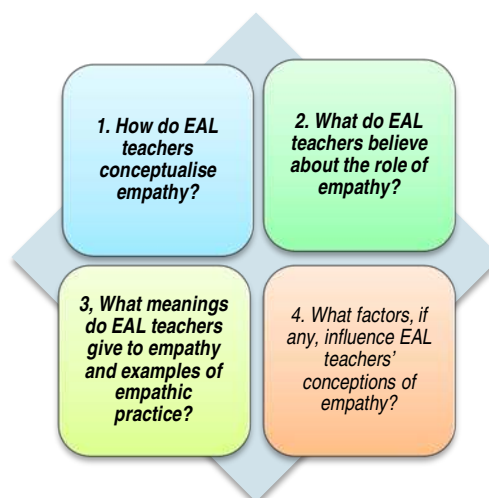
Figure 7.1. The central research questions one, two and three.

The sub-propositions.

The third proposition was developed from three related sub-propositions:

a) *English language teachers' understanding and acceptance that their students have worldviews which differ from their own is integral to intercultural teacher empathy;*

b) *English language teachers' intercultural empathy is enhanced when they understand and have knowledge of the cultural beliefs, values and practices of their students;*

c) *English language teachers respond appropriately to situations in which they have a limited understanding or knowledge of particular cultural or religious beliefs, practices and behaviours of their students.*

A fourth sub-proposition, while providing further insight into the key concepts of the core categories, diverges from the main tenet of the third proposition stating that:

d) *At times, the beliefs and practices of English language teachers contradict the importance that they place on understanding and valuing the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students.*

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, the key concepts are discussed and defined with reference to the research literature and empirical data gathered for the current study. Utilising data extracts as sub-headings, the third proposition and its related sub-propositions are presented in three further sections which analyse and discuss the data coded under the core categories labelled *understanding* and *knowledge*.

Knowledge or Understanding?

> If you understand something in only one way, then you do not really understand it
> at all […] The secret of what anything means to us depends on how we have
> connected it to all the other things we know. (Minsky, 1994, p. 112)

Competing definitions of the key concepts of *understanding* and *knowledge* are evident in the everyday usage, and the research literature (Minsky, 1994; Schwandt, 1999), as well as in the empirical data gathered for the current study. These key terms were not defined by the researcher or research participants during the data collection stage of the study; however, it is possible to differentiate between the terms by analysing how they were used by the study participants. For example, when talking about what constituted empathy or an empathic instance, the study participants talked about how knowledge led to understanding. When referring to

knowledge, participants were more likely to refer to the transfer of meaning from one person or situation to another:

> Well first of all you need to **know** a little bit about them, so it is important to have
> an idea of where they are coming from and where they want to go. And if you *know*
> that, you are able to **understand** things a lot more. (Silvia, group B)

For the study participants, knowledge referred to indisputable factual information, usually about the culture or motivations of students, which often served as a basis through which they could understand their students.   This is illustrated in the following extract in which the word "information" is substituted for the word "knowledge":

> It [empathy] is **knowledge** plus applying that knowledge to a situation or to a
> student and using that background **information** to make judgements about
> perhaps why they are having difficulties with particular things or why they have an
> aversion to doing particular kind of activities. (Leena, group B)

In contrast to the concept of knowledge, for the participants in this study, the term understanding referred to a more complex psychosocial phenomenon which involved an awareness of other ways of being through which meaning was constructed, interpreted and attributed, with particular emphasis on the person acquiring new understandings. As Leena explained:

> Be aware that they are not experiencing the situation the way that you might be or
> that native speakers might be. That there are other parameters, there are other
> things going on in them. (Leena, group B)

Despite this conflation of, and confusion about, the meaning of these two terms as distinct constructs, the data analysis identified a number of points of differentiation between the key concepts of *knowing* and *understanding*:

a) the term understanding refers to a process through which meaning is being continually constructed, reconstructed and attributed, while knowledge refers to that which can be readily acquired, or is knowable;

b) understanding refers to an open-ended interpretation or process; in contrast to knowledge which refers to an end or a product;

c) within the conception of understanding both social cognition and social affect are present as new understandings are formed whereas knowledge includes only social cognition and refers specifically to the acquisition of information that is viewed as already in existence.

Despite the differences between understanding and knowledge, the current study viewed both terms as social practice and as socially constructed. Both are intersubjective and emerge in social interaction (Hoffman & Roth, 2005) and are mediated by individual interpretation and use. Both terms refer to an interpretation of human social experience that is influenced by culturally embedded schemas (Nishida, 1999), which enable and constrain meaning or sense-making when negotiating meaning in intercultural settings. In this chapter, the term *schema* is used to refer to a framework of existing knowledge and/or understanding from which meaning is interpreted and constructed, as outlined by Nishida (1999):

> It is said that when a person enters a familiar situation, a stock of knowledge of appropriate behaviour and an appropriate role he/she should play in the situation is retrieved. In other words, every interactant's social world is usually constituted within a framework of familiar and pre-acquainted knowledge about various situations. (p. 754).

When faced with a new situation or experience, schemas are activated and form a knowledge basis from which people are able to interpret and construct meaning. However, there are concerns that people often assume that new experiences or situations conform to these schemas when they may not (Cook, 1997). This can lead to misunderstanding and conflict as each person seeks to impose her or his schematic representation as truth. Analysis of the data suggested that participants believed that they were able to negotiate meaning successfully with their students primarily through their acceptance that their students saw the world differently from them.

Trying To See the World As They See It (Mikki, Group A)
Sub-proposition a) of the third proposition suggests that:

English language teachers' understanding and acceptance that their students have worldviews which differ from their own is integral to intercultural teacher empathy.

Throughout the study, the participants emphasised that they understood and accepted that their students did not view the world as they did. They referred to the influence that schemas had on how both they and their students felt, thought and behaved. Participants regularly utilised the store of knowledge of their past experiences in order to make meaning and draw inferences from

their students' words and actions. Awareness of and responding to the different worldviews of their students was an important element of being an empathic teacher. Mikki described how empathy involved an understanding and acceptance of other's worldviews or, "departure points", as well as a desire to see the world from the perspective of others:

> I don't think without some form of empathy that you would even want to bother to understand. So if you were at that point where you didn't even want to understand someone else's point of view, you just wanted to see your point of view, that is pretty narrow view of the world. [Empathy is] trying to see the world as they see it, and trying to understand their departure points for their actions as well. (Mikki, group A)

Through this process participants acknowledged that changes to their schemas occurred and they were able to acknowledge that their ego boundaries were permeable:

> When do you allow yourself to be changed through an empathic experience? And say: No, that actually is now a part of my worldview, that is part of the way I now feel about this. (Anthony, group C)

Harris expressed how he attended to the diversity of students' worldviews. He talked about transcending the commonly held conception of culture as a set of "content-competencies" (Stier, 2006, p. 6) which involve knowing about others in terms of home culture, history, language, values and norms. He acknowledged the importance of trying to understand students' perspectives:

> I think it is important to somehow absorb or connect with their worldview on some level, not just random sets of one sentence customs and rules and behaviour. (Harris, group C)

In another example Leena explained how empathy involved an expanding of her worldview which enabled her to connect with her students:

> The ability to extend your own understanding rather than just have your own point of view [...] you have to make that connection somehow. (Leena, group B)

The participants in the study viewed empathy as not only enabling them to see things from the perspectives of their students, but also as a catalyst which caused them to challenge their

understanding of situations. Harris explained how empathy enabled him to understand his students' situations and set aside his own worldview:

> [Empathy is] trying to look at their life situation and trying to understand the difficulties of their situation and trying to disregard as much as you can your own biases and perceptions and assumptions. (Harris, group C).

For another teacher, Anthony, intercultural empathy involved a voluntary uptake of someone else's worldview through which he was able to see the world from other perspectives:

> [E]mpathy is being able to temporarily adopt someone else's world view not intellectually seeing it, but actually voluntarily trying to observe through that point of view what are they seeing and thinking. (Anthony, group C)

This section has suggested that the participants in the study acknowledged that their students had different worldviews. The study participants believed that through empathy they were able to adopt other worldviews which enabled them to understand the learning experience from the perspectives of their students. Analysis of these data suggested that intercultural empathy brought participants closer to a third space; it ameliorated their fears of schema displacement and encouraged more flexible ego boundaries. The next section presents the analysis of the data that led to the development of sub-propositions b) and c), which argue that the participants in the study also believed that their knowledge and understanding of different cultures contributed significantly to intercultural empathy.

Knowledge Does Create Empathy (Mikki, group A)
As noted in the introduction to the current chapter, sub-propositions b) and c) argue that:

English language teachers believe that intercultural empathy is enhanced when they understand and have knowledge of the cultural beliefs, values and practices of their students;

English language teachers respond appropriately to situations in which they have a limited understanding or knowledge of particular cultural or religious beliefs, practices and behaviours of their students.

Many participants indicated that they believed that empathy was evident in situations in which they understood that students' actions and reactions were related to their cultural backgrounds. For example, Nadia, who was born and raised in Singapore to Chinese-born parents, explained

how her understanding of cross-cultural pragmatics enabled her to recognise and accept a form of address that was generally considered rude in Australia:

> What classifies as rude to one culture may not be to another. For example, the term 'teacher'; some people don't like being called 'teacher', but I don't mind it, and I think the thing is to see where they are coming from, it's what they do. They are not allowed to use the first name of their teacher. They are actually showing you respect, if we didn't know that then we would take offence that they are using a term that we would not personally like. (Nadia, group A)

Analysis of the data suggested that the participants in the study believed that their knowledge of the habits, norms and values of their students helped them to empathise. For example, Silvia was asked why she responded differently to the English language students that she taught. She explained what she did if a local monolingual student was not paying attention or fell asleep during class. She contrasted this response with how she responded to English language learners who were not engaged or who appeared to be bored, tired or inattentive during class:

> Silvia: I'd say something sarcastic and tell their friend to dig them in the ribs, and I would tell them off. I would see it as a disciplinary issue; as an insult, but if an Asian student does it, I don't like to be too rude.
>
> Researcher: So how would you handle it?
>
> Silvia: I'd change what we were doing, change the activity, so that they were all up out of their seats for a while and get some fresh air. (Silvia, group, B)

It was thought at the onset of the current study that teachers who taught in settings that were culturally and linguistically diverse may have increased intercultural competence and that empathy might be associated with this. It was suggested that language teachers work in *intercultural spaces* in which their horizons (Rinvolucri, 2001) are continually displaced; that is, their thoughts, beliefs and feelings (or schemas) in relation to their own, and other cultures, are continually challenged, thus leading to the construction of new understandings (Kramsch, 1998; Min, 2001). The participants in the study taught students from a wide variety of languacultures. They managed diverse groups of learners of whose behaviours, attitudes and values they had limited understanding. Through cultural and emotional awareness and reflexivity, the participants in the study believed that they were able to respond sensitively to situations that were potentially stressful or anxiety inducing for themselves and their students.

Our way is not the only way; we live and breathe that every day (Harris, group C)

As stated in previous chapters, affective factors, including stress and anxiety, are considered to be crucial factors in language learning. As to be expected in any situation when people from different cultures interact, there were numerous situations that caused stress and anxiety for English language learners, particularly in the initial settling in period in the host country. The findings of the current study show that the participants believed that the ways in which they managed their thoughts and feelings as teachers contributed to the creation of a positive learning environment. The study participants understood teacher empathy to include an acceptance and accommodation of responses and behaviours with which they were not familiar. Mikki believed that it was not necessary for her to have had knowledge of a particular culture in order for her to be empathic. Mikki managed a difficult situation in which a female student from Saudi Arabia did not want to sit next to male students during Mikki's lessons:

> She was about to walk in late, and I was standing so that I couldn't see her when she opened the door a little [...] So the door opened and the door closed and I just assumed that someone had come into the wrong class. And then the Arabic boys at the back started shuffling around and said: oh teacher, teacher there is a lady outside. So I ran and looked and I just saw her just wandering around the corridors. And I asked what is wrong, and she said there is no room for me. But what she meant was that there was no room for her on a table with just girls. (Mikki, group A)

Mikki acknowledged and utilised the cultural knowledge of other students in the class, enabling her to manage the situation sensitively:

> One of the Arabic boys got another Korean boy and asked him to move [...] and they made room for her [the student who was in the corridor]. I don't know. I think that's right. (Mikki, group A)

A few days later, Mikki had attempted to find out the reason for the student's behaviour:

> I spoke to her [the student] yesterday. I said to her: I am really interested about your culture, can you tell me is it you that feels uncomfortable when you sit around girls, or is it the men you are worried about? That they might feel uncomfortable? Can you explain to me what this is? She said in her country, in Saudi Arabia, she has never gone to school with boys, and they have never gone to school with girls, and then she added also her religion forbids it. (Mikki, group A)

Mikki believed that as an English language teacher she needed to be sensitive to the student's cultural background and therefore she wanted to accommodate the student. This was contrary to what the then Director of Studies had advised her to do when she had sought advice about how to manage the situation if it occurred again:

> Brian said, no, we won't allow that in Australia, we just gotta have people mix. But I think that we have got to respect that because it is religion. I mean the law says we respect other people's religion [...] I felt that it was wrong to say that you are in Australia therefore you will sit with anyone. I don't know; I feel uncomfortable about that. So I'm happy to not move people, and they volunteer anyway because they know her situation. (Mikki, group A)

Poppy (group A) explained what she had learnt when a student had refused to shake her hand:

> Poppy […] I put out my hand to shake his hand. He held his heart. He put his hand on his heart and he said: Hello teacher. He looked at my hand and then he did that. And then I realised. Now, I'd never hold out a hand to an Arab student, to an Arab male now.
>
> Researcher: What did you understand by that?
>
> Poppy: For him culturally, that was taboo.

Other participants explained how they accommodated different cultural schemas. Anthony acted to protect a student from Vietnam from feeling embarrassed about a poor test score. He tried to protect her from being embarrassed or humiliated in front of her peers:

> I have got a Vietnamese girl; it is a culture that has that notion of saving face and public appearance. And she is not doing very well in her listening, and I wanted her to see Brian [the Director of Studies] today. And I had time in the class that I could have snook off with her and left the class to come and see Brian that wasn't on my lunch break, but the only thing holding me up was that people would have put two and two together because I had just handed back the listening test results. (Anthony, group C)

Anthony believed that he was expressing intercultural empathy for this student by using his understanding of "face" to guide his actions. In interpersonal pragmatics, *face* refers to people's sense of self that motivates politeness towards others and is mediated through emotional responses (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Anthony expressed awareness of the idea that face can be

both lost and gained through *face threatening acts* (FTAs) (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). In Australia, loss of face is generally considered to be a particularly sensitive issue for people from Asian cultures (Watson, 1999). By not drawing attention to the student during the class, Anthony believed that he had helped the student to save face. Yet the action of asking the student to see the Director of Studies to discuss her poor test results could have also caused a loss of face, particularly when taking the power differentials into account between the student and the Director of Studies. Anthony then went on to explain how he would have behaved differently towards an Anglo-Australian student:

> She is quite shy and I got the sense that face was important to her. If it was an
> Aussie, I would have said: Ok, let's go and see Brian now. (Anthony, group C)

Anthony believed that loss of face would not have been an issue for an Anglo-Australian in the same situation. Thus, he believed that he was sensitive to the cultural schema of his student and was able to minimise her emotional discomfort.

The participants also believed that having knowledge of why their students were learning English helped them to empathise. At the time the first interviews took place, a number of changes had occurred on the program where the participants worked. The number of students studying English on the program had doubled overall. The student profile had changed and the vast majority of students were learning English in order to gain entry to university rather than for travel or work purposes. Between 60 to 70 percent of the total student body comprised of either government sponsored public sector employees from Saudi Arabia and young adults from China.

As noted in previously, this new cohort of students was described as "high stakes" and their situation was recognised as being quite different from other students on the program who were learning English for travel or work purposes. The high stakes students had a limited amount of time and resources to meet the English language requirements of their next course of study.

The findings of the study suggest that participants believed that empathy was enhanced when they knew what their students' study pathways and learning goals were. Many of the participants in the study reported that they were emotionally involved in students' efforts to achieve their pathway goals, and believed that they understood the difficulties that their students faced in trying to meet the English language requirements of their next course:

> You know that if they have made the grade they want you obviously share their
> happiness. And if they can't get into a course that they are meant to go into you
> feel bad for them, sad for them. (Nadia, group A).

Communicative language teaching.

The practice of English language teaching places certain demands and expectations on learners that may at times contradict learners' cultural norms and values. Communicative language teaching is the preferred teaching approach in western English language teaching contexts (Ellis, 1994). Most English languages teachers in Australia are familiar with this approach; trainee teachers are exposed to the communicative approach on the Cambridge University Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) teacher training course and other English language teacher training courses. Communicative language teaching emerged in the 1970s in response to research and theory in the fields of linguistics and psychology that challenged the theory that knowledge of language structure was the most important element of learning a language (Spada, 2007). Nowadays, although form is still considered important by most practitioners and linguists, *communicative competence* is generally accepted to be a key goal of English language lessons. In order to achieve this goal, meaning is emphasised over form (Lightbown & Spada, 1999); fluency is emphasised over accuracy; and lessons are learner-centred (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) which means that interactive speaking practice is commonplace (Harmer, 2007; Thornbury, 2005). Thus, students are expected to interact with their teacher and with their peers during lessons and it is generally accepted that varying with whom students sit and where students sit in a class encourages language learning (Harmer, 2007).

To educators in other settings, it may seem strange that teachers of adult learners dictate where students sit during class; however, the goal of communicative competence means that it is a central concern for many English language teachers to ensure that students speak in English to each other and to the teacher during lessons. It would be reasonable to assume from this that participants expected students to participate in speaking activities. It was not unusual for the participants in the study to express that they felt bad (frustrated) when students did not conform to this expectation:

> They have to give their ideas and give their opinions as well, if a student doesn't do
> that it is very difficult to have empathy. (Leena, group B)

Analysis of the data suggested that because of the dominance of the communicative approach, the participants in the study may have overlooked the fact that their students had other culturally influenced ways of being and learning. At times, the participants struggled to adapt the

communicative approach to suit both themselves and their students. Leena described how she tried to adapt the approach to a group of Japanese students in such a way as to enable students to practice speaking in English that was mutually acceptable:

> Leena: You would ask for an opinion and no response and in group work it would not happen. You would have to go to individual groups and ask them individually for their opinion and then they would give it.
>
> Researcher: And then it worked?
>
> Leena: Only until you stopped asking the questions and go away again and then they would stop. (Leena, group B)

Another situation illustrates the frustration felt by another teacher, Silvia, when a student did not participate in a speaking task:

> In the Wednesday pm class she was continually talking quietly in Chinese, fiddling with her mobile phone and would not get on with the task assigned her. I found my voice rising in volume and my annoyance growing as I tried to tell her off and get her attention back onto the task I'd set. She refused to speak to me, just looked down and wouldn't look at me at all. (Silvia, group B)

The analysis suggested that participants' adherence to the communicative approach can be problematic when teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who "have their own agendas, and their own attitudes to silence, and may not be ready or able to play the role of globally engaged citizens which is thrust upon them" (Pegrum, 2004, p. 8). The analysis also suggested that the participants in the study had limited and at times simplistic conceptualisations of their students' perspectives, relying on stereotypes to view student behaviour. The next section presents the final sub-proposition, which is underpinned by a more critical perspective of the data.

Valuing Cultural and Linguistic diversity
Sub-proposition d) suggests that:

At times, the beliefs and practices of English language teachers contradict the importance that they place on understanding and valuing the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students.

Analysis of the data suggested that intercultural encounters may not always lead to intercultural understanding, and that intercultural empathy was not consistent in the daily working lives of the

participants in the study. However, on the surface, the participants believed that they valued their students' cultural and linguistic diversity.   Many participants said that they chose English language teaching as a profession because they were "interested in other cultures" and enjoyed overseas travel:

> I think amongst co-workers, it is what I like about the job, is that one thing I share
> with colleagues, is a lot have travelled, and everyone is interested in other cultures.
> (Anthony, group C)

Like English language teachers in other contexts (Kubota, 2004), the study participants sometimes viewed, understood and responded to learner behaviours, beliefs, aptitudes and values through a lens in which cultural, linguistic or religious difference was viewed as deficit or detrimental to learning English. Rather than explaining student behaviour in terms of individual differences, participants had a tendency to homogenise learners' beliefs, attitudes, aptitudes and behaviours in terms of language, culture and nationality. For example, when an activity had failed to engage learners, it was explained in terms of cultural preferences rather than as a problem inherent in the classroom materials or learning activities.

Essentialism, reductionism and deficit discourses of English language learners were evident in the data gathered for the current study.   This was evident during interviews with all the participants in the study, including the bilingual, bicultural participants (Poppy, Mikki and Nadia) as well as participants who had lived and/or taught English for considerable periods of time in contexts where English was not the main language of communication (Niren, Leena, Silvia, Jane and Anthony).   Participants generally perceived students as being either strongly influenced or largely constituted by and from particular cultures or countries. Participants perceived students in terms of their own understandings and beliefs about particular languacultures even when they had significant knowledge of students' backgrounds. For example, Mikki, who had a Japanese mother, was fluent in Japanese, and who had lived and worked in Japan for several years as an adult, made the following generalisations about Japanese managers:

> Looking back at my experiences with dealing with middle management in Japan,
> and you know, the fact that they have all got some sort of chip on their shoulder or
> complex. (Mikki, group A)

Another participant, Harris, whose parents were both migrants to Australia from Eastern Europe, expressed a deficit view of students' beliefs and values in a broad generalisation of the English language learners that he taught:

>Should we pander to their ways of thinking, where we limit what we teach? (Harris,
>
>group C)

Anthony, whose father was a Spanish speaking migrant, and as someone who had spent a year in Spain as a young man studying Spanish, expressed essentialist views of Chinese students:

>Some of the Chinese students are pretty indoctrinated, and they will just throw stuff
>
>away; they will not listen [….] I think maybe the method of teaching and learning
>
>could be rote. (Anthony, group C)

Leena, who lived and worked in Japan for several years and studied Japanese, stereotyped male students from Saudi Arabia:

>You know we have had a lot of Saudi students coming into […] and there has been
>
>difficulties [...] They have less respect for females, women, just by their manner,
>
>just by the things that they say, you get this understanding. (Leena, group B)

The target culture.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the exposure to and learning of 'native speaker-like' language is often the main focus of English language teaching, as is the teaching of the target culture; in this case Anglo-Australian habits, beliefs and values. Few lessons utilised students' own linguistic and cultural knowledge. Of those that did, there was on current affairs or social or political issues that often required a level of proficiency in English that was beyond students' capacity to respond. In some cases, participants utilised students' cultural backgrounds in ways that lacked respect and understanding, particularly in a context of a significant discrepancy between the linguistic abilities of teachers and students. Participants asserted their own cultural beliefs and values over that of students, often in the guise of 'critical thinking' activities. In some classroom activities, students' cultural knowledge and/or practices appear to be elicited for the purpose of demonstrating the superiority of the target languaculture over the students' languacultures. In this regard, Anthony described a lesson that he had created and delivered to a group of predominantly Chinese students about the Tiananmen Square protests that took place in Beijing, in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1989:

Anthony: Yes, I showed Tankman, on the Tiananmen anniversary, to the Chinese students.

Harris: Woa.

Katie: That's brave.

Anthony: But I go into it cautiously, and I was culturally, culture was at the forefront of my mind. They come from an authoritarian culture, they don't see a lot of this stuff, you can't just go and throw an alternative reality at someone. And we went through it in stages, and they were all really receptive to it, and so I kept going with it .... I was just trying to be aware and sensitive at each stage how they were going with it, and they were good. (Group interview C)

Anthony believed that exposing his Chinese students to ideas that he believed directly challenged their beliefs and values rendered them better able to learn English as well as adapt to and possibly adopt Anglo-Australian norms and values. Through an understanding of Chinese culture as "authoritarian", Anthony, and other participants in the study, created and delivered lessons that they believed helped students to learn English and adapt to the target culture. Practices such as these diverged from the humanistic underpinnings of the communicative approach, as Arnold (1998, p. 238) argued "imposition of any kind is quite outside basic humanistic teaching philosophy".

Valuing and rejecting.

The participants were neither wholly uncomfortable nor completely comfortable with the diversity that they experienced on a daily basis. Analysis of the data showed that the participants in the study simultaneously valued and rejected students' cultural and religious values, beliefs and practices. For example, Poppy described what happened when a student wearing a *niquab* arrived late to her class (the niquab is a face veil which covers the hair and face leaving a narrow slit for the eyes that is worn by some Muslim women when in public or in the company of men who are not members of her immediate family):

She came in a bit late and when I saw this all bandaged up *[Poppy laughing and imitating head being covered up],* I just instinctively said: Would you like to join this group or the other girls there? (Poppy, group A)

Poppy's way of describing the student as "all bandaged up" suggested that she had a derogatory view of the niquab. However, Poppy's actions showed sensitivity and understanding towards the

student. Poppy was aware that the student was uncomfortable in class where male students were present, so she helped the student to find a place with a group of female students.

Another participant discussed her first encounters with a student wearing a niquab:

> I remember standing there and my heart racing. This is scary, there's this black person in my classroom and I can't see them and I can only talk to their eyes. I remember feeling really anxious about it because I couldn't read them. (Jane, group B)

Jane viewed the wearing of the niquab as dehumanising:

> I wanted to make them a person on my eyes. You're a human being and you're valuable. Let's develop a relationship with them in the classroom. So, instead of dehumanising them, try to humanise them. (Jane, group B)

Jane interpreted the wearing of the niquab as a form of female oppression; through this interpretation Jane was able to find a means through which she was able to empathise with students who wore the niquab:

> I let them know that it was important for me that they were comfortable culturally in the classroom. I won't ask them to sit next to a man. They were safe. I respected the cultural reasons. (Jane, group B)

Research shows that Muslim women who migrate or study in Muslim minority contexts such as Australia, The United States and France face prejudice and discrimination, particularly those who wear Islamic dress such as the burkha, niquab or hijab which are stigmatised in such contexts (Casimiro, Hancock, & Northcote, 2007; Tissot, 2011; Volk, 2009). Volk (2009) found that female Muslim migrants to the United States who wore Islamic dress faced daily discrimination and harassment and were in many cases forced to modify their dress in order to avoid being harassed and verbally abused in public. Similarly, Casimiro, Hancock and Northcote (2007) found that female Muslim migrants in Western Australia were verbally abused and exposed to criticism and ridicule for wearing a *hijab* (a headscarf) as one of Casimiro, Hancock and Northcote's participants explained:

> Everywhere you go, you have this constant fear that you'll be attacked or that someone will be racist to you (Iraqi woman, 29). (2007, p. 65)

Analysis of the data suggested that Jane, Poppy, and other participants, perceived Islamic dress to be a symbol of female oppression. Although participants believed that their response to the wearing of Islamic dress came from a position of care and concern, the analysis of the data suggested that their empathic response was also a form of othering that disempowered the students who wore the hijab or niquab by viewing them as subservient, powerless and unable to make choices about what they wore. Tissot (2011) challenges the anti-sexism arguments that surround the criminalisation of the wearing of the niquab in public in France:

> The focus on racialized women as the only victims of sexism in France has logically nurtured a vision of women wearing the niqab as the most outrageous expression of masculine domination, a situation that cannot be compared with any other behaviors and attire. (Tissot, 2011, p. 42)

This extreme view of the meaning of the niquab is reflected in the study participants' views. Participants did not express awareness that many Muslim women cover their hair, face and bodies by choice as Ghida, one of Volk's (2009) participants had:

> Ghida was one of the first to share that she felt out of place because she wore the niqab in addition to her full body veil, and, as a result, she drew curious looks from people around her. She said that she had ignored encouragements from her husband to take off the face veil to make herself less conspicuous in public. She proudly maintained that it was her choice to wear the niqab, which she considered to be the proper dress for a Muslim woman. (Volk, 2009, p. 404)

The wearing of Islamic dress is currently undergoing a reconceptualisation and is increasingly being worn by Muslim women as a symbol of social justice, identity and even of Muslim women's rights (Ahmed, 2011; El Guindi, 2009). Although the participants in the study had a limited understanding of Islamic culture and expressed prejudiced beliefs and assumptions that were common to the anti-Islamic discourse post 9/11 and anti-Islam Western feminist discourses in Australia, the data analysis provides evidence that empathy was evident in their interactions with students who wore Islamic dress. Participants treated female Muslim students with respect; participants accommodated such students to the limits of their cultural understanding, and showed care and concern for their well-being.

Stereotypes.

As noted, at times the study participants referred to English language learners in stereotypical terms, relating particular deficits of belief, practices or values to particular groups of students. It

was also common for participants to homogenise learners. In particular, participants had a tendency to refer to 'Asian' students as lacking the capacity to think independently and that Asian students lacked a capacity for deep learning. As Silvia explained:

> In many Asian countries, a good student is one who sits quietly, doesn't make a fuss, memorising everything and repeats that in the exam for the teacher. (Silvia, group B)

Another teacher, Katie, discussed a lesson that another teacher had created specifically with the aim of encouraging the students from China in his class to question the actions of the Chinese government. Katie believed that students with Confucian Heritage Cultural (CHC) backgrounds such as students from China were unable to think critically due to the way in which they were educated:

> Let's face it; they are really big concepts for these Chinese students because their education system does not go there at all. (Katie, group C)

This view of Asian students has also been well-documented among teachers and academics in Australia (Volet, 1999; Vandermensbrugghe, 2004) as well as among ex-patriot teachers working in Asia (Kember. 2000). Kirkpatrick (2004) also noted that other national groups are also talked about in a similar way in Australia. Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggests that there are three common stereotypes of Asian students prevalent among English language teachers; a) they are obedient to authority, (b) they lack critical thinking skills, and (c) they do not participate in classroom interaction (p. 710). Kumaravadivelu points to the danger in, and the absurdity of, the homogenisation of such a diverse array of languacultures encapsulated in the geographical term 'Asia':

> It is apparent that there exists a harmful homogenisation of nearly 3 billion people belonging to cultures as contrasting and conflicting as the Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and many others-all thrown into a single cultural basket labelled Asian. (2003, pp. 709-710)

There is a growing body of research that contradicts and challenges many of the commonly held assumptions teachers and academics in Australia hold about Asian learners. Volet (1999) for example, showed that international students from Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) such as China studying in Australian universities performed better than their local counterparts in terms of academic performance. Chalmers and Volet (1997) findings also contradict many of the

persistent stereotypes and prevailing misconceptions that Australian teachers and academics have of so-called Asian learners. They conclude that, "focusing on differences between students, or groups of students, increases the possibility of perceiving students inaccurately or seeing only part of the full picture" (Chalmers & Volet, p. 96).

As Chalmers and Volet (1997) argue, "when the 'problem' is attributed to the students, teachers can avoid examining their own attitudes and practices" (p.96). Kumaravadivelu (2003) explores the well-evidenced racial stereotyping of English language learners by English language teachers. He suggests that racial stereotyping is an understandable reaction to the difficulties that English language teachers face as they negotiate the complex, culturally diverse context of English language classrooms. Kumaravadivelu (2003) argues that teachers' racial stereotyping of learners may serve to alleviate the challenge of negotiating with diverse groups of learners as it creates a framework from which teachers can view, explain and resolve communication and learning problems. As Russell (1991) stated, "[h]uman beings divide the world into categories. We speakers of English divide colours into red, green, and so on; and our kin into aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on" (p 426). That is not to say that the categories or generalisations evident in the data gathered for the current study are correct or that they should remain unchallenged, but to suggest that stereotyping might have served a purpose.

Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 716) suggests that "the persistence of cultural stereotypes" may even be a reaction to the difficulties that English language teachers face as they negotiate the complex, culturally diverse context of English language classrooms. Instead of explaining student behaviours in terms of individual differences or personal characteristics it was easier for participants to look for (and find) patterns which enabled them to homogenise learner beliefs and behaviours and explain behaviours in terms of culture. For example, if an activity failed to engage the learners, it was explained in terms of cultural preferences rather than as any particular problem with the activity or the way in which it was set up or presented to students. Thus, cultural or racial stereotyping also served as a mechanism whereby participants avoided self-criticism. If it was culture, religion or race that was viewed as causing the problem then teachers did not need to not challenge their own teaching approach and classroom practices.

When participants were aware that they lacked cultural knowledge, they were more likely to think that their assumptions and beliefs were not necessarily accurate. Mikki, for example, expressed awareness that sometimes she had a negative reaction to her students' culturally different behaviour, particularly when she lacked cultural knowledge. Analysis of the data showed that

through awareness, Mikki suspended her judgements about students, and reflected on how she felt, rather than reacting negatively to the behaviour:

> From past experiences you realise how much knowledge does create empathy. If I don't have knowledge, and therefore I have that initial allergic reaction to something, I realise that it is not them. But my lack of knowledge, so maybe I don't have that knowledge yet, but I have that other knowledge that tells me, hang on, you don't have the knowledge. (Mikki, group A)

What Mikki described here as "other knowledge" was her awareness that the way in which she reacted to particular words or actions of students was driven by lack of knowledge or understanding rather than offensive behaviour on the part of students. Participants who were aware that their ability to empathise was constrained by *not knowing*, and who were aware of this when it occurred, were more able to modify their adverse reactions and seek knowledge.

If critical incidents that occur in intercultural encounters are not evaluated and judged on cognitive, affective and behavioural levels then stereotypes and prejudices may be reinforced (Otten, 2003). Otten's research into how teachers manage cultural and linguistic diversity shows that if teachers failed to make use of the diversity in intercultural classrooms interaction stayed monocultural and monolingual:

> If intercultural implications in teaching are subordinate to some kind of academic universalism and institutional functionalism, it will not encourage faculty members to value cultural differences in class. It is most likely that a parochial learning environment creates a no-risk climate among teachers and students rather than openness, curiosity, and trust. (Otten, 2003, p. 15)

Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter suggest that intercultural teacher empathy was associated with participants' knowledge and understanding of students' cultural backgrounds. The chapter has also shown how participants' knowledge and understanding of students' cultural and religious practices and beliefs influenced their teaching practices. Analysis of the data indicated that at times the participants in the study may have unwittingly devalued the linguistic and cultural diversity of students through a lack of understanding and biases towards students' cultural and religious beliefs, thoughts and practices.

The findings also indicate that at times the participants in the study lacked a critical approach to their thoughts and actions that resulted in the reinforcement of racial and cultural stereotypes and

culturally inappropriate and insensitive classroom practices. The findings suggest that cultural stereotyping of English language learners made it easier for participants to manage the challenges of their daily working lives because it enabled participants to create a framework from which they interpreted, explained and attempted to solve problems. When perceived cultural, racial or religious differences formed a common basis from which participants explained the behaviour of English language learners, participants avoided reflection and self-criticism. These findings suggested that it was easier for participants to view the cultural backgrounds of students as the problem rather than to question their own assumptions and beliefs.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the third theoretical proposition presented in this chapter, in conjunction with Propositions One and Two presented in this thesis, combine together to create a tentative answer to the central research questions one, two and three. Chapters Eight and Nine to follow present findings related to factors which enhanced and constrained empathy, teacher identity and the discourses of humanism which together provide a tentative answer to the fourth and final research question which asked:

What factors, if any, influence EAL teachers' conceptions of empathy?

Together, these five theoretical propositions constitute a tentative answer to the central research questions of the current study in the form a theory of intercultural teacher empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia, as illustrated in Figures 7.2 and 7. 3.

Feeling

Understanding

Relating

Knowledge

Observing
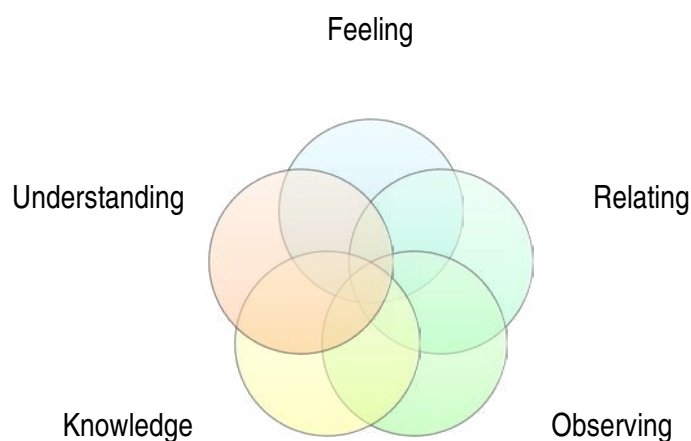
Figure 7.2. Propositions One, Two and Three were developed from five core categories which together form the basis of the tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy.
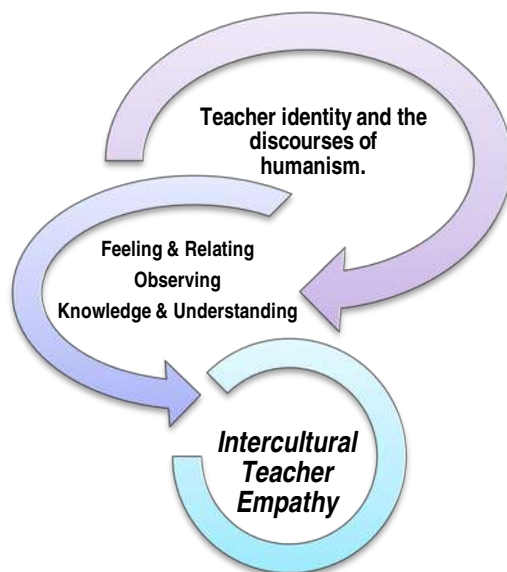
Figure 7. 3. Intercultural teacher empathy. The core categories are influenced by teacher identity and the discourses of humanism.

<div align="center">**Chapter Eight: More or Less Empathy**</div>

Introduction

> The experience of empathic contact frees us as human beings from the isolation in
> which we can remain locked when this contact is lacking, even in the presence of
> other people. (Staemmler, 2011, p. 5)

The current chapter presents findings associated with participants' beliefs about the factors which enhanced and constrained intercultural teacher 'empathy'. This chapter suggests that for the participants in the study, intercultural empathy was an individual capacity as well as an intrasubjective phenomenon embedded in a social context. For the study participants, intercultural empathy was mediated through interpersonal and intercultural interactions that influenced their energy and openness as teachers to empathic response.

These findings are explicated in the form of a fourth proposition which contributes to the theory of intercultural teacher empathy presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven of this thesis. The previous chapters described and discussed the propositions developed from the core categories labelled *feeling, relating, observing, knowledge* and *understanding* and illustrated how these core categories contributed to the development of a tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy. This current chapter explicates this theory further by exploring the factors which may influence the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy in the daily working lives of the study participants.

      Proposition Four.
The fourth proposition suggests that:

The manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy in English language teachers' daily working lives is mediated through teachers' interpersonal and intercultural interactions with students which are **enhanced** *and* **constrained** *by teachers' expectations of students and teachers' personal and workplace circumstances.*

Proposition Four was developed from data coded and categorised under the core categories labelled *enhancing empathy* and *constraining empathy* as illustrated in Figure 8.1.

<div align="center">159</div>
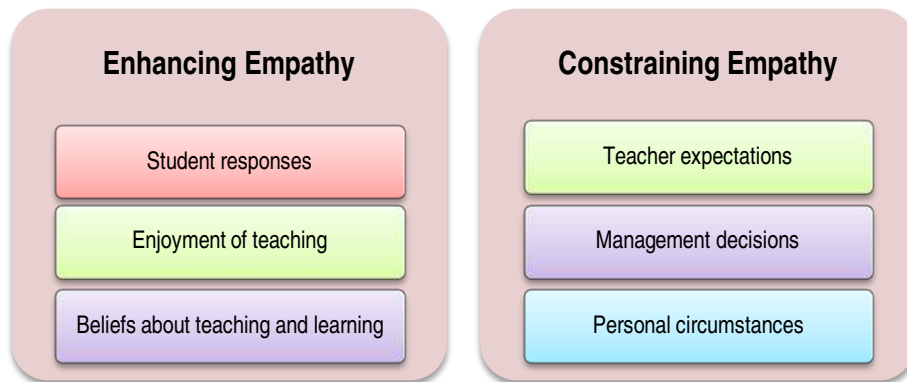
Figure 8.1. Codes and sub-categories which illustrate factors which participants believed enhanced and constrained intercultural teacher empathy.

The core categories labelled *enhancing empathy* and *constraining empathy* were developed from analysis of data associated with phenomena that participants' identified as having an influence on the manifestation of intercultural empathy in their daily working lives. The term *enhancing* refers to a positive association between particular phenomena and the manifestation of empathy in the daily working lives of participants, while the word *constraining* refers to a negative association between the phenomena and intercultural teacher empathy. Thus, these two terms refer to whether particular phenomena were associated with participants being more, less or not able to empathise with their students.

The sub-propositions.
The fourth proposition was developed from the following sub-propositions:

a) The manifestation of intercultural empathy in the daily working lives of English language teachers is influenced by teachers' perceptions of students' responses;

b) English language teachers' expectations of students influence the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy in their daily working lives;

c) Personal and workplace circumstances influence the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy in the daily working lives of English language teachers.

The fourth proposition and its related sub-propositions were developed from a process that involved the comparison of data coded under the core categories and related sub-categories illustrated in Figures 8.2 and 8.3.
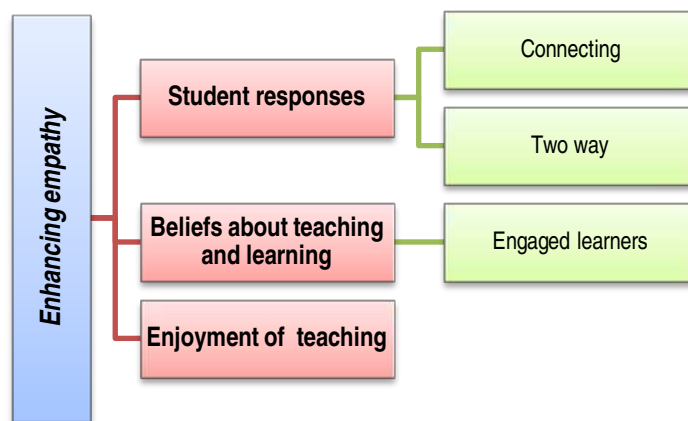
Figure 8.2. Sub-categories and codes of the core category enhancing empathy show that empathy was enhanced by effective interpersonal and intercultural communication.
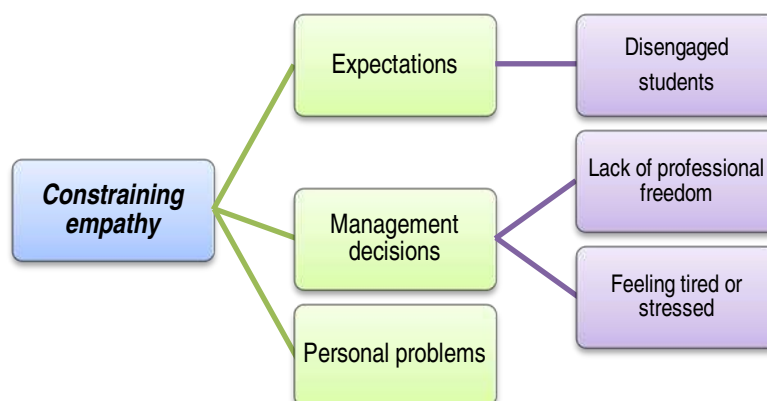
Figure 8.3. Sub-categories and codes of the core category constraining empathy show that empathy was constrained by participants' expectations of students, and personal and professional challenges.

The findings presented in this chapter were developed from analysis of data associated with participants' shared beliefs that there were various situations in their daily working lives in which they had more empathy, less empathy or no empathy. Participants believed that they experienced empathy as either present or absent in particular situations and they also experienced it in degrees, as Leena explained:

> You have less empathy when you are tired; if you are relaxed, you have more
> empathy. (Leena, group B)

This chapter is arranged in two main sections. The first section presents and discusses the idea that the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy was contingent upon students' responses and participants' expectations of students. For the participants in the study, intercultural teacher empathy was both an individual capacity and an intersubjective experience that was mediated

through participants' interpersonal and intercultural encounters in the workplace. The second section presents and discusses participants' beliefs associated with the limits of intercultural teacher empathy in their daily working lives.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Empathy

Quantitative and qualitative research into empathy provides evidence that the emotional brain is activated *automatically* and *unconsciously* when one person observes a display of emotion in another (Keysers & Gazzola, 2007; Icoboni, 2009). Some philosophers, on the other hand, argue that empathy is a *conscious* experience and is consciously activated by the empathiser (Richmond, 2004). Presenting the arguments on both sides and drawing on evidence and theories from neuroscientific, psychological and philosophical perspectives, DeVignemont and Singer (2006) argue that empathy involves the empathiser taking into account the contextual information related to emotional display, such as the interpersonal relationship of the people involved. This process results in the experience of empathy being modulated by the empathiser. Diverging significantly from the behavioural view of empathy as an automatic, unconscious mechanism, the findings presented in this chapter converge to some extent with DeVignemont and Singer's (2006) research findings. Analysis of the data suggested that the reach of intercultural teacher empathy was contingent upon individual capacity or disposition to be empathic as well as on the context and the kind of interactions or relationships that occurred between teachers and students.

We are expecting a fair bit in return (Harris, group C).

> Empathy is something that happens both within and between two individuals.
> (Hakansson & Montgomery, 2003, p. 267)

The analysis suggested that there was an association between student response and the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy. The participants in the current study believed that for effective intercultural communication to occur, English language learners needed to express empathy towards the target languaculture, their teacher and their culturally different peers. Participants also expected students to be engaged and interested in learning. Leena explained that she expected students to have empathy with the target culture:

> Intercultural empathy would not only be my empathy with the students, but student
> empathy with this culture. (Leena, group B)

Analysis of these data suggested that there was an association between teachers' expectations of students and the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy. Empathy was positively associated with student reciprocation of the respect and care that they were shown by their teachers to both their teachers and their peers. When students did not reciprocate the respect and care that participants showed them, teacher empathy was constrained. Niren expressed his expectations of students:

> I think it [empathy] is two way, there is no use in teacher being all: I understand. You understand what they are saying, but they've got to understand too. It has to come the opposite way too. (Niren, group B)

Empathic response.

> Students do respond just because we care – and because they like us. Some educators want students simply to respect rather than like their teachers. But earning the respect of students is not enough. Students must perceive that we care, and even that we like them deep down, as people. (Mendes, 2003, p. 56)

Analysis of the data also suggested that for the participants in the study, intercultural teacher empathy was dependent on student responses to the teacher and to learning activities. Many of the participants talked explicitly about expecting something back from their students; for example, they associated the reciprocity of the respect and care that they showed to their students with intercultural empathy. If students met teachers' expectations, empathy was enhanced; as one participant explained:

> It [empathy] is two way, it is a two way communication. (Leena, group B)

The idea that empathy was "two way" was surprising as it diverged from much of the literature on empathy in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy which defined and explored empathy as being dependent on the personality or disposition of the empathic person; in short, much of the research literature views empathy as residing *within* and emanating *from* the empathiser. However, Hakansson and Montgomery (2003) propose that "empathy is a phenomenon that connects two otherwise isolated individuals to each other" (p. 267). Hakansson and Montgomery (2003) explored empathy from the perspective of both the empathiser and the target. The findings of the current study suggest that empathy did not reside solely within the empathiser and that empathy was both an interpersonal, intrasubjective phenomenon.

Another teacher, Katie, explained the association between teacher empathy and mutual respect. Katie expected her respect for students to be reciprocated:

> You show you care about them on a professional level, you respect them and they respect you back in the classroom. (Katie, group C)

Another teacher, Nadia, described how teacher empathy influenced students' responses. She believed that teacher empathy was associated with caring about students and explained that empathy mediated students' positive emotional responses, which in turn led to a positive learning environment:

> You actually care what they think, how they feel, and I am sure that comes across to them. So, that can only lead to positive feelings and a positive environment all round. (Nadia, group A)

Leena explained that the empathy she expressed needed to be reciprocated by students. She explained that for teacher empathy to be more effective and for it to be maintained, there needed to be a positive response from students:

> [Y]ou can give that empathy, but in order to make that really effective, in order to make that an empathy that is going to make a connection that is going to work, or be more useful, there has to be that empathy coming the other way [...] There has to be that response in order to continue that empathy. (Leena, group B)

Participants believed that students also needed to show empathy towards each other:

> It [intercultural empathy] is also between the students, it's the building block of our classes. (Harris, group C)

Empathising with 'good' students

The analysis suggested that empathy manifested in situations in which participants' expectations of students to be good language learners were met. For example, when participants perceived students to have made an effort to learn, empathy was more likely to manifest:

> I tend to empathise with hardworking students. (Katie, group C)

Teacher empathy was also more likely to manifest in relation to students of whose attitudes and behaviours they approved, as Nadia explained:

> I suppose I empathise more with those students who I can see are trying hard; like
> they are working hard. (Nadia, group A)

Anthony said that he empathised more with "committed" students. When he perceived that a good student was having difficulties, it made him more likely to want to help. In the following extract, Anthony's empathic response was mediated by his approval of the student:

> [H]e is good in class, but I can see he drifts off quite a bit in class, he is not really
> following what is going on and I know that he is not disruptive and he is committed
> and keen. (Anthony, group C)

Analysis of these data suggested that because Anthony perceived the student to be a good language learner he was more attentive to the student's feelings and actions. Through his observations of the student Anthony had a sense that all was not well with the student. Anthony explained that he had noticed that something was bothering the student, so he was compelled to offer support and help. When talking to the student in private, the student disclosed a recent, personal tragedy to Anthony:

> I went and talked to him and I found out that not so long ago in Kurdistan his elder
> son drowned in a river. (Anthony, group C)

Anthony explained that in this situation he believed that the student had disclosed this very sensitive, personal information because the student had wanted someone to empathise with him. Anthony believed that the student wanted Anthony to understand that he was not deliberately being an irresponsible learner:

> [H]e wanted me to empathise with him, he wanted me to understand that he wasn't
> showing any disrespect. He wasn't bored for example, he told me. And that gave
> me an understanding of where he is at, and where his head space is, and what he
> must be feeling. (Anthony, group C)

Anthony explained how he had responded to the student's disclosure and how he had felt hearing the student's story, illustrating his experience of empathy:

> I guess, initially, it was almost too much. And I thought that I needed to understand
> this. So, I let myself feel what it would be like for me to have lost one of my
> children. At the time he was talking, I was doing this in my head, and I felt like I

> wanted to cry, and I felt like I wanted to touch him and say: It is ok, just come when
> you want to class, it is alright. (Anthony, group C)

Through empathy which involved creative supposition, Anthony was able to take the perspective of the student and construct a representation of his experience:

> [I]t is the worst thing that I could imagine happening to someone, my respect for
> him and what he is going through, coming to a strange country, a strange
> language. And they are doing it as fragile humans, they are not doing it as these
> little robot students, they are coming with this life experience, this narrative behind
> them. (Anthony, group C)

In the situation outlined above, it was significant that the student was perceived to be a good student by Anthony as it formed the basis whereby empathic response was activated. The student was identified as a good student, thus the context was created for empathy to manifest.

Interacting with students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Analysis of the data showed that the participants believed that their interest in their culturally and linguistically diverse students, as well as their desire to learn more about other cultures, enhanced intercultural empathy. Like teachers in other settings, it was important for the participants to enjoy their work. Research has shown that English language teachers derive pleasure and satisfaction from teaching people from cultural and linguistic backgrounds which differ from their own (Brown, 2005). As noted in the previous chapters, it was common for the participants in the current study to talk about their interest in other cultures and how they enjoyed learning about their students' cultures. The following exchange that took place during one of the group interviews illustrates how participants' typically expressed this idea:

> Anthony: Intercultural empathy?

> Harris: What are we talking about there?

> Anthony: I see myself as a closet anthropologist (laughter). I love getting those
> new students and trying to figure out what, how they see the world, or the cultural
> perspective they come from. Who have I got at the moment? Some Timorese.

> Harris: They are great.

> Anthony: They are really good.

> Katie: If only we had more time to sit and talk to them, but you don't. (Group
> interview C)

This exchange illustrated the pleasure that participants experienced from being able to interact with people from a wide range of languacultures. Participants enjoyed the opportunity that their work as English language teachers gave them to interact with people from different cultures. In terms of job satisfaction, participants placed great importance on the positive emotions that they experience when interacting with their students:

> I was just thinking on the way back from class, I was talking to Amir from Iran
> about the whole Iran crisis and then talking to Ghazwan and Falah from Iraq about
> it. And we just get on like a house on fire. I was just thinking, this is such a good
> job, and we'll have dinner in a few weeks, and I am thinking what a great job, and
> that is what it is all about to me. (Harris, group C)

Analysis of the data indicated that there was an association between the resulting positive affect that participants derived from being able to interact with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and empathy and the manifestation of empathy.

The second section to follow discusses the interpersonal, intercultural, personal and workplace factors that constrained the manifestation of empathy.

The Limits of Empathy

> When empathy reaches its limits, the other may be experienced as alien and
> unknown. (Kirmayer, 2008, p. 457)

Analysis of the data coded under the core categories also explored a number of questions related to the *limits of empathy* which were:

What happens to intercultural empathy if teachers' expectations are not met?

What happens to intercultural empathy if a student is categorised as a bad student?

What happens to intercultural empathy when teachers feel bad?

In clinical psychology and other disciplines, the limits to empathy have been recognised (Garret & Greenwalt, 2010; Kirmayer, 2008; Koss, 2006). In clinical psychology, it is important to recognise and acknowledge when empathy is constrained because of the significance of empathy in the

psychotherapeutic relationship. As Staemmler (2011, p. 4) points out, "a therapeutic relationship without empathy is hardly conceivable". In the current study, the participants recognised that teacher empathy was limited or constrained in some situations. These situations were related to intercultural, interpersonal, personal and workplace factors. These findings suggest an association between participants' attitudes and emotions and the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy.

What happens to empathy if teachers' expectations are not met?

Some of the taken-for-granted norms, values and expectations of participants were challenged in their interactions with students. Participants reacted differently to these challenges at different times and in relation to different students. Analysis of the data suggested that sometimes these challenges limited empathy while at other times they did not.

Although it was rare for the participants in the study to explicitly criticise students' cultural or religious norms, values and beliefs directly, the analysis suggested that sometimes participants made moral judgements about students and had a negative emotional response:

> We have that problem now with students, who, you know, from different Saudi
> cultures. Very rigid, there is no bloody empathy there. No cultural empathy there at
> all. (Niren, group B)

Leena explained that she had felt insulted when a male student from Saudi Arabia had refused to shake her hand when she had greeted him:

> I put out my hand to shake his, and he just ignored it. I was really offended by that.
> (Leena, group B)

It was rare for Muslim students to refuse to shake a teacher's hand although it was a practice of students who were very conservative or devout Muslims. When it occurred, it was quite confronting for participants. In Saudi Arabia, Muslim men are not permitted to touch women to whom they are not related. It was probably as difficult for the student to refuse to shake Leena's hand as it was for Leena to experience the student's refusal to shake her hand. Most people want to be able to express their cultural beliefs and values without offending other people, particularly when the person is a teacher. Leena explained the difficulty of teaching students when she was not familiar with their cultural background:

> You know we have had a lot of Saudi students coming to […] and there have been
> difficulties there, you know. You don't understand their social background.

> Obviously, there is differences of gender backgrounds. They have less, this is how
> I feel, this is a completely personal opinion. They have less respect for females,
> women. Just by their manner. Just by the things that they say. You get this
> understanding, a partial understanding. (Leena, group B)

Although Leena made judgements about students from Saudi Arabia, she also expressed awareness that her perceptions were based on her own limited understanding. As illustrated in previous chapters, Leena had many strategies to find common ground with students and often drew on personal experiences of racism and motherhood to relate to students when she lacked cultural understanding. Leena expressed awareness that her experience of teacher empathy was limited by her own lack of cultural knowledge.

In other situations, cultural differences created actual physical barriers that constrained intercultural teacher empathy. Poppy explained that it was very difficult for her to empathise with a female student from Saudi Arabia who wore a *niquab* and covered her eyes:

> The most difficult was when the student was totally covered and sun glasses […]
> Huge dark glasses, you know, and that I found most difficult because you can't get
> a response. You know, it is like teaching a bookshelf, or something like that.
> Because the eyes, even if you don't say anything, you get some response from the
> eyes. You can see whether they've understood or not, whether they dislike what
> you are saying, or whether they are bored. (Poppy, group A)

Despite the fact that Poppy was unable to use eye contact to communicate with the student, she still attempted to create a connection with the student:

> I used to always walk right up to her, just try to talk to her, and get to know her that
> way. (Poppy, group A)

What happens to empathy if a student is categorised as a bad student?

When talking about situations when they had less or no empathy, there was a tendency for participants to focus on learning deficits, student behaviours and attitudes. When participants perceived students to be lazy, uninterested, disengaged, too demanding, dependant, rude, or disrespectful, they had less or no empathy as Harris explained:

> Some of them are lazy, and if they are lazy, you don't really empathise. (Harris,
> group C).

The learning deficits described were associated with students who were categorised as 'bad' students. Katie described the contexts in which she believed that she was less able to empathise with students. When she perceived that students were not engaged, she believed that she had less patience:

> Students who are clearly not interested in the class, students who are disruptive, students who don't engage[...] I find my patience is very limited with students like those and I will be quite hard on them. (Katie, group C)

Like other participants, Katie sometimes questioned her negative feelings towards students and attempted to find out if there was an underlying cause when students were not responding to the lesson in an appropriate way:

> I am quite aware that I have got to step back and think, no, you are not dealing with a naughty teenager, not sort of fall into this. I will certainly talk to them and let them know what they are doing, and not doing in the classroom, and how it is affecting the rest of the class. (Katie, group C)

Silvia, recalled another scenario that arose during her lessons that frustrated her. Silvia viewed the student behaviour to be rude and believed that situations like this limited her capacity to respond empathically:

> The other one that I get, and it does get under my skin sometimes, is students talking and not stopping talking when I want the whole class to listen to something. (Silvia, group B)

Other constraints on empathy related to students' attitudes to learning English:

> Not all students engage. We know that some don't want to engage and you get those ones who just come in the classroom and they really are just a bum on a seat. (Katie, group C)

What happens to empathy when teachers feel bad?

Analysis of the data also suggested that how participants felt in relation to their students also influenced the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy. When the participants felt bad they believed that they had less empathy. Research suggests that is not uncommon for people to experience negative feelings in intercultural encounters (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993, 1998;

Otten, 2003). Negative feelings can lead people to make negative value judgements of people whose languaculture differs significantly from their own (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002).

In the current study, however, it was rare for participants to explicitly express negative feelings or attitudes towards the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students. Participants explained that empathy was influenced more by individual learner behaviours than cultural backgrounds:

> It depends on the students. It depends on the student; I mean if it is a student that
> is consistently late, you are not; you've got no empathy. (Leena, group B)

This was true even when participants referred to students from backgrounds of which they had very little experience or knowledge. Katie associated her capacity to respond empathically with individual behaviours not students' cultural backgrounds:

> Researcher: Are there situations where you have less empathy?

> Katie: I don't think it would be culturally related at all, it would be related to the
> individual. (Katie, group C)

Another teacher talked about how he handled an upsetting situation in which a student had criticised his teaching skills:

> One student I had a few modules ago has come to mind. He was a Saudi student.
> And my class is run a bit like an academic lecture in some respects, in that they
> are adults, I will motivate to an extent, but I won't, if someone is consistently
> talking, I will ask them to sit at the back, or ask them to talk quietly, or I will just
> ignore them. But before it has come to that I will talk to them and say: This is your
> money. But then, what frustrates me is if they come to the class in the last week
> and say: You taught me nothing, look at my grade, this is terrible. That really
> upsets me when they become personal. Yea, I do lack empathy with those people.
> (Anthony, group C)

In this situation, the student had complained to the then Director of Studies with two of his classmates about Anthony. This situation exemplified the challenges to empathy that many of the participants faced when teaching high stakes student. Pathway students were under so much pressure to succeed that they sometimes blamed the teacher if they did not achieve the grades they required suggesting that empathy was limited in situations like this These types of conflicts were quite rare and were often resolved when the student moved to another class. The personal

and professional challenges that teachers faced also influenced the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy.

Personal challenges.

The personal challenges that the participants faced had the capacity to both enhance and constrain empathy. For example, in the following extract a teacher acknowledged that she had faced significant educational challenges as a student during her teens. She believed that this experience had helped her to understand what it was like to feel the pressure to succeed as pathway students did. She believed that because of this experience she was better able to empathise with students:

> Coming from a family that really values educational qualifications and success in academia etc, I think it was harder because I wasn't interested in study. So of course, you are not up there getting the A pluses like my sisters were, and when you fall behind, you start not understanding what the teacher is saying and snowballing in a really really bad way. So, I guess coming from that point to realising in year 11 and 12, oh hang on, I actually need school to get to where I wanna be in the future. And so studying, and yea just realising how hard it is when you have missed so much, you don't know so much and the level is way beyond you. I sympathise with people who have been in my lower level classes and have come straight out of their country. (Mikki, group A)

Mikki drew on and utilised the educational challenges that she had faced in her childhood to manage her expectations of students. Other participants described how personal challenges had the opposite effect, rendering them less able to empathise with students. These findings converge with those of Cooper (2011) who found that multiple personal issues constrained individual high school teachers' capacity to empathise with students.

Silvia explained how her divorce had affected her capacity to empathise with students. She described what it was like for her when she had been in the process of separating from and divorcing her husband:

> When I separated, that was tense, and I was doing some bridging English and I didn't have the mental energy to get to know the students. At that stage, I was actually a bit fearful of my personal safety and the safety of my children and those things took priority. (Silvia, group B)

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During the period of her divorce, she had been assigned to teach on the English bridging course at short notice. She was not familiar with the course, which was a very intensive 12 week direct entry course and she was unable to cope:

> I just couldn't do it because I didn't have the mental energy to come to grips with
>
> the materials or the students. (Silvia, group B)

Care needs to be taken to ensure that teachers who are already experiencing significant personal distress and pressure are not expected to carry out duties in the workplace that may create even more stress and pressure for them. It is possible in retrospect that these experiences will add to Silvia's capacity to empathise with students. However, managers need to be mindful of teachers' personal circumstances. Asking a teacher to teach a new course at short notice can cause significant stress for teachers and managers (in Silvia's case the manager had to find a replacement teacher at very short notice, and had to deal with complaints from students who expected to have the same teacher throughout the course).

The next section discusses in more detail the workplace issues which participants' believed influenced intercultural empathy.

Professional challenges.

English language pathway programs differ significantly from general English language programs and teaching on a pathway program presented unique challenges for the participants in the study. These challenges related to the pressure on pathway students to meet the English language requirements as well as the financial constraints of a self-funded program.

As noted in previous chapters, there had been a dramatic increase in the number of students on the English language program where the participants worked. The vast majority of pathway students were from China, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Kuwait. Although, the cultural and educational backgrounds of the students differed, the student body could be loosely divided into two groups. One group consisted of government sponsored mature adult learners from Middle Eastern countries who were already educated to a tertiary level and who often had family responsibilities, and the other consisted of young adult learners from China and Hong Kong who were yet to matriculate. The pathway students had a tendency to compare the course that they were taking with their peers who were in a different class at the same level. If students believed that they were not covering the same syllabus, or that other classes were receiving extra-curricular input, then they complained.

The effect of this situation was that for the first time many participants experienced what it was like to teach classes that largely constituted high stakes students from Arabic and Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese) speaking backgrounds. There was also the additional pressure caused by the increase in student numbers which meant that for the first time there were multiple classes at the same level. To standardise the pathway courses and to maintain the validity and reliability of assessments when there were multiple classes at the same level, the syllabus was less flexible. There was also pressure on teachers to ensure that all elements of the syllabus were covered in tandem with other classes at the same level. To achieve parity, teachers needed to use exactly the same materials that were used in other classes and needed to adhere closely to the syllabus.

Analysis of the data suggested that the workplace situation caused stress for participants, particularly those who were more experienced teachers and those who were not used to such constraints on their professional freedom. Teaching on the pathway program was intense and participants explained that they often felt tired or stressed, particularly in the first week or the last week of a course. Participants explained the influence that workplace stress had on empathy:

> I think when you are under stress you have less empathy because perhaps you
> are rushed and under a number of constraints. (Leena, group B)

When explaining the influences on his capacity to empathise, Niren described how irritated he was with the "whole system":

> Niren: That is what really irritates me [...] some of us are really experienced good
> teachers and we get all this crap put on us; you have gotta do this, gotta do that
> and I really resent it.
>
> Researcher: What are you talking about? Are you talking about the materials?
>
> Niren: Just the whole system here, at this place, it has become very intrusive, very
> micro-managed; I don't like that at all. (Niren, group B)

Niren also explained the negative effect that having to be too prescriptive had on being a responsive, empathic teacher:

> I never write a lesson plan, all this stuff about 10 minutes this and five minutes that.
> I hate that stuff because real good teaching is reacting to how people are taking
> the information in, and you can't predict that, you've got a vague idea about what

you what to do, but the way you do it, how you do it, I make up on the spot. (Niren, group B)

Leena also described how pressure to cover the syllabus influenced her capacity to be an empathic teacher:

If you have got a lot of pressure, you have to get a lot of work done within a particular amount of time. If you have got two hours and you've got to do five tasks or too many tasks within that time, then you are going to have less empathy. Because when a student asks you a question, you are going to cut it down, or give a shortened answer, or say that is not related to the particular task, so I can't answer it right now as we have to get on with this right now. (Leena, group B)

Financial constraints.

Working in an educational setting which operated as a private enterprise also meant that there were competing forces at play which influenced empathy in participants' daily working lives. Demands that the English language program be both financially viable and of a good quality were sometimes contradictory. The participants had to deal with the effects of marketing strategies which failed to take into consideration their effects on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the 10 week courses were divided into two five-week periods which ran back to back to maximise the number of entry points over the academic year. This meant that there was a new intake of students every five weeks; a new schedule was created and teachers were often required to change courses when they were half way through a 10 week course. Marketing imperatives such as these, which demanded maximum flexibility in terms of entry points without consideration of the impact on teaching and learning, conflicted with many participants' beliefs about good practice in language teaching and learning. As one experienced teacher explained:

It's one of the things about teaching on ELICOS, there doesn't seem to be a lot of transparency. Students don't get much feedback about their progress, about what they are doing. This five-week business is pedagogically bullshit; we are playing games in some ways, so they don't get much feedback about their academic progress, or lack of progress. (Silvia, group B)

Another related issue was that students sometimes arrived after a course had started. Given the limited time available (five weeks) to build rapport with a new group, students who started a course late had the potential to adversely affect the learning experiences of both the individual student and the class. Research into group dynamics in English language lessons has shown the importance of good group dynamics in language lessons (Senior, 2006). It was common to hear

participants talk about the dynamics of a particular group and the effect that group dynamics had on teaching and learning. For example, in the following extract Niren explained the importance of getting off to a good start and described the effects of late arrivals on the group dynamics:

> If the group hasn't been formed properly, because there are rituals to classes, there is a beginning; you get to know them, you get those rituals. Once you have gone through those rituals you are cemented as a group. And if there are too many changes, too many new students coming in, it breaks that dynamic. (Niren, group B)

The financial viability of the English language program also depended largely on the number of students per class; classes were required to have minimum of at least 12 students per class per course in order to be viable. Sometimes there were insufficient numbers of students to open a class at a particular level of English language proficiency and students were then placed in a class at a level below or above the level at which they had been assessed. Participants expected students in the same classes to have a similar level of proficiency in English.

At lower levels, differences in levels between individual students in a group were generally more pronounced. While it was not impossible to teach mixed level classes, it was very challenging for participants, particularly those who taught classes of students at the lower levels of proficiency. Mikki explained how this situation affected one of her classes (Developing English One and Two refer to beginner and elementary courses respectively):

> I sympathise with students who have been in my lower level classes. So students should be in Developing English One or Developing English Two, but we don't have it. You do get told, don't worry, it is just teething problems and they will settle in. And I guess they do, but there is still this huge gap between those students and the ones who come in with a good grammar base. And they never really quite catch up. (Mikki, group A).

Research into language acquisition and adult language learners has shown that a certain amount of comprehensible input is required in order for language learning to occur (Krashen, 1981). Scaffolded learning (Vygotsky, 1976) is an accepted pedagogy in English language teaching and it is generally accepted that it is very difficult to learn a language if learners are faced with input that is pitched at a level that is difficult for them to comprehend.

Another problem that participants faced was a lack of choice in the courses that they were assigned to teach. As the teaching schedule changed every five weeks, it was not possible to predict the language proficiency of incoming students. Therefore, maximum flexibility was required from the participants in terms of the courses that they taught. Participants believed that being assigned to classes for which they felt ill-equipped or unsuited caused frustration and anxiety which constrained empathy:

> That is another thing, teaching something that I am not happy with, I used to do the CALL classes, I used to hate that and because I really hated it, I didn't do a good job. Everyone thought I was good at that, but I hated it. I always got pushed into doing it. I felt compelled to do it because no one else wanted to do it, but I was able to palm it off eventually. I have to like what I am doing, I can't teach something that I don't like. (Niren, group B)

The analysis of the data suggested that stressful personal experiences when compounded by workplace demands interacted to reduce the energy and openness that the participants had to empathic response and teacher engagement.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the fourth theoretical proposition related to interpersonal, intercultural and workplace factors which the study participants believed influenced empathy. A number of key findings were presented in this chapter. The participants in the study viewed empathy as both a capacity and an interpersonal phenomenon. They expressed awareness that they were more able to empathise in some situations and in relation to some students than they were in others. Participants believed that intercultural teacher empathy was positively influenced by students reciprocating the care and respect that they were shown by their teachers. Conversely, when participants believed that students did not respond or behave appropriately to the learning context, intercultural teacher empathy was constrained. Participants also believed that personal challenges and workplace pressures impacted on the manifestation of teacher empathy.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that intercultural teacher empathy was mediated through interpersonal, intercultural and workplace interactions and pressures. The findings suggest that participants conceptualised themselves as empathic teachers, and also illustrated some of the limits of empathy in their daily working lives.

Chapter Nine: Being an Interculturally Effective English Language Teacher

> The development of intercultural competence is not only a question of tolerance towards or empathy with others, of understanding them in their cultural context, or of understanding oneself and the other in terms of one another. It is also a matter of looking beyond words and actions and embracing multiple, changing and conflicting discourse worlds. (Kramsch, 2011, p. 356)

Introduction

This chapter presents findings associated with 'empathy' and the *professional identity* of the study participants as English language teachers. In particular, these findings explicate how participants positioned themselves as effective English language teachers. The findings derived from an exploration and evaluation of the convergences and divergences between the findings of the current study and the existing body of knowledge on empathy, teacher identity formation, teacher professional identity, and English language teacher identity.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section presents a summary of the findings in the form of the fifth theoretical proposition and discusses the key conceptual literature and analytic framework that influenced the analysis of the data from which the fifth proposition was developed. The second part presents and discusses the findings grouped according to the codes and sub-categories of the core category labelled *being an effective teacher*, revealing details of how the participants in the study conceptualised and positioned themselves as empathic, interculturally effective English language teachers. The third section outlines and evaluates the influence of contextual factors including the dominant discourses of humanism in participants' constructions of English language teacher identity. The final section discusses the significance of teacher emotion in relation to teacher identity.

Proposition Five.

As outlined in earlier chapters, the focus of the current study was to explore the meanings that participants gave to the phenomenon of empathy as it pertained to their daily working lives as English language teachers. In the group and individual in-depth interviews, the participants imagined and gave voice to what they did, how they felt, and what they believed about empathy and its manifestation in their daily working lives as English language teachers. Analysis of these data led to the emergence of a final core category labelled *being an effective teacher*, which in turn led to the development of Proposition Five.

Proposition Five states that:

The development of a professional identity as interculturally competent is integral to English language teachers' perceptions of themselves as effective teachers; the dominant discourses of humanism as they pertain to English language teaching and beyond have agency in the construction and reinforcement of this professional identity.

The sub-categories.

As outlined in Chapter Four of this thesis, the fifth proposition was developed from a process that involved the re-exploration and re-interpretation of the data and the review of the related literature concurrently. This process led to the emergence of a number of sub-categories associated with teacher empathy including *teacher identity* and the conception of an *interculturally effective teacher* that would eventually form the core category. During this process, additional interviews were conducted with five of the research participants to gather further data as well as to explore and seek convergences and inconsistencies between the findings and participants' perspectives. All the raw data were revisited and recoded and new data were gathered as the core category was developed by the re-coding and re-categorising of the extant data and the concurrent literature review.

The core category.

As the analysis became less descriptive, and more conceptual, the literature formed an *analytic lens* (Gee, 2000) through which the data were re-interpreted. The analysis attended to what participants said and to what they did not say (Clark, 2008), and in doing so aimed to uncover some of the ideologies sustained or opposed in the data. The exploration and analysis of the data in this way led to the development of the core category labelled *being an effective teacher*.

I view the construction of the core categories and related proposition presented in this chapter as driven by two competing but not mutually exclusive identities. The first was myself-as-teacher as I reflected on the formation of my own identity and my colleagues' identities as interculturally effective English language teachers. The second was myself-as-researcher as I gathered information and ideas from the literature and the interview data to support and inform the data analysis. The following overarching question was one of the main drivers of this interpretive process:

What do these data say about the identity/identities of the participants in the study?

The key drivers of Proposition Five are summarised in Figure 9.1:
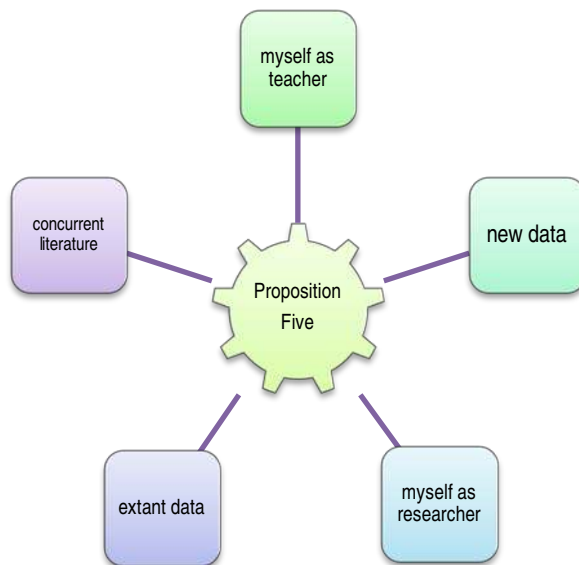
Figure 9.1: Developing Proposition Five, the key influences on the data analysis and theory development.

Hence, as noted in Chapter Four, the fifth theoretical proposition was developed in a marginally different way than Propositions One, Two, Three and Four which were developed from a process that involved the collection and analysis of data and concurrent literature review as summarised in Figure 9.2:
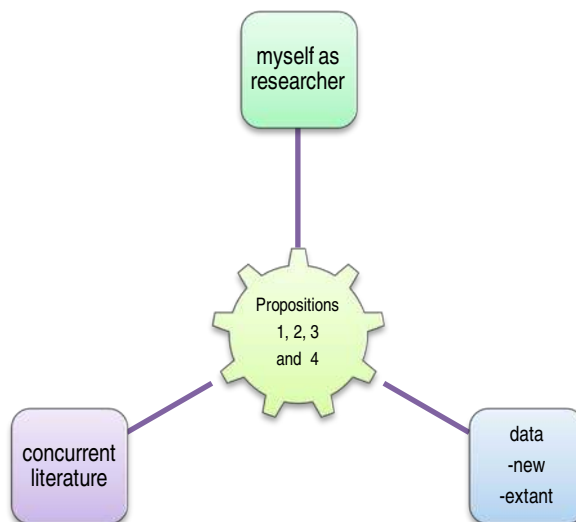
Figure 9.2: Developing Propositions One, Two, Three and Four.

As noted in Chapter Three of this thesis, as there can be no fixed meanings in language (Lowrie, 2007), the conceptualisation of data and resulting interpretation needed careful consideration as outlined next.

Constructing teacher identity from interview data.

> The search for a general form of the forms of the human is engaged in a paradox: on the one hand, it must attempt to say something universal about human nature; on the other, it must say this from a specific location in language, culture, and intellectual history […] The only way to enable one pattern is to restore the possibility of many patterns. (Heisig, 2000, p. 185)

The interpretation of data presented in this chapter may not be the meanings that the participants sought to or intended to express. Further, this chapter is not arguing that participants had the same or even similar "subject positions" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 42) in relation to their professional identities as interculturally effective English language teachers. However, the findings of the current study are underpinned by evidence to suggest that there was a common discourse that sustained some shared understandings among the participants in the study of what it meant to be an interculturally effective teacher. The participants were part of a community of practice (Wenger, 2000) both in terms of the single study site and in terms of the English language teaching profession with which they identified, so it was not inappropriate to explore the data for shared understandings.

The authenticity of the resulting interpretation of data may best be judged in relation to the extent to which the findings *fit* the area under investigation. Further, the shared understandings of empathy and its association with being an interculturally effective teacher uncovered in the data may also reflect the lived experience of what it was like to participate in a research study about intercultural empathy.

In summary, the findings presented do not attempt to represent the collective meanings of the participants who participated in the current study or of English language teachers in general, instead they represent an emic interpretation of English language teacher identity as viewed through the conceptual framework of the current study and chapter. The following section introduces the literature that formed the basis of the interpretive lens used to support the data analysis process that led to the development of Proposition Five.

Teacher Identity and Discourse

As outlined in Chapter Four, the interpretation of the interview data presented in this chapter was supported by the use of an *analytic lens* (Gee, 2000). This lens incorporated the interrelated concepts of *identity* and *discourse* drawing on selected elements of Fairclough's (1998; 2003) *critical discourse analysis* to support the analysis. Critical discourse analysis is a means through which the latent power and ideologies of texts can be uncovered and explored (Martin, 2000; Schirato & Yell, 2000). The interpretation yielded theory about English language teacher identity from the self-reported professional experiences, understandings, concerns, beliefs and practices of participants as English language teachers. The words that participants used and the meanings these words denoted were not accidental (Schirato & Yell, 2000); further to this, the resulting interpretation is not intended to be judged as truth, but rather as a plausible and adequate rendering of the data (Fairclough, 2003).

Teacher identity.

> Our strategy has been [...] to unbundle the thick tangle of meanings that have
> accumulated around the term 'identity'. (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 14)

There is a rich and growing body of literature on language learner identity in English language teaching (Kubota & Lin, 2009; Kubota, 2002; Norton & Toohey, 2004), and language teacher identity (Brown, 2005; Clark, 2008; Garton & Richards, 2008; Mackie, 2009; Phan, 2008; Varghese et al., 2005), all of which draw on the concept of discourse to inform their explorations of identity. Clark's (2005) study of the discourse of pre-service language teachers in the United Arab Emirates found that the teachers in the study unconsciously and wholeheartedly adopted a particular construction of what it meant to be a teacher. Drawing on elements of Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse analysis, Clark explored teacher identity through analysis of the chains of equivalence evident in the teacher discourse. Clark (2005) found dichotomies served to position and align the participants with the favoured pedagogy of the course in which they were enrolled:

> The individual and community identities involved are built up through 'chains of
> equivalence' between elements of 'new' or 'progressive' teaching. These elements
> include teacher as 'facilitator', practicing 'student-centred' teaching within a
> 'complex' classroom environment that values 'high motivation' and 'active learning'
> and prizes 'sensitivity' towards learners, who are recognised as having varied
> 'learning needs' and individual 'learning styles'. (Clark, 2005, p. 90-91)

In the context of the current study, teacher identity or identities are: "points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 42). Varghese et al. (2005) theorise further that identity is either *claimed*; that is, the identities teachers align themselves with or claim as their own, or *assigned*; that is, those that are imposed on or prescribed to them through the dominant discourse(s). The findings of the current study suggest that these notions of claimed or assigned identities may be difficult to separate, and that the phenomena presented and discussed in this chapter associated with English language teacher identity can be viewed as simultaneously both assigned and claimed.

English language teacher discourse.

The notion of discourse was intrinsic to the conceptualisation of the interview data as the data were re-categorised and the core category developed. The data were thus interpreted as *English language teacher discourse*. "Discourses are ways of being 'certain kinds of people'" (Gee, 2000, p. 110). Gee (2000) argues that identity is created and sustained through the process of *recognition* and that through *Discourse* (with a capital) one's identity as a certain kind of person is constructed:

> Discourses are particular ways of behaving, valuing, interacting, believing, thinking,
> speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of
> particular identities (or types of people) by particular groups. (Gee, 2007, p. 3)

Language can only be understood when it is interpreted within discourse and discourse is constituted of both language and non-language (Gee, 2007). Non-language includes thoughts, beliefs, emotions and values. Incorporating the idea of non-language into conceptions of discourse enabled an exploration of the particular identity/identities that were enacted as well as the meanings that were attributed to or associated with the beliefs and practices of participants as English language teachers (Gee, 2000).

The current study explored the systems of knowledge and beliefs associated with empathy and English language teaching that were both evident in, and absent from, the data. The study identified a particular teacher identity that the data as *discourse* sustained. Through producing and representing meaning, the data as English language teacher discourse pointed to the values and practices that were inherent in the research setting as well as in the related sectors of Australian education. At times, these values and practices were inconsistent with the conceptions of intercultural empathy that emerged during the study. There was also evidence of

individual teacher discourse (Alsup, 2006; Clark, 2008) which suggested that it might be possible for the participants as teachers to produce positive change from within the dominant discourse(s).

From dominating discourses to personalised pedagogies.

Alsup (2006), Clark (2008), and Sachs (2001) adopt a more or less Foucauldian perspective of teacher identity by viewing it as constructed within the hegemony of the dominant discourses. They adopt the Foucauldian notion that discourse *is* discipline or practice; that is, teacher identity is constructed within and through the broad disciplinary discourse. Alsup (2006), however, draws on the work of Gee (2000) to offer a less totalising view of the role of discourse in shaping teacher identity. Alsup (2006) argues that individual teachers bring their own subjectivities to the profession in a discursive act, and as such, they are actively engaged in the construction of their identities as teachers. A subjective personal pedagogy might be enabled to surface, if the idea of a singular, unitary teacher identity is abandoned, or at least challenged; for example, when teachers are permitted to work in ways that are more congruent with their own personal pedagogical beliefs, they may be less likely to revert to authoritarian or conservative pedagogies as "lifesaving measures" (Alsup, 2006, p. 21).

Within and beyond the dominant discourses.

Teacher educators and researchers such as Alsup (2006) Clark (2008), Sachs (1999, 2001, 2006), Trent, (2010), Widin (2010) and Varghese et al. (2005) create a case for a critical perspective on the role of discourse in teacher identity formation and construction. This critical perspective ranges from a view of discourse as a totalising force within which there is little, if any, individual agency to a more emancipatory view of teacher identity which allows for individual agency. Regardless of the perspective adopted, there is agreement that teachers and researchers ought to be engaged with a critical approach to teaching, one that fosters ambiguity and encourages teachers to challenge their beliefs and alignments (Trent, 2010). Hence, one aim of researchers in exploring the relationship between discourse and identity is to uncover, explore, question and problematise (Clark, 2008) the underpinnings and the prevailing unitary views of teaching and learning within a particular context. This involves teachers being either consciously or unconsciously "[…] in the process of fashioning and refashioning our identities by patching together fragments of the discourses to which we are exposed" (Miller March, 2003 as cited in Clark, 2008, p. 9).

As noted above, the findings of the current study suggest that the English language teacher identity of the participants was constructed and constituted both within and beyond the dominant discourse(s); there was some evidence that personalised pedagogies had a role in mediating the

teacher identity/identities of participants. Participants' interactions with other people, objects and experiences, in other places, at other times, before, beyond and *without* the constraints of the profession also served to construct their personal pedagogies. This space of identity construction is conceptualised by Alsup (2006, p. 6) as the "borderlands":

> One must find the borderlands between two (or more) discourses in a sincere way
> and speak from this new space, this site of alternative discourse, to enact change
> in a particular community. (Alsup, 2006, p. 9)

Alsup (2006) names the borderlands as a site of teacher identity construction: "the place of becoming [...] where ambiguity and reflection is the goal" (p. 10). The borderlands are a third space between the dominant discourses and personal pedagogies where teacher identity forms and re-forms. As teachers think and interact with self and other(s) in order to acquire new understandings, skills and knowledge, how they see themselves changes (Alsup, 2006; Sachs, 2001; Trent, 2010).

Professional identity.

> They respect your opinion and they respect you as a teacher, and know that you
> are a professional. (Katie, group C)

The findings presented in this chapter point to some of the ways in which the participants in the current study represented and positioned themselves as professional English language teachers as well as provide a critical perspective on this positioning. The findings provide insights into *English language teacher identity* by illustrating some contextual issues that may have influenced the teacher identity of participants in the study.

Within the Australian educational context, the construct professional identity is ambiguous and any attempt to define or describe it needs to address the "problem of clarity" (Sachs, 2001, p. 124). Definitions and descriptions of professional identity lack clarity because professional identity, like the construct of identity more generally, is a complex and abstract concept (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Sachs, 2001). Further, definitions of the construct *teacher professional identity* also vary according to the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin them. For example, orthodox understandings of professional identity often refer to professional identity as a set of attributes (Sachs, 2001) and competencies that teachers need to acquire if they want to become a member of a profession.

It would therefore be incongruent with the design of the current study to define or describe teacher professional identity in terms of a set of constituent parts. Nor would it be consistent to conceptualise professional identity as a stable, singular construct (Alsup, 2006); as Chong and Low (2009) found, and as findings from this current study suggest, individual teachers can and do have more than one professional identity that changes over time.

For the purposes of the current study, the conceptualisation of teacher professional identity follows three key characteristics identified and summarised by Mockler (2011) common to interpretive or qualitative research. First, teacher professional identity is "shifting and multiple" (Mockler, 2011, p. 125); it is constructed and negotiated through discourse, conversation and interpretation. Second, it is "framed through narrative" (Mockler, 2011, p. 128); it is expressed and shaped through language as social interaction as a discursive practice. Third, it is constructed and constituted through the interaction of personal histories and experiences within the professional context, categorised by Mockler (2011, p. 126) as "circumstances and conditions".

The English language teaching profession.

As noted in earlier chapters of this thesis, broadly speaking the English language teaching sector defines what it means to be a professional English language teacher in Australia in relation to a set of requirements outlined by the National English Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) and the peak body of the industry English Australia (EA). These requirements state that to be eligible to work in an accredited language centre or college, English language teachers are required to have a university degree or equivalent qualification and a Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA). However, there is some agreement that these requirements are the minimum qualifications required to work in the field. In an attempt to summarise what it means to be a professional English language teacher, Wong (2011) argued that a professional teacher requires further qualification, experience, skills and attributes than those requirements outlined by NEAS and EA:

> To be considered a professional, one needs to possess the theoretical background, mentored experience, professional affiliations, and certifications to meet the standards of excellence in the chosen field. (Wong, 2011, p. 142)

The findings of the current study incorporate a critical perspective of the concept of professionalism. As Alsup (2006, p. 9) argues, the belief that one becomes a professional teacher when one acquires a qualification and learns a new set rules for behaviour is too

simplistic and does not account for the complex process of being or becoming a teacher. Moreover, within this conceptualisation of professional identity, being accepted as a teacher, and being an acceptable teacher, means that one must also uncritically accept, adopt or appropriate the norms and values of the profession (Clark, 2008; Mockler & Sachs, 2006; Sidorkin, 1999; Trent, 2010).

The findings of the current study suggest that the norms and values adopted by participants as part of their professional identity were shaped to some extent by the dominant discourses of the profession. This evidence further suggests that the teacher identity of the participants was mediated through the discourse of the profession and related professions. The section to follow presents a representation of these findings in the form of a semantic explication (Wierzbicka, 1999a, 2003) of the three central concepts of this chapter; *identity, discourse* and *intercultural competence.*

Semantic explication of the central concepts.

In an attempt to elucidate further the complex, widely used and often undefined (Clark, 2008) concepts of *identity* and *discourse* and *intercultural effectiveness*, I have used elements of Wierzbicka's (1999, 2003) Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) to further support the explication of these key terms in the context of the current chapter. Drawing on simple, universal semantic primes where possible, the following explanatory paraphrasing presents an explication of the key concepts from my interpretation of the research data and related literature as a teacher and researcher:

Discourse is:

> The beliefs, values, assumptions and feelings I experience, value and express through language and non-language.

> What shapes, re-shapes and reinforces my beliefs, values, assumptions and feelings.

> What determines my actions, feelings and words.

> **Based on:**

> The genetic, familial, linguistic, cultural, social, economic, historical and political forces that is/are most pervasive and powerful at any given moment.

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Identity is**:**

> How I see myself
>
> How others see me
>
> What I think myself to be
>
> What others think me to be.
>
> **Based on**:
>
> What I say
>
> What I do
>
> How I feel
>
> What I think
>
> What I know.

The following conceptualisation of *intercultural effectiveness* is derived mainly from an interpretation of the data coded under the core category, *being an effective teacher* that was verified in follow up interviews with participants:

Intercultural effectiveness is:

> A teacher is being *interculturally effective* at this time.
>
> **A student thinks like this at this time:**
>
> This teacher understands how I feel and attends to what I say.
>
> This teacher is able to understand how I feel and what I think by observing my facial expression and body language.
>
> This teacher values me and my languaculture.
>
> This teacher learns about my languaculture.
>
> This teacher is doing something to help me communicate.

> When I am with this teacher, it is easier for me to communicate in the target language.
>
> I understand more about my own languaculture and other people's languacultures through interacting with this teacher.
>
> I can learn something at this time because of how this teacher acts.
>
> Both this teacher and I are changed through our interactions with each other.

These explications of the key concepts of discourse, identity and intercultural effectiveness underpin the sections to follow which illustrate how the participants constituted, presented and represented their teacher identities in the research process. When required, a critical discourse approach supported the data interpretation.

The section to follow discusses the extent to which participants aligned themselves with the idea of being an effective teacher. These interpretations are then juxtaposed with evidence of the influence of the dominant discourse of humanism as it pertained to the data to consider the deficit and positive discourses that may have had agency in participants' constructions of their teacher identities. A final section discusses participants' beliefs about emotion and being an effective teacher suggesting how participants' views and beliefs about teacher emotion are mediated through the dominant discourse(s) of the profession and related professions. When needed, a critical discourse approach supported the data interpretation, particularly to explicate the complexities and contradictions that constituted participants' views of what it meant to be an effective English language teacher.

The first sub-section and related sub-sections to follow introduce the idea of being an effective teacher and discuss the significance of this notion to participants. It outlines the context in which English language teachers work and presents phenomena that participants associated with effective teaching. It aims to illustrate some shared understandings of the participants in the study drawing on theory and research to present, contextualise, analyse and criticise the concept of being an effective English language teacher.

Being an Effective English Language Teacher

> Teacher identity is a profoundly individual and psychological matter because it concerns the self-image and other images of particular teachers. It is a social matter because the formation, negation and growth of teacher identity is a fundamentally social process taking place in institutional settings such as teacher education programs and schools. It is a process that is inextricably intertwined with language and discourse. (Varghese et al., 2005, pp. 39-40)

This section presents findings related to participants' beliefs about empathy and its association with being a "good" or "effective" teacher. The findings emerged with particular reference to the context of English language teaching and the areas of research and practice that it encompasses. Methodological, pedagogical, and ideological trends are considered, as is the professional status of English language teachers in schools, colleges and universities in Australia and in other similar settings. The findings suggest that the values and beliefs that participants associated with being an interculturally effective teacher may be problematic if the study participants and the researcher engage with them uncritically.

Contextual issues.

> The concept of method has little theoretical validity and even less practical utility.
> Its meaning is ambiguous and its claim dubious. (Kumarvaradivelu, 2006, p. 170)

Many of the participants in the study expressed confidence in their preferred teaching methods particular those with significant professional experience. The current study took place as a paradigm shift from positivism to post-positivism had occurred and communicative language teaching had become the dominant paradigm in the field of English language teaching (Bell, 2003). As noted in previous chapters, the communicative approach is the current favoured teaching approach of many Western English speaking countries and is endorsed and sustained by the English language teaching industry through its materials and teacher training programs.

At the heart of this paradigm shift was a call for the reconceptualisation of the concept and goal of method as postmodernists declared the search for the best method to be over (Kumaravadivelu; 2006; Pennycook, 1989; Sowden, 2007). This period saw the limitations of method acknowledged; communicative language teaching was reconceptualised as an *approach*, methodological eclecticism was foregrounded, and research on teacher cognition rose; that is, what "teachers think, know and believe" (Borg, 2003, p. 81), and the quest for the best English

language teaching method(s) declined. In this "post-method condition" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 170), it is difficult to determine what an effective teacher should do.

The participants in the study described the teaching methods and approaches that they used in their lessons. For example, after explaining that a group of Japanese students were quiet and reluctant to contribute to group discussions, Leena explained what she did to help the students:

> The best method was to give them specific roles and make their roles very focused and that worked. (Leena, group B)

It is common to judge the quality of an English language lesson in relation to the amount of time that is spent on communicative tasks. For example, the amount of time students spend talking compared with the amount of classroom time taken up by teacher talk is often cited as a way to judge whether a lesson is effective or not (Harmer, 2007). Thus, it was not surprising that Leena believed that her students needed to participate in the discussion tasks to learn.

The participants in the study rarely addressed issues related to language and language acquisition. Several studies conducted in similar contexts have sought to explore what native speaker English language teachers know about subject matter. Broadly, subject matter includes grammar, phonology, syntax, and genres. One study found that most native speaker teachers relied on tacit knowledge of language rather than learnt knowledge; for example, the teachers in the study relied on intuition to know whether a particular sentence was correct or not (Yuen, 2005). A review of over a decade of research into language teacher cognition; that is, what teachers think, believe and know showed that there were surprising gaps in English language teachers knowledge and understanding of grammar (Borg, 2003a).

This situation has also coincided with a debate around the professional status of native speaker English language teachers in Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Canada and North America. The professional status of English language teachers has long been a contentious and emotional issue for teachers. English language teachers face serious and ongoing challenges to their credibility as professional teachers and criticisms such as the one reported in the following extract are not unusual:

> I had a comment from a friend's dad who seemed to know about language teaching so I said, are you an English language teacher? He said: No, I am a real teacher'. (Anthony, group C)

Findings similar to these pertaining to the low status that English language teachers in Australia are afforded are well documented (Arkoudis, 2006; Brown, 2005; Harper, de Jong & Platt, 2008; Johnson, 1997). In a high school setting, Brown (2005) found that it was often assumed that anyone could be an English language teacher:

> When these teachers moved into ESL teaching, work was available part-time, given to any teacher available, and given to any teacher under-allotted. This is not the way that skilled and valued work should be understood. (Brown, 2005, p. 17)

Professional status includes practice based on an agreed body of research and standards of practice and certification (Murray & Christison, 2011). The industry or field of English language teaching is considered by many to lack the professional status that other disciplines with consistent disciplinary knowledge are afforded; the profession draws on a "fractured" (Murray & Christison, 2011) disciplinary knowledge which enables the status of English language teachers as professional teachers to be questioned.

Moreover, this profession is one whose existence is at the mercies of the international student market; a market that is frequently unpredictable and fluctuating as Chapter two of this thesis explains. In this context, English language teachers are often paid less than other kinds of teachers and are more likely to be employed on a casual, part-time basis (Brown, 2005; Borg, 2009). Even when they are qualified and experienced, English language teachers may lose their jobs to someone who is less qualified who will work for less money (Murray & Christison, 2011).

Within the primary and secondary school system in Australia and elsewhere, English language teachers are also viewed as less professional than other kinds of teachers and their knowledge and skills may not be valued because English language teaching is seen to be an easier alternative to mainstream teaching (Brown, 2005; Harper, de Jong & Platt, 2008). It is within this context that the participants' identities as English language teachers were constructed and constituted.

I want to be a good teacher (Harris, 02).

Notwithstanding the situation outlined above, empathy was associated with participants' conceptions of themselves as a "good" or "effective" teacher; an identity that had great significance for the study participants, as it did for teachers in other settings (Chong & Low, 2009). The participants commonly expressed a desire to be effective English language teachers; that is; they *positioned* themselves as being or in the process of becoming effective teachers. This positioning served to reinforce both individual and group English language teacher identity of

the participants in the study as *interculturally effective.* For example, when discussing her teaching approach, Nadia explained that it was her notion of what a teacher does that influenced the kind of teacher she believed she was:

> I know what I would like a good teacher to do in a classroom, so I suppose that
> sort of moulds who I am now. (Nadia, group A)

Being a good teacher was important; it was an ideal subject position for many of the participants in the study, as one participant explained:

> Being an effective teacher is the most important thing. (Harris, group C)

Concerns about adopting an ideal subject position in relation to being a teacher are evident in studies that have focused on teacher identity formation. For example, findings from research into the association between professional identity formation of trainee teachers and effective high school teaching by Alsup (2006) argue that the idea of a singular teacher identity is problematic, particularly one that focusses only on what a teacher *should be.* Alsup (2006) found that the trainee teachers viewed teacher identity in ways that were not helpful to their development as high school teachers:

> One of the problems faced by some students in this study is that although their
> personal identities were multiple and diverse, their perceptions of the professional
> identity of the teacher was not. They saw the teacher identity as rigid and
> unchangeable. (Alsup, 2006, p. 182)

The sub-section to follow explores the findings in more detail by evaluating the strength with which participants aligned themselves with the central concept of being an effective teacher.

I need to be a really effective teacher (Katie, group C).

In this sub-section and in a number of sub-sections to follow, a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1998, 2003; Clark, 2008) of the data that were coded under the core category labelled *being an effective teacher* is used to illustrate the varying degrees of certainty that participants conveyed as they expressed their beliefs about empathy in relation to their experience as English language teachers.

After it was observed that participants had differing degrees of certainty and affinity with the ideas that they expressed, the data were re-evaluated through analysis of the *language in use* of participants with a focus on *modality* following Fairclough (1998, 2003) and Clark (2008) as

outlined in Chapter three of this thesis. According to Fairclough (1998), modality refers broadly to a speakers' commitment to truth and certainty and can be explored in relation to its importance, type and frequency of occurrence in texts. In the current study, linguistic expressions of modality were explored to identify the denotation of facts and universal truths; that is, the degrees of certainty, affinity, and solidarity that participants had to the beliefs, values, feelings that they expressed.

The participants in the study expressed various degrees of certainty when talking about empathy and being an effective English language teacher. At times, they identified strongly with this notion, presenting ideas as fact or truths through unmodalised statements. For example, the unmodalised use of language in the following extract which included the use of the *present simple tense* in combination with the first person plural "we" and the first person plural possessive "our" denoted facts and general truths:

> **We are** empathic; **we try** to get everyone settled**. We are** always planning, trying
> to make **our** lessons interesting. (Harris, group C)

Unsurprisingly, given the personal nature of in-depth interviewing, the data also showed that participants used "I"; the exclusive first person singular which is commonly understood to denote a singular unambiguous point of view. In the following extract, Harris explained his personal desire to be a good teacher. He used the exclusive "I", in combination with the repetition of the verb "want" in the present simple form:

> **I want to** be a good teacher, **I want to** be a better teacher. (Harris, group C)

Combined together, this use of language creates the impression that Harris had a strong personal affinity with the beliefs and desires that he expressed. Harris aimed to be a good teacher; furthermore, his use of the adjective "good" alongside its comparative "better" suggests that Harris believed that he was in the process of *becoming* a good teacher.

Another participant, Katie, explained and justified why it was particularly important for her to be an effective teacher and how this influenced her teaching approach. In the following extracts Katie explained that she needed to be an effective teacher because her students were under so much pressure. The students that Katie referred to were on a direct entry course that would give them access to a degree or diploma course if they met the English language requirements by passing the English course. There was a distinct absence of uncertainty in Katie's choice of vocabulary and grammar as well as in her repetition of key words which served to denote certainty, urgency

and the importance of being an effective teacher. For example in the extract to follow, the verb "need" was used in conjunction with the modifying adverb "really" denoting the high degree of affinity that she had with the idea of being an effective teacher:

> I **need** to be a **really** effective teacher **for** these students who have really high
>
> stakes. (Katie, group C)

In addition, the use of the preposition "for" reinforced the notion that she had to be an effective teacher in order to support and benefit her students. Through her choice of words and repetition of ideas, Katie expressed a strong sense of urgency with her students' aims possibly mirroring the urgency that her students may experience about achieving their study goals:

> The type of students that we have here and their aim to get into university; that
>
> they **have to** achieve in X amount of time. (Katie, group C)

As she continued, the language she used further emphasised the significance that Katie attributed to helping students achieve their aims. The use of the pronoun "everything" in the following extract expressed the overwhelming importance to Katie that her students achieved their aims. To further emphasise this, Katie used the modal verb "have to" followed by the use of a modifying adverb "very" as she repeated the key point:

> **Everything** that you **have to** do in the classroom **has to be very** structured, **very**
>
> focused, towards their goals, so that they can achieve what they have come here
>
> to achieve in this amount of time. (Katie, group C)

Participants in the study also expressed lower degrees of certainty in relation to their beliefs about being effective teachers and in some cases they moved between certainly and uncertainty. For example, Harris, one of the less experienced teachers who participated in the study, frequently used the *-ing* form of verbs when talking about what empathy meant to him as an English language teacher:

> **Trying** to look at their life situation and **trying** to understand the difficulties of their
>
> situation, and **trying** to disregard as much as you can of your own biases and
>
> assumptions; that is probably the hardest part of it [being an English language
>
> teacher]. (Harris, group C)

The repeated use of *-ing* forms and the lexical choices that Harris made suggest that, at times, Harris was not certain that he had achieved his aim of being an effective teacher. The extract

above indicates that while he believed that he was making an effort to be an effective teacher, he was not sure whether he was successful. As Harris continued, he expressed his views on empathy as an effective teaching strategy. In doing this, he expressed both certainty and uncertainty almost simultaneously as indicated by his grammatical and lexical choices:

> As a teacher, **you want to be trying to improve**, **trying to understand** other
> people; you **have to want to understand** where other people are coming from.
> (Harris, group C)

The use of the to-infinitive "want to be" is indicative that Harris had confidence in what he was saying, but the choice of the verb "try" and its repeated use as a gerund expresses less certainty. The next sub-section discusses how participants reinforced their teacher identity through feedback.

I have always had good feedback (Anthony, group C).

In stating that they wanted to be effective teachers, many of the participants in the study wanted to be acknowledged as good teachers by other people, especially their students. It was not enough that they considered themselves effective teachers, or that they had the desire to be effective teachers; it was the feedback on their teaching which served to confirm and affirm their identity as effective teachers. The participants referred to student feedback as an important way in which they were able to judge whether they had achieved their goals of being an effective teacher. The feedback was communicated in a number of ways including the participant's interpretation of how their students might be feeling:

> I get very good reactions from the students, the students always seem to like being
> in my classes, I seem to get very few students who don't like what I do and to me, I
> am happy. (Niren, group B)

Feedback also came from students via participants' line managers:

> And in return for that [being an effective teacher] I know I will get the [student]
> feedback going back to my boss saying I am a good teacher. (Harris, group C)

The feedback was not only what students said about teachers, but also what students did:

> I have always had good feedback and I frequently have students asking to come
> into my classes. (Anthony, group C)

Participants believed that there were negative consequences to not being a good teacher and that this motivated them to be effective teachers:

> If I am not being an effective teacher, and I've got students giving feedback; you want to do a good job, you want to be effective, and if you don't, I think it does come around. (Katie, group C)

Thus, student feedback served to affirm and assign participants' identities as effective teachers. Both positive and negative feedback motivated them to do a good job and to continue doing what they did. This was a challenge in the research setting as teachers typically taught groups of students from a wide variety of backgrounds who often had quite different learning needs and expectations. The sub-section to follow discusses what the participants believed about meeting the needs of the diverse group of students that they taught.

You try and meet most of their needs (Katie, group C).

> Everyone has different expectations and different needs; you have eighteen different expectations and individuals that you are dealing with. (Katie, group C)

For the participants in the study, being an effective teacher was strongly associated with attending to the needs of students. According to one participant, it was part of a teacher's job to determine the learning needs of students:

> I think all teachers have to look at the makeup of their class and make judgements about the students that you have, and you have to think not only what their actual needs are, but what they perceive their needs to be. (Leena, group B)

Addressing the needs of students also meant methodological flexibility and compromise:

> I know there is no point explaining the grammar to them, but they value this and believe that it helps them, so I do it, and then we practise. (Poppy, group A)

Poppy believed that a deductive approach to the teaching of grammar was not as effective as an inductive approach. In a deductive approach, the teacher presents a grammar point that is then practiced by students, whereas in the inductive approach learners engage with examples of the target language to identify patterns and work out the meaning prior to practice (Ellis, 2006). Research has found that neither one of these approaches is conclusively more effective than the other (Ellis, 2006), but the practice on the pathway program where the data was gathered was to favour an inductive approach over a deductive one. Thus, when Poppy's students wanted her to

explain grammar points explicitly, she was willing to do this because her students considered it to be important even though she believed that it was not the most effective way for them to learn.

Addressing students' needs also meant diverging from the prescribed syllabus:

> We have to cover Australian life and culture every Friday afternoon, but a lot of the students don't want to do that; they don't value that. They want to focus on their academic writing or reading, so that influences me, so we rarely do that. (Katie, group C)

Participants believed that determining students' needs was difficult and unpredictable and that their judgements about what students needed to learn may not have been correct, as one teacher explained:

> There is no one way to do it and a lot of it is guesswork, sometimes you are wrong. You might think they need this and they need that and they are not vaguely interested, they don't want any of it. (Niren, group B)

Although determining students' needs was associated with effective teaching, participants believed that it was unrealistic to think they could meet the expectations and needs of every student:

> You try and meet most of their needs, but you can't be everything to all students and some students are going to be disappointed. (Katie, group C)

Participants also had expectations of students and believed that clarification of these expectations was also part of being an effective teacher:

> The good teachers make their expectations clear; it doesn't really matter what the expectations are. (Silvia, group B)

Thus, being an effective teacher meant attempting to predict students' needs. It meant attending to those needs even though it sometimes required that teachers diverged from the syllabus. It also meant that teachers set aside their own beliefs about effective teaching to teach in ways that they considered less effective in order to meet their students' needs and expectations.

The sub-section to follow present findings in the form of evidence of the influence of the humanistic tradition on the constructions of English language teacher identity uncovered in the current study.

A teacher's job is to care (Anthony, group C).

In analysing the data associated with being an effective teacher, common words and expressions were evaluated in relation to the extent to which they might provide evidence that participants had shared conceptions of English language teacher identity. Dominant themes were identified and words that were commonly grouped together by participants were explored as possible educational clichés (Alsup, 2006). Clichés associated with teaching were considered important markers of the teacher identities/identity of the participants as part of a particular community of practice as mediated through teacher discourse.

Key signifiers were viewed alongside other words and expressions which were thought to form chains of equivalence in the data (Jørgensen & Philllips, 2002). Chains of equivalence are groups of related words that indicate a particular meaning or set of meanings. Viewing the common words and phrases as chains of equivalence provided a means to uncover evidence of the dominant discourses that may have influenced what participants believed about being an English language teacher.

Analysis of these clichés suggest that the participants in the study may have been consciously and unconsciously influenced to place emphasis on humanistic traits such as caring and being a good person in a moral sense in association with their teacher identity. This is evident, in particular, through the lexical choices that the participants made when talking about their work as teachers. The participants in the study believed that teaching is rewarding work and that teaching is a vocation; you need passion and you need to care to be any kind of teacher. Moreover, like teachers in other educational settings, many of the teachers who participated in the current study believed that they chose their profession because they were "caring" and because they wanted to "help" others.

Participants often referred to commonly held tenets of a humanistic pedagogy such as teachers "caring" about student and wanting students to feel "comfortable":

> Teaching is a humanistic job; it's not a job where you are working on a machine. Anything where you are working with people [...] and most people who go into teaching go into it because you care about people. (Katie, group C)

For participants, teaching was a humanistic practice that they entered into because they cared about other people. Harris, for example, associated effective teaching with ensuring that his students were feeling comfortable. He referred to the idea of a "safe learning environment" that

he had been introduced to during the Certificate of Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) course:

> Researcher: So you think empathy is part of being a good teacher?

> Harris: It is just patience more than anything, maybe that is the most important thing, the most important result is the patience it gives you and you know the old catchphrase of CELTA, the safe learning environment that you provide your students with, if they are not comfortable then they can't learn. (Harris, group C)

You have got to bring that human element to it (Katie, group C).

Participants talked about being a good teacher in an idealistic, moral or virtuous sense. They mentioned qualities such as trustworthiness, patience, and understanding as well as other humanistic qualities and ideals. For example, Harris associated being a good person with that of a good teacher as he attempted to sum up his beliefs about the role of empathy in his teaching approach:

> Basically, you try to be **a good human being** and that should turn you into **a half decent teacher** because if you are a bit of a prat, you are not going to be **a good teacher**. (Harris, group C)

Thus, humanistic qualities such as caring for students and helping them were important aspects of their identity as effective teachers:

> The role of a teacher is not just to stand up and instruct, you **have got to bring that human element** to it as well [...] It is all part of, all parts that make up the whole of what it is to be a teacher. (Katie, group C)

Participants wanted to help their students and believed that part of their role as teachers was to have a positive effect on students' lives:

> You are trying to **make their lives better**. (Leena, group B)

The language that participants used showed that they had a strong affinity with their subject position as "caring" teachers. For example, when attributing humanistic traits such as caring, giving and nurturing to being an effective teacher, they expressed these ideas with a strong degree of certainty as illustrated:

> A teacher's job **is to give** and **to nurture**. (Anthony, group C)

Antony's use of the verb "to be" in its present simple form followed by the infinitive "to give" denotes fact, or general truth suggesting that he has a strong degree of certainty with the beliefs that he expressed.

Another teacher, Katie, explained that she also saw caring as an important part of her role as an English language teacher. Using the present perfect tense and the adverb "always" Katie assigned the attribute of "caring" to her personal self as well as to her teacher self, illustrating that she saw this phenomenon as part of an ongoing personal identity:

> I have **always** been quite a **caring** person towards people. (Katie, group C)

While the examples above show the participants in the study speaking in abstractions and generalisations in relation to caring about their students, participants also gave examples of what they do in practice to care. One of the main examples that participants in the study gave to illustrate that they care was coded as *giving up personal time* to help students. For example, in the first interview, Katie talked about how she spent time with particular students who were going through difficult times:

> They have wanted to talk, and I would stay back and we would just sit and talk
> about schoolwork or what was happening in their life. And that I would actually give
> them time, and I will talk and try to help them that way. (Katie, group C)

Another teacher, Poppy, described how she showed that she cared about her students by delaying her lunch break so that she could spend time getting to know the some of the students in her class:

> At lunchtimes I would sit with them because I saw that as soon as the boys left the
> room at the end of the lesson, they would close the door, shut the blinds and take
> off their scarves, so I would join them and we would talk and laugh. (Poppy, group
> A)

Another teacher, Anthony, said that he helped students in his spare time:

> When I have finished prepping, I am spending lots of time helping my Libyan
> students to find jobs. They don't know what to do, their money has been cut off and
> the payment they received from the government is not enough. (Anthony, group
> C)

This view of English language teacher work and identity as caring reflects findings in other research studies (Brown, 2005; Cowie, 2011) which found caring to be a constituent part of teacher identity. Brown's (2005) study of English language teachers explored the influence of teachers' perceptions of teacher identity on their work and their initial decision to become an English language teacher. Brown found that "initial perceptions [of what it means to be an ESL teacher] act in the nature of a self-fulfilling prophesy" (2005, p. 13). Brown (2005) found that the participants in her study chose to be English language teachers in order to reinforce and reify their perceptions of themselves as helpful and caring people, stating; "if we believe ourselves to be 'helpers', we select a role which will allow us to 'help'"(Brown, 2005, p. 13). Brown argued that it was teachers' beliefs about themselves as people that influenced the choice and formation of their professional identity. The teachers in Brown's (2005) study had a view of their work as a 'force for good' (p. 18). They emphasised the special relationships that they had with their students who had come to Australia as refugees and how they cared about them and felt happy that they were able to help them. They viewed their work with migrants and refugees as more rewarding than mainstream teaching.

Cowie's (2011) study of the emotions of experienced English language teachers in Japan found that caring for students was "especially common" (p. 241) among the participants in the study. Similarly, Boyer's (2010) study of empathy development in trainee early childhood teachers also reflects this view of teacher identity as caring, linking empathy to effective teaching: "an ethos of caring deeply and empathically about children and their learning has been identified as being at the heart of purposeful teaching" (p. 313).

The sub-section to follow introduces further evidence of the influence of the discourses of humanism through analysis of what participants' beliefs about learner engagement and the role of the teacher.

My job is to get people's attention (Niren, group B).

> Getting people's attention, keeping them on task, making them feel good about
> what they are doing, doing it in a lively, entertaining way, that is what teaching is all
> about. (Niren, group B)

In addition to stating that caring was intrinsic to being an effective teacher, the participants in the study teaching expressed other beliefs and referred to practices considered to be associated with the discourse of humanism. They believed that effective teaching meant encouraging and sustaining positive student interaction, engagement and motivation in the language learning

process. This humanistic perspective constructed an effective teacher as one who engaged learners, and created and sustained a positive learning environment in which students were able to learn. Within this view of effective teaching, the teacher was the central agent in influencing learning outcomes. In contrast, several reviews of the research literature on second language acquisition (Arnold, 1999; Cook, 2009; Ellis, 1994) argue that individual learner differences have a far greater influence on learning outcomes than teachers. In particular, individual learner motivation has a very significant impact on language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). As Cook (2009) states in summarising what language teachers can learn from language acquisition research: "It is the learner who learns, not the teacher" (p. 155); that is, the learner is central to learning outcomes not the teacher.

Engaging learners.

As noted in the introduction to this sub-section, in contrast to the research evidence, the participants in the current study were confident that as teachers they had a central role to play in learning outcomes. In particular, participants spoke emphatically and with conviction about what a teacher was and did and often associated this with humanistic phenomena. For example, they believed that by engaging students they were able to help them learn:

> If you can engage a person, hopefully, you can teach them something. (Leena,
> group B)

The language that participants used to express their beliefs about engaging learners indicates the strength of the affinity and the degrees of certainty that they had with these ideas. For example, when one participant, Niren, discussed his classroom practice he focused largely on the importance of engaging learners, his use of language emphasised the affinity that he had to the beliefs he was expressing:

> My job **is to get** people's attention, **give** them a message, whatever it is, and **get**
> them fully involved in what I am doing. (Niren, group B)

The combination of the to-infinitive and present simple tense in the extract above denotes a strong sense of confidence, certainty and purpose in relation to the ideas that Niren expressed. As he continued, expressed a strong desire for his students to be engaged in learning:

> I **want** people to be actively involved in what **I am doing** […] I try to think of more
> interesting ways, active ways, to engage people. (Niren, group B)

Niren emphasised the importance of the creation and maintenance of learner engagement in order to be an effective teacher:

> The **whole thing** is that as a teacher, you **need** to know **all** the skills required to
> engage people. (Niren, group B)

Participants used the phrase "as a teacher" repeatedly to qualify statements about what they did in their daily working lives to engage learners, the may indicate the centrality of humanistic qualities such as caring and student-centred pedagogies to their beliefs about being effective language teachers.

A better learning environment (Leena, group B).

As noted previously, the participants in the current study believed that as teachers they significantly influenced the learning outcomes of their students by caring about their students, by engaging them and by striving to meet their needs. They also believed that they influenced learning outcomes by encouraging and motivating learners and by ensuring that their lessons were enjoyable. This was not an unusual goal for teachers as explained by Cook (2009):

> The measure of a good lesson for many teachers […] is one where the activities
> work and the students are happy, with little tangible evidence that the students
> have learnt anything. (p. 139).

The English language teacher discourse of the current study was marked with words and phrases associated with the humanistic notion of a positive learning environment. Many of the participants in the current study believed that as teachers they were the central agents in the construction of a positive learning environment characterised by positive energy and enthusiasm:

> Having a personal interest in the topic is good too. If you are **enthusiastic** about it,
> it is much easier for them [the students] to be **enthusiastic** about it; they **feed off**
> that **energy**. (Anthony, group C)

Participants believed that they were able to change students' level of motivation and interest by their attitudes as teachers to the subject of the lesson, as well as their attitude to being a teacher:

> As a teacher I go in there and **I know** that my attitude dictates **the energy level** of
> those students, I take them **right up** bring them right down. (Harris, group C)

They believed that as teachers they had the power to change how students felt:

> But, if you can, why not make them feel better and **lift up** the **energy** in the
> classroom? (Nadia, group A)

Participants believed that as teachers they had the power to influence how their students felt and responded to the lesson. They wanted students to feel good and to enjoy their lessons. Participants believed that they achieved this through the power of their own actions and attitude.

You have got to keep it entertaining (Anthony, group C).

Being an effective teacher meant ensuring that lessons were enjoyable for learners; participants aimed to ensure that their lessons were not "boring" and believed that lessons should be enjoyable for students as this was associated with effective learning:

> If people enjoy and they learn and they come back to you four or five years later
> and they say thank you, I think I must be doing something right. (Niren, group B)

Participants viewed humour as a way to create and maintain a positive learning environment. Harris attempted to reconcile a "fun" lesson with an "effective" one. Analysis provided insight into the complexity of participants' beliefs about becoming and being effective teachers. The analysis explored Harris' beliefs about fun and its association to effective teaching. Harris stated that he used humour for specific purposes and at specific times during his lessons:

> To break it up, if you are going hard slog, a little bit of a laugh to break it up.
> (Harris, group C)

When he first mentioned humour, the analysis suggests that Harris was confident and insistent. As he expressed his beliefs about the role of humour in effective teaching, Harris had a strong degree of affinity with the beliefs that he expressed. He used the modal verb "have to" in its present simple form repeatedly as he explained the importance of students responding to his jokes:

> Students **have to** respond; it is just basic manners. They **have to** laugh at my
> jokes, I say that jokingly, but they **have to** get where I am coming from. (Harris,
> group C)

The present simple tense denotes universal or timeless truths about the nature of the world (Clark, 2008; Langacker, 2001). The use of the present simple tense in the extract above suggests that Harris believed that his use of humour in the classroom was a marker of effective

teaching. Harris continued to talk confidently and in generalities about the kind of classroom atmosphere that he aimed to create by using humour:

> […] and it **is** great when they **throw** lots of sarcasm back at me and it really **lightens it up**. (Harris, group C)

The analysis to follow illustrates a change in the degree of certainty and confidence that Harris expressed in relation to his beliefs. Harris recalled and referred to his prior teaching experiences and expressed less certainty about the importance of a fun lesson. He reflected on the effectiveness of his use of humour as a teaching approach:

> **I think I was getting** into too much of a comedy routine in my previous job and I **had to** cut it back. (Harris, group C)

The use of the phrase "I think" in conjunction with the past continuous tense and the modal verb "had to" indicate both a past and present questioning of the use of humour in the classroom. As he continued to talk about his use of humour, Harris acknowledged that at times he felt that he was still going too far in his attempt to create a fun classroom environment, although he justified his actions as a means to counter a "boring" classroom:

> And sometimes I have to control myself from having too much fun in the classroom, but having said that you **have got to have fun** in the classroom because it is so boring. (Harris, group C)

Harris described more confidently how he had made changes to his teaching approach. He argued that empathy had played an important role in his re-consideration of his use of humour in the classroom:

> I think you need to be empathic to think for example that this is too much of a comedy routine, let's rein it back in for the students because it is probably not good for the students. (Harris, group C)

Thus, Harris acknowledged that while it may have been enjoyable for him to use humour in his lessons, it might not always have been so helpful to students. The analysis of these data extracts illustrate that Harris had a changing perspective in relation to the use of a "comedy routine" as an effective classroom practice.

In a later interview, Harris presented a more consistent and stronger view on being an effective teacher. Using the present simple tense and a superlative adjective, he discussed the importance of making the distinction between having a fun lesson and being an effective teacher:

> That **is** the next step for me, it **is** easy to have a good fun class, but being an effective teacher **is the most important** thing. (Harris, group C)

Senior (2006) reporting on the findings of a research study which sought to explore what constituted a 'good' English language lesson, presents her conclusions on English language teachers views of 'having fun' in lessons:

> Many language teachers operate as enthusiastic amateurs for some years, having developed a range of language teaching techniques for energising their classes and convincing themselves that worthwhile learning is taking place. (p. 58-59)

Senior refers to the "key role of humour in teaching" (p. 174), but cautions that while humour plays a role in the development and maintenance of class cohesion through its "coercive power" (p. 174), humour can also operate in negative ways, excluding those who do not understand the cause of the laughter. Senior (2006, p. 185) refers to the "party games syndrome" in which less experienced language teachers may "confuse fun with learning", she concludes that a distinction must be made between having fun and effective teaching and that it is experienced teachers who are more generally better able to draw this distinction:

> Experienced language teachers sense that there is a reciprocal relationship between enjoyment and learning [...] They are equally sure that enjoyment is not the same thing at all as the students having a good time together at a social occasion such as a party: it is of a different order altogether. (Senior, 2006, p. 185)

Although the participants in the study were clear that they wanted to be effective teachers, their changing perspectives on what it meant to be an effective teacher illustrates the temporality, inconsistency and mutability of data in the form of spoken language. However, these data provide snapshots of how participants in the study expressed their identities as effective teachers. The sub-sections to follow explicate further the phenomena that the participants claimed and assigned as part of their identities as effective teachers.

You form good relationships with your students (Katie, group C).

> No education can take place without interpersonal communication. Effective teaching can thus be qualified in terms of relating effectively in the classroom. (Le Roux, 2002, pp. 37-38)

Beyond the daily administrative tasks, the planning, the marking, the meetings and the photocopying that the participants in the study attended to as they went about their daily working lives, their identities as effective teachers were also associated with their beliefs about their relationships with students which was strongly associated with interactions with students. The participants in the study constructed and conceptualised themselves as effective teachers through the special relationships that they had with their students:

> There is an unstated understanding which teachers use with their students; an idea; a relationship; something that goes on for which there is no word. (Niren, group B)

They valued the relationships that they had with their students and believed that as teachers they were able to communicate effectively and form relationships with students:

> I think that is just one of the beauties of the job, it really does really reinforce again and again that it is just a bunch of individuals, and everyone has got their own characteristics, wants and needs. (Harris, group C)

As teachers it was important for participants to communicate and relate to their students as people:

> I like to be interested in my students, not just as students, but as people as well. (Nadia, group A)

Participants described how they attended to and adapted to accommodate the individual behaviours and characters of the different students in their classes:

> I have found that quite often the quiet people just take a bit more time to draw out and they can be very interesting, so you just take your time with people and it is usually worth it. (Harris, group C)

However, an analysis of these data also suggest that there was a tendency for participants to oversimplify and idealise the complexity and difficulties of forming a relationship with people from

diverse backgrounds in a learning context in which there were unequal power relations. Issues such as these were sometimes expressed through stereotypes and othering:

> People from different cultural backgrounds have different needs. The Japanese
> need to learn to speak up, speak out and disagree publicly. Saudis need to be
> quiet and listen to someone else's argument. (Silvia, group C)

The participants in the study also had different ideas about how close a relationship to their students was permissible. For example, Katie considered having a good relationship with her students to be important part of her professional identity, but for Katie there were clear boundaries to her relationships with students:

> I don't get involved with my students. You know some teachers, they go out and
> they drink with them, and they go out for dinner, they do all this social stuff. I
> never, to me that is a line, and I don't cross it. (Katie, group C)

For other participants, the time they spent getting to know their students was associated with effective teaching:

> The more I teach them, get to know them, regard them as people, it is easier to
> teach. (Poppy, group A)

For communication between participants and students to be effective, it needed to be mutually beneficial. As illustrated in earlier chapters, the teachers in the study noted that teacher empathy required a response from students. Participants believed that student responses were associated with effective teaching:

> I think that it [empathy] is not only for the students, it is probably to help me as well
> because I need that common ground as well in order to function or operate more
> effectively as a teacher. (Leena, group B)

To summarise the findings thus far, the extracts and analysis in this current chapter provided insights into the ways in which participants expressed their identities as language teachers. The data analysis suggested that the study participants were confident about the significance of humanistic phenomena to effective English language teaching. Moreover, the analysis also showed that participants considered themselves to be the central agents in determining student learning outcomes.

Participants' beliefs about the capacity of teachers to influence student learning outcomes are reinforced by empirical research. However, there is also a substantial body of knowledge on learning outcomes in second language acquisition that contradicts the study participants' perspectives on the role of the teacher. For example, research has shown the benefits of specific types of explicit language instruction on second language acquisition (Ellis, 1994; August, Goldenberg, Saunders & Dressler, 2010; Spada & Tomita, 2010). However, as noted earlier in this chapter, extensive research exploring the association between language teaching methods and second language acquisition has proved inconclusive. More specifically, no language teaching method(s) in particular have been found to be more effective than any other and the search for the one best method is generally no longer a concern for second language acquisition researchers (Cook, 2009; Ellis, 1994; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Sowden, 2007) with researchers firmly focussing their attention on learners.

However, quantitative research in the areas of school education and educational psychology supports the view of participants in the current study that there is a positive association between humanistic, student-centred teaching approaches and student learning outcomes. Cornelius-White's (2007) meta-analysis of 1,000 journal articles and 119 quantitative research studies that were conducted and published between 1984 and 2004 concluded that:

> Learner-centred teacher variables have above-average associations with positive
> student outcomes. Positive relationships, non-directivity, empathy, warmth, and
> encouraging thinking and learning are the specific teacher variables that are above
> average compared with other educational innovations. (Cornelius-White, 2007, p.
> 134)

This research confirms the belief that a humanistic approach to teaching English can have a positive impact on student learning. The sub-section to follow discusses some concerns that arose in relation to participants positioning of themselves as effective language teachers. Analysis of the language that the study participants used when referring to students indicates the power differentials in the context of the study.

Traces of othering.

Alsup (2006) argues that researchers need to explore the multiple conflicting subject-positions of teachers within the persistent ideologies of teaching contexts in order to counter the "pervasive cultural scripts and stereotypes of teachers" (Alsup, 2006, p.6). As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, in the post-colonial context, the field of English language teaching has been called to account for its tendency to be largely unaware of the ideological power of English (Widin, 2010)

as well as for *othering*; that is, uncritically reinforcing linguistic, racial and cultural inequality through racial and cultural stereotyping of English language learners (Kubota, 2002, 2004, Kubota & Lin, 2009; Min, 2001; Norton, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Othering refers to the ways in which the discourse of a particular group defines other groups in opposition to itself. (Palfreyman, 2005, p. 212). Othering is not simply the reinforcement of the power and status of one's own languaculture through searching for and establishing *differences* between one languaculture and another, but it is also expressed through a focus on *sameness* (Kubota, 2003). Kubota (2002) criticises sameness as:

> [...] a colour-blind liberal discourse of individualism, equality and meritocracy. The idea that everyone is equal regardless of race and other attributes and that socioeconomic success is the result of individual effort makes each individual responsible for his or her own success. In this logic, the cause of failure is not systematic, institutionalised inequalities but lack of individual effort. (p. 87)

As illustrated in previous chapters, analysis of the data provides evidence of traces of these discourses in the data gathered for the current study. However, the findings of the current study converge with and diverge from the underlying ideologies of these discourses. The findings suggested that the teachers in the study consciously attempted to ameliorate the racism that they acknowledged was commonplace in Australia. The participants expressed anti-racist views and attempted to dissociate themselves from racism. For example, Harris expressed his anti-racist positioning in the following extract:

> I have actually parted with a friend, a good bloke, but I couldn't stand the racism.
> In Bunbury, I worked as a furniture removalist and my colleagues were racists.
> Bunbury is a racist town. (Harris, group C).

Another teacher described her personal experience of racism in Australia and was aware of the racism that English language learners might face in Australia:

> In Australia, if you are not white, you come across a lot of racism. And I think a lot
> of [international] students come here [Australia] and have that problem as well. I
> think it is more to do with being different within a culture. You have to prove
> yourself because you are different. (Leena, group B)

Analysis of these data suggests that the study participants made a conscious effort to counter outmoded notions of race despite expressing a limited understanding of the politics and ideology

of English and White privilege. Participants were aware of the importance of culture, but they also saw learners as individuals:

> There are many aspects of the self that transcend culture and if it [culture] is the
> only paradigm used then I think we can lose sight of the individual. However, in the
> ESL classroom (and I think generally in my life) the notion of culture is, for me, at
> the forefront. (Anthony, group C)

Anthony explicitly acknowledged that teachers' perceptions and understanding of culture was significant in the teaching of English as an additional language. Anthony referred to a prescriptive, deterministic view of the concept of culture and then attempted to explain that he did not see culture as fixed. Anthony referred to culture without resorting to racial or cultural stereotypes. The following extract illustrates the thought processes involved in becoming interculturally competent. Anthony questioned common conceptions of culture as static national habits and beliefs and explored instead the idea that culture could be conceptualised in a different way:

> Cultural aspects of a person are not simply imposing national stereotypes onto an
> individual. When I think of how to define culture I can't pin it down. I could give a
> text book definition about shared beliefs, values and norms, but for me that's not
> accurate enough. It is paradoxical; dynamic yet static, regional and national,
> collective and individual; class defined and classless. I guess I am trying to convey
> a sense of fluidity to my understanding of culture, and I feel that much of my
> interpretation is intuition based on encounters with 'the other'. (Anthony, group C)

Analysis of the data suggested that the cultural and linguistic prejudice evident in various practices of the field of English language teaching and traces of "the colour-blind discourse of individualism, equality and meritocracy" (Kubota, 2002, p. 87) were evident in current study. There was also evidence that othering served to reinforce the power and privilege of Anglo Australian English, culture and values with which many of the participants aligned themselves. This included the imposition of English only in classrooms (Auerbach, 1997; Baumgardner, 2006), cultural stereotyping (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Volet, 1999) and the "inferiorisation" of students; "a process in which the other is rendered inferior to the self" (Kubota & Lin, 2009, p. 6) which was most evident in the perpetuation of a deficit model of students' languacultures.

I had this little Chinese fella in my class (Poppy, group A).

Analysis of the data suggested that the participants in the current study claimed the identity of being and becoming an empathic, effective English language teacher uncritically, because they were unconsciously attracted to the power that is generally ascribed to teachers to lead, inspire and nurture. The analysis pointed to the unequal power relations between English language teachers and learners in the study context. One regular feature of English language teacher discourse was the use of "boy" and "girl" for man or woman when referring to students by gender as well as the use of the word "kids" when referring to students as illustrated in the extract:

> There is usually a reason for **bad** behaviour and you have to deal with it otherwise
> the **good kids** get forgotten. (Katie, group C)

The addition of the adjective "little" when referring to students also reflects a view of students as inferior and less powerful than the teacher:

> One **little girl** keeps popping to mind. (Leena, group B)

> I had this **little Chinese** fella in my class. (Poppy, group A)

Analysis of these data suggests that the use of diminutives placed students in a subordinate position, infantilising them through a discourse that rendered them as helpless, powerless, and incapable of thinking for themselves. This use of language would be understandable in a school context, but in an adult learning context this use of language suggests that a view of learners that placed the participants in a position of much greater power. This discourse may reflect the fact that some of the participants were former schoolteachers: assignments were "homework" or "schoolwork", "university" was "school", students were "naughty" and had "bad behaviour". This discourse may also reflect the fact that many English language learners on pathway programs in Australia are in their late teens and early twenties. However, there was evidence to suggest that participants positioned themselves as adult decision makers and indicated that they enjoyed the personal power that they claimed in the classroom as teachers:

> We all love teaching because you make your own little world; you're the king and
> you make the decisions. (Silvia, group B)

As the main decision maker in the classroom, Silvia felt powerful. She enjoyed teaching English because of the power she was able to claim for herself as a teacher.

The participants also believed that they needed to be in control of the class in order to create an effective learning environment:

> As a teacher you do have to keep a certain amount of decorum or control over your class, you cannot just let people do what they want. (Niren, group B)

It was important for participants that they maintained a particular atmosphere in the classroom and they believed that sometimes the only option was for them to intervene when students expressed their cultural identities in ways that participants considered inappropriate:

> I had one student, a Chinese guy, a real extrovert, a gorgeous guy, a big personality, and he'd drink coke in the class, and twice he did this really big burp […] and the other Chinese students did not take any notice, but I also had five or six students from the Middle East, and three of them were older Libyan men in their mid-forties. And one of them looked up like this (teacher denotes displeasure), so I said: Oh, that's impolite, do you know that we say in English, if you do that? He laughed, I told him, and I wrote it up on the board: Excuse me or I beg my pardon. And the others stopped, and I said: Usually we would cover our mouths". So I told him: In our culture we consider that to be impolite. (Katie, group C)

> *Classroom rules.*

Sometimes participants attempted to control the behaviour of their students through classroom "rules". Some of the rules that were mentioned reflected the policies of the institution, while others did not. For example, smoking, using mobile phones eating and drinking during classes were not permitted in any classrooms in the institution and rules like these were unlikely to be considered discriminatory or racist.   However, the English language teachers created and imposed their own classroom rules some of which were discriminatory and biased towards particular cultural values and beliefs, but were understood by the teachers as sound pedagogy. The classroom rules were understood to be common knowledge as the use of the definite article and the phrase highlighted in the extract below indicated :

> I got the students to establish **the** classroom rules. I made sure that the groups were mixed; a mix of old and new students, because **the old students know what our rules are.** A lot of them were the same, like no mobile phones. I typed them up and gave everyone a copy of the list and I put one up on the wall and I would ask them: what rule was that that you just broke, have a look at your list. (Katie, group C)

Katie explained how the rules were negotiated in her class, thus indicating that the students had agency in the creation of the rules. However, if the rules were negotiated one would expect that the rules were unknown before the negotiation took place. Another participant, Leena, described a situation in which two students did not follow the classroom rules, illustrating a power struggle between the teacher and the students:

> Leena: There were two Libyan students who were constantly interrupting the class to ask their questions, it was like their private forum that they were going to control
>
> Silvia: They didn't know the social rules …
>
> Leena: […] about the classroom. They didn't know the classroom rules. It took a lot of time for them to learn how to behave. It took a lot of practice and training to get them to the stage that they are at now. They are brilliant students now; they behave well in the classroom. They are very, very polite, they know when to interrupt, and how. They know when they are asking too much, too many questions […] I had to tell them that they can't just dominate, there are other students in the class. (Group interview C)

Leena viewed rules such as English only as a means to create a harmonious classroom. Leena believed that students needed to learn and adhere to the classroom rules to be successful learners. The findings of the current study argue that these rules are ideologically questionable and pedagogically unsound. The need for and imposition of an explicit set of rules on groups of mature adult language learners, however well intended, is unlikely to have a positive effect on learners who are already marginalised and disadvantaged, such practices are discriminatory and unnecessary. However, the data provides evidence that participants were unaware of the process and impact of othering in their conceptualisations of English language learners.

Participants argued that they needed rules to discourage inappropriate behaviours that were unfair on other students or were detrimental to language learning. For example, some participants explained that English was the only language they allowed to be used in the classroom. This imposition of English only in the classroom was of particular concern pedagogically. Research into the significance of first languages (L1) in the learning of second (L2) or additional languages shows the important role that first languages play in the study and acquisition of an additional language, as Canagarajah (2005, p. 941) points out: "gone are the days when we treated the L1 as needing to be supressed if one is to become a proficient speaker of an L2".

The findings indicate the different power discourses that may have had agency in the construction of the English language teacher identity of the participants and in their positioning of students. The analysis illustrated the power that participants claimed for themselves over students and points to the subordinate position that they assigned to students.

Should We Want to Be Good Teachers?

Few educators, if any, would deny that humanism has provided significant and long lasting improvements to education and educational practices. However, the clichés that abounded in the participants' perceptions of themselves and their profession as "caring" are problematic. Pennington, Brock and Nduras' (2012) exploration of 'white' teachers' conceptions of caring in a multicultural setting found that teachers need a critical awareness of the role that privilege plays in caring relationships. Teachers need to understand and privilege the caring needs of students over their own need to care. Herrera and Morales (2009) found that even with the best intentions, the English language teachers in their US study minimised or ignored personal, institutionalised or societal discrimination and racism against English language learners through the discourse of humanism exemplified in the quotation to follow:

> I myself emphasize respect in my class every day and try my best that students
> respect each other. I respect them, they respect me. They are students to me not
> Hispanic, Mexican American, White, Black or other. I do not care about the color of
> their skin, I respect them and they respect me, that is what is important. (female
> English teacher). (Herrera & Morales, 2009, p. 202).

The colour-blind liberal discourse of humanism (Kubota, 2004) creates and maintains teachers' avoidance of confrontation and honest dialogue about English language education, race and cultural identity. Moreover, within an all-encompassing view of the teaching profession as caring, it may be difficult for teachers to say that sometimes they do not care, that sometimes they hate their job, or that they became a teacher because they were unable to think of anything else *to be* as some participants in the current study did:

> I did my Dip because he [her husband] was doing his and he paid for me. (Leena,
> group B)

> I didn't want to be a teacher. I married and fell into teaching. So, I went into
> teaching by default, and I used it to travel. (Silvia, group B)

Analysis of the data suggests that the dominant, overly positive, discourse of humanism evident within English language teaching may have constrained the capacity of the study participants to express the complexity of their beliefs about what it meant to be a teacher of culturally and linguistically diverse students and to speak honestly about what they believed and how they felt as they attended to their daily work. If the dominant discourses prevent teachers from talking and thinking critically about their identity and work as English language teachers then they are likely to continue to view their beliefs and practices uncritically.

The overly positive discourse of humanism may be also perpetuated in the context of the "deficit discourse" of the ongoing public debate about quality teaching in Australian schools and universities, and in other Western democracies (Thomas, 2011, p. 371). Within this debate, binary oppositions (Clark, 2008) or dichotomies serve as markers that indicate the extent to which teachers are constrained and influenced to construct an overly positive or deficit lens through which they view themselves, their profession, and their students. For example, the use of comparatives and superlatives in the broader public debates about teacher quality and learning outcomes illustrate how binary opposition contributes to the construction of a deficit or overly positive discourse. The public educational discourse constructs and sustains a system of knowledge and beliefs which positions teachers in opposition to each other. The discourse identifies and acknowledges only *the best* teachers whereby *the rest* are side-lined or are defined by their shortcomings (after Clark, 2008).

Dichotomies of "good" and "bad", "pass" and "fail" dominate the public, professional and individual teacher discourses. These prevailing dichotomies may serve to maintain an elitist view of education that does not allow a place for teachers to express their different teacher identities. Within this discourse, teachers are often represented and represent themselves as deficit; they need to be "better" teachers and their students need to obtain better results. Some teachers are "bad" and parents ought to be afraid, as a by-line from The Daily Telegraph warned at the start of the 2012 school year:

> As you prepare your child for school this year, you are about to enter a lottery.
> You don't know if their teacher will be any good. (Bantick, 2012, para. 1))

This discourse implies that teachers may not be good enough at their job, yet at the same time, politicians consider them almost wholly responsible for the educational outcomes of the students that they teach as reported in the Australian newspaper in 2010:

> As part of its second wave of school reform, Julia Gillard yesterday outlined a scheme paying the top 10 per cent of teachers, about 25,000 staff, a one-off bonus based on their performance, including their students' results and involvement in their school. (Ferrari & Maher, 2010, para. 3).

Angus (2011) presents a growing body of research evidence of the failure of neo-liberal education policies that have dominated the educational discourse in Australia for the past three decades. The neo-liberal agenda significantly underplays the influence of students' backgrounds and social circumstances on learning outcomes (Angus, 2011) focussing instead on the role of teachers in influencing learning outcomes. These influences may have agency in the perceptions of study participants as English language teachers. The final section of this chapter presents findings about the emotional experience of being and becoming an effective English language teacher and suggests that participants' conceptions of their emotional experiences as teachers has been mediated, at least in part, through the dominant discourses.

Just a Big Tangle of Emotion (Katie, group C)
Recent research calls for an account of a discursively constructed teacher identity that incorporates both thinking and feeling. Both Clark (2008) and Alsup (2006) attend to the importance of teacher emotion in shaping teacher identities. They argue that discourse includes not only language, but also non-language that includes feelings. Clark (2008, p. 72) defines discourse as, "socially valued ways of thinking, speaking, *feeling* [my italics] and acting". With the focus of the current study on the emotional experience of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners, a number of insights into the association between teacher emotion and professional identity formation emerged.

How participants managed their feelings and attributed meaning to the emotional experience of being an teacher was an important element in the construction of their professional identity as interculturally effective English language teachers. The inklings of the important role of teacher emotion in the daily working lives and professional identity formation of pre-service and in-service teachers continues to emerge as more studies are conducted that take account of teacher emotion (Alsup, 2006; Clark, 2008; Trent, 2010). Research into teacher emotion and teacher identity formation in the areas of English language teaching and second language acquisition also demonstrate the importance of teacher emotion in the process of professional identity formation (Brown, 2005; Cowie, 2011).

However, it may be difficult for teachers to view their emotional experiences as important, particularly if the emotional experience of being a teacher does not form part of the dominant discourses. Emotional phenomena such as stress resulting from the isolation and lack of support that teachers may experience during their initial practicum or first teaching position makes it even more difficult for trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers to deal with the daily pressures of teaching (Boyer, 2010; Brown, 2005). Analysis of the data of the current study converges with this research and suggests that negative emotional phenomena associated with participants' work such as stress influenced their sense of identity as effective teachers.

Participant referred to their formative experiences as teachers and describing how they had tried to cope with the emotional demands of being newly qualified teachers. When asked about her capacity to empathise with her students, Nadia referred to the anxiety she had experienced in her early years as a teacher. Nadia she believed that she was not able to attend to students' needs at the time as her own needs were so all-encompassing. Her repetition of key words and her choice of expression indicate the power of the emotions that she experienced at that time:

> When I started out, I was so caught up in my own teaching, I was so nervous, it was mainly **me**. I was focused on **me.** It was so nerve wracking that I was constantly thinking about **me**. What am I going to do? Am I doing this right? It was so **me me me me me**. Nobody else existed. (Nadia, group A)

Another participant, Katie, explained how she had changed as a teacher. She described how she was unable to create boundaries to protect herself from the strong feelings that were aroused when she first started work as a teacher:

> If you get too caught up in someone's emotions and feelings, you can't be objective and have perspective, and you can't actually help them. It becomes just a big tangle of emotions. (Katie, group C)

Participants believed that they were not initially equipped to deal with the emotional experience of being a teacher, and believed that it was undesirable for them to experience emotions in their daily working lives. As one teacher explained:

> I had to distance myself from that [being emotional]. **The last thing you want to do** [as a teacher] is to get emotional. (Leena, group B)

Leena's use of the modal verb "had to" and the expression "the last thing you want to do" are indicative of the strong affinity that she had to this belief. Another teacher, Katie, described how she had left her job as a high school teacher because she was unable to cope with the emotional demands that were placed on her:

> When I was in high school, I lasted a year. They were too needy, and teenagers were too demanding, and the problems were too complex. (Katie, group C)

Katie compared her experiences as a high school teacher with her experiences as an English language teacher. She believed that it was less emotionally demanding to be an English language teacher than it was to be a high school teacher. As an English language teacher she was more able to be the kind of teacher that she wanted to be:

> Whereas for me it [high school teaching] was too much, whereas this [English language teaching] is enough. I can be caring and empathetic without getting involved in, and drawn into those issues and complex problems that teenagers have. (Katie, group C)

She believed that to be an effective teacher she needed to be in control of her feelings. When her feelings had become entangled with those of her students, she believed that she was a less effective teacher because she "was really getting caught up" in her students' lives. It is significant that Katie's past self was the subject of her reflections on her current situation. Katie's frequent use of the first person singular as she described her past experiences as a high school teacher pointed to the individual and personal nature of the situation that she described, and also indicated individual agency in the construction of her identity as an effective teacher.

In the same interview, Katie explained in more detail about the difficulties she perceived she had had being a high school teacher. She described how she was unable to manage the negative emotions that she experienced in relation to her students' traumatic backgrounds. She attributed her inability to construct an emotional boundary between herself and the students she was teaching to her decision to leave her job as a high school teacher:

> As a teacher there has to be boundaries. I had to work that out when I went into high school teaching, which I only did for a very short time. But working with teenagers, they have lots of issues and I found I was really getting caught up in all the traumatic backgrounds that kids come from, and I thought if I am going to do this and be a successful teacher I've got to stop [getting caught up]. And, in fact,

> one of my reasons for leaving teaching was that I found I took on too much of the
> kids' problems. (Katie, group C)

Katie's use of language indicates the significance and importance that Katie attributes to emotion in her work as a teacher. Her language was strong and assertive when she talked about establishing boundaries. Katie first mentioned her beliefs about the role of empathy in helping people to manage their feelings during the first interview with her group as they discussed whether there was a difference between empathy and sympathy:

> Empathy is more objective and you can stand back and you can put yourself in
> another person's shoes. You can stand back or have the ability to stand back and
> be more objective and be more helpful, whereas sympathy involves pity as well.
> And sometimes your emotions are entangled with the other person's when you are
> feeling sympathy. With sympathy, emotions tend to get entangled with the other
> persons' because you are feeling for that person whereas with empathy you can
> understand and be aware, but you don't get entangled in their issues. (Katie,
> group C)

What Katie suggested here was that through empathy she was able to relate to her students on an emotional level without getting caught up in their feelings *as if* she herself was experiencing the same situation. Katie's explanation above reflects the "as if" clause of Rogers's (1967) definition of empathy:

> To sense the client's private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing
> the 'as if' quality […]. (p. 3)

Katie admitted that during her initial teaching experience, she was unable to untangle her feelings from those of her students, but she believed that she became more able to do so when she had started to work in adult education that she perceived as less demanding.

Katie's description of how she had failed to cope with the emotional experience of being a newly qualified school teacher was not unusual, nor was it unusual for an English language teacher to have trained and worked as a school teacher. Many of the participants in the current study had trained and worked as school teachers prior to becoming English language teachers. Brown (2005) that found that a significant number of primary and secondary school teachers turned to English language teaching when they could not cope with the demands of mainstream teaching (Brown, 2005).

As noted in previous chapters, scant attention has been paid to the role that teacher emotion plays in determining the quality of pre-service and in-service teachers' daily working lives (Hargreaves, 1998; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Further, teacher emotion is still more or less a taboo topic when it comes to teacher education, as Alsup (2006) states: "teacher educators do not feel comfortable with the emotional lives of their students" (p. xii). Becoming a member of the teaching profession means that teachers often have to be able to cope with the emotional demands of the job alone as so little attention is paid to the importance of teacher emotion as they construct their identities as teachers.

Research by Cowie (2011) on the emotions of experienced expatriate English language teachers in Japan concluded that acknowledging emotion was important to the teachers in the study; teachers needed to talk collaboratively about their teaching, and the English language teaching profession ought to acknowledge the importance of teacher emotion in teacher development and research. Cowie (2011) argued further that emotion should be of particular concern in English language teaching because of the added challenges that English language teachers face when teaching in unfamiliar cultural contexts and/or with learners with whom they do not share the same cultural background.

The findings of the current study suggest that the lack of attention paid to the emotional experience of participants as pre-service and in-service teachers may be associated with the construction of a teacher identity that discouraged teachers from sharing their emotional experiences as a teacher. These findings are also related to participants' conceptualisations of negative emotions.

Negative feeling is bad.

> [H]ow teachers deal with emotions can have a great impact on their personal growth, and the kind of emotional support that they receive from their colleagues and institution can be a major factor in their development as a teacher. (Cowie, 2011, p. 236)

Although there is limited research on teacher emotion (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), research into student learning and teacher development contends that it is negative feelings in particular that ought to be of concern to researchers and educators. Researchers investigating teacher development recommend the minimisation of bad feeling when implementing change in educational settings. As noted in earlier chapters of this thesis, research into emotion in the areas of English language teaching and second language acquisition has focused almost entirely

on the adverse effects of negative feelings on learners. This has resulted in teaching practices that seek to minimise learner anxiety through the construction and conceptualisation of learning spaces as "safe" or "comfortable". In the current study, phrases such as "positive learning experience" or "safe learning environment" were evident. Participants believed that the construction of a positive classroom atmosphere infused with positive emotion was essential to promote and support student learning and adjustment to an unfamiliar cultural context:

> Our classrooms should be a safe place where students can experience and operate within the culture without fear of mistakes having lasting social ramifications. (Harris, group C)

Research into interculturality has also paid scant attention to the role of emotion in interculturality focussing more on individual characteristics and competencies such as knowledge, skills and attitudes (Sercu, 2005). However, a few studies in this area have tentatively pointed to a more constructive view of the role of negative feelings in the development of intercultural competence (Byram, 1989; Otten, 2003). Moreover, while negative emotions such as anxiety and anger are typically understood to have an adverse effect on positive social and educational outcomes, more recent studies in psychology suggest that negative emotions such as anger may have a positive effect in some situations (Tagar, Federico, & Halperin, 2011).

Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter suggest that the participants in the study positioned themselves as interculturally effective English language teachers, and that it was important to their conceptions of themselves as professional English language teachers that they did so. The findings point to the influence of humanism in the English language teacher discourse in constructing, maintaining and reinforcing the professional identity of the participants in the study. The findings show how participants viewed themselves as central agents in influencing the learning process, the learning experience and the learning outcomes of their culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The chapter also discussed the ongoing challenges to the status of English language teachers in particular and suggested that deficit and overly positive discourses of education may have had influence over the beliefs of participants. Notwithstanding the influence of dominant educational ideologies such as humanism identified and discussed in this chapter, the beliefs of participants remained largely untouched by second language research outcomes that pointed to the

significance of language learner identity, individual learner differences in determining learning outcomes in second language acquisition.

While there was some evidence in the data of individual agency in the participants' positioning as interculturally effective English language teachers, analysis of the data suggest that participants were mostly unaware of the dominant ideologies and pedagogies with which they chose to align themselves. Instead, there was evidence to suggest that the participants in the study adopted a totalising view of their work as effective teachers, resisting self-reflection or self-criticism in order to represent themselves as effective teachers. Participants' uncritical positioning of themselves as interculturally effective teachers may not be a desirable, useful or attainable position for English language teachers to adopt.

These findings may reiterate the notion that, "as teachers we are always, in part, invisible to ourselves" (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 32). They suggest that drawing attention to, and being aware of some of the ways in which discourses may shape and inform English language teacher identity might be important to the development of English language teacher training programs and ongoing professional development that aim to uncover and change inequalities in educational practices (Trent, 2010).

The findings of this chapter contribute to a growing body of research by locating English language teacher identity as both practice and discourse. The English language teacher identity presented in this chapter is located in personal and local contexts as well as in "the wider social, cultural, economic and political structures and pressures that position them, and all teachers, in particular ways" (Clark, 2008, p, 198). In locating teacher identity in this way, this chapter has provided a critical perspective on English language teaching, the aim of which is to sustain and support English language teachers as "critical, proactive educators" (Ramananthan, 2002, p. 65).

The chapter to follow concludes this thesis with a summary of the research questions, the methodology, the data collection and analysis methods and the key findings. The implications for theory, practice and future research are also discussed and parameters of the study are outlined.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis presented a qualitative study that developed theory about empathy; an important but neglected phenomenon that has been associated with the process of interculturality. As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, the growth of English as a global language and the corresponding increase in a globally mobile population seeking education in English has resulted in unprecedented changes in the number and diversity of international students in higher education institutions in Australia. This situation places increased pressure on educators in Australia to be interculturally competent within a status quo of monolingualism and monoculturalism. The limited research into the emotion and empathy in diverse educational settings, coupled with a significant and related change that occurred at the researcher's workplace, an English language program located in an Australian higher education institution, provided the context, impetus and setting for the current study.

This concluding chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section summarises the study aims, the central research questions and the study methodology. The second section summarises the key findings and discusses the credibility of the findings and the parameters of the study. The third section outlines the implications of the study in relation to theory, practice and future research.

Context, Aims and Methodology

As discussed in Chapter One, higher education institutions in Australia have always exchanged knowledge and ideas across national boundaries and cultures. However, the situation of unprecedented increases in international student numbers and diversity in Australia over the past few decades has placed more demands on educators than ever before. Few Australian educators who work in higher education or other sectors of education in Australia have taught, or lived outside their own national context, and few teacher training courses in Australia address intercultural or multilingual education. Thus, Australian academics, teachers and institutions may not be sufficiently prepared to cope with the demands of a diverse student population.

The study explored teacher empathy in the English language teaching sector of Australian education, a sector of education that is intercultural by nature. By researching empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia the study also aimed to address a gap in the literature on the role of teacher emotion and empathy in English language teaching that was identified during the preliminary literature review and discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. Thus, the aim of the study was to develop theory related to empathy

that would be relevant, resonant and useful to educators who work in multilingual, multicultural educational settings in Australia. To achieve these aims, a set of central research questions was created and a qualitative research methodology was adopted that was underpinned by a constructivist grounded theory approach which informed the research design, data collection, data analysis and theory development.

The central research questions.

This study aimed to develop theory about empathy, interculturality and the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia by asking the following questions:

1. How do English as an additional language (EAL) teachers define/conceptualise empathy?

2. What do EAL teachers believe about the role of (teacher) empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia?

3. What meanings do EAL teachers give to (teacher) empathy and examples of empathic practice in their daily working lives?

4. What factors, if any, influence EAL teachers' conceptions of empathy?

The study provided answers to these questions in the form of five tentative theoretical propositions that were developed from a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) located within the qualitative research paradigm.

The methodology.

As explained in Chapter Four of this thesis, a constructivist approach to grounded theory was considered the best approach to answer the central research questions and develop theory. This approach developed theory that was aligned with the underlying epistemological and ontological tenets of the qualitative paradigm. Constructivist grounded theory is informed by a social constructivist view of reality based on symbolic interactionism (Prus, 1996; Schwandt, 2000). This theoretical perspective views meaning as socially derived through dialogue, interaction and negotiation. Knowledge is created not discovered (Charmaz, 2006), it is in flux and is partial and local (Schwandt, 2000), not complete or universal.

The constructivist grounded theory data collection and analysis processes and procedures of the study were iterative, cyclical, simultaneous and sequential. Data were gathered through intensive group and individual interviews with participants who supplied rich and relevant information. Ten English language teachers who taught on an English language pathway program located in a

public institute of higher education in Australia were recruited and grouped according to their intercultural experience and teaching experience. The participants were not necessarily representative of English language teachers in Australia more widely.

Data were analysed by open coding, selective coding and constant comparison of the data as well as memo-writing, theoretical sorting and theoretical writing (Charmaz, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). NVivo, a code and retrieve qualitative research software, was used to maintain an audit trail as well as to organise and manage the data.

The study design and data analysis was also informed by a conceptual framework of key terms and concepts introduced in Chapter Three of this thesis that positioned the study in relation to interpersonal and intercultural communication, language, emotion and culture in the related fields of English language teaching, intercultural communication and sociolinguistics. The key terms and concepts of the conceptual framework were outlined in Figure 3.0.

Through this research design, empathic experience, as understood in the daily working lives of English language teachers was used in conjunction with the related empirical research and extant theories of empathy in other disciplines to develop a tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia.

The Findings
This section presents a summary of the key findings. First, a brief overview of the findings is presented followed by a distillation and semantic explication of the tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy. The key findings of each of the five tentative theoretical propositions are then summarised followed by a discussion of the plausibility of the findings and the parameters of the study.

The key findings of the study are presented in the form of five theoretical propositions which together contribute to and extend understanding of intercultural empathy, teacher emotion and interculturality in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia. These findings also extend understanding of the factors which influence English language teachers' experience of empathy in their daily working lives.

The study revealed empathy to be a significant phenomenon in the daily working lives of the study participants and foregrounded the complexities and contradictions that characterised

everyday intercultural interactions in a multilingual, multicultural educational setting. The findings showed that intercultural teacher empathy involved the creation and maintenance of emotional connections between the participants and their students. Empathy was also associated with the participants' observations and interpretations of the emotional facial expression and emotional body language of their students as well as with participants' capacity to understand and learn through intercultural encounters with students, even when those encounters were disruptive or disturbing. The findings of the study challenged the taken-for-granted universality of emotional expression and interpretation and also identified an association between interculturality and the definition, interpretation and expressions of emotion in intercultural encounters. The findings reinforced the significance of emotion and emotional expression as cultural artefacts and provided further evidence that teaching practice may be enhanced by empathic understanding and response, particularly in the teaching of culturally and linguistically diverse groups of learners.

The findings of the study also identified professional, personal, cultural and ideological forces in the discourses of humanism and othering in the field of English language teaching and beyond. It is suggested that these forces influenced the participants' conceptions and experiences of empathy. The findings revealed evidence of the traces of neo-colonial discourses in the data and suggested that these traces contributed to the formation of a teacher identity in which essentialism and othering was evident. The findings suggested that there was an association between othering and culturally inappropriate teaching practices, but also suggested that othering may be a part of the process of interculturality.

Distillation of the key findings.

Intercultural teacher empathy and its constituent 'parts' were manifest in various ways in the daily working lives of the English language teachers who participated in the study. Figure 10.1 presents a distillation of the key findings in the form of a representation of processes involved in the tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy developed in the current study. The phenomena represented in Figure 10.1 were developed through a symbolic interactional ontology which interpreted the ever-changing experience of intercultural teacher empathy as experienced and reported by the study participants. Each of the key phenomena of intercultural teacher empathy is social, interpersonal and intrasubjective. Each aspect is in flux, is dynamic and is created and maintained through multiple interpretations of social and interpersonal interactions. These phenomena are variously constructed, enhanced and constrained through the interactions, contexts and discourses within which they are mediated including the discourses of the

profession, the related fields and the research setting. Thus, this representation of intercultural empathy is not absolute or complete.
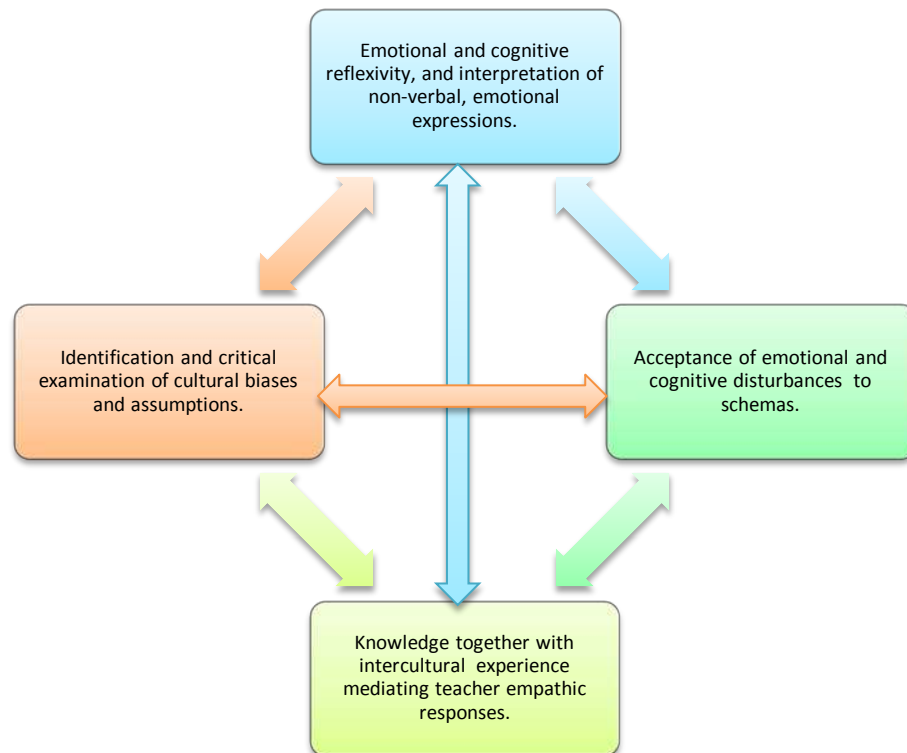
Figure 10.1. A representation of the iterative and interactive aspects of the process of intercultural teacher empathy.

The study developed an interpretive representation of intercultural teacher empathy that provided a momentary conceptual stability and continuity based on intersubjective agreement. At the same time, the study design acknowledges the variability and fluidity of the tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy therefore allowing for similarity (not sameness), reconceptualisation and renewal.

This distillation is further explicated in Figure 10. 2 with the use of universal human concepts expressed in basic words empirically established to exist in all languages (Goddard & Wierzbicka 2007, Wierzbicka, 1999, 2003) (see Table 3.1). While acknowledging that this explication was developed through a Western academic discourse, the semantic explication to follow aimed to construct a tentative understanding of intercultural teacher empathy which may have resonance in other languacultures:

| Emotional and cognitive reflextivity and response | • I want to do or say something if I know you feel or think something bad or good.
• I want to do something to make you feel good when something bad happens to you.
• I can know if I feel or think something good or bad when I see you do something. |

| Interpretation of emotional expression based on observation and shared experience. | • I want to know if you feel good or bad.
• I can know if you feel good or bad if you do not say what you feel or think.
• Sometimes I can think or feel like you because I know or do something the same like you before. |

| Awareness and acceptance of disturbance to schemas. | • Sometimes I think what you say, feel, think or do is bad and I feel bad.
• I do not say or do something to you when something like this happens.
• I can feel or think like you if something like this happens.
• I do not do or say something because I feel or think something bad when you do or say something. |

| Awareness of schema | • I know what you say, feel, think or do is not the same like other people.
• I know what I say, feel, think or do is not the same like other people.
• I am not the same now because of what happens when you think, do, say, or feel something before. |

| Critical awareness and examination of bias | • I know that because I am a teacher, I can do something to you.
• I want to know what I can do to you.
• I want to know what you think or feel when I do something to you. |

Figure 10.2. A semantic explication of intercultural teacher empathy created using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) (Goddard & Weirzbicka, 2007; Wierzbicka, 1999, 2003).

The tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia was presented in the form of five theoretical proposition and their related sub-propositions in this thesis which are summarised in the sub-section to follow.

The theoretical propositions.

Propositions One, Two and Three, presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven of this thesis respectively, provided a tentative answer to central research questions one, two and three and formed the basis of the tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy represented in Figures 7.2, 10.1 and 10.2. Propositions Four and Five, presented in Chapters Eight and Nine added further to the theory by providing an answer to the fourth research question. Propositions Four and Five provided a critical rendering of the factors that mediated and constrained intercultural teacher empathy in the teaching of English to international students in Australia as illustrated in Figure 7.3.

Proposition One.

Chapter Five introduced and explained Proposition One which was developed from the data coded under the core categories labelled *feeling* and *relating* respectively. The first proposition stated that:

*English language teachers create and maintain emotional connections to their culturally and linguistically diverse students through the affective responses of **relating** and **feeling**.*

This first proposition was developed from four related sub-propositions:

a) English language teachers relate more strongly to students with whom they have shared experiences;

b) English language teachers relate more strongly to students whom they perceive to have difficulties or face challenges;

c) Empathy is associated with English language teachers' emotional responses to their students;

d) Teacher empathy involves noticing and responding to students' negative feelings.

The first theoretical proposition presented in Chapter Five of this thesis introduced the idea that through intercultural empathy, participants related to and gained access to their students' feelings. In particular, the findings suggested that participants were able to empathise through the lens of shared experiences through which they formed and maintained emotional connections with students.

As discussed in Chapter Four, seminal theories of empathy in psychology claim that one need not have had similar experiences to understand what others feel. Empathy is a means through which one person is able to experience an accurate understanding or access objective knowledge of the experiences of others. Through empathy people can perceive what is unspoken and feel what is unobservable or inexpressible without the empathiser having had the same direct experience.

However, the findings of the current study demonstrated that participants' personal and professional experiences living, studying and teaching in unfamiliar cultural contexts facilitated empathy as did bilingualism and the study of additional languages. In particular, the personal experiences of the participants formed an empathic lens through which they related to and identified with their students. Relational theory in psychotherapy suggests that through identification people have an innate capacity to intuit the intentions and feelings of others by

seeing the self as the other. These findings were associated with bilingualism and teaching experience but also pertained to other experiences such as being a parent. These findings converge with the idea that biculturality and intercultural experiences and encounters may facilitate interculturality.

The findings also indicated that the participants were concerned with the emotions of students. In particular, participants were more concerned with students' negative feelings than they were with positive ones; participants believed that negative emotion influenced learning outcomes. These findings converge with long established humanistic principles in language teaching and research which indicate that negative emotional states can adversely affect language learning potential and language acquisition.

Despite awareness of a cultural bias towards North America, Britain and Australia (NABA) embedded in the communicative approach, the findings suggested that the meanings that the participants attributed to student emotion were influenced by the communicative approach and its humanistic underpinnings. Participants believed that they adhered to a humanistic pedagogy and that humanistic practices had a positive effect on learning outcomes, which they associated with intercultural teacher empathy.

As discussed in Chapter Four, empathy and sympathy are usually considered to be two separate and distinct phenomena. However, the findings suggested that sympathy was subsumed within participants' understandings and experiences of empathy. The findings indicated that although the participants drew a distinction between the two terms when they were asked to define the terms, when discussing empathic experiences the participants made no distinction and used the terms interchangeably. This suggested that sympathy was neither a distinct and separate concept nor a subset of intercultural teacher empathy.

Proposition Two.

Chapter Six introduced Proposition Two which was developed from the data coded under the core category labelled *observing.* The second proposition stated that:

*English language teachers gain knowledge of the feelings and thoughts of their culturally and linguistically diverse students through **observing** and interpreting student emotional facial expression and emotional body language which prompts the teachers to act.*

This second proposition was developed from four related sub-propositions:

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

a) English language teachers notice the emotional facial expression and the emotional body language of their students;

b) Observation and interpretation of students' emotional facial expression and emotional body language helps English language teachers to identify when students need help, or are not engaged;

c) English language teachers pay attention to and monitor their students' non-verbal cues during lessons;

d) English language teachers express confidence in the accuracy of their interpretation of students' non-verbal cues, but may not always be correct in their interpretations.

Chapter Six presented findings that illustrated that the study participants associated their observations and interpretations of student emotional facial expression and emotional body language with intercultural teacher empathy. Non-verbal displays of emotion indicated students' feelings and to a lesser extent their thoughts and were used by participants to create unique inferences about students' learning experiences. The findings explored participants' empathic interpretation of student emotional expression in relation to theory of mind (ToM) and questioned whether empathy was an automatic response or involved reflection. The findings suggested that participants' capacity to notice and respond to student emotional visual cues developed over time and/or through formative intercultural experiences and showed that participants were confident of their capacity to interpret student non-verbal cues, even those with limited intercultural and teaching experience. The findings also suggested that participants' reliance on national boundaries and languages to interpret student emotional expression may have led to misrepresentation and misinterpretation. These findings were discussed in relation to studies of non-verbal expression of emotion, brain imaging studies and studies on the in-group advantage hypotheses.

Proposition Three.

Chapter Seven presented Proposition Three which was developed from the data coded under the core categories labelled *knowledge* and *understanding* respectively. The third proposition stated that:

Although English language learners experience and respond to the learning situation in ways that may be unexpected and difficult for English language teachers to understand, teachers are able

*to traverse these difficulties through intercultural **understanding** and **knowledge**, which helps them to accommodate, respond and adapt to the needs of learners.*

This third proposition was developed from four related sub-propositions:

a) English language teachers' understanding and acceptance that their students have worldviews which differ from their own is integral to intercultural teacher empathy;

b) English language teachers' intercultural empathy is enhanced when they understand and have knowledge of the cultural beliefs, values and practices of their students;

c) English language teachers respond appropriately to situations in which they have a limited understanding or knowledge of particular cultural or religious beliefs, practices and behaviours of their students.

d) At times, the beliefs and practices of English language teachers contradict the importance that they place on understanding and valuing the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students.

The findings presented in Chapter Seven focussed on participants' beliefs about the association between negotiation of meaning, cultural knowledge, and awareness of schema in intercultural encounters. The findings illustrated that participants' schemas were activated in unfamiliar contexts and circumstances, and that participants expressed metacognitive awareness of their own emotions, values, beliefs and assumptions as well as awareness that their students experienced the world differently to them. Participants taught in an intercultural space which meant that their schemas were often challenged and sometimes displaced. The findings suggested that through awareness of schema, participants' accepted that students schemas differed from their own culturally and pedagogically and that sometimes they needed to adapt their teaching practices to accommodate different ways of being.

Through intercultural empathy, the participants negotiated challenges to their cultural and educational schemas and in doing so intercultural learning occurred whereby they sometimes relinquished aspects of their own beliefs and practices. The findings revealed that through this process of negotiation, participants were aware of the importance of student emotion, and showed how, through empathy, participants were able to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety that their students experienced. The findings also revealed that participants treated students with respect; they accommodated students to the limits of their cultural understanding, and showed care and concern for their well-being. However, the findings also indicated that at times

participants expressed essentialist, discriminatory views of learners' cultural or religious beliefs, values and practices.

Figure 7.2 in Chapter Seven summarised the core categories of the first three theoretical propositions which together formed the basis of a tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia. In answer to the fourth central research question, Propositions Four and Five to follow provided evidence of the factors which influenced the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy as represented in Figure 7. 3.

Proposition Four.

Chapter Eight presented Proposition Four, that was developed from the core categories labelled *enhancing empathy* and *constraining empathy* respectively. The fourth proposition stated that:

The manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy in English language teachers' daily working lives is mediated through teachers' interpersonal and intercultural interactions with students which are **enhanced** *and* **constrained** *by teachers' expectations of students and teachers' personal and workplace circumstances.*

The fourth proposition was developed from four related sub-propositions:

a) The manifestation of intercultural empathy in the daily working lives of English language teachers is influenced by teachers' perceptions of students' responses;

b) English language teachers' expectations of students influence the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy in their daily working lives;

c) Personal and workplace circumstances influence the manifestation of intercultural teacher empathy in the daily working lives of English language teachers.

The findings of the fourth theoretical proposition suggested that intercultural teacher empathy was conceptualised and experienced as both intrasubjective and interpersonal by the study participants. The findings provided insight into the conditions for, and limits of, intercultural teacher empathy. Participants' empathic responses were influenced by a range of factors which included interactions with students, students' responses and reciprocation, participants' expectations of students as well as participants' appreciation of, and interest in, languacultures that differed from their own. The findings suggested that the manifestation of intercultural teacher

empathy was also influenced by the meanings that participants attributed to their emotional and cognitive responses during and after intercultural encounters with students. Participants' norms, values, and expectations were sometimes challenged through their intercultural encounters with students, which constrained but also mediated intercultural teacher empathy. The findings suggested that intercultural empathy was constrained when participants expressed deficit views of learners, when participants expressed negative feelings towards students, and when they experienced personal and workplace challenges.

Proposition Five.

Chapter Nine presented Proposition Five, developed from the core category labelled *being an effective teacher.* The fifth proposition stated that:

The development of a professional identity as interculturally competent is integral to English language teachers' perceptions of themselves as effective teachers; the dominant discourses of humanism as they pertain to English language teaching and beyond have agency in the construction and reinforcement of this professional identity.

The fifth theoretical proposition located the core categories of the tentative theory of intercultural empathy developed from the current study in the discourses of humanism in education and English language teaching. The findings suggested that the participants' self-concepts and practices as professional, empathic, interculturally effective English language teachers were formed and maintained through deficit, and overly positive discourses. The findings revealed that the study participants were concerned with the creation of safe and comfortable learning environments which facilitated positive feelings and language acquisition. The findings suggested that participants cared about and empathised with their students, and also provided evidence of traces of post-colonial discourses of othering in participants' practices and conceptions of students.

These findings indicated that the study participants were unaware of the dominant ideologies and pedagogies with which their teaching practices and conceptions of students were aligned. Moreover, they suggested that participants resisted self-reflection and self-criticism in order to represent themselves as empathic, interculturally effective teachers.

Plausibility of the findings.

The plausibility of the findings was achieved by adherence to an interpretivist research approach that employed appropriate data collection and analysis strategies which were presented and discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis and summarised in the first section of this concluding

chapter. The propositions provided a credible, critical explanation of the research data, the research setting and the study context. The plausibility of the study findings can be judged according to the extent they are resonant with, and transferable to, other settings and contexts. The plausibility of the findings were enhanced by the following:

- ❖ The choice of a suitable research approach which achieved the aims of the study;
- ❖ The appropriateness and rigour of the research processes and procedures including:
  - The creation of quality data that reflected the issues and concerns of the research participants and setting;
  - The integrity of the data analysis;
- ❖ The alignment of the research approach, methods and outcomes with the qualitative research paradigm.

Suitability of the research approach.

Constructivist grounded theory processes and procedures contributed to the fit and integrity of the study findings to the research approach, aims, setting and context. The findings of the study were developed from an interpretation of the perspectives of a group of English language teachers who had both shared and individual understandings of their lived experiences of empathy. The study adopted an interpretivist stance which viewed the interview data as co-constructed from shared knowledge, experience, and relationships. The integrity of the analysis was achieved through the constructivist grounded theory method of simultaneous data collection and analysis which required the researcher to acknowledge assumptions and biases, and to adopt a position of theoretical agnosticism though reflexivity, particularly during the early stages of the data analysis.

The data collection and analysis methods.

Interviews were a means through which the unobservable, intrasubjective experiences of the participants were rendered visible. The interview data did not represent reality in any absolute sense (Prus, 1996; Schwandt, 2000); it provided an account of the lived experience of phenomena that the study participants associated with empathy. Intercultural empathy was understood through the meanings that participants attributed to it at a particular point in time, and the findings of the study were developed from an interpretivist rendering of the interview data, field notes, the related literature, and the researcher's lived experience as an English language teacher.

The researchers' experience as an English language teacher and position as participant-observer contributed to the quality of the research data and analysis. The researcher worked on the same English language program as the study participants, and had close working relationships with the participants. The unrestricted access to the research setting, the collegial long term working relationships between the study participants and the researcher, and the researcher's experience as an English language teacher, enabled rich data to be gathered and ensured that the analysis remained as close as possible to the research setting.

Bias and reflexivity.

The quality and integrity of the data collection and analysis were also achieved through the constructivist grounded theory strategies employed. These strategies enhanced theoretical openness through the constant comparison method and researcher reflexivity whereby researcher biases and assumptions were assumed and needed to be acknowledged. The researcher was not a 'blank slate' and as such acknowledged that her experience, knowledge and assumptions shaped and influenced the research process and outcomes. Conscious and unconscious bias was assumed and those biases that remained uncovered were offset by the rich data that were gathered as well as by the rigour and transparency of the analysis. Bias was also counteracted by the use of NVivo, a code and retrieve qualitative research software package, to create an audit trail.

Theory development.

No theory in relation to empathy and the teaching of English as an additional language has yet been developed. However, a possible association between empathy and interculturality was noted at the onset of the study as was the dearth of research into teacher emotion in the fields of English language teaching and second language acquisition. The study did not set out to explore a hypothesis or discover reality. The study aimed to develop theory critically, abductively and creatively (Charmaz, 2006, Richardson & Kramer, 2006). The tentative theoretical propositions were developed by systematic, creative and critical inference and analysis without aligning empathy to a particular theory (as one had not been developed). Existing theoretical ideas earned their place within the resulting analysis. Initially, the raw data were open coded and categorised with a conscious effort to put aside conceptualisations of empathy uncovered in the preliminary literature review. The empirical research evidence and extant theories provided an additional data source from which the emergent codes and tentative categories were compared to support a critical approach in the later stages of theory development.

The data were coded in-vivo to ensure that the rendering of the data remained close to the lived experiences of the study participants and the research setting. Closeness, fit and resonance were also enhanced by the use of universal semantic primes and gerunds where possible to render the data of the core categories and the propositions. The tentative theoretical propositions are close to the realities of the working lives of the study participants as described and interpreted. They reflect the personal and professional contexts and issues that influenced the beliefs and practices of the participants, and they provide a critical perspective of these contexts and issues.

Transferability.

The transferability of the findings can be evaluated in relation to how well the analysis rendered the data, the research setting and the concerns of the local and global context of English language teaching. Researchers, teacher educators and teachers who work within the area of English language teaching are in a position to consider the extent to which the findings of the current study resonate with and are transferable to other similar settings. In addition, researchers, teacher educators and teachers who work in other multilingual and multicultural educational settings may also be able to judge the extent to which the findings are transferable. Further research will also enable the transferability of the tentative theory to be tested.

Parameters.

The findings of the study were constrained by a number of factors including: the problem of studying a largely unobservable phenomenon, the lens of Western academic discourse, the time required to gather and analyse qualitative data, the partial view of empathy from which the theory was developed and other practical and ethical concerns. However, these constraints are to be expected when conducting research within the qualitative paradigm and were accounted for and acknowledged within the study methodology. The advantages of the qualitative research approach adopted by the current study offset these constraints as it allowed for a partial conclusion and tentative propositions that further research could extend, reinforce, question or challenge.

There are many ways to study unobservable social or psychological phenomena: One way is to create a definition of the phenomenon and then create an instrument that can detect and measure the phenomenon. Another way is to conduct experiments in controlled, unnatural environments using quantitative data analysis processes and procedures to create knowledge or test hypotheses. As noted in Chapter Four, despite the vast amount of empirical and conceptual literature related to empathy, quantitative approaches have dominated studies of empathy in

psychology and educational psychology for decades and have resulted in multiple conceptions of empathy that are far from people's lived experiences. The current study aimed to understand empathy through an interpretative rendering of the meanings that English language teachers attributed to the manifestation of empathy in their daily working lives. This aim was achieved through analysis of data gathered from group and individual interviews with participants who supplied rich information.

The study was also constrained by the Western academic discourse within which it was conceptualised and conducted. Although the study participants were diverse, for example in terms of country of birth, languages other than English spoken, and the variety of English spoken, the study collected, interpreted and presented the findings in a form of English that was acceptable within the tradition that it was created. Although, the multiple and diverse voices of the participants were presented in the thesis, the representation of the participants was constrained by the transformation of the data from spoken to written language as well as by the data analysis being presented in formal academic English. These constraints were acknowledged, and it is hoped that the study approach, which included the use of in-vivo coding and the use of semantic universal primes has enhanced the transferability of the findings of the study to other languacultures and their associated knowledge creation traditions. Moreover, it is hoped that further research to extend, reinforce or challenge the findings of the current study will develop and strengthen this approach.

Interview data and time constraints.

Asking participants to describe and explain empathic experiences as they pertained to their daily working lives was not without its challenges. In-depth interviews were time consuming for both the study participants and the researcher and required the researcher to be present during each interview. Moreover, the interview data needed to be audio recorded and then reviewed which also restricted the amount of data that was gathered and the number of participants recruited. This means that the findings of the study have limited generalisability. However, the research approach adopted allowed for theory development without consideration of the *amount* of data or *number* of participants. Constructivist grounded theory is developed from an interpretive process that does not rely on replication, verification and generalisability to judge theory. Moreover, the researcher's involvement, over substantial periods, with all aspects of the data collection and analysis resulted in a level of familiarity with the data that contributed to a thorough and in-depth analysis of the data.

The data collection and analysis was also constrained by the constructivist grounded theory approach adopted by the study that led to restrictions on the data collection processes and procedures. The constant comparison method required that in the initial stages of data collection and analysis, every line of raw data was coded and new data were gathered and analysed constantly and almost simultaneously. New data were not gathered until the extant raw data had been coded and accounted for in the emergent theoretical categories. This data collection and analysis process occurred over a four year period, during which three of the study participants resigned from their teaching positions in the research setting, two from group A and one from group B. Although all the participants contributed to the initial group discussions and were available for a semi-structured background interview and one in-depth interview, in the later stages of the data collection and analysis, these key informants were unavailable to provide additional data. Although a new participant was recruited to group B, it was not possible to recruit participants to replace the two from group A who had withdrawn from the study, as there were no other bilingual teachers employed on the English language program.

However, the researchers' location in the research setting as a full-time teacher and knowledge of the setting and field as an experienced teacher had particular advantages that compensated for these disadvantages. These advantages included the ease of access to suitable participants, the willingness of suitable teachers to participate in the study, a great degree of flexibility to arrange interview times, and insider knowledge from which to select participants, conduct interviews and analyse the data. These advantages enabled the creation and analysis of data that was rich in depth, detail and sincerity.

Ethical and practical concerns.
The ethical and methodological approach of the study also constrained the choice of data collection methods. The theory of intercultural teacher empathy developed in the study was developed from an interpretation of *teachers' perspectives of empathy*. One reason for this was that the interviews were conducted in English. Although it was desirable to obtain student perspectives of empathy, it was impractical to interview English language learners. Firstly, as the interviews were conducted in English and the English language learners had limited facility in English, it would be difficult for students to participate in interviews and provide the depth, detail and integrity that qualitative research demands. If students had been interviewed it would have also have constrained the credibility of the findings if the data were analysed without enlisting a translator to clarify meanings which was beyond the resources of the study. Another significant concern was the unequal power relations between the researcher and English language learners,

which meant that uncoerced, informed consent could not be guaranteed. Thus, the study findings are limited to teachers' perceptions of intercultural empathy. Further research into intercultural teacher empathy involving bilingual researchers in settings where there are more equal power relations in terms of facility of communication between researcher, teachers and students could address this constraint.

It is common in qualitative research in educational settings to combine interviews with classroom observations. However, classroom observations are very demanding of research participants and when coupled with their contrived nature and the well-documented observer effect, data gathered from classroom observations can be limited even when measures are taken to minimise the effects of teachers and students being observed. Thus, the potential stress of classroom observations on participants, and the limited value of the data gathered in this way meant that observations were not used to gather data. These constraints limited the understanding of intercultural teacher empathy developed in the study. However, the data collection method employed was considered the best way to gather rich, detailed data that was ethical and naturalistic.

Implications for Theory, Practice and Future Research

This section is based on the implication that intercultural teacher empathy can be developed beyond the limits that were uncovered in the current study and is predicated on the idea that although empathy is an innate capacity, it is limited by the discourses and the practice of English language teaching. This section presents the implications of the study findings for theory, practice and future research. It includes a number of suggestions and recommendations to support the process and development of interculturality and intercultural empathy in English language teaching and other educational settings in Australia. It also provides some additional suggestions for future research to extend the data and strengthen the tentative theory developed in the current study.

Interculturality.

> The symbolic dimension of intercultural competence calls for an approach to the training of language teachers that is discourse-based, historically grounded, aesthetically sensitive, and that takes into account the actual, the imagined and the virtual worlds in which we live. (Kramsch, 2011, p. 366)

The current study created insight into a phenomenon that is central to effective human social relationships and interaction by placing teacher emotion, teacher empathy and interculturality

centre stage in the teaching of English as an additional language to international students in Australia. The findings contributed empirical evidence which suggests that teacher empathy is associated with interculturality, and that intercultural empathy is mediated through intercultural interactions. The findings also suggest that knowledge of schema theory is associated with intercultural empathy and the associated capacity to accept different ways of being may also help teachers to navigate intercultural encounters. The findings suggest that people have an innate capacity to empathise with others, but that people empathise more with some people than they do with others which means that teachers need support to develop intercultural empathy in relation to learners of whom they have limited knowledge or understanding.

The findings of the study point to the importance of intercultural experience in the manifestation of intercultural empathy and argue that teachers who are bilingual and/or who have significant experience teaching in intercultural settings value and demonstrate interculturality and intercultural empathy. The study showed that sometimes bilingual and experienced teachers did not need even a rudimentary understanding of students' languacultures in order to manage cultural conflict or differences in a sensitive and respectful manner. This has implications for teacher recruitment strategies as well as the support that is required for newly qualified monolingual teachers.

The findings of the current study suggest that empathy was enhanced when teachers had substantial experience learning an additional language. Knowledge of an additional language, not only provided insight into learners' schemas, but also developed a store of experiences on which teachers were able to draw to encourage empathic response. Some English language teacher training courses include a tutorial in which the trainee teachers participate in a language lesson. For many trainee English language teachers this is their first experience of learning a language as an adult and may be the only time that they experience the learning of an additional language in a formal context. It is recommended that all English language teacher training programs and English language program providers incorporate the study of additional languages into professional learning and training programs for teachers. It would not be necessary for the teachers to reach a particular level of competence in a language; participating in language study and having the opportunity to reflect on the experience with colleagues could be of significant value in the development of interculturality and intercultural teacher empathy.

One of the aims of the current study was to create theory that might be useful for educators in Australia who may not be sufficiently prepared for the demands of working in increasingly

culturally and linguistically diverse educational settings. These educators, through no fault of their own, may be trapped by the status quo of monoculturalism and monolingualism that inhibits the development of interculturality and appropriate pedagogies. The findings of the current study point to the significance of intercultural experience, bilingualism and exposure to learners from a wide range of languacultures as possible markers of effective intercultural educators.

The communicative approach in language teaching.

English language teaching demands innovative practice that can accommodate the diversity of multilingual and multilevel classes. Intercultural teacher empathy may be a vehicle to more innovative, appropriate approaches and practices to English language teaching. English language teaching pedagogy in Australia and beyond currently promotes the development of communicative competence as the goal of language teaching and learning. However, the concept and aims of communicative competence as enacted through communicative language teaching may fail to take into account English language learners' culturally and socially constructed ways of knowing, learning and communicating. In particular, the communicative approach with its focus on the practical use of four skills promotes a simplistic view of language and culture as stable, apolitical entities that are separate from people and place. Far from promoting the intercultural understanding, caring and tolerance that humanism demands, the findings of the current study suggest that at times the communicative approach may be at odds with the humanistic principles with which it is imbued. It may also be working in opposition to the social justice, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory position with which English language teachers often align themselves.

The study recommends a reformulation of the communicative approach and communicative competence as culturally situated concepts and practices and recommends that all English language teaching approaches become subjects of critical enquiry. In terms of practice, it is recommended English language teachers explore with students the ways of learning and behaving that both students and teachers find acceptable and those which they do not. In this process, teachers and students may uncover and explore the beliefs, values and practices that they and their students may uncritically resist or adopt. Instead of a pedagogy that views all students as alike, the context needs to be created whereby teachers can create a learning-centred environment perhaps through the facilitation of peer learning and student-directed learning opportunities.

It is not being proposed that teachers abandon the communicative approach or adopt teaching approaches that they or their students believe to be ineffective, but that teachers explore and

practice critical intercultural pedagogical diversity. English language teaching is a global industry that relies mainly on Anglo-centric knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning of languages to inform language teaching practice globally. Given the status quo of monolingualism and monoculturalism among English language teachers in Australia and other similar countries and the Anglo-centricity of the field and the English language teaching industry, it may be that English language teachers and researchers in Australia have something to learn from language learning theory and practice developed in other cultural contexts. This process involves relinquishing some of the power that is assigned to English language teachers, pedagogical agnosticism and reflexivity. Future research into how a critical intercultural approach to English language teaching pedagogy may work in practice will be useful to examine the value and practical application of such an approach.

The findings also suggest that teacher educators and researchers in the field of English language teaching and applied linguistics need to promote the notion of diversity and mutability within languacultures in order to create a critical intercultural pedagogy. Focussing on taxonomies of cultures which study languacultures in terms of cross-cultural differences encourages a monolithic view of languacultures as stable, unchanging entities. This approach may reinforce discrimination and prejudice through the creation of knowledge that relies on comparison and contrast to construct meaning. By foregrounding the diversity and mutability within and between languacultures without privileging one languaculture over another, analysis of diversity within and between languacultures may mediate intercultural understanding and empathy in the practice of English language teaching.

Teacher identity.

The findings also have implications for English language teachers' self-concepts. The findings pointed to the significance of the discourse of humanism in influencing teachers' self-concepts as empathic, interculturally effective teachers, as well as providing examples of interculturally effective teaching practices. The findings also provided evidence that deficit and overly positive discourses influence teachers' identities and self-conceptions as effective teachers. The discourse constrains teacher agency by a focus on meritocracy, individualism and caring. In doing so it ensures that English language teachers remain largely unaware of the issues of power that are at play in the spread of English and the practice of English language teaching.

The findings also reinforce research which points to the low status of English language teachers in Australia and suggests that the demands on the English language education sector to be profitable influences this status. The fields of second language acquisition and English language

teaching should not ignore the issues of low status of the profession in Australia while attempting to improve teaching practices. The study findings call on teacher educators and governing bodies to initiate changes to the practice of English language teaching that will develop its integrity and better reflect English language teachers self-concepts as open-minded, caring, and interculturally competent educators. The English language teaching sector in Australia needs to adopt a critical, but humanistic conception of English language teacher professional experience. This would include an anti-racist pedagogy that acknowledges the privilege and power of English and English teachers. It is recommended that cultural, linguistic and racial differences are not hidden and that othering, in the form of pedagogical practices, homogenisation, positive and negative stereotyping, is expressed and open to challenge.

Teachers need the opportunities and tools to enable them to adopt a more critical approach to their identity and work as English language teachers. It may be useful for teachers to acquire analytic tools to enable them to explore critically the forces that influence their perspectives of themselves and their students, including the dominant ideologies that may unconsciously perpetuate through their work. Personal pedagogies for example may enable teachers to challenge and counter the assigned values and beliefs of the English language teaching profession. Individual agency can mediate the shaping of these personal pedagogies and English language teacher identities through the borderlands; a space that may mediate the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of English language teacher identity and work.

Othering.

> […] the learning or teaching of English needs to be linked to a commitment to linguistic diversity and linguistic human rights. In my view, the English teaching profession needs to be seen in the light of an understanding of linguistic neo imperialism, its global and local impact, and how a more just balance between languages can be promoted. (Phillipson, 2009, p. 2)

The findings of the study showed how an empathic approach to emotional disturbances and disruptions can ameliorate the effects of othering. Critical pedagogies contend that othering is a pervasive, harmful, racist practice in English language teaching and other related fields. Othering is created and maintained by neo-colonial discourses which are self-serving and maintain linguistic and racial prejudices. The findings of the current study provide further evidence of othering in the discourse of English language teaching in Australia, even among bilingual, bicultural teachers. However, the findings suggest that intercultural teacher empathy may ameliorate some of the effects of othering.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Given the diversity and experience of the study participants, the findings suggest that othering in the form of negative and positive stereotypes may be part of the process of intercultural empathy and interculturality. Categorising and labelling culturally and linguistically diverse learners may reflect a human desire to understand the unfamiliar or the unknown in order to deal with the anxiety that uncertainty can cause; teachers may revert to stereotypes in order to make sense of student behaviours and beliefs that disturb their schemas. If teachers are afraid to express their thoughts and feelings about what their students do, feel and say to avoid accusations of racism, the possibility of intercultural empathy may be limited. If this occurs, teachers may resort to indirect ways of expressing their criticisms of students' cultural values and beliefs through the position of privilege and power they are afforded as teachers. This was suggested in the current study by the adoption of learning activities that were designed to illustrate the cultural, linguistic and educational deficits of English language learners.

Assumptions based on national and linguistic boundaries need to be challenged as does positive and negative stereotyping. This may be achieved by a critical understanding of othering and other discourses that create and maintain the status quo of English language teaching in Australia. However, a critical understanding of othering is not easy to achieve as illustrated by research in the United States and Canada (Herrera & Morales, 2009; Pennington, Brock, & Nduras, 2012; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Ullman & Hecsh, 2011) to be discussed, which has been shown to have little impact on teachers' understandings of institutionalised racism and discrimination.

Critical pedagogies and othering.

Anglo-Australian culture strongly associates itself with egalitarianism. In Australia, racism and discrimination are often expressed indirectly and accusations of racism and discrimination are often met with outrage and denial. Racist othering can be veiled in arguments of equality, fairness, deservedness, as well as in the discourses of democracy and universal human rights. This tendency needs to be taken into consideration when recommending ways to introduce a critical intercultural pedagogy to the field of English language teaching.

The findings of the study suggested that teachers who teach in culturally and linguistically diverse settings in Australia may unintentionally reinforce institutionalised racism and discrimination through colour-blind, overly positive discourses of humanism which include banal multiculturalism and positive stereotyping. In the United States and Canada, the concept of 'white privilege' has been used as a critical pedagogical tool in the education of teachers to confront racism by exploring how racism confers power and privilege on some groups while disadvantaging others.

However, research (Herrera & Morales, 2009; Pennington, Brock, & Nduras, 2012; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Ullman & Hecsh, 2011) suggests that this approach is ineffective as most white trainee teachers resist the notion of white privilege. These studies have identified "discourses of denial" which prevail over any significant changes in understanding (Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005, p. 147).

The findings of the current study illustrated that empathic response can be automatic or mediated through prior knowledge and experience and that participants experienced less empathy in some circumstances and with some students. These findings converged with brain studies which showed that empathic response is lowered between strangers and by cross-cultural studies that suggest that there is an in-group advantage in the interpretation of non-verbal expression of emotion.

The study recommends that English language teachers are made aware of the dominant discourses within which they practice. This can be achieved through activating teachers' personal experiences in order to develop empathic response. Rather than confronting teachers directly with notions such as colour-blindness, sameness, positive stereotyping, a more scaffolded, empathic approach needs to be taken whereby time and space is created for biases and assumptions to be unravelled and challenged over time by teachers.

The activation of prior learning and knowledge has long been recognised as an important learning tool. The current study recommends that teachers' innate capacities for empathic response are used to encourage the development of intercultural teacher empathy which includes a critical understanding of issues of power and privilege at play in their practices and conceptions of English language learners as mediated through the discourses of the field. This recommendation does not endorse a conception of empathy in which tolerance and caring are promoted above a critical approach whereby issues of power, privilege and inequity are ignored or subordinated. The process of interculturality and intercultural empathy involves emotional stress and disruption, as does the process of adopting a critical intercultural approach to English language teaching.

The current study interpreted unobservable phenomena assisted by the use of abstract concepts and a methodology which resisted notions of universal truth or a stable, unchanging reality to develop an understanding of empathy based on reports of lived experience. Thus, in the current study, the 'firm ground' is conceptual and ideological and grounded in the empirical data and can be found in concepts such as schema, the third space and intercultural teacher empathy. Teachers may not be able to *know* or *feel* what it is like to be the other, but they are able to

imagine (informed supposition) what it is like and then seek knowledge and understanding that will enable them to challenge, questions or confirm their imaginings. Teachers can use critical pedagogies to cast doubt on the frames of knowledge that they draw on to make pedagogical decisions, as well as to challenge the categories or criteria that they and others use to judge, validate and understand teaching and learning in diverse settings.

Through the adoption of a critical intercultural pedagogy, teachers may be able to liberate themselves from the dominant discourses. The tentative theory of intercultural teacher empathy developed in the current study provides teachers with a set of concepts that can be used as analytic tools to approach their work and identities as critical, empathic, interculturally effective English language teachers. These tools may encourage teachers to enact humanistic teaching practices self-consciously and reflexively, and to acknowledge and claim othering as part of the process of interculturality and intercultural teacher empathy. This can be supported through *praxicum* (Pennycook, 2004); that is, professional learning that involves a reflexive process in which teachers develop integration of their practice, feelings and thoughts continuously. This critical practice could include for example the study of an additional language, or action research into the expression and interpretation of emotion across cultures alongside an exploration of the discourses and ideologies which sustain linguistic, racial, religious and cultural discrimination and reinforce disadvantage. By bringing to the forefront teachers' desire for social justice, and by activating teachers' innate capacity for empathy, intercultural teacher empathy can be developed beyond its current reach.

The development of intercultural teacher empathy requires teachers to adopt a form of critical cultural relativism, which incorporates the capacity to develop an ideological stance on cultural practices that are harmful without racism, bias, stereotyping or blindness to harmful practices within their own communities. Critical cultural relativism requires that the power, status and cultural biases and assumptions of the observer are exposed through a process of reflexivity which explores othering and binary opposition in one's judgements of others. Critical cultural relativism requires that teachers identify, expose and change harmful practices that are sustained through their *own* practices or inaction and those of the communities and institutions of which they are a part.

Emotion and education.

The findings suggest that emotion may be particularly important when dealing with intercultural miscommunication and misunderstandings. The study showed how participants' recognition and interpretation of emotional responses in themselves and their students led to interaction and

educational decisions. These findings pointed to the importance of empathy and the interpretation of student emotion in multilingual, multicultural settings.

In the context of a dominant scientific and philosophical tradition which views emotion as inferior to cognition by almost every measure, these findings contributed to a growing body of research which diverge from deficit conceptions of empathy and emotion. The findings of the current study suggested that emotion cannot be separated from empathic intercultural understanding and response. The significance of emotion in education and English language teaching has been driven by the discourse of humanism which promotes compassion, tolerance and caring. The findings of the current study suggested that humanism demands empathy, but that a 'soft' humanistic pedagogy does not necessarily create or sustain the conditions for empathy to manifest. While the current study recommends a critical approach to the discourses of humanism it simultaneously acknowledges the centrality of emotion and empathy in teaching and learning in multilingual, multicultural settings.

The findings of the current study questioned teaching practices which take negative student emotion into account without placing sufficient emphasis on the diversity of the meaning, interpretation and expression of emotion within and between languacultures. The findings of the study challenged some of the taken-for-granted beliefs, assumptions and practices of English language teachers about the universality of emotion and emotional expression. While foregrounding emotion, English language teaching pedagogies need to take into account that the expression and interpretation of emotional body language are not universal and that emotional concepts and the words used to express emotion are cultural artefacts. Moreover, teacher reliance on national boundaries to understand student emotion and behaviour is also problematic in the light of research that has found that people express emotion differently even within national boundaries (see Lu & Wang, 2012).

If as research suggests, emotions determine the quality of people's lives, then it is necessary for teacher emotion to be taken into account in teacher training and ongoing professional learning to encourage the development of interculturality and intercultural empathy. In intercultural contexts, this means that a framework is needed to develop understanding of bodily feelings, non-verbal expressions of emotion and the semantics of emotion. The study recommends that teachers are supported to think about communication across cultures in terms of universal semantic primes (Goddard & Wierzbicka 2007, Wierzbicka, 1999, 2003) and schema theory (Nishida. 1999). Through knowledge of schema theory and the application of universal semantic primes, teachers

may be able to gain an emic view of other languacultures without facility in that particular languaculture. For example, knowledge of universal semantic primes informs teachers that the word *emotion* and *empathy* are particular to an English academic discourse (Wierzbicka, 1999a).

Teacher training courses influence how teachers think and talk about their work and create the framework from which teachers learn and develop. If this framework excludes ideas and theories about how teachers feel as they go about their work, it is failing teachers and students. Teachers should be encouraged to conceptualise teaching as an emotional practice as well as voice and explore their assumptions about their culturally and linguistically diverse students. The study contends that teachers should not be afraid of or seek to avoid emotional disruption in the process of intercultural teacher empathy. As illustrated by the findings of the current study, disturbance and disruption to schema is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition in the process of intercultural empathy and interculturality. Instead of a banal, apolitical, ideologically agnostic stance that cloaks hidden fears, biases and prejudices, teachers need a conceptual framework from which they can understand their negative emotional responses to students' culturally different ways of being. The tentative theoretical findings of the current study and their associated key concepts can provide such a framework.

Future research.

In the context of the sociocultural turn in English language teaching which contends that social, cultural and historical factors have agency in language learning, the current study indicated the potential and significance of the expression and interpretation of emotional phenomenon in mediating intercultural communication and learning in multilingual, multicultural educational settings. The impact of this on language learning outcomes was beyond the scope of the current study as was English language learners conceptions of the role of teacher emotion and teacher empathy in their learning. Future research into how the expression and interpretation of emotion in intercultural encounters influences teaching and learning in multilingual, multicultural educational settings would be an appropriate way to strengthen and extend the tentative theoretical propositions developed in the current study.

Data is also needed to explore the reach of the theoretical propositions. Additional data could be gathered through interviews with English language teachers in schools or in other sectors of Australian education to achieve this aim. To question some of the key theoretical propositions, it is important to explore the manifestation of intercultural empathy from the perspectives of novice, monolingual English language teachers with limited intercultural experience. It is also important to seek students' perspectives of intercultural teacher empathy in order to explore the ability of

the theoretical propositions to incorporate student perspectives. To minimise ethical concerns, data could be gathered from international postgraduate students in Australia for whom English is an additional language who have experienced and completed a course of formal English language instruction in Australia.

Future research to explore the association between learning outcomes and intercultural teacher empathy would also be useful as would research into empathy in other cultural contexts. In addition, the tentative semantic explications developed in the current study could be validated through translation into other languages as well as by using semantic explications to explore intercultural teacher empathy in others settings.

The study also points to the need for additional research into the presence and significance of othering in English language teaching in Australia. In particular, it is important to explore whether there is an association between the process of intercultural teacher empathy advocated in the current study and reduced prejudice, discrimination and racism.

Finally, little is known about the significance of teacher emotion in language learning outcomes; further research could explore in more detail the emotional experience of English language teaching, including expressions and interpretations of teacher emotion as well as to uncover conceptions of emotion in English language teaching. Wierzbicka's (1999a) questioning of the ethnocentric bias of the research on emotion to date in English language teaching and second language acquisition calls for new ways of thinking about and researching emotion in intercultural contexts and would be a useful framework from which to research teacher emotion in English language teaching and in other diverse educational settings.

Conclusion

This thesis reported on a qualitative research study that used a constructivist grounded theory approach to answer the central research questions. The findings of the study provide new insight into intercultural teacher empathy in English language teaching as a socio-emotional, intersubjective phenomenon that involves emotional and cognitive awareness in relation to intercultural encounters. Intercultural teacher empathy is built on an innate capacity to respond to the feelings and actions of others, it involves creative supposition, the capacity to suspend judgement, the capacity to explore one's own biases and assumptions and a desire to ameliorate negative emotion in others. The findings also contribute new understanding of teacher empathic response in English language teaching which suggests that intercultural teacher empathy was

mediated and constrained through interpersonal, intercultural and professional circumstances as well as through the discourses of humanism and othering.

The study contributes theory related to the manifestation of intercultural empathy in the daily working lives of the English language teachers who participated in the study. The findings indicated that for the study participants, intercultural teacher empathy was an interpersonal, intersubjective phenomenon that mediated intercultural understanding between teachers and their culturally and linguistically diverse students. The findings revealed that the study participants were concerned with the creation of safe and comfortable learning environments which facilitated positive feelings and language acquisition. Empathy was associated with emotional and cognitive awareness and with the creation and maintenance of emotional connections between teachers and students. Empathy was also associated with teachers' inferences about students' emotions particularly in relation to negative emotions and also involved teachers' responses to student behaviour particularly when this involved disruptions to teachers' schemas. These findings contribute to understandings of empathy and its association with the process of interculturality and indicate the significance of teacher emotion in English language teaching.

The findings confirm and question participants' confidence and ability to interpret the feelings and thoughts of culturally and linguistically diverse groups of English language learners. The findings demonstrate that intercultural teacher empathy was associated with participants' capacity to accommodate and respond to their students. However, the findings also point to contradictions between teachers' beliefs and practices including the value and significance that they placed on teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. These findings suggested that participants cared about and responded empathically to their students, but also provided evidence of traces of post-colonial discourses of othering in participants' teaching practices and conceptions of students.

The study suggests that intercultural teacher empathy was mediated and constrained through interpersonal, intercultural and professional circumstances and interactions within the dominant discourses of the fields of English language teaching in Australia and beyond. In particular, the post-colonial discourses of othering and the dominant discourses of humanism were found to have agency in participants' beliefs and practices and self-concepts as empathic, interculturally effective English language teachers. The findings indicate that the participants were unaware of the dominant ideologies and pedagogies with which their teaching practices and conceptions of

students were aligned. Moreover, they suggest that participants resisted self-reflection and self-criticism in order to represent themselves as empathic, interculturally effective teachers.

These findings point to the experience, knowledge, understanding that contribute to the process of intercultural teacher empathy and interculturality that may be of use to English language teachers, university teachers and school teachers. In addition, the findings also point to interpersonal, contextual, institutional, social and ideological forces that mediate and constrain these processes. These findings open up a number of potential future areas of research into intercultural teacher empathy, teacher emotion and interculturality in culturally and linguistically diverse educational settings in Australia.

The study indicates the importance of a critical approach to intercultural education whereby teachers are involved in examining their own culturally embedded biases and assumptions including both deficit and overly positive conceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse students. A critical approach to pedagogy is needed to support teachers in their desire to care about and value their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers need to be able to acknowledge that to be any kind of teacher, they must first align themselves to a favoured or dominant subject position. Then, by critically exploring the socially valued ways of thinking, speaking, feeling and acting with which they are aligned, they may be able to uncover the values, beliefs and practices that they are sustaining and opposing.

Teachers in higher education in Australia also need to be aware of the dangers of the colour-blind liberal discourse of humanism and the neo-colonial discourses of othering that is evident in the field of English language teaching as they become interculturally competent educators. Adopting a critical pedagogical approach to their work and identities as interculturally competent educators may help them to counter these discourses. A critical approach to teaching is not only appropriate when teaching students who speak English as an additional language or dialect, but can also support teachers to confront other associated issues such as differences in social status, religion and race.

As educators in Australia try to co-exist within a system in which the expectations of their profession conflict with and contradict the professional identity that they construct for themselves, concepts such as the borderlands, the third space and intercultural empathy may serve to inspire and engage them. Concepts such as these can raise awareness and give educators hope that they have some agency to resist, challenge and possibly even change the dominant discourses with which they may disagree, but sustain unwittingly.

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Appendix One: Consent Form

Information Sheet

Researcher: Maggie McAlinden, M. EdSt. student, UWA.

Title of study
Understanding others: a qualitative study of intercultural empathy as experienced by teachers' of English as a Second Language (ESL) on English language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS).

Purpose
The aim of this study is to build theory about how ESL teachers conceptualize and experience 'empathy' in relation to culturally diverse students.

Benefits
It is anticipated that the results of the study may help other educators working in culturally diverse settings.

Research Methods
This research study has a range of overlapping stages which involve the collection of data through discussion groups and interviews. Data analysis will be ongoing and will direct the later stages of data collection. Initially, small groups of teachers (discussion groups) will be brought together and asked to describe and discuss what the term empathy means to them. After this, a number of participants will be invited to participate in interview(s) with the researcher to gain more details of individual conceptions of empathy and how it is experienced by each participant in their daily life. As data is gathered and analysed participants will be selected according to the themes which are emerging from the data and more interviews will be conducted.

Demands and Time
The amount of time that participation in this study will involve will be flexible and will depend largely on what is most convenient for each participant. However, it is anticipated that participation in either a group interview or individual interview will take one hour.

Rights of participants
If you participate in this study you are free at any time to withdraw consent to further participation without prejudice in any way. It will not be necessary for you to justify any decision to withdraw, and all data collected up to that point will be destroyed, unless otherwise agreed. Participation in this study will not prejudice your rights to compensation under statute or common law. After the data has been collected and analysed it will be published in a thesis paper, and all audio visual recordings will then be stored in the Department of Education at UWA.

Further Information
If you have any further questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone

Letter of Informed Consent

Dear research participant,

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. In order for the research to proceed, please read the following statements and sign where indicated.

I _____ have read the Information Sheet provided and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this study and know that I may withdraw at any time without reason or prejudice.

I understand that all information I provide is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the researcher. The only exception to this principle of confidentiality is if a court subpoenas documentation. I have been advised as to what data is being collected, what the purpose is, and what will be done with the data upon completion of the research.

I agree that data gathered for the study may be published provided my name and other identifying information is not used.

_____   _____

     Participant   Witness   Date:

Note
The Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Western Australia requires that all participants are informed that, if they have any complaint regarding the manner, in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively to the Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee, Registrar's Office, University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA 6009 (telephone number 6488-3703). All study participants will be provided with a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for their personal records.

Appendix Two: Transcript Extract Group Discussion

Researcher 2.12	There are two main things that I am interested in. One is a definition, I am trying to create a shared definition, I don't know that that will happen. I want to know from you guys what it means. What does the term, the word empathy mean? So the first thing I'm going to do is ask you about that. And then I am going to ask you some more specific questions about your classroom experiences and anything you think you might call empathy.
Niren 2.13	I would never use the word empathy. 'Cos usually empathy is, you feel what someone else is feeling when there is suffering and I would prefer to think that our students are not actually you know…
Leena 2.24	An emotional connection…
Niren 2.32	It's usually that someone is going through some sort of trauma.
Leena	Crisis
Niren	Crisis
Researcher	In the literature I found that sympathy is related to suffering, but empathy isn't, but you are saying in your understanding it isn't.
Niren	Yes, in my understanding of it.
Silvia 3.06	I thought that it was to acknowledge that someone else has feelings and to try and identify the emotions that they might be feeling.
Leena 3.16	So, an emotional connection.
Silvia 3.20	Yea. And for me as well it was trying to be aware that as well as students learning in the classroom they are also dealing with culture shock, perhaps loneliness, perhaps a bit of discomfort, settling in to the home stay or their new home, just feeling their way, they are not feeling.. I think they don't feel grounded for a while… a month or so. They just feel alien and I think empathy for me has to do with being aware of that and trying to help them a bit with that.
Researcher 3.56	Ok, so awareness, but Niren's idea about negative I am in interested in that as well. Had either of you ever thought about it specifically as talking about about suffering, understanding or feeling?
Leena	It's a mothering term isn't it? I mean…
Researcher 4.24	The term itself. . Niren's right, it's not in common use, but I think we all have some idea of what it might mean in terms of an everyday understanding of that term what would you say that most people would understand it to mean?
Niren 4.42	Just you understand someone's feelings.
Leena 4.49	The ability to extend your own understanding rather than just have your own point of view. I have… with my Chinese students sometimes they find it difficult to empathise with Western ideas.
Researcher	So understanding and feeling, those are two things that have come up quite a lot.
Leena 5.25	To place yourself in someone else's situation.
Silvia 5.27	Be aware that they are not experiencing the situation the way that you might be or that native speakers might be. That there's other parameters, there are other things going on in them. Like the whole way we teach them, they've to a do a mental head shift from passive memorization which is what you need to learn a language to active critical thinking which is what you need to survive in an Australian University. There you are – dispel that.
Researcher 6.02	I'm doing this investigation asking people as teachers and obviously teachers who work in intercultural contexts, and one of the things I kinda wanted to do is to ask people if they thought there was some kind of difference between the term intercultural and cross-cultural. Would you differentiate or would you consider them to be the same?
Leena 6.34	Very similar I think.
Niren 6.37	Does it really matter?
Researcher	Well, it does because I have to establish a shared which is basically either people use it interchangeable or there is… a kind of… some people might have another understanding. So far, people have all said that to them…both have… they would use them interchangeably. Would you say that is the same for you?

Appendix Three: Transcript Extract Individual Interview

Researcher 0.00 – 00.35	Just wanna highlight something and grab a schedule (Researcher on computer) Just let me grab this one.
Leena 0.40	Is it the transcript? Can I have a look at it?
Researcher	Yea, go for it. In fact, I'll print another one out, actually. It's not perfect, it's not like done in…it's just done in a kind of… It's quite rough.
0.55-	(Both reading transcript)
Researcher 2.17	It seems that…actually what I was gonna do was highlight the stuff that you said and then… I mean I've got things in my head…when I am transcribing I kind of, there are certain things that kind of stand out from the analysis that I've done so far and stuff. But erm, I think it would be great if you just, if there is anything that you have been thinking of since then, or if there is anything you wanted to clarify or anything from that we could look through the transcript even together. In particular, you know right at the beginning we started to talk about the word empathy and I think Niren said he doesn't use that word and I was wondering …because at that point you didn't really , you know you said some things, but you know you weren't making…
Leena	(reading from transcript) An emotional connection….
Researcher	Yea. That was the first thing that you actually said which is… I just wondered if you could expand on that a bit more about what the word means to you.
Leena	As related to English language teaching or just…separate from it?
Researcher	Yea well, that's a good question – do you think that you can separate those things or not?
Leena 3.28	Yea, probably, erm so empathy, so empathy, so you wanna separate the two things?
Researcher 4.18	Cos in the discussion, towards the end of the discussion that was one of the things we were talking about erm how I think you said but we can't have it all the time, we don't have it with our…but you were also saying we have it with our… other people, but it is not just in relation to our students, but I guess I am interested in how we experience empathy in relation to culturally diverse students…people that from cultures that really we don't know that much about or we may have some understandings of, so…I think if you can talk about in relation to your students that would be really good and if then that translates.. I mean what is culture? We get into those issues…
Leena 4.34	Well, I mean if I look at say for example my students erm the empathy, erm for example I lived in Japan for a number of years, and so I I still have that that that empathy that that empathy or emotional connection or or erm I mean in want of another word with those Japanese students because I understand erm a little bit about their culture, and the the restrictions they've had, erm their upbringings, restrictions in schooling in particular you know I know that some of them for the the example they have cram schools these juku? systems in Japan where you know from a very early age they are crammed with grammar there there the way they are taught they are taught to translate from Japanese into English and so erm you know you have an empathy for those J students because you see see that they are really they don't want to go into into grammar at all bec they are so sick of having it pushed down their throats for so many years. And I feel an empathy in that respect erm yea. there is erm, so you know the problems that they've had and grown up with, erm, but then you can also you have an empathy even with erm listening for example a Japanese presentation because I am familiar with their their pron problems for example like stress the Japanese lang you know it's not a stress timed language it's syllabic, so its almost like your ear become if your ear becomes attuned to the problems they have I think this is a kind of empathy as well bec you are familiar with you take into consideration those difficulties, and those faults, and have empathy in that respect with Japanese SS. I mean there is two levels there, pron being familiar with erm their difficulties erm not only actual physical difficulties, but you know historical background or what would you call it?
Researcher	Cultural context?
Leena	The context, social context, erm linguistic that they are coming through so I think that is a form of empathy really, erm I believe, so that is with the Ss.
Researcher 7.39	This is with your Japanese students; yea? What about with other students

Group Interview Schedule
This study is interested in what you as ESL teachers think and believe about intercultural empathy.

The purpose of this initial discussion is for you to explore your own and other teachers' responses to the questions, and to provide a starting point for the individual interviews that will follow. In particular, this discussion seeks to uncover both shared and individual beliefs and experiences about the questions. Try to give examples from your own experience to support your points. Feel free to diverge from the questions and ask your own questions should you wish to.

My role will be minimal, but please feel free to ask for clarifications when necessary.

I have tried to organize the questions in a progressive order, but feel free to discuss them in any order you choose. I suggest that you read all the questions in Part 1 before you start your discussion.

Part 1: Definitions and Beliefs

a) What is empathy?

b) What does intercultural/cross-cultural mean, are they the same?

c) What is *intercultural* empathy?

d) Are sympathy and empathy the same?

Part 2: Your personal experiences of intercultural empathy as a teacher

a) How do you experience intercultural empathy? Can you describe an experience of intercultural empathy?

b) What influences your experience(s)? How has this changed over time?

c) What, if anything, do you do to respond in an empathic way to your students?

d) What role does empathy have in your teaching of linguistically and culturally diverse students?

Appendix Five: Individual Interview Schedule

Interview 01 Schedule Niren 11/09/08

Defining empathy:

Silvia:
To acknowledge someone else has feelings and to try and identify the emotions that they might be feeling...being aware of student's situation.

Leena:
An emotional connection. The ability to extend your own understanding rather than just have your own point of view. To place yourself in someone else's situation.

Niren:
Understanding someone's feelings.
> How are you able to understand how someone else feels?
It is two way.
> Explain how it is two way (interpersonal not intrapersonal?)
> What do students have to do to enable you to empathise?

When I look at the students, I think that could be me... what would I want the teacher to be doing, how would I want it to be presented? How would I want to do it? It makes you do better than you would do… I do this better because if I was there I would want to, so you put yourself in their shoes and everything become easier to do, clearer

There is an unstated understanding which teachers use with their students. An idea, a relationship...

Explain how your professional and personal knowledge and experience enhance empathy with your students? E.g Leena living in Japan.

Explain what constrains empathy with your students? E.g. When you are tired, stressed – there is only so much fuel in the tank, someone who is in a wheel chair – Silvia