

It's a Two-way Street: Informing Irish Pre-  
sessional EAP Programs with a Needs  
Analysis of Irish Higher Education

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## Summary

This thesis investigates international students' expectations, strengths and difficulties, and needs in Irish higher education from both faculty and students' perspective. This thesis further makes implications for pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs to better prepare and support international students. It argues that an Academic Literacies approach to inclusive pre-sessional EAP programs, along with integrating aspects of translanguaging and Global Englishes, will provide students with the preparation they need for Irish higher education. Using mixed methods, international students were invited to take part in a questionnaire and an interview. Faculty in Irish higher education were also invited to take part in an interview.

In Chapter 1, I outline the rationale for the thesis along with a brief description of the theoretical and methodological approaches. This thesis emerged from the lack of research done on pre-sessional EAP programs, especially those in Ireland on which there has been no studies to date. Also, as a practitioner, I became interested in investigating international students' needs to inform EAP curricula as the EAP field in Ireland is vastly underdeveloped. In this chapter, I also introduce my research aims and questions.

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical underpinnings and previous research. Here, I first discuss internationalization in Ireland, building context for the study. Next, I introduce EAP, the different types of programs and the common approaches to EAP (e.g., English for general academic purposes vs. English for specific academic purposes, study skills vs. Academic Literacies, etc.). Further, I develop my theoretical underpinnings by discussing how Academic Literacies is named as the overarching theory, with the compatible theories of translanguaging and Global Englishes being seen as supporting theories. I then discuss approaches to needs analysis while examining past needs analyses which have looked at international students' needs in higher education. Finally, caveats are explored.

The methodology is discussed in Chapter 3. A mixed methods approach was taken to use both quantitative and qualitative data. The design of the data collection tools – a questionnaire and interviews – are discussed along with ethical considerations and data collection techniques. Further, the approach to data analysis is explored. Within the questionnaire, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were applied along with

thematic analysis. The interviews were analyzed thematically, through a critical lens, building upon a framework developed in Garska and O'Brien (2019). I also explore the changes made to the study and position myself as a researcher within the study to acknowledge the intricate relationships I have with the topic.

Chapters 4-6, then, present the results from the data collection tools. First, the questionnaire results are explored to determine which skills students felt were important, and which ones they felt they had difficulty with. Additionally, statistical tests were applied to see the influence of six different factors on their answers: degree level, discipline, time spent studying in an English-speaking country, L1(s), and IELTS scores. Then, the student and faculty interview results are presented in a thematic nature. The major themes identified are: *imagining the university/students, regulations, rules, and authority, student struggle and resistance, variation, ownership and empowerment, and meaning-making and negotiation.*

Chapter 7 presents a discussion of all results. This chapter is two-fold to recognize the research questions. First, faculty and students' perceptions of international students' strengths and difficulties, expectations, and needs in Irish higher education are explored and related to past literature. This part of the discussion is organized into aspects which influence students' academic success: student evaluation of institutions, linguistic factors, institutional factors, integration and social life, internal and emotional factors, English L1 (first language) and LX (additional language), culture, external authority, and variation. Then, taking into consideration these elements, implications for a pre-sessional EAP program are explored. While the focus is on pre-sessional EAP programs, wider implications are made for institutions and the government, such as suggested internationalization efforts. Overall, an argument for a holistic, inclusive pre-sessional EAP program is presented. This proposes opening a means-tested or free program to all students, L1 and LX, while incorporating a robust social program. It is argued that an Academic Literacies approach to the discipline-specific pre-sessional EAP program, with aspects of translanguaging and Global Englishes integrated into materials and lessons, will best support students in preparation for Irish higher education. The conclusion, in Chapter 8, provides a summary of findings along with identification of unique contributions to the field that this thesis makes. This chapter further discusses limitations of this study and provides suggestions for future research.

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## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

- AHSS** Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
- CAE** Cambridge English: Advanced
- cda** Critical Discourse Analysis
- CEFR** Common European Framework of Reference
- CELTA** Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
- CFTEAP** Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes
- CPE** Cambridge English: Proficiency
- DELTA** Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
- EAP** English for Academic Purposes
- EGAP** English for General Academic Purposes
- EIL** English as an International Language
- ELF** English as a Lingua Franca
- ELT** English language teaching
- ESAP** English for Specific Academic Purposes
- ESP** English for Specific Purposes
- ETS** Educational Testing Services
- HEA** Higher Education Authority
- IELTS** International English Language Testing system
- JEAP** Journal of English for Academic Purposes
- TEAP** Teaching English for Academic Purposes
- TESOL** Teaching English as a Second or Other Language
- TOEFL** Test of English as a Foreign Language
- L1** First language
- ll.** Line # (in interview transcripts)
- LX** Additional language
- N** number
- NFQ** National Framework of Qualifications
- NNS** Non-native speaker
- No.** number
- NS** Native speaker
- PIM** Professional Issues Meetings
- QQI** Quality and Qualifications Ireland

**SELMOUS** Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students

**STEM** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

**UCLES** University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

**WE** World Englishes





## 1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study examines the needs, strengths and difficulties, and expectations of international students in Irish higher education from the perspective of both students and faculty.

Further, it draws explicit implications for pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs in Ireland. In this introduction, I outline the background and rationale for my study, my research aims, and my theoretical and methodological approach.

### 1.1 The Irish context

Increased student mobility has led to a high number of international students seeking tertiary education at third level institutions in Ireland (Clarke, Hui Yang, & Harmon, 2018). In 2010/2011, 20,995 international students studied in Irish higher education institutions, including both private and Higher Education Authority (HEA)-funded institutions, increasing to 33,118 international students in 2014/2015 (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). In 2017/2018, 30,420 international students studied at Irish HEA-funded institutions (Higher Education Authority, 2018); this, however, is an underestimate as there are a number of non-HEA funded institutions which provide private undergraduate and postgraduate degrees which are regulated through Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (Citizens Information, 2020). The Irish Times reports 44,000 international students in HEA-funded higher education in 2019 (McGee & O'Brien, 2021), with 28,275 international enrollments reported by the HEA in 2018/2019 (Higher Education Authority, 2019). This increasing number of international students spurred the government to develop an international education strategy calling for high-quality, competitive education and international student support within Ireland to retain and increase student numbers (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Four priorities were stated in the strategy: a supportive national framework, internationally-oriented, globally competitive higher education institutions, sustainable growth in the English language training sector, and succeeding abroad (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Specifically, specialized programs such as EAP and university pathway programs have been identified as important areas of growth within Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Further, this strategy aimed to increase the economic value of internationalization to from €1.58bn per annum in 2014/2015 to €2.1bn per annum in 2020, and to increase the number of international students in Irish higher education to 44,000 by 2020 (Department of Education and Skills, 2016).

No official report could be found on the number of international students in Irish higher education for the years after 2018, or any report for international student numbers in non-HEA institutions. Additionally, no new international education strategy for 2021, as

the one cited here is for 2016-2020, has yet been released. This gap in information is concerning, and points to a need for increased attention and research on internationalization in Ireland. Further, this international education strategy has been criticized for focusing on economics and numbers rather than academic goals (Clarke & Yang, 2021). However, the international education strategy does state that the increasing numbers of international students must not exceed the necessary supports, and calls for an ethical, inclusive, and holistic approach to internationalization (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Yet it remains contested whether institutions within Ireland have embraced such a holistic approach to international education (Clarke et al., 2018; Clarke & Yang, 2021; Groarke & Durst, 2019; O'Connor, 2018). It is clear, though, that with the increase of international students and the international education strategy calling for more increases, along with identifying EAP and university pathway programs as key areas of growth, that research can play a key part in informing quality, holistic programs.

In Ireland, EAP provision, especially pre-sessional EAP courses, is severely underdeveloped (Garska & O'Brien, 2019). The first writing center in Ireland was set-up in 2007 (Cleary & Ide, 2015). Only 19 out of 27 HEA institutions provided language support in 2010; only 10 of those institutions offered support to non-Erasmus international students (Ni Chonail, 2014). This increased to 26 institutions (out of 35 responding institutions) in 2018; yet this may be a generous estimation as institutions may have reported both faculty-based and university-wide language support (Clarke et al., 2018). This shows a clear lack of EAP support across the board in Ireland. Along with the increase in international students, Ireland follows the UK in their widening access to higher education both in terms of home students, who bring with them a variety of language practices (i.e., Irish as an L1, vernacular or other Englishes such as Irish English, and English LX students), and international students (Clarke et al., 2018; Smyth, 2018). In this study, I will argue that these issues can best be approached from the perspective of Academic Literacies (Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1; Chapter 7).

A needs analysis by Sheridan (2011) shows how Irish faculty fail to engage with the differentiated needs of international students in Irish higher education and calls for a holistic response. Other studies in Ireland assess international students' satisfaction with their studies in Ireland or responses to internationalization (Clarke et al., 2018; Clarke & Yang, 2021; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Finn & Darmody, 2017), with most echoing the call for holistic support. However, despite this call for support, there is a clear lack of Irish-based research on EAP programs. Those that exist focus on writing centers (Cleary & Ide, 2015; Farrell, O'Sullivan, & Tighe-Mooney, 2015; Kelly & Harding, 2016; McClay, 2017;

O'Sullivan, Tighe-Mooney, Lenihan, & Farrell, 2017; Tighe-Mooney & Farrell, 2015), investigate spoken academic discourse through corpora (Farr, 2003), explore writing needs of Irish higher education students (Cleary, Graham, Jeanneau, & O'Sullivan, 2009; Farrell & Tighe-Mooney, 2013), and describe the application of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or small-scale pedagogical/assessment interventions in EAP modules (Carson, 2016, 2017; Carson & Murphy, 2012). None focus on pre-sessional EAP programs in Ireland. This study, therefore, aims to draw implications for Irish pre-sessional EAP programs through a needs analysis of Irish higher education.

## **1.2 Background and rationale**

The main predictor of international students' academic success is their performance on standardized tests, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Banerjee & Wall, 2006). These tests function as a gatekeeping tool, regulating flows of migration and entrance to English-speaking institutions (W. S. Pearson, 2019). However, IELTS is often criticized for not matching the realities of academic studies (Cheng & DeLuca, 2011; Hamid, 2014; Hamid & Hoang, 2018; Leung, Lewkowicz, & Jenkins, 2016). Therefore, the validity of these measurement tools is currently debated, given that international students whose standardized English test scores meet the admission criteria of their institution nonetheless face challenges in the course of their studies (Andrade, 2006; Cho & Bridgeman, 2012; Dooley & Oliver, 2002). These challenges are intertwined and include linguistic, cultural, social, emotional, structural (institutional), and socio-economic challenges (e.g., Adisa, Baderin, Gbadamosi, & Mordi, 2019; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Jabeen, Wang, & Cheng, 2019; Martinez & Colaner, 2017). This suggests that these standardized tests may not be adequate prediction tool. Further, related preparation courses (i.e., IELTS exam preparation classes through an English school) may also not be fit-for-purpose in preparing students for their studies. Nonetheless, standardized exams and their preparation courses continue to be used globally.

In response, EAP courses show promise for developing an alternative predictor of academic success while increasing the success of international students (Daller & Phelan, 2013; Donohue & Erling, 2012). Pre-sessional EAP courses have been developed around the world to allow students who fall short of the institution's entrance criteria to progress to their degree course upon successful completion (Banerjee & Wall, 2006). These courses tend to focus on more than just the linguistic realm, and touch on aspects such as critical thinking, research skills, discipline-specific conventions, intercultural communication, collaboration, autonomy, etc. (Ding & Bruce, 2017). Additionally, these courses allow

students to settle, make improvements in language, and make friends before embarking on their degree (Benzie, 2010). This means pre-sessional EAP courses often touch on the wide range of challenges international students may face and may be a more holistic prediction and preparation tool than standardized exams.

However, these courses are also sometimes criticized as being a “back-door” into universities (Fiocco, 2005; W. S. Pearson, 2020). W. S. Pearson (2020) further expresses concern over how proficiency cutoff scores and pre-sessional EAP program assessment benchmarking is conducted. Additionally, research has found mixed results on the effectiveness of pre-sessional EAP programs with some research stating that students who complete the pre-sessional EAP program enter their degree with borderline acceptable proficiency (Yen & Kuzma, 2009) or struggle as compared to those who directly enter with a standardized exam (Thorpe, Snell, Davey-Evans, & Talman, 2017). Other research also shows students may have negative impacts from the program such as struggling to cope, difficulties developing social networks, taking longer to graduate, and being at greater risk of failing (Antherton, 2006; Copland & Garton, 2011; Dyson, 2016; Llyod-Jones, Neame, & Medaney, 2012; MaCaulay, 2016; Mar-Molinero & Lewis, 2016; Millar, 2002; Ong, 2014; Ridley, 2006; Roche, 2017). In contrast, some research does show that those who pass pre-sessional EAP programs are successful academically (Archibald, 2001; Green, 2007; Mazgutova, 2015; Terraschke & Wahid, 2011) or show some positive transfer or course impact (Allen, 2016; Dyson, 2016; Issitt, 2016; MaCaulay, 2016; Ong, 2014; Roche, 2017). These mixed results show a need for more research on pre-sessional EAP curriculum design and outcomes. The fundamental beginning step for any curriculum design is a needs analysis (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Oanh, 2007; Rahman, 2015; Strevens, 1980), which this study aims to conduct in the Irish context.

### **1.3 Personal rationale**

On a personal level, I moved to Ireland in 2015 as an international student studying an MPhil in English language teaching (ELT) at Trinity College Dublin. Here, I became interested in EAP and Academic Literacies. Through teaching at various schools, including private pathway programs and Trinity College Dublin’s EAP program, I realized that such programs are often underdeveloped or linked to UK or multi-national third-party companies (e.g., NCUK and Study Group). Ireland is also in a unique position to become a leader in pre-sessional and EAP provision as the strict regulations are not in place as they are in other countries. Further, Ireland has the opportunity to learn from other countries’ successes and failures – building on previous knowledge to design innovative, inclusive,

and holistic EAP programs. I saw this opportunity to build programs based on research and decided to pursue a PhD.

As I began to speak with my MPhil supervisor about pursuing a PhD, it became apparent that pre-sessional EAP programs were almost non-existent in Ireland in 2017. Trinity College Dublin had an ad-hoc four-week program, where unconditionally accepted students would study. Within this program, teachers were responsible for their own curriculum and assessment. The first pre-sessional EAP program at Trinity College Dublin open to conditionally accepted students was in 2017; this was also an ad-hoc program where each teacher created their own curriculum, and students had to re-take IELTS at the end of the course. The first hired academic coordinator for the Trinity College Dublin pre-sessional EAP program was in 2019. Through networks of teachers, I learned this was common throughout Ireland; either institutions did not have pre-sessional EAP programs, they accepted third-party pre-sessional EAP programs, or had ad-hoc programs which still required IELTS be taken afterwards. From teaching on the 2017 pre-sessional EAP program in Trinity College Dublin, I became interested in how we could build a better pre-sessional EAP program for Trinity College Dublin, and indeed the rest of Ireland. This led me to explore past research on pre-sessional EAP programs, especially Irish-based research, which, as discussed above, is lacking. Both the gap in past research and my personal interest in EAP and pre-sessional EAP programs led to the study at hand: conducting a needs analysis of Irish higher education from both the faculty and student perspective to inform Irish-based pre-sessional EAP programs.

#### **1.4 Research aims**

This study aims to investigate how pre-sessional EAP programs can be better designed to meet the needs of international students studying in Irish third level education through a comprehensive needs-analysis of third level education. The objectives are as follows:

- Complete a needs analysis of current international students in Irish third level education from the perspective of faculty and students
- Draw implications from the needs analysis for pre-sessional EAP curricula and assessment for the Irish context

The main research questions are:

1. Do international students feel overall positively or negatively towards their educational experiences in Irish higher education?
2. What do international students and faculty feel that international students need for academic success, and what do they struggle with and succeed in?

- a. What level of agreement do faculty and international students have with respect to the issues raised in the foregoing research question?
3. What implications do the answers to the above research questions have for Irish pre-sessional EAP programs?

Research question 1 was developed to first evaluate how students feel about their educational experience in Ireland. This question, if the result is found to be overall negative, provides justification for the other three research questions along with the need to improve Irish higher education and international students' experiences in Ireland. It further provides the basis for the need to conduct a needs analysis. Research question 2 was then developed to investigate needs and expectations, along with aspects that students struggle with and succeed in. This question appears to be two separate questions: needs and strengths/struggles. However, in practice these two questions show great overlap and tend to merge. When students focused on factors which are needed for academic success, these were also often the factors that they struggled with. Therefore, this research question is presented as one question as opposed to two. Research question 2a, then, aims to investigate the level of agreement in question 2 between faculty and students. This sub-question is addressed throughout the discussion of research question 2 in the discussion chapter (Chapter 7); however, it will be answered separately in the conclusion chapter of this study (Chapter 8). If there is a large gap between the two populations, it signals a need for various solutions to address the gap. These solutions could be institutional in nature, or by providing programs to support students. Finally, research question 3 makes implications for pre-sessional EAP programs based on the answers to the previous research questions.

### **1.5 Theoretical approach**

Theoretically, this study is informed by Academic Literacies theory, with translanguaging and Global Englishes as supporting theories. The justification for this is that although the three theories highlight many of the same points, each theory primarily focuses on one aspect (translanguaging focuses on using all linguistic resources, including named and non-named languages and modalities, Global Englishes focuses on varieties of English, etc.). As Garska and O'Brien (2019) argue, these theories are not incompatible. However, as Ireland tends to follow the UK in approaches to EAP, and as seen above also mirrors the UK's past with underdeveloped academic language provision, the name of Academic Literacies is familiar to institutions and practitioners and may allow for greater influence in terms of implications (Lillis & Scott, 2007). Therefore, this study employs Academic Literacies as the primary framework while recognizing that phenomena best seen through

the lens of translanguaging and Global Englishes may be identified in the data and discussed in the implications.

When taking an Academic Literacies approach, EAP provision recognizes that aspects of power, identity, and culture specific to the institution and classroom have the potential to impact international students' academic success through possible marginalization (Lea, 2008; Lillis, Harrington, Lea, & Mitchell, 2015). This allows courses to view literacy practices as socially and contextually situated while advocating for EAP provision to be open to English L1 (first language) and English LX (additional language) speakers in order to aid students in navigating and negotiating academia (Lillis & Tuck, 2016; Street, 2015; Wingate, 2018). Academic Literacies focuses on the producer and practice, challenges the nature and status of English, norms, and standards in academia, and recognizes that expectations in academia are often obscure and opaque (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). Applying this theory to this study aids in understanding faculty and students' experiences with academia and allows for explicit implications for pre-sessional EAP programs to be drawn.

### **1.6 Methodological approach**

This research takes a mixed methods approach to conduct a needs analysis of Irish higher education, with a view to informing a pre-sessional EAP program. This approach was taken to allow for the use of both qualitative and quantitative data in the needs analysis. The needs analysis will explore the challenges that international students face in higher education along with faculty and international students' view of expectations and needs in higher education. This will be done through conducting a questionnaire with international students, and interviews with both international students and faculty in Irish higher education. Based on these findings, implications for a pre-sessional EAP curriculum and assessment will be made as an alternative measure to standardized testing.

The impact of this study lies in its potential to improve academic outcomes for international students as well as contributing to research on best practices in EAP. Simultaneously, this research will increase our understanding of international students' academic difficulties in tertiary education and expand on alternatives to IELTS as a predictor of academic success. In its needs analysis, the study takes into account not only students' perceptions but also those of faculty, who tend not to be represented in previous research. Further, this study adds to the base of research done on pre-sessional EAP programs, which is lacking in the field of applied linguistics and EAP. As research on EAP programs in Ireland is also scarce, researching this context is a unique contribution to the field. Specifically, there has been no research done in Ireland relating to pre-sessional EAP

programs. This study will be the first study to draw explicit implications for Irish pre-sessional EAP programs.

### **1.7 Terminological points**

Before proceeding, the reader should be aware of some terminological points. First, international students refers to students who are not domiciled in Ireland. This means that the student may have English as a first or additional language. Second, Native Speaker (NS) and Non-native speaker (NNS) are only used when referring to the problematic nature of these terms (e.g., the native-speaker yardstick and standard which promotes a monolithic ideology). Instead, English L1 and LX are used to challenge the monolingual standard, as defined in Dewaele (2018) and expanded on by Thomas and Osment (2020).

### **1.8 Conclusion**

In this introduction, I have presented the background and rationale for this study, the research aims and questions, the theoretical and methodological approach, along with the context of the research. Each of these topics are dealt with in detail in different chapters of this study. In Chapter 2, I explore internationalization in Irish higher education, approaches to EAP, including the theoretical underpinning of Academic Literacies combined with Global Englishes and translanguaging, and international students' needs and expectations identified from previous research. In Chapter 3, I present the research methodology for this study, where I detail the methodological approach, the research context and population, along with data collection tools and analysis. Chapters 4-6 are the results chapters for each data collection tool. In Chapter 7, I present the discussion of the findings along with implications. Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes the findings of the study, its contributions, its limitations, and areas for further research.



## 2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter first explores internationalization in higher education, then goes on to focus on Irish higher education. It then describes types of EAP programs and the debate of general or discipline specific EAP programs to justify the focus of this study on pre-sessional EAP programs. After this, pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings are explored. This study takes Academic Literacies as its overarching theory, with translanguaging and Global Englishes as supporting theories. With the theoretical underpinnings discussed, the role of needs analysis in designing pre-sessional EAP programs is presented. This is followed by a discussion of previous studies which have conducted needs analyses of international students in English-medium higher education to identify factors which influence academic success. The final section explores caveats in relation to pre-sessional EAP programs in the UK, the role of professional associations, and the role of the EAP practitioner.

### 2.2 Internationalization in Higher Education

Despite the vast depth of internationalization theory and debates, this section will be confined to briefly defining internationalization and exploring internationalization in Ireland.

Commonly thought of as a response to globalization, defined as “the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, technology, and economy across borders, resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world” (Knight, 2008, p. x), the internationalization process has taken hold of higher education institutions worldwide (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, definitions of internationalization remain contested and varied (Robson, 2015) with Knight (2003) providing a generic definition which might apply to many contexts as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p. 2). This definition views internationalization as an ongoing process which encompasses the national, sectoral, and institutional levels of internationalization and the relationship between these levels (Knight, 2003).

There are three common ideologies to internationalization: instrumentalism, idealism, and educationalism (Stier, 2004). Idealism sees internationalization as creating a better world, promoting fairness, democracy, and equality (Stier, 2004). However, this ideology is criticized

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<sup>1</sup> COVID19 has interrupted and reduced the accessibility of non-online academic resources from the Trinity College Dublin library due to various travel restrictions and library closures since March 2020. It is acknowledged that this may impact the sources represented in the literature review and discussion of this study.

for being ethnocentric and as flowing one way, i.e., *they can learn from us* (Stier, 2004). Instrumentalism focuses on marketisation, economic growth, increasing student numbers, and competency building and training (Stier, 2004). This ideology is criticized for “brain drain,” exploitation, and cultural imperialism (Stier, 2004). Educationalism, then, focuses on individuals’ learning process and development, where exposure to other cultures and ways of learning spurs self-awareness and reflection (Stier, 2004). While this approach is the most advocated for, this ideology can still be criticized for being academicentric, i.e., *our methods of teaching are better*, and as promoting social and global problems, i.e., promoting an oversimplified view that the solution for poverty is education (Stier, 2004). Indeed, others believe that internationalization should focus more on creative, ethical, social, cultural, academic, and holistic goals (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016; Robson, Almeida, & Schartner, 2018; Woodin, Lundgren, & Castro, 2011). This means reciprocity, equality, and mutuality between all players in internationalization, and valuing diversity (Ilieva, Beck, & Waterstone, 2014; Woodin et al., 2011).

### **2.2.1 Internationalization in Irish higher education**

In 2018, 5.6 million international students were engaged in tertiary education globally, representing an increase from 2 million in 1999 (OECD, 2020). Additionally, as the number of English speakers is expected to rise to 2 billion people by 2020 with English LX speakers outnumbering English L1 speakers by 4:1 (The British Council, 2013), new markets for accessing international students are expected to open (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). This internationalization prompted Ireland to engage in a variety of strategies to tap into the global market and set ambitious goals for attracting international students to Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). In 2017/2018, 30,420 international students studied at Irish HEA-funded institutions (Higher Education Authority, 2018), while the Irish international education strategy aimed to increase the number of international students in Ireland to 44,000 by 2020 (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Further, this strategy aimed to increase the economic value of internationalization from 1.58bn per annum in 2014/2015 to 2.1bn per annum in 2020 (Department of Education and Skills, 2016).

The increasing number of international students, global competition, and continuing preference for studying in English speaking countries also signals a need for high-quality, competitive education and international student support within Ireland to retain and increase student numbers (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Consequently, the Government of Ireland’s most recent international education strategy states four priorities: a supportive

national framework, internationally-oriented, globally competitive higher education institutions, sustainable growth in the English language training sector, and succeeding abroad (i.e., strengthening Ireland's presence in and relationships with other Governments and the international education market) (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). This study focuses on the areas of globally competitive higher education institutions and sustainable growth in the English language training sector. More up-to-date statistics and Irish international education strategy are not available at the time of writing.

However, many institutions and countries – including Ireland – are criticized for taking an instrumentalist, symbolic, and marketized approach to internationalization through their focus on recruitment of international students (Clarke et al., 2018; Clarke & Yang, 2021; Groarke & Durst, 2019; O'Connor, 2018). Within the ambitious aims of student recruitment, the Irish Government's strategy, however, does recognize that the increasing numbers of international students must not exceed the necessary supports to ensure the quality of the students' experience (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). They therefore call for an ethical, inclusive, and holistic approach to ensure sustainable internationalization (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Yet it remains contested that institutions within Ireland have encompassed such an approach (Clarke et al., 2018; Clarke & Yang, 2021; Groarke & Durst, 2019; O'Connor, 2018). These studies have cited the lack of funding, resources, and incentives as reasons for internationalization strategies not being implemented or failing to meet expected outcomes. International students have shown mixed satisfaction levels with their experiences studying in Ireland, with some studies showing that they had an overall negative experience but spoke positively about named services (Sheridan, 2011). On the other hand, some studies found that international students had an overall positive view of their time in Ireland, despite some critiques or concerns about some aspects of their studies (Clarke et al., 2018; Finn & Darmody, 2017). Some faculty are also increasingly worried about increased workload due to internationalization efforts (E. Jones, Coelen, Beelen, & De Wit, 2016). This critique is validation that a study such as the one at hand needs to be conducted; a needs analysis of Irish higher education might allow institutions, and the government, to identify where they may implement more holistic internationalization policies and practices.

The strategy also focuses on increasing numbers of English language students and growing the language education market through specialized programs, such as EAP programs, to attract such students (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). These programs have been identified as important areas of growth within Ireland. This study aims to contribute to

the sustainable internationalization of Irish higher education through conducting a needs analysis of Irish higher education making explicit implications for pre-sessional EAP programs to better support and prepare international students.

### **2.3 English for Academic Purposes**

English for Academic Purposes (EAP), a term first coined by Tim Johns in 1974, emerged between the 1960s and 1980s from the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). First developed due to the emergence of English-medium universities, and in response to the increasingly culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student population (J. Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). EAP now includes a widely diverse group of learners spanning a wide range of ages, countries, and linguistic backgrounds (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). This can be reflective of the fact that due to academic English's specialized language, discourse, and practices as compared to general English, there is a need for inclusion in EAP of both L1 and LX students (Lillis & Tuck, 2016; Mauranen, 2006). Therefore, to adopt a definition of EAP, this study accepts that presented by Hyland (2006) that EAP is "specialized English-language teaching grounded in the social, cognitive and linguistic demands of academic target situations" (p.2). Using this definition recognizes the multitude of contexts, countries, and learners that may participate in EAP. However, this study focuses this definition through a contextual concentration on Irish higher education.

Traditionally situated in separate departments<sup>2</sup>, such as auxiliary language centers, within higher education institutions and working as a support for students, EAP focuses on teaching academic language and conventions which differ from everyday language (Hyland & Shaw, 2016). Therefore, EAP is still typically needs-driven and tends to focus on specific and specialized areas of language to support international students in universities (De Chazal, 2014). Developed to fulfill the linguistic needs of such students, yet often criticized for taking a deficit view of students' abilities, the field has now expanded to more commonly include a multitude of competencies and knowledge (De Chazal, 2014). Such competencies include the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, along with twenty first century skills such as critical thinking, study skills, literacies, genres, discourses, and academic culture and practices (De Chazal, 2014; Hyland, 2006).

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<sup>2</sup> Many scholars have made an argument for the embedding of EAP programs, which means both the content lecturer addressing literacies in class and EAP programs which are within each school rather than generically offered as a separate support (Kamasak, Sahan, & Rose, 2021; Wingate, 2006, 2015, 2018, 2019; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). This is not explored in depth in the literature review as most discussions surrounding embedding EAP focus on in-sessional EAP programs.

### 2.3.1 Types of EAP Programs

Along with different approaches to EAP, there are different types of programs offered to students at different stages of their studies. A typical path of an English LX student could look like Figure 2-1. However, most students will skip one or more of these stages (e.g., exam preparation, foundation program, pre-sessional EAP program). As the differences between General English and EAP have been established, this section will not focus on exploring General English.



*Figure 2-1* Possible progression of language courses leading to study in higher education

Exam preparation programs take students through strategies, skills, and language that will help them successfully complete standardized exams. There are two dominant testing agencies, the Cambridge exams, with their University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), and the Educational Testing Services (ETS) (Chalhoub-Deville & Turner, 2000). UCLES includes the Cambridge English: Advanced and Proficiency (CAE and CPE) exams, constructed similarly to an achievement test, and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). ETS includes the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and constructs their exams as a proficiency test. These exams are typically used by admission offices for a number of reasons: access, convenience, efficiency and controllable costs, preparation (e.g., IELTS preparation courses), recognition, status, and security (De Chazal, 2014).

While the British Council, Cambridge English Language Assessment, IDP: IELTS Australia, and IELTS USA (2014) states that the IELTS Academic exam “measures English language proficiency needed for an academic, higher learning environment” (p.1), there is no pass or fail and decisions as to what a sufficient band score is for academic study is left to each institution (The British Council et al., 2014). They do, however, suggest that for linguistically less demanding academic courses, a 6.5 band is “probably” an accurate predictor of success (The British Council et al., 2014). Most Universities set their acceptance levels at a 6.5 IELTS or equivalent (Carlsen, 2018; The British Council et al., 2014; De Chazal, 2014). Additionally, IELTS states that their approach is “recognized as being fair, reliable and valid

to all test takers, whatever their nationality, cultural background, gender or special needs. The test questions were developed by a network of IELTS test material writers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and US” (The British Council et al., 2014, p. 2).

However, a number of criticisms have been introduced such as lack of authenticity, lack of effectiveness, limitation in scope, inflexibility, widely available access to resources, commercialism, and negative washback (De Chazal, 2014). Additionally, as with using any standardized test used to make critical decisions, test-users such as universities need to analyze their own admission requirements based on informed decisions related to their unique academic programs and language abilities needed (Chalhoub-Deville & Turner, 2000). This is arguably not always the case as the predictive validity of these tests have come under fire, with mixed results of correlation, and some students still failing to achieve satisfactory performance and adjustment after admission (Andrade, 2006; Ayers & Quattlebaum, 1992; Bayliss & Ingram, 2006; Campbell & Li, 2008; Cho & Bridgeman, 2012; Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Dooey & Oliver, 2002; Harrington & Roche, 2014; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000; Leung et al., 2016; Seelen, 2002; Zeegers & Barron, 2008). Other studies have been carried out on the attitudes and perceptions towards these tests, which are generally found to be negative; these studies conclude that there is a lack of responsiveness to the realities of study in universities (Cheng & DeLuca, 2011; Hamid, 2014; Hamid & Hoang, 2018; Leung et al., 2016). Additionally, with the design of the test focused on the inner-circle countries, as defined by Kachru (1985), issues of fairness and representation of users in international contexts have been problematized, and there have been calls for alternative testing practices (Rose & Syrbe, 2018).

Therefore, with the validity of the exams being questioned, exam preparation courses are questioned as a valid form of academic preparation for higher education. There is a need for alternative preparation, and EAP programs show a promise to fill this gap (Daller & Phelan, 2013; Donohue & Erling, 2012). This has then spurred the development of foundation, pre-sessional and in-sessional EAP programs as seen in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1**  
*Types of EAP programs*

<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>Foundation Programs</b> (Dublin International Foundation College, 2018; Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2015)	<p>Provide content and EAP classes and examinations</p> <p>Typically discipline specific</p> <p>One or two academic semesters in length and may or may not include the summer</p> <p>Have partner universities who then waive the language requirement upon successful completion of the course</p> <p>Lead to undergraduate or postgraduate study</p> <p>Within Ireland they are regulated by the Government in terms of curriculum and assessment and run or influenced by UK-based or international companies and programs</p>
<b>Pre-sessional Programs</b> (De Chazal, 2014; Manning, 2016)	<p>For students who hold a conditional offer to a university, based on unsuccessful attempts at gaining the appropriate language requirement</p> <p>Some programs are institution-specific, while others are considered to be third party programs and have partner universities</p> <p>Generally full-time and range from one year to four weeks depending on the students' language level at the time of entry</p> <p>Commonly focus on developing academic skills, language skills, and cultural awareness</p>
<b>In-sessional Programs</b> (Clarke et al., 2018; De Chazal, 2014)	<p>Commonly part-time</p> <p>Take place while the student is studying their course in the university</p> <p>Tend to focus on the main form of assessment: writing</p> <p>Typically seen as support within Irish universities and can be either credit or non-credit bearing courses</p> <p>Tend to be regulated in part by the university and verified through external examiners when credit bearing</p> <p>Needs are easier to identify, and content may be more discipline or course specific</p> <p>Part-time EAP study may be a disadvantage in terms of class-time, and the demands of their university course may limit out-of-class study</p>

In light of the questions of validity of current standardized entry exams such as IELTS and calls for alternative testing and preparation practices, this study will focus on pre-sessional EAP programs and entry assessment practices. Further, the choice to focus on pre-sessional EAP programs was due to their lack of development and regulation in Ireland, and for the opportunity to focus on preparation before the student enters the academy. Additionally, the institutional focus on entry requirements within Ireland and the challenge of the validity of the current standardized exams used to regulate entry to such universities led to the focus on pre-sessional EAP programs.

To expand, pre-sessional EAP programs in Ireland, as with the general field of EAP, are still within the embryonic stages of regulation and development (Department of Education and Skills 2016; see Chapter 1, Section 1.1 and 1.2 for a discussion of the lack of EAP provision in Ireland). Irish pre-sessional EAP programs vary from institution to institution and have little government regulation as pre-sessional EAP programs typically have the duration of less than 90 days and, therefore, are not subject to visa or QQI accreditation requirements as outlined by the Irish Government (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2015; Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, 2015). Currently, few third-party pre-sessional EAP programs exist in Ireland and so pre-sessional EAP programs are typically ratified by and held to quality assurance standards within their respective universities. However, as a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award is not granted at the end of such programs, pre-sessional EAP programs may fall into a grey area in terms of categorization at the institution and the level of quality assurance they are held to may therefore vary (Trinity College Dublin, 2017). Yet, these programs remain highly impactful as the assessment results determine university entry for the students. The importance of pre-sessional EAP programs is further highlighted in Ireland's international education strategy (Department of Education and Skills, 2016), which identifies such specialized programs as an area of important growth for the Education in Ireland brand. However, the international education strategy also recognizes the need for connectivity, co-ordination, and an integrated strategy monitored by an oversight group to ensure satisfactory growth, program quality, and protection for all stakeholders in the Education in Ireland brand (Department of Education and Skills, 2016).

Due to their importance, high-stakes status, and current lack of development and regulation, the curriculum and assessment of these pre-sessional EAP programs are in need of research-informed development to create programs which adequately prepare students and predict academic success. In this way, Irish universities can rely on such programs and scores resulting from the program for entry to the university.

### **2.3.2 General or discipline specific EAP programs**

A major debate in the field of EAP is between General EAP (EGAP) and Discipline Specific EAP (ESAP), a distinction which traces back to Hutchinson and Waters (1980). This debate is sometimes resolved within institutions based on practicalities of the program at hand in terms of the EAP teacher's education, embedding of programs within the disciplines, resources available, and homogeneity of the student cohort (De Chazal, 2014). To explore the debate, however, many have investigated the differences in disciplines and argue for recognizing the



complexity of each discipline by designing ESAP courses (Halliday, 1989; Hyland, 2002, 2004, 2011; Prior, 2013; Tardy, 2009). The main arguments for ESAP are differences in student needs including linguistic features such as nominalization, differences in assignment requirements, and differences in culture and genre based on their discipline (Hyland, 2011).

Arguments against ESAP are based on increasing interdisciplinarity, the potential lack of EAP teachers' specialized disciplinary knowledge, feasible class numbers, and the tendency to prioritizing specific knowledge over common discourse (Alexander, Argent, & Spencer, 2008; Bruce, 2005, 2015; De Chazal, 2012; W. S. Pearson, 2020). This has led to an argument supporting the use of EGAP, deemed as more appropriate for most contexts (Alexander et al., 2008; Bruce, 2005, 2015; De Chazal, 2012). Further, researchers such as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), Bruce (2005), and McCarter and Jakes (2009) have identified common generic features and transferable skills, originating from Bloor and Bloor (1986) and their "common core hypothesis," such as listening to lectures and paraphrasing, which can form the basis of an EGAP class.

Still others argue for an interdisciplinary approach where navigation of the blurred boundaries between disciplines is encouraged (Feak, 2011). Rather than separating students into classes based on discipline, this approach is based on building awareness and flexibility in navigating the differences between disciplines while recognizing the increasing trend of interdisciplinary study within universities (Bodin-Galvez, 2019; Feak, 2011). In this study, the context of the Irish Higher Education system together with the needs analysis will inform the choice of a general, specific, or interdisciplinary approach to EAP.

#### **2.4 Pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings**

Approaches to EAP are still debated within the field with ongoing critique and support of a multitude of approaches (Benesch, 2001; J. Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2018; Jwa & Tardy, 2016; Lea & Street, 2006; Molle & Prior, 2008; Spack, 1988; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Importantly, many of these approaches focus on academic writing, as within the academy this is the main form of assessment (Lillis & Tuck, 2016).

EAP takes methodological approaches to the overall pedagogical design and delivery. Such approaches have been developed around the world including areas such as South Africa, Latin America, the US, UK, and Australia. Some notable influences include the New Literacy Studies (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Baynham & Prinsloo, 2001; Gee, 1996), the London school of linguistics (Stubbs, 1996), US college composition studies (Bazerman, 1988; Ivanič, 1998; Jwa & Tardy, 2016; Russell, 1991; Tardy, 2009), discourse studies (Prior,

2013; Van Dijk, 2011), process writing (Raimes, 1991; White & Arndt, 1991), systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1989, 1994; Martin, 2011), genre analysis and rhetorical genre studies (Bazerman, 1988; Bruce, 2013; Devitt, 2004; Johns, 1997; Swales, 1990, 2004), register and corpus analysis (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; Coxhead, 2000; Jordan, 1997; M. P. West, 1953), critical EAP (Benesch, 2001; Canagarajah, 2001; Turner, 2012), study skills (Bowler & Harrison, 2007; Candlin, Kirkwood, & Moore, 1975; Hyland, 2006; Jordan, 1997), Academic Literacies (Angelil-Carter, 1998; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Thesen & Cooper, 2014; Thesen & van Pletzen, 2006), English as a lingua franca in academic settings (ELFA) (Jenkins, 2013; Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2010; Tribble, 2017), Global Englishes (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019), and translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011b; García, 2009; García & Wei, 2014; Vogel & García, 2017). These influences often build on each other and interact in their similarities and differences.

As this study focuses on Ireland, the focus will be on exploring the approaches developed within the UK, due to proximity. The terms and theoretical basis for this particular study remain in the UK-based model of Academic Literacies due to the existing UK influence exerted on Irish EAP programs. However, this theory is also combined with translanguaging and Global Englishes, two other approaches popular in the UK, as each theory emphasizes particular aspects which were found to be important in the study. First, the Academic Literacies model is discussed, then translanguaging and Global Englishes will be explored separately. The three models will then be compared with an argument made for the practical combination of the three theories in the pre-sessional EAP classroom.

#### **2.4.1 Academic Literacies**

The study skills approach, which is now commonly seen as based on a deficit view of students' language and other abilities, is commonly thought of as the "generic" EAP approach (Lillis & Scott, 2007). Within this approach, techniques for effective studying are taught as practical and transferable skills, the mastery of which leads to academic success (Alexander et al., 2008; De Chazal, 2014). Past research has been done on study skills, and these skills often include notetaking, skimming and scanning, time management, proofreading, and referencing conventions (Alexander et al., 2008; Braine, 1989; Dunkel, 1988; Johns, 1981). However, the study skills approach is criticized for being patronizing, mechanical, focusing on superficial surface features, and as shifting away from a language focus (Alexander et al., 2008; De Chazal, 2014; Waters & Waters, 2001). Recognizing the need for a more complex

understanding of study skills and a deeper-level approach, researchers such as Waters and Waters (2001) have advocated for study competencies rather than skills. Based on criticisms from Lea and Street (1998) and other Academic Literacies advocates that study skills are lacking context and take a deficit view of students to focus on surface level grammar, spelling, and skills, a shift was seen to academic socialization within the three-tier model of study skills, academic socialization, and Academic Literacies.

Academic socialization, then, focuses on inducting or socializing the student into genres and disciplines within the academy (Lea & Street, 1998). This approach does make a distinction between deep, surface, and strategic skills where tutors guide students through stages to induct them into the academy (Lea & Street, 1998; Marton, Hounsell, & Entwistle, 1997). However, this socialization is often implicit and views academic writing as transparent where disciplines are seen as stable and norms reproducible after learning (Lea & Street, 2006; Lillis & Tuck, 2016). Therefore, it views the institution as homogenous in a culture where learning a set of norms will provide access to the institution as a whole (Lea & Street, 1998). Additionally, academic socialization is criticized for not representing institution-specific practices, changing disciplinary differences, and power within the academy (Lea & Street, 1998). From this academic socialization model, an Academic Literacies model was formed to address these critiques.

This Academic Literacies model is intended to encompass the previous two models of study skills and academic socialization to further the recognition of varied and multiple literacies within unique contexts (Lea, 2004). Academic Literacies, primarily attributed to Lea and Street (1998) and Lillis (1997) within the UK, stems from New Literacy Studies (Barton et al., 2000; Baynham & Prinsloo, 2001; Gee, 1996) and is related to the US-based Composition Studies (Ivanič, 1998). The primary focus of Academic Literacies studies in the beginning was on non-traditional home students in the UK rather than international students or EAP (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). Literacies in this model are seen as diverse, socially and culturally situated, shifting, contextualized, ideologically shaped, and contested within academia and beyond in order to recognize the influence of power, identity, and culture (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). The terms identity, power, and culture are explored more in Section 2.4.5. Importantly, Academic Literacies sees language and literacy as a practice rather than a skill and focuses on both literacy events and practices (Street, 2015), which all students (English L1 or LX) must learn to navigate and may face challenges in doing so (Wingate, 2018).

Within this model, the focus is on navigating and negotiating meaning-making within academic discourses (Lea, 2004). Major themes of Academic Literacies research, as identified by Lillis and Tuck (2016), include the fact that expectations in academia are often obscure and opaque, that disciplinary discourses are situated and contested, that identity is significant in academic navigation, and that the academy needs to open itself to other semiotic and linguistic practices. Importantly, Academic Literacies recognizes that difficulties are often detected in student writing, and wrongly assumed to be due to language problems rather than with wider challenges and negotiation (Wingate, 2018).

Therefore, as identified by Lillis (2019) and Lillis and Tuck (2016), the tenets of Academic Literacies are:

- There is a gap between students' and faculty understanding of conventions and expectations which needs to be explored, made explicit, and problematized (Lea, 2004; Lillis, 2001)
- Literacy practices are not straightforward: they are not transferable or clear but are rather seen as opaque, obscure, variable, changing, and socially situated (Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič et al., 2009; Lea & Street, 1998; Scott, 2017)
- Identities, cultures, and previous experiences influence literacy practices of both faculty and students (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Tuck, 2018)
- The deficit view of students is problematic, and the focus should be on accepting a range of semiotic practices along with exploring – and critiquing – institutions' ideologies and external authority's influence (i.e., who makes the “rules?” who holds “power?”) (Lea & Street, 1998; Turner, 2018)
- Dominant discursive and rhetorical practices (e.g., norms, what counts as assessment, and standard English's status in academia) should be debated along with alternatives (English, 2011; McKenna, 2015)

Section 2.4.4 provides a comparison of Academic Literacies with critical EAP (i.e., translanguaging and Global Englishes).

### **2.4.2 Translanguaging**

Translanguaging is first traced back to Cen Williams (1994, 1996) who used the Welsh word *trawsieithu* to describe pedagogical practices where both Welsh and English were intentionally used in the classroom. Since then, the concept has evolved from dynamic bilingualism and bilingual education (Baker, 2001; García, 2009), as well as the multilingual

turn in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) which challenges monolingual ideology to view multilinguals, rather than monolinguals, as the norm and basis for successful language learning (Cook, 2016a, 2016b; García, 2009; May, 2014; Ortega, 2013). It has three tenets (Vogel & García, 2017, p. 4):

1. It posits that individuals select and deploy features from a unitary linguistic repertoire in order to communicate.
2. It takes up a perspective on bi- and multilingualism that privileges speakers' own dynamic linguistic and semiotic practices above the named languages of nations and states.
3. It still recognizes the material effects of socially constructed named language categories and structuralist language ideologies, especially for minoritized language speakers.

Translanguaging is both a language practice and a pedagogical strategy, placing it as a practical theory (García & Wei, 2014). Like Academic Literacies and Global Englishes, translanguaging views languages as a process rather than a product (Canagarajah, 2013c), as “a verb rather than a noun, as a social act people do rather than a linguistic object that is possessed” (Sayer, 2013, p. 69). This views languages as being fluid in one integrated system, rather than distinct separate entities which should be kept separate (García & Lin, 2016). Challenging the sociopolitical boundaries of named languages, translanguaging views multilinguals as being heteroglossic (Bailey, 2007; Bakhtin, 1981) and dynamic (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García & Lin, 2016). It is the ability to “shuttle” between languages and modalities without boundaries (Canagarajah, 2011a) and to integrate social spaces which are typically kept separate (Wei, 2011).

However, there is a weak version of translanguaging, which only calls for the softening of named language boundaries (see Cummins, 2007), and a strong version, which states that people select features from one linguistic repertoire (García & Lin, 2016). While this study still uses named languages (i.e., English), it still takes a strong version of the theory as it advocates for the inclusion of students' entire linguistic repertoire within academia and EAP. Therefore, this thesis defines translanguaging as “the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015, p. 281).

As a pedagogical strategy, translanguaging uses a learners' whole linguistic repertoire to learn (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). Studies show how students shuttle between languages and modalities as they learn, pointing to the fact that translanguaging happens naturally and

spontaneously in contexts, including everyday and academic contexts (García, 2009). However, while translanguaging happens naturally, and often behind teachers' backs even when forbidden (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; Lin & Martin, 2005), Canagarajah (2011a) emphasizes that translanguaging still needs to be intentionally practiced and taught to develop competency and proficiency in translanguaging. Studies which have been done at a tertiary level context show how students use multiple linguistic and semiotic resources to communicate knowledge, to better understand and engage with content, and to better develop academic language (Chen, Tsai, & Tsou, 2019; García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017; Mazak & Carroll, 2017). Other benefits of translanguaging include encouraging and supporting different ways of knowing and knowledge, and supporting students' identities and socioemotional development (García et al., 2017). Therefore, translanguaging directly challenges the monolingual mindset that students are best taught monolingually in the target language, and instead advocates for the use of all of the students' linguistic resources even when the teacher does not share the students' L1 (García & Lin, 2016; Lin, 2013). Cenoz and Gorter (2017) summarizes three main pedagogical applications of translanguaging: using translanguaging input and output, using students' L1 as a resource (e.g., scaffolding and unpacking complex concepts), and using translanguaging in writing. Yet, monolingual ideologies at institutions and teacher adherence to monoglossic ideologies and linguistic purism, which emphasizes the separation of languages, still curtails translanguaging pedagogy in higher education (Carroll & van den Hoven, 2017; Chang, 2019; García & Lin, 2016).

### **2.4.3 Global Englishes**

Global Englishes has been used by a number of scholars such as Pennycook (2007) and Canagarajah (2013d) as a more inclusive paradigm as compared to World Englishes (WE) (Kachru, 1992), English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2000; Mauranen, 2012) and English as an International Language (EIL) (Matsuda, 2012). Much of the criticism of World Englishes, ELF, and EIL by the scholars cited above are that they are still too focused on native speaker/monolingual ideology, such as linguistic and geographic boundaries based on colonialism. This study, though, uses Global Englishes as defined by Rose, McKinley, and Galloway (2020, p. 3):

This is an inclusive paradigm that aims to consolidate the work of WE, ELF, and EIL to explore the linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and implications of this diversity of English on multifaceted aspects of society... Thus ‘Global Englishes’ consolidates work in these related fields; it also unites similar movements in SLA, such as translanguaging and the multilingual turn.

Global Englishes, like translanguaging, stems from and contributes to the multilingual turn (Cook, 2016a, 2016b; May, 2014; Ortega, 2013; Rose & Galloway, 2019). This means that Global Englishes does not measure proficiency by referring to native-speaker norms, and views TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or Other Language)/EAP curricula based on static or native-speaker ideologies as irrelevant (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose, McKinley, et al., 2020). It further encourages a critical approach to standard language ideology and critiques the terms “native” and “non-native” speakers as such terms are often used in discriminatory manners (e.g., “othering,” discriminatory TESOL hiring practices) where “non-native” speakers are often seen as lesser in their cultural, linguistic, and intellectual attributes (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Holliday, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Despite many suggestions from other scholars for alternative terms (see Rose and Galloway, 2019 for a discussion), Rose and Galloway (2019, p. 15) still use such terms as:

The labels of ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ are widely used in society, and by many readers of this book, and we need to use them in order to politically change their existence. Hence, we have decided to only use these labels in this book when the ideas surrounding them are challenged. We also choose to use these problematic labels when we are referring to a perceived, rather than defined, distinction. When the labels do not bring this dichotomy into question, we seek to adopt alternative and more accurate terms.

Thus, this study too uses “native” and “non-native” when it brings the problematic nature of these terms into question. However, alternative terms are used when the labels do not bring the dichotomy into question. It is argued elsewhere, yet still within Global Englishes, that all English users are legitimate, and therefore, L1 and LX are used to describe language users purely in a way which demarcates which language(s) was acquired first (e.g., someone may have more than one L1, and someone who has learned English from birth would have English as an L1 in a chronological sense) (Dewaele, 2018; Thomas & Osment, 2020). This model expands to discuss how English LX users may use English in a variety of contexts or usages (i.e., primary user, peripheral user, or additional user) and may have varying, and complex, identification with English (Thomas & Osment, 2020). This study adopts L1 and LX as

alternative terms for “native” and “non-native” when the problematic nature of the latter is not called into question.

As with Academic Literacies and translanguaging (see Sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2, and 2.4.4), Global Englishes places language as a process which is socially and contextually situated rather than a static product (Ortega, 2013, 2014). Global Englishes and translanguaging research further call for curricula which view multilingualism as the norm, view language and communication as flexible, encourage the use of students’ complete linguistic repertoire, and move away from measuring proficiency with descriptors such as “grammatical accuracy” or other native-speaker defined benchmarks (Rose, McKinley, et al., 2020). It recognizes that, along with linguistic boundaries, nation-state boundaries are contested (i.e., transnationalism; see Section 2.4.5), and that culture and identity are negotiated and re-constructed as one situates oneself in a social space while drawing on values and practices of diverse cultures (i.e., transculturalism; see Section 2.4.5) (Guo & Maitra, 2017; E. Lee & Canagarajah, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019). English LX users, therefore, engage in transnationalism where their contexts, interlocutors, and experiences are constantly changing (Rose & Galloway, 2019). A Global Englishes curriculum, therefore, centers learner agency and language creativity where conversational strategies are flexible and depend on context and situation (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

However, while Rose and Galloway (2019) show how Global Englishes draws from scholarship on translanguaging and multilingualism to include languages other than English, Global Englishes ultimately has English as its core. Implications for Global Englishes in the classroom (Rose, McKinley, et al., 2020), likewise, tend to focus on Englishes used in a variety of contexts rather than emphasizing the use of other languages as well. Therefore, I believe it is essential for this thesis to still have both Global Englishes and translanguaging as pedagogical theories which support Academic Literacies as the overarching theory of this study. As will be discussed in the next section (Section 2.4.4), the three theories emphasize different aspects which they have in common. I believe that these aspects are important to give weight to, and so adopt an overarching theory with two supporting theories.

#### **2.4.4 Comparison and summary**

It is important to note that since Academic Literacies did not originate in EAP or second language acquisition, differences exist as seen in Table 2-2 where EAP, regardless of approach, is often lumped into academic socialization or study skills (Lillis & Tuck, 2016).



**Table 2-2***Differences between EAP and Academic Literacies (table informed by Lillis & Tuck, 2016)*

<b>EAP</b>	<b>Academic Literacies</b>
Focus on text	Focus on producer and practice
Focus on English	Nature and status of English challenged
Novice-expert trajectory	Emphasis on diversity of experience and knowledge
Induction to discourse (i.e., normative)	Change in academic discourse and responsiveness at all levels valued (e.g., transformative)

However, while Hyland (2018) recognizes critiques of EAP as valid, he describes how EAP is converging with theories which criticize EAP, such as Academic Literacies and Critical EAP. Recognizing that Academic Literacies has moved to influence EAP over the years, a convergence between the two has been identified through the similarities of critical EAP, in this study's case translanguaging and Global Englishes, and Academic Literacies (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). Critical EAP commonly problematizes EAP for a number of reasons. First, EAP is criticized for benefiting and passively allowing the expansion of English in academia around the world, therefore supporting linguistic colonialism, gatekeeping, and big business (Benesch, 2001; Hyland, 2018; Pennycook, 1997; Phillipson, 1992). EAP is also said to take a normative approach, which disregards the influence of power relations and promotes adherence to such power relations and norms based on the native-speaker yardstick (Benesch, 2001; Pennycook, 1997).

As the link between Global Englishes and translanguaging has been made in Section 2.4.3, this section focuses on the similarities between critical EAP, including both Global Englishes and translanguaging, and Academic Literacies. The similarities between critical EAP and Academic Literacies can be viewed as mainly ideological (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). In particular, lines of comparison can be drawn between Benesch's (2001) *rights* analysis approach and Lillis & Tuck's (2016) exploration of students' navigation of meaning-making where both approaches have brought questions of expectations within the academy to the forefront. These questions include where expectations come from, who created them, what is gained by following or breaking these expectations, and if they should be fulfilled (Benesch, 2001). Further, linguistic and semiotic resources are challenged and expanded to recognize Global Englishes, indigenous academic languages, and modalities in academia, also explored in Galloway and Rose (2015), Canagarajah (2013d), Lillis and Curry (2010), Horner, NeCamp, and Donahue (2011) and Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011).

Critical EAP and Academic Literacies also recognize a range of expertise and trajectories, along with valuing knowledge brought to the academy (Canagarajah, 2002; J. Flowerdew & Li, 2009; Lillis & Tuck, 2016). The theories see literacy as ideological rather than autonomous, and additionally view literacy as a social practice which engages multiple participants, i.e., tutors, assessors, students (Canagarajah, 2015; Lea & Jones, 2010; Street, 2015). Lillis and Tuck (2016, p. 39) also identify a similarity to critical EAP in their focus on transformative pedagogy defining this as the following:

- Negotiation and dialogue should be central to the teaching learning, production and evaluation of what counts as ‘academic’ writing;
- Orientations to what count as ‘appropriate’ linguistic and semiotic resources that producers bring to meaning-making in the academy need to be expanded to include multimodality, multi and translingualism, vernacular and official practices;
- In general, core conceptual categories such as ‘English’ and ‘Academic’ need to be explored rather than taken as given, given the multiple patterns of mobility in an increasingly transnational academia and the complex nature of recognizing ‘diversity’ in academic production (Horner & Lillis, 2015)

These points are also explored by Archer (2006), Canagarajah (2013a, 2015), and Lillis and Scott (2007).

One downfall to critical EAP and Academic Literacies is that despite being called “practical theories,” they often lack concrete pedagogical implications (Harwood & Hadley, 2004; Hyland, 2018; Lillis, 2003; Wingate & Tribble, 2012), and often applications that do exist may be limited by institutional assessment requirements and lack of application to mainstream higher education (Benesch, 1996, 2010; Chun, 2015; Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 2006; Lillis, 2011; Lillis et al., 2015; Pessoa & Freitas, 2012; Scalone & Street, 2006; Street & Leung, 2009; Wingate, 2018). However, there are pedagogical applications of Academic Literacies, translanguaging, and Global Englishes, showing a move to alternative, transformative, and holistic curricula, materials, and assessment (Breen, 2019; Canagarajah, 2013d; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; García et al., 2017; García & Kleifgen, 2018; García & Wei, 2014; Kristiansen, 2019; Lea, 2004; Lillis et al., 2015; J. Pearson, 2017; Rose, McKinley, et al., 2020; Wingate, 2012, 2015; Wigglesworth, 2019).

Therefore, this study uses Academic Literacies as the primary theory and recognizes Global Englishes and translanguaging as supporting theories for a number of reasons. First, as argued in Garska and O'Brien (2019), these theories are not incompatible and engagement with work across disciplines which share the same ideology is necessary (Canagarajah, 2015; Lillis & Tuck, 2016; Rose, McKinley, et al., 2020). To quote Lillis and Tuck (2016, p. 39):

There is a danger that researchers/pedagogues stay separate...it will be important that researchers with shared interests and ideological concerns engage with each other's work, both in order to avoid working within conceptual boundaries they seek to disrupt, and as a means to develop richer understandings of knowledge-making in the contemporary world.

Second, the recognition of heterogenous contexts, the consideration of diversifying the ways of meaning-making (semiotic and linguistic), and the influence of identity, power, and culture on academic discourses stands out as especially important to recognize and consider during this study, in part due to the increased diversity and internationalization of higher education in Ireland. These three theories address these influences, and while Academic Literacies incorporates different languages and semiotic resources along with varieties of Englishes, using Global Englishes and translanguaging as supporting theories gives weight to the importance of these aspects. Third, it is important to use a theory which is of some familiarity to the institutions and practitioners in the field when trying to influence such entities (Lillis & Scott, 2007). As Ireland follows the UK in terms of approach to EAP, and as UK-based third-party programs, practitioners, and training have largely been transplanted from the UK to Ireland, using Academic Literacies as the main theory allows for a sense of familiarity. Garska and O'Brien (2019, p. 67) also argue for the use of Academic Literacies as the main theory, with the support of other theories such as translanguaging:

Academic Literacies, then, allows for the introduction of the idea that programs should be developed to support students in their negotiation of academic discourses and practices regardless of students' L1 – in a context where institutions need to be convinced of developing such programs in the first place. The researchers propose first advocating for the approach of Academic Literacies on the island, as familiarity with this approach stems from historical and current contact with the UK. Academic Literacies may offer more readily accepted institution-specific, transformative pedagogical implications for the current context of Ireland. The researchers do acknowledge that this study focuses on international students, however they feel that there is a risk of institutions confining EAP support to international students based on research advocating only L2 writing support (despite current research in this field increasingly including English L1 students).

Academic Literacies is the overarching theory as preparing students to navigate the academy while recognizing the influence of power, identity, and culture on academic discourses is of utmost importance to pre-sessional EAP programs. Translanguaging and Global Englishes support this theory while highlighting the importance of accepting and using different languages and varieties of Englishes within the academy.

### 2.4.5 Power, identity, and culture

Power, identity, and culture are identified terms which are problematized and discussed in all three theories. The overarching theory of Academic Literacies explicitly states that these three terms are at the core of the theory, and that they have a complex relationship with students' literacy and language. Therefore, it is important to define these terms for this study.

As translanguaging challenges socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages, and therefore language norms, it can also be said that translanguaging is a political act that engages with issues of power and inequality (Flores, 2014). Power represented through languages can be seen through aspects of gatekeeping, the act of deciding what is and isn't allowed (Fairclough, 2001b). Translanguaging scholars identify power enacted in the classroom as silencing multilingual students through assessment and instruction which restricts and ignores their entire linguistic repertoires, only allowing certain practices when they are deemed "appropriate" (Flores & Rosa, 2015; García & Lin, 2016). Similarly, Academic Literacies and Global Englishes scholars identify power in the EAP classroom and academia where gatekeeping is often implemented to uphold and reproduce standard language norms while silencing students' resistance to, and negotiation of, such norms (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Lea, 2008; Lillis, 2001; Lillis & Scott, 2007). All three theories seek to uncover these power dynamics while negotiating and challenging standard language norms.

Along with aspects of power, translanguaging touches on identity and culture. Wei (2011, p. 1223) states:

The act of translanguaging then is transformative in nature; it creates a social space for the multilingual user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance.

This amalgamation of different dimensions shows how identities are socially constructed, negotiated, layered, changing, multiple, and complex (Canagarajah, 2015; J. Flowerdew & Wang, 2015). This reflects *transnationalism* (Levitt, 2001, 2004; Levitt & Schiller, 2004) which views *ways of belonging* as practices which represent identities in a group and *ways of being* as social practices which individuals engage in. While someone may be a part of a social space they may or may not choose to identify with different categories which are available to them (Levitt, 2001, 2004; Levitt & Schiller, 2004). Therefore, while an international student may move to a new country, they do not cut ties with their "home" country to assimilate to their "host" country; their identity, or belonging, does not depend on either the "host" or

“home” country (Levitt, 2010). Wei (2011), in his quote above, highlights how language, particularly translanguaging, provides space to perform such complex and dynamic identities. If the use of such linguistic resources is limited or restricted (i.e., enforcing an “English-only” classroom), so are the opportunities for a person to perform their identities (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, & Martin, 2006; Creese & Blackledge, 2015).

In line with the discussion on *transnationalism* and identity, cultures are also socially constructed, negotiated, contested, and changing (Archer, 2008; E. Lee & Canagarajah, 2018). *Transculturalism*, as with the concept of identity and *transnationalism* above, stems from contact zones (Pratt, 1992) along with an individual’s agency in resisting or engaging with cultural and linguistic adaptation (Zamel, 1997). Therefore, “transculturalism involves situating oneself in liminal social spaces and drawing from values and practices of diverse cultures to constantly reconstruct one’s identity and social belonging” (E. Lee & Canagarajah, 2018, p. 3).

As both *transnationalism* and *transculturalism* view identity and culture as practices and processes (E. Lee & Canagarajah, 2018), rather than products, these definitions are in line with all three theoretical underpinnings of this thesis. Older conceptualizations view identity and culture as static, homogenous, and separate, often ignoring the influence of power on identity and culture (Canagarajah, 2013b; Heath & Street, 2008; Kubota & Lehner, 2004, 2005). The terms “culture” and “identity” do appear in the analysis and discussion of this thesis, rather than *transculturalism*, as the participants’ views of these terms often align with the older conceptualizations of culture and identity. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, this often leads to the deficit view of students by attributing their “difficulties” to culture, while *transculturalism* is seen through the students’ conception of how culture influences their academic success.

## **2.5 The role of needs analysis**

After establishing the Academic Literacies focus of this research, the roles of needs analysis must next be considered. The concept of analyzing needs for language courses first appeared in the 1920s (Rahman, 2015). Needs analysis reappeared in the 1960s with the coinage of English for Specific Purposes as well as Munby’s (1978) work on the communicative syllabus design (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; Rahman, 2015). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) define a needs analysis as a way of constructing the *what* and *how* of an EAP courses.

Bruce (2015) underscores that EAP courses are “high-stakes, needs-driven and expectation-driven education [activities]” (p.36), which means that “within a relatively small

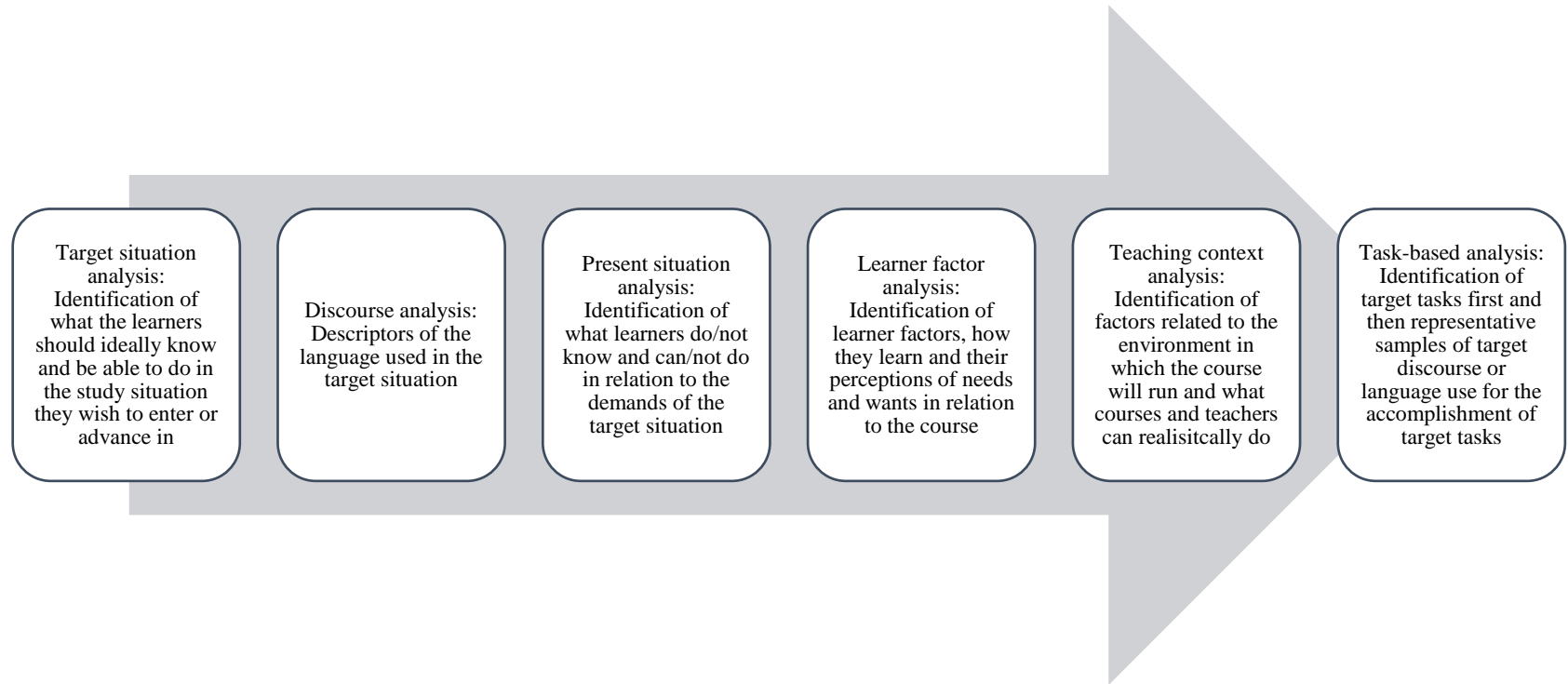
time frame, such courses are expected, sometimes unrealistically, to facilitate rapid development of students' academic knowledge and language skills so that they are equipped to enter and succeed in university courses" (p.36-37). His statement highlights the importance of a needs analysis in developing an EAP course to provide focus and to act as the fundamental first step to planning, curriculum design, and material development while increasing the accountability and quality of the program (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Oanh, 2007; Rahman, 2015; Strevens, 1980). Many guides to designing and conducting needs analyses in ESP/EAP are available, along with reviews of past needs analysis research, due to the importance of needs analysis to curriculum design in this area (Basturkmen, 2010, 2013; Belcher, 2006, 2009; Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; Braine, 2001; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; L. Flowerdew, 2013; Huhta, Vogt, Johnson, Tulkki, & Hall, 2013; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2006; Jordan, 1997; Oanh, 2007; Rahman, 2015; Upton, 2012).

### **2.5.1 Traditional needs analysis**

First, "needs" must be defined as there has been much debate regarding the types of needs that should be investigated. R. West (1994) identifies "needs" as an umbrella term while types of needs identified in literature include (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Oanh, 2007; Richterich & Chancerel, 1978): felt needs, expressed needs, perceived needs, normative needs, comparative needs, individual needs, group needs, professional needs, administrative needs, subjectively measured needs, objectively measured needs, target situation-oriented, process-oriented, product-oriented, necessities, wants and lacks. Not all of these will be explicitly explored in this literature review. Those which are used within this study's needs analysis will be the focus of this section.

At the beginning of the development of needs analysis, through more informal analysis, only discrete language such as grammar and vocabulary were analyzed (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Due to Munby (1978), this was expanded to explore function and situation as well (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Munby (1978) first only focused on target needs; however this was criticized by R. West (1994), Jordan (1997) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) for not including the learners' lacks and wants, or program constraints, and for not using different sources to gather information. McDonough (1984) developed a model to place the student at the center, to include different sources of information, and to recognize that needs are ever-changing; however, this model does not take into account learning needs. Researchers subsequently focused on the target situation and learning situation needs (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) presented a model which includes necessities, lacks, and wants (i.e., target, present, and learning needs); however, this model misses important considerations. These considerations, namely means analysis, linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, and genre analysis, were included in the model presented by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). This model is expanded in Figure 2-2 to consider further developments, additions, and changes in terminology to the model (Basturkmen, 2010, 2013; Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Holliday & Cooke, 1982; Long, 2005). An even further development has been seen with the critical needs analysis approach, or *rights* analysis, and ethnographic approach, discussed further in Section 2.5.2 (Benesch, 1999; L. Flowerdew, 2013).



*Figure 2-2* Needs analysis process (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016, p.56)



Commonly, studies focus on the target situation and present situation analysis (Helmer, 2013). However, Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) prioritize the target situation analysis, present situation analysis, learning situation analysis, and means analysis. Corresponding with Figure 2-2, due to the scope of this study, the present needs analysis will focus on the target situation, present situation, and part of the learning situation (i.e., what learners' perceptions of needs and wants are). However, it is recognized that by focusing on all of the Irish Higher Education, with data coming from students who have already entered the academy, the results will be broad. In line with Academic Literacies, institutions that go on to develop a curriculum and assessment based on this study should gather institution-specific information on an ongoing basis to fill any gaps.

Importantly, many researchers emphasize the importance of using multiple tools (triangulation) and sources to conduct a needs analysis (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; De Chazal, 2014; Tait, 1999), something which is done in this study and discussed further in the methodology section. Additionally, a needs analysis is seen as an ongoing process which requires iterations as needs and perceptions of these needs change both throughout the course, and from course year to course year (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; De Chazal, 2014; Oanh, 2007; Robinson, 1991). Formal methods of assessing needs include interviews, questionnaires, placement tests, learner journals, and evaluation of facilities, to name a few (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; J. D. Brown, 2009; Bruce, 2015; Jordan, 1997; Long, 2005; Oanh, 2007). Bocanegra-Valle (2016) mentions in her review of EAP needs analysis that studies involving a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments are rare, a gap which this study aims to fill.

### **2.5.2 Rights analysis**

However, as with the mainstream EAP pedagogical approaches discussed in Section 2.4.1, a traditional needs analysis approach can replicate and accommodate institutional power structures (Helmer, 2013). This can place EAP programs in an isolated and marginalized position that subordinately serve institutional and external departmental demands, often without direct oversight or proper support or resources (Chun, 2009, 2015; Helmer, 2013; Le Ha, 2009; Pennycook, 1997). Furthermore, following a traditional needs analysis structure can place students in a deficit system where their knowledge is described as having “gaps” (Belcher, 2006; Muñoz, 2009). This deficit view can often miss the core causes which contribute to poor academic performance, and further places the blame for this performance on the student as solely their responsibility to fix without taking into consideration the larger context such as power, culture, and marginalization (Benesch,

1996; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Swartz, 2009). Others have pointed out that this deficit view also fails to draw upon the students' cultural and linguistic resources and the knowledge they bring with them to the academy (Bennett, 2003; Canagarajah, 2011b).

Therefore, considering the points above and drawing from Academic Literacies where Lillis and Tuck (2016) point out the convergence of Academic Literacies with *rights* analysis and critical EAP, this study is designed to employ a *rights* analysis rather than a needs analysis. Importantly, a *rights* analysis is conducted in a similar way to a needs analysis; however it includes critical reflection (Benesch, 2001). Benesch (1996) states that the term *rights* is used rather than *needs* as *needs* tends to imply that institutional demands are conditions and expectations which are equal with student desires and which enhance the students' learning, something that is in fact often contrary to the truth. Between budget cuts, larger class sizes, and decontextualized assessment with little guidance, institutional demands may actually be a detriment to student learning, and yet students are expected to meet these demands or are at risk of being labeled as deficient (Benesch, 1996, 2001).

As with a needs analysis, a *rights* analysis investigates linguistic and cognitive challenges. However, a *rights* analysis then encourages researchers, practitioners, and students to question the requirements rather than passively accept them in order to find ways in which to build healthy communities based on participation (Benesch, 2001). A *rights* analysis, then, highlights these unequal power relations and conditions to build on the strengths and knowledge of the students to reveal transformative opportunities where students might increase their voice in learning, balance the level of power, and assert their views (Benesch, 1999; Bennett, 2003; Canagarajah, 2001; Helmer, 2013). A *rights* analysis seeks to discover how students can better engage with the institution and expectations in their courses (Benesch, 1999). As seen with Academic Literacies and theoretical underpinnings of this study, a *rights* analysis sees the classroom as a site of struggle where students can actively participate, engage, voice concerns, and navigate and negotiate the academy (Benesch, 1999). Often, faculty may also be subjected to and oppose this inequality of power, as seen in Benesch (1996). Despite this seemingly overt challenge to institutional hierarchy, Benesch (1996, 2001) does note the importance of a three-level approach to courses based on the *rights* assessment:

- Supporting students to succeed in and navigate the requirements and expectations of an institution
- Supporting students in challenging those requirements and expectations
- Supporting the students in developing social awareness and action relating to the context outside of the institution

Importantly, this is in line with the approach taken by Academic Literacies where navigation is the focus rather than overt resistance (Lillis & Tuck, 2016).

Based on the exploration of literature above, this study follows Bocanegra-Valle (2016) in designing and conducting the needs analysis and then employs critical reflection while recognizing the dialectical relationship between needs and rights. Henceforth, *rights* analysis will be referred to as a needs analysis for consistency. Additionally, this study recognizes the need for on-going iterations of needs analysis to improve and design the pre-sessional EAP course as no needs assessment is exhaustive (Belcher, 2006).

## **2.6 Factors influencing academic success of international students in higher education**

This chapter has thus far explored internationalization, the types and need for EAP programs in Ireland, pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings of the study, and the role of needs analysis. This section focuses on the overarching themes from previous studies which explore challenges, strengths, and expectations of international students and faculty.

### **2.6.1 Linguistic factors**

Previous studies focus on literacy and productive skills (i.e., writing and speaking) as important skills in academia (Andrade, 2006; L.-S. Huang, 2010; Jabeen et al., 2019). In terms of challenges, studies have found that students are generally confident in their abilities (Caplan & Stevens, 2017; L.-S. Huang, 2010; Mamiseishvili, 2012). However, Kamasak et al. (2021) found a more neutral self-assessment of students' abilities in English. Despite confidence in their abilities, past research tends to focus on the challenges of international students or students undertaking English medium instruction. While this study focuses on international students in a country where English is an official language, English medium instruction literature in other contexts is also relevant as both focus on content instruction through English (Pecorari & Malmström, 2018).

Most literature found that academic writing is a main difficulty (Andrade, 2006, 2010; Breeze & Dafouz, 2017; Campbell & Li, 2008; Cheng, Myles, & Curtis, 2004; Evans & Green, 2007; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Kamasak et al., 2021; K. Lee & Lee, 2018; Phakiti & Li, 2011; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014; Zhu & Flaitz, 2005). Others who do not fully focus on writing as the main difficulty focus on the other three main skills

(reading, speaking, and/or listening), with the focus on either productive skills (writing and speaking in academic contexts) or on literacy (reading and writing in academic contexts) (Aizawa, Rose, Thompson, & Curle, 2020; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Evans & Green, 2007; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Gebhard, 2012; Kamasak et al., 2021; Phakiti, Hirsh, & Woodrow, 2013). Only a few studies focus on grammar and pronunciation (Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Evans & Green, 2007; L. Flowerdew, 2013), while vocabulary, often academic vocabulary, was identified as a main challenge (Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Curle, Yuksel, Soruc, & Altay, 2020; Evans & Green, 2007; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Kamasak et al., 2021). Further, general English language proficiency or general communication has been identified as a source of struggle for international students (Adisa et al., 2019; Banjong, 2015; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Eslami, 2010; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Smith, 2016; Young, Sercombe, Sachdev, Naeb, & Schartner, 2013; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014), while others found that general English proficiency does not impact academic success or that other factors such as knowledge of academic language and convention are more important (Campbell & Li, 2008; Curle et al., 2020; Kamasak et al., 2021; Terraschke & Wahid, 2011).

### **2.6.2 Integration and social life**

Many studies have pointed to social integration as being a challenge, yet important for academic success for international students (Andrade, 2006; Banjong, 2015; Campbell & Li, 2008; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Clarke et al., 2018; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Finley, 2018; Finn & Darmody, 2017; Gebhard, 2012; Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011; Jabeen et al., 2019; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Newsome & Cooper, 2016; Scally & Jiang, 2020; Sheridan, 2011; Smith, 2016; Young et al., 2013; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014). In contrast, Jabeen et al. (2019) state in their literature review that there is literature which shows that students who socially integrate often achieve lower academic outcomes due to social activities taking away time from studying. The majority of literature cited above, however, reveal that isolation, loneliness, and lack of social support can lead to depression and stress, which negatively affects students' academic success; this highlights the need for successful integration and social life for academic success. Many of the above studies focus on culture shock and difficulties integrating into a new host culture, with studies focusing on and analyzing various stages of integration and exploring issues of loneliness, homesickness, and integration with English L1 students. In addition, other research has identified financial difficulties, housing, and working alongside studying as barriers to academic success and satisfaction with their time abroad (Banjong, 2015; L. Brown & Holloway, 2008; Clarke et

al., 2018; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Finn & Darmody, 2017; Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2010; Jabeen et al., 2019; Newsome & Cooper, 2016; Nguyen, 2013; O'Reilly, Hickey, & Ryan, 2013; Ramia, Marginson, & Swain, 2013; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008; Sheridan, 2011; Smith, 2016).

Some literature has shown students have anxiety and shyness due to self-perceived limitations, loneliness, and homesickness, and that negative feelings such as anxiety and stress can have a negative effect on academic success (Andrade, 2006; Banjong, 2015; Cheng & Fox, 2008; Fox, Cheng, & Zumbo, 2014; Gebhard, 2012; Jabeen et al., 2019; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Smith, 2016). Aspects such as integration and social life, as discussed in the previous paragraph, may lead to these negative feelings, and therefore may affect students' academic success. However, past studies have found that motivation, self-efficacy, empathy, confidence, determination, and open-mindedness are also important factors which promote academic success for international students (Aizawa et al., 2020; Andrade, 2006; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Phakiti & Li, 2011; Smith, 2016; Tang, Collier, & Witt, 2017; Thompson, Aizawa, Curle, & Rose, 2019; Young et al., 2013). Both negative feelings due to stressors or challenges, and positive internal factors which may help students succeed bring an internal and emotional aspect to international students' success.

### **2.6.3 Cultural factors**

Studies on international students in Kachru's inner circle countries tend to point to cultural differences as reasons for unintentional plagiarism, classroom behavior, etc. (Andrade, 2006, 2010; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Fatemi & Saito, 2020; Nguyen, 2013; O'Reilly et al., 2013; Smith, 2016). In addition, international students are said to struggle with a new discipline, institutional, academic and host country culture (Adisa et al., 2019; Campbell & Li, 2008; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Gebhard, 2012; Jabeen et al., 2019; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Roy, 2013; Scally & Jiang, 2020; Sheridan, 2011; Smith, 2016; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014). However, international students do not always view their culture as problematic (Adisa et al., 2019; Campbell & Li, 2008; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Jabeen et al., 2019; Scally & Jiang, 2020; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014), and more recent studies advocate for institutions to adapt culturally to international students rather than placing the onus on students to adapt to a new culture as forcing students to adapt is not effective (Campbell & Li, 2008; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Gebhard, 2012; Y. Huang, 2012; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; O'Reilly et al., 2013; Y. Zhou, Topping, & Jindal-Snape, 2011).

#### **2.6.4 Institutional factors**

Institutionally, student supports which are culturally responsive and easily accessible have a significantly positive correlation with academic success (Andrade, 2006; Banjong, 2015; Gebhard, 2012; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010; Smith, 2016; Young et al., 2013).

However, international students largely identify existing services as problematic as they are unsure of the services available to them, found the services to be inadequate, or not culturally responsive (Campbell & Li, 2008; Clarke et al., 2018; Scally & Jiang, 2020; Sheridan, 2011; Smith, 2016; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014).

Further, research points to a gap between the understanding of expectations of students and faculty, despite handbooks, rubrics, and criteria being disseminated (Campbell & Li, 2008; Finley, 2018; Hennebry, Lo, & Macaro, 2012; L.-S. Huang, 2010; C. Jones, Turner, & Street, 1999a, 1999b; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Matshedisho, 2020; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Pedagogically, international students often feel that faculty could be more responsive to international students in their classroom through a variety of strategies such as speaking slowly, writing keywords on the blackboard, and showing empathy (Andrade, 2006; Nguyen, 2013; Roy, 2013). Research suggests that while training in Academic Literacies and internationalization strategies would be beneficial for faculty to address these student concerns, faculty are equivocal about engaging in such training (Andrade, 2010; Haan, Gallagher, & Varandani, 2017; Schneider & Jin, 2020).

#### **2.6.5 Summary**

Research has shown that international students face linguistic, cultural, social, emotional, and structural (institutional) challenges, which are often intertwined. This study aims to explore the needs, challenges, and strengths of international students in Ireland as context is important when conducting a needs analysis. However, having an overview of challenges, strengths, and needs identified in past literature may help in the analysis by providing salient themes which may be a basis for comparison.

In terms of gaps, it appears that studies analyzing international students' challenges and needs from faculty perspectives are sparse (Andrade, 2010; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Eslami, 2010; Hennebry et al., 2012; L.-S. Huang, 2010, 2013; Smith, 2016; Zhu & Flaitz, 2005). Further, Clarke et al. (2018), Farrelly and Murphy (2018), Sheridan (2011), and Finn and Darmody (2017) are the only Irish-based studies exploring the needs of international students or assessing students' satisfaction with their studies. These studies found a general level of satisfaction amongst international students in Ireland, though they still call for a more holistic response to supporting international students. However, none of these studies focused on implications for EAP programs. While some other studies on

international students have been conducted in Ireland, some focus on short-term (i.e., exchange or study abroad) students rather than full-time students (O'Reilly, Ryan, & Hickey, 2010) and solely American international students (O'Reilly, Hickey, & Ryan, 2015), which are not explicitly relevant to this study. Irish-based EAP studies that exist explore writing instruction at six academic writing centers (McClay, 2017), investigate spoken academic discourse through corpora (Farr, 2003), develop individual guidebooks with Irish institutions as cases or institutional-specific program evaluations focusing on writing centers (Cleary & Ide, 2015; Farrell et al., 2015; Kelly & Harding, 2016; O'Sullivan et al., 2017; Tighe-Mooney & Farrell, 2015), focus on the writing needs of Irish higher education students (Cleary et al., 2009; Farrell & Tighe-Mooney, 2013), and describe the application of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or small-scale pedagogical/assessment interventions in EAP modules (Carson, 2016, 2017; Carson & Murphy, 2012). Only two Irish-based studies exist from the perspective of faculty: Sheridan (2011) who conducted surveys with faculty, and Clarke and Yang (2021) who explored faculty responses to internationalization.

Such a paucity of research on international students in Ireland constitutes a clear gap in the field. In addition, currently there are no Irish-based studies on international students which have implications for EAP programs, let alone implications for pre-sessional EAP programs<sup>3</sup>. With the general lack of studies which include both faculty and student perspectives, this study is the first in Ireland which engages faculty through interviews. It is this niche that this study fills; a needs analysis of international students in Ireland from the perspective of both students and faculty with implications explicitly made for pre-sessional EAP programs.

## **2.7 Caveats**

This section briefly explores some caveats of this study. This contextualizes the study while recognizing important influences and possible considerations which may be of interest to further research. However, with the scope of this study, it is not possible to explore these areas in detail, yet are important to recognize and acknowledge. First, the development of pre-sessional EAP programs in the UK will be explored to acknowledge the influence of the UK educational system on Irish education, along with how Irish pre-sessional EAP programs can learn from the UK's past. Then, the role of EAP professional

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing this study, two other PhD students in Trinity College Dublin are working on or have recently submitted a PhD conducting a needs analysis of international students in Ireland from the students' perspective, relating their findings to foundation and in-sessional EAP programs. No published studies explicitly informing EAP programs with a needs analysis have been conducted in Ireland at the time of writing this study. Further, no qualitative studies from the faculty perspective in Ireland have been conducted.

associations and their possible influence on pre-sessional EAP programs will be discussed. Finally, the role of the EAP practitioner will be explored as no program can exist without those who deliver such programs.

### **2.7.1 Pre-sessional EAP programs in the UK**

Pre-sessional EAP programs first began in the UK as ad-hoc solutions to address international students' language needs (Jordan, 2002). The first EAP programs were traced to the 1960's, with Birmingham University developing a pre-sessional EAP course and diagnostic assessment for international students in 1971 (Jordan, 2002). Manchester University also developed a small 6-week summer course for Latin-American students in 1968, subsequently leading to full-time pre-sessional EAP courses being offered by 1972 (Jordan, 2002). Two other universities, Leeds University and Newcastle University, were likewise running similar ad-hoc programs (Jordan, 2002). Pre-sessional EAP programs have changed drastically throughout the years. Their materials, focus (e.g. discrete language or vocabulary, academic culture, etc.), and approaches (e.g. study skills, academic literacies, etc.) have developed as the number of international students, and therefore the need for EAP, has grown (Jordan, 2002).

However, EAP programs first developed from a need to bolster academic success of international students typically from former British colonies (Jordan, 2004). The first ESP/EAP programs were first financially supported by British government agencies as aid projects, and led to English language teaching (and teacher training) being a 'British export' where EAP developed in tandem with the marketization of education (Jordan, 2004). EAP programs and their departments still lay on the margins of universities as they tend to be critiqued as being an economic and intellectual short-cut for universities and international students (Jordan, 2004). Further, the grassroots and ad-hoc development of pre-sessional EAP programs in the UK led to EAP being a 'poor relation' in academia, and the "ad hoc, small-scale, quick fix attitude typified the modest beginnings of EAP teaching still pertains" (Hamp-Lyons, 2011, p. 93).

Pre-sessional EAP programs are now sometimes seen as a quick fix for complex language issues, providing universities with "maximum throughput of students with minimum attainment levels in the language in the shortest possible time" (Jordan, 2004, p. 97). As time has passed in the UK, more and more regulations are being imposed by the UK government, often influenced by standardized exams such as IELTS, which may shift the focus of pre-sessional EAP programs to mimic standardized exams, or place them in a position of playing border control for international students (Harding, Brunfaut, & Unger, 2020; Pearson, 2021). While the use of Secure English Language Tests (SELT) are a



requirement for UK pre-sessional EAP programs, the autonomy to select such tests, or to create their own, possibly allows for linguistically underprepared students to be admitted to universities through pre-sessional EAP programs (Pearson, 2021). Further, as universities arguably see students as consumers, and target increasing international student recruitment as a way to increase profits, the role of EAP programs has shifted to service those students who pay high fees (Riddle, 2020). Therefore, EAP courses such as pre-sessional EAP courses play an instrumental role in creating a profit for universities due to the high fees associated with pre-sessional EAP programs, but these courses are also typically under-resourced and face cost-cutting measures from the universities (Marginson, 2010). This, in turn, reduces the academic standing of pre-sessional EAP courses, and has led to increased privatization and outsourcing of such programs (Ball, 2007; Fulcher, 2009).

Irish EAP programs have likewise developed in an ad-hoc, grassroots manner. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 and 1.2 and Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1, these programs developed much later than the UK programs as the first writing center in Ireland was developed in 2007. While Ireland does not yet heavily regulate pre-sessional EAP programs, many EAP practitioners, managers, materials, and trends in Ireland are imported from or influenced by the UK. Therefore, Irish EAP provision is also on the margin of the academy, with increasing privatization and outsourcing along with viewing pre-sessional EAP programs as a money-maker for universities. However, as Irish EAP provision is much younger and less regulated, there is a chance to change this direction. Carefully analyzing and tracing the history of EAP provision in the UK can help Irish-based programs as they may be able to learn from both the weaknesses and strengths of UK EAP provision. Irish EAP programs have the opportunity to develop with a model to guide them, both positively and negatively, as opposed to beginning from scratch. There is the opportunity to incorporate the positive aspects of UK-based EAP provision, and to resist the negative aspects. While this study does recognize the immense influence of UK programs on Irish-based EAP provision, this is not the focus of the study and an in-depth analysis will not be discussed. However, references to UK programs or influences may be made as appropriate throughout the discussion and analysis within this study.

### **2.7.2 Role of EAP professional associations**

Due to the ad-hoc nature of EAP programs, practitioners from Birmingham University, Manchester University, Leeds University, and Newcastle University felt that they were working in isolation (Jordan, 2002). As a remedy to this, an informal meeting was arranged at Birmingham University in 1972 to share materials, discuss their difficulties, and share approaches to the programs (Jordan, 2002). From this meeting, it was agreed that more

informal, small meetings would be arranged each year as a venue for practitioners to support one another (Jordan, 2002). The emphasis was originally on materials, and the group intended to keep the meetings small to promote close relationships and to keep administrative work to a minimum (Jordan, 2002). This group became known as SELMOUS (Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students) (Jordan, 2002). SELMOUS continued to hold meetings on important topics, including pre-sessional EAP programs, research projects, and English tests and went on to hold their first conference in conjunction with BAAL in 1975 (Jordan, 2002). Once SELMOUS changed its name to BALEAP in 1989, the group broadened its interests to include all aspects of language provision and expanded their membership (Jordan, 2002).

Since its inception, BALEAP has contributed to EAP in many ways. *Professional Issues Meetings* (PIMs) were started in the 1990's to gather professionals for one-day symposia focused on special topics of interest (Ding & Bruce, 2017). They also began holding biennial conferences in 1975, with an EAP academic journal called *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* (JEAP) established in 2002 (Ding & Bruce, 2017). Beyond these ways of gathering professionals to share ideas, curricula, materials, research, and to build community, BALEAP has played a role in shaping 'professionalism' and policy. In 2008, BALEAP developed a framework which outlines teacher competencies called the *Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes* (CFTEAP) (BALEAP, 2008). This framework focuses on academic practice, EAP students, curriculum development, and program implementation (BALEAP, 2008). Further, in 2014, BALEAP launched a teacher accreditation scheme based on CFTEAP and a program accreditation scheme (Ding, 2019; Ding & Bruce, 2017). They further influence policymaking of institutions, in particular as to which language assessments are recommended and accepted for university entrance (Howell et al., 2020).

Membership of BALEAP is still not required for practitioners to teach or work in EAP, which limits its influence (Ding & Bruce, 2017). They are not a regulatory power, do not oversee training or mandatory accreditation in ways that other professional associations do (e.g. for speech and language therapy practitioners), and do not partake in politics or political advocacy (Ding & Bruce, 2017). Further, BALEAP and its schemes have been criticized for being UK-centric, and promoting the reproduction and assimilating to the 'norm' of discrete skills teaching and 'normative' practice (Ding & Campion, 2016).

At large, professional EAP organizations have not spread around the world (Hamp-Lyons, 2011). Some countries (e.g. Spain and Brazil) gather EAP professionals, and other countries (e.g. Malaysia) host EAP interests in ESP organizations (Hamp-Lyons, 2011). In

Ireland, *EAP in Ireland* ([www. https://eapireland.wordpress.com/](https://eapireland.wordpress.com/)) was formed by Julie Butters and Jessica Garska (the author of this study) in 2017 much in the same informal, grass-roots route that SELMOUS/BALEAP was formed. *EAP in Ireland* hosted numerous workshops, meetings, and two conferences before taking a hiatus in 2021. While this organization is in a hiatus, this was the first professional organization to be formed in Ireland for EAP and served the purpose of developing community between once isolated institutions and professionals. When *EAP in Ireland* re-starts, it has the potential to act as an influencer in EAP teacher development, curricula, policy, and accreditation in much the same way BALEAP does in the UK. *EAP in Ireland* can draw upon the wealth of knowledge contained within BALEAP and learn from both their successes and failures to shape the EAP field in Ireland. Particularly, this organization could influence policies on program accreditation and monitoring, influence the types of accepted entrance exams, promote and create teacher training and accreditation, and lobby for EAP interests within their institution and the government. However, the in-depth exploration of professional organizations' influence on pre-sessional EAP programs is beyond the scope of this study.

### **2.7.3 Role of the EAP practitioner**

EAP units often seek teachers who have a general English background (Campion, 2016). In addition, there is no common or formal qualification required in order to begin teaching EAP (Ding & Campion, 2016). A range of qualifications are held by EAP practitioners, commonly including general English qualifications such as the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) and the Trinity Certificate in TESOL (Ding & Campion, 2016). Still other EAP teachers may hold diplomas or Masters degrees in TESOL, ELT, or Applied linguistics; some may even have PhDs in such non-EAP specific courses (Ding & Campion, 2016). While these courses may have some modules on EAP (e.g. the Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (DELTA) and some Masters courses have specific modules or topics within modules which touch upon EAP), it is much less common to be offered, or to take, EAP-specific qualifications (Ding & Campion, 2016). However, in recent years some EAP-specific qualifications have been developed in the UK such as the Masters in TEAP (Teaching English for Academic Purposes), postgraduate certificates in TEAP, and some short courses (see Ding & Campion, 2016 for a list of courses offered in 2016). While BALEAP, in their CFTEAP discussed above, list types of qualifications acceptable for EAP practitioners, they do not include EAP-specific qualifications (Ding & Campion, 2016). Further, job advertisements continue to require generic qualifications for EAP positions (Ding & Campion, 2016). These EAP-specific courses, however, still face criticism for the pragmatic nature of their

courses and that it is not clear at what career stage they are meant to be taken – that is, whether they are intended to be pre-experience or post-experience courses (Ding & Campion, 2016). Further, teachers from a general English background still face stigma as they are often seen as not prepared to teach EAP due to the specialized content in EAP; general English teachers are often seen as not having the proper knowledge, skills or disposition to make the transition (Campion, 2016; Hamp-Lyons, 2001).

Beyond formal qualifications, EAP teacher development tends to be ad-hoc once they enter EAP teaching posts, despite teachers feeling that their development is a long-term process (Campion, 2016; Ding & Campion, 2016). Depending on the context and environment that EAP practitioners find themselves in, there may be informal routes of development such as mentoring, workshops, and encouraged scholarship (Ding & Campion, 2016). However, in the opposite environment, practitioners may find themselves isolated and without professional development besides any reading or scholarship they choose to do on their own time (Ding & Campion, 2016). Therefore, the location of the EAP unit affects the teaching provided as the amount of resources, teaching loads, and time or encouragement for scholarship varies greatly between contexts (Ding & Bruce, 2017; Hadley, 2015; Marginson, 2010). Most opportunities for development emerge from organizations (Ding & Campion, 2016), as discussed in relation to BALEAP in the section above.

The fact that universities see EAP courses as a revenue stream negatively affects how EAP professionals develop and the conditions in which they work (Ding, 2019). These pressures increase teaching load, administrative load, and may reduce chances or encouragement to engage in scholarship (Blythe, 2021; Ding, 2019). Further, the location of EAP support units in the university tends to be separated from academic departments, and EAP professionals are hired as teaching-only or support staff rather than as academics (Ding, 2019). This may lead to limited opportunities to influence the wider institution (Hyland, 2018), and increases precarity and hourly-paid positions rather than full-time, permanent contracts (Ding, 2019). In terms of pre-sessional EAP programs, this is especially apparent where teachers commonly only work one pre-sessional EAP program with a university before needing to find work elsewhere due to the type of contract being offered; this means that pre-sessional EAP programs have high turnover and low retention rates (Blythe, 2021). This high turnover and low retention may affect the continuity and quality of a program as new teachers must be trained each summer, sometimes with little to no experience with the pre-sessional EAP program that they must deliver. With socialization of practitioners being ad-hoc and post-hoc, and most often in-situ, there is the

danger that developmental opportunities will become even more scarce than they already are and that the burden of such development will be placed on the practitioner with no institutional support (Ding, 2019). A further, more in-depth discussion of practitioner socialization and identity can be found in Ding (2019) and Ding and Bruce (2017).

While it was originally intended that this study would involve EAP practitioners through the implementation of a curriculum, it was beyond the scope of this thesis due to limitations and changes discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3; Section 3.11.1). However, this study still recognizes the importance of the development and identity of practitioners, along with the environment and conditions in which they work, on pre-sessional EAP programs. Without well supported practitioners who receive adequate developmental opportunities, it is unlikely that a program will be as impactful or well-delivered as it might be. Therefore, suggestions made within this study are made with the knowledge that further studies and implementation of any suggestions will need to be made in tandem with a focus on the practitioner and their working conditions.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed internationalization in higher education to show how many institutions, including Irish institutions, are criticized for taking an instrumentalist approach to internationalization. A discussion of Ireland's previous international education strategy established the study's focus on Irish higher education, specifically preparation for Irish higher education. The chapter then discussed different types of EAP programs, justifying the need for a focus on pre-sessional EAP programs as research on the area is lacking. Further, critiques of IELTS and other standardized exams and the debate concerning general and discipline specific EAP programs were discussed.

From there, the chapter turned to pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings to discuss how Academic Literacies is the named theory of this thesis, with translanguaging and Global Englishes being used as two supporting theories. Justification for this was provided by comparing the three theories, and definitions for power, identity, and culture were given.

This chapter then discussed the role of needs analysis before turning to previous studies which have conducted needs analyses of English-medium higher education. Salient factors which influence academic success were discussed, namely linguistic, cultural, social, emotional, and structural (institutional) challenges. Finally, caveats were presented to acknowledge the influence and history of UK pre-sessional EAP programs, and the importance of professional organizations and EAP practitioners. The next chapter presents the methods employed in the study.

### 3 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed during the present study. I first discuss the objectives of the study followed by a discussion of the research paradigms and overall design of the study. Then, the population and research context along with ethical considerations are explored. After, an overview of the data collection, instruments, and detailed design considerations is presented. Following this, the data collection timeline is given. From there, procedure and sampling are discussed. Finally, data analysis and changes from the original research plan are addressed.

#### 3.2 Objectives of this study

This study aims to investigate how pre-sessional EAP programs can be better designed to meet the needs of international students studying in Irish third level education through a comprehensive needs-analysis of third level education with implications made for pre-sessional EAP programs. The main research questions are:

1. Do international students feel overall positively or negatively towards their educational experiences in Irish higher education?
2. What do international students and faculty feel that international students need for academic success, and what do they struggle with and succeed in?
  - a. What level of agreement do faculty and international students have with respect to the issues raised in the foregoing research question?
3. What implications do the answers to the above research questions have for Irish pre-sessional EAP programs?

#### 3.3 Research paradigms

Approaches to research methods have been the subject of debate in the past decades, evolving from aligning with one paradigm to a typically mixed-methods approach (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Dörnyei, 2007). This section briefly explores these paradigms in the form of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

##### 3.3.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods

A quantitative approach, aligning with the positivism paradigm, typically expresses data through statistical methods which is then analyzed to express law-like generalizations that have statistical significance (Cohen et al., 2011). This approach focuses on proving or disproving a hypothesis or quantifying a phenomenon within a population (Cohen et al., 2011). Quantitative studies seek large sample sizes and standardized procedures which in turn boasts validity, methodological rigor, and reproducibility (Cohen et al., 2011).

However, this approach does not account for individuality, intention, inner experience, and other complexities of human behavior (Cohen et al., 2011). Moreover, underlying processes and the “why” of the occurring phenomenon are rarely explored within quantitative data analysis (Dörnyei, 2007).

To express complexity, and to challenge the hegemony of quantitative studies, an anti-positivism paradigm through qualitative research emerged (Cohen et al., 2011). Anti-positivists see people as creative, situations as fluid, and both people and situations as unique (Cohen et al., 2011). They therefore use a qualitative approach to allow for detailed, rich data and high levels of individual expression from participants (Cohen et al., 2011). Data within qualitative research is typically non-numerical, comes from a small sample size, and is analyzed through non-statistical methods such as discourse analysis (Dörnyei, 2007). Dörnyei (2007) includes that since processes in applied linguistics which are commonly studied, such as in this study, are dynamic, qualitative analysis allows for the exploration of patterns. However, this approach is subjective in nature, lacks methodological rigor, and results in low generalizability due to small sample sizes (Dörnyei, 2007).

### **3.3.2 Mixed methods**

Recently, the trend has been to mix qualitative and quantitative data, resulting in mixed-methodology, or a pragmatist approach (Dörnyei, 2007). This combines the strengths of both methods in explaining phenomena and balances the limitations of these approaches. Quantitative data is used to increase the generalizability, validity, and reliability of the study (Dörnyei, 2007). Qualitative data is then used to provide rich, detailed data to account for the uniqueness of individuals and complexity of situations to allow for a multi-level analysis of complex phenomena (Dörnyei, 2007). The purpose of mixing methods is two-fold: one to achieve a deeper understanding of the subject at hand, and the other to verify findings (Dörnyei, 2007).

As this study seeks to both achieve a deeper understanding and to verify findings, and therefore is using mixed methods, the design of such studies must be explored. Authors such as Dörnyei (2007) and Creswell (2014) outline typical functions and designs of mixed-methods studies (e.g., the complementary function, development function, the initiation function, and the expansion function) and designs of mixed-methods studies (e.g., convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, transformative mixed methods, embedded mixed methods, and multiphase mixed methods). This study uses mixed methods in a complementary function in a convergent parallel design to gain a fuller picture of the research questions, using triangulation in both research participants

and data collection tools to further verify findings. This means that this study uses quantitative and qualitative data collection tools at the same time to complement, merge, and compare findings to answer the research questions more fully.

### **3.4 Population and research context overview**

Within this study, academic staff and international students enrolled in Irish higher education institutions were the sample population. There are 24 third level institutions which report to the HEA in Ireland, including universities, colleges, and institutes of technology (Higher Education Authority, 2018), all of which were contacted to participate in the needs analysis. A number of other institutions which are independent and privately funded were additionally contacted (e.g., Griffith College); importantly, these institutions are often qualified to offer degrees as accredited by the QQI, yet not always included in HEA statistics (Citizens Information, 2020). During the data collection phase of this study, Dublin Institute of Technology merged with a number of other institutes to form the Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin). I contacted all of the institutes of technology, including those who merged into TU Dublin, separately. A full list of institutions contacted follows:

- Limerick Institute of Technology
- Cork Institute of Technology
- University of Limerick
- University College Cork
- NUI Maynooth
- Griffith College (Dublin, Cork, and Limerick)
- NUI Galway
- University College Dublin
- Dublin City University
- Trinity College Dublin
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- National College of Art and Design
- Waterford Institute of Technology
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- The Institute of Technology Tralee
- The Institute of Technology Tallaght
- The Institute of Technology Carlow
- The Institute of Technology Sligo



- Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
- Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology
- Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Dublin Institute of Technology
- Athlone Institute of Technology
- Independent College of Dublin
- National College of Ireland
- Galway Business School
- Shannon College
- Dublin Business College
- Saint Nicholas Montessori College of Ireland
- CCT College Dublin
- ICD Business School
- American College Dublin
- BIMM Dublin
- Carlow College
- Dorset College
- Monaghan Institute
- Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences
- Marino Institute of Education
- St. Patrick's College Maynooth
- St. John's College
- Hibernia College
- Cavan Institute
- St. Angela's (NUI Galway)
- Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
- Cork College of Commerce
- Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board
- Liberties College; City of Dublin Education and Training Board
- Ballyfermot College of Further Education; City of Dublin Education and Training Board
- IBAT College Dublin
- Institute of Public Administration (UCD)

- Mary Immaculate College (UL)
- Royal Irish Academy of Music

In 2017/2018, within HEA institutions, there were 9,686 academic staff in higher education institutions in Ireland (Higher Education Authority, 2018). Again within the HEA institutions, 30,420 international students studied in 2017/2018 (Higher Education Authority, 2018). Unfortunately, this data may drastically under-represent the number of both academic staff in Ireland and, most importantly, international students studying in Irish third level education due to private institutions not associated with the HEA who are not included in HEA reports (Higher Education Authority, 2018). Further, home students with diverse linguistic backgrounds are also excluded from these figures. As discussed in the introduction (Chapter 1), up-to-date statistics could not be found for after 2018.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

In conducting research within education, ethical considerations are important when planning and conducting the study. Cohen et al. (2011) outlines the following areas that researchers should consider when planning their study:

- Informed consent
- Access to the place of research
- Ethics in social research
- Ethical debates (e.g., absolutist and relativist ethics)
- Problems such as privacy and confidentiality
- Regulatory ethical frameworks and committees
- Personal practices of ethics
- Sponsored research
- Responsibilities to the research community

This study was approved in full by the ethics committee in the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences at Trinity College Dublin (Appendix A). Other institutions required separate ethics approval to access their populations. I completed these applications as required and the project was approved in full by the outside institutions. This section outlines how ethical considerations were taken within this application to address the relevant points as made in Cohen et al. (2011).

A gatekeeper was used for initial contact with participants. The gatekeepers explained and distributed the participant information leaflet along with the initial questionnaire either via e-mail or in-person where appropriate. The participant information leaflet outlined the purpose of the research, the involvement and time commitment of the participant if they chose to partake, the potential risks and benefits to the participant, and

contact information for me and my supervisor for further questions and information. The participant could then choose to complete the relevant online questionnaire which was kept confidential on an encrypted password protected computer. Informed consent was obtained for the questionnaire through a yes/no question indicating consent.

The questionnaire itself did not ask any identifying information such as names or student/faculty ID, however an optional section for filling in their e-mail address to indicate interest in a follow-up interview, along with the participant leaflet information for the interview, was included. These e-mails were immediately deleted from the questionnaire after I contacted the participant for the interview to ensure confidentiality.

At the interview, informed consent was obtained from each participant after explaining all details, including possible risks and benefits, and before conducting the interview or collecting data such as standardized test scores. It was made clear to all participants that the study is completely voluntary, and that they may provide as much or as little information as they want or may withdraw at any time without an explanation or repercussions. It was also emphasized that participation in the study will have no impact on any modules or scores. A copy of a signed informed consent form was given to each participant for their records, while the signed copy was kept for my records.

All data that includes identifying information, e.g., mentions of institutions, in interviews were immediately recoded in the research database to protect confidentiality. Further, all data collected was stored on an encrypted, password protected computer folder or, in case of hard copies, in a locked filing cabinet in the the Long Room Hub in Trinity College Dublin. Pseudonyms were chosen by each participant to use in publications.

### **3.6 Overview of data collection and instruments**

A brief overview of the data collection follows:

- (1) A needs analysis was conducted to explore the needs of international students in Irish third level education from the perspective of both students and faculty, along with exploring students' strengths, difficulties, and expectations. The instruments used are as follows:

- Student questionnaire (Appendix B)
- Student and faculty semi-structured interviews (Appendices C and D)

### **3.7 Instrument design considerations**

This section discusses the design considerations taken while constructing the instruments for this study. First, the background and definitions of questionnaires will be discussed along with the limitations of this instrument. Then, the background, definitions and application of interviews will be explored, and limitations of the interviews explained.

### 3.7.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire used for students were informed by a number of studies, whose tools were available either with the article or through IRIS: A digital repository of instruments and materials for research into second languages (Cai, 2013; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Ustunel & Kaplan, 2015; Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2009; Yates, 2011), information from relevant literature, and my experience as a practitioner to cover a range of strategies and domains typically associated with EAP courses. The questionnaire used in Evans and Morrison (2011) was subsequently validated by Kamasak et al. (2021), further strengthening the validity of my questionnaire which was influenced by the former. A faculty questionnaire was created and distributed, although due to low response rate (12 responses), the responses cannot be generalized, and is considered as invalid when extrapolating responses to a wider population. Therefore, the faculty questionnaire is not included in the results or discussion; further, a discussion of the design, procedures, and sampling for the faculty questionnaire is not included here.

Questions within questionnaires measure three types of information: factual, behavioral, and attitudinal (Dörnyei, 2007). Within this study, Table 3-1 shows the questions which fall into each category. The majority of the questionnaire falls within the attitudinal and behavioral.

**Table 3-1**  
*Questionnaire categories by question number*

Category	Question number
Factual	1-9
Behavioral	10-15, 17-22, 102-106, 115
Attitudinal	16, 24-101, 107-114, 116

Along with these types of information, questions come in two typical formats: closed-ended and open-ended questions using formats that includes the following (Dörnyei, 2007): Likert scale, semantic differential scale, numerical rating scale, true-false items, multiple-choice items, rank order items. Within this study, Likert scale, semantic differential scale, true-false items, and multiple-choice items were used for various purposes (Table 3-2). Semantic differential formatting was used to evaluate the difficulty and importance of different tasks that international students commonly encounter in higher education while multiple choice were used to evaluate opinions and behaviors, and to collect demographic information.

**Table 3-2***Questionnaire closed-ended answer format by question number*

<b>Closed Answer Format</b>	<b>Question number</b>
Likert scale	15, 23
Semantic Differential	24-61, 63-100
True-false items	10, 14
Multiple-choice items	2-3, 5-6, 8, 17-22

Open-ended questions, then, follow typical formats including specific open questions, clarification questions, sentence completion, short-answer questions, branching questions (Dörnyei, 2007). In this study, the majority of the open-ended questions were for clarification or short answer to gain more information and richer data (Table 3-3).

**Table 3-3***Questionnaire open-ended answer format by question number*

<b>Open Answer Format</b>	<b>Question number</b>
Specific	1, 4, 9
Clarification	3, 5
Short answer	62, 101-111, 113-116
Branching	11-13, 15, 112

While designing the questionnaire, I carefully considered wording, format, sequencing, layout, and length as discussed by Dörnyei (2007). Notably, I broke-up large groups of questions with the same scale for readability purposes. Additionally, I ensured that the questionnaire would take no more than 30 minutes for the participants.

### **3.7.1.1 Limitations**

While questionnaires are an easy and quick way of obtaining large amounts of data, there are some limitations. An ill-constructed questionnaire may produce unreliable and invalid data, although by following the above considerations in this study along with piloting, this limitation is avoidable (Dörnyei, 2007). The single greatest limitation of questionnaires is the tendency to produce superficial and simple data which limits the richness of the results (Dörnyei, 2007). To fill this gap, follow-up interviews were introduced to provide rich and detailed data to complement and further investigate the results found in the questionnaires.

### **3.7.2 Interviews**

To gain a deeper understanding of the topics explored in the questionnaire, interviews were conducted. This qualitative data collection tool can have many purposes, but for this study they are intended to gather data related to the phenomenon at hand, to help establish and explore relationships, to validate, and to expand on information gathered through the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2011). Interviews have the benefit of conveying verbal and

non-verbal meaning while exploring complex, deep issues in a controlled, yet more spontaneous than a questionnaire, manner (Cohen et al., 2011). The interviews in this study were used to explore similar concepts as the questionnaire as well as to ask questions that were too complex to ask within the questionnaire.

To ensure rich data, it is recommended to hold three interviews with each participant with the first interview building rapport and the following two interviews to gain more in-depth, focused answers and clarification on previous answers (Dörnyei, 2007). However, due to the scope of the study, a single session interview was implemented to encourage a wide range of participants. Further, this study implemented a semi-structured type of interview which had pre-prepared questions to allow for comparability and standardization, but allowed for the freedom to ask other questions of interest brought up in the interview or to ask for elaboration to gather richer, more detailed information (Dörnyei, 2007).

The interviews in this study implemented thematic sections to organize the interviews (Table 3-4). While the themes often overlap (for example, “needs for academic success” are typically intertwined with “expectations, modules, and assessment” in the faculty interviews), these distinctions provide a roadmap and ensure that all essential topics are covered in the interviews.

**Table 3-4**  
*Thematic organization of interviews by number of questions*

Theme	Number of Questions	
	Student	Faculty
Expectations, modules, and assessment	11	10
Experiences with current entry and preparation tools	4	6
Advice for students and faculty	5	0
Experiences with international students	0	3

The interviews then followed the types of questions as stated by Patton (2005):

- Experiences and behaviors
- Opinions and values
- Feelings
- Knowledge
- Sensory information
- Background and demographics

This study leans towards asking questions about experiences, behaviors, and opinions (Table 3-5). Again, many of the questions overlap in their categorical type, especially those

that include probe questions. Questions about experiences and behaviors relate to modules and standardized testing. Questions on opinions and feeling were designed to evaluate or make suggestions regarding entry level tools and preparation. Additionally, knowledge questions were essential so I did not assume prior knowledge of pre-sessional EAP programs, academic support, or entry level tools. Probe questions within the interviews for this study often included questions to elicit elaboration or further feelings.

**Table 3-5***Categorical organization of interview questions by number of questions*

Question Type	Number of Questions	
	Student	Faculty
Experiences and behaviors	10	10
Opinions and values	14	11
Feelings	2	3
Knowledge	8	9
Background and demographics	1	1

### 3.7.2.1 Limitations

Interviews provide rich and detailed data, however, due to the small sample size, there is low generalizability (Dörnyei, 2007). In addition, issues such as the participants' level of comfort, interview bias, and the participants' tendency to be shy or verbose may affect the validity and quality of the results (Dörnyei, 2007). Further, since there is no anonymity, the participant may try to paint themselves in the best light possible, skewing the results (Dörnyei, 2007). The researcher needs good communication skills and to build rapport to help offset these limitations, although careful planning and wording coupled with triangulating the results with other data collection methods will increase the benefits of using interviews (Dörnyei, 2007). The main limitation of interviews is the fact that it is time-consuming, both in data collection and analyzing the results (Dörnyei, 2007).

### 3.8 Timeline of data collection

The research was conducted over a period of twenty months within the following time frames (Table 3-6):

**Table 3-6***Data collection timeline*

Instrument	Time Frame
Student questionnaire	February-December 2018
Student and faculty interviews	March 2018-June 2019

### **3.9 Procedures and sampling**

This subsection will first describe the procedure of piloting, where relevant, and implementation for each data collection tool. Then, sampling procedures and characteristics of the participants will be provided. With all tools, it should be noted that due to General Data Protection Regulation, and protection against research fatigue, there were issues with access to other departments and other institutions within Ireland. Many institutions and departments responded that access, either directly or indirectly, was not possible due to these two factors. Therefore, there is a strong leaning in the data towards participants from Institution 1 and Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS) students. It should also be noted that while English LX students within Ireland were the initial target population, many English L1 international students (e.g., students from India, Australia, and the United States of America) asked to participate in interviews, or participated in questionnaire, as they faced differences and difficulties within Ireland's higher education system. I decided to include these results to keep in line with the Academic Literacies stance of the research.

#### **3.9.1 Questionnaire**

Following Dörnyei (2007), after initial creation of the questionnaire in this study, there was the initial piloting where other researchers at the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching at Trinity College Dublin gave feedback on the items. This fixed technical issues such as question formatting, and resulted in the final version (Dörnyei, 2007).

Administration techniques can influence the number of completed responses, and so are essential to consider (Dörnyei, 2007). I contacted various organizations, e.g., Graduate Students Unions, Students Unions, the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching's administrator, international students' societies and Global Rooms or international offices, to ask that the questionnaire be distributed via their e-mail lists. As attitudes by authority and administration, respectable sponsorship, and communicating the purpose and significance of the questionnaire is important in influencing the response number (Dörnyei, 2007), I drafted an e-mail to include all essential information that the administration could then e-mail the students with. In terms of faculty, the Director of the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching at Trinity College Dublin and other institutions' respective research offices or Deans and departmental Executive Officers contacted faculty on my behalf.

When sampling for questionnaires, there are two general types of sampling: probability and non-probability (purposive). Probability sampling aims to randomly sample from the wider population to ensure representativeness, however, non-probability sampling



represents a particular group (Cohen et al., 2011). While non-probability sampling may increase bias and decrease generalizability (Cohen et al., 2011), this study uses non-probability sampling in the questionnaire due to the small-scale nature of the research.

Within non-probability sampling, there are several types: convenience sampling, quota sampling, dimensional sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling (Cohen et al., 2011). This study used purposive sampling, which is defined as picking cases based on specific criteria (Cohen et al., 2011). This means that the questionnaire is targeted at a specific group, international students within Ireland, with knowledge that the results will only represent international students within Ireland rather than all international students globally.

To ensure representativeness and avoid sampling error, it is suggested to obtain as large of a sample as possible with a minimum of 100 participants in a questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2007). It is important to note that even with this, due to the procedures taken, participants are able to self-select which may lessen representativeness and validity of the results (Dörnyei, 2007). A total of 126 student responses were garnered. However, two participants were excluded from analysis due to listing Ireland as their home country and English as their only L1, indicating that they are not international students. The final number of student responses is thus 124.

I aimed to obtain a spread of disciplines to account for differences between disciplines. However, the majority of the respondents were from AHSS. The results by general discipline can be seen in Table 3-7. A detailed list of disciplines, as indicated in varying detail by the respondents, for the student questionnaire can be seen in Table 3-8. Majors within the Business School were the most popular discipline with 24 respondents and variations of linguistics (e.g., applied linguistics, linguistics, ELT) were the second most popular discipline with 17 respondents studying this. Nine of the respondents indicated studying more than one discipline.

**Table 3-7**  
*Number of questionnaire responses by school discipline*

<b>School</b>	<b>No. of Student Respondents</b>
Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	93
Engineering, Mathematics and Science	22
Health Sciences	8
N/A (Researcher)	1

**Table 3-8**  
*Number of questionnaire responses by discipline*

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>No. of Student Respondents</b>
Accounting	1
Applied languages and translation	1
Applied linguistics	3
Art history	1
Artificial intelligence	1
Business	16
Biochemistry	3
Biochemical engineering	1
Chemistry	1
Civil engineering	1
Computer science	4
Counselling psychology	1
Culture	1
Economics	1
Education	5
Engineering	3
English language teaching	8
English literature	1
Environmental science	1
Finance	1
Financial risk management	1
Germanic studies	1
Health	1
Hispanic studies	1
History	1
Human sciences	1
Humanities	2
Humanities and political science	1
International management	2
Peace studies	4

Languages	1
Law	5
Law and business	1
Linguistics	6
Literary translation	1
Marketing	3
Mathematics	1
Medicine	4
Midwifery	1
Music performance	1
Natural sciences	1
Pharmacy	1
Philosophy	1
Philosophy, political science, economics, sociology	1
Physics	1
Politics	2
Politics and history	1
Public health	1
Psychology	7
Psychology and French	1
Public history and cultural heritage studies	1
Researcher	1
Science	3
Social sciences	1
Spanish and Russian	1
Statistic and computer science	1
Theology, biology, and education	1
Theoretical physics	1
Youth and community work	1

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In the student questionnaire, there were 99 females and 25 males who participated in the student questionnaire. Additionally, 17 were PhD students, 72 postgraduates, and 35 undergraduates. One hundred and four of those indicated that they are studying full-time, one part-time, and 19 indicated that they are visiting or Erasmus students. Age wise, the majority were between the ages of 18 and 29 (Figure 3-1). The majority of the respondents studied at institution 1 (108; Table 3-9).

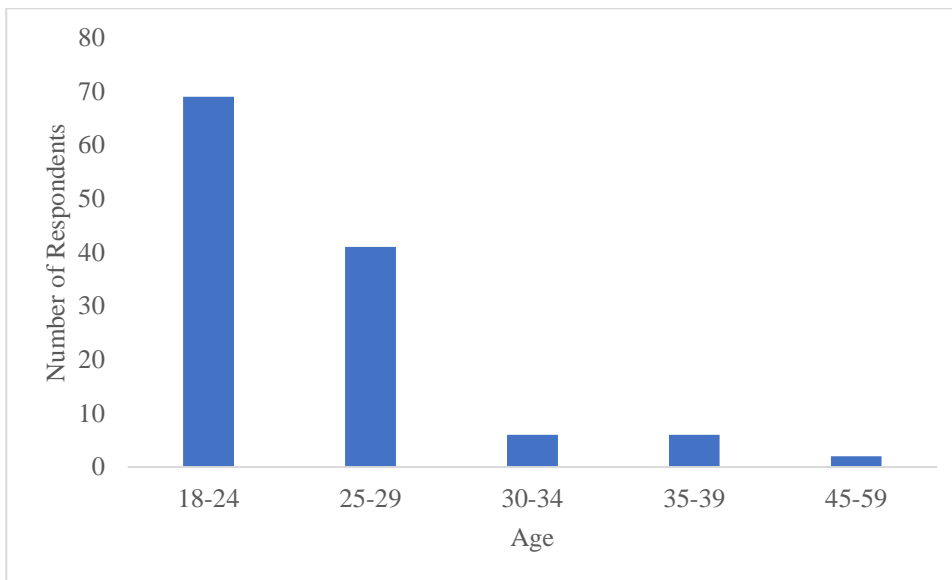


Figure 3-1 Age of respondents in the student questionnaire by number of respondents

**Table 3-9**

*Institutional representation by number of respondents from the student questionnaire*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
Institution 1	108
Institution 2	1
Institution 5	1
Institution 8	1
Institution 9	1
Institution 10	1
Institution 12	3
Institution 13	1
Institution 14	1
Institution 15	3
Institution 16	1
Institution 17	1
Institution 18	1

Thirty-eight countries were represented (Table 3-10) with the most representation from China (23), France (16), and India (10). Some respondents indicated typically thought of English-speaking countries such as Ireland (three), the United States of America (five), Canada (two) as their home country, indicating the diversity found within countries and representing English L1 international students. The three students from Ireland who were included in this study indicated an L1 which was not English. There are 59 respondents from Europe, seven respondents from North America, nine respondents from Central and South America, 46 respondents from Asia (of those, five considered to be from the Middle

East), two respondents from Eurasia (Russia and Turkey), and three respondents from Africa.

**Table 3-10**  
*Home country by number of respondents in the student questionnaire*

<b>Country</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Brazil	2
Austria	2
Bangladesh	1
Belgium	3
Bulgaria	1
Burundi	1
Canada	2
China	23
Colombia	2
Czech Republic	1
Finland	2
France	16
Germany	7
Greece	2
Honduras	1
India	10
Iran	1
Ireland	3
Italy	3
Japan	1
Libya	2
Malaysia	3
Mexico	2
Netherlands	4
Oman	3
Poland	1
Russia	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Serbia	1
South Korea	1
Spain	7
Sweden	1
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Turkey	1
Ukraine	3
The United States of America	5
Venezuela	1
Vietnam	2

Linguistically, the group is extremely diverse with multiple multilingual respondents (10), and 12 participants listing English as one of their first languages (Table 3-11). As indicated above, respondents indicating only English as their L1 were still included in the study to recognize Academic Literacies. Overall, 29 different languages were mentioned with Chinese (21) and French (17) being the most popular languages.

**Table 3-11***LI(s) by number of respondents in the student questionnaire*

<b>Language</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Arabic	6
Bengali	1
Czech	1
Chinese	21
Dutch	3
Dutch and German	1
English	8
English and Greek	1
English, Hindi, and Bengali	1
English and Malay	1
English and Ukrainian	1
Farsi	1
Finnish	1
French	17
French and Portuguese	1
German	1
German and Russian	1
Greek	2
Hindi	6
Italian	3
Japanese	1
Kirundi	1
Persian	1
Polish	1
Portuguese	2
Russian	2
Russian and Ukrainian	2
Russian and French	1
Serbian	1
Spanish	14
Swedish	2
Tamil	2
Turkish	1
Urdu	1
Vietnamese	2



Regarding language exams, 75 indicated that they took IELTS with 49 indicating that they either took no exam or took a different exam (Table 3-12). Two people indicated taking more than one exam. Uniquely, one person reported taking Ireland's leaving certificate.

**Table 3-12**

*Type of language proficiency exam taken by number of respondents in the student questionnaire*

<b>Exam</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
IETLS	74
CAE	6
Erasmus OLS test	2
In-house university exam	2
Ireland's leaving certificate	1
None	19
PTE	1
TOEFL	15
TOEFL and PTE	1
TEOFL and IELTS	1
No indication	2

For ease of comparison, using conversion tables (Cambridge Assessment English, 2018; Education Testing Service, 2019), all reported scores were translated to an IELTS equivalency (Table 3-13). The leaving certificate result could not be converted to an IELTS equivalent as this exam covers more than language. The majority of participants had the equivalent of a 6.5 IELTS upon entry to their institution. In line with the exams taken, 50 participants indicated taking a preparation course (e.g., exam preparation, EAP).

**Table 3-13**

*Proficiency level represented by overall IELTS score by number of respondents in the student questionnaire*

<b>Overall IELTS Score</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
5.5	2
6	3
6.5	25
7	21
7.5	20
8	17
8.5	5
9	2

In terms of how long the respondents have been studying in an English-speaking country (Figure 3-2), the majority indicated less than six months. However, the second most indicated time was more than five years.

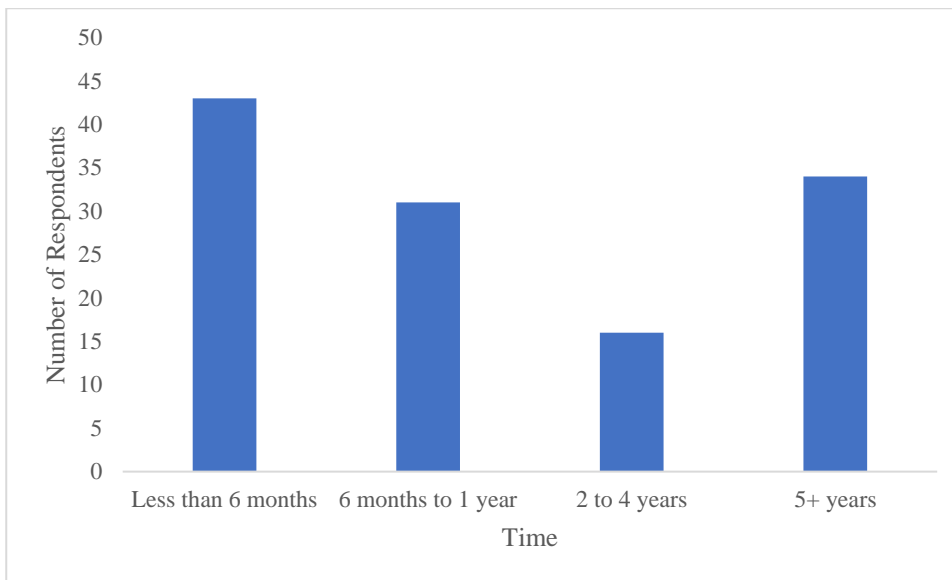


Figure 3-2 Time spent studying in an English-speaking country by number of respondents

### 3.9.2 Interviews

From willing participants from the questionnaire, I contacted respondents to coordinate an interview at a time and location of their choice. Types of sampling for qualitative data includes homogeneous, typical, criterion, maximum variation, extreme case, critical case, snowball, opportunistic, and convenience sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). Purposive sampling was used through criterion sampling, meaning that certain criteria is met to ensure a range of responses (Dörnyei, 2007). Qualitative data needs less participants as it is focused on gathering rich and varied data rather than representativeness (Dörnyei, 2007), however to reach a spread of disciplines and degree level, criterion sampling needed to be used.

The recommended number of participants for an interview study is between 6 and 10, however participants should be added until saturation is reached (Dörnyei, 2007). This means that when additional data does not generate new concepts, saturation has been reached and recruitment for participants can cease (Dörnyei, 2007). From this, 41 students from six institutions and 14 faculty from six institutions were interviewed. Table 3-14 shows the discipline, nationality, gender, age, degree level, and institution for each student participant while Table 3-15 shows the discipline, gender, and institution for each faculty participant. To note, one faculty/student interview was cut due to low-quality recording and was excluded from the counts above and not included in the tables. Additionally, one student's transcript was heavily edited by the participant upon providing the transcript by request. The interview was included in the results as it was felt that the resulting transcript would not skew the results, however it is recognized that some valuable information was lost.

**Table 3-14**  
*Demographic information of the student interview participants*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Degree Level</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Institution 1	AHSS	Chinese	Master's	24	M
Institution 1	AHSS	French	Undergraduate	20	F
Institution 1	AHSS	American	PhD	26	M
Institution 1	AHSS	Italian	PhD	38	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Chinese	Master's	26	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Greek	PhD	27	F
Institution 1	AHSS	French	Master's	26	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Hungarian	Master's	27	F
Institution 1	AHSS	French	PhD	25	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Colombian	PhD	37	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Chinese	Master's	29	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Russian	Master's	24	F
Institution 1	AHSS	French	Undergraduate	18	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Mexican	PhD	32	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Chinese	Master's	22	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Indian	Master's	24	M
Institution 1	AHSS	Indian	H.Dip	28	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Indian	Master's	28	M
Institution 1	AHSS	Brazilian	PhD	42	M
Institution 1	AHSS	Chinese	Master's	22	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Romanian	PhD	42	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Australian	Visiting Master's	32	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Chinese	Master's	22	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Italian	PhD	27	F
Institution 1	AHSS	American	Master's	33	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Peruvian	Master's	38	F
Institution 1	AHSS	German	Master's	24	F
Institution 1	AHSS	American	PhD	31	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Italian	Master's	28	F
Institution 1	AHSS	Vietnamese	Master's	27	F
Institution 1	STEM	Indian	Master's	29	M
Institution 1	STEM	French	Erasmus	21	M
Institution 1	STEM	Iranian	PhD	29	M
Institution 1	STEM	Italian	PhD	28	F
Institution 1	Medical Sciences	Libyan	PhD	35	F
Institution 3	STEM	Brazilian	Bachelor's	35	M
Institution 4	STEM	Bangladeshi	Undergraduate	34	M
Institution 6	AHSS	Brazilian	Master's	31	F

Institution 6	AHSS	Brazilian	Master's	25	F
Institution 7	AHSS	Spanish	PhD	27	F
Institution 8	AHSS	Vietnamese	Undergraduate	22	F

**Table 3-15***Demographic information of the faculty interview participants*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Institution 1	AHSS	M
Institution 1	AHSS	M
Institution 1	AHSS	M
Institution 1	AHSS	F
Institution 1	AHSS	F
Institution 1	AHSS	F
Institution 1	AHSS	F
Institution 1	AHSS	M
Institution 1	Medical Sciences	F
Institution 1	Medical Sciences	F
Institution 2	Medical Sciences	F
Institution 5	AHSS	M
Institution 5	AHSS	F
Institution 10	STEM	M

Most of the students and faculty were in AHSS. Within the students, there were more females (31) than males (10). Additionally, six undergraduates, 20 master's students, one H.dip student, and 14 PhD students took part in the interviews. The faculty were more equal in terms of gender with eight females and six males. The average age of the students was 28 years old. The students come from 20 different countries, including four students from traditionally thought of English-speaking countries and an additional three students who completed their entire schooling (primary to postgraduate) in English. One additional participant completed their entire schooling in an English-medium school, however, they stated besides the textbooks, the actual instruction took place through their L1. In terms of the largest numbers of students coming from one country, six students came from China, five from France, four from India, four from Italy, and four from Brazil.

It is important to note that to increase confidentiality and security, pseudonyms have intentionally not been attached to the demographic information of participants. Further, institutions and other identifying information were edited to generic forms within the transcriptions for increased confidentiality. These steps were taken due to the repeated request of some participants throughout their interviews that the information remain non-identifiable for fear of retribution or repercussions.

### 3.10 Data Analysis

In this study, all quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and qualitative data was analyzed in NVivo 12. This section describes the analysis of the questionnaire and interviews.

#### 3.10.1 Questionnaire

The first step in analyzing the questionnaire was to check for completeness, accuracy, and uniformity after the excel document was downloaded from Google forms (Cohen et al., 2011). One case was thrown out due to not being complete; this was not included in the count or demographic information above. Two other cases were thrown out as they indicated Ireland as their home country and had only English as an L1. The answers were then coded by identifying categories and assigning a numerical value to each unique category as shown in Example 3-1. Open-ended questions that elicited longer answers were not coded numerically.

#### Example 3-1

I identify my gender as:

- i. Female: 1
- ii. Male: 2
- iii. Prefer not to answer: 3
- iv. Other: 4

With these codes, most data could then be analyzed quantitatively, while longer open-ended questions could then be analyzed qualitatively.

##### 3.10.1.1 Quantitative

Before applying statistical tests, the type of data gathered must be considered. The questionnaire in this study resulted in mostly non-parametric data with most of the questions producing ordinal data (Table 3-16).

**Table 3-16**  
*Categorization of questionnaire data*

Category of Data	Type of Data	Question Number
Non-parametric	Nominal	1, 3, 4-7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 21-22, 62, 101, 107-116
	Ordinal	16, 23-61, 63-100
Parametric	Interval	11, 13
	Ratio	2, 8, 17-20, 102-106

Categorizing the data can then allow for proper analysis. First, it is important to note that the majority of the data was not normally distributed as determined by conducting Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Therefore, it does not satisfy the assumptions for parametric tests and non-parametric tests must be used. A main form of

analysis for non-parametric data is descriptive statistics where the data is simply described and presented (Cohen et al., 2011). This type of statistical analysis only allows researchers to draw conclusions about that particular sample (Dörnyei, 2007). In terms of descriptive statistics, means, frequency, and percentages were used to explore general trends in the data (Cohen et al., 2011). However, these decisions along with other presentational decisions, such as combining categories, were made with caution as to not distort the data (Cohen et al., 2011). The main type of descriptive statistics that were used in this study are means and percentages. Means were used to determine the level of difficulty and importance students assigned to different elements. This allowed conclusions to be made about which skills were identified as more or less difficult and important. Percentages were used in other cases to determine which answer the majority of the students chose (e.g., type of assessment students encounter in their studies).

Five factors were then identified as areas of interest to see if they impacted other answers in the student questionnaire. These factors were: degree level, discipline, time spent studying in an English-speaking country, L1(s), and IELTS scores. As this data is not normally distributed, ANOVA could not be used. The Chi-square was first considered due to the non-normality and non-parametric attributes of the data, however, the minimum number of cases for the Chi-square (five) was problematic (Cohen et al., 2011). Some data for this study was initially placed into categories which would not satisfy the minimum number of cases for the Chi-square, but was not included in the results at the end of the analysis (see Chapter 4, Section 4.10.4). Therefore, it is suggested to turn to either the Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney U, Wilcoxon, or Friedman tests for non-parametric data which does not satisfy the minimum number of cases for the chi-square (Cohen, et al., 2011).

It was determined that the Kruskal-Wallis test with a post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test was the most suitable statistical analysis for the data. The Kruskal-Wallis test was chosen as it tests for association between three or more groups which are not related (Cohen, et al., 2011). It is important to note that the Kruskal-Wallis test only flags that there is a significant difference, but it does not tell where the difference is (Cohen, et al., 2011). Therefore, once significance is found, using the confidence level of 95% or p-value of  $\leq 0.05$ , a post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test is used to determine which two groups have a significant difference (Cohen, et al., 2011). This post-hoc test was chosen as the Mann-Whitney U test also tests for association between groups which are not related, however, it only can test for two groups (Cohen, et al., 2011).

When applying these tests, the null hypothesis is that there is no significant difference between the two groups (Cohen, et al., 2011). A p-value of  $\leq 0.05$  signifies that we can reject the null hypothesis and accept that there is a significant difference between the groups (Cohen, et al., 2011). Meyer and Seaman (2013) suggest using the exact significance instead of the asymptotic approximation significance wherever possible. However, SPSS only provides the exact significance for sample sizes above 15 (Meyer and Seaman, 2013). Therefore, the exact significance was used when SPSS provided this, and these instances are explicitly stated within the results chapter (see Chapter 4, Section 4.10). The sample size for each group ideally should not be below five, however the test can still be done with a sample size below five (McDonald, 2014). As the initial analysis was conducted with sample sizes for some categories below five, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used in the final representation of the analysis rather than re-running statistics with the Chi-Square after categories were combined to ensure a sample size above five (see Chapter 4, Section 4.10). Further, when applying statistical analysis, it is important to not overgeneralize (Dörnyei, 2007). Each test has its limitations, and must not be generalized beyond a certain population (Dörnyei, 2007). This was kept in mind when applying statistical analysis.

### ***3.10.1.2 Qualitative***

Open-ended questions were then analyzed qualitatively through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows for data to be categorized and quantified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Open-ended questions were coded and represented numerically in scores, or how many times the code is represented (Dörnyei, 2007). This allowed for questions asking about additional information, as seen in Example 3-2, to be included in the analysis.

#### **Example 3-2**

What would you want to learn in a future English for Academic Purposes class?  
In order to code the data, I followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes and producing the report. Coding themes are defined in the results section for each relevant question.

### **3.10.2 Interviews**

Before analyzing the interviews, they needed to be transcribed. Acknowledging that non-verbal cues are lost in recording interviews, I chose to record and fully transcribe the interviews for a thorough analysis rather than rely on notes which may miss details and exact wording of the interviews. The transcriptions used mark-up informed by Du Bois (2000, 2003), Breiteneder, Pitzl, Majewski, and Klimpfinger (2006), and Atkinson and

Heritage (1984) as outlined in Table 3-17. Recognizing that some cues may be lost by not transcribing in full detail, these mark-up symbols were chosen to represent cues to show sufficient detail for the purposes of this research (Taylor, 2001). However, such detail such as the exact length of pauses were not necessary for the purposes of this study, although, based on the advice of Cohen et al. (2011) additional margin notes such as the mood of the speaker, notes about non-verbal cues, and the tone of the speech were recorded. Further, it became apparent that recording every “uhm,” inflection, and noticeably faster speech was unhelpful and so excluded in later transcriptions. Within the results chapters, examples are further edited for ease of readability. Full transcripts of the student and faculty interviews can be found in appendices E and F.

**Table 3-17** *Transcription mark-up (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Breitender et al., 2006; Du Bois, 2000, 2003)*

Meaning	Mark-up Symbols
Sharp cutoff of prior word or sound	Wor-
Pause in speech	[pause]
Pause in speech of longer duration (more than 2 seconds)	[long pause]
Vocalism	[cough]
Laughter	@
Laughter during speech	@word
Speaker emphasis	<u>Word</u>
Rising inflection	Word?
Declining inflection	.
Start of overlap	Word//
End of overlap	Word
Unintelligible	#unt
Transcriber guess	#word
The talk encompassed was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk	>word<
Participant speaker	Pseudonym:
Interviewer	Researcher:

After transcription, the interviews could then be analyzed through thematic discourse analysis with a critical lens (Rogers, 2011). This is influenced by the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2001a), however, it is not classed as Critical Discourse Analysis with upper-case letters as it does not strictly follow the structure and steps of CDA. If pure thematic or content analysis were chosen, a surface level analysis would be conducted. However, it is possible that this would not provide the depth of analysis needed to recognize the theoretical underpinnings of Academic Literacies, and could possibly



place students in a deficit view without exploring external factors, environments, or situations which influence students' academic success or experiences, and faculty experiences. Further, thematic discourse analysis through a critical lens allows for the conclusions drawn in relation to pre-sessional EAP curricula and assessment to empower and foster a higher level of negotiation in the academic context. By choosing thematic discourse analysis through a critical lens, a problem-oriented approach can be taken by identifying obstacles to international students' academic success and then suggesting and implementing solutions to mitigate these obstacles. The critical aspect to this problem-oriented approach is seen through not only making suggestions for students and pre-sessional programs, but also focusing on governmental and institutional changes which are needed to foster international student success. Using thematic discourse analysis through a critical lens not only focuses on students, but also expands the analysis to include a more holistic analysis which encompasses many different factors which, when working together, may mitigate challenges international students may face in their studies.

To analyze the interviews, first all interviews were printed and color-coded themes were indicated in the margins of the interviews. This process allowed rough themes to emerge directly from the interviews, which could be further refined as more interviews were marked-up. This initial process took place with the faculty interviews first and took almost one month to complete. With the hard-copies marked in color-coded themes, it became apparent that the overall themes were similar to a framework developed by Garska and O'Brien (2019, pp. 79-80). Therefore, this framework was used to refine and manage the themes found in this study. After initially familiarizing and marking-up the faculty interviews, a sample of the student interviews were initially analyzed the same way. Through this process, I found that the two populations had similar themes, thus strengthening the reason for using and expanding the framework developed by Garska and O'Brien (2019, pp.79-80). The framework encompassed power dynamics, external factors which influence academic success, and other aspects of academic literacies, therefore falling within thematic discourse analysis through a critical lens. The focus was not solely on what students felt they lacked or had success in, rather the interviews were analyzed to recognize other players and factors which may influence their experience studying in Ireland.

The analysis, then, drew upon the framework developed in Garska and O'Brien (2019, pp. 79-80), Table 3-18, and expanded this framework as the analysis was conducted. Importantly, since the initial framework focused solely on academic writing, expansion and changes to the framework were essential to encompass the scope of this

study. Each turn within the interview was coded for a particular theme. All of the turns contained multiple themes. The final resulting themes for the student and faculty interviews can be found in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

**Table 3-18** *Interview analysis theme initial framework (Garska & O'Brien, 2019, pp.79-80)*

Categories	Definition
Regulation, rules, and authority	Enforcement and imposition of norms and rules
Struggle and resistance	Contradicting opinions and ideas or going against norms
Inventing the university	Creating of the audience or expectations imposed (Bartholomae, 1986)
Habitus	Reactions to situations and a “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1992)
Culture	Aspects of national, ethnic, and local culture
Voice and identity	Dialogic expression of the self and culture (Lillis, 1997)
Meaning-making	How texts, words, and intended meaning are understood and conveyed (Bakhtin, 1986)
Ownership and empowerment	Gaining or having a feeling of authority and a right to own or use language independent of “native speakers” (Galloway & Rose, 2015)
Communities of discourse and dominant discourse	Privileged and predominant language, uses of language, and social groups where this language is privileged (Fairclough, 2001b)
Learned process	Aspects of academic [language] that improve with familiarity or experience

From the hard copies, NVivo 12 was then used to import and organize the interviews by population (i.e. faculty vs. student). Then, each interview transcript was coded using the framework categories as nodes, or themes. Using the previous framework and physical color-coded themes as a starting point, interviews were coded and re-coded to reflecting changing and additional themes which emerged from this data set and to refine or combine similar themes.

The themes are quantified and collated, however, the main focus is on unpacking instances of the themes. The reason for quantifying and collating the themes was due to the scope of this thesis. The interviews revealed a multitude of qualitatively interesting themes which could be discussed in-depth. Unfortunately, due to the scope of this thesis a limit on the number of themes discussed needed to be implemented. Therefore, a cutoff using the quantified, collated instances of themes was essential to manage the volume of results discussed while allow the focus to remain on the most salient themes of the interviews. Initially, the cutoff for themes was set to minimum 30 instances for the faculty interviews, however this produced more data to be discussed in-depth than could feasibly fit within the

scope and length of this thesis. Therefore, a cutoff of minimum 40 instances was chosen to represent the most important and qualitatively interesting themes throughout the interviews. Likewise, the student interview cutoff was set to minimum 117 to manage the scope of the project and to match the cutoff ratio of the faculty interviews (40 instances : 14 faculty = 117 instances : 41 students). Certain sub-themes which fall below these cutoff ratios are mentioned in the results sections (Chapters 5 and 6) when their absence of coding, or low-salience, is useful in making commentary about a theme (i.e. the absence of discussing qualities of successful writing corroborates and strengthens students' descriptions of the lack of clarity of expectations from faculty members), and when the sub-themes comprise a high-order parent code and is explicitly relevant to the theoretical underpinnings of this study (i.e. varieties of Englishes and translanguaging as discussed under the parent-code of communities of discourse). Coding is only presented within the tables of the results sections when they are a high-order parent code (first or second level coding) or when they are explicitly discussed within the chapters. A complete list of student and faculty coding can be found in appendix G and H.

Further, a corpus was created from each set of interviews using Sketch Engine to explore frequencies of words such as fillers, hedging, words of emotion, etc. Preliminary statistical tests (e.g., t-test on frequencies per million) revealed no statistical differences between faculty and students' use of fillers (e.g., um, uh, eh, etc.), "know," "about," "but," "could," "maybe" and "may"; therefore, the corpus was not explored any further beyond these preliminary tests and further transcriptions excluded such fillers. It is recognized that the words could be further categorized into broad groups and explored; however, it was determined that this was beyond the scope of this study.

### **3.11 An evolving journey**

#### **3.11.1 Circumstantial and institutional changes**

Before concluding this chapter, I feel that it is important to take the reader on the research journey to show the twists and turns that this project encountered. As with all aspects of life, unexpected circumstances drastically change how events and projects unfold, and this study is no different. Crucially, these changes have altered the focus and outcomes of this study and, therefore, are important to document. As Casanave (2017, p. 236) says:

However, what even expert authors avoid talking about are the difficulties of crafting a publication that looks seamless in finished form, from research that did not proceed linearly or even smoothly. For the published version, authors usually remove the struggles, twists, and turns so as to comply with the rhetorical conventions and stereotypes of academic writing. They do not write about themselves. Readers are thus left with the impression that indeed there are real authors out there, but that they do not struggle with their research or writing.

This illusion of a perfectly conducted project is not one I want to project. The proposal submitted for both entry to the PhD program and for the ethics application was an ambitious, multi-phased, longitudinal project taking the pre-sessional EAP program design through needs analysis, creation, implementation, and evaluation. At the beginning, the project was to take a design-based research methodological approach underpinned by complex systems theory to recognize iterations and the full process of designing a course along with contributing to and developing theory (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Barab & Squire, 2004; Bell, 2004; The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). The original plan was as follows:

- Needs analysis
  - Faculty and student questionnaires
  - Faculty and student interviews
  - Correlation of students' IELTS scores and subsequent marks in their university studies
  - Analysis of students' written assignments and faculty feedback
- Creation of the program
  - Migration of needs analysis
  - Scoping review of in-use and empirical pre-sessional curricula and assessment
- Implementation of the program
  - Researcher journal (ongoing from needs analysis to evaluation)
  - Collection of EAP course grades
  - Interviews with EAP managers and teachers
- Evaluation of the program over one year after implementation
  - Faculty and student questionnaires
  - Faculty and student interviews
  - Correlation of EAP students' EAP grades and subsequent marks in their university studies
  - Analysis of EAP students' written assignments and faculty feedback

Hedgcock and Lee (2017) point out how circumstantial changes reshape the research design, question, and theory of a project. In line with this sentiment, with such a large scope and timeline, it was inevitable for aspects of my project to be cut. First, the evaluation was put on the backburner as a potential post-doctoral study due to restrictions on the number of years I could remain a funded PhD student; the timeline was too short to complete the project in its original form. The project was tweaked to remain within the

design-based research methodology where a portion of the design process would be completed. The curriculum and assessment would still be implemented, and modifications could be made to the curriculum and assessment based on the success or failure of the implementation.

Then, institutional changes and the hiring of a pre-sessional EAP coordinator at Trinity College Dublin resulted in the elimination of implementation. With this change, it was no longer feasible to call this research design-based research as no iterations were involved and only the first step of the design process would have been completed. Additionally, without the collection of EAP grades, the grade correlation in the needs analysis seemed out of place and did not fit within the new aims of the project as it would not offer any insights into the quality of the newly created program. Therefore, this was also cut.

Further down the line, the in-use scoping review (despite all data being collected for this), researcher journal, and analysis of written assignments were also cut purely due to manpower, feasibility, and time. With only one scholar, myself, working on this project, such a large scope was not feasible for a PhD project. The empirical scoping review was also then cut, despite having been already completed and written, as conclusions made from this were not relevant to the refined research questions, argument, or scope of the thesis.

All of the aspects cut from my initial plan remain an interest for future research and data which was already collected, such as grade and assignment collection, remain for future analysis. Other data, such as the scoping review, remain for future publications separate from the PhD. While my PhD changed drastically during the course of my studies, each change was a learning process and made me a better researcher as a result. During this whole process, flexibility in design and timeline was key, as was the systematic adjustment to circumstantial changes and evaluation of how the changes influence the project as a whole (Hedgcock & Lee, 2017).

### **3.11.2 Personal interaction with the project**

Not only do I not want to present my research as a seamless and trouble-free process, I also do not want to represent my research as completely separate from myself. As researchers, we are continually intertwined with our research in ways which are beyond our control. My identities and roles within the university, society, and academia often highlighted unexpected overlaps that need to be discussed. Again, as Casanave (2017, p. 240) aptly states:

Novice writers might feel that it is difficult to front themselves openly like this in their writing, particularly if they hope to get published in a competitive and convention-bound academic community. But by not doing so, they risk misleading readers as to what happened, how they interpreted events in their lives and the lives of those they write about, and how their inquiry actually got done.

First, it is important to note that at various points during the PhD journey, I was an international student, albeit one with English as my L1, an EAP tutor, an administrator for the Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching, co-supervisor for MPhil students, and an actor in designing and seeking approval for the various EAP programs within Centre for English Language Learning and Teaching. I had also completed my MPhil at the institution working with the same initial supervisor (this initial supervisor left Trinity College Dublin to move to a different university mid-way through my PhD), and so had previous familiarity with institutional structures and supervisory ways of working.

Many of the participants took part in the study as they saw signs around the institution, received e-mails from various gatekeepers, or were referred by their friends or colleagues. These were inevitably people who I would engage with in various areas of my life. The participants were my peers, friends, colleagues, former and current students and professors, employers, and acquaintances. We shared lived experiences, history, and many times our stories overlapped in complex ways.

As the student participants spoke of their experiences with housing, finances, navigating institutional services, immigration, supervisory relationships, insecurities, and successes – I found myself relating to their narratives in ways beyond a researcher. These were topics and issues that also touched my life, many in the same ways that they expressed. Likewise, as the faculty participants spoke of teaching, workload, and experiences with their students and institutions – I also found myself relating as I was also a lecturer, administrator, and supervisor. Further, many of the experiences that both sets of participants shared were experiences where I had been an actor in some way. This is best shown through two participant examples.

In the first example, Mike, noticed that I was an international student and tried to elicit my experiences as an international student during the interview (Example 3-3). Importantly, we had had previous contact before the interview, so Mike knew I was from the United States and not Ireland, however, this shared identity of “international student” seemed to allow Mike to feel comfortable revealing information to me. Within this interview, I would sometimes share information based on this shared identity to build rapport (Example 3-4), yet I would also sometimes deflect questions to avoid leading the conversation (Example 3-5).

**Example 3-3**

Yes, what about America?... You should absolutely sense it because compare it to America it's nothing... -Mike, ll. 10128, 10187-10188

**Example 3-4**

Mike: @@ Counsellor, do you have any advice for me? @@

Researcher: @@ No, because it's the same for the United States for the visa.

M: Really?

R: Yeah, but for me being here, so.

M: But you don't need to get a residency of Ireland if you want to stay here, for example, yes?

R: Mhm, I do, I need it.

M: Okay, just leave this country as soon as possible. @@@ -Mike, ll. 10246-10253

**Example 3-5**

Mike: @@@ Just, you can feel better than me because you come from America. I think it's not comparable with America, Ireland, yes?

Researcher: Mmm.

M: You're thinking about? Absolutely, it's not comparable.

R: Mmm.

M: @@@ Why you don't say something? @@ Jessica, this is not fair. @@@ you @@@

R: @@@ This is not my interview. @@

M: @@@ No, it's not fair. Okay, you should, I wanted to make you say something that after that then you cannot publish this interview. @@@

R: @@ No, I can still publish it [if I say something], but I'm trying not to influence you.

-Mike, ll. 10329-10340

It should also be noted, based on the content of Example 3-5, that despite Mike joking throughout the interview about not publishing the interview, he did in fact give full consent to using the interview in the study. This trend of participants verifying anonymity led to the decision to not attach pseudonyms to demographic information, to generically edit information in the transcripts, and to change the disciplines recorded in the methodology to the generic AHSS, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Medical Sciences.

Further, the teacher-student relationship was mentioned throughout this interview as well. Although there is risk of this power structure molding the interview where Mike would hide information, he used this opportunity to speak honestly about his experiences and even delivered criticism of the program which did not offer levels or a way of progressing year after year for the students (Example 3-6).

**Example 3-6**

Mike: Okay, this I prepare for your course especially, as I attend it. I think this course is not really interests, is not really good for international students like me that their English is not good... Our major is science, not teaching English, and it is not fair for us and for them... Its different aspects, because they are more professional, [they] should be because they are studying English and the variance is, general question, yes, mathematic, we have some variance.

Researcher: Yeah, like the levels.

M: The difference between people is very high... I think there is not any long term vision in these courses when you planning these courses, yes, am I right?...Because it's in university, it's easy for students to attend the courses, and also it is very cheap. For me, I want to just come to, just attend this courses every semester. This is long term, is improving gradually beside my studying my PhD...

R: Right, you want progression.

*-Mike, ll. 10375-10376, 10379-10380, 10383-10387, 10395-10396, 10400-10402, 10405*

Another example is of Penelope, who I had had previous contact with before the interview. In Example 3-7, Penelope refers to a module that I had previous knowledge of. In her interview, Penelope referred to this shared knowledge by explicitly mentioning that I already knew what she was about to reveal. Penelope continually referred to shared knowledge and experiences throughout her interview, and therefore brought many of my identities into the interview as seen in Example 3-8.

**Example 3-7**

Modules involve, and you know this already, but they involve student...

*-Penelope, ll. 22257*

**Example 3-8**

But a lot of [PhD students] are doing admin as well, like yourself...

*-Penelope, ll. 22275*

These two participants are not unique. Many of my participants, both students and faculty, would explicitly refer to shared knowledge, experiences, or identities throughout their interviews. Therefore, it was a balancing act between being the person that they knew me as and being an objective researcher who would refrain from expressing opinions or leading the conversation, which could introduce bias. Both when collecting and analyzing the data, I had to remain aware of my intricate relationships with the participants and our shared stories in order to accurately represent their stories and to avoid introducing bias. On the other hand, however, having such relationships with the participants also strengthened the data collection as the familiarity also bred honesty and understanding that may have otherwise been absent with an “outsider” researcher.



### **3.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed how this research takes a mix-methods format. It explained the types of design considerations taken when designing the questionnaire and interviews, along with their limitations. Further, the chapter explored the sampling techniques, administration, and data analysis to gather data about international students' expectations and needs in Irish higher education. This study conducted a questionnaire with international students in Irish higher education and interviews with faculty and international students in Irish higher education. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative portions of the questionnaire. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative portions of the questionnaire. To analyze the interviews, a thematic analysis through a critical lens was applied expanding a framework developed in Garska and O'Brien (2019).

The chapter finished by documenting changes which have influenced the direction of the artifacts of this study, along with personal connections to the topic at hand. The following chapters, then, describe the results of this data collection. The results chapter are broken into separate chapters to represent each data collection tool and population.

## 4 CHAPTER FOUR: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

A questionnaire was conducted with students to gain an overall, broad view of a variety of factors which may influence curricula and assessment design. First, this chapter explores the questionnaire which was both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. The questionnaire was additionally subjected to a Kruskal-Wallis test and post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test to explore how certain factors may influence the students' answers. The student questionnaire garnered 124 respondents from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds. A faculty questionnaire was also distributed, yet only garnered 12 responses. Therefore, the faculty questionnaire was not included in the results due to lack of validity.

### 4.2 Assessment and professor expectations

When looking at content of assignments (Figure 4-1), essays were the most common type of assignment (N= 113) followed by reading (N=95). Presentations (N=86) and written exams (N=61) were also two commonly identified elements of assignments.

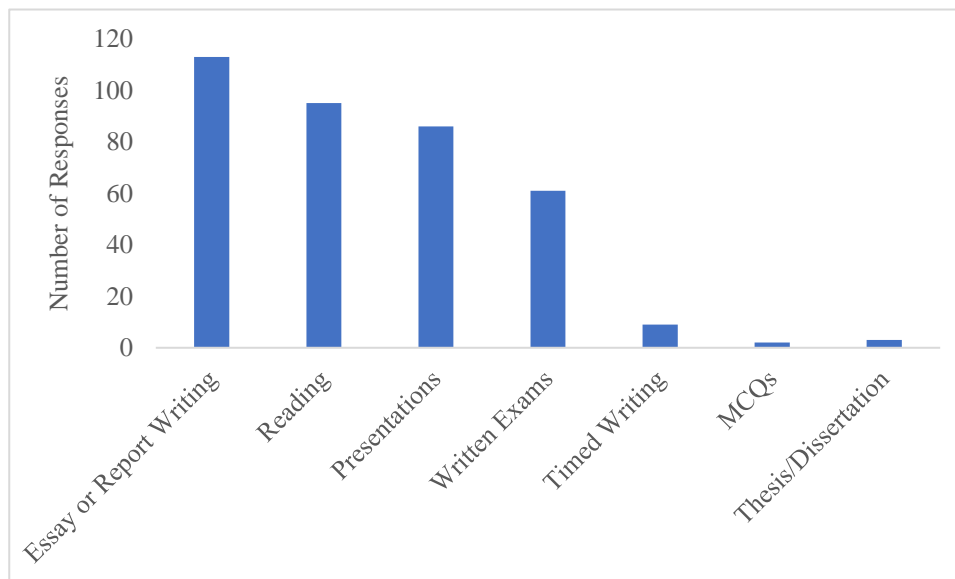
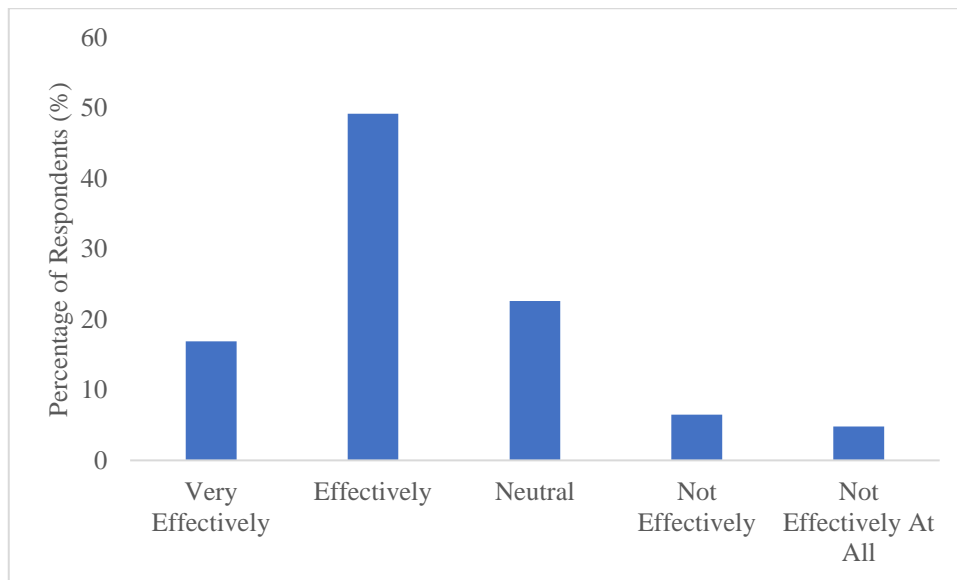


Figure 4-1 Assignment content by number of responses (N=124)

In addition to these common assignment types, 15 other assignment types were mentioned by one person each. These ranged from practical assessments and placements to vivas and portfolios.

After exploring the common elements of assignments, participants were asked how effectively their professors communicate their expectations. Figure 4-2 reveals that most students believe that their professors do effectively communicate their expectations with 66.1% agreeing with this statement.



*Figure 4-2* Student views on the effectiveness of lecturers' communication of expectations by percentage of responses (N=124)

However, despite this seemingly positive view, the qualitative analysis of the question “what do you professors expect from you academically” reveals a different perspective. Table 4-1 shows how the 119 responding students answered this question. As these answers were analyzed qualitatively, many of the students included two or more of the created themes in their answer.

**Table 4-1***Open answers to “what do your professors expect from you academically?”*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
Good writing (including explicit thesis, formatting, referencing, clarity, meaning, argumentation)	34
To pass; be good; succeed	29
I don't know; unclear	16
Critical thinking and criticality	12
Complete assignments	9
Active involvement in my studies	9
Reading (required readings, reading for writing, extensive reading)	8
Content (knowledge, understanding)	7
Application of content/theories	7
Good English	7
Speaking (class discussion, presentations, Q and A)	6
Independence and independent study	5
Conduct self-paced, independent research	5
Publications	4
Develop theories and contribute to my topic	3
Develop transferable skills	3
The same expectations that they have for English L1 speakers	3
Innovation; creativity; originality	3
Introspection; reflection	3
Group-work	2
Overall interest	2
Very little; not as high as expected	2
Involvement in academic life (e.g., conferences, attending talks)	1

Overall, writing seemed to be the main focus of the students' answers ranging from vague answers such as “good writing” to more explicit answers detailing what good writing means (Example 4-1; Example 4-2). Criticality was also a popular choice and was most often explained simply as “develop critical thinking” with no further explanation.

**Example 4-1**

Complete my assignments with the right format, and enough components (bibliography, title, internal cohesion)

**Example 4-2**

Give an organized point of view that you explain with valid results...write coherent essays which show that you can explain concepts and events

Approximately 57% of the answering students portrayed the communication of expectations as poor or inadequate through vague answers and words signifying doubt. Numerous vague answers such as “I have no idea,” “good work,” or “to pass” were also

given. Additionally, many answers included words such as “maybe,” “I think,” or “I don’t know but I imagine...” to express doubt or lack of clarity. In fact, the majority of the answers for the themes “to pass,” “I don’t know” and “complete assignments” were worded this way. More developed answers expanded this doubt (as seen in Example 4-3, Example 4-4, and Example 4-5) and often suggested that professors did not communicate their expectations before the assignment was due or were not clear about these expectations.

#### **Example 4-3**

I don’t know what the lecturer expected of us because he didn’t tell us.

#### **Example 4-4**

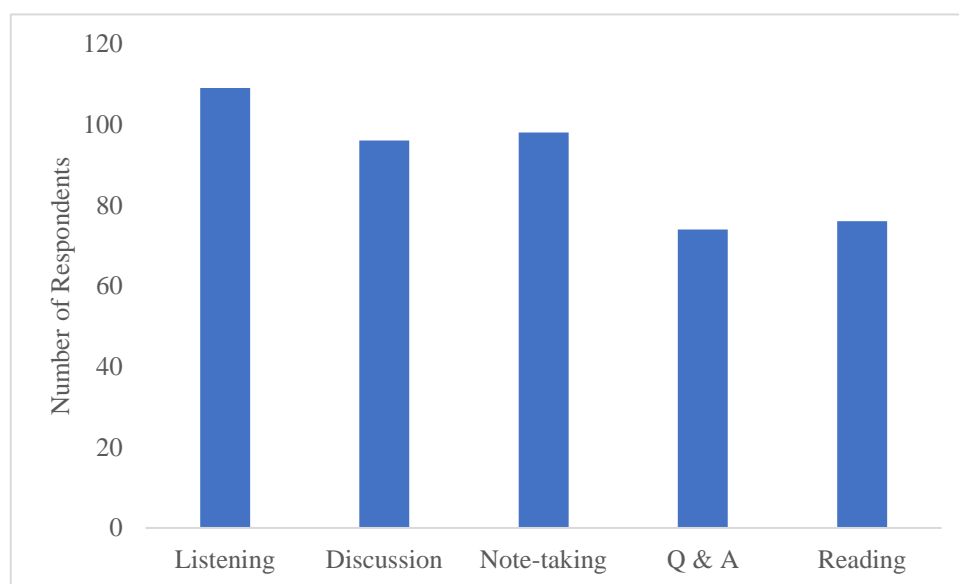
Most of my professors did not say what they expect of us. I imagine they want us to learn and understand the theories. Regarding writing assignments, they give us space to innovate and be creative. However, I got the impression they prefer if we use the following structure for academic writing...one [lecturer] had very concrete expectations but did not say what he wanted exactly, resulting in most classmates getting poor grades.

#### **Example 4-5**

I think my professors expect a lot from the students, but they are not clear about what they expect exactly. We only find out when we receive feedback and see that it is not what they expected even though they were not clear about it.

### **4.3 Lecture content**

The three most identified elements of lectures, as seen in Figure 4-3, included listening (N=109), note-taking (N=98), and class discussions (N=96). Reading (N=76) and question and answer (N=74) were also popular. Two people mentioned not currently taking modules. Further, four other types of lectures were mentioned such as roleplays and laboratory work.



*Figure 4-3* Elements in a lecture by number of responses (N=124)

#### 4.4 Importance of skills

Students were asked to assess the importance of skills associated with writing, reading, listening, and speaking. A semantic differential scale was used where 1 represented not important and 5 represented essential. Skills who had a mean above the midpoint, 3, meant that students considered these skills essential to their studies (Table 4-2). There was an overall trend of seeing all skills as important. However, reading ( $M = 4.28$ ) and writing ( $M = 4.15$ ) were seen as the two most important skills with listening ( $M = 4.03$ ) and speaking ( $M = 3.92$ ) receiving only slightly less attention. Referring to sources, writing coherent paragraphs, using proper language and vocabulary when writing, using proper language and vocabulary when speaking, reading critically, and understanding lectures were identified as the most important elements in each of the four skills.

**Table 4-2**  
*Means of importance of skills*

<b>Writing statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Writing lengthy papers (e.g., dissertations, reports, and essays)	4.36	.990
Writing exam essays	3.85	1.323
Writing introductions	3.92	1.166
Searching for appropriate literature	4.40	.900
Evaluating literature	4.22	1.040
Referring to sources	<b>4.44</b>	.956
Reviewing and critiquing previous research	4.27	.989
Creating a research gap	3.60	1.262
Designing research methods	3.70	1.236
Writing up the methods section	3.69	1.252
Summarizing and presenting data	4.25	1.041
Commenting on and discussing data	4.32	.959
Writing references/the bibliography	4.17	1.057
Writing conclusions	4.41	.874
Proof-reading written assignments	3.86	1.264
Using appropriate lexical phrases (e.g., on the basis of, it should be noted that) freely	4.02	1.047
Summarizing/paraphrasing	4.25	1.009
Writing coherent paragraphs	<b>4.44</b>	.930
Linking sentences smoothly	4.29	.935
Using proper academic language and vocabulary (style)	<b>4.44</b>	.940
Using discipline-specific and technical vocabulary	4.40	.873
Using proper grammar (e.g., tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, prepositions)	4.35	.946
Taking notes	3.74	1.118
<i>Total writing</i>	<i>4.15</i>	<i>1.048</i>

<b>Speaking statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Participating in class discussions and group work	3.85	1.097
Communicating with your lecturers	3.83	1.153
Communicating with your classmates	3.82	1.097
Negotiating in group work	3.74	1.089
Linking ideas and sentences smoothly	4.12	1.056
Using proper language and vocabulary	<b>4.16</b>	1.023
Using proper grammar (e.g., tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, prepositions)	3.92	1.094
<i>Total speaking</i>	<i>3.92</i>	<i>1.087</i>
<b>Reading statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Understanding specific language features of an academic genre (e.g., a research paper)	4.33	.862
Understanding the required reading	4.48	.801
Reading quickly	3.70	1.089
Reading for specific information	4.21	.829
Reading critically (e.g., being able to reflect on and analyze the text)	<b>4.48</b>	.821
Reading specialized papers (e.g., academic journals and reports)	4.47	.770
<i>Total reading</i>	<i>4.28</i>	<i>0.862</i>
<b>Listening statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Understanding accents	3.68	1.213
Understanding lectures	<b>4.37</b>	.941
<i>Total listening</i>	<i>4.03</i>	<i>1.077</i>

#### 4.5 Difficulty of skills

Students were also asked to self-assess their difficulty with these elements. A semantic differential scale was used where 1 represented very difficult and 5 represented very easy. Skills who had a mean above the midpoint, 3, meant that students considered these skills to be easy while below the midpoint represented skills as being difficult (Table 4-3). The students were fairly neutral in their rating of difficulty, with no skills rated below the midpoint overall. Writing ( $M = 3.05$ ) and reading ( $M = 3.07$ ) were the two most difficult skills with speaking ( $M = 3.33$ ) and listening ( $M = 3.12$ ) being rated as slightly easier. Individual elements, however, were rated below the midpoint. Writing lengthy papers, negotiating in group work, reading quickly, and understanding accents were the most challenging elements of each skill. Overall, students find literacy skills (reading and writing) to be both the most important and most difficult skills.

**Table 4-3**  
*Means of self-assessed difficulty with skills*

<b>Writing statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Writing lengthy papers (e.g., dissertations, reports, and essays)	<b>2.65</b>	1.250
Writing exam essays	2.72	1.200
Writing introductions	3.16	1.122
Searching for appropriate literature	3.02	1.085
Evaluating literature	2.88	1.193
Referring to sources	3.52	1.172
Reviewing and critiquing previous research	2.74	1.216
Creating a research gap	2.67	1.216
Designing research methods	2.77	1.202
Writing up the methods section	3.01	1.151
Summarizing and presenting data	3.04	1.165
Commenting on and discussing data	2.94	1.228
Writing references/the bibliography	3.56	1.264
Writing conclusions	3.15	1.243
Proof-reading written assignments	3.09	1.155
Using appropriate lexical phrases (e.g., on the basis of, it should be noted that) freely	3.02	1.144
Summarizing/paraphrasing	3.16	1.192
Writing coherent paragraphs	2.99	1.144
Linking sentences smoothly	3.11	1.191
Using proper academic language and vocabulary (style)	2.95	1.312
Using discipline-specific and technical vocabulary	2.94	1.251
Using proper grammar (e.g., tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, prepositions)	3.25	1.266
Taking notes	3.74	1.147
<i>Total writing</i>	<i>3.05</i>	<i>1.196</i>
<b>Speaking statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Participating in class discussions and group work	3.20	1.189
Communicating with your lecturers	3.51	1.078
Communicating with your classmates	3.62	1.033
Negotiating in group work	<b>3.18</b>	1.112
Linking ideas and sentences smoothly	3.26	1.147
Using proper language and vocabulary	3.27	1.141
Using proper grammar (e.g., tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, prepositions)	3.24	1.205
<i>Total speaking</i>	<i>3.33</i>	<i>1.129</i>
<b>Reading statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Understanding specific language features of an academic genre (e.g., a research paper)	3.20	1.082
Understanding the required reading	3.22	1.064



Reading quickly	<b>2.84</b>	1.239
Reading for specific information	3.18	1.044
Reading critically (e.g., being able to reflect on and analyze the text)	2.90	1.259
Reading specialized papers (e.g., academic journals and reports)	3.10	1.100
<i>Total reading</i>	<i>3.07</i>	<i>1.131</i>
<b>Listening statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Understanding accents	<b>2.86</b>	1.114
Understanding lectures	3.38	1.173
<i>Total listening</i>	<i>3.12</i>	<i>1.144</i>

The students were asked later in the questionnaire to identify their strengths and weaknesses in terms of academic language. Table 4-4 shows that the majority of answers (N=124) find reading to be their strength with the next easiest skill being writing. The major skills are further broken down to identify the elements which the students' felt were their strongest. Writing had the most identified elements ranging from simply completing the assignments to writing concisely and coherently. Most of the answers were short and simple, and so did not provide much information beyond what is shown in Table 4-4.

**Table 4-4**  
*Self-identified strengths in terms of academic English*

<b>Major skill</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
Reading	40	Reading quickly	4
		Unspecified	36
Writing	31	Completing assignments (e.g., word count, submission)	4
		Clarity	4
		Coherence	3
		Conciseness	2
		Grammar	2
		Summarizing and paraphrasing	2
		Structure	2
		Use of appropriate language	1
		Style	1
		Referencing	1
		Sentence complexity and structure	1
		Unspecified	7
Listening	19	Lectures	1
		Accents	1
		Unspecified	17
Speaking	15	Giving presentations	2
		Fluency	1
		Unspecified	13
I don't know/none	14		
Self-identified fluent speaker	7		
Critical thinking	7		
Making links; analysis	7		
Understanding (general)	6		
Vocabulary (general)	4		
Grammar (general)	4		
Communication (general)	3		
Clarity (general)	1		
Technicality (general)	1		
Understanding of the rules of the language	1		
Note-taking	1		
Creative ideas	1		

When describing their difficulties with academic English (Table 4-5), writing, speaking, and vocabulary were the top skills identified as being difficult. In contrast to their strengths, reading is not identified as a major difficulty. Aspects such as culture and confidence along with other non-linguistic factors are mentioned. As with the self-identified strengths, elements of each skill are further identified, yet most answers were concise and provided no other detail than what is provided in the table.

**Table 4-5**  
*Self-identified difficulties in terms of academic English*

Major Skill	No. of Instances	Element	No. of Instances
Writing	50	Using academic vocabulary	6
		Logic and connecting ideas/sentences	4
		Reaching word count or dealing with length	3
		Structure and content of sections	4
		Grammar	3
		Adapting to purpose/audience	3
		Paraphrasing	2
		Writing quickly	1
		Paragraphing	1
		Familiarity with topic (content)	1
		Style	1
		Unspecified	33
Speaking	22	Fluency; linking ideas	3
		Speaking in front of professors and NS	2
		Group discussions	1
		Using academic vocab	1
		Unspecified	16
Vocabulary; formality and technicality	20		
Reading	11	Reading quickly	3
		Understanding technical phrases	2
		Understanding implications and nuances	2
		Reading different styles	1
		Unspecified	3
Listening	11	Accents	4
		Lectures	1
		Unspecified	6
None	10		
Grammar (general)	6		

Content	4
Articulating thoughts	3
Critical thinking	3
Culture	3
Familiarity with academic language and formality	2
Time management	2
Clarity of expectations (from professors)	2
Confidence	2
Spelling	1
Proof-reading	1
Adapting to pedagogy	1
Focus	1
Research	1
Negotiation (general)	1

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#### 4.6 Suggestions for pre-sessional EAP program

Students were asked what they would like to see in a summer pre-sessional EAP program, and what they wished they had known before attending their institution. The answers to these two questions, due to their similarity, were combined for analysis (Table 4-6).

**Table 4-6**

*Amalgamated answers to “what did you wish you had known before starting your studies” and “what should be included in a summer EAP course”*

<b>Skill</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
Writing	58	Essays and reports	8
		Referencing and academic integrity	7
		E-mails	3
		Paragraphing	2
		Types and structures of different genres	2
		Peer-reviewing	1
		Creative writing	1
		Developing research questions	1
		Differences between academic writing and exam essays	1
		Dissertations	1
		Error correction	1
		Formality and academic register	1
		Handling large amounts of writing	1
		Linking ideas	1

		Planning long essays	1
		Proposals	1
		Writing critically	1
		Unspecified	24
Speaking	36	Discussions	5
		Groupwork	4
		Presentations	3
		Communicate with supervisors	1
		Debates	1
		Idioms	1
		Negotiation	1
		Presenting and defending ideas	1
		Public speaking	1
		Pronunciation	1
		Unspecified	16
Culture	25	Irish academic system, grading differences, expectations, and college support systems	9
		Cultural differences in essays	3
		Cultural responsiveness and intercultural communication	2
		Awareness of academic situations	1
		Unspecified	10
Reading	23	Reading quickly	5
		Course reading lists	4
		Reading critically	2
		Reading for specific information	2
		Unspecified	10
Listening	18	Accents	8
		Lectures	1
		Pop media	1
		Unspecified	8
Vocabulary	10	Discipline specific vocabulary	3
		Academic word list	1
		Academic abbreviations	1
		Unspecified	1
Social aspects	9	How to socialize	3
		Interaction with native speakers	3
		Unspecified	3
Real-life activities	8		
Critical thinking	7		
Finding literature	7		

Information about life in Ireland	7
Grammar	7
General communication	6
Discipline-specific English	5
Confidence	4
Dealing with stress	4
Note-taking	4
Evaluating literature	3
Independent study	3
Courses for advanced and PhD students	3
Endnote	2
Irish (Gaelic)	2
Time management	2
Design thinking	1
One-to-one tutoring	1
Online discussion board	1
Using academic English (general)	1

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Writing was by far the most popular skill for students to identify as needing to be taught. With writing and speaking, most of the students specifically identified that they wanted to practice these skills rather than learn theoretically about them. One notable aspect is that culture, at 25 instances, was requested more than reading or listening. Within this “skill” students mentioned needing to learn the Irish academic system, and even more specifically, their institution’s and individual professors’ expectations.

Many students asked for extras, or non-linguistic, non-academic English aspects, to be added to the course. For example, students asked to be taught about life outside of their studies, such as how to find housing, how to manage money, and how to navigate immigration. Students also asked to have opportunities to socialize with English L1 students, and to be taught how to socialize. Further, students specified confidence building and how to deal with stress, particularly how to perform academically under stress, to be added to the curriculum. Eight students even requested real-life activities, with some students going as far to ask for placements to practice their English in the real community or discipline before starting their studies.

#### 4.7 Other factors affecting academic success

Students were also asked which other factors also impact their academic success (Table 4-7). With 118 of the students answering, most mentioned their living situation and social life. Again, most answers were very brief with only “social life” or “living situation” written. However, a few poignant answers were given, and are discussed individually to show the factors they touch upon below.

**Table 4-7**  
*Other factors which impact academic success*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
Living situation	53
Social life	41
Previous knowledge of subject content	25
Finances, cost of living and need to work	20
Intrinsic factors: motivation, interest in subject, confidence, concentration, time management	13
University factors: workspace, environment, class size, delivery of classes, lack of services and problems accessing or navigating services	11
Work, life, study balance	10
Health, homesickness, mental health, and stress	8
Unclear expectations from university or professors; supervision issues	6
Culture shock, cultural differences, and cultural background	6
Extracurriculars	4
Immigration	3
Previous work experience	2
Weather	1
Family background	1

The first example, Example 4-6, highlights aspects of culture, and institutional services. This student expresses a “lack of interaction” with Irish cultural and social aspects, however, it can be interpreted in a few ways. It could first represent a lack of previous familiarity with the Irish culture and accent in their home country and signify that the student had to adjust to these factors once they arrived in Ireland, something which other students identified. It could also, in contrast, mean that the student perceives this separation in Ireland itself and feels that international students and Irish students generally keep to their own separate groups within the university and wider society. This student also discusses trouble accessing, and in fact even knowing about, services within the university.

This signals a need for more visibility of the services and assistance in ensuring that students successfully access the services that they need.

**Example 4-6**

Lack of interaction with Irish culture, people, accent, also the lack of guidance on the information about the modules I should take. Problems to find some important books in the library, and at the beginning not knowing how the library worked. Lack of guidance about software for transcription, data encryption, SPSS, etc. Lack of knowledge on the types of services or support offered by [Institution 1]. I know there's help out there, but sometimes it's very hard to find.

The next three examples (Example 4-7, Example 4-8, and Example 4-9) draw upon the same sentiments as the previous example. These students first highlight the living situation, and although they do not mention the housing crisis explicitly, each of the students listed the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation as the first factor in their answer. Using the word “nightmare,” the first student highlights the difficulty of finding accommodation – something which is echoed throughout the open answers with students using words such as “horrible,” “filthy expensive,” “tough,” “hard work,” “depressing,” “instability,” and “unhappy” to describe both their search for accommodation and their current living situations. These examples also all highlight institutional administrative difficulties ranging from registering at the university to obtaining proper immigration status causing undo stress on top of adjusting to a new environment and school. The last example, Example 4-9, also discussed inadequate study facilities at the university, something which a few students also mentioned.

**Example 4-7**

Finding accommodation is a nightmare. Student residences are too expensive. Registering academically took me a month, I wasn't helped that much.

**Example 4-8**

Living situation and social life. Commuting and making friends, deal with documents and immigration make life extremely stressful as an international student on top of being at a completely new school, new program, and new environment.

**Example 4-9**

Living situation, comfortable home. Essential to be able to work at uni. Desk space, working internet and warm enough study spaces at [Institution 1].

Example 4-10 was by far the longest and most detailed answer. They present the other factors as being the most difficult part of their studies and call attention to a few issues. First, they identify their living situation as a difficult factor, but they did not point to the expense or difficulty finding housing, rather they point to living independently. This can be interpreted to mean that the student has never lived independently and is adjusting to not just a new country, but also the transition between being dependent on their parents, or



other providers, to being expected to provide for themselves. This student is particularly negative in their answer pointing out difficulties receiving feedback from professors, which they identify as being harsh, and needing to become a more autonomous and independent student. They, however, view this as being “lost” and “lonely” in their studies with inadequate communication of expectations, guidance, or supervision from their professors, again, something which a few other students also highlighted. Financially, their worry is not about their current situation, which is the general trend of the other students, but that of the future. They also express how their classmates feel, noting how negatively their peers felt about the situation as well.

#### **Example 4-10**

The ‘other factors’ are actually the most difficult part. Living situation (having to do everything on my own, such as cooking and cleaning), social life (I feel too stressed about my studies and therefore feel too guilty if I go out with other people, which in turn makes me depressed, and then I cannot do my essays or go to classes), expectations from professors (I feel very incompetent even when I have succeeded due to their harsh feedback; since we are expected to find out everything on our own, I feel really lost and lonely about what I should be doing for my studies), social factors (I do not think I will have a job that allows me to pay for rent and food after finishing my degree and this makes me really depressed and makes me wonder what is the point of making any effort on my studies at all). Most of my classmates also frequently talk about their sleepless nights, about days they spent crying because they were too anxious about their studies or because of the feedback they received from professors. It is hard to even care about academic success when you are in this situation because you feel you are going to fail no matter how much effort you make to succeed.

As mentioned above, most of the students’ worries about finances are concerned with the present (Example 4-11 and Example 4-12). These examples show that balancing work, college, and life is a constant worry which weighs on the student. The financial stress, especially if one is a self-funded student, is consistently identified throughout the answers. Example 4-12 discusses how they were given the idea, presumably from research, peers, or recruiters, that finding part-time work in Dublin is easy, and that this part-time work would adequately cover living expenses. However, they did not find this to be true. To put these answers in context of the wider society, it should be mentioned that international students in Ireland are restricted in the hours they are able to work. This is something which could result in the financial stress expressed through the questionnaire as international students have no option of undertaking full-time hours if they find that part-time work is not available or is not enough to cover expenses.

#### **Example 4-11**

Social life, work, financial situation, and motivation – I live in constant stress trying to balance work and college.

**Example 4-12**

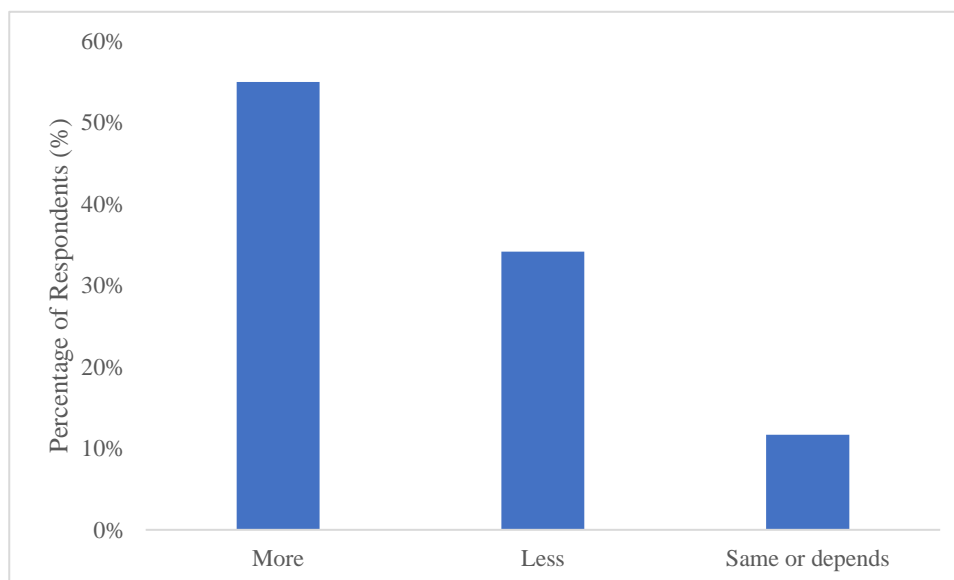
Living situation: Dublin is filthy expensive. I was given an idea that it is easy to find a part time job and one can support their living, but I am facing the exact opposite.

The final example (Example 4-13) shows how having, or not having, an academic background in their field of study either helped or hurt their academic success. A good portion of the students identified either having a difficult time with terminology or content as their courses were completely new to them. Other students identified having an easier time as they were familiar with their topic and course. This is a factor which was not necessarily expected to be found in the results, but it does bring attention to students who switch disciplines, likely between their bachelor's and master's, and the difficulties this might present.

**Example 4-13**

No academic background related to my course (business classes, etc.) – everything is new (terminology)

These other factors seem to have a strong influence on academic success with 66 students, approximately 55% of the respondents, identifying that these factors influence their academic success more than language (Figure 4-4). A further 14 students (approximately 12%) stated that these factors contribute the same amount to academic success, or that it depends.



*Figure 4-4* Answers to “do these factors impact your academic success more or less than your language skills” by percentage of respondents (N=120)

When analyzing these answers, the choice of vocabulary stuck out. Thirty-one students used words related to mental health and well-being such as “demotivating,” “hard to concentrate,” “impacts confidence,” “anxious,” “depressed,” “exhausted,” “lonely,” and “stress” when speaking about how these factors negatively impact their academic success.

A further ten students allude to these factors by speaking about feelings of not having strong social bonds, feeling unsafe in their living conditions, and not having a sense of belonging in their university. One student (Example 4-14) mentions how these issues are systematic, or institutional in nature, and therefore the student cannot solve them on their own.

**Example 4-14**

Much more. These are roadblocks that are systematic, and the student has not control over improving.

Other students (Example 4-15 and Example 4-16) describe how these factors contribute to poor mental health, and in turn make it difficult to complete or focus on their studies.

**Example 4-15**

More, they have a stronger impact on my psyche and therefore also impacts on how I put myself in front of the study

**Example 4-16**

Yes, a lot. They make me extremely anxious and depressed to a point of not being able to eat or sleep, much less writing essays. I feel exhausted most of the time due to being alone, away from my family and friends, and it is hard to focus on my studies.

A good number of students (Example 4-17, Example 4-18, and Example 4-19) further describe how other factors and language are intertwined, impacting language development, the ability to navigate other factors, and their academic studies. The student in Example 4-17 states that they are unable to convey their feelings and this in turn makes them feel isolated, which impacts their studies. Example 4-18 and Example 4-19 say that if the other factors could be solved, they would feel that they belonged more or have more social support in their university and that their language development would improve.

**Example 4-17**

Both play a role as I'm unable to convey my feelings as there is no support system and home not being in a home one feels safe in, studying becomes difficult.

**Example 4-18**

It impacts both. Having uncertainty in the academic environment has an impact in the language skills I would be able to develop. Addressing the issues I mentioned above would save time and they would give me a sense of belonging to [Institution 1].

**Example 4-19**

Social life – having no friends in college has impacted my motivation/academic success and it has kept me from improving my language skills.

Others show how language skills matter more due to their influence on the other factors (Example 4-20 and Example 4-21). Example 4-20 states that there is a threshold in which the other factors become more important, and Example 4-21 shows how having a base

level of English could have made adjusting easier. This sentiment is generally shared by those who chose the “no” answer to this question, although it was more common to have a simple “no” or “less” with these answers than the description provided by the “more” answers.

**Example 4-20**

Language skills matter more than other factors. However, once the language skills have achieved certain threshold for academic success, other factors play a more significant role.

**Example 4-21**

These factors impact my academic success significantly. However, it could be better if I were had my language skills developed at the beginning. I have had a lot of problems with the English.

Importantly, it is not just the students who have English as an LX who struggle. The majority of students who identified English as being their L1(s) feel that these other factors contribute more to their academic success, as Example 4-22 describes their struggle with immigration and obtaining financial freedom. Further, they highlight that the college has done little to support them, especially in immigration matters.

**Example 4-22**

More: financial security and immigration concerns contribute to the majority of my stress. Having come from an English-speaking country, there has been little to no language barrier upon moving to Ireland, however, adjusting to social customs, finding sustainable funding (and affordable housing), and registering with INIS have been extremely stressful, and I wish I had more support from [Institution 1] in these matters. I have yet to find outside work or secure funding, which continues to put stress on my time and resources that could be better dedicated to my research.

#### **4.8 English usage and ownership**

Based on the answers of two questions, “If you have taken a preparation class, which class, and for how long” and “Please describe your English learning history,” it became clear that the information was difficult to pick apart to place the students into the concrete categories. Originally, taking a preparation course was flagged for statistical analysis to see if taking a preparation course influenced students’ answers. However, respondents rarely reported taking only one type of class as many had English classes in primary and secondary school (both in school and in private academies) and/or in university in addition to exam preparation courses or other types of courses. With such variety and overlap, it is impossible to determine which course type had the most impact, and therefore also impossible to determine which type or combination of courses influenced the respondents’ answers.

Once it was determined that statistical analysis would be reductive in this case, the learning histories of the respondents were analyzed qualitatively to provide an overview of

learning history (Table 4-8). First, it should be noted that these results are an amalgamation of the answers to the two questions discussed above and that due to students rarely taking English in just one place, many students fall into more than one category. Further, all of the English L1 students were not included in this count. With this in mind, overall, there is a large range of the ways and places that students learned English, however, most students had studied English in their schools (either primary or secondary) and took exam preparation classes.

**Table 4-8**

*English language learning histories categorized by place or venue of learning*

<b>Place/venue</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
School (primary or secondary)	77
Exam preparation classes (amalgamated with earlier questionnaire question)	42
University	32
Unspecified	21
Private language schools	15
Study abroad	14
Movies, books, media, pop culture	9
Jobs and internships	7
Private lessons	3
Travelling	2
Self-taught	2
Family or through dating	2
English language foundation course	1

Thirty-two students identified taking English during their university studies. Fourteen of those students mentioned that their whole degree was delivered in English in their home country. Others (six) stated that their courses were a mixture of modules taught through English and modules in their L1(s). These six differed from simply taking an English elective as a part of the degree as they all stated that up to one half of their degree program was delivered in English. Further, two participants also explicitly mentioned mixing languages, either through using English textbooks but conducting class in a mixture of languages, or through having content conducted through English (e.g., books, exams, teacher explanations) and students using their L1(s) for communication.

#### **4.9 Other comments**

In the final question, while there were only a few answers when asked for any other comments, there was still a trend in the answers. First, a few students noted that the questionnaire was a bit too long, which is something that is taken into consideration when interpreting the answers. Then, some students mentioned that not all international students

are “NNS,” and that “NS” still face difficulties. Finally, a handful of students suggested either that the EAP courses be advertised heavily and visibly during the application process to the university or that it be made mandatory.

#### **4.10 Factors influencing student perception of skills: quantitative analysis**

From a more general analysis, I then explored specific factors that may influence the students’ perceptions of importance and difficulty of skills. Based on current debates in the field such as EGAP vs. ESAP, five factors were identified for analysis: degree level, discipline, time spent studying in an English-speaking country, L1(s), and IELTS scores. First, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to flag significant relationships. Then, a post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test was conducted for each group combination to determine between which group there is significance (e.g., between STEM and AHSS when looking at difficulty writing lengthy essays). When using these tests, semantic differential scales (e.g., essential to not essential or easy to difficult) were combined into three groups rather than five to determine if differences in overall feelings were influenced by the above five factors. This decision was made as this section of the quantitative analysis is looking at more general differences such as if different groups find certain aspects difficult or not as compared to another group.

Therefore, 1 represented not important, 2 represented neutral, and 3 represented essential. The larger the mean rank, the more importance assigned to the element in question. Like the rating of importance, 1 represented difficult, 2 represented neutral, and 3 represented easy. The smaller the mean rank, the more difficult the group found that element. Questions asking if lectures and assignments involve certain elements were coded as 1 representing yes and 2 representing no. Therefore, the larger the mean rank, the less the group encounters an element.

##### **4.10.1 Degree level**

Students were sorted into three groups based on degree level: undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD (Table 4-9), with the majority of the students indicating that they were postgraduate students (72).

**Table 4-9**  
*Degree level by number of respondents*

<b>Degree Level</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Undergraduate	35
Postgraduate	72
PhD	17

A Kruskal-Wallis test identified 13 factors as significant (Table 4-10). Most of these factors revolved around types of assessment, elements of lectures, and the importance assigned to different elements. Only the assigned importance of elements of writing and speaking were flagged as significant. Additionally, only one factor for self-assessed ability was flagged, difficulty participating in class discussions and group work, and this is thought to be because of the differences between the degree levels in terms of lecture content and the amount of required group work in the students' courses.

Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U tests were then conducted for each group pairing to determine where the significance was for each factor flagged in the Kruskal-Wallis test (Tables 4-11 to 4-13). As expected, postgraduates and PhD students showed less of a difference between their answers with only four flagged significant elements as compared to either of those groups and undergraduate students with nine flagged significant factors between postgraduates and undergraduates and 10 flagged significant factors between PhDs and undergraduates.

**Table 4-10***Kruskal-Wallis test significant factors for degree level*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank Undergraduate</b>	<b>Mean Rank Postgraduate</b>	<b>Mean Rank PhD</b>
Importance of creating a research space	9.251	2	0.010	49.66	65.60	75.79
Importance of designing research methods	8.251	2	0.018	51.00	64.96	75.76
Importance of writing up the methods section	9.568	2	0.008	48.66	67.10	71.50
Importance of participating in class discussions and group work	7.597	2	0.022	50.60	67.72	64.91
Importance of communicating with lecturers	7.870	2	0.020	50.34	66.74	69.56
Importance of negotiating in group work	8.101	2	0.017	50.26	68.60	61.88
Difficulty in participating in class discussions and group work	10.496	2	0.005	53.04	61.82	84.85
Written exams (Assignments)	27.007	2	<0.001	39.36	71.83	70.62
Reading (Assignments)	6.356	2	0.042	53.31	65.22	69.88
Essays and reports (Assignments)	10.682	2	0.005	58.77	61.31	75.24
Question and answer (Lectures)	12.081	2	0.002	64.07	56.44	84.91
Discussion (Lectures)	23.652	2	<0.001	72.03	53.31	81.82
Listening (Lectures)	7.553	2	0.023	56.77	62.75	73.24



**Table 4-11***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for undergraduate and postgraduate groups*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank Undergraduate</b>	<b>Mean Rank Postgraduate</b>
Written exams (Assignments)	600.000	<.001	<b>35.14</b>	63.17
Reading (Assignments)	1018.00	0.024	<b>47.09</b>	57.36
Importance of creating a research space	942.500	0.020	44.93	<b>58.41</b>
Importance of designing research methods	977.500	0.036	45.93	<b>57.92</b>
Importance of writing up the methods section	889.000	0.006	43.40	<b>59.15</b>
Importance of participating in class discussions and group work	918.000	0.007	44.23	<b>58.75</b>
Importance of communicating with lecturers	925.000	0.010	44.43	<b>58.65</b>
Importance of negotiating in group work	888.000	0.004	43.37	<b>59.17</b>
Discussion (Lectures)	1105.00	<0.001	64.87	<b>48.72</b>

**Table 4-12***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for postgraduate and PhD groups*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank Postgraduate</b>	<b>Mean Rank PhD</b>
Essays or written reports (Assignments)	474.500	0.009	<b>43.09</b>	53.09
Question and answer (Lectures)	331.000	<0.001	<b>41.1</b>	61.53
Discussion (Lectures)	330.500	<0.001	<b>41.09</b>	61.56
Difficulty participating in class discussions and group work	380.000	0.008	<b>41.78</b>	58.65

**Table 4-13***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for undergraduate and PhD groups*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank Undergraduate</b>	<b>Mean Rank PhD</b>
Importance of communicating with lecturers	207.000	0.049	23.91	<b>31.82</b>
Importance of creating research space	218.500	0.005	22.73	<b>34.26</b>
Importance of designing research methods	177.500	0.01	23.07	<b>33.56</b>
Importance of writing up the methods section	184.00	0.016	23.26	<b>33.18</b>
Difficulty participating in class discussions and group work	149.500	0.002	<b>22.27</b>	35.21
Written exams (Assignments)	147.500	<0.001	<b>22.21</b>	35.32
Reading (Assignments)	218	0.018	<b>24.23</b>	31.18
Essays or written reports (Assignments)	218.500	0.005	<b>24.24</b>	31.15
Question and answer (Lectures)	197.500	0.24	<b>23.64</b>	32.38
Listening (Lectures)	218.500	0.005	<b>24.24</b>	31.15

There were significant differences between the three groups in terms of elements in a lecture. It appears that PhD students are less likely to indicate that their lectures contain question and answer as compared to both undergraduates and postgraduates who had the majority indicating that this was a component of their lectures. This could be due to many PhD students not taking lectures as a part of their degree, or when they do take lectures, many are at a postgraduate level. Undergraduates, as compared to PhD students, are more likely to indicate listening as an element. Postgraduates, however, are the ones who are more likely to indicate discussions as a part of their lectures as compared to the two other groups.

Turning to assignments, undergraduates were more likely to have written exams than either of the two other groups. They also indicated that they had more reading as a part of their assignments than the other groups. Admittedly, this question is a bit vague since some students may consider reading done for an essay as a component of their assignment and others may not. PhD students seemed to have less essays or written reports as assignments than the other two groups, however this may not take into consideration the thesis which PhDs are required to write as the main component of their degree.

The importance assigned to each element of the writing process by the groups likely reflect the types of tasks and focus of their degree. The three elements in the writing process which were flagged as significantly different were related to research methods. Undergraduates assigned less importance to this than either postgraduates and PhD students, likely because of less dissertation-style tasks being assigned at an undergraduate level, and most of the undergraduates being from the AHSS discipline where laboratory work is not generally required.

When evaluating speaking skills, a significant difference between undergraduates and postgraduates was found in three skills, and between undergraduates and PhD students in one skill. Less undergraduates found participating in class discussions and group work to be important than postgraduates, possibly due to less of their lectures including discussions as indicated in the analysis above. Undergraduates also found negotiating in group work to be less important than postgraduates. Additionally, communicating with lecturers was less important to undergraduates than either postgraduates or PhD students. This could be because of less interaction with lecturers at an undergraduate level, or the possibility of not being assigned supervisors as postgraduates and PhD students would be for their dissertations.

The final significant difference between degree levels was the difficulty of participating in class discussions and group work. PhD students found it easier than either

undergraduates or postgraduates. One possible explanation is that PhD students have had more experience with these elements through the years as they have completed both of the previous degrees and, theoretically, have engaged in group work and class discussions more than those in a lower degree level.

#### 4.10.2 Discipline

The impact of discipline was then explored due to the EGAP/ESAP debate in the field. Table 4-14 shows the three broad categories assigned to the students. Unfortunately, finer groups such as business, law, chemistry, linguistics, etc. could not be made due to the number of participants. For this study, AHSS had the highest response rate (92) with Medical Sciences having only eight respondents.

**Table 4-14**  
*Groups for discipline by number of respondents*

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
AHSS	92
STEM	24
Medical Sciences	8

Through the test run, 16 factors were flagged as significant (Table 4-15). These included mainly the importance assigned to different elements of writing and reading and elements included in assignments and lectures. Only two questions looking at self-assessed ability were flagged: difficulty reading critically and difficulty understanding accents. Further, the perceptions of professors' effectiveness of communicating expectations were also flagged as significant. STEM and Medical Sciences were the least different in their answers with only two flagged significant differences (Table 4-16). AHSS was significantly different from both STEM and Medical Sciences with 11 flagged differences each (Table 4-17 and Table 4-18).

**Table 4-15***Kruskal-Wallis test significant factors for discipline*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank AHSS</b>	<b>Mean Rank STEM</b>	<b>Mean Rank Medical Sciences</b>
Difficulty reading critically	6.241	2	0.044	66.54	54.42	40.31
Difficulty understanding accents	7.447	2	0.024	66.43	56.81	34.38
Professors' effectiveness communicating expectations	10.346	2	0.006	65.07	64.92	25.75
Importance of writing introductions	11.635	2	0.003	67.83	46.25	50.00
Importance of evaluating literature	7.796	2	0.020	65.95	50.60	58.56
Importance of proof-reading	8.449	2	0.015	66.43	47.17	63.25
Importance of using appropriate lexical phrases in writing	6.623	2	0.036	66.36	50.40	54.44
Importance of summarizing and paraphrasing	12.098	2	0.002	66.27	47.29	64.81
Importance of linking sentences smoothly in writing	10.938	2	0.004	66.51	51.58	49.13
Importance of writing coherent paragraphs	9.237	2	0.010	65.78	55.19	46.75
Importance of using proper grammar in writing	7.097	2	0.029	65.58	52.94	55.75
Importance of reading critically	10.886	2	0.004	63.87	65.08	39.00
Importance of reading specialized papers	6.012	2	0.049	64.68	57.60	52.06
Essays or written reports (Assignments)	20.770	2	<0.001	58.35	72.50	80.25
Question and answer (Lectures)	7.527	2	0.023	58.39	71.08	84.00
Discussion (Lectures)	12.373	2	0.002	57.76	74.83	80.00

**Table 4-16***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for STEM and Medical Sciences*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank STEM</b>	<b>Mean Rank Medical Sciences</b>
Professors' effectiveness communicating expectations	36.5	0.007	<b>18.98</b>	9.06
Importance of reading critically	57	0.013	<b>18.13</b>	11.63

**Table 4-17***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for AHSS and STEM*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank AHSS</b>	<b>Mean Rank STEM</b>
Importance of writing introductions	718.000	0.001	<b>63.65</b>	43.23
Importance of evaluating literature	831.000	0.006	<b>62.4</b>	48.15
Importance of proof-reading	758.000	0.004	<b>63.32</b>	44.54
Importance of using appropriate lexical phrases in writing	818.000	0.013	<b>62.66</b>	47.13
Importance of summarizing and paraphrasing	764.000	<0.001	<b>63.22</b>	44.92
Importance of linking sentences smoothly in writing	838.500	0.003	<b>62.3</b>	48.54
Importance of writing coherent paragraphs	915.000	0.023	<b>61.57</b>	51.38
Importance of using proper grammar in writing	879.000	0.010	<b>61.97</b>	49.83
Essays or written reports (Assignments)	852.000	<0.001	<b>56.76</b>	70.25
Discussion (Lectures)	800.000	0.003	<b>56.16</b>	72.58
Reading (Lectures)	808.000	0.016	<b>56.2</b>	69.46

**Table 4-18***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for AHSS and Medical Sciences*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank AHSS</b>	<b>Mean Rank Medical Sciences</b>
Difficulty reading critically	209.500	0.032	52.22	<b>30.69</b>
Difficulty understanding accents	177.000	0.010	52.58	<b>26.63</b>
Professors' effectiveness communicating expectations	133.500	0.001	<b>53.05</b>	21.19
Importance of linking sentences smoothly in writing	264.500	0.020	<b>51.63</b>	37.56
Importance of writing coherent paragraphs	255.500	0.008	<b>51.72</b>	36.44
Importance of reading critically	219.000	0.002	<b>52.12</b>	31.88
Importance of reading specialized papers	293.500	0.032	<b>51.31</b>	41.19
Importance of understanding lectures	266.000	0.022	<b>51.61</b>	37.75
Essays or written reports (Assignments)	238.000	<0.001	<b>49.09</b>	66.75
Question and answer (Lectures)	216.000	0.021	<b>48.85</b>	69.50
Discussion (Lectures)	236.000	0.010	<b>49.07</b>	67.00

The perceived effectiveness of professors' communication of expectations was flagged as significant. Medical Sciences had lower satisfaction than either of the other disciplines with more Medical Sciences students indicating that they did not believe their professors effectively communicated their expectations.

When asked about the content of assignments, only essays and reports was flagged as being significantly different between groups. More AHSS students reported having essays and reports as assignments than either STEM or Medical Sciences. Yet, each group still had the majority of respondents indicating that these types of assignments are given in their course.

Turning to elements of lectures, more AHSS students reported having question and answers in their lectures than Medical Sciences. More of AHSS students said that discussions are a part of their lectures as opposed to STEM and Medical Sciences students. AHSS students also had a higher rate of responses indicating that reading was a part of their lectures as opposed to Medical Sciences students.

Turning to the importance of different elements associated with the writing process, AHSS students consistently placed higher importance on the elements than at least one of the other groups. AHSS students found evaluating literature, writing introductions, proof-reading, using appropriate lexical phrases, summarizing and paraphrasing, and using proper grammar to be more important than STEM students. However, while not flagged by the statistical tests as significant, no Medical Sciences students indicated proof-reading and summarizing and paraphrasing as important. Students in AHSS found linking sentences smoothly and writing coherent paragraphs to be more important than either STEM or Medical Sciences students. Again, these differences may be caused by the types of tasks or focus of the courses.

Following the same general trend as the elements associated with the writing process, AHSS students assigned more importance to the elements associated with reading and listening. More AHSS students found reading specialized papers and understanding lectures to be more important than the Medical Sciences students. Both AHSS and STEM students assigned more importance to reading critically than Medical Sciences students.

The final questions to be flagged as significantly different were the difficulty of reading critically and understanding accents. Medical Sciences students found reading critically and understanding accents to be more difficult than AHSS students.



### 4.10.3 Time spent studying in an English-speaking country

The next factor investigated was time spent studying in an English-speaking country (Table 4-19). Four categories defining the length of time have a fairly even spread of respondents, however, the category “less than 6 months” has the highest number of respondents with a count of 43.

**Table 4-19**

*Groups for time spent studying in an English-speaking country by number of respondents*

<b>Time Spent Studying in an English-speaking Country</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
<6 Months	43
6 Months to 1 Year	31
2-4 Years	16
5+ Years	34

Ten questions were flagged as having a significant difference based on these categories (Table 4-20). Most of these related to the self-assessed difficulty of elements associated with speaking and listening, with only three differences relating to the importance of an element: referring to sources, using proper academic language and vocabulary in writing, and understanding accents. This trend could be due to becoming more comfortable speaking and listening as time progresses in a place where you exercise these skills on a regular basis. The biggest difference was seen between the groups “less than 6 months” and “5+ years” with eight questions showing a significant difference (Tables 4.21-4.25). Less of a difference was seen between any of the other group combinations which could signal that it takes up to five years to see these elements become easier, or at least for students to feel comfortable enough with the elements to rate them lower in difficulty.

**Table 4-20***Kruskal-Wallis significant factors for time spent studying in and English-speaking country*

Variable	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	P Value	Mean Rank <6 Month	Mean Rank 6 Months to 1 Year	Mean Rank 2-4 Years	Mean Rank 5+ Years
Difficulty communicating with classmates	9.897	3	0.019	50.79	64.21	70.78	71.85
Difficulty linking ideas and sentences smoothly in speaking	8.953	3	0.030	51.03	71.08	60.06	70.32
Difficulty using proper language and vocabulary in speaking	9.507	3	0.023	51.53	64.08	61.94	75.19
Difficulty using proper grammar in speaking	9.538	3	0.023	51.52	61.73	68.50	74.26
Difficulty understanding specific language features of an academic genre	9.576	3	0.023	52.81	67.97	53.41	74.04
Difficulty understanding accents	10.153	3	0.017	54.38	58.08	63.75	78.94
Difficulty understanding lectures	9.926	3	0.019	54.71	60.9	59.56	77.99
Importance of referring to sources	8.335	3	0.040	54.92	67.19	67.31	65.54
Importance of proper academic language and vocabulary in writing (style)	7.845	3	0.049	56.71	67.63	69.50	61.85
Importance of understanding accents	9.143	3	0.027	74.24	57.31	54.28	56.25

**Table 4-21***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for <6 months and 6 months to 1 year*

Variable	Mann-Whitney U	P Value	Mean Rank <6 Months	Mean Rank 6 Months to 1 Year
Difficulty linking ideas and sentences smoothly in speaking	450.500	0.012	<b>32.48</b>	44.47
Importance of understanding accents	476.500	0.014	<b>41.92</b>	31.37
Importance of proper academic language and vocabulary in writing (style)	546.500	0.027	34.71	<b>41.37</b>
Importance of referring to sources	534.000	0.028	34.42	<b>41.77</b>

**Table 4-22***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for 2-4 years and 5+ years*

Variable	Mann-Whitney U	P Value	Mean Rank 2-4 Years	Mean Rank 5+ Years
Difficulty understanding lectures	191.000	0.048	<b>20.44</b>	27.88
Difficulty understanding specific language features of an academic genre	182.500	0.043	<b>19.91</b>	28.13

**Table 4-23***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for <6 months and 2-4 years*

Variable	Mann-Whitney U	P Value	Mean Rank <6 Months	Mean Rank 2-4 Years
Importance of understanding accents	239.000	0.027	<b>32.44</b>	23.44
Importance of using proper academic language and vocabulary (style)	272.000	0.049	28.33	<b>34.50</b>

**Table 4-24***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for <6 months and 5+ years*

Variable	Mann-Whitney U	P Value	Mean Rank <6 Months	Mean Rank 5+ Years
Difficulty communicating with classmates	480.000	0.004	<b>33.16</b>	46.38
Difficulty linking ideas and sentences smoothly in speaking	515.000	0.017	<b>33.98</b>	45.35
Difficulty using proper language and vocabulary in speaking	474.500	0.004	<b>33.03</b>	46.54
Difficulty using proper grammar in speaking	480.000	0.005	<b>33.16</b>	46.38
Difficulty understanding specific language features of a genre	477.500	0.005	<b>33.10</b>	46.46
Difficulty understanding accents	459.000	0.003	<b>32.67</b>	47.00
Difficulty understanding lectures	461.000	0.003	<b>32.72</b>	46.94
Importance of understanding accents	521.000	0.011	<b>43.88</b>	32.82

**Table 4-25***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for 6 months to 1 year and 5+ years*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank 6 Months-1 Year</b>	<b>Mean Rank 5+ Years</b>
Difficulty understanding accents	356.000	0.017	<b>27.48</b>	38.03
Difficulty understanding lectures	379.500	0.027	<b>28.24</b>	37.34

Students in the “less than 6 months” group found referring to sources less important than the “6 months to 1 year” group. The importance of using proper academic language and vocabulary in writing was rated as being more important by the “6 months to 1 year” group than the “less than 6 months” group. Likewise, the “2-4 years” group found using proper academic language and vocabulary in writing more important than the “less than 6 months” group. The group “less than 6 months” found understanding accents to be more important than any other group except for “5+ years,” where there was no significant difference found. The rating of understanding accents could be caused by becoming used to other accents during the years, and so the importance assigned to this skill reduces with perceived ease.

In terms of difficulty, again the “less than 6 months” group showed the most differences. As compared to the “5+ years” group, the “less than 6 months” group consistently rated all of the speaking skills flagged as significantly different as more difficult. There is also a difference between the “less than 6 months group” and the “6 months to 1 year” group when looking at the difficulty of linking ideas and sentences smoothly, again following the same trend of the “less than 6 months” group finding this to be more difficult.

Turning to reading and listening, the “less than 6 months” group again rated all of the flagged skills as being more difficult as compared to “5+ years.” When looking at the difficulty understanding accents and difficulty understanding lectures, the “6 months to 1 year” group found this to be more difficult than the “5+ years.” The “2-4 years” group also found understanding lectures and understanding specific language features of an academic genre (reading) more difficult than the “5+ years” group.

#### **4.10.4 L1(s)**

L1(s) was also an interesting factor due to the Academic Literacies stance of offering EAP support regardless of the students’ L1(s). Table 4-26 shows that the respondents were divided into two groups: those with English as an LX, and those with English as an L1. The majority of respondents were English LX students (112). Fourteen questions were flagged as being significantly different between the two groups (Table 4-27). These differences mainly pertained to the difficulty assigned to different elements, however three questions asking about the importance of elements of writing, one question about the importance of an element of reading, and one question about the importance of listening were also flagged.

**Table 4-26***Groups for L1(s) by number of respondents*

<b>L1(s)</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Language(s) other than English	112
Monolingual English or multilingual English + other language	12

**Table 4-27***Mann-Whitney U test for language(s) other than English and monolingual English or multilingual English + other language*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank English LX</b>	<b>Mean Rank Monolingual English L1 or Multilingual English + other L1</b>
Difficulty writing lengthy papers	380.500	0.008	<b>59.90</b>	86.79
Difficulty reviewing and critiquing previous literature	448.000	0.041	<b>60.50</b>	81.17
Difficulty using appropriate lexical phrases in writing	363.000	0.006	<b>59.74</b>	88.25
Difficulty using proper academic language and vocabulary in writing	451.500	0.046	<b>60.53</b>	80.88
Difficulty communicating with classmates	407.00	0.012	<b>60.13</b>	84.58
Difficulty understanding specific language features of an academic genre	428.000	0.027	<b>60.32</b>	82.83
Difficulty reading quickly	360.500	0.005	<b>59.72</b>	88.46
Difficulty understanding accents	432.000	0.031	<b>60.36</b>	82.50
Difficulty understanding lectures	420.000	0.020	<b>60.25</b>	83.50
Importance of writing exam essays	345.000	0.001	<b>65.42</b>	35.25
Importance of writing introductions	392.000	0.004	<b>65.00</b>	39.17
Importance of commenting on and discussing data in writing	521.000	0.037	<b>63.85</b>	49.92
Importance of understanding accents	454.000	0.046	<b>64.36</b>	45.17
Importance of reading quickly	450.000	0.027	<b>64.48</b>	44.00

The importance assigned to writing exam essays, writing introductions, commenting on and discussing data in writing, understanding accents, and reading quickly showed that English LX students found them to be more important as compared to those with English as an L1. Those with English as an LX also found writing lengthy papers, reviewing and critiquing previous literature, using appropriate lexical phrases in writing, and using proper academic language and vocabulary in writing to be more difficult. Likewise, they also

identify communicating with classmates, understanding specific language features of an academic genre, reading quickly, understanding accents, and understanding lectures to be more difficult. It could be that, as seen with the above section exploring time spent in an English-speaking country, that familiarity and time spent using these skills could be factors in the difference seen between the two groups.

The responses were initially further categorized as: monolingual or multilingual other language(s), monolingual English L1, multilingual English L1 + other language(s) L1. The statistical results were similar to the division of with or without English as an L1 with the exception of one added variable (difficulty using proper grammar while speaking) and minus two variables (difficulty reviewing and critiquing literature and difficulty reading quickly). These results, however, are not included in the in-depth analysis as only four participants were multilingual English L1 + other language(s) L1. This would be an interesting line of exploration for future research where intentional sampling of these categories is conducted.

#### **4.10.5 IELTS score**

To analyze the impact of the participants' IELTS scores, first those with no information on their scores (N=29) were excluded. Then categories based on their scores were made (Table 4-28). IELTS scores below 6.5 were combined, first, to reach the required count for the Kruskal-Wallis test and, second, to recognize the generally accepted cutoff of 6.5 for entry to university. IELTS scores above 8.5 were also combined for reasons of count and since 8.5+ is recognized as a C2 or proficient level of English. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed significance for only one variable: importance of proof-reading (Table 4-29).

**Table 4-28**

*Groups for IELTS score by number of respondents*

<b>IELTS Score</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
5.5-6	5
6.5	25
7	21
7.5	20
8	17
8.5-9	7

**Table 4-29***Kruskal-Wallis significant factors for IELTS scores and importance of proof-reading*

<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank 5.5-6 IELTS</b>	<b>Mean Rank 6.5 IELTS</b>	<b>Mean Rank 7 IELTS</b>	<b>Mean Rank 7.5 IELTS</b>	<b>Mean Rank 8 IELTS</b>	<b>Mean Rank 8.5-9 IELTS</b>
13.733	5	0.017	61	46.64	56.57	51.7	38.35	30.71

However, when conducting the Mann-Whitney U test, SPSS determines if the sample size is sufficient enough to use the asymptotic significance value (asymp. Sig) as the P-value, and when it is, it does not provide the exact significance value (exact sig.) unless specified. When the exact sig was automatically provided by SPSS due to low sample size, the exact sig. was used. Out of all of the tests (e.g., discipline, degree level, etc.), only the IELTS scores prompted SPSS to provide the exact sig.

Upon conducting the post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test, IELTS 5.5-6 group and IELTS 8.5-9 group showed significance initially. However, the exact sig [2\*(1-tailed Sig.)] must be used here, and this equaled .148 signaling no significant difference. This again happened when looking at the difference between IELTS 7.5 and 8.5-9 (exact sig. [2\*(1-tailed sig.)] = 1.04).

Only two post-hoc Mann-Whitney U tests, then, revealed significance: IELTS 7 and IELTS 8, and IELTS 7 and IELTS 8.5-9 (Table 4-30 and Table 4-31). While flagged for significance, I do not assign any importance to this result as these IELTS scores would gain direct entry into universities around the world. Therefore, these results are irrelevant for the study at hand due to pre-sessional EAP courses generally accepting students with IELTS 6.5 and below. However, the fact that more significant differences were not found between the IELTS bands is a surprising result in and of itself as IELTS bands are a ubiquitous marker for entry to university, and by proxy, used as a gate-keeping tool where students are deemed to have a sufficient English level to complete the course upon achieving an IELTS 6.5 score. It would also be beneficial to collect more results from students who have below an IELTS 6.5 and 5.5 to determine if more differences would be seen between these groups.

**Table 4-30***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for IELTS 7 and IELTS 8*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>P Value</b>	<b>Mean Rank IELTS 7</b>	<b>Mean Rank IELTS 8</b>
Importance of proof-reading	110.5	0.045*exact sig, 0.010*asympt. Sig	<b>22.74</b>	15.5



**Table 4-31***Post-hoc Mann-Whitney U test for IELTS 7 and IELTS 8.5-9*

Variable	Mann-Whitney U	P Value	Mean Rank IELTS 7	Mean Rank IELTS 8.5-9
Importance of proof-reading	36.5	0.048*exact sig, 0.006*asympt. Sig	<b>16.26</b>	9.21

#### 4.11 Conclusion

The questionnaire provided information to consider while designing the pre-sessional EAP course. First, the elements of lectures were identified as mostly consisting of listening, note-taking, and class discussions. In terms of assignments, the students stated that written assignments and presentations were the most frequent type of assignments. However, students found professors to be a bit unclear with their expectations although they had a vague idea that they are marked on elements of their writing. The main bulk of the questionnaire focused on assessing the importance of skills and the self-assessed difficulty with these skills. Overall, the students assigned importance to all of the skills, yet perceptions of the difficulty of the skills were more neutral. Students found literacy skills (reading and writing) to be both the most important and most difficult skills.

In their open answers, the students began to introduce non-linguistic and non-academic factors such as culture and professionalism as skills to be learned in an EAP course. When asked their opinion on what should be taught in a pre-sessional EAP course, there was a focus on the writing process. Students also requested speaking, cultural aspects, real-life practice, and reading. They also began to focus on a mix of linguistic and non-linguistic factors in their answers pointing to a need for a course which can address these complex needs. In response to other factors which influence academic success, the students answered that their living situation and social life have a big impact. They identify that these aspects could have more of an impact on their academic success than linguistic features. However, they also illustrate how language and other factors are intertwined and often relate to or impact the other.

The inferential statistics, then, revealed potentially helpful results for the basis of organization for EAP programs. Statistical tests indicated that there may be more of a difference between degree levels and disciplines than IELTS scores. This could indicate that organizing a course by discipline and degree level could be beneficial and that levels based on IELTS scores could prove to be an unfounded organizational choice. Differences in L1(s) and time spent studying in an English-speaking country revealed results, however the number and type of results indicated that perhaps levels based on these factors or

different support classes in a pre-sessional EAP course could aid in addressing these differences rather than excluding students who have English as an L1 or who have spent substantial time in an English-speaking country from the course altogether. It would be fruitful to re-administer this questionnaire, along with other measurements of differences (e.g., tasks encountered), targeting groups who had lower participation (e.g., students with English as an L1, Medical Sciences students, students with <5.5 IELTS band, etc.).

As with all questionnaires, the findings are limited with respect to depth and cannot fully inform a curriculum. Indeed, the results from this questionnaire may offer guidance for course content or confirmation of organizational choices such as separating classes by discipline. However, these decisions must still be made with other information as the questionnaire did not ask the likes of written assignment lengths, types, and aims which may contribute to differences seen between undergraduate and postgraduate courses and courses of different disciplines. It is also impossible to cover all skills which students may encounter in one questionnaire as doing so would render a lengthy questionnaire and may result in lower response rates. Another factor is that this questionnaire asks for self-assessment which may be subjective and not reflect the students' aptitude of the skills as assessed by a third party. Further, despite finding statistical significance between groups, it must always be kept in mind that correlation does not equal causation, so definite links between groupings and answers must be made with caution. Therefore, to add in-depth and rich data to the study, interviews were also conducted to further inform decisions in ways that questionnaire may not be able to.

## 5 CHAPTER FIVE: STUDENT INTERVIEW RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction

After the questionnaire, which provided an overall, broad view of factors which may influence curricula and assessment design, interviews were also conducted with both students and faculty. This chapter focuses on the student interviews, while the next chapter focuses on the faculty interviews.

Forty-one students from six institutions were interviewed. As with the questionnaire and the faculty interviews, there is a large bias towards institution 1 as the majority of respondents were within this institution. The aim of the interviews was to gain a more detailed view of students' needs, expectations, and strengths/struggles while studying in Irish higher education. The questions were thematically organized to explore expectations, modules and assessment, experiences with current entry and preparation tools, and advice for students and faculty. The interviews were analyzed thematically through a critical lens.

From these interviews, six parent codes were identified during analysis (Table 5-1). The coding is presented both with the number of participants and the number of instances. The focus remains on the collated instances, rather than case studies, however, if only one participant is represented in a code with 120 instances, it is deemed less important than a code where 30 participants composed the 120 instances.

All instances have overlapping coding, with some sub-codes within a parent code having identical coding to a sub-code within a different parent code. In these instances, different aspects within the coding are the focus in different parent codes. For example, if assessments are coded in both the *regulations, rules, and authority* parent code and the *variation* parent code, the former will focus on the norms imposed by the assessment while the latter with focus on the number of different types of assessment students encounter.

**Table 5-1***Overview of student interview coding*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Imagining the university	Creating the university or ideas developed about the university	41	2882
Regulations, rules, and authority	Enforcement and imposition of norms and rules	41	1357
Student struggle and resistance	Self-evaluated instances and causes of struggle. Contradicting opinions and ideas or going against norms.	41	1151
Variation	Instances of variation, subjectivity, or case-by-case individuality	41	1078
Ownership and empowerment	Gaining or having a feeling of authority, success and/or a right to own or use language independent of “native speakers” (Galloway & Rose, 2015)	41	430
Meaning-making and negotiation	How intended meaning is understood and conveyed (Bakhtin, 1986) and aspects of negotiating such as meaning or authority	41	218

Within this chapter, the six parent codes are explored in detail within the sub-sections. The cutoff for discussing the codes and sub-codes is 117 instances. This was due to space and scope limitations. The cutoff level was set so that the ratio of minimum number of instances to number of participants was the same as in the case of faculty (40 instances : 14 faculty = 117 instances : 41 students). Further, the tables within the chapters only present coding which are high-order parent codes (first or second level coding) or when the coding is discussed within this chapter. A complete list of codes can be found in appendix G.

## **5.2 Imagining the university**

*Imagining the university* is a code where students both evaluate and describe their university (Table 5-2). In this parent code, *imagining* is used as the students describe their perceptions of academia, both in evaluation and describing expectations. Students, in the code *expectations*, *qualities for success and dominant discourse*, both describe what they believe faculty expect of them and also what they, as students, need to succeed in academia.

**Table 5-2***Imagining the university*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Expectations, qualities for success, and dominant discourse	41	2420
Evaluation of faculty and institutions	41	462

### 5.2.1 Expectations, qualities for success, and dominant discourse

Within *expectations, qualities for success, and dominant discourse*, students' remarks were divisible into two sub-codes (Table 5-3). First, *student expectations and needs* is where students spoke about what they believe they need to succeed in academia, this could include personal qualities or resources provided by the university. This differs from the second sub-code, *faculty or external expectations*, where students speculate what they believe their professors expect of them and/or what external expectations they must meet to succeed academically.

**Table 5-3**

*Expectations, qualities for success, and dominant discourse in student interviews*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Student expectations and needs	41	1425
Faculty expectations and needs	41	995

#### 5.2.1.1 Student expectations and needs

*Student expectations and needs* is the sub-code where students speak about what they believe they need, externally and internally, to succeed in academia (Table 5-4). Three main areas emerged within this sub-code: *institutional factors, other and internal factors, and writing*.

**Table 5-4**

*Student expectations and needs as expressed by students*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Institutional factors	41	593
Improved student supports and resources	41	510
Responsive lectures, courses, and institutions	39	261
Extra labs or support classes	38	181
Other and internal factors	40	286
Writing	37	150

##### 5.2.1.1.1 Institutional factors

Within *institutional factors*, students mainly described needing improved student supports and resources from their institutions. First, they spoke of responsive lectures, courses, and institutions. This sub-code also had three predominating themes: faculty awareness and intervention (43 instances from 23 participants), clear expectations (41 instances from 19 participants), and mentoring and supervision (34 instances from 18 participants). These three sub-codes have a great amount of overlap, as will be shown with the examples used in this section.

Students such as Abeer and Seven spoke of needing awareness and intervention in the classroom, they stated that professors should be cognizant of international students in the classroom and respond accordingly, giving examples of discussing expectations and speaking slowly (Example 5-1 and Example 5-2). Other students, like Lucy and June, spoke of needing professors to be aware and intervene more in external matters such as wellbeing and social integration (Example 5-3 and Example 5-4). June spoke of a particularly difficult experience where she lived in 65 hostels during the course of one year because her former rental accommodation was sold. She expands on that experience to speak of how supervisors should be aware of students' wellbeing outside of academia and intervene or show empathy to support their students as these problems greatly impact academic success. Lucy and Shelly OB, likewise, state that faculty should remain aware of how students are socially fitting into their new academic environment; they cite that being an international student increases the likelihood of struggling in a new environment as compared to Irish students, and that professors should ensure that international students are referred to proper supports (Example 5-4 and Example 5-5).

#### **Example 5-1**

Advice to faculties would be that they should understand that there can be some, like, difficulty in understanding by these students, so they should understand this and not go with the flow I would say. They should try to take a personal note of this situation. Like, some students are also hesitant to come up with a problem, and since they are fearing that they may lose marks and that this may impact their assessment, so they don't, like, come up to the professors to, like, ask any questions or doubts they might have because of this issue. – *Abeer, ll. 226-233*

#### **Example 5-2**

I have to say that could you please @slow @down because they - maybe they want to talk more about the content, so their speed is really fast sometimes. I found it very difficult to, how to say it, to grasp them, yeah. I hope the keywords can be clear because sometimes there are too many informations in one class, and after class I feel it's hard to summarize it. – *Seven, ll. 13260-13264*

#### **Example 5-3**

My supervisor didn't care [about me living in hostels]. It's not that he didn't care, he was just, like "Oh cool, you're doing that. Okay." I hope that he told that because he thinks I'm a very independent individual, and I wouldn't just have collapsed under the pressure of having to do that. But, still, you know, you want someone to worry about you, even just to ask you if everything is okay because if you don't, the small little thing could become huge in the future...So, they need to be more aware of certain things, which it does not mean that they have to parent us or spoon feed us, it just means that they need to understand that we're in a vulnerable position and we need help, and sometimes just asking "How are you?" or to ask if you want to talk about things can make a huge difference. - *June, ll. 6070-6075, 6082-6086*

**Example 5-4**

Make sure that they find people to speak to... I would say make sure that the student is able to fit in, and just have a look around, see what's going on, just pop in a class and just be like is everything alright?...I had friends who went to Erasmus, and they struggled a lot because of that...Also, at the PhD level even more, because as a PhD you don't have classes so very easily you can end up just being in your house. So, for example places like the [research institute]...that would be a great way to, like, to help international because at least you would be sure they'd meet people. Because whereas, like, Irish people, they already, at the background, they already have their friends or their family etc. – *Lucy, ll. 8981, 8984-8987, 8989-8995*

**Example 5-5**

Even checking in with their students, which I know, like, the mentality is you don't need to be doing that, they're independent, but as a foreign student you're not an adult in your own world. You're an adult in a different world. So, there's a certain amount of - that could be even just you know a couple of times a semester, you know, I don't know, or if they had a sheet of details about where to find [supports], you know, that they didn't have to do it themselves. It was there, they could give to students who are struggling to find the places they needed to go to access certain things. - *Shelly OB, ll. 13638-13645*

Students also expressed the need for clear expectations surrounding academic work (Example 5-6). These examples were generally straightforward, as seen below, where students explicitly stated the need for clear expectations and examples of assessments and expectations. Further, students discussed needing good mentoring and supervision (Example 5-7, Example 5-8, and Example 5-9). This includes mentoring and supervision in both research supervision, in the case of a PhD or postgraduate research student, and also in general to help students navigate the academy. Most students signaled a lack of support, and those who did receive support had to seek the support themselves or received it informally. As Max states, it should be the institution who provides and clearly demarcates this support.

**Example 5-6**

Probably, like, I know for assignments, for example, they do have a rubric or some kind of chart that helps them. Great. But, for example, showing us that beforehand would be helpful to know what it is expected, for what you're being graded on when you turn in an assignment. Because sometimes you think that you're writing what you're supposed to write, and then when you check that table you see what they marked, maybe you didn't understand correctly or maybe there's some kind of mismatch between what you think they want and what they actually grade. So, being aware of those grading charts would be helpful, and maybe, even though professors don't have the time to work with you in class you know in your assignments, at least providing examples or some kind of guidance so that you know what they want. – *Patricía, ll. 13016-13026*

**Example 5-7**

Because I'm a PhD student, it's not really related to take course because I don't, for me, is not important to be at [institution 1] or in South Africa because they're no different. Because I do research, the only things important for me is my supervisor and he is nice man, it's okay for me. I cannot say something about [institution 1] because the only thing I need is a desk and a laptop and my supervisor @. - *Mike, ll. 10068-10072*

**Example 5-8**

But, like, the first semester maybe I needed like more help just to know, okay we want this, don't worry, like, what do you need. Like, maybe we need more like a tutor, how can I say, because it doesn't matter if I'm postgraduate, because I know that, for example, for undergraduate there are some [discipline] English lectures and I wanted to the same because, for example, they never know if it's my first time that I'm studying [discipline] in English...maybe, even like one week we can just, okay, [discipline] English in general, like, this like we expect this from your assignment, these are the critical thinking, the [discipline] critical thinking. – *Coma, ll. 2592-2598, 2600-2602*

**Example 5-9**

The support maybe. I think we are not supported. We are not enough supported. I don't know how to say that I thought that when I arrived in [institution 1], I would find someone with whom I would sit and try to see what the modules are that I can follow. Like, I think someone can do that. It will take one hour, two hours, but at least the student will be, like, on track. Directly you can ask every question you have and maybe you can have a lot of advices because [institution 1] is nothing like - it's really different from universities in [country] and there's a lot of things that are completely different. I've been lucky because I found that you can have someone at the airport waiting for you, so she explained us a lot of things. Then here I have a friend from those two years of school that I did after high school, so she was here for the whole year, so I met her, and she explained me a lot of things. But I think it's something that should be done by someone working for [institution 1]...I was expecting for more support, but I think it's something in [institution 1], like, you are expected to be really independent, so, just doing things by yourself@. - *Max, ll. 9930-9942, 9945-9946*

Students then went on to speak of extra classes or labs, which they feel would support their success in academia. Overwhelmingly, students spoke of needing EAP classes in various forms. As seen in Example 5-10 and Example 5-11, students pinpointed discipline-specific preparation as being especially useful for succeeding in academia (48 instances from 29 participants). Some students, such as Nadia, alluded to discipline-specific aspects, while others, like Nicole, explicitly referred to discipline-specific preparation. They also spoke of EAP in a more general sense, citing the need for ongoing support as well (38 instances from 22 participants; Example 5-12).



**Example 5-10**

I don't know the actual operation of those summer programs, but I don't know whether they provide a simulation, like, before taking the actual undergraduate or postgraduate program, students can actually get a real picture about the lectures or the structure of their lectures they are going to take. Like, during the summer program, some real lectures can be presented to students for their program so they can get a real picture, like, what kind of challenges I might encounter in future lectures or how the lecture is, what kind of requirements that I have to meet in order to, you know, actually do well in academic study. - *Nadia, ll. 11249-11256*

**Example 5-11**

I think they should give some specific preparation for different programs the students are going to take. Like, if you are going to do a science program, then you should have different preparation from students doing arts and humanities, I think. - *Nicole, ll. 11922-11925*

**Example 5-12**

I think if people that start doing a master's here, if they could have some kind of, you know, seminars on writing skills or what goes into an assignment before they are asked to do something... Make sure that before international students start here, they are aware that they're gonna be asked to write in a high level. So, if they don't have the skills there, that the college, it's here to help them, you know, it's really important for you to...have the writing skills. If you don't have, if you feel that you don't those skills yet, we are here to support you with this modules. - *Zico, ll. 16101-16103, 16264-16269*

**5.2.1.1.2 Other and internal factors**

When speaking of *other or internal factors*, students mainly spoke about their integration and social life (86 instances from 33 participants). Here, students spoke of homesickness, challenges in acclimating to a new country and environment, and also spoke extensively about isolation and developing a healthy support system. Cat, in Example 5-13, spoke about the need for research institutes or easily accessible groups within the university to foster social connections, which in turn supports academic success. BK also spoke about culture shock and stated that universities should help facilitate students' integration (Example 5-14). Other students, not exemplified below, also spoke of the importance of having a personal support group, including family, friends, and peers. It is important to note that while students spoke of this theme broadly, to be included in this sub-code, students had to have pointed to the need for these factors for the support of academic success. If the student merely spoke of their struggles with isolation or integration yet did not state that students need to be socially supported for academic success, it was not counted in this sub-code and was rather counted in the *struggle* sub-code.

**Example 5-13**

I know isolation is a massive issue for people doing post-grad studies because it's pretty isolating because we spend a lot of time just on your own. I guess one of the beneficial things about the [research institute] here is it fosters connections with other people, other students, other staff, which means you are practicing language as well as making connections - it's essentially the same thing just different. But if you've arrived in a place that's unfamiliar and not in a space set-up to do this, even if you're an undergrad, you might meet people, you might not...It's not always easy to know where to find even the communities where, you know, you expect to go. Like, most universities have places for LGBTQ people or for people from particular parts of the world or international students specifically, but you need to know how to find them and look and you need to know what they are and that you can go to them - they're not just for other groups of people. As someone who spent time dealing with younger kids, the more isolated a student, all the more their confidence is damaged and those two feed back into each other really badly. It doesn't matter how smart they are, how capable they are, how high achieving they are, they won't progress. Even if their grades don't slip, it stops them from being able to get past or to continue and that's really unfortunate. – *Cat, ll. 1553-1570*

**Example 5-14**

Then also another big part is the cultural part, because I don't think many students would spend quite a lot a lot of time to learn or try to discover the cultural, you know, the country they're going to study. It's actually causes, like, a lot of problems, especially for people from really different backgrounds, like, huge culture shock. It actually affects a lot of students' personal lives too which could be avoided. So, I think culturally, and then study, and also maybe for students - like, maybe for me from [country], they're quite different backgrounds - they could have, like, I don't know, like, introduction or orientation for - because the system is very different also, university life, like, school life are quite different too – so, if they could give those students maybe some tours around and let them get to know societies and different events or activities, and maybe also some like living tips, that would be good. – *BK, ll. 1322-1333*

**5.2.1.1.3 Writing**

Students, then, also spoke about *writing* as an essential factor for achieving academic success. However, students only spoke of this very generally (46 instances from 24 participants), as seen in Example 5-15. They also spoke about the need for practice with similar genres or assessment types (32 instances from 19 participants; Example 5-16). In this sub-code, students mainly reflected on their personal experiences with not having had practice with the assessment types in their modules, and then extrapolating that personal experience to a wider need to practice with similar content and assessments (Example 5-17). Otherwise, there was not a consensus on which factors within writing (e.g., clarity, structure, etc.) lead to academic success.

**Example 5-15**

One thing I'm thinking of is the academic writing. First, this one is very important as I was in [country], so the [nationality] writing academic writing style is different from the Western, from the [institution 1] one. So, I would recommend anybody to take the writing, at least to take the writing, because that is just the formality, and also the requirements, and the writing style is totally different. – *Anthony, ll. 478-482*

**Example 5-16**

So, I would say having the time to engage with actual tasks that you'll perform in your future whatever, Master, or whatever, or undergraduate. I think it's very important. So, and possibly with a bit of content as well, of the future modules. - *Mary, ll. 9490-9493*

**Example 5-17**

I think writing, really, a kind of help about writing skills. I think, I wish, I don't regret but, I think I should have practiced more writing, for example, try to write more, to see how an essay is structured, how to write an essay, try to write one in a short time. For example, at the end of the year, I'm going to have, like, to write in two hours two [discipline] essays and that kind of scares me because, for example, in [country] you have, like, [discipline] questions and you have four hours to write it. I have two questions in two, one hour just for one question, it's kind of really scary because I've never done that in such short time. - *Noémie, ll. 12265-12272*

**5.2.1.2 Faculty expectations and needs**

Within this sub-code, students speculated what their professors expect of them in order to achieve academic success (Table 5-5). Here, students spoke of *writing*, *oral communication*, and *listening* the most. As with some of the above sections, students did not seem to reach a consensus about what their professors expect beyond these three aspects. As will be seen, the students focused mostly on assessment and deliverables, along with lectures, painting a general picture rather than describing the qualities or specifics that their professors are looking for.

**Table 5-5**

*Faculty expectations and needs as expressed by students*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Writing	41	343
Assessment and deliverables	41	237
Oral communication	40	172
Listening	39	121
Lectures	39	118

**5.2.1.2.1 Writing**

In terms of *writing*, students primarily focused on the types of assessment and deliverables which faculty require in their modules. Most students mentioned dissertations of various

forms (105 instances from 30 participants). Here, they also spoke about the parts which make up a dissertation such as a literature review or methodology chapter (Example 5-18). Next, they spoke of essays (61 instances from 30 participants), as seen in Example 5-19. Students were fairly straightforward in their description of assessment, even when asked how they believe faculty evaluate academic success and what faculty are looking for when marking. Students mostly cited word counts, topics, group or individual writing, and grades or feelings surrounding future marks. Superwoman's example is included in length as it exemplifies the bare minimum information students offered on their assignments, along with the general sense of not having a clear idea of expectations or qualities which would make an assessment successful (Example 5-19). The next sub-code beyond assessment types was structure (19 instances from 16 participants), which is only mentioned here as the gap between qualities of writing and the types of writing required is striking and may shed light on how students perceive expectations.

#### **Example 5-18**

Jane: We just basically started, like, we had to hand out a proposal, research proposal, two weeks ago. So that's the, it's ongoing. @

Researcher: Okay, and what kind of work do you think you'll have to do for that?

J: We already have to do a lot of research about the literature around subjects and we also had to prepare methodology, what was it as well, philosophy?, around the dissertation as well. So, afterwards what it will entail would be a lot more literature review, and then also quantitative and qualitative studies, and the whole writing @the @dissertation. @ @Just @have @to @do @it, have to do it at some point. – *Jane, ll. 4368-4376*

#### **Example 5-19**

Superwoman: So, for the tutorial skill we have to pick the topic ourselves, but for the group project they divided us into smaller groups, then we came up with our own ideas and one of the ideas was picked. Based on that, we are doing the entire group project, but I don't know the format of the essay yet. So, I don't know, like, is it starts with - because usually I know it starts with paraphrasing, then you give your introduction, subparagraphs, and then conclusion - but I don't know if that's the way they are going to accept the essay or not.

Researcher: Do you know how long the essay needs to be? Like, is it three thousand words?

S: It's two thousand words.

R: Two thousand.

S: Two thousand words.

R: Alright, cool, and you have to pick your own topic?

S: Yeah, we have to pick your own topic.

- R: So, okay, which leads me to my next question, and what do you think your professors look for when they're grading? So how would they assess academic success?
- S: Yeah, so, that's a question for me@ to figure@ it out yet. But I had, like, a chance to talk to our program coordinator. So, I checked with her, like, how we are going to be marked on [discipline], because [discipline] is a subject in which there's nothing really wrong or nothing really right so it's your own perspective that you are writing on that paper, so, how will it be taken. So, she told me that in [institution 1], people, like, professors are very acceptable to the answers, so the spelling mistakes and, like, until and unless the word is literally not making any sense, then it is something problematic but if you did a little bit spelling mistakes, it would be okay. But I'm really not sure about the marking, and this is something which I would want to know in the first place. Like, how would you be marking us in the exams because if I write two pages and there are some people who like pointers, you know, in the essay, some people like diagrams to be shown, some people are looking for particular keywords, if you don't put those keywords then they find that essay is not up to the mark. So, I'm not really sure about the expectations from the professor, like, from their point of view. – *Superwoman, ll. 14203-14215, 14232-14247*

#### 5.2.1.2.2 Oral communication

Students then mentioned *oral communication*, mainly in the form of interactive lectures (62 instances from 33 participants) and assessment (42 instances from 24 participants). Within interactive lectures, students mainly spoke of discussions or seminar-style lectures (24 instances from 19 participants), however there were seven unique types of interactive lectures. Students mainly focused on parts or features of the class which were based around discussions, as seen in Example 5-20 and Example 5-21, or specified that a class was a particular type of interactive lecture, such as Example 5-22. Assessments focused on presentations (28 instances from 18 participants), with five other types of oral assessments identified. Like writing assessments, students were generally brief in their description, and so this is not shown in an example.

##### Example 5-20

I would say the professor, you know, tries, like, wants the class to participate. They try to ask the questions also, so they want involvement from the class. – *Abeer, ll. 49-51*

##### Example 5-21

Occasionally there'd be group work. That it was, I mean, really, I mean, at the maximum 10 minutes. – *Balthazar, ll. 828-829*

**Example 5-22**

I think the first semester, we didn't have any lectures. It's mostly seminars discussion and then it's very confuse. People talk very fast, and sometimes over each other, and the topic moves so quickly, sometime unrelated to each other@, and so this too makes things difficult. – *Tina, ll. 14796-14799*

**5.2.1.2.3 Listening**

*Listening*, then, focused on lectures (118 instances from 39 participants). Within this, interactive lectures (62 instances from 33 participants) discussed in the sub-section directly above were the most spoken about elements of lectures. The *listening* code also included PowerPoint-based, or professor-focused, lectures (52 instances from 37 participants). The use of PowerPoint is sometimes explicit (Example 5-23) and sometimes implicit (Example 5-24).

**Example 5-23**

During lectures, it's really, like, the lecturer most of the time use PowerPoints and speak about the materials. - *Noémie, ll. 12053-12054*

**Example 5-24**

So, during the class, students are expected to listen to the lectures, and the lecturers will be introducing different theories about the subject that we were learning. – *Anthony, ll. 354-356*

**5.2.2 Evaluation of faculty and institutions**

Students then began to evaluate faculty and institutions. It will be noted in the following subsections if students mostly commented on individual faculty or institutions in general with each aspect discussed. Overall, however, students mainly spoke negatively of their institution (321 instances from 39 participants) rather than positively (141 instances from 38 participants).

**5.2.2.1 Negative**

While students mainly evaluated their institution negatively, there was not a clear consensus on what is negative about the institution. Students mainly spoke of the institution being unclear (62 instances from 30 participants), unsupportive (37 instances from 18 participants), as having a lack of facilities and infrastructure (35 instances from 17 participants), and lacking communication (32 instances from 18 participants). When speaking of an institution being unclear, students mainly referred to professors and their expectations (Example 5-25). However, the other three sub-codes mentioned here primarily refer to the institution at large, claiming that support or communication at large is lacking (Example 5-26). The lack of communication both referred to communication between professors, departments, and administration as well as a lack of communication with students (Example 5-27, Example 5-28, and Example 5-29).

**Example 5-25**

It's like [the criteria] are actually written on our feedback sheets, but something we are actually confused is, because we're just getting results from different lecturers, it's just sometimes it's quite strange because it's not really, I mean, like written in details like how, I mean, we have like different descriptors for different like 2.1 and distinction, but it's just because sometimes for students we get result, like, you get distinction, like, the first grade and then get, like, 2.2 at the same time too. So, sort of, like, lost, you just don't know how this could be so, like, this distant, like, so different. – *BK, ll. 1199-1206*

**Example 5-26**

Well, first of all, I think the university lacks a lot of resources. As a student coming from [country], I know [nationality] universities have a lot of issues with providing students with services and resources. When I came here, I thought it would be different. For example, the library doesn't have a lot of books that I need or that I would like to find. Some of them are lost, like, even though the system says they are there, when you go and look for them, they're not. Even if you ask for help, no one can find them. So that's one thing. Also, like, there is help, like, if you go or if you contact people, they always tell you, okay, we have this services, we have mentoring, we have the student services, or this department that is supposed to be helping students with academic issues, but at the same time it's not clear what they offer. – *Patricía, ll. 12916-12926*

**Example 5-27**

Balthazar: To be honest, it was quite disorganized. I have to say that was a major complaint I had. There was no clear curriculum and every two weeks we had a different professor, who, you know, had a completely different agenda and thing to teach. So, the overall theme of the class was so weakly connected I would barely even call it a, you know, a theme because, I mean, it basically was just saying that [content] @

Researcher: @ okay so basically you summed the whole module down into one sentence.

B: Yeah, I mean because it seemed like there's no communication between the professors – *Balthazar, ll. 808-816*

**Example 5-28**

Speaking as an international student, it's a very frustrating experience to try and get here. There's, it felt like anyway, there's so little communication that's done interdepartmentally that, you know, I would have a question, and somebody would say talk to the academic registry. The academic registry would tell me to talk to some other department or talk to the [discipline] department or, you know, we don't do that, here talk to someone else, but never give me who I need to talk to, or I go talk to that person and they send me back to the academic registry. It's very disjointed and was a really very frustrating experience. – *Katie, ll. 6643-6650*

**Example 5-29**

I know it exists in [institution 1], like, you can take a class, but it's not something that the teachers talk about. It's just, like, an email that we received from the student skills, I don't remember the full name, it's not something that the teachers really do talk about. Like, they just say, oh, well, you can go to the library website where they explain everything, but they don't talk about the workshop. – *Jane, ll. 4522-4527*

### 5.2.2.2 *Positive*

Students did, however, also describe their institutions positively. Here, as opposed to the negative descriptions, students focused on individuals, professors at large, or named services (e.g., counselling, housing support) within the institution who were supportive (55 instances from 26 participants) or provided good supervision (20 instances from 11 participants). These instances were in contrast with above as they tended to be more specific, while the negative descriptions focused on a more general and broad description (Example 5-30 and Example 5-31). Further, when speaking about the institution as being supportive, it was also fairly common to first describe the positive aspects and then also mention that these supports, while supportive, could be improved (Example 5-32).

#### **Example 5-30**

I think she is a really good supervisor because... - *Carmen, ll. 1852*

#### **Example 5-31**

I mean we have [name] and she's always in there. We can always talk to her. We have, one of the most, he's a director as well, I don't know, I'm terrible with this but [name] is another one. He is very supportive and much more an academic. If you have an academic problem, [name] is the one you go to find him because he has an expertise in education. – *Fernanda, ll. 4203-4207*

#### **Example 5-32**

Estí: In my school now, there is a specific member of staff for looking after international students. They have meetings, they had two already, I was not able to go but I will go. Then, so, there is the [students union], the global room, there is the society international students' society. What else? And then the same for all students, like the career advisory service, the counselling services.

Researcher: Would you consider the support to be adequate or could it be improved?

E: They are obviously doing a good job; they could be improved though I think. – *Estí, ll. 3749-3757*

### 5.2.3 **Summary**

Overall, the *imagining the university* code discussed three over-arching themes: *student expectations and needs*, *faculty expectations and needs*, and *student evaluation of their institution*. Within *student expectations and needs*, students focused primarily on *institutional factors* which are needed to support students in their academic success. These included improved supports and responsive universities, which focused on faculty awareness and intervention, clarity of expectations, mentoring and supervision, and extra support classes such as EAP classes. Students then expressed that certain *other and internal factors* were needed to achieve academic success. This mainly focused on



integration and social life. The next need students mentioned was *writing*; however, this was spoken about in a very general sense with a low consensus on which qualities were needed to make writing successful.

Students then imagined, or speculated, faculty expectations. Students identified three main expectations: *writing*, *oral communication*, and *listening*. All three areas focused on assessment and lecture types, showing that students may have a fuzzy grasp of the qualities faculty expect to see in successful students' work. This also shows a primary focus, or imagined focus, on the products expected of the students rather than the process.

Next, students evaluated their university primarily negatively citing that their institutions tend to be unclear in terms of expectations, unsupportive, lack facilities and infrastructure, and lack communication. However, these negative evaluations were more general in scope, often describing the university at large negatively rather than specific people. In contrast, students positively described individuals and named services. Here, students indicated that these individuals and services were supportive and that they were receiving good supervision in their institutions.

### 5.3 Regulations, rules, and authority

The second most mentioned code was *regulations, rules, and authority* (Table 5-6). This code represents the rules of the academy that students are bound too, along with other types of authority such as standardized exams or "NS" standards. Students mostly spoke of *faculty expectations and needs*; however, these are discussed in-depth above rather than here as they are coded identically. Next, students spoke of *external authority*.

**Table 5-6**  
*Regulations, rules, and authority in student interviews*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Faculty expectations and needs	41	995
External authority	41	257
"NS" yardstick	27	105

#### 5.3.1 Faculty expectations and needs

*Faculty expectations and needs* appear in two parent codes: *imagining the university* and *regulations, rules, and authority*. This is because these codes represent both the students' speculation of what is expected of them, rather than an objective assessment, and also external authority or rules which are imposed on them. As these were discussed in-depth in

the last parent code, they will not be discussed here, however, they are presented again in Table 5-7.

**Table 5-7**  
*Faculty or external expectations as expressed by students*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Writing	41	343
Assessment and deliverables	41	237
Oral communication	40	172
Listening	39	121
Lectures	39	118

### 5.3.2 External authority

*External authority* is where students mentioned or expressed some sort of authority outside of their university. This included immigration, professional accrediting bodies, external examiners, standardized language exams, and external funding. Students were asked if they had to take standardized language exams and, yet this only garnered 99 mentions from 33 participants. Students were also asked if they took any preparation courses for their standardized exams or for their university study. This question prompted students to speak about their previous language preparation, and therefore only the sub-code previous English or EAP instruction (120 instances from 35 participants) satisfied the numerical cutoff to be discussed in depth. Following this, students spoke of exam preparation (21 instances from 17 participants) and general English preparation (19 instances from 13 participants), however, general English may be more frequent as participants were not explicitly asked about their general English experience.

Most mentions within this sub-code were about school English (60 instances from 26 participants). Here, students indicated that they learned English in a school setting such as primary or secondary school (coded as general instances with 14 instances from 12 participants) and through Erasmus placements (three instances from three participants). Students varied on how well they believed this instruction was with four out of the twelve participants speaking of their school English in some negative way (see Example 5-33 for a negative evaluation and Example 5-34 for a positive one). However, the sub-code with the most mentions here was previous degree in English with 34 instances from 21 participants. From these 21 participants, seven described English as their L1: three students from India, three students from the United States, and one student from Australia. Here, the term *degree* includes completing their entire schooling in English, such as primary and

secondary school. The sub-codes of previous degree in English and English L1 will appear again in *ownership and empowerment*.

### **Example 5-33**

In [country], for example, if you don't go to any extra course apart from the scholar course, I mean, the university doesn't have any good courses for teaching, I mean, for studying English because all the classes are a massified. – *Carmen, ll. 1768-1770*

### **Example 5-34**

I start for my school. I was from a English, you know, like, my father is English teacher, okay, so, upper form. So, English is my second language and we used to, like, from my place the English is the second language to the mother [language]. All my graduation studies, everything, been in English. – *Vick, ll. 14945-14948*

### **5.3.3 Summary**

*Regulations, rules, and authority* explored the enforcement and imposition of rules and norms on students. Here, students spoke of faculty expectations and needs, which was discussed in *imagining the university*. This sub-code was counted in each parent code as students are both speculating about and describing the rules and norms which they believe faculty require in academia.

Students also spoke of *external authority*, primarily in the form of their previous English or EAP preparation. Most students described encountering English at different times in their schooling as opposed to private language schools. While they spoke about this generally (e.g., primary school, secondary school, etc.), students most often mentioned that they had completed a previous degree in English. Throughout the more general mentions, students varied on their evaluation of the effectiveness of their school English, while when speaking of previous degrees in English, all of the students felt this prepared them well for their current degree.

### **5.4 Student struggle and resistance**

*Student struggle and resistance* is a code where students discussed their struggles, and also the causes of those struggles (Table 5-8). These two sub-codes were difficult to separate, however, it was deemed that if a student simply said that they struggled with an aspect, but did not explicitly say *why* they struggled (e.g., lack of practice, educational experience, institutional factors, etc.), then it was only counted as a *struggle*. Many of the aspects in *causes of struggle* appear in *struggle* as well. Below, *causes of struggle* is discussed first as it garnered the most mentions, followed by *struggle*. While it is not discussed in-depth within this chapter, it was also notable that only two students expressed disagreement with what faculty expected of them or expressed times when they challenged expectations or

standards. This low number is telling in that students may not feel that expectations and standards can be broken or challenged.

**Table 5-8**  
*Student struggle and resistance in student interviews*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Causes of struggle	41	589
Struggle	41	556
Disagreement or independence from faculty	2	6

### 5.4.1 Causes of struggle

*Causes of struggle* focused on the *why* of student struggle in academia. Categorized by six sub-categories, students expressed the causes of their struggle in academia from academics to culture to language to institutional factors (Table 5-9). However, only two sub-codes made the cutoff for discussion: *institutional factors* and *language*.

**Table 5-9**  
*Causes of struggle in student interviews*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Institutional factors	37	182
Language	37	157
External factors	30	105
Culture	33	81
Mental health	20	33
Academics	14	31

#### 5.4.1.1 Institutional factors

Students, within *institutional factors*, discussed which aspects of their institution contributes to their struggle in academia. Here, unclear expectations (62 instances from 30 participants) and lack of communication (32 instances from 18 participants) were the top two factors mentioned. Following this, administration (27 instances from 14 participants) and then basic course and lack of ongoing assessment (15 instances each from five and 10 participants respectively) along with other factors were mentioned; however, these are not discussed in depth as this showed a general lack of consensus amongst the participants.

Along with the examples already presented in the *negative evaluation* sub-section, the examples below show students speaking about unclear expectations and the lack of communication. Both Fernanda and Jasmine spoke about unclear expectations in relation to assessment and supervision. Both students expressed that it is difficult to figure out exactly what professors want (Example 5-35 and Example 5-36). Jasmine additionally

brings in culture as she expressed that her supervisor often makes jokes when speaking of expectations, leaving Jasmine to guess if he is serious or if he wishes that she would take a different direction.

**Example 5-35**

We have the assessment, they put a list of what they want and they have points for language and for how you assess the question? We had problems with this as well, we couldn't understand what they were willing to get from that. So, for instance, oh just discuss something, like, or something like that. We didn't know what it meant to be, like, what do you want for that? They had to explain in that sense because it's not that clear sometimes. – *Fernanda, ll. 3890-3895*

**Example 5-36**

This man, @[my supervisor], is really complicated. @@@I mean, I have to try to guess because he is really fog. He says that it is a learning process, and I yet to arrive to the right conclusion by myself. But the point is sometimes I'm asking for advice and after a while I learned that his answer, I don't have to take his answer as true, but maybe the answer is a joke and he want to me something different. [sigh] So, yeah, it is not easy because sometimes it's not clear at all, in everything, also small things also. Maybe I tell him, oh, I did this because I thought that you think, "oh no no I never, do whatever you want, you don't have to do in this way." But you show me that you prefer in this way, "no it's the way you think that I'm prefer." I mean, it is not clear but I think is that maybe the personal behavior on him that is not clear. Yeah, so knowing the expectation that he has @. - *Jasmine, ll. 4690-4700*

Mona Lisa, in Example 5-37, bridges the lack of communication with unclear expectations by speaking of how she has never received feedback on her essay, leaving her with just a mark, but no indication of *why* she received that mark. Shelly OB also spoke of communication and expectations, explaining that her institution generally leaves students to independently discover expectations and navigate the system; something which, she says, is unnatural even in a new job where a level of communication and mentoring is implemented to ensure that the person is on-track for their new responsibilities (Example 5-38). Shree also spoke of the lack of communication by speaking of how existing supports are not promoted (Example 5-39). Here, he cites that he and his peers only discovered these supports halfway through writing their dissertation in a master's program, which was too late to avail of these resources. Estí and Max touch on administration and communication, citing that a lack of communication within the administration led to delayed registrations for modules and general trouble with the administration (Example 5-40 and Example 5-41). Many students described a difficult administrative transition when registering, finding housing, or beginning their degree due to a lack of communication both within the university and with the students.

**Example 5-37**

Well, basically, attend a seminar and at the end the evaluation was an essay related with my topic. I don't know exactly how they evaluated this because we never received feedback. Not only me, all the people in my office. -*Mona Lisa, ll. 10588-10590*

**Example 5-38**

There's not much in the way of, kind of, guidance, or it's a certain degree handholding, which I get they always say you shouldn't need this at this stage. But for each, for us every stage is a new stage. So, even if you're in a job, you're informed of how to do the job before, you know, you get promoted. You spend a day with a person who's already done the job, or you sit down with your manager and they say okay these are your new responsibilities, this is how you go about it. [institution 1] has not been great for that. - *Shelly OB, ll. 13529-13535*

**Example 5-39**

So, these are [supports] that I found out in the very end. That these are actually free if you're a [institution 1] student and nobody told us that in the beginning of the year. We found out writing the end when we are halfway through our thesis. So, @if we would have known that before, maybe we would have, things would have been a little more easier. - *Shree, 14108-14112*

**Example 5-40**

Well, I think through my experience, but also my discussions with fellow PhD students, every week at least five people have a problem with administration that they take a lot of their time off in order to solve. A lot of times it's not solved properly and that has become an everyday reality. That is not okay. - *Esti, ll. 3583-3586*

**Example 5-41**

As for, at the academic registry they have some books with the modules you can follow [in Erasmus], but they didn't tell me that. Like, the secretary in [discipline] gave me the one for [discipline] but, like, she thought I already had that, so she gave this to me really late and she told she told me that there was one for every major. So, if I knew that before, it would have really helped me. - *Max, ll. 9913-9917*

**5.4.1.2 Language**

*Language*, then, was the next cause of struggle. Within this, academic language (75 instances from 31 participants) and a mismatch between IELTS/standardized exams and university expectations (39 instances from 26 participants) were the top two causes of struggle attributed to language. Within academic language, students spoke of specific language which is unique to academic contexts. Students, like Constance, described situations which could be classed as general English, such as understanding accents, however they generally spoke of language causing struggle in their academic life rather than everyday contexts (Example 5-42). Both Constance and Coma pinpointed not being a “NS” as being a reason for their difficulties in language. This “NS/NNS” dichotomy where students held themselves and others to the “NS-standard” was captured in the *regulation*,

*rules, and authority* code under “NS” yardstick, however it was not discussed in depth. Further, Coma described her difficulties as “being without arms” where academic vocabulary and language were the cause of her struggles (Example 5-43). She stated that she has academic skills and is able to think in a discipline-specific way, however, specific language is the point which causes her to struggle. She went on to speak of equity and the importance of providing resources to those who may struggle with language.

**Example 5-42**

There is no doubt that the first one is communication with [nationality]. They ask us, the pronunciation of [nationality] is very hard for me to hear because my I'm not a native speaker. - *Constance, ll. 3087-3089*

**Example 5-43**

For example, for students who are like me, who are not native speakers, because you can follow more the lecture and the topic and sometimes, like, the last semester I had a lecture where the professor was just speaking, but I didn't have, like, maybe the first month was difficult because I had to like learn like the [discipline] translation, the word, sorry, the word in [discipline] English. I had to understand what was in [language] as well, like, so just to understand some, to have some vocabulary, [discipline] vocabulary, like, was main difficult part... You feel stressful when, like, you know, that you have academic skills, but I felt like without my arms because, like, you have academic skills; I am able to think in [discipline] way and maybe I am able to write about, but I'm not in the same situation of a native speaker. - *Coma, ll. 2532-2538, 2618-2621*

Cat, who describes English as her L1, brought up the aspects of familiarity with academic language and institution-specific language (Example 5-44). This is a common theme amongst students who found that their past educational experiences were different in terms of linguistic requirements than their current degree. Cat explained that her past writing experiences were different from her current requirements, and thus, her supervisors must be more involved in explaining aspects of assessments, such as structure. She also contrasts academic English and the English used within the institution to describe supports or administrative aspects of the university, pointing to the need for institution-specific language support.

**Example 5-44**

I don't have a background in the kind of writing I'm expected to do for this, so it is completely foreign. Bless my supervisors, [they] are absolutely wonderful and try to help but they keep having to reorient because I can write, but don't really know how research writing works. They're "oh you can write, so we think you know this, nope you didn't know that, does that mean you don't know this? No, you can do that." So, it's a weird sort of mix of stuff that you'd expect me to not be good at, but I can do, or stuff you'd expect I would know, that I don't. That's really difficult to get past because I'm never sure if I'm doing it right... There's sort of two things, there's English speaking is the main, most common academic language, and then there's an academic English specifically which has its own oddnesses to it 'cause it's its own dialect. But you add to that the internal language of the institution, which is a different English again@. It's kind of like having to learn more than one language. I speak English, but there's a whole bunch of stuff, particularly when I was brand new, that I was being told, that I was taking in, but I wasn't understanding - at least not the way it was intended, because their definitions for words that I was familiar with was just not the same. – *Cat*, ll. 1386-1393, 1534-1541

When speaking of the mismatch between standardized exams and university requirements, students generally recognized some level of usefulness of the exams (Example 5-45).

However, aspects such as discipline-specific content, specific-language, or relevance to current assessments were criticized (Example 5-46). Lena, in Example 5-47, cited a need for a bridge between the exams and university, something which many students also cited.

**Example 5-45**

I don't think so, because from the IELTS exam, especially for the writing we had two parts, and I think it's not very related to what I need to write now. Maybe for speaking is helpful and for listening. I think it's more about the daily life. – *Seven*, ll. 13248-13250

**Example 5-46**

I mean, if some writing, it were really, like, talking about the [discipline-specific exam topic]. If you don't know, I mean, you should invent something and show that you have capacity, but maybe someone knows the English, but doesn't have the capacity @@@. So, it's a bit weird. Also, then the speaking, it was not in academic, so it was also really weird... I mean, there's some question when you are difficult to answer, it's not because you don't know English, is because the question is so weird that you, like, say "What? So what? Why are you asking@ me@ that@?" - *Jasmine*, ll. 4807-4811, 4815-4817

**Example 5-47**

In general, I think the IELTS gives a good preparation for academics, but it's not enough. So, definitely there should be some, like, a like a bridge between just doing the IELTS and @jumping into the lectures. – *Lena*, ll. 8719-8722

**5.4.2 Struggle**

Within this sub-code, students spoke of aspects which they struggled with (Table 5-10).

Here, students expressed a lot of *self-blame and self-doubt* (120 instances from 34 participants). This was included in *struggle* as students seemed to internalize their



struggles in academia, as will be seen below. Students also identified *writing* (105 instances from 30 participants) as a main area of struggle. The next aspect was external factors with 52 instances, showing a sharp drop in instances and thus not discussed.

**Table 5-10**

*Struggle in student interviews*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Self-blame and doubt	34	120
Writing	30	105

#### 5.4.2.1 *Self-blame and doubt*

*Self-blame and doubt* is a bit different than most of the sub-codes in *struggle*. This is because, throughout the interviews, students expressed an internal struggle or internalization of their academic struggles. As seen in Example 5-48, Ariadne expressed doubt in her academic skills as it is a new way of working. This internalization of struggle when navigating expectations or academia is what qualifies this to be coded under self-blame and doubt. Within this sub-code, most students expressed self-blame and doubt in a general sense (88 instances from 32 participants). This general sense is primarily expressed in doubting their success within academia, their qualification to be where they are, or the quality of their work or language (Example 5-49 and Example 5-50). Another indication of self-blame or doubt is where students express that they are “trying” or “working hard” but still feel behind or not up-to-par, sometimes despite receiving feedback that they are actually succeeding academically (Example 5-51). Terms such as “I think” or “I’m not sure” or “I don’t know” were also counted as this interjected doubt into the certainty or confidence in their answer. Other students, like Christina in Example 5-52, expressed a harsher type of self-blame and doubt where she describes herself as “stupid” when asked to give advice to students seeking to enter her university. Other students expressed this as well in various contexts, including using the phrase “I’m not a native speaker” as a derogatory phrase towards themselves. Still others directly identified confidence as a weakness, which was also counted as doubt (Example 5-53).

#### **Example 5-48**

I think sometimes it's hard to choose between two answers when you're not sure and I may have not precise enough answers. Here, I don't know if I read too much or if I don't read enough books, because that's a new way of working for me, readings and giving back essays, so I'm a bit lost? But I think it's gonna be alright. -  
*Ariadne, ll. 620-624*

**Example 5-49**

I think that's part of the thing I find most difficult because I don't know. I got really no idea what I'm doing. I get that in a lot of ways, nobody does, which is the thing that has been said multiple times. But, like, I didn't do an Honors Program, I haven't come through any of the things I think someone in my position would normally have come through, so I genuinely don't know. – *Cat, ll. 1449-1453*

**Example 5-50**

I think he's looking for essence if that makes sense. And that's what I'm trying to do. Yeah, and because, I sometimes, you know, I've told him as well that writing in English slows me down and sometimes I stop and worry too much about the comma; that I can spend two hours googling grammar rules and, you know, I'm terrified of making a mistake about the comma or a word. He said don't worry about the commas, write, like, the content is important to catch when, you know, to catch your - how can I say that – first, we're going to look at the content, and then the commas and everything we can work together, but your thoughts is what, you know, needs to be put on paper first. That helps take the pressure off sometimes. – *Estí, ll. 3563-3573*

**Example 5-51**

[My supervisor's] a nice man, he just don't talk with - he wants it. Means that - how can you say that - I'm just doing well or not, something like this. He's a nice one I think. Until, you know, after four months he doesn't tell me anything about the progress, but I said him that my progress is weak @@@... His response said that no, it's okay, it's this first stage. I think, yeah, he is okay, his statements isn't true because compared with the courses, just because I'm come from another country, and my expectation is different. They are just there from, they expect I can just compare the courses between my country and here and I think that they are just, they don't want to just work hard. Because of that it is better to just me reduce my expectation from my PhD. - *Mike, ll. 10142-10146, 10150-10155*

**Example 5-52**

I'm not so smart. So many advice. @@ I'm not so wise, @@@@ sometimes I can be very stupid, I mean, very very amazingly stupid @@@. - *Christina, ll. 2320-2321*

**Example 5-53**

R: What about your weaknesses in terms of English?

Lack of self-confidence because sometimes, well, I heard some people say that you kind of sound American, and I also heard some people say that no actually we can hear [language] accent etcetera. – *Natalia, ll. 11375-11378*

**5.4.2.2 Writing**

*Writing* was also identified as a main area of struggle. However, there was no consensus about *what* students struggle with in terms of writing. The sub-codes with the most instances were structure (16 instances from eight participants) and academic writing in general (16 instances from 11 participants), and general mention (15 instances from 10 participants). While overall, the identification of writing as an area of struggle was significant, there was not enough instances in any one area to discuss in-depth. This lack of

consensus, however, was significant in itself in that it shows how individualized areas of struggle can be.

### 5.4.3 Summary

In *student struggle and resistance*, students focused on the causes of their struggle, or the *why* of their struggle, and the identification of their struggles, or the *what* of their struggles. In the *causes of struggle*, students identified *institutional factors* and *language* as the two factors which cause the most struggle. The *institutional factors* are the same as the *negative evaluation* seen in the *imagining the university* code. In terms of *language*, students pin-pointed academic language as the primary cause of struggle. This includes language in academic contexts, institution-specific terminology, specific language such as discipline-specific language, and language ability due to being a “NNS.” When speaking of what they struggle with, students generally expressed *self-blame and doubt*. This is where they internalized their struggle and blamed themselves, or something within themselves such as personal qualities, for their struggle in academia. They also expressed doubt in their academic and linguistic abilities along with doubting their success in academia. Then, students identified *writing* as an area of struggle. However, there was a low consensus on what they struggled with in terms of writing.

### 5.5 Variation

Next, students spoke of *variation* within the academy, along with variation within aspects which affect academic success or standards (Table 5-11). Within this code, students first spoke of a plethora of *modules, assessment, and practice*. They then spoke of *roles and identities*, albeit almost purely in the form of using examples and personal anecdotes. Following this, they spoke of variation in *culture*, again almost purely regarding academic culture, and then *communities of discourse* used within the academy.

**Table 5-11**  
*Variation in student interviews*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Modules, assessment, and practice	41	482
Roles and Identity	41	325
Culture	32	135
Communities of discourse	33	123
Degree level	8	13

#### 5.5.1 Modules, assessment, and practice

Within this sub-code, students primarily spoke of the types of assessment they encountered during their studies rather than aspects such as choice of topic or differences in the

lecturer's expectations. This sub-code will not be spoken about in depth as both of the top aspects discussed, lectures and types of assessment, are discussed more in depth in previous sub-sections. However, this coding is presented again as within the *variation* parent code, the focus is on the wide variety of assessment types that students encounter rather than the rules or norms of academia that these assessment types represent and are imposed on students, as is represented in the *regulations, rules, and authority* parent code.

As seen in Table 5-12, students spoke of the types of assessment encountered. Here, the primary focus was on writing assessments. Including all types of assessments, there were 44 distinct types of assessment mentioned by students. Next, students spoke of the different types of lectures which include interactive lectures and PowerPoint-based lectures. These types of lectures may have overlap as having a PowerPoint-based lecture does not exclude also incorporating interactive aspects within the lecture.

**Table 5-12**  
*Variation in modules, assessment, and practice as expressed by students*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Types of assessment	41	323
Other assessment and deliverables	19	47
Coding	3	4
Course Work	7	11
Lab work	4	8
MCQ	1	1
Practical	2	3
Project	5	7
Statistics	5	10
TED talk	1	1
Website	1	1
Speaking	24	42
Conferences	6	8
Interview	1	1
Mediation	1	1
Poster presentation	3	3
Presentations	18	28
Role play	1	1
Writing	41	234
Case study	1	1
Coding instructions and writeup	1	1
Comparative paper	1	1
CV	1	1
Dissertation	30	105

Abstract	2	2
Aims and objectives	4	5
By publication	1	1
Confirmation	3	4
Data analysis	2	2
Data collection	4	7
Funding application	1	2
General	24	44
Literature review	12	17
Methodology	7	10
Proposal	5	5
Transcription	1	2
Translation	2	2
Viva	1	1
With company	1	1
Essay	30	61
Poster	3	3
Publication	9	18
Reaction paper	2	3
Reflection	4	4
Report	5	6
Research paper	2	3
Systematic review	2	2
Written exams	16	25
Lecture	39	124

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### 5.5.2 Roles and identity

Students also expressed *roles and identities* throughout their interviews. I did not include student as a role since due to the nature of the interview, they were primarily speaking through the role of a student. Outside of the example and personal anecdotes sub-code (279 instances from 39 participants), there were only five other roles or identities that the students mentioned. In addition, these five roles or identities had relatively few mentions with the greatest number of mentions being a “worker” with 23 instances from 12 participants. Therefore, only the example and personal anecdote sub-code will be explored here.

Examples were used to either expand or illustrate answers to offer more detail to previously vague answers (Example 5-54). They also served to limit information by focusing on a certain module or example to answer a question rather than detailing, for example, all module requirements or assessment (Example 5-55). Personal and second-

hand anecdotes were another feature of this sub-code (Example 5-56 and Example 5-57). These were generally used to illustrate or validate a point with a story of an experience or incident that was either their own or that of a peer. Overall, this sub-code shows the variation of information provided by students within the interviews, signaling the possibility of the student omitting information or focusing on only one aspect or module throughout their interview. This points to the need for a variety of needs analysis tools, such as a materials review, to gather more complete information to inform a pre-sessional curriculum.

#### **Example 5-54**

I think when the module has begun, that's when they give [the guidelines]. So, for example, if, like, today is Friday and we have to submit an assignment on Monday, so they will most probably give the handouts around in one week before that. So, yeah, seven days or ten days maybe. – *Abeer, ll. 85-88*

#### **Example 5-55**

For instance, when we had class on how to project, like how to create an approach - I don't know how to say - we had to [create a discipline-specific project]. – *June, ll. 5766-5768*

#### **Example 5-56**

I've talked to a few of my classmates, they had similar experience too. Especially one of the Chinese girls. She's been moving from places to places, like five times or six times. Every time I saw her, she was just so grumpy, and she just said 'I don't want to study. I don't want to work.' because she's just so occupied with so many different unnecessary things. So, that would be a big issue I think, especially in Dublin. – *BK, ll. 1257-1262*

#### **Example 5-57**

I just kind of, I don't know how to explain it, but I mean I try to - I don't know if I – because, like, in my past when I was 15 years old, I start study [discipline] there. I did that for three years but I never, I wasn't good enough. It was very painful for me to learn the subject, and I thought could be just because it's [discipline] because before I went to the [category] school, I said to my dad 'look I don't want to go there I want to do [discipline]. But I want to do it in another city.' Even though at that time was the school that my father thought would be better for us, for me, my brother, my sister. When I went to do the test, do the assessment test, so, to start it I just decide, okay, I want it now. I don't know why, but I really want it. For three years, I felt very, I wasn't feeling strong enough for the subject. I discovered that I have something [that] brought my brain to learn it. I try. I push myself as much as I can, but even though it's not easy things that I learn. – *José, ll. 5005-5016*

### **5.5.3 Culture**

The sub-code of *culture* almost exclusively focused on academic culture (108 instances from 30 participants). Here, students generally contrasted expectations in different countries and noted the variation and differences in academic culture between countries and institutions (Example 5-58 and Example 5-59). Students also made links between

cultural differences which may not be explicitly labelled as academic to the academic context. This is seen with Constance who attributes the breakdown of communication within group work to cultural differences (Example 5-60). Estí emphasizes a point which was made by many participants that the onus of cultural variation and adaptation should not be solely on the student, rather it should be a “two-way street” where both institutions and students negotiate the differences in academic culture (Example 5-61).

**Example 5-58**

So, the [nationality] writing academic writing style is different from the Western - from the [institution 1] one. – *Anthony, ll. 479-480*

**Example 5-59**

I think we should learn how the school system works here because it's totally different from other countries. – *Ariadne, ll. 716-717*

**Example 5-60**

If we have class we just, the [nationality] sit together and the [nationality] sit together. It's very difficult for us to communicate with them. Maybe it's a different culture, and it's hard for us to communicate with them. – *Constance, ll. 3182-3186*

**Example 5-61**

Prepare [institution 1] to accept international students, but not only by accepting the large number of international students but by creating a culture of internationalization in the institution. That means mutual respect, mutual cultural respect. Not bringing people in and have the assumption that you have to; ‘this is the way we do things here and you have to find a way to adapt as soon as possible’. It's a two-way street in order to work. – *Estí, ll. 3709-3713*

**5.5.4 Communities of discourse**

Students also spoke of *communities of discourse* such as Englishes (52 instances from 19 participants), translanguaging (42 instances from 20 participants), discipline-specific discourses (24 instances from 16 participants), and genre-specific discourses (4 instances from 4 participants). Here, both Englishes and translanguaging will be explored in depth.

**5.5.4.1 Englishes**

In terms of *Englishes*, students either generally spoke of Englishes (28 instances from 13 participants) or spoke of accents (24 instances from 15 participants), which was considered significant enough to form its own sub-code due to the frequency it was mentioned.

Englishes included named varieties of English (e.g., British, American, Indian, Irish, etc.), general descriptions of differences between English speakers (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, etc.), and describing various ways or registers that English LX speakers use English. Most of the students focused on their adjustment to, use of, or familiarity with different varieties of Englishes during their academic studies (Example 5-62 and Example 5-63).

**Example 5-62**

I just felt prepared to do a master's when I could really, literally, like, understand different people from different countries, native speakers or not. – *Fernanda, ll. 4014-4016*

**Example 5-63**

I have done my schooling entirely in English, but the sentence formation and sentence construction was very simple. I've never used very complicated sentences or a complex word in order to do the writing or speaking, but when I come here, there are words like coherent, right? So, I do know the meaning of that but when they place it in the sentence, then it takes me a while to understand – okay, okay this is, like, this okay, this sentence means this. So, there are fellow students in the class who are international and they are also facing the same thing, because there are some words which are very common in English in here, but we do know those words because we read the newspapers and magazines. So, we know that these words mean, but I cannot use those words in my writing because I'm not habitual to it. – *Superwoman, ll. 14342-14351*

As accents are a part of Englishes, it is considered to be a part of this sub-code, yet also substantiated a separate category. Students spoke of accents both in terms of accents of typically thought of English L1 users (e.g., American, English, etc.) and of those belonging to English LX users (e.g., South-East Asian, German, etc.). Students generally focused on the diversity of the accents, the difficulty or ease of understanding such accents, their experiences with language learning and accents, and their own pronunciation (Example 5-64, Example 5-65, and Example 5-66). Anthony highlights the lack of Englishes encountered in students' English language education. Carmen, then, describes how accents within Ireland are different and require time to adjust to. Tina discusses how English LX students often understand each other as they are used to different accents. In contrast, she states that English L1 students often misunderstand her accent; however, Tina blames her pronunciation for this rather than the English L1 interlocutor's exposure to other accents and Englishes.

**Example 5-64**

Foreign students are trained in the either the received pronunciation of the British or the American, The New Yorker pronunciation. So, they are not very familiar with the Irish accent. So, at least during the first week or the first month, professors might need to slow down a bit. – *Anthony, ll. 503-506*

**Example 5-65**

For example, for me at the beginning, was the different accent of Irish people because it's not the same accent if you speak with someone who live in Kerry, or someone who live in Cork, rather than in Dublin or in Drogheda. – *Carmen, ll. 1934-1936*



**Example 5-66**

Well, I feel like pronunciation is very important. This, I guess because when I, with my country listen, even like, because people from same country, like, speak English in second language, we speak English wrong in the same way. So, we kinda understand each other easily as people understand me, but here, then, for example, if I meet an Asian student who she speak English very badly, I still understand her, she understands me, but if I meet a very good native English speaker, but says in the quite of an accent or phrasing, I understand and sometime I try bit hard to speak, but people still wouldn't understand me. – *Tina, ll. 14811-14817*

**5.5.4.2 Translanguaging**

*Translanguaging*, then, focused on students' use of English and other languages throughout academic contexts both explicitly and behind-the-scenes or hidden. Many students described school settings before or during their degree where they used multiple languages, switching between them for different purposes such as research or instruction (Example 5-67 and Example 5-68). Other students, like Carmen in Example 5-69, described the increasing need for English in academia due to English being the “common language” despite their degree being almost entirely in their L1. Christina described her knowledge of languages as a benefit while explaining her strategic use of her linguistic resources to de-code discipline-specific vocabulary (Example 5-70). Coma, then, spoke of translating and making words which combine both languages (Example 5-71). Translation was a common theme where students described thinking in their L1 and translating in order to speak or write. Students primarily described translanguaging practices positively (24 instances from 15 participants) as opposed to negatively (19 instances from 13 participants). This includes one instance from one participant which was described both positively and negatively.

**Example 5-67**

My research is in my country, so I have to translate the documents in two languages always. – *Mona Lisa, ll. 10576-10577*

**Example 5-68**

Except in English class, we read or write in English. but when we ask some doubt, even teachers used to explain in [language] rather than in English. So, rest of the subjects are like in books we will read in English, when the teacher and student conversation will happen in [language] to explain everything. - *Vick, ll. 14989-14992*

**Example 5-69**

Most of the university's [language] medium. Well, the PhD is different because nowadays there are many many conferences or congresses, and all of them are in English. but apart from that all day, classes are in [language]. – *Carmen, ll. 1776-1778*

**Example 5-70**

I have a bonus, a kind of bonus, because, for example, some scientific terms, you know, concepts are coming from Latin and there are international words. I understand them because we have the same, or almost the same words in [language], and being a [profession], I heard, or I know the meaning of those words. This is a kind of bonus for me, but it's not very frequent to be honest@. – *Christina, ll. 205-2100*

**Example 5-71**

I love so much my language when I'm speaking English, sometimes I trans-, change the word, I make a new word that is not like that in English. – *Coma, ll. 2463-2464*

**5.5.5 Summary**

When speaking of *variation*, students referred to *modules, assessment and practice, roles and identities, culture, and communities of discourse*. Within *modules, assessment and practice*, students identified 44 unique types of assessment along with detailing different types of lectures which they must take. In *roles and identities*, students primarily used examples and personal or second-hand anecdotes. These functioned to expand, illustrate, or validate a point and to limit information given, typically restricting their answers to speaking of one or two modules. When speaking of *culture*, students generally spoke of academic culture and cultural differences within academic contexts. Here, they reinforced the point that the onus to bridge cultural differences should be on both the institution and the student, rather than solely on the student. Lastly, when speaking of *communities of discourse*, students spoke of *Englishes* to primarily focus on accents and general mentions of varieties of Englishes. They then also discussed *translanguaging* and translingual practices within academia. When discussing translanguaging, they generally referred to their translingual practices in a positive way.

**5.6 Ownership and empowerment**

*Ownership and empowerment* focused on what students considered their *strengths* (Table 5-13). Students were asked explicitly what they felt their strengths were academically and in terms of English. However, this code also included all instances throughout the interview where a student expressed that they felt positive about themselves or attributed something as the cause for this strength. Additionally, this code included the sub-code of *ownership of English*. This code is where students expressed that they feel a level of ownership over English, e.g., comfort using the language in different contexts, having completed degrees or other life-aspects through English, describing themselves as English L1 or comparable, etc.

**Table 5-13**  
*Ownership and empowerment in student interviews*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Strengths	41	308
Ownership of English	31	122

### 5.6.1 Strengths

Students described their *strengths*, both academically and linguistically, throughout the interviews. The top three sub-codes here were: personal qualities (75 instances from 32 participants), benefits from language exams (35 instances from 17 participants focusing mainly on the methodology gained for the four skills), and writing (33 instances from 21 participants focusing primarily on writing in a general sense). Here, only personal qualities will be discussed as the low number of instances in the rest of the sub-codes shows a low level of consensus regarding strengths.

Students mainly identified personal or internal qualities as their strengths in academia. These descriptions included confidence (28 instances from 19 participants), self-motivation, determination, and goal setting (22 instances from 15 participants), the ability to relate to others (seven instances from five participants), and interest in their course (three instances from three participants) among other qualities. As can be seen, there was again a low consensus on which qualities were identified as their strengths, showing the individual nature of students' needs, difficulties, and strengths. Within the confidence sub-code, students mainly referred to their confidence in their subject knowledge with 23 mentions from 17 participants in contrast with the five mentions and three participants who identified confidence in their linguistic skills. The sub-code of strengths was shown both directly, as seen in Example 5-72, and indirectly or in contrast to their difficulties, as showing in Example 5-73.

#### Example 5-72

I'm good at [topic], [topic], and relevant research. Well, I'm working in the relevant field right now. – *Kevin, ll. 7470-7471*

#### Example 5-73

[My difficulty] would be construction of the words. So, where I, like, if a question is given in the exam, or there is a topic, so, I am aware about the content. So, content is not a problem, but how to draft that content on the piece of paper is a problem@. - *Superwoman, ll. 14143-14145*

### 5.6.2 Ownership of English

*Ownership of English* refers to points in the interview where students described comfort using English in certain contexts or referred to English as their L1 or language of

instruction in a previous degree. Students described working through English (38 instances from 15 participants, including five participants who describe English as their L1), having a previous degree in English (37 instances from 21 people, including seven participants who describe English as their L1), and having general ownership over English (31 instances from 19 participants). When speaking of their work experiences in English, students described their experience as useful for their language skills (Example 5-74). They also described their work experiences in a more general sense, presenting the simple fact that they must work throughout their degree, generally commenting on the impact on their degree (Example 5-75 and Example 5-76). Students also stated that they had previously held a job in English. These instances were still included in ownership of English as this comment shows a level of comfort working through English.

#### **Example 5-74**

Actually, when I came to Dublin, I just speak a little English. Like, I had no English at all. So, I did [classes for] three years. The first year, I went to school, which was general English... The second year, I was working a lot... I was more interested to learn in the job, like, try to communicate with people without care about the grammar or any mistakes relate to that. Then, on the third year when I decide, okay, maybe for from the fourth I'm gonna go to college, I need to be in a class. I need to learn it because probably I will have some English test as an assessment test to get in college. So, I went to a class, which for me as I learned on my second year how to communicate with people with my job, on the third year I felt completely much better in the class - English class - because I knew what I was doing there. I could ask so much more to the lecturer and it was really good to spend time there, which helped me a lot to go to college. – *José, ll. 5290-5303*

#### **Example 5-75**

In my case, what will affect me was lack of money. That affects me a lot, you know, because I'm tired. I have to work three days a week because the [PhD] scholarship that I was offered, it's not really enough for me to pay the bills... That really affect me. I have a happy face. So, I'm tired, but I'm all the time putting this happy face, you know, because I don't really want to be seen, you know, tired. So, always puts for this happy face, but I'm tired and, you know, stressed. So, that's the main problem, I guess. – *Zico, ll. 16128-16130, 16140-16144*

#### **Example 5-76**

Since I'm working as a full-time employee, after the work, actually, it is really challenging to focus on the [topic] courses. So, I'm not saying that I'm struggling, that I don't know anything. I know, of course, but I have really tired mind to focus on. – *Kevin, ll. 7528-7531*

Having a previous degree in English is discussed already in *regulations, rules, and authority*. Students here simply described or mentioned that their previous degrees or school were through the medium of English. In a more general sense, students expressed ownership over English through their confidence in their language skills, describing translingual practices, and through describing progress in their language skills (Example

5-77, Example 5-78, Example 5-79, and Example 5-80). Many students, such as Fernanda and Katrina, described their language journey and expressed confidence in their language skills now, even pointing to how English is easier than their L1 in some contexts (Example 5-78 and Example 5-79). Other students, such as Patricía, explained that they feel ownership over English, and even describe English as an L1 or a primary language, but that their confidence has been knocked since entering their degree program (Example 5-80).

**Example 5-77**

Yeah, I feel good about English, so, I don't know [specific strengths] @. - *Ariadne*, ll. 626-627

**Example 5-78**

I still feeling like amazed with the fact that I can express myself sometimes better in English. In some subjects, I'm better expressing myself in English. I don't know how to say things in [language]. If you ask me something very formal, I don't, you know? I feel proud somehow because of them, because of the teachers you had, because of the master's they've developed me so much subjects. Like, they were amazing. I learned how to negotiate in English. I don't know how to negotiate in [language], you know? – *Fernanda*, ll. 4305-4312

**Example 5-79**

So, I think the confidence for English is really really important. I don't think - I know - my English is not perfect, but you can understand me, and I can understand you, so, I think this is the main, you know? I know when I got here, I couldn't speak hi or how are you but I'm really happy, I'm glad as well, to see way, my story. - *Katrina*, ll. 7183-7188

**Example 5-80**

I would say my previous experience as a lecturer and a [discipline] teacher gives me some kind of guidance or foundation to kind of understand the world academically, or at least what @I @think it is like. Obviously, the expectations here and in [country] are different...for example, the experiences I've had writing in English in [country] have been very successful. I have a few publications, and one of them actually international, although it was in [continent]. It feels like there, what I write is good. It's like, I've had two papers accepted with no corrections by journals, and then here it feels like I can't get them right. So, I don't know if the fact that we are not native speakers makes it a little bit, like, they're a little bit more tolerant with our mistakes there or if it's actually good and I just don't understand what is happening here. – *Patricía*, ll. 12809-12812, 12823-12830

**5.6.3 Summary**

*Ownership and empowerment* saw students describing their level of *ownership of English* and their *strengths* relating to both academia and language. In terms of *strengths*, students primarily discussed personal qualities such as confidence, self-motivation, and determination. They also mentioned the benefits of standardized exams such as IELTS – mainly in relation to learning the methodology for the four skills. Similar to their struggle

with writing, students described writing as a strength in a very general sense rather than identifying what about their writing makes it strong. However, even with these three categories being discussed, there was a generally low consensus surrounding strengths which shows the individual nature of students. When looking at the *ownership of English*, students showed ownership through working through English, having completed a previous degree in English, and a general sense of ownership over English. This was expressed through comfort using English in different contexts, pride over their language-learning journey, pride in their translanguaging practices, and confidence using English.

## 5.7 Meaning-making and negotiation

Finally, *meaning-making and negotiation* is where students expressed instances where they were negotiating expectations and academic success; for example, through feedback or discussion with faculty (Table 5-14). Students primarily described the *discussion of expectations*, or the lack of discussion of expectations, in this code. In contrast, the *opportunities for feedback* were relatively low, only garnering 56 instances. Within these opportunities for feedback, students described receiving feedback from faculty (46 instances from 24 participants) and giving feedback to faculty (10 instances from eight participants); however, these will not be discussed in-depth, but the lack of feedback described should be noted in general.

**Table 5-14**

*Meaning-making and negotiation in student interviews*

Coding name	No. of students	No. of instances
Discussion of expectations	41	162
Opportunities for feedback	26	56

### 5.7.1 Discussion of expectations

Students who spoke of the *discussion of expectations*, or the lack thereof, primarily spoke of unclear expectations or expectations not discussed (62 instances from 30 participants). Here, students expressed frustration at the lack of feedback and lack of clarity surrounding expectations (Example 5-81). They also pointed to a need for clear expectations, as discussed in previous sections, where the criteria and expectations are unpacked for each class (Example 5-82).

#### Example 5-81

Kristina: To be honest, I didn't have an appointment in person face to face with my supervisor, just was through email because she was very busy. I had a new supervisor for the last three weeks and, yes, he was different person. I had face to face with him, but I had to restructure my whole assignment, the whole dissertation.

Researcher: Oh.

K: Yes, @@@ was nice @@@.

R: Okay, so you had to restructure everything?

K: Yes, his point of view, yeah, because my other supervisor, she left early. So, but I couldn't have a meeting with her. Yeah, it was a bit difficult to be honest because I couldn't um show my point of view or get any feedback from her. Just through email. It is not easy to get feedback. – *Kristina, ll. 7764-7774*

### **Example 5-82**

Particularly for international students, more explaining us what does that mean to write an essay in a particular field because writing an essay in [discipline] and [discipline] is really different. They assumed at the beginning of the year that we knew that it was different but most of us didn't know. So, most of the time we learned it because some second-year student told us that it's different. That you can, for example, use I in [discipline] essay but not in [discipline] essay. So, I feel maybe in being more specific about the vocabulary, or about the form that we are able to use, or not that we can use or not. Yeah, for international students, yeah, how to write an essay in particular field, not just saying you have to write an essay but really explaining what does it mean and what does that mean to be to have critical thinking in different fields, because it's different. The lecturers kind of assumed that we know the differences between the different topics, but we don't. – *Noémie, 12307-12318*

Only 17 participants, in 19 instances, stated that their professors discuss expectations in class (Example 5-83). Similarly, only 10 participants in 14 instances stated that expectations were discussed with their supervisor (Example 5-84). Three of these participants overlapped in these two categories, resulting in 24 participants total who described the discussion of expectations. Further, 13 students in 16 instances described faculty as being approachable for questions or private discussion of expectations (Example 5-85). Students also mentioned being presented with criteria, rubrics, and handbooks (33 instances from 25 participants; Example 5-83 and Example 5-86). However, the usefulness of all of these venues of discussion or communication of expectations varied from participant to participant, as demonstrated by Katie.

### **Example 5-83**

Most of them discuss it in class and they also post the rubric on blackboard or send it to us to our emails, to our student emails, as well. – *Zan, ll. 15699-15700*

### **Example 5-84**

[My supervisors and I] have, I think, weekly meeting. So, I tell them what I did this one and this one and this one, and they said most of the time they said “okay, great, yes, you did good.” Maybe they have extra advice. So, you can correct this one and maybe if you read more in this area concentrate doing. – *Nono, 12576-12579*

**Example 5-85**

Again, depending on a lecturer, but usually they're quite open for questions. You can either come to them after the class, or just write an email and then ask them. Then, yeah, they either give you like direct feedback within also a day, and some others are very slow @, but usually they're very open for questions. – *Laura, ll. 8177-8180*

**Example 5-86**

We were given a handbook for the program, but it's like three hundred and something pages. I started to read it and got, like, 40 pages in and was like this is, just, no. So, anytime I have a question and they say it's in the handbook, I do like a keyword search and @try to find@ the information that I need. It's just it's way too much and how that's presented, they didn't, it's not like they printed it and handed it to us so you can like physically go look through it. It's, you know, I went and looked it up on the course website and found it. So, I think it would have been helpful to have a little bit more of an introduction our first day of classes. – *Katie, ll. 6591-6598*

**5.7.2 Summary**

In *meaning-making and negotiation*, students described the *discussion of expectations*, or the lack thereof. Students primarily expressed that expectations were unclear or that they were not discussed. However, students did cite that expectations were communicated in-class, with their supervisors, and through criteria, rubrics, and handbooks. Additionally, they stated that faculty were generally approachable for questions if a student reached out. Yet, students' evaluations of the usefulness of these venues of communication varied.

**5.8 Conclusion**

The student interviews were coded into six parent-codes and explored in a thematic way. Students focused on *imagining the university, regulations, rules, and authority, student struggle and resistance*, and *variation*. To a lesser degree, students spoke about *ownership and empowerment* as well as *meaning-making and negotiation*.

Overall, students spoke of a mixture of factors which both are needed for academic success and affect academic success. These factors were not always academic, and even revolved around institutional factors, external factors such as social life, and internal factors. When academic factors were discussed, there was in general a low consensus which signals a variation and individuality regarding student experiences, strengths, and struggles.

In *imagining the university*, students focused on the factors needed and expected by both students and faculty. This ranged from students identifying *institutional factors* and *other or internal factors* as important. They did identify *writing* as important, however, this was in a very general sense. Students stated that they believe faculty mostly expect success in *writing, oral communication, and listening*. Yet, within these factors, assessment and



lecture types are the focus rather than qualities of these factors. Students also spoke of their university at large in a fairly negative sense, citing unclear expectations and a lack of facilities and infrastructure among other factors. They did speak positively about their universities, however, this focused on individuals and named services providing support and supervision.

In *regulations, rules, and authority*, students also mentioned *faculty expectations and needs* as they did in *imagining the university*. They also spoke of *external authority*, but this mainly focused on previous language preparation. Approximately half of the participants have taken a previous degree through English, and others spoke of having school English. This school English, though, was spoken about both positively and negatively.

Turning to *student struggle and resistance*, students identified *institutional factors and language*, mainly academic language, as the main causes of *struggle*. When identifying what they struggled with, students expressed a high level of *self-blame and doubt*, showing an internalized struggle. Students did say that they struggled with *writing*, however, they spoke of this very generally and did not identify what specifically it is they struggle with when writing. Also, within this code, students expressed a very low level of disagreement or independence from faculty.

A high level of *variation* was also found within the interviews. The participants identified a great number of unique types of assessment and lectures which they must complete during their degree. Students also spoke of *identities and roles*, mainly using examples and anecdotes to illustrate their points or to add or limit information shared. *Culture* was another aspect which they felt varied. Here, students focused on academic culture and stated that the onus on navigating this variation should be on both the institution at large and the students. Finally, students described a vast number of *communities of discourse* ranging from different Englishes to translingual practices within the academy.

*Ownership and empowerment* focused on their *strengths* and *ownership of English*. In terms of *strengths*, students primarily focused on personal qualities. They then spoke of the benefits gained from standardized exams and also identified writing, albeit in a general sense, as a strength as well. The *ownership of English* sub-code focused on students working in employment through English, on completing previous degrees through English, and on a general sense of ownership.

Finally, *meaning-making and negotiation* focused on the *discussion of expectations*. Here, students described the various ways in which faculty communicate

their expectations, ranging from in-class to private meetings to rubrics and handbooks. Students did, however, have a varied conclusion on the usefulness of these methods of communication. Further, a main sub-code was that of unclear expectations and expectations not discussed, signaling a lack of clarity despite these methods of communication.

As this chapter focused on students, interviews were also conducted with faculty to gain a wider view of expectations within the academy. In the next chapter, the results from the faculty interviews will be discussed following the same format as this chapter.

## 6 CHAPTER SIX: FACULTY INTERVIEW RESULTS

### 6.1 Introduction

Fourteen faculty members from four institutions were interviewed. The aim of the interviews was to gain a detailed, nuanced view of the faculty's expectations and experiences with international students. The questions were thematically organized to explore expectations and assessment, experiences with international students, and evaluation of entry and preparation tools. The interviews were analyzed thematically through a critical lens.

From these interviews, four parent codes were identified (Table 6-1). Each parent code is presented with the number of participants whose interviews contained the coding along with the number of total instances. All instances contained overlapping coding, both parent and sub-coding. Quantifying the number of both participants and instances for the code was essential to help determine the importance of the code. For example, if a sub-code had 40 instances, yet all of these instances were from one participant, it was deemed less important to explore within this chapter than a code with 40 instances from 14 different participants. As a case study approach was not adopted, the focus of the analysis remained on collated coding. Therefore, within this chapter, each parent code is further explored in subsequent sub-sections first to explore overall aspects of the parent code, and then to further explore sub-coding with more than 40 instances. Coding is only presented within the tables of the results sections when they are a high-order parent code (first or second level coding) or when they are explicitly discussed within the chapters. A complete list of coding can be found in appendix H.

**Table 6-1**

*Overview of faculty interview coding*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
Regulation, rules, and authority	Enforcement and imposition of norms and rules	14	1570
Imagining students	Creating students or ideas developed about students	14	904
Variation	Instances of variation, subjectivity, or case-by-case individuality within the academy	14	780
Meaning-making and negotiation	How intended meaning is understood and conveyed (Bakhtin, 1986) and aspects of negotiating such as meaning or authority	14	302

Throughout the interviews, faculty remained confident in their answers with few self-interruptions, contradictions, or nervous laughter. Faculty, in terms of body language, were

more at ease and appeared less nervous than students. However, faculty did show emotions such as frustration within the interview. Further, faculty took longer turns than students and I asked less questions prompting expansion, explanation, or clarity with the faculty as opposed to the students. This could signify a higher level of comfort and confidence surrounding the topics explored within the interviews. Relevant aspects of emotion and body language will be further explored in the respective coding.

## 6.2 Regulations, rules, and authority

The parent code *regulations, rules, and authority* was the most prevalent code with 1514 instances spread across the 14 faculty (Table 6-2). This code represents the enforcement and imposition of norms and rules across multiple levels of power dynamics. The first level is that of *expectations and dominant discourses* which is what faculty require of students. *External authority* are players beyond faculty which impose norms or authority either on faculty or students. *Link with the real world or practice* represents the links to professions beyond the degree, which may dictate content or learning objectives within the degree structure. Finally, *student expectations* represents faculty's perception of what students want from the degree.

**Table 6-2**

*Regulations, rules, and authority in faculty interviews*

Coding name	No. of Faculty	No. of Instances
Expectations and dominant discourse	14	1316
External authority	14	204
Link with "real world" or practice	13	38
Student expectations	6	12

### 6.2.1 Expectations and dominant discourse

This code was developed to explore the expectations which faculty identified as being needed to succeed in their respective institution or as discussed as a positive trait leading to academic success. Often, faculty identified these codes explicitly in response to the interview questions (Example 6-1).

#### Example 6-1

You know, something that shows an actual process of intellectual engagement with the material, that for me is what represents success in an academic enterprise. –  
*David, ll. 16886-16888*

Further within this code, instances of types of assessment or work required for modules were coded. This gave way to the sub-codes of *writing, oral communication, listening* and *reading* (Table 6-3). These sub-codes will be explored in more detail in the following sub-sections. Attributes purely relating to these modalities were also categorized within these

sub-codes (e.g., clarity of writing). It is not surprising that the four skills ranked the highest in terms of instances, namely through the types of assessment described and the preparation for classes which faculty expect students to undertake. In the following sections, the sub-codes which had at least 40 instances are further explored.

**Table 6-3**

*Expectations and dominant discourse as expressed by faculty*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
Writing	14	337
Oral communication	14	184
Listening	14	132
Reading	13	118
Rubric, criteria, and handbooks	14	44

### **6.2.1.1 Writing**

*Writing* (Table 6-4) was not surprisingly the most mentioned skill with types of assessment being the most referenced aspect throughout the interviews. Within the 23 unique types of writing-based assessment, dissertations were referenced the most, for PhD students and master's students, with many programs offering a choice of a dissertation by practice. Rather than a traditional literature-based or data collection-based dissertation, students either work with real companies on a problem or produce a final piece of work such as a portfolio, film, or magazine. Also, important to note, the methodology and literature review assessments listed in Table 6-4 are not always a part of the dissertation and are therefore counted as a separate type of assessment.

**Table 6-4***Writing-related coding in faculty interviews*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
Writing-focused Assessment	14	169
Thesis or dissertation	14	43
Essay	10	29
Timed examination	9	15
Methodology	7	14
Literature review	5	9
Reflection	6	8
Publications	4	7
Research proposal	4	6
Coursework	4	6
Project work	1	6
Poster	2	5
Journal	3	3
Placement report and reflection	2	3
Portfolio	2	3
Wiki	1	3
Company project	2	2
General mention	1	1
Book review	1	1
Case study	1	1
Lab report	1	1
Placement log	1	1
Research project	1	1
Workbook	1	1
General mention	13	65

Most of the faculty referred to modules that they teach and detailed general requirements such as word count, aim, and format (Example 6-2). Notably, written components may be individual or group-based and each faculty acknowledged the high level of variation in assessment requirements based on the module, degree level, lecturer, and student choice of topic.

### **Example 6-2**

There would be written reports for most modules. Some are presentation only, but then you would have, in most cases, you would have say a 3,000 to 4,000 word, in some cases larger, sometimes if it's a group of people up to 5,000 words, report and then alongside that you give your overview presentation, some summary of a presentation as well. – *Matilda, ll. 20432-20436*

Within the writing category, general mention mainly referred to mentions of writing in

IELTS or unspecified writing as seen in Example 6-3 and Example 6-4. Echoing the sentiments of most of the faculty, Linda describes that students are scoring low in the writing component of IELTS yet reaching the cutoff through high scores in the other components. This also points to faculty placing high importance on writing skills for academic success, while valuing listening and other components as less important to academic success. Laurence, in Example 6-4, mentions writing in an unspecified manner stating that, like all of the faculty, there is a large amount of written components in the degrees and students who “struggle” with writing will likely encounter more challenges within the course.

**Example 6-3**

They're getting an 8.5 in listening or something, one of the components that isn't as important as the as comprehension or writing or whatever it might be. The whole overall average score doesn't work. I mean, we're seeing students that are getting a 5 in writing, which like they need to get by in the program, but their average score is dragged up by some other component. – *Linda, ll. 20195-20200*

**Example 6-4**

For anyone, you know, with any language related problems, this must be a hard course because it's a very high word count. They produce volumes of work every single year. – *Laurence, ll. 19327-19328*

From assessment to general mention, faculty then spoke about qualities of writing necessary for academic success. To be counted within these sub-codes, faculty must not have described such qualities as evaluative of students' academic writing unless it was to make commentary on what qualities students need for academic success or what qualities faculty find pleasing, such descriptions which purely evaluate student academic writing, both positively and negatively, are included in the *imagining students* code. These sub-codes, while important in gaining an overview of faculty expectations, are not discussed in depth due to the cutoff level of 40 instances.

**6.2.1.2 Oral communication**

*Oral communication* identified by faculty largely remained focused on assessment practices (Table 6-5).

**Table 6-5**  
*Speaking-related coding in faculty interviews*

Coding name	No. of Faculty	No. of Instances
Speaking or interactive assessment	13	58
Presentation	9	22
Group work	5	12
Conference presentations	4	7
Placement interview and observation	3	4
Role play	2	3
Viva	2	3
Participation	1	3
Debate	1	2
Interpretation	1	2
Interactive lectures	14	45

Presentations, unsurprisingly, are the most frequently mentioned type of oral assessment. Most mentions of presentations were general or generic mentions of individual and group in-class presentations. Some faculty gave justification for including presentations as they allow for professors to actively engage with students to assess their engagement with and communication of the course content. In addition to this, faculty spoke about the need to foster teamwork and communication as this not only satisfies college requirements, but also prepares students for the workplace. This sentiment was best expressed by Rose in Example 6-5.

#### **Example 6-5**

Then I have the in-class presentation because I also want to hear them talking about ideas. That's also coming back to the in-class discussion, you know, I want to ask them questions because I want to hear them talking about it using terminology properly... I mean, I try and have really frank conversations with them saying, you know, it's not just 'and here's the exercise', but I try and put it into that broader bigger context. So, I'll say to them, you know, we're not making you do this just for the sake of it, we're making you do this because the college says that when you graduate you're going to be good communicators, and communication entails oral communication. For us, [language] communication, written communication... You know the reason why we have group work is because when you go out into the real world, you're going to work with other people, and there are going to be shirkers and there are going to be times when you're gonna have to pull your weight more and do things, well, play to your strengths. – *Rose, ll. 23083-23086, 22952-2297, 22966-22968*

While other types of oral assessment are in the minority as compared to presentations, it is important to acknowledge that these types of assessments are being used and are significantly different in terms of requirements and skills from the standard presentation. Out of the 12 mentions of group work, four of those referred to a written product. These



instances were included in this code rather than writing as team presentations and team reports require some type of oral communication to complete the product; however, the genre of the written product was indexed in the *writing* code above.

All 14 lecturers mentioned using some type of interactive aspects in their lectures. As seen through the coding, there is a range of the type of interactivity from working teams in the laboratory, role-playing in the classroom, informal discussions, tutorials and seminars, and flipped learning.

Linda brings up a common point that lecturers generally have autonomy over the delivery of their modules (Example 6-6), something which is reiterated in every interview as faculty tend to describe specific modules that they teach as examples while acknowledging the wide variety of approaches that they take depending on the module. Nichole, like many of the faculty, spoke of the difficulty of building in interactive aspects into modules with a large number of students (Example 6-7). Yet, as seen by 45 mentions of interactive lectures, faculty actively seek ways to make their lectures interactive regardless of the number of students.

#### **Example 6-6**

Module leaders, again, have a bit of autonomy when it comes to how they deliver. Within that three hours, a lot of module leaders, including myself, we break it up between, you know: interactive group work, we set them a task, we do the traditional lecture style where we kind of dictate to them content, a mix of videos, a mix of guest speakers. So yeah, it's a three-hour slot, but then within those within that three hours, it can be the module leader giving the lecture or the students actively participating. – *Linda, ll. 19843-19849*

#### **Example 6-7**

I'm in a large theater of which could have 160 students in it, so it is a PowerPoint usually. However, I really, I go out in front of the podium and I have a cordless mic and I try and engage them with questions. Even with a large audience, I'll try and get some dialogue going, which can be difficult, I know, with large groups, but I do try to do it. – *Nichole, ll. 21370-21374*

### **6.2.1.3 Listening**

*Listening* was the next most mentioned skill; however, these mentions mainly referred to lectures and indexing the types of lectures given along with approaches to lecturing such as interactive aspects of the lectures (Table 6-6). Beyond lectures, faculty rarely mentioned listening as a skill needed for academic success on its own, although it is recognized that listening would play a part in any type of oral communication as well.

Interactive lectures are discussed further in the *oral communication* section above. Other notable sub-codes appearing in the *lecture* code is that of PowerPoint-based lectures, with all faculty mentioning that at some point in their lectures they use PowerPoint to communicate content. Faculty members tended to briefly detail how they used PowerPoint

in their lectures, with the majority using their PowerPoints as a review or study tool for students or to anchor and guide the lectures in terms of content.

**Table 6-6**

*Listening-related coding in faculty interviews*

Coding name	No. of Faculty	No. of Instances
Lectures	14	121
Interactive lectures	14	45
PowerPoint based	14	24

#### 6.2.1.4 Reading

The *reading* code fell into six categories, with the most frequent mention of reading surrounding reading for assessment (Table 6-7).

**Table 6-7**

*Reading-related coding for faculty interviews*

Coding name	No. of Faculty	No. of Instances
Reading for assessment	12	56
Finding and using literature	12	24

Most of the mentions of reading for assessment were fairly general, for example Rose's mention of reading and referencing literature (Example 6-8) and Nichole's mention that PhD students need to do a lot of reading (Example 6-9).

##### **Example 6-8**

Oh yeah, how am I evaluating. Yes, yeah, okay so, it depends. If it's an essay, @have they answered the question, have they read the literature, are they referencing the literature appropriately. – *Rose, ll. 23241-23245*

##### **Example 6-9**

I have some PhD students; they need to do a lot of reading, and a lot of writing and drafts, and submit, and engage with me. I suppose that's a big thing, their engagement. – *Nichole, ll. 21343-21345*

Most of the reading for assessment referred to reading for writing assessments. Sarah explained that her students are expected to read and engage with documents on the virtual learning environment as a part of their writing assessment, and that even after accumulating years of experience she still needs to engage with materials as writing is not an isolated event (Example 6-10). This highlights the point that the rest of the faculty also made that reading is an integral part of assessment.

**Example 6-10**

I would say the biggest thing they need is to engage and, for example, I mentioned to you I've seen students who failed and this is one of the tips I give them when they're preparing the essay; I say, still, I could not go into a room and write the same essay I've given a first year, or write a research proposal that a master's student, or write a thesis. I couldn't go, as you know, 25-30 years of writing, I couldn't do it in isolation, you know, it's not just an isolated task. The first job I do before I write a paper is engaged with the blackboard materials, read all the documents, read. – *Sarah, ll. 23902-23909*

Finding and using literature is a sub-code of reading for assessment as when faculty spoke about finding and using literature, they were always speaking about assessment. David, in Example 6-11, spoke of the rubric in his department which identifies the use of relevant literature as a category on which students are marked. Finn expands this by detailing what he is assessing (presentation and structure, knowledge of topic, engagement with given materials, and independent reading), expressing that evidence of independent reading is typically the defining factor between a pass and an honors mark (Example 6-12). He even explains how he intentionally leaves materials out of his reading lists to see which students will discover them, something which he learned from his professor in his undergraduate degree. Nichole, then, switches the focus to the importance of developing skills such as using the library and extracting relevant information from the reading materials (Example 6-13). She additionally relates this to teaching others about what you have learned, and further in the interview identifies finding and using literature as a key skill to have in order to problem solve in the workplace.

**Example 6-11**

So [the rubric] kind of gives a description of what a first looks like, or a 2:1, or whatever, under each of these headings. So, we have like seven headings, they are coherence of argument, presentation, I can't remember what else, content, and use of relevant literature and so on. – *David, ll. 16854-16857*

**Example 6-12**

So, can they show they've engaged with the materials that were presented to them maybe in class. We have a virtual learning environment Moodle, and have they read stuff and clicked through it. Did it have an analysis, that's the third thing, and then, fourth, is there evidence of independent reading and research. And that's what gets you a first, right. So, if you hit the first two, you get a pass. If you get a good analysis, you get an honors mark. If you @can @show @me I found schmuck and schmuck who wrote about this and you never mentioned, that's the first. Yeah, I do leave things out off book lists to see will the students find their way to them. So, people kind of go I found this great book, and I go really? Yeah? – *Finn, ll. 17754-17763*

**Example 6-13**

So, it's not about just doing a perfect piece of work, it doesn't have to be perfect, it's about the learning, you know. And to know how to do that, you know, even to go out and know how to do a search, even to know how to get your literature, because that's what they need is to be able to do that. So, it's to get the skills really... Yeah, absolutely, definitely critical thinking, absolutely, and to be, you know, to want to learn, to be able to read and go through the literature, and to extract what they need. Also, a part of it is that they are also able, then, to educate others and that it just continues on really. – *Nichole, ll. 21497-21501, 21509-21512*

**6.2.1.5 Rubrics, criteria, and handbooks**

*Rubrics, criteria, and handbooks* is a code which revealed the communication of expectations in a written form. Ted, as with most faculty, mentioned these expectations as being clear and carefully constructed to guide students through their course (Example 6-14). Nichole even calls the handbook the students' "bible," stating that it is very structured (Example 6-15). Learning outcomes, grade descriptors, assessment methods, module descriptions, and reading lists are all examples of content found within handbooks or other documents given to students. Additionally, as seen in Ted's quote, multiple faculty members offered me access to their handbooks and rubrics, showing a spirit of collaboration and genuine want to support students.

**Example 6-14**

So, the grade descriptors are given in the handbooks. So, every year has a handbook: there's junior fresh handbook, senior fresh handbook, sophister handbook, each MPhil program would have its own handbook. So, the grade descriptors, which state very clearly what we expect from students performing at every level, they would state what they need to do so that if a student isn't achieving a certain grade, we could say look this is what you need to be doing to achieve that grade. And those points would be fleshed out, you know, much more clearly there. Yeah, I can actually send you the descriptors if that's helpful. - *Ted, ll. 24582-24589*

**Example 6-15**

Very very structured, very good guidelines. I say so this is your Bible, and I go through the full guidelines in the lecture with them, and I say bring in your guidelines and look at this, this is literally what you do. So, it is very structured. Then they also get individual supervision as well. - *Nichole, ll. 21472-21475*

Laurence spoke about professional accrediting bodies who dictate guidelines and criteria for some types of courses (Example 6-16). As with the other professional courses, Laurence described the very detailed nature of the framework that the accrediting body develops. He also explained that the students are aware that the assessment of these criteria is evidence-based and are given clear guidelines on the proficiencies they must develop along with the written assessment that modules may require. Hanna further spoke about the professional bodies stating that they are reviewed to ensure that the students are meeting

these externally developed criteria, and if the course is found to not meet the level required, they lose their certification (Example 6-17).

**Example 6-16**

Yeah, they know that this is what the [accrediting body]'s six domains, and all of the drop-down boxes of proficiencies, they know that they're instructed in that in the classroom. This is what your practice teachers are looking for exactly....So, they know it's evidence-based, that there would be observation of their work samples, talking to colleagues about their work, in some cases talking to service users about their work. So, it'll all be evidence-based, and it'll be this framework, so that's very clear. They also know in their written piece, there's a very clear word count, a very clear template. They know how the marks are weighted, this, that, and the other. So yeah, that's all clear to the students and communicated very clearly, and they have the paper copies, or electronic copies, of all those assessment frameworks. - *Laurence, ll. 19181-19194*

**Example 6-17**

We have these professional bodies that come and review us, and students have to be at a certain capacity, they have to be performing at a certain level, and if they don't, we would lose our certification. - *Hanna, ll. 18383-18385*

Touching a bit on negotiation, another common sentiment expressed in this code is that of the work required to develop these handbooks and rubrics. Matilda aptly described the work involved in making a handbook which is useful for the students (Example 6-18).

Here, Matilda spoke about how lecturers vary in detail in their assignment briefs; something which if, as in her first example, a lecturer is not detailed enough the head of faculty or other faculty member who is responsible for collecting the briefs must fix. This, however, presents the problem of checking with both the lecturer and what is represented in the handbook to ensure consistency and clarity for the students. This can cause delays in the communication of expectations and delivery of the handbook, and also shows negotiation between faculty members.

**Example 6-18**

So - like one lecturer this semester - for example, sent me. When I asked them for the assignment brief, and I sent out the assignment brief template, actually he submitted it, just sent me back a one-liner, like a reply to the email and as I was gonna write the email, I realized it was the title of his essay. That was just what he believed an assignment @brief @was, @just the title, no markings, mean, or weighting, or module. Anyway, so, it definitely varies, and it can end up that myself or the head of faculty or, you know, that we end up putting a lot of that stuff in. Which, yeah, you're making things clearer for the student? But it can be, you know, you have to keep checking in to make sure the lecturer is tuned in with what they're working towards and what's been communicated to them in the handbook, so it definitely doesn't work perfectly...Some of the lecturers do absolutely the opposite end of the spectrum of the guy I just described, you know, one line in an e-mail, some have amazing rubrics on GradeMark and give really detailed feedback using that, which we are trying to move towards as a faculty that everybody does that. It's probably about 70 to 80 percent of lecturers who do it correctly. - *Matilda, ll. 20525-20535, 20541-20544*

**6.2.2 External authority**

*External authority* is the next sub-code within *regulation, rules, and authority*. With 204 instances, this sub-code focuses on power dynamics which faculty members must navigate (Table 6-8). This includes situations, organizations, and standards which may influence how a faculty member marks, how they work, and what expectations they hold for their students, among other impacts. The focus of the following sub-sections will remain on *college, school, or departmental level authority*.

**Table 6-8***External authority in faculty interviews*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of Instances</b>
College, school, or departmental level authority	14	113
Professional programs	8	34
Language tests	12	22
Conferences or other discipline socialization	6	12
Government level authority	4	8
External examiners	7	7
CAO or leaving cert	3	5
Professional proofreading	2	3

**6.2.2.1 College, school, or departmental level authority**

The *college, school, or departmental level authority* code primarily focused on college level authority (37 instances from 12 participants), this includes business or numbers-driven policies implemented by the university (15 instances from seven participants). It also focuses on faculty workload and the lack of resources provided by the university (34 instances from 10 participants) and school or departmental level authority (26 instances

from 10 participants). Primarily, faculty spoke of limitations or impositions which are exercised on faculty from a college, school, or departmental level in terms of curriculum or policies which they must uphold. As seen with Penelope, faculty often spoke of these factors as limiting what they are able to do within the classroom (Example 6-19). Other faculty spoke of these factors as bringing structure and standardization and spoke of these factors more positively (Example 6-20 and Example 6-21).

**Example 6-19**

They are exposed to samples and it's not a complete mystery for them. So, I do think that's probably a good idea. We don't do it now, our department doesn't kind of allow us to give samples of essays to other students because they argue that they could be over influenced by them. – *Penelope, ll. 22372-22375*

**Example 6-20**

So, we have a group work policy in the faculty which requires groups that are diverse in terms of gender, nationality, background, culture, and experience. Even when students self-select groups, they have to self-select against those criteria, or in some cases lecturers will assign groups, and then have their criteria of what is required. – *Matilda, ll. 20373-20377*

**Example 6-21**

Everybody is going to be assessed the same way. A lot of things are changing in [institution 1] at the moment, and I think everybody is going to be assessed on the basis of a maximum three-thousand-word assignment and there'll be no exams in future. So, three thousand words we've generally agreed is much more appropriate. – *David, ll. 16762-16766*

One salient theme within college level authority was business or numbers-driven policies. Faculty expressed concerns of over the struggle between numbers of students and rigor of education. Faculty across the board described their universities as an “industry” and “[degree] factory.” Linda, in Example 6-22, described the struggle between maintaining academic rigor and a healthy financial status for the university throughout her interview. However, she emphasized the impact that reputational damage can have on the university and cautions against taking a purely numbers-oriented stance to recruitment and resource allocation.

**Example 6-22**

You know, reputational damage word-of-mouth is worth gold...If we're sending people out of here with master's degrees, and then they enter a job, let's say in Dublin, and in their first day they're found out that they can't contribute in a meeting, I mean that's going to come back and bite not only the school's but the college's reputation...I think they may look across the board at statistics and say on average universities look for 6.5. It means we can throw the net wider. It means we can get more students on seats, and it means our revenue model can grow...As I said, reputational damage word-of-mouth is way more powerful than I think they understand...I know sometimes, and our recruitment team are great, they are really dedicated, but they are given targets by their superiors. It's these targets that is the polarizing aspect. It's where I'm looking for rigor and quality on the program and an enjoyable experience, and there are other people that are looking for bums on seats, which is - I know it's I'm being quite frank here - but that's where there's this kind of tug of war really going on. I want the school to be successful and do financially well so that we can funnel that back into funding more programs and better resources and all that kind of stuff, but at the end of the day I don't want to accept anyone and anybody on the program if they're not going to do well on the program or if they're if they're going to inhibit or hinder other people doing well in the program. - *Linda, ll. 20087-20091, 20171-20174, 20176-20177, 20237-20246*

Faculty members also spoke of their workload and resources in a negative way. This was kept as a separate code rather than lumping it in with college or school/departmental level authority as it was often difficult to decipher which level of authority caused these issues with workload and resources. Faculty stated that they do not have the time to provide adequate support to students. Hanna explained that due to time demands on staff, her department is going to fully multiple-choice assessments (Example 6-23). Nichole, on the other hand, stated that providing feedback and support to students impinges on her home life. At this point during the interview, Nichole became visibly upset when speaking of the impact of the workload on her home life coupled with the feeling that students were not receiving enough support or feedback (Example 6-24).

**Example 6-23**

I don't know. That's because we're weaning off of having short answer and essay questions. In fact, we're going to be going to all multiple choice because of limitations on staff to student ratio and demands on staff. We don't have time. - *Hanna, ll. 18512-18515*

**Example 6-24**

I would give feedback and it would be so bad that they'd send it to me again and I'd edit a bit more and say now follow through. Or, you know, a little bit here and there because I was trying to make sense of it and giving a huge amount of time. To be honest, it impinges on my home life. Actually, I shouldn't be admitting this, but it does, because I find it very hard not to give them the help...I actually stayed up - and I'm not trying to be a martyr - but I was actually up to one o'clock last night. Yeah, I had spent the weekend doing a different chapter, then he sent me another one and I reviewed that. I stayed up until one o'clock because I was meeting him today. -*Nichole, ll. 21424-21428, 21430-21433*



Other faculty members, such as Melinda and Linda (Example 6-25 and Example 6-26), spoke about the amount of services offered to students stating that generally they are under-resourced or stretched in terms of the number of staff available.

**Example 6-25**

I think we would be under-resourced when it comes to things like student services. We would have a counselling service available. We would have, you know, a very good pastoral care culture, but in terms of actual bodies and human resource and like resources behind it? The intention is good, but the execution isn't very good. - *Matilda, ll. 20706-20710*

**Example 6-26**

We're growing, the [discipline] school is growing, and the full-time staff numbers are growing but not quick enough to match the student numbers. So, a lot of our module leaders are adjuncts or external professors from other universities that fly in and fly home. So, they're not, and a lot of them are, given the nature of [discipline] as a discipline, a lot of them are just, you know, industry experts and consultants. They're not really used to the way of life of a university and an educational institution. - *Linda, ll. 19969-19974*

Senior academics stated that they have the choice to reduce their workload by choosing less intensive modules to teach or by having less research students to supervise (Example 6-27 and Example 6-28), something which junior academics contrasted by stating that their workloads are often unmanageable due to the large amount of modules, size of the modules, and number of research students they must take on.

**Example 6-27**

Well, one of the benefits of being up to food chain is I don't get tutorials. - *Finn, ll. 17646*

**Example 6-28**

In terms of on the master's program, additional to the placements, they do undertake research, a dissertation. I supervise as few of them as possible @@ for literally just workload management because I have the burden of the fieldwork, which has shortened my life@. - *Laurence, ll. 19013-29016*

Faculty also spoke of partner universities or other mentions of globalization, such as market competition with other “English speaking” countries, within their interviews. This code usually tied in with business and numbers-drive policies as faculty expressed concerns that the universities were seeking markets and partner universities at a detriment to the quality of education. This code also revealed that universities send lecturers and students across borders for education and English support. These sub-codes show a wider culture within academia which centers around academic institutions being run as a business, which may be in conflict with faculty’s image of what an educational institution should be. It further shows a culture which students must navigate, often without enough

support due to increased demands on faculty and decreased resources allocated to departments and student supports.

### 6.2.3 Summary

*Regulations, rules, and authority* looked at the enforcement and imposition of rules and norms on both students and faculty. *Expectations and dominant discourse* focused on faculty's expectations for students and requirements for academic success. Within this code, faculty spoke about assessments along with characteristics or qualities needed for academic success. Not surprisingly, the four skills of *writing, reading, oral communication, and listening* featured as the top four sub-codes. *Writing*, however, was clearly spoken about more than any other skill or quality. Faculty spoke of writing mainly in terms of the assessment required in the academy and in a very general sense; this represents the high prevalence of writing within the academy. *Oral communication*, the next most prevalent skill, focused on assessments, namely presentations, and interactive lectures. *Listening* focused almost solely on lectures and *reading* focused mainly on reading for assessment. Next, faculty spoke of *rubrics, criteria, and handbooks* as a means of clearly communicating their expectations to students, referring to these as "bibles."

While other qualities or characteristics did not reach the 40-instance cutoff, and therefore are not discussed in this chapter in-depth, it does not necessarily mean that these qualities are not important to academic success. Factors such as "clarity" or "academic integrity" are arguably important, and often constitute unique grading criteria according to the faculty participants in this study, and should still be considered when informing a pre-sessional EAP program. Therefore, they will be considered in the conclusions of this study. Additionally, the prevalence of the four skills within the interviews should, and will, also be critically evaluated and problematized.

Turning to *external authority*, this sub-code focused on external factors such as the government, college-wide policies, or restraints within the academy outside of the faculty's power to change. Here, faculty expressed frustration and exacerbation when speaking of the constraints and workload that they face. In fact, workload, business-and-numbers-driven policies, and being under-resourced was the main focus of this sub-code. Faculty felt conflict between wanting to provide a high-quality, supportive educational experience for students and pressures from external players. They touched on how these requirements and pressures limited their ability to give feedback to students and deliver high-quality programs. Other examples of external authority include professional program requirements, faculty or school level requirements, college-wide requirements, and standardized testing.

Overall, *regulations, rules, and authority* revealed complex, varied, and sometimes muddled requirements which both students and faculty must navigate. While faculty generally remained confident in their expectations for students, and their communication of these expectations, they also spoke of conflict between their own understandings and hopes for academia and the reality and pressures of academia as it is.

### 6.3 Imagining students

The *imagining students* code is where faculty describe, or imagine, the students, and their characteristics, who they teach and support. This code mainly focuses on the evaluation of students' abilities and work, positively and negatively, along with faculty's perceptions of the causes of student struggle within academia (Table 6-9). This code also includes faculty definitions of international or English LX students.

**Table 6-9**  
*Imagining students*

Coding name	No. of Faculty	No. of instances
"Causes" of student struggle	14	288
Evaluation of students	14	287
International or English LX student definition	14	223
Student experience	11	31
Previous knowledge of student background	14	30
Language not an issue	9	22
Neutral or positive mention of widening access	8	13
Student background knowledge of discipline	8	10

#### 6.3.1 Causes of student struggle

In the *causes of student struggle* code faculty speculate as to why students struggle within the university (Table 6-10). Within the main sub-code here, *English L1 and LX struggle*, faculty express that the cause of students' struggle has less to do with their language background and more to do with other factors which are more finely explored in the subsection below. *Culture*, which includes different academic systems and nationality, is another attribute that faculty identified as being the cause of student struggle. Within this code, *other factors* refers to factors which impact students outside of the academy, such as the need to work or social factors, while *institutional factors* refers to aspects of the academy which may cause students to struggle. The *struggle due to language level and communication* was coded where faculty explicitly state that a student's language level causes them to struggle within their academic degree.

**Table 6-10***Causes of student struggle in faculty interviews*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
L1 and LX struggle	13	100
Culture	13	71
Other factors	10	48
Struggle due to language level or communication	12	37
Institutional factors	13	32

### **6.3.1.1 English L1 and LX struggle**

Throughout their interviews, faculty repeatedly identified that both English L1 and LX students struggle academically. They primarily pointed to the jump or difference between degree levels as a cause of academic struggle (47 instances from 11 participants). Linda, in Example 6-29, described how students must make a “conceptual leap” from undergraduate to postgraduate. However, this leap seems to be one of autonomy and independence as Linda described how handholding “[is] all removed in a click...in an instant for some students.” Sarah and Oisín (Example 6-30 and Example 6-31) spoke about the leap between secondary school and undergraduate. Sarah, like Linda, pointed to the increased requirement of autonomy and independence being a point of struggle for students. Six other faculty members, in ten instances, also described this jump of independence as a main factor in the jump or difference between degree levels sub-code. Oisín, then, brought in the point of academic discourse and discipline-specific language being a stumbling block for students. He also reiterated the previous points of students needing to make the jump themselves, stating that many students “flounder” while making that transition.

#### **Example 6-29**

When you're a master's student, particularly straight from undergraduate, there's a level of making that conceptual leap, let's say, or it's from being an undergrad student to an adult that's responsible for your own learning. I think that whole, you know, they need to learn, and they probably learn it quickly but in a tough way, that hand-holding system that they're probably used to at undergrad level is not here. We don't have it. We don't have the resources to. We don't think that it's a great way to treat master's students who are adults, you know, where we handhold them and we tell them everything that they need to do and how they need to do it and when they need to do by and if they don't do it, you know, that we'll be looking over their shoulder. That's all removed in an in an in a click, in an instant, for some students. So, I find that kind of the leap in maturity or, you know, the leap from being a student to an adult who's studying is a big one for a lot of them to take. - Linda, ll. 20098-20109

**Example 6-30**

I suppose we have a requirement for a fairly high level of independence. Well, compared to at least in Irish secondary school...So, what we would require kind of a usual level of university independence, but they struggle with it. - *Sarah, ll. 23607-23609, 23611-23612*

**Example 6-31**

At the undergrad level I think a lot of students need to be deprogramed from the leaving certificate... So, you are effectively introducing a wholly alien discourse to them. Well, not alien, an unusual discourse to them. In that sense it is a bit like learning a language...They simply have to immerse themselves, and that is basically reading reading reading writing thinking talking. If they don't make that jump, and nobody can make it for them, then they're going to be floundering. So, I think that is the difficulty of trying to explain just how much of it's not just simply carrying on studies that they have done at secondary school [sigh]. - *Oisín, ll. 21878-21879, 21947-21949, 21951-21955*

While not within the 40-instance cutoff, the general mention of this sub-code illustrates the faculty's stance that both English L1 and LX students struggle (28 instances). Hanna, in Example 6-32, pointed to communication and study skills as an area of struggle while Matilda, in Example 6-33, pointed to writing and presentation.

**Example 6-32**

Of course I would like to add English and proper communication, because we see that our students are having to do double time, not just our international non-English mother-tongue students, but even our Irish students who have English as their primary language. We see that they're struggling, not just with the material, but they're struggling as they don't have skills to be a student - or to be a student who's expected to perform at a high level. - *Hanna, ll. 18715-18720*

**Example 6-33**

It's not just international students that need to be concerned with their language, but all students particularly in their written work. Often we would find that the international students would perform better in terms of the presentation of their written work because they're more anxious about it and they spend more time on it and then they're more systematic in how they, you know, the grammar, the syntax, everything. Whereas an Irish or English native speaker might have an assumption of - sure, it wouldn't even cross their minds - probably, you know, they just think they know what they're doing. So, I think it is a massive for everybody, for all students. -*Matilda, ll. 20672-20680*

**6.3.1.2 Culture**

When speaking of *culture*, faculty primarily referred to differences between countries (64 instances from 13 participants) rather than cultural differences between institutions or regions within the same country. The differences between countries were largely surrounding academic differences (Example 6-34, Example 6-35, and Example 6-36). Of course, many of the expectations expressed by faculty in previous coding could fall within this coding as expectations and requirements symbolize an academic culture within the

country and institution where the faculty are employed; however, this was not counted within the coding here as only aspects of culture which faculty identified as causing students to struggle was counted. This does point to the fact that faculty rarely saw their own institutional culture as problematic (five instances from two faculty members), and rather placed the blame on the students' cultural background along with the onus to adapt on the student rather than the institution.

**Example 6-34**

I've also, with regard to plagiarism, over the years I've concluded that it really is true that some people just don't understand what it is. They just they honestly don't know what is fair and what isn't fair...So, I think there are cultural differences in what's acceptable with regard to using other sources and so on. There's misunderstandings about how a quotation works and so on. - *David, ll. 17230-17232, 17238-17240*

**Example 6-35**

I realized a couple of years ago - we had students from Kentucky, and it was the first time I did an exit interview, really, with students from the United States. I was shocked because they hadn't written long assignments, and so I thought they would find it easy whereas they were finding it really @hard. - *Finn, ll. 17857-17860*

**Example 6-36**

So, yes, we would have major issues. We still would on the undergraduate side in the [discipline] degree where lecturers would find it quite demotivating? Both from a language level perspective, but also from an engagement perspective, which are probably related, but also cultural in terms of engagement. You know, the students who have studied maybe two years of higher education in China are used to sitting in a large room, listening to the lecture, and everything the lecturer says is gospel, and you know it's crack your head open stuff the knowledge in rather than a dynamic exchange, which is what our teaching style would be. - *Matilda, ll. 20406-20415*

Further, while not making the 40-instances cutoff, other aspects of culture such as navigating power dynamics and other social or cultural norms were discussed in the other sub-codes. These codes are important to mention as they illustrate that students are not adjusting just to a new academic culture, but also to a wider culture which may also be assumed and hidden to the students and may impact their academic experience.

**6.3.1.3 Other factors**

Faculty also spoke of *other factors* which impact students' academic success, signaling a complex relationship between a students' academic and personal life. With 48 total instances, it also signals that these factors do enter into faculty's consideration when speaking of expectations and evaluating academic success. Both Finn and Matilda (Example 6-37 and Example 6-38) spoke of the housing crisis and finding suitable accommodation (seven instances from five participants) along with students' having jobs whiles studying (11 instances from seven participants). Faculty who mentioned mental

health (7 instances from five participants) were generally speaking about the impact of these other factors on students. Finn, however, pointed out an important aspect that it is not the faculty's responsibility to solve these issues, yet he remains aware of the impact of these issues on his students showing empathy and support from his side.

**Example 6-37**

They also need to be in a situation, in a more holistic way, where they're not working too much. That they have time to give to their study. Whether or not or they have accommodation that's suitable, they have a place to study. That's not our responsibility, but I would be cognizant of students when you're looking at them thinking you look a bit tired today @, were you working at, what were, you how, many hours where inside here, and stuff like that. - *Finn, ll. 17809-17817*

**Example 6-38**

Outside of the college is huge. We've had, you know, with the housing crisis, we have international students arriving and living in hostels for weeks on end, months on end. We have, you know, students arriving with unrealistic expectations of the cost of living in Dublin. Those things have a massive impact of their performance because then they're missing class because they're trying to find accommodation, their mental health suffers, they start, they might find a job...they'll take all the hours they can get or they'll work night shifts and then come into class like a zombie the next morning. Then they'll attend classes, but they're physically there and mentally not, and they're exhausted and eventually they'll hit a wall. - *Matilda, ll. 20688-20698*

**6.3.2 Evaluation of students**

Within this sub-code, faculty describe their students in terms of evaluating their academic success. This code was analyzed for positive (41 instances with 11 faculty) and negative (146 instances with 14 faculty) evaluations, revealing that faculty mainly evaluated students negatively. This could be due to the nature of the interviews where faculty were focusing on ways that students could improve, however, the large numerical difference between the negative and positive evaluations may also reveal that faculty in large feel that students are not up to par. Faculty overwhelmingly evaluated students on their *writing ability* (116 instances), perhaps reflecting the dominant form of assessment from which faculty base their marks around.

**6.3.2.1 Writing ability**

When evaluating students' writing ability, faculty mostly mentioned their evaluation in a general sense. Rather than specifying what in the writing led to the evaluation, such as grammar, sentence structure, and clarity, a more general evaluation was generally made (48 instances). Linda, in Example 6-39, explained a common sentiment that there is a "line" between writing which is muddling the content and writing which may not be clear. However, Linda also went on to note that with professional writing help, a student who was previously indecipherable improved drastically and went on to pass despite still being

sub-par in terms of writing skills. This node is extremely intertwined with the *causes of student struggle* code as faculty tended to speculate as to why students struggle with writing rather than pinpointing the areas in which students struggle in general (Example 6-40).

**Example 6-39**

I know that there's a qualitative difference between student A and student B who struggled a little bit in terms of it's not pitch perfect in terms of their writing, and those that are really struggling that have probably used a direct translator to get their assignment in and it makes no sense and I have to read it three four times to try and decipher something. So, when I get those unfortunate cases of student B, I do have to fail them because their writing competency is well below not only what would be expected of an undergrad student, but of a master's student. - *Linda, ll. 20056-20063*

**Example 6-40**

Our students come from so many different backgrounds and so many different institutions and so many different countries where the education system is different. So, for example, if I get a French student, they will look at me like I have ten heads if I tell them they need to reference a document and they're like what because it's just the reflective discursive essay style assessment that they're used to from their undergrad. If I look at students from Germany, they're crap at exams because they don't do the traditional closed book exams. - *Matilda, ll. 20640-20646*

**6.3.3 International or English LX student definition**

This code appeared as faculty described and defined international students throughout their interviews. Faculty members tended to stick to one definition, or a few, throughout their interviews. This can point to the fact that faculty have more experience with certain “types” of international students due to their involvement with such students through teaching and supervision. This can reveal a nuanced look at faculty answers as many aspects of their interviews, such as expectations and evaluation of students, may be influenced by who they consider to be international students. Additionally, these definitions may be compared to the general make-up of a pre-sessional EAP cohort highlighting the danger of pre-conceived ideas of international students in EAP being non-English L1 students whereas faculty definitions of international students span a much wider net to include students from a variety of linguistic backgrounds.

Looking at the sub-coding within this code, faculty most often described Non-EU students throughout their interviews, followed by a generic international student description (Table 6-11). Erasmus and EU students were also described, although at a lesser frequency but also by the greatest number of faculty (52 instances from 13 participants).



**Table 6-11**  
*Faculty definitions of international students*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Non-EU	12	90
General international students	11	75
Erasmus and EU students	13	52
English LX in Ireland	4	6

Faculty most commonly described non-EU students from countries with English as an official language (47 instances from 11 participants) as compared to countries without English as an official language (24 instances from nine participants), or generalizing a region which could fall into either category (14 instances). Generic mentions of international students either fall within English LX (25 instances from nine participants; most commonly referred to as “NNS” within the interviews) and visiting students (14 instances from two participants). Visiting students are most commonly Erasmus students, however this was kept in a separate category as within these 14 instances the students were explicitly called visiting students. Overall, faculty explicitly referred to some category of English LX students 121 times compared to the 47 instances of students coming from countries with English as an official language.

English LX students in Ireland, including first and second-generation immigrants from a variety of backgrounds, were not as commonly mentioned within the interview. This again, could be due to preconceived ideas about the study at hand as the PIL stated “international students,” yet this also highlights that a cohort of students who may find EAP useful, Irish home students from English L1 and LX backgrounds, are commonly left out of the narrative surrounding EAP support.

#### **6.3.4 Summary**

*Imagining students* focused on faculty’s evaluation and description of their students. The three primary sub-codes, receiving almost equal attention from the faculty participants, were *causes of student struggle*, *evaluation of students* and *international or English LX student definition*. Overall, faculty spoke of more negative evaluations, however, this could be due to the nature of the interviews. When making evaluations, faculty primarily spoke of *writing* in a general sense, matching the focus on *writing in regulations, rules, and authority*.

When speaking of the *causes of student struggle*, the faculty spoke at length about how both English L1 and LX students struggle in academia, and instead of language being the cause, they pointed to the jump between degree levels as causing this struggle.

Independence, communication, writing skills, and study skills were all factors that faculty said students struggled with due to this jump between degree levels, with many faculty stating that students need to be “deprogrammed” from the previous degree (e.g., secondary school leaving cert, undergraduate, etc.). Next, faculty identified *culture* as a cause of student struggle. However, faculty rarely pointed to their institutions’ culture as being problematic, and instead focused on the academic culture of the students as being different and therefore problematic for the students. This suggests that the onus is on the students to assimilate to the academic culture of their Irish institution instead of both sides adapting. Faculty not only spoke of academic culture, but also mentioned other social or cultural norms which cause “culture shock” or difficulty for the students. The next sub-code focused on *other factors* which cause student struggle such as finances, students’ needing to work during their degree program, the housing crisis, and mental health. Faculty felt that while it is not their responsibility to support students in these other factors, supports should be in place and that faculty remain aware that these factors can negatively impact a student’s academic success.

Finally, faculty defined international and English LX students throughout their interviews. Most faculty focused on only one or two definitions of international students throughout their interview. This was coded as a faculty members’ experience and definition of international students could influence their expectations and evaluations. While, overall, faculty spoke more of English LX students, roughly half of the mentions of international students referred to students who have English as an L1. It is also important to note that Irish students with English as an LX were rarely mentioned, signaling a cohort who may be slipping through the cracks.

The *imaging students* code reveals how faculty feel their students are performing, and also their speculations as to why students are struggling. This, coupled with their idea of an international student, can help influence student supports by providing a more nuanced view as to those who need supports and what they need support in. However, as seen with the overall negative evaluation of students, this also places the students in a deficit-view which may be problematized.

#### **6.4 Variation**

The *variation* code is important in that expectations and factors influencing academic success are often variable and points to taking many answers coded above “with a grain of salt.” Faculty mostly described *modules, assessment and practice* as being variable, changing, or individually different on a case-by-case basis (Table 6-12).

**Table 6-12**  
*Variation in faculty interviews*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Modules, assessment, and practice	14	422
Roles and Identities	14	159
Communities of discourse	12	87
Culture	13	71
Degree level or program	7	17
Variation in language level despite IELTS	7	11
Evaluation or definition of academic success	7	9
Intake practices	2	4

Likewise, faculty described various *communities of discourse* which are acceptable, unacceptable, encouraged, discouraged, or essential to be within students' repertoire. This sometimes exemplifies additional expectations for students and at other times shows that the typically thought of "academic discourse" is being challenged within the academy. Moreover, faculty took on different *roles and identities* throughout their interviews which, as they described, change their expectations or evaluation of students depending on which identity they encompass. *Culture*, despite having over 40 instances, is not discussed as a subsection here as it was discussed in-depth in Section 6.3.1.2. Largely *culture* was spoken of in a way that caused struggle for students, however it was included in the *variation* code as it points to variations of expectations, requirements, educational systems, and ways of communicating throughout the world.

To give a solid example of the type of language surrounding the *variation* code, Example 6-41 to Example 6-45 show how faculty frequently took examples or stated throughout their interviews to preface that there is a large amount of variety in almost every answer before going onto more specific details. While the following sub-sections will briefly highlight the type of variation found, the language faculty used and the resulting variations described are important to EAP programs as it shows a need to collaborate closely with faculty members to develop specific programs for specific disciplines, degree levels, and institutions as a one-size-fits-all program cannot achieve the wide scope of variety represented throughout the academy.

**Example 6-41**

So, let's take just as an example... – *David, ll. 16811*

**Example 6-42**

Okay, well it depends on the module, but if we take a typical one, like, let's say... - *Rose, ll. 22811-22812*

**Example 6-43**

Gosh, it's a really tough question to answer. You go on kind of on a case-by-case basis. - *Ted, ll. 24861-24862*

**Example 6-44**

It depends on how you - your working definition of succeed. – *Hanna, ll. 18474*

**Example 6-45**

Okay, so speaking for my own module this semester... – *Chris, ll. 16351*

**6.4.1 Modules, assessment, and practice**

Faculty focused on the variation within *modules, assessment, and practice* throughout their interviews, with most of the variation referring to the types of assessment or deliverables (Table 6-13).

**Table 6-13**

*Variation in modules, assessment and practice as expressed in faculty interviews*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Types of assessment or deliverables	14	232
Lectures	14	129
General mention	12	27
Lecturers	5	16
Choice in assessment	8	13

Within the sub-code of assessment or deliverables, it is more important to focus on the number of unique types of assessments rather than the number of instances. There are 23 different types of writing assessments, nine types of speaking assessments, and three other types of assessment. As these have been detailed in Section 6.2 *Regulations, rules, and authority*, the types of assessment will not be explored in depth here. However, it was also notable that eight of the faculty (13 instances) mentioned students having a choice in the topic or type of assessment.

In terms of lectures, most of the variation is again referring to the type of lectures which take place which may impact the lecturing style, assessment, or in-class activities. Few lecturers mentioned having guest lecturers (three faculty) and only nine faculty mentioned explicitly that class size rather than lecture type (e.g., laboratory, tutorials or seminars) has an influence on how the lectures are delivered. This, however, may be implicitly covered by the definition of such types of lectures (e.g., seminars being small). Most lecturers reported having interactive lectures (45 instances from 14 participants) while PowerPoint-based lectures and placements or practice modules were also common (24 instances from 14 participants; 21 instances from six participants).

### 6.4.2 Roles and identities

Along with the variety introduced through modules, assessments, and lectures, faculty also explicitly undertook 22 different *roles and identities* throughout their interviews, changing how they answered questions (Table 6-14). I didn't include teacher/lecturer or supervisor because of nature of the interview meant they were in this role most of the time, and this is mostly represented through their use of examples or personal experience, which is the most represented sub-code within *roles and identities*.

**Table 6-14**  
*Roles and identities expressed by faculty*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Example or personal experience	14	74
Course director	5	18
Researcher or academic	5	10
Student	4	10
Module coordinator	4	5
Not a language teacher or expert	4	5
Not a certain role	2	5
Partner university coordinator	2	4
Erasmus coordinator	2	3
Reviewer of applications	2	3
Outside university privilege	2	3
Director of teaching and learning	1	3
Journal editor	1	3
Director of postgraduate teaching and learning	1	2
Placement coordinator	1	2
Head of faculty	1	2
Director of undergraduate programs	1	1
Personal tutor	1	1
PI	1	1
Administrator	1	1
Non-academic professional	1	1
Director	1	1
External examiner	1	1

This sub-code is included in variation for a number of reasons. First, as Sarah in Example 6-46 shows, having experience in different roles sometimes influenced the topics which the faculty spoke about. Second, as David in Example 6-47 shows, past experiences in certain roles influence expectations and viewpoints regarding topics in the interviews. Third, as already discussed in the main *variation* code and shown by Matilda (Example 6-48), using

examples, roles, or personal experience may limit the information which is included or discussed within the interviews. These examples may also serve to expand previously vague answers (Example 6-49).

#### **Example 6-46**

Like the reason I'm talking about the copying and pasting, I mean, I've seen it. I'm an editor and we now have plagiarism protection software in the journals, and it doesn't just happen in non-English speaking countries@. It happens in English-speaking countries too. - Sarah, ll. 24016-24019

#### **Example 6-47**

What I officially expect is that they would... What I actually expect will happen@ is that... That's what I think actually happens. I don't think that's the best way to do things, but on the other hand I also personally think that I didn't do a whole lot in between @@lectures when I was an undergraduate student. Anyway, but what I did do was... - David, ll. 16937-16938, 16940-16941, 16945-16948

#### **Example 6-48**

It varies, again, by module. So, like, for example, one of our lecturers, [name], has her class today in [topic]... - Matilda, ll. 20440-20441

#### **Example 6-49**

Maybe I'll give you an example. We had student a few years ago who... - Finn, ll. 17727

### **6.4.3 Communities of discourse**

The *communities of discourse* sub-code mainly referred to instances of discipline-specific discourses or using varying styles, registers, or types of Englishes (Table 6-15). *Discipline-specific* and *Englishes*, therefore, invariably have some overlap. Within this sub-code, only *discipline-specific* reached the 40-instance cutoff level. However, *Englishes* and *use of other languages* (i.e., translanguaging) will be discussed briefly due to their relevance to the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

**Table 6-15**

*Communities of discourse in faculty interviews*

<b>Coding name</b>	<b>No. of Faculty</b>	<b>No. of instances</b>
Discipline specific	12	43
Englishes	9	29
Using other languages	7	15

Within this sub-code, Ted and Hanna, in Example 6-50 and Example 6-51, represent the over-arching views of faculty that writing, and language, varies according to disciplines and topics. Other faculty also pointed out that language changes even between assessments.

**Example 6-50**

It's difficult because [writing] varies so much from subject to subject, you know, the requirements vary so much from subject to subject. - *Ted, ll. 24795-24797*

**Example 6-51**

So, again, we can't expect them to be amazing at everything. [Discipline] is all about - [exhale] well I don't know how to summarize these things quickly - it's not the same as writing a philosophical piece or writing policy or do you know what I mean. - *Hanna, ll. 18807-18810*

Faculty also directly expressed the need for EAP or language support to be specialized, even stating that general English or generic EAP is not sufficient to adequately support students through their studies (Example 6-52).

**Example 6-52**

Generally speaking, those who are struggling with the English language, we would try to help at a local level within the department simply because people with kind of a specialized vocabulary tripping them up, you can't send them to a general language class to see how they get on. - *Oisín, ll. 22054-22057*

Further, faculty such as Laurence also expressed the need for classes to be “non-classist” and “not stigmatizing” for students who use vernacular, and rather focus on the navigation and negotiation of Englishes (Example 6-53). Linda, in Example 6-54, also articulates the point that the use of such variations of English, or even what are commonly considered “errors,” does not call for the assessment to be marked down. Faculty did, however, speak of a “line” between where language obscures the content and where it does not. Overall, the presence of these sub-codes within the interviews signifies the need for specialized EAP instruction which supports both discipline-specific practices and the navigation of register.

**Example 6-53**

[EAP] needs to be not stigmatizing. It needs to be non-classist because, you know, vernacular is fine, it's just in the settings. In formal record settings, you don't say hi judge, you don't say cheers, [name]. - *Laurence, ll. 19528-19530*

**Example 6-54**

I'm almost immediately - as you know, and yourself, you're probably able to do as well - you're able to tell straight off the bat when this is somebody from Europe where English is not their first language or someone from Asia or someone from India where English is not the first language in terms of writing and there are some grammatical mistakes, there are some typos, there are some, you know, just some minor errors throughout the document. Okay, I would assume that most module leaders take that into consideration. I know I certainly do. - *Linda, ll. 20047-20054*

When referring to using other languages in the classroom and in academia, there were four instances from three faculty members where this was seen as a negative. These four instances mainly referred to students whom the faculty suspected use google translate or

direct translation to produce a finished product in English. Five instances, including one that represented both a positive and negative view, from four faculty members viewed using other languages as a positive trait. The remaining seven instances, from one faculty member, described using another language as essential due to the type of degree program they taught on.

#### 6.4.4 Summary

*Variation* is important in that it highlights how expectations, assessment, and requirements are variable and subjective. Faculty, throughout the interviews, spoke of this variation explicitly and consistently. Mirroring *imagining students*, faculty spoke about academic and social culture being variable. They additionally focused on the variation between *modules, assessment, and practice* by highlighting that assessment types and lecturing styles, formats, and types all depend on the module, discipline, degree level, and even lecturer.

Likewise, faculty referred to multiple *roles and identities* throughout the interviews. This shows that the topics spoken about in the interviews, along with faculty experiences and expectations, often change depending on which identity they are taking on. For example, a faculty member who is also an editor of a journal consistently spoke of plagiarism due to her experience in that role, signaling that perhaps this aspect became a focus of importance for them due to this role. Faculty also consistently used examples throughout their interviews which either limited the information they offered, for example only detailing the assessment requirements for one module, or expanded on previously vague answers, for example providing an example of a student who struggled with a certain expectation.

Another distinct sub-code within the *variation* code is that of *communities of discourse*. Here, faculty highlighted how language and requirements change based on disciplines, subjects, and even topics within the same module. They also spoke of varying levels of acceptance of *Englishes*. Some faculty members encouraged the use of vernacular, turns of phrases, and errors which do not impede communication, albeit only in “appropriate” situations. This highlights the “line” between language impeding content, something which is also subjective and often difficult to navigate. Another salient point within this theme was that of EAP programs needing to be discipline and context specific for students to truly benefit. Faculty also emphasized that these supports should be available to all students and be de-stigmatized. Further, faculty spoke about the *use of other languages*, or translanguaging, in their courses. Primarily, they were positive about translanguaging practices, however, translanguaging was mentioned only a few times throughout



the interviews. The *variation* code overall points to a need for responsive EAP programs which are adaptable and transferable to such a wide variety of contexts and requirements within academia.

## 6.5 Meaning-making and negotiation

The final major code within the faculty interviews is the *meaning-making and negotiation* code. This code highly ties in with the *variation* code as much of the *meaning-making and negotiation* identified within this code results in variations in expectations, deliverables, and discourses within the academy. Two sub-codes were identified here (Table 6-16). First, *faculty and student negotiation and meaning-making* refers to how faculty and students arrive at common understandings and how they communicate to reach this common understanding. Second, *faculty negotiation and meaning-making* refers to how faculty understand the academy around them both through internal negotiation of expectations and the academy and negotiation with external parties such as other faculty members, departmental expectations, and college-wide or governmental requirements.

**Table 6-16**  
*Meaning-making and negotiation in faculty interviews*

Coding name	No. of Faculty	No. of instances
Faculty and student negotiation and meaning-making	14	192
Faculty negotiation and meaning-making	13	110

### 6.5.1 Faculty and student negotiation and meaning-making

The sub-code *faculty and student negotiation and meaning-making* is broken down into instances where faculty and students have the opportunity to negotiate meaning (Table 6-17). To be included within this code, faculty must have spoken explicitly about these opportunities. However, as will be seen in the discussion of the sub-codes, some instances may actually limit opportunity for negotiation rather than promote it. Looking at the sub-codes, opportunities for negotiation and meaning-making around *assessment* and *feedback* are the two sub-codes with the most instances.

**Table 6-17**  
*Faculty and student negotiation and meaning-making in faculty interviews*

Coding name	No. of Faculty	No. of instances
Assessment	14	55
Feedback	13	48

#### 6.5.1.1 Assessment

The *assessment* sub-code focuses mainly on the discussion of expectations (28 instances from 14 participants), either in-person, in-class, or online, beyond simply providing a

rubric or handbook. This is shown by Penelope in Example 6-55, who dedicates a class to discussing the assessment and also explicitly opens time for individual questions. Both discussing expectations as a group and providing individual discussion is common with the rest of the faculty as well.

**Example 6-55**

I'll make sure to leave ten minutes at the end where they can just ask, I'll tell them that I'm going to stay back for ten minutes so if they want to come and ask me questions about the assignment, they can. They do, almost invariably they do. So, there's a lot of time for clarification. With a twelve-week module like [module], I give the second last class over to focusing on the assignment. - *Penelope, ll. 22387-22392*

The next sub-code is that of students choosing aspects of their topic or being asked to put their "stamp" on the assessment to promote student meaning-making (24 instances from nine participants). This is shown by Chris who, like the other faculty, require and explicitly discuss or explore how students make the assessment their own to promote ownership and an individual approach for each student (Example 6-56).

**Example 6-56**

I try to ensure that when I'm giving the project, that they have to put their own stamp on it. So, I will ask them specifically how this is something that is particularly relevant to them and try to ensure that it is going to be a custom project or problem for them to solve. So, I suppose the project area is about that taking away the prescription and giving them the freedom to put definition on their approach themselves within the examination. - *Chris, ll. 16390-16395*

**6.5.1.2 Feedback**

Another opportunity for meaning-making and negotiation happens with opportunities and instances of *feedback*. Notably, faculty spoke more about giving feedback to students (33 instances from 11 participants) rather than receiving feedback from students (15 instances from 11 participants). Faculty also reported fairly superficial formal venues of receiving feedback from students, such as surveys, but also described more informal venues of receiving feedback, such as continued contact with previous students (Example 6-57).

**Example 6-57**

You know, we run a lot of surveys but apart from surveys, I keep in touch with my - I only have one group graduates from last year - so I invite them come back for social events and invite them to come back for, you know, guest speaker or guest lectures. I do, you know, sometimes receive a good, you know, very nice email. - *Marta, ll. 21272-21275*

In regard to giving feedback to students, faculty often described how they give feedback for general assessments, such as David telling of how students often email him outlines or ideas for assessment and he gives feedback via email or through a meeting (Example 6-58). The other most common example is of feedback to students undertaking a

dissertation at various levels. Nichole, in Example 6-59, spoke of how students receive feedback through a variety of venues and that feedback on dissertation drafts tend to be more detailed and time-consuming than feedback on module assessments.

**Example 6-58**

So very often they'll email me with a suggested structure, and I'll give them feedback on that, or they can come to see me and we talk through, you know, what they have in mind. - *David, ll. 16841-16843*

**Example 6-59**

Initially we find at master's level some of it is over the phone, by email - the meeting, when they need to wouldn't always be face to face meetings because they're working. Yeah, if they're working, they might not be on site so, I am inclined to track changes, make loads of comments, and then say I'm here to ring on the phone to arrange a time to go through the feedback page my page if we haven't met up. - *Nichole, ll. 21477-21482*

On the other hand, faculty also often described the lack of feedback due to various reasons. Penelope, in Example 6-60, pinpointed faculty workload as a factor limiting her ability to give feedback to students, highlighting the disadvantage this puts students at. Rose expanded on this stating that students often have a lack of opportunities for applying formative feedback (Example 6-61). Other faculty also expressed the lack of formative feedback as an issue for students.

**Example 6-60**

As an academic I feel that we are constrained with time. We have huge workloads, administrative workloads, and it means that it isn't the kind of experience where we have loads of time to give our students. That's the biggest disadvantage. So, they have to be able to take feedback on in fifteen or twenty minutes, and go away and apply that themselves, and maybe that's the only thing for two months. - *Penelope, ll. 22424-22429*

**Example 6-61**

I think, you know, that's why I think that one of the one of the challenges here in [institution 1] is that there aren't enough opportunities for those recursive pieces of work... They're not getting enough opportunities to practice writing, and they're not getting enough opportunities to build in formative feedback. So, we give formative feedback, but are they applying formative feedback? I don't think so. - *Rose, ll. 22980-22982, 22988-22990*

**6.5.2 Faculty negotiation and meaning-making**

Here, faculty spoke about instances where they are negotiating meaning both internally (87 instances from 13 participants) and externally (23 instances from eight participants). *Internal meaning-making* will be discussed more in depth in the following subsection. However, *external meaning-making*, while not discussed in depth, revolved around negotiating external authority such as college or government requirements for degree courses. To be considered within this category, faculty must have expressed instances

where they actively negotiated requirements, expectations, or other aspects of the degree program and/or grappled with such requirements from outside players. Briefly, this is shown in Example 6-62 and Example 6-63 to show active negotiation and meaning-making with outside players. This is important as it reveals that faculty are often bound to external requirements, as discussed in *external authority*, and also undergo personal negotiation and meaning-making with those requirements where they may or may not agree with such expectations. It also shows that students are not the only ones navigating academia and may signal a wider cause of muddled expectations.

### **Example 6-62**

So, [CEFR is] what we have to use now all the time, and the QQI are saying B2 plus is the entry requirement. I haven't been able to get a straight answer about what a B2 plus means in the context of what I know of IELTS, if you know what I mean...[The QQI] said the English-language requirement has to be B2 plus for all third level programs. I don't know how much thought they've put into it? I don't know how strong the reasoning is behind that? I know certainly if that's if the B2 plus is a 6.5 [pause] on the framework I know of IELTS, it would cause a major problem for our undergraduate programs because we have always accepted an IELTS of six. - *Matilda, ll. 20783-20786, 20819-20824*

### **Example 6-63**

Well it goes up as they go through the years. About eight, about ten years ago, we got all the humanities people to sit together and go the length of an essay in first year should be @, the length of an essay in second year should be, because some people are getting asked to write huge essays. We were kind of like, yeah, 1500 to 1800 words in first year is fine, 2000 to 2300 in second year is fine, and 2500 to 2800 in third year is fine. - *Finn, ll. 17702-17707*

#### **6.5.2.1 Internal meaning-making or negotiation**

With *internal meaning-making or negotiation*, a variety of factors were highlighted. Faculty spoke of how they internally negotiate expectations, assessment within their classrooms, how content and language are so intertwined that they engage in meaning-making while reading student assessments, and even personal negotiation of language(s). However, faculty reflection was the most-mentioned sub-code with 40 instances from 13 participants. Faculty spoke of how they reflect on their practice through student feedback and update course content year to year. However, within this code faculty primarily expressed that the interview process associated with this study caused them to reflect upon their practices along with the questions that were asked. Many stated that this was the first time that they were presented with such questions and also the first time in which they really reflected upon expectations, language, and academic success of international students (Example 6-64 to Example 6-67). This reflection hints at the openness of faculty to such conversations and involvement in student supports, perhaps signaling to

universities to open such cross-faculty collaborations, teacher training, and faculty involvement in EAP programs.

**Example 6-64**

The question that I thought was the one that caused me to ponder was what would you like to get from the English learning [program], because I think it's something I'll reflect on afterwards. - *Chris, ll. 16704-16706*

**Example 6-65**

Let me think. I'm doing all this thinking for the first time. - *Laurence, ll. 19523*

**Example 6-66**

I'm kind of sitting here scratching my head saying, if there are people in college that are working in this area we have a major deficit of expertise, why have we not done this collaboration @ before? So, that's my only kind of - I'm delighted that you guys may be able to step in and help us in some way. - *Linda, ll. 20326-20330*

**Example 6-67**

Researcher: So, are there any question that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask?

Ted: You asked a lot of questions.

R: Yes, I did@.

T: They have all made me think, and I suppose I can't think of anything offhand, but I will say that you've given me a lot to think about.

R: Brilliant.

T: My answers should be thought of by you as maybe the beginnings of answers, you know. So, do feel free to get in touch if you want me to go back, if you have a transcript you can send it to me, yeah, and say look you gave this answer, could you be clear? I'd be very happy to clarify it because I thought all the questions were very interesting and kind of open. I'd be happy to follow them up and clarify and be more specific if that's needed. - *Ted, ll. 25021-25032*

### 6.5.3 Summary

The final code, *meaning-making and negotiation*, showed how faculty navigate meaning with students, within themselves, and with external players. This, like the *variation* code, shows that there is a high level of navigation, conflict, and subjectivity in academia.

Overall, the *negotiation and meaning-making* code showed the various venues and ways in which students and faculty navigate and negotiate the academy.

First, faculty highlighted how *feedback* is given to students both on assessments and larger pieces of work such as a dissertation. They spoke of how *assessment* requirements are discussed in various ways both as a class-group and individually. However, the interviews highlighted that the faculty feel that they are not able to give enough feedback and that students are not getting enough formative feedback. Further, receiving feedback was mentioned significantly less than giving feedback to students. In

terms of receiving feedback from students, faculty spoke about mainly superficial formal ways of receiving feedback such as surveys and also of more in-depth informal ways such as through contact with former students. However, these informal venues of receiving feedback from students may favor those students who had a positive experience with their degree.

How faculty negotiate meaning with external players, while not mentioned as much, links in with *external authority* and highlights how faculty in turn make meaning of outside requirements and pressures. Here faculty often speaking of conflict and negotiating meaning from requirements that they themselves do not feel are clear or justified.

Finally, faculty spoke of *internal negotiation and meaning-making*. They pointed to how they navigate creating requirements for modules and assessments along with how they make meaning of student assessments, again highlighting the “line” between language impeding content. However, the most striking sub-code of the internal negotiation and meaning-making is that of faculty reflection. Within this sub-code faculty expressed how they reflect on their practice throughout their career and highlighted that this interview was a reflection practice in its own right. This reflection shows an openness for collaboration and a willingness to improve their personal practice in order to better support students.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The faculty interviews were coded into four different parent-codes. Primarily, faculty spoke of *regulations, rules, and authority, imagining students, and variation. Meaning-making and negotiation* was spoken about to a lesser degree.

In *regulations, rules, and authority*, faculty focused on their expectations and the dominant discourse of the academy. Within this, they focused on the four skills of *writing, reading, speaking, and listening*. However, *writing* remained the most dominant skill or quality, generally spoken about in terms of assessment or deliverables. *Oral communication* and *listening* followed suit by focusing on assessment and interactive lectures while *reading* focused on reading for assessment. In terms of communicating these expectations, faculty mostly spoke of *rubrics, criteria, and handbooks* which are given to students. Faculty did not focus on the qualities of writing, however some descriptions such as “clarity” and “plagiarism” were discussed. Also within this parent-code, faculty spoke of *external authority* which looked at external factors such as government or college-wide policies or restraints which impact expectations in the academy, but which are outside of individual faculty’s power. Here, faculty expressed frustration in terms of workload, business-and-numbers driven policies, and being under-resourced. Faculty discussed the

conflict between these restraints and the ability to deliver high quality degree programs and feedback to students.

*Imagining students*, then, focused on faculty's evaluation and description of students. In terms of evaluation, faculty generally negatively evaluated students and focused on students' writing ability. From there, faculty spoke of the *causes of student struggle* and how both *English L1 and LX students struggle* in academia. Instead of focusing on language, faculty focused on the jump between degree levels and pinpointed independence, communication, writing skills, and study skills as the areas of weakness in their students. Faculty also discussed differences in academic *culture* as being a cause of struggle. However, they rarely pointed to their own institution's culture as being problematic, and rather focused on the students' previous educational experiences and culture shock. Further, faculty identified *other factors* as causing struggle. These factors include finances, students' needing to work during their degree program, the housing crisis, and mental health. Faculty stated that supports should be put in place, but also recognized that there is a limit as to what they, or the institution, can offer students in terms of personal life support. When describing students, faculty generally focused on one or two definitions of international students according to their experience with international students. Overall, faculty spoke of English LX students, however, roughly 20% of the mentions of international students referred to students who do have English as their L1.

*Variation* highlighted how expectations, assessment, and requirements are variable and subjective. Faculty focused on the high level of variation between modules, assessment, practice, and lecturing styles, attributing this variation to specific modules, disciplines, degree levels, and lecturers. Additionally, faculty spoke of academic and social culture as being variable. Further within this parent-code, faculty brought in multiple identities and used examples throughout the interviews. The use or mention of these identities and examples served to show how experiences and expectations changed depending on which identity faculty were using, along with limiting or expanding information provided throughout the interview. Also within this parent-code, faculty spoke of *communities of discourse*. Here, faculty highlighted how language and requirements change based on discipline, modules, and topics. Englishes and translanguaging were also spoken about with various levels of acceptance, sometimes referred to as acceptable in "appropriate" situations, and other times focusing on finding the "line" between language impeding content and accepting errors, turns of phrases, and varieties of Englishes.

Lastly, *meaning-making and negotiation* looked at how faculty navigate meaning with students, within themselves, and with external players. Overall, this parent-code

focused on how *feedback* is given to students and *assessment* is negotiated. Here, faculty discussed the various ways that requirements are discussed, including in-class and individually. However, faculty felt that they are not able to give enough feedback and that students do not have enough opportunities to apply feedback. Receiving feedback from students was discussed significantly less and focused on either superficial or informal ways of receiving feedback from students. Faculty did not discuss their negotiation with external players as much. Finally, they spoke of *internal negotiation and meaning-making*, looking at how they navigate creating requirements for modules and assessments and how they make meaning of student assessments. The primary focus of internal negotiation was that of faculty reflection, showing how faculty reflect on their practice and highlighting how this interview aided in that reflection.

This chapter concludes the results chapters. The next chapter focuses on the discussion of the results, which will be presented in a single chapter. After the discussion, the conclusion chapter will be presented.



## 7 CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

### 7.1 Introduction

The past three chapters have explored the results of three different data collection tools: the student questionnaire, student interviews, and faculty interviews. Within this chapter, the three research questions will be addressed while interpreting and relating the results to previous literature. The research questions in full are:

1. Do international students feel overall positively or negatively towards their educational experiences in Irish higher education?
2. What do international students and faculty feel that international students need for academic success, and what do they struggle with and succeed in?
  - a. What level of agreement do faculty and international students have with respect to the issues raised in the foregoing research question?
3. What implications do the answers to the above research questions have for Irish pre-sessional EAP programs?

### 7.2 Research question one: Student evaluation of their educational experience

Students generally spoke negatively about their institution and experience in their degree program. They felt that expectations in their degree program were vague and that administrative processes were difficult, both of which negatively affected their academic success. The questionnaire suggested that students found their professors to communicate their expectations clearly; however, the qualitative answers of the questionnaire suggested that students were unclear what their professors expected and that professors were vague and unclear in their communication. Students further expanded these negative descriptions within their interviews to pinpoint unclear expectations, unsupportive environments (including a lack of student supports), a lack of facilities, and lack of communication within the university. These negative descriptions tended to focus on the wider university and experience rather than on specific faculty or services.

However, not all descriptions were negative. Students also spoke positively of their universities, although this tended to focus on individuals and named services which provide support and supervision (Sheridan, 2011). This could indicate an overall dissatisfaction with the institution because navigating the system presents many barriers and challenges. However, the positive descriptions highlight that individuals do help students navigate these barriers or mitigate challenges. Students also generally described their positive experiences with a follow-up of how services or aspects of the university could be improved, pointing to a need for institutional change.

This overall negative evaluation is important as research has linked low levels of satisfaction with higher attrition rates (H. Coates, 2009). In contrast with the present study, other Irish-based research has shown high levels of satisfaction among international students with their experience studying abroad (Clarke et al., 2018; Finn & Darmody, 2017). This difference could be because the present study mainly focused on academic and linguistic experiences, rather than on overall experiences with studying abroad in Ireland, as in previous Irish research. However, Finn and Darmody (2017) say that students' satisfaction with their institution is the primary indicator determining overall satisfaction in their studies, something which students in the present study were generally negative about. With a bias towards institution 1 in the present study, it is important to note the dissatisfaction with the institution, which may indicate a risk of students developing an overall negative experience of studying in Ireland.

### **7.3 Research question two: Faculty and student expectations, needs, strengths, and struggles**

Faculty and students described various aspects of their experiences within Irish higher education including needs, expectations, and strengths or struggles. Students in the present study focused more on other factors which are needed to support academic success, such as institutional factors and social integration, than linguistic factors. Holistic factors were emphasized more by students than the linguistic factors needed for academic success, however, students did express that linguistic factors impact and may compound these other factors. In contrast, faculty almost purely focused on linguistic expectations which are needed for academic success.

First, this section will focus on expectations and needs for academic success from both faculty and students' perspective, starting with the linguistic expectations, followed by more holistic factors such as institutional factors, integration, and internal factors. Following this, external authority, which adds a more complex picture of the navigation of expectations in academia, will be discussed. Finally, aspects of variation will be explored followed by a summary of the section.

#### **7.3.1 Linguistic factors**

As Ellis (2010) and L.-S. Huang (2013) state, skills which are identified as important by both students and faculty do not always align with the skills which faculty and students feel students need to improve. This could indicate that while a skill is important for academic success, students may struggle with less important skills, possibly shifting the focus of EAP programs to the development of less important skills. Therefore, it is

essential to balance a needs analysis to inform curricular decisions based not only on skills students find difficult in English, but also what is important for their studies.

### ***7.3.1.1 Expectations***

Faculty felt that the four skills (i.e., writing, speaking, listening, and reading) were essential for academic success, yet their focus was primarily on writing and oral communication. Students, despite rating all skills as important in the questionnaire, still overwhelmingly felt that writing was the most important skill and instead of focusing on the four skills, expressed a more holistic view of what is needed for academic success (i.e., institutional factors and integration). Overall, though, both students and faculty felt that productive skills were the most important (Andrade, 2006; L.-S. Huang, 2010; Jabeen et al., 2019; Lillis & Tuck, 2016).

Other research found a mismatch between needs identified by students and those identified by faculty (Eslami, 2010; Hennebry et al., 2012; L.-S. Huang, 2013; Zhu & Flaitz, 2005). The present study could be seen to mirror the mismatch found in previous literature; however, when asked what faculty expect of them, the students in the present study also identified the four skills as what faculty require for academic success. This match of expectations identified by faculty and students was also found in the study conducted by L.-S. Huang (2010).

Students and faculty spoke of needs and expectations in very general (e.g., writing and assessment) rather than specific terms as in other research (e.g., writing thesis statements, argumentation, etc.). Further, both faculty and students primarily named products or tasks (e.g., assessment, types of lectures, and reading for assessment) within the four skills rather than qualities, showing a product-focused view (Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Sheridan, 2011). Specifically, students and faculty identified primarily essays and oral presentations as the primary products required. Further, the present study mirrors the focus on writing identified in Academic Literacies which states that writing is the main form of assessment, and therefore the main focus for both the university and EAP (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). The fact that students state that faculty expect products or tasks within the four skills rather than naming qualities of what faculty expect for academic success may show that expectations are still unclear or that students are unaware of what makes writing successful. It could further highlight the variation of expectations between disciplines, modules, and lecturers as students may express general expectations as an overview of what they encounter in their degree rather than going into detail about what each module expects.

While faculty in the present study did describe some qualities of writing which are

important, their choice of descriptions highlights the unclear and subjective nature of these concepts. As they are subjective, concepts like “clarity,” “engagement,” “intelligence” and “confidence” may be difficult to communicate to students and to apply to marking (Wingate, 2006; Wrigglesworth, 2019). Examples of less subjective concepts that faculty could have identified in their interviews include content knowledge, argumentation, and structure, although these concepts would still need unpacking when communicating them to students. Further, these descriptions did not make the 40-instance cutoff, signaling that there was not a high level of agreement about what makes writing successful. Like students, faculty could be providing an overview as each of their modules may have different expectations or faculty may struggle to identify what makes writing successful.

### **7.3.1.2 Challenges**

Within the questionnaire, students rated their difficulty with skills rather neutrally, mirroring Kamasak et al. (2021), yet contrasting with Caplan and Stevens (2017), L.-S. Huang (2010) and Mamiseishvili (2012)’s research where students were confident in their abilities. Overall, both students and faculty felt that writing is the main difficulty (Andrade, 2010; Kamasak et al., 2021; K. Lee & Lee, 2018, among others)<sup>4</sup>. In contrast with the present study, Caplan and Stevens (2017) and Aizawa et al. (2020) did not report that students identified difficulty with writing. In fact, reading, listening, and/or speaking were listed as the greatest challenges in other research (Aizawa et al., 2020; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Phakiti et al., 2013, among others). Other research also identified grammar and pronunciation as difficulties (Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Evans & Green, 2007; L. Flowerdew, 2013), which were not featured in the present study.

Further, Caplan and Stevens (2017) discussed that qualitative data introduced more nuance and identified more specific difficulties. Yet in the present study, most students and faculty presented a general view of difficulties with the four skills rather than describing exactly what they have difficulty with. For example, most students found writing to be difficult, however, they only generally described this rather than identifying elements such as structure or argumentation as the aspect which they struggle with. This general description of writing could signal that both faculty and students are not at the stage of accurately self-diagnosing international students’ academic difficulties (L.-S. Huang, 2010). Further, it may highlight the individual nature of challenges.

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<sup>4</sup> Only the most recent or relevant studies are cited in this chapter, despite the amount of research available on needs analysis in various contexts. When significantly more citations are available to support a point, this is marked by ‘among others’ after the included citations.

Students in the present study also felt that academic vocabulary, particularly discipline-specific vocabulary, “general” English in academic contexts, institution-specific language (e.g., language used to describe supports or administrative aspects of the university), and discipline-specific academic language to be causes of struggle for students (Adisa et al., 2019; Curle et al., 2020; Kamasak et al., 2021, among others). Many students felt that it was assumed that they knew such specific language (e.g., academic vocabulary and institution-specific language), when in fact students felt that they were thrust into a “sink or swim” environment when studying in Ireland.

These differences between the primary focus of writing in the present study as compared to some other research could be due to context (e.g., Japan, Hong Kong, China, Australia, etc.) and/or the strong focus on writing as assessment (J. Flowerdew, 2016; Lillis & Scott, 2015), coupled with students’ general unfamiliarity with long essays (N. Coates & Dickinson, 2012; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Sheridan, 2011). Further, other contexts, such as North America, may have broader general educational requirements which require a wider range of literacy practices as opposed to the earlier specialization in UK-influenced systems, requiring more program-specific literacy practices sooner (Melzer, 2009; Wingate, 2015). This also draws attention to the fact that most problems are seen through assessment, which in most cases is a writing assignment, leading faculty and students to misdiagnose challenges and the cause of those challenges as technical or linguistic rather than being caused by wider challenges and negotiation (Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate, 2018). Further, differences between the present study and previous research could also be due to the fact that some literature focuses on specific populations of international students (e.g., Chinese) or disciplines, whereas the present study does not specify the population of international students or the discipline.

### ***7.3.1.3 Mismatch between IELTS and academia***

Both students and faculty questioned if standardized exams such as IELTS are fit for purpose as an entry requirement, pointing to a mismatch between IELTS and the realities of academic studies (Cheng & DeLuca, 2011; Hamid, 2014; Hamid & Hoang, 2018; Leung et al., 2016). Students felt that standardized exams lacked relevance to their disciplines and tasks encountered in their degree. They felt that taking IELTS neither prepared them well for their degree nor reflected their “readiness” for studying in English. Yet, some students also felt that taking IELTS allows for familiarity with the four skills and therefore has some general benefits for students who want to study in English. Faculty further grappled with the entrance requirements (i.e., band scores) set by both the university and the government, sometimes feeling that the requirements were too low. Other times faculty felt

that there is a lack of thought behind setting minimum band scores and a lack of communication as to what band scores actually mean in the context of academic study through English.

These findings support a move from using standardized exams to using more holistic measures, such as pre-sessional EAP programs, as entry requirement. They also qualitatively support research which shows mixed results when comparing the relationship between IELTS scores and academic success (Cho & Bridgeman, 2012; Harrington & Roche, 2014; Leung et al., 2016, among others), despite IELTS identifying a 6.0 or 6.5 band as “probably acceptable” for academic study (IELTS, 2019). The mismatch between IELTS scores and academic success suggests that proficiency thresholds are difficult to establish as there is no discernable level at which students have “enough” proficiency to manage academic work in English (Aizawa et al., 2020). In further support of challenging IELTS as a suitable entry requirement, the present study did not statistically flag IELTS bands as being a strong influence on students’ assessment of difficulty or importance of skills (Phakiti & Li, 2011). This, however, could be due the lack of participants who had below a 5.5/6 IELTS band.

### **7.3.2 Institutional factors**

The academic success factors students focused on above all were institutional ones. In fact, students felt that institutional factors were both more important and caused more challenges than linguistic factors. Faculty, however, did not identify institutional factors as a common source of difficulty. As discussed in Section 7.3.6, the onus of academic success should not be just on the students; institutions should also adapt and provide responsive resources and supports to promote academic success.

Broadly, students expressed that they need responsive institutions, faculty, courses, and supports in order to succeed. Students stated that faculty needed to be aware of students’ needs and intervene when they see that students need support. This could mean showing empathy, slowing down when giving a lecture, writing keywords on the blackboard, directing students to appropriate support, etc. (Andrade, 2006; Nguyen, 2013; Roy, 2013). Some students felt that faculty speak too quickly and may have a thick accent, making it difficult to follow lectures. Further, students felt that faculty assume that silence means students understand, however, students say that often they are afraid of asking questions and that faculty should not “go with the flow,” but rather develop an awareness of the challenges of being an international student and integrate strategies within their courses to support students (e.g., slowing down when giving a lecture, writing keywords on the blackboard, etc.). These factors are included in institutional factors rather than a

separate pedagogical category as faculty are a part of the institution, and institutional changes such as training may address such issues.

Some students shared harrowing stories of isolation and homelessness, highlighting the need for empathy and faculty intervention in external factors. These students felt that they do not have the established support networks that Irish students have, and that often academic staff such as supervisors and lecturers are the first line of contact for international students. In these stories, students shared that faculty reacted in mixed ways, with some providing support and others only focusing on purely academic matters. While faculty in the present study also recognized the impact of outside factors on academic success, they emphasized that it is not their responsibility to solve such issues. Students did say that faculty do not need to act as parents, but rather be aware and empathetic, while guiding students to proper supports within the university such as counselling, accommodation supports, etc. Finley (2018) also states that meaningful faculty-student interaction leads to academic success, and further supports the point that faculty should be empathetic, aware, and responsive to students.

Further, students in the present study felt that these supports are essential to their academic success and pinpointed the need for extra classes, namely discipline-specific, embedded EAP, and supports within their institutions. Along with being essential to their academic success, they felt that it is imperative that supports are culturally responsive and easily accessible (Banjong, 2015; Smith, 2016; Young et al., 2013, among others). However, students generally felt that institutional factors such as the services provided were problematic; they were unsure of which services were available, found the services to not be culturally responsive, and found the services to be inadequate (Campbell & Li, 2008; Scally & Jiang, 2020; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014, among others). While it is documented that Irish higher education institutions provide a range of student supports such as fee-based EAP support, accommodation support, orientations, etc., students felt that these supports could be improved, expanded, advertised better to ensure access, and made more culturally responsive (Clarke et al., 2018; Groarke & Durst, 2019; Sheridan, 2011). Students also identified a lack of communication, both in communication to students (e.g., feedback, expectations, and information about supports and institutional matters) and between different players within the institution (e.g., administration, faculty, etc.), signaling a need for better, more cohesive, more transparent communication venues and administrative processes. This is significant as it shows that Irish higher education is only beginning its journey to becoming internationalized and providing adequate student supports.

Additionally, students said that institutions and faculty have unclear expectations and lack good communication with students (e.g., feedback, expectations, and information about supports, and institutional matters). Students feel that institutions should place a focus on good mentoring and supervision both in terms of research supervision and also in terms of general navigation of the academy at all levels of study (e.g., tutors for all levels of study). As one student explained, each level of education presents new expectations and requirements which need to be taught and explained, much like starting a new job and receiving training on your new responsibilities.

However, students in the present study felt that despite expectations being discussed in class, handbooks, rubrics, and one-to-one meetings or emails, there is a lack of clarity surrounding expectations (Canagarajah, 2001). Faculty do mention rubrics, criteria, and handbooks as being a “bible,” showing that faculty feel that their expectations are clearly communicated through both discussions and written handbooks. This shows significant effort and care taken by the faculty to successfully communicate concrete expectations to students. Yet, as students in the present study still claim that expectations are vague, and as faculty used descriptors such as “clarity” and “engagement” to describe qualities of successful assessments as discussed above, this shows that expectations still need to be unpacked as an explicit dialogue between faculty and students to achieve a common understanding and clarity (Hennebry et al., 2012; Tapp, 2015). Despite handbooks, rubrics, and criteria being provided for students, there is a gap between faculty and students’ understanding of expectations and rubrics (Finley, 2018; L.-S. Huang, 2010; Matshedisho, 2020, among others), where university requirements may not be aligned with students’ previous experiences and identity (Lea & Street, 2006; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Further, both faculty and students cited a lack of feedback and formative assessment, or venues where students are able to receive and apply feedback, often due to faculty workload, class size, time pressure, etc. (Campbell & Li, 2008).

### **7.3.3 Integration and social life**

Students also expressed difficulty with other or external factors, something which faculty also discussed. These included integration, social life, well-being, living situations, and the need to work alongside studying as all being aspects which affect academic success. Faculty primarily focused on housing and finances as causing difficulties for students, while students focused more on their social life and general integration. Further, students in the present study emphasized that struggles with isolation and other factors do in fact impact their academic success (Andrade, 2006, 2009; Andrade & Evans, 2009; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). They highlighted that these other factors are intimately intertwined with



language and also impacted their academic success more than explicit language difficulties.

Primarily, students in the present study pointed to social integration as being a challenge, yet important for academic success for international students (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Jabeen et al., 2019; Mamiseishvili, 2012, among others). Students in the present study spoke extensively about homesickness, isolation, and difficulties acclimating to a new country and environment, highlighting the need for developing healthy support systems. They felt that their isolation, loneliness, and lack of social support sometimes led to depression and stress, which negatively affected their academic success. Some students in the present study found that institutional initiatives such as research institutes and social groups (e.g., college societies) helped them develop a social network, highlighting the important role that institutions play in supporting international students' development both academically and otherwise (Clarke et al., 2018; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018). Yet, students still felt that the onus for social interaction is generally placed on them, rather than being facilitated by their institution, and advocated for more institutional support in integration and social life (Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; O'Connor, 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2013).

In addition, financial difficulties, housing, and working alongside studying were identified as barriers to academic success of international students (Gu et al., 2010; Newsome & Cooper, 2016; Ramia et al., 2013; Sawir et al., 2008, among others). Students and faculty in the present study primarily spoke about the housing crisis, rent prices, and cost of living in Ireland as particularly difficult aspects which cause stress and affect every aspect of their lives (Clarke et al., 2018; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Finn & Darmody, 2017; Fitzgerald, 2017; O'Brien, 2018).

Despite the present study not focusing on students' experiences outside of the university, these findings, along with institutional factors and internal/emotional factors, bring a more holistic view to this thesis, highlighting the fact that outside factors both impact and influence academic experiences. Faculty do, though, point out that while they are cognizant of these factors, it is not their responsibility to solve these issues for students. Universities, however, can mitigate some of these factors through student supports and faculty can direct and help students access these supports.

#### **7.3.4 Internal and emotional factors**

Students expressed self-blame and doubt, showing that they simultaneously show critical self-awareness and reflection, which may lead to personal and academic improvements, and show an internalized struggle which places the blame on themselves for being "inadequate" rather than pointing to systems, power structures, and linguistic or academic

aspects as areas of struggle. This self-doubt could additionally signal negative feelings such as depression and anxiety due to self-perceived limitations, loneliness, and homesickness, where such feelings have a negative effect on academic success (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Gebhard, 2012; Martinez & Colaner, 2017, among others). Most of the students in the present study felt that they were homesick, lonely, and isolated during their studies. They also doubted their success within academia, their qualification to be where they are, or the quality of their work or language. These emotions permeated the present study both by students implicitly and explicitly indicating a lack of confidence or self-doubt and struggles with anxiety, demotivation, loneliness, and confidence.

Students also felt that their strengths were primarily their personal qualities such as confidence, self-motivation, determination, and goal setting. They pointed to their individual motivation, empathy, confidence, determination, and open-mindedness as important factors which aided them in their academic success (Aizawa et al., 2020; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Tang et al., 2017; Young et al., 2013, among others).<sup>5</sup> Mirroring self-blame and doubt, this also shows that students internalize their successes and difficulties rather than pinpointing qualities of academic work (e.g., clarity of writing) and/or aspects of the university which support or make difficult their success.

### **7.3.5 English L1 and LX**

#### **7.3.5.1 “NS” standards and ownership**

Students mentioned the “NS/NNS” dichotomy as a cause of struggle, often pointing to their “status” as a “NNS” as their difficulty in their studies, reflecting the “NS” standard and yardstick in academia (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2006), and showing a level of internalization of struggle as students used “NNS” or “I’m not a native speaker” in derogatory manners, showing some of the self-doubt and blame discussed above. This deference to the “NS” standard being best also points to the upholding of inner circle standards and norms within academia (Canagarajah, 2013a), which could be due to the socialization, replication of norms, influences of authority, and the “NS” standards discussed in Academic Literacies (Lea, 2008; Lillis, 2003; Turner, 2012; Wingate, 2015).

In contrast with the “NS/NNS” dichotomy, students also expressed different levels of language, usage (i.e., contexts) and identification with English (Thomas & Osment, 2020), which challenges power structures based on students’ L1(s) (E. Lee & Canagarajah,

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<sup>5</sup> These descriptions of internal or emotional strengths, such as motivation, could lead to the use of self-efficacy (Thompson et al., 2019) as a way to conceptualize the emotional aspects of pedagogy in a pre-sessional EAP program. However, as this was not a strong theme, and due to the scope of this study, self-efficacy is not explored in depth.

2018; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Lillis & Scott, 2007). Most participants have had English throughout their schooling, including past degrees. Further, many students identified English as their L1, either as their sole L1, or in conjunction with another L1.

Faculty definitions of international students vary, and most consider international students to primarily be English LX. Their definitions are problematic as students who have English as a primary language, e.g., students from India or Nigeria, are often spoken about as if they did not have English as a primary language or L1 and as if they struggle with the English language. This follows the same stigmatization as identified in Flores and Rosa (2015), who describe appropriateness-based approaches to language diversity in education to be problematic as it places legitimate multilingual students in a deficit view, often linked to seeing racialized students as lacking “proper” language skills. The present study supports Flores and Rosa (2015) view, because despite students’ identifying as being proficient in English as well as other languages, faculty continue to describe international students as “NNS.” Faculty descriptions highlight the fact that students’ linguistic practices are often seen as deficient regardless of how closely they conform to standard norms (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

### ***7.3.5.2 Academic Literacies for all***

The current study at hand included international students who identified English as their L1 based on the Academic Literacies perspective that all students would benefit from Academic Literacies support (Lea & Street, 2006; Wingate, 2015, 2018; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). L.-S. Huang (2013) further investigated this claim by explicitly comparing how students (L1 and LX) and faculty rate the importance and difficulty of skills and found that L1 and LX students have similar needs, in the eyes of both faculty and the students themselves, particularly with regard to writing. The similarities of English L1 and LX students’ needs was further supported by faculty in the present study who focused on general difficulties which affect all students instead of linguistic proficiency as the factor which cause students to struggle, and rated LX students to be on par with L1 students in many ways (also seen in Andrade, 2010). In the present study, faculty identified the jump or difference between degree levels, autonomy and independence, and discipline-specific aspects as areas of struggle for all students (Lea & Street, 2006; Wingate, 2006).

Likewise, degree level and discipline were identified as an important factor influencing the students’ answers, more so than time spent in an English-speaking country or L1, which both had some influence, or IELTS band, which had almost no influence. However, the present study found that, to some degree, spending more time studying in English does reduce linguistic challenges (Kamasak et al., 2021). While both L1 and LX

students face similar difficulties, linguistic challenges faced by LX students may compound other difficulties which they encounter in their degree program (Andrade, 2006, 2009; Andrade & Evans, 2009; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). The fact that faculty do not identify language as a major factor in international students' struggle could be due to the fact that they aren't aware of how much language impacts academic success and other factors. It could also show that faculty believe that more holistic factors influence academic success more than linguistic factors.

### **7.3.6 Culture**

Faculty felt that a student's culture was a major cause of struggle, primarily referring to academic differences between countries. Faculty attributed difficulties such as plagiarism, engagement, and familiarity with assessment or lecturing styles to students' cultural background (Fatemi & Saito, 2020; Nguyen, 2013, among others). However, faculty in the present study rarely pointed to their own institutional culture as being problematic, and instead placed the onus on students to adapt, which places students in a deficit view. Students, in contrast with faculty, did not feel their culture as being problematic or a cause of struggle. Students in the present study mostly neutrally discussed the variations in academic culture rather than identifying their own culture as a source of struggle (Adisa et al., 2019; Jabeen et al., 2019; Scally & Jiang, 2020, among others). When students spoke of cultural differences, they referenced different countries and institutions having different expectations, tasks, and cultures. For example, students in the present study felt that writing styles vary from country to country. However, they did not blame their educational background for their struggles in their current studies in Ireland.

Research has identified students struggling with conforming to a new discipline, institutional, academic and host country culture (Adisa et al., 2019; Roy, 2013; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014, among others). However, this sometimes places the onus on the students to adapt. As students in this felt that institutional factors caused struggle (see Section 7.3.2), it could be said that they see the "host" culture as problematic and that the situation is one in which both parties must make allowances and changes to negotiate. Students in the present study explicitly state that the onus of cultural variation and adaptation should not be solely on the student, but rather, the institution and students should meet halfway in adapting (Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Y. Huang, 2012; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; O'Reilly et al., 2013, among others), as forcing students to adapt is not effective (Y. Zhou et al., 2011). This highlights the dangers of an over-simplistic view that culture is the sole reason for international students' struggle, instead advocating for supporting individuals who are influenced by a multitude of different and changing cultures and experiences, academic

and otherwise, and have agency (Heng, 2018; Li, 2014; Shao & Gao, 2016). In essence, this reflects *transculturalism* where students are drawing values and practices from diverse cultures with which they have had contact (E. Lee & Canagarajah, 2018), whereas students feel that institutions still view culture as distinct and separate.

### **7.3.7 External authority**

The theme of external authority brings to light the power structures that both students and faculty must navigate. Faculty primarily spoke of college, school, or departmental level authority, and to a lesser degree professional accrediting bodies, which impact their autonomy and factors within the classroom. Further, faculty who were in senior positions said that when creating rubrics, handbooks, and assignments, there is often back-and-forth negotiation to create the final products which are then given to students. However, the faculty who discussed this expressed high levels of frustration with this process, as all parties are often not in agreement as to what assignment expectations should be, what should be provided to students, or what constitutes a rubric or assignment brief. This shows power structures within the academy which may render unclear or impose expectations which both faculty and students must navigate. This navigation of authority is also identified in Academic Literacies research, with questions of who makes the rules and who holds the authority to impose those rules, while confirming that faculty are also constrained by power dynamics which they may oppose (Benesch, 1996; Fairclough, 2001b). Further, such structures and restraints imposed on faculty should be made explicit to students when discussing expectations (Wrigglesworth, 2019). This brings up issues within the institution and wider governmental policies which faculty, and by proxy, students, must navigate within the academy. As Wrigglesworth (2019) says, “each level has its own meaning-making language, its documentation and review processes and they are interlinked; however, there can be institutional misunderstandings within and between levels, rather than a seamless constructive alignment” (p.4).

Some faculty spoke positively of this external authority, citing standardization and policies which improve learning, while others pointed to policies which are harmful. This included business or numbers-driven policies implemented by the university and government, which faculty felt put them playing “tug-of-war” between providing quality education and meeting quotas. This conflict shows that some faculty feel that institutions are taking an instrumentalist approach to internationalization, focusing on metrics, rankings, and economics rather than more holistic approaches to internationalization which support learning and education (Clarke & Yang, 2021).

Supporting the faculty's concerns, Clarke et al. (2018), Clarke and Yang (2021), O'Connor (2018), and Groarke and Durst (2019) all stated that the international education strategy for Irish higher education focused on economic goals and economic recovery rather than on academic goals. Faculty in the present study also felt that the lack of resources available for internationalizing (Clarke et al., 2018) and funding cuts to Irish tertiary institutions have negatively impacted the availability of resources despite the increase in both domestic and international students (Clarke & Yang, 2021). Faculty worried about being able to provide enough support due to this lack of funding and resources. Additionally, they spoke about their workload within the university, with some faculty saying that this workload impinges on their homelife and restricted their ability to provide support and feedback to students. This reflects concerns that more involvement with supporting international students would increase an already heavy workload (Clarke et al., 2018; E. Jones et al., 2016).

### **7.3.8 Linguistic variation, discipline specificity, and individuality**

#### **7.3.8.1 *Variation between disciplines***

Students and faculty said that their modules, assessment, and practice were highly variable in terms of format, requirements, and deliverables (Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Sheridan, 2011). In addition, the questionnaire showed significant differences between the disciplines (see Chapter 4). Faculty also described how language and discourse communities vary depending on the discipline, module, and even type of assignment. This shows the differences between disciplines (Hyland, 2012; Kuteeva & Airey, 2014; Lillis, 2019), and strongly reflects the Academic Literacies theoretical stance which advocates for context, institutional, and discipline specific courses (Hyland, 2011; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Prior, 2013; Wingate, 2015). The fact that few students identified finer variations of discipline could be due to only having experience with one discipline, whereas faculty would be more aware of different disciplines and their differences. However, while students did not explicitly identify discipline or degree level as much in their interviews, statistical analysis did flag that these two factors influenced their answers on the questionnaire, implicitly identifying discipline as being an important variable.

Faculty further emphasize that general and generic English are not appropriate for supporting students in their studies and that discipline-specific academic English support needs to be provided. Both faculty and students feel that practice with formats of lectures and deliverables, such as essays or case studies, which students will encounter in their

degree is essential. Further, faculty state that classes should be “non-classist” and “non-stigmatizing,” accepting a range of Englishes as discussed in Section 7.3.8.2.

### ***7.3.8.2 Englishes and translanguaging***

Students identified different registers and varieties of Englishes which they speak and encounter during their studies and everyday life. Students either remained neutral on their encounters or stated the need for English instruction to provide more familiarity with different registers and variations of English, especially in terms of accent (Cheng et al., 2004; Hellekjaer, 2010; Kuo, 2011; among others) as students have difficulty acclimating to various accents they encounter in their studies. Particularly, students feel that Irish accents are difficult to understand, and that their previous English education focused too much on standard British or American English rather than exposing them to a wide variety of Englishes. Additionally, some students said that while English L1 speakers sometimes cannot understand international students, other English LX speakers have no difficulty as they are used to a wider range of Englishes.

Faculty did, however, describe a level of acceptance of different varieties of English, or “errors,” within academic work (Andrade, 2010). Faculty in the present study did point to the “line” of when language impedes content but were not specific as to where that line is, leaving the level of acceptance of non-standard Englishes within academia not specified. Further, faculty in the present study pointed to only a level of acceptance of varieties of English, stating that vernacular is fine in “appropriate” contexts only. Showing that native-speaker-English ideology still dominates academia, these findings point to the need for academia to de-stigmatize and accept varieties of English, regardless of “appropriate” use, as the definition of “appropriate” is often filled with ideology and power dynamics which may disfavor or marginalize students’ use of their dialects and linguistic varieties (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Jenkins, 2013; Lillis & Tuck, 2016; MacKenzie, 2015).

Additionally, students spoke about their use of translanguaging inside and outside of academia, primarily describing translanguaging as positive and as an advantage, which confirms the benefits identified in research (Canagarajah, 2006b; Cheng et al., 2004; García, 2017; Motlhaka & Makalela, 2016). Students said that using their L1 allows them to understand large concepts and helps to de-code academic vocabulary. Many students described past educational experiences where translanguaging was used either to deliver certain classes in English with others in their L1, or classes delivered simultaneously in English and their L1. Faculty also described the use of other linguistic resources beyond English within academia. While they did primarily describe these instances as positive,

they did point to the use of Google Translate or direct translation as a problem, while students felt that translation helped them understand content.

### ***7.3.8.3 Use of roles, anecdotes, examples, and reflection***

Students and faculty also used anecdotes and examples throughout the student interviews. These aspects show individuality and variation in terms of what information was presented in the interviews. This shows how students experience their studies in a uniquely individual way. Faculty described how different roles and identities influence their answers and what topics are brought up within the interviews. Students may draw upon their experience with a wide range of courses, using examples to highlight only a small number of aspects, for example, assessment, which they encounter during their studies. Likewise, faculty often pick one or two modules as an example, and therefore may limit the information which they present within the interviews. This highlights the need for individualized support within EAP programs so that both students and faculty can pinpoint not only general themes, but also allow students to receive individualized support focusing on their unique needs and experiences. It also highlights the need to collaborate closely with departments and faculty to best design an EAP program which fits the requirements of each discipline, incorporating other data collection tools such as materials review.

Further, the presence of faculty reflection points to an openness to collaboration and training. Schneider and Jin (2020) also found, in contrast with other research (Andrade, 2010; Haan et al., 2017), faculty generally recognize and try to facilitate language development within the higher education classroom. Of course, participant self-selection may have presented a bias towards faculty with the most experiences with international students or language development, resulting in faculty who are more aware of international student needs. The present study's findings of faculty reflecting, often for the first time, on international student needs also may show a lack of present supports for faculty within the institution in terms of awareness and training in Academic Literacies and strategies which can best support international students (O'Reilly et al., 2013; Wingate, 2015).

### **7.3.9 Summary**

The present study supports other research that international students face linguistic, cultural, social, emotional, structural (institutional), and socio-economic challenges during their degree (e.g., Adisa et al., 2019; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Jabeen et al., 2019; Martinez & Colaner, 2017). These elements are intertwined, and no sphere can be ignored when looking to support students. Such elements identified in the present study included linguistic elements (e.g., writing, academic vocabulary, discipline-specific language, institutional language), academic and institutional culture, emotional well-being, social



life, finances, and housing. However, the present study emphasizes that the onus for adaptation and mitigating such challenges should not solely be on the students; faculty, institutions, and the government all need to “meet students halfway.” Meeting halfway means that faculty, institutions, and the government need to change and implement practices and policies which accommodate and support international students. For example, institutional culture and assessment may be overhauled to be more culturally responsive. International students should not be the ones who must completely adapt to an institution, the institution must also adapt to international students. The sentiment that wider change is needed is also emphasized by the fact that faculty identify students’ culture as problematic, a challenge to be overcome, while students on the other hand identify variations in culture and feel that it is the responsibility of both students and institutions to adapt.

Students primarily point to their emotional and internal characteristics as their strengths which support their academic success, alluding to strategies that help them overcome challenges and leaving questions of how we can incorporate these into EAP curricula. Other important aspects identified as essential to academic success include institutional support (e.g., support classes such as EAP, mentoring, clear communication of both expectations and aspects of university life), a supported and healthy social life, and strong writing and assessment skills.

Both students and faculty felt that there is a wide range of variation in academia. This included differences in institutions, disciplines, modules, assessment, expectations, and lecturing styles. Further, both faculty and students felt that Global Englishes and translanguaging were found throughout academia, pointing to a need for training on these aspects for both faculty and students. Additionally, the high level of reflection and use of anecdotes and examples shows how individual experiences, challenges, strengths, and needs are.

This variation, and the wide range of challenges and needs add to the complexity of supporting students during their studies. Both English L1 and English LX students must navigate expectations, course requirements, and new cultures. However, faculty also navigate these aspects, namely through external authority which imposes policies, expectations, and requirements; again, this highlights the need for responsive policies, support, and change at every level of higher education.

While all of these factors influence how an EAP pre-sessional program should be designed, it is also important to keep in mind that needs analyses are often not specific enough to fully inform a curriculum; however, they are valid starting point (Evans &

Morrison, 2011; Hyland, 1997). Further, needs analyses are context dependent and are not everlasting (Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; L.-S. Huang, 2010). Needs change as students progress over their course, and institutions and/or academia change with time (Evans & Morrison, 2011). A perfect example is how from the start of the present study in 2017 to the time of writing in 2021, a global pandemic has shifted higher education worldwide to the digital realm, changing the reality, and therefore the needs, of faculty and international students in higher education. This needs analysis focused on the Irish context at a certain time, and implications for EAP pre-sessional EAP programs will be made in light of the above discussed factors while recognizing that further, ongoing needs analysis will need to be conducted when fully informing and implementing a curriculum. Therefore, the following section will focus on broad directions and implications which those in Irish institutions may use as a guide to begin their curriculum design journey.

#### **7.4 Research question four: implications for pre-sessional EAP**

Within this section, general implications for pre-sessional EAP programs based on the above analysis will be made. Sheridan (2011) advocates for a holistic institution-wide approach to internationalization, and specifically to supporting international students. Such a holistic approach includes institutional and governmental change along with implications for a pre-sessional. Implications include the organization of the program and the development of a social program, extra activities, curriculum, and assessment. As the focus of the present study is on pre-sessional EAP courses, suggestions for wider governmental and institutional change are only briefly explored.

##### **7.4.1 Organization and general recommendations**

Each institution should create their own in-house pre-sessional EAP program as third-party programs may not be able to expose students to institution-specific culture, norms, and administration. A third-party program introduces the danger of a too broad or general program, which will not be able to be adequately tailored to individual departments or institutions. Additionally, an in-house program would allow for the institution to design an inclusive program. This means opening the program to all students regardless of their standardized exam score<sup>6</sup> or their L1 as advocated for by Academic Literacies and

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<sup>6</sup> It is acknowledged here that a lower limit of standardized scores will need to be in place depending on the length of the program, purely for feasibility of program numbers and to provide an appropriate length of study to gain benefits from the pre-sessional EAP program. The relationship between IELTS bands and time needed to increase proficiency is under researched (W. S. Pearson, 2020): typically, it is thought that 200 hours of instruction results in a 0.5 IELTS band increase or to increase one CEFR level (Cambridge English Assessment, 2021; IELTS, 2002, p. 22, cited in Green, 2005). However, making program decisions based on IELTS is also problematic in that while trying to get away from IELTS as a gatekeeper and model for pre-sessional scores, deciding lower limits for entry into the pre-sessional EAP program and the length of the program based on IELTS scores directly plays into and adds to IELTS' influence on the field.

emphasized within the present study (Lillis & Tuck, 2016; Mauranen, 2006; Wingate, 2015). Yan and Sendall (2016) further advocate for mixed L1 and LX programs, while simultaneously differentiating for different needs (e.g., international students who have and haven't studied in Ireland before); this could be done through levels within each discipline in the pre-sessional EAP program, rather than excluding groups of students due to their L1. An example of programs which also accept English L1 students include the bridging programs in the United States, which offers students a bridge between secondary school and university (The University of Chicago, 2021); however, this could be further expanded to allow any student to enter the program regardless of their degree level or year.

The program should be free or means-tested to provide access to all and to ensure that the program is non-stigmatizing and inclusive. The program should be restricted to conditionally or unconditionally admitted students, as is the norm for pre-sessional EAP programs. However, this proposition expands the reach of the pre-sessional EAP programs to those who would not be able to afford the high fees for the pre-sessional EAP program on top of already high fees for their degree program, and to home students who were previously not included in pre-sessional EAP programs. As an example, Trinity College Dublin currently charges €3,450 in tuition for a 10-week pre-sessional EAP course and €20,100 for a non-MBA business postgraduate degree (Trinity College Dublin, 2021a, 2021b), which was chosen as an example for its popularity with international students. Models for means-tested or free university preparatory programs include the Trinity Access Program and United States universities who have bridging programs such as the University of Chicago (The University of Chicago, 2021; Trinity College Dublin, 2021c).

Such inclusive EAP programs were called for by faculty in the present study and are needed as Lillis (2001) notes that UK universities, and therefore UK-influenced university systems such as Ireland, are still behind systems such as those in North America, which recognize the need for writing development for all students, resulting in universally required writing courses for all students. In the Irish context, it is evident that we are still behind the UK as our first writing center was created in 2007, with most current EAP or writing interventions being ad-hoc or "bolt-on" generic courses (Cleary et al., 2009; Cleary & Ide, 2015; Garska & O'Brien, 2019). In 2010, only 19 out of 27 Irish HEA institutions offered language support, and only 10 of those institutions offered support to international students who were not Erasmus students (Ni Chonail, 2014). In 2018, it appears that only 26 institutions (out of 35 responding institutions) in Ireland offer language support; however, this still may be a generous estimation as institutions may overlap in offering support through university-wide and faculty-specific interventions (Clarke et al., 2018). L.-

S. Huang (2013) further states that US universities have a mandate to provide academic English support to both English LX and L1 students, something which Irish universities should also adopt.

Expanding the need for inclusive in-house programs, an argument for embedded EAP, that is both the content lecturer addressing literacies in class and EAP programs which are within each school rather than generically offered as a separate support, has been made in Academic Literacies research to allow programs to be discipline-specific and to encourage collaboration between faculty and EAP professionals (Kamasak et al., 2021; Wingate, 2006, 2015, 2018, 2019; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). With findings in the present study pointing to the need for close collaboration of departments to achieve a discipline-specific course, I propose expanding this embedding to the pre-sessional EAP program (J. Flowerdew, 2016; Fox et al., 2014; Thorpe et al., 2017). Each school should have a pre-sessional EAP program which is designed in close collaboration with the faculty of that school. This would serve as a “feeder” and preparation for embedded in-sessional EAP courses; most Irish universities currently do not have embedded courses, however, would benefit from developing to ensure that students receive support throughout their degree.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings in this thesis (see 7.3.8.1), the main organization of the program should be by discipline and degree level with different levels to include English L1 students (Hyland, 2011; Lea & Street, 2006; Prior, 2013; Wingate, 2015). However, as W. S. Pearson (2020) shows, most UK institutions (taken as an example due to the UK’s influence on Irish higher education), in reality, take an EGAP approach for various reasons such as lack of available resources, cost, numbers of students in each discipline on the pre-sessional, and governmental requirements on assessment for visa purposes. So, in a situation where ESAP is not possible due to restraints, an interdisciplinary approach will allow as much personalization as possible for each individual student so as to allow the student to tailor the program to their discipline (Bodin-Galvez, 2019; Feak, 2011): for example, allowing students to choose their assessment topic or bringing in their own discipline-specific texts as materials to analyze in class.

#### **7.4.2 Curriculum**

The curricula of EAP programs traditionally focus on the four skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The results of this thesis focused on the need for writing, speaking, academic culture, and reading to be developed within EAP programs. However, all skills should be integrated throughout the classes with a focus on practice and hands-on activities for the students (Caplan & Stevens, 2017). Additionally, rather than focusing on the

product or discrete skills, which would shift the program to a study skills approach, EAP programs should focus on the process and on unpacking the how, why, when, and where of tasks along with students' ways of making knowledge through resisting or conforming to norms. This prepares students to confront unfamiliar genres or tasks in their university degree as they will have experience unpacking the expectations of tasks which they may encounter. Essentially, EAP programs should adopt a heuristic Academic Literacies framework with Global Englishes and translanguaging strategies intertwined within the curriculum and assessment (Canagarajah, 2011a, 2011b; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Lillis, 2019; Lillis & Tuck, 2016). While this section of the discussion will make general recommendations and implications, a full curriculum or assessment at fine level (e.g., day-to-day lesson plans, rubrics, specific tasks, etc.) for a pre-sessional EAP program will not be detailed, and readers are guided to examples of detailed applications of Academic Literacies including rubrics and lesson plans (Breen, 2019; Kristiansen, 2019; Lea, 2004; Lillis et al., 2015; J. Pearson, 2017; Wingate, 2012, 2015; Wigglesworth, 2019); examples of translanguaging and Global Englishes will be given below along with the justification for incorporating these theories in a pre-sessional EAP program along with Academic Literacies.

The present study corroborates and expands the tenets of Academic Literacies as identified in Lillis (2019) and Lillis and Tuck (2016):

- There is a gap between students' and faculty understanding of conventions and expectations which needs to be explored, made explicit, and problematized (Lea, 2004; Lillis, 2001). Students within the present study pointed to this gap, claiming unclear expectations despite rubrics and handbooks. They further described gaps in viewing how culture influences their educational experiences, and cited gaps within the institution in terms of support offered. Faculty and students use general descriptions when speaking of important linguistic and academic factors which lead to academic success, suggesting that expectations are not straightforward.
- Literacy practices are not straightforward: they are not transferable or clear but are rather opaque, obscure, variable, changing, and socially situated (Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič et al., 2009; Lea & Street, 1998; Scott, 2017). The high level of variation found between modules, disciplines, and even assignments signals that expectations and practices are dependent on individual contexts, lecturers, and educational institutions. Therefore, learning one set of norms or skills, or a general set of norms and skills, and transferring these norms to a wide variety of situations is difficult at

best. This tenet is tightly intertwined with the above-mentioned tenet discussing the gap between faculty and students' understanding of expectations.

- Identities, cultures, and previous experiences influence literacy practices of both faculty and students (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Tuck, 2018). Students in the present study described a wide variety of previous experiences with academic English, showing that students' relationships with English are complex, varying, and influence their current literacy practices. By further identifying institutional culture as potentially problematic, and varying between institutions and disciplines, students suggest that literacy practices which they encounter are also influenced by faculty, cultures, and institutions. However, faculty do identify that English L1 and LX users struggle while pointing to degree leaps (e.g., the leap from secondary school to third level education) as a source of struggle. This further shows how a students' educational experience influences their literacy practices. Both students and faculty used a range of roles and examples or anecdotes within their interviews. Especially from the faculty point of view, their roles and identities, along with their examples, molded and influenced the topics they spoke about in their interviews. These roles and past experiences shape their literacy practices, teaching practices, and expectations.
- The deficit view of students is problematic, and the focus should be on accepting a range of semiotic practices along with exploring, and critiquing, institutions' ideologies and external authority's influence (i.e., who makes the "rules?") (Lea & Street, 1998; Turner, 2018). Tying in with the tenet above, students in this study were specific in stating that adaptation to literacy and academic practices, along with integration and social practices, should be the responsibility of all parties involved. This is in contrast with faculty citing students' culture as a source of struggle in aspects such as plagiarism, classroom tasks (e.g., interactive lectures), and assignments. Further, faculty tended to described students as "NNS" regardless of the students' previous experiences with academia through English, contrasting the students' complex relationship with English in which they often feel a level of ownership over the language. While faculty seemed to place students in a deficit position, students in this study challenged that position and called for adaptation from all parties. Faculty also described different levels of external authority which exert power on expectations and how the institution supports international students. Many faculty members do feel that this external authority is in some way negative, signaling a critique of such authority and ideologies.

- Dominant discursive and rhetorical practices (e.g., norms, what counts as assessment, and standard English's status in academia) should be debated along with alternatives (English, 2011; McKenna, 2015). Both students and faculty describe a wide range of discursive and rhetorical practices which are discipline and context specific. Showing a subtle level of acceptance of different Englishes, faculty feel that there is a "line" between acceptable "errors" and impeding the content; this may show a challenge to the monolingual ideology in academia, but it also may show a level of viewing students in a deficit view where faculty may arbitrarily decide where that "line" is based on pre-conceived notions or past experiences and literacy practices. Students and faculty also describe instances of translanguaging and Global Englishes, challenging the status of standard English (and indeed of English) in academia.

Therefore, using Academic Literacies to unpack course requirements and institution-specific expectations, language, and culture along with students' feelings and ways of making knowledge, including possible resistance to norms, should be the focus of the curriculum. For example, pre-sessional EAP programs could unpack expectations by discussing what terms such as "critical thinking" or "argumentation" mean in different contexts and disciplines, guiding students to discover their course assignments and rubrics in a supported environment, and analyzing and critiquing samples of assignments, both successful and unsuccessful assignments, while fostering an environment where students can express resistance to the "norms" of their discipline. Further, challenging the monolingual English-only ideologies of academia and English language teaching, Academic Literacies advocates for the use of other languages, modalities, and Englishes (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). This theoretical implication of Academic Literacies is reflected in and expanded by the present study through the students' and faculty's experiences with, acceptance of, and use of multiple varieties of Englishes and translanguaging. Therefore, it is suggested that pre-sessional EAP programs in Ireland incorporate both Global Englishes and translanguaging within their curriculum and assessment to best prepare students for the realities of higher education in Ireland. Brief examples of their application will be made. However, larger and more specific discussion of their application is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, readers will be referred to other literature which focus on the application of these theories.

Since students already use translanguaging strategies throughout their lives and faculty felt generally positively about translanguaging, materials which promote and support the strategic use of all of a student's linguistic resources within the EAP classroom

should be used (Canagarajah, 2011a). Teaching intentional translanguaging strategies within the EAP classroom would allow students to develop translingual skills which would aid in the understanding and communication of knowledge (Chen et al., 2019; Mazak & Carroll, 2017). While I won't go into depth on specific pedagogical applications due to space and the scope of the study at hand, research has been done on translingual pedagogy within content classes and EAP (Canagarajah, 2013d; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; García et al., 2017; García & Kleifgen, 2018; García & Wei, 2014; Lin, 2013, 2015; Mazak & Carroll, 2017; Prada & Turnbull, 2018). From this previous literature, three main pedagogical aspects of translanguaging are identified: translingual input and output, using students' L1 as a resource, and translanguaging in writing and other modalities. For example, EAP teachers could encourage and teach students how to take effective multilingual notes, use students' linguistic resources to decode unfamiliar vocabulary on the whiteboard, allow students to clarify instructions with other students in different languages, encourage the use of different languages in assessment (e.g., if a student were to discuss a business model of a Chinese company, allowing Chinese characters and a translation of the name and/or slogans, etc.), and encourage and allow the use of the students' languages to discuss complex concepts such as "critical thinking." Both within the EAP program and the wider institution, faculty training on the incorporation of translanguaging within their classes would be essential (see Liu, Lo, & Lin, 2020) and would further challenge monolingual ideologies and support international students.

Further, Global Englishes is essential to the curriculum as it allows students to gain familiarity with different Englishes that they may encounter during their studies, and how to navigate the usage of these Englishes. Global Englishes within the curriculum could manifest in materials such as choosing listening recordings which have speakers from a wide variety of contexts and countries, and texts which are written by authors from a variety of backgrounds. A further example of Global Englishes in the curriculum is awareness raising activities where students research, discuss, and present different varieties of Englishes or contexts in which English is used around the world (e.g., a presentation on the use of English in Chinese transportation or businesses). Other tasks may involve students interviewing or developing a questionnaire to ask those who live in their neighborhood or who currently study at their university about a topic and then presenting on the results; this incorporates research skills along with gaining familiarity with a variety of different English users who may be L1 or LX English users. For research which has been done on more specific pedagogical applications of Global Englishes across contexts including higher education and English language teaching, Rose, McKinley, et al. (2020)



have conducted a thorough systematic review. Further resources can be found in Rose, Syrbe, Montakantiwong, and Funada (2020) and Rose and Galloway (2019).

Taking an Academic Literacies approach while incorporating translanguaging and Global Englishes can be done through academic classes, holistic workshops (see Section 7.4.4), personal one-to-one tutorials and advising, and using the institutions' online learning environment (e.g., for submissions, extra activities, discussion boards, posted PowerPoints and materials). An example weekly timetable can be seen in Table 7-1, where a course would be a minimum of 12 weeks long (see Footnote 7).

**Table 7-1**  
*Sample weekly timetable*

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat <sup>7</sup>	Sun
Morning (2 hours)	Class	Class	Class	Class	Class	Social	Free time
Afternoon (2 hours)	Class	Class and/or placement	Class	Class and/or placement	one-to-one tutorial	Social	Free time
Evening (1-2 hours)	Workshop	Placement /free time	Workshop	Placement /free time	Social	Free time	Free time

### 7.4.3 Assessment

The mismatch between IELTS and the degree program suggests the need for a move away from IELTS and towards an EAP program which more closely mirrors the realities of the university (Kokhan, 2012; Leung et al., 2016; Templer, 2004). Yet, IELTS continues to play a gatekeeping role in access to education, despite criticisms that standardized exams may not be suitable for making such decisions. As is discussed in 7.4.5, Ireland currently does not regulate pre-sessional EAP programs in the same way as the UK does. This means that Irish pre-sessional EAP programs are not required by immigration (in the UK, the Home Office) to use assessment which is benchmarked to a Secure English Language Tests (SELT), e.g., IELTS, for entry to higher education (Harding, Brunfaut, & Unger, 2020; Schmitt & Hamp-Lyons, 2015). However, Ireland does require benchmarking to CEFR at a B2+ for all foundation-year English language programs, although individual institutions can set a higher level for entry<sup>8</sup> (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> While it is the norm for English language summer schools and some pre-sessional EAP programs to have social activities on some evenings and on the weekends, staffing would need to be sufficient to prevent burnout. This means having social activity staff, workshop staff, and EAP tutors along with administration and management personnel. Most social activities could be offered to students on an optional basis to allow students to choose to rest if needed.

<sup>8</sup> The QQI regulates foundation-year programs (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2015), however, pre-sessional EAP programs often fall in a grey area as they do not lead to an NFQ award and are largely

Using CEFR as a benchmark may allow for a more holistic benchmarking. However, CEFR is not without criticism as well for promoting native-speaker standards (Rose & Syrbe, 2018).

Pre-sessional EAP programs do not focus solely on the linguistic realm, rather they touch on elements such as critical thinking, research skills, discipline-specific conventions, intercultural communication, collaboration, autonomy, etc. (Ding & Bruce, 2017). To have a pre-sessional EAP program which is based on IELTS, i.e., testing the four skills in a generic manner, therefore focusing only on the linguistic realm, carries the same dangers as using IELTS in the first place. In addition, Moore and Morton (2005) argue that it is not feasible to simultaneously prepare students both for academia and IELTS (or a test which mirrors IELTS) in a pre-sessional EAP program. Therefore, a move away from standardized and IELTS-style exams should be taken and assessments which are created for Irish pre-sessional EAP programs should focus on quality and holistic assessment. While this section focuses on assessment with a move away from IELTS-style assessment, as assessment and curriculum are intertwined, the curriculum also moves away from study skills and towards Academic Literacies.

It is recognized that not using a “secure” test poses its own problems within the institution such as the determination of cutoff scores and reporting which is understood by administration (W. S. Pearson, 2020). However, developing bespoke assessments which are discipline-specific could allow Irish institutions to more accurately assess the skills needed for each discipline rather than simply adopting an IELTS band which is “probably” sufficient. Further, within the field of English language teaching and applied linguistics, a move towards dynamic, holistic style assessment has been called for (Canagarajah, 2006a; Rose & Syrbe, 2018; Rose, Syrbe, et al., 2020). While this introduces objectivity, a move towards holistic, dynamic assessment will provide students with better preparation than a standardized exam as it may reflect the reality of studying better than IELTS.

As writing remains the dominant form of assessment, and the skill which was identified as the most important and most difficult in the present study, a primary part of the EAP program assessment should be a piece of writing of substantial length, such as 2,000 words. Students should be allowed to have a choice of the format and topic of the writing piece assigned. This is to allow students to pick a topic of interest and to choose a

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regulated by individual universities. If a third party engages in pre-sessional EAP programs, that pre-sessional EAP program would need to be recognized and accepted by the university. The QQI has standards in terms of learning outcomes for foundation-year programs, which can be used as a guide for pre-sessional EAP programs. They also stipulate that students need to reach a minimum of B2+ to pass the foundation-year program (i.e., IELTS 6.0 or 6.5) as this is the minimum language requirement for universities in Ireland. Individual universities can set higher language requirements.

genre which is most suited to their future degree program. While a business student may choose a case study, a biology student may choose a lab report or literature review. This also allows programs which are not able to organize the program by discipline to consider disciplinary differences. The choice of topic and format will be unpacked and guided throughout the one-to-one tutorials and personal advising sessions as well as more generally in class.

With this final writing product, there is a risk of focusing too much on the product and not enough on the process. To balance this, I propose the *processfolio*, designed by J. Pearson (2017, 2019, 2020), as a formative assessment which allows insight into the students' process. Here, students are able to choose how to document their writing process. They could choose to include notes, drafts, annotated bibliographies, pictures, reflection, record of choices (e.g., reasons for rhetorical choices, conventions, critical thinking, reading for assessment, and composing the writing product), etc. Students will be encouraged to keep a record of their choices as a part of their *processfolio* as this highlights why, and when, students may not follow conventions or norms. It also allows students to express conflict, resistance, and conformation to norms during their writing process.

Then, a feedback viva is proposed to reflect the talk-back feedback sessions as proposed by Academic Literacies researchers (Lillis, 2001, 2003; Seviour, 2015). Here students could present on the topic of their writing assessment (either organized as class "presentations" or open to all in the pre-sessional EAP program to watch), followed by a viva-style discussion with the assessors where students can justify choices, speak about their process, and assessors can ask questions about the writing assessment. Importantly, the presentation is not limited to PowerPoint, to allow for the inclusion of all modalities (e.g., if someone is going to study film, then presentation of a short film based on the paper would be more appropriate). Other types of speaking, such as debates, listening to a lecture and then discussing it, etc. will be intertwined in the program, but not assessed. Reading and listening are intertwined in both the writing assessment and the viva assessment, however, they are not assessed a separate, discrete skills.

The issue of reporting pre-sessional results is another factor to consider. While IELTS-style reporting is common, it is often lacking nuance and qualitative information that can be used by both the student for learning and the university to make admission and ongoing support decisions such as in-sessional EAP support (Banerjee & Wall, 2006). On the other hand, a purely qualitative report can be too subjective and variable in nature to make admission decisions (Banerjee & Wall, 2006). To balance these two options, the present study proposes that there should be two forms of reporting: one is qualitative and is

based on the feedback viva/talk-back session which serves as a continuation of the one-to-one tutorials; the second is a form that is based on departmental rubrics used to assess writing. The below feedback forms are invented examples, with the viva-style feedback form based on Lillis (2001, 2003) and the institution-style feedback form based on my current department in Trinity College Dublin. However, it is stressed that each pre-sessional should design their own forms which fit their institution, and further context is needed to fully design and understand such feedback forms.

**Sample viva-style feedback form** (form will vary from learner to learner)

- Describe your *processfolio* and essay:
- Using new vocabulary: At the beginning of the course, you found it difficult to choose synonyms and new vocabulary to represent your intended meaning. Now, you feel that it is easier although you sometimes feel that the words are not yours and that you still rely heavily on phrases that have been used in other studies because they sound “more academic” than your own words. How will you continue to negotiate between using your own words to convey your meaning and meeting your perceived expectations of your professors?
- Personal voice:
- Style:
- Content:
- Use of linguistic resources:
- Use of Global Englishes:
- Essay structure:
- What did you like and not like about your *processfolio* and essay? Is there anything that you would change?
- Student feedback (opportunity for students to express their feedback on the course, their learning, their assignments, and the viva-style session):

**University feedback form:**

- Grade:
- Structure:
- Content:
- Coherence of argument:
- Use made of relevant literature:
- Independence of thought:
- Presentation:

- Overall comment:

**Marking scheme based on university rubrics:**

- Not to University Standard (1) = 39 and below
- Moderately Proficient (2) = 40-49
- Proficient (3) = 50-59
- Highly Proficient (4) = 59-69
- Distinction (5) = 70 and above

The qualitative report template should avoid descriptors such as “accuracy” and instead focus on communicative strategies and linguistic repertoire, negotiation, language awareness, and other competencies highlighted in the field of Academic Literacies, translanguaging, and Global Englishes (Canagarajah, 2006a; Lea, 2004; Lillis, 2001; Rose, Syrbe, et al., 2020; Shipka, 2005). It would be useful for this to be provided to those making admission decisions, to the department so they can set up any necessary supports for the student as they enter their program, and to the students themselves to promote learning from assessment. This change in assessment and curricula would result in the need for training for EAP tutors and administrators.

**7.4.4 Social program and extra activities**

A robust social aspect should be added to the pre-sessional EAP program. As students and faculty expressed the need for aided social integration, familiarity with the students’ new environments, well-being, and confidence-building, the social program and extra activities become an important part of the pre-sessional EAP program.

This main social program would focus on exposing students to their new city, for example, going to museums or tourist destinations, while also promoting different avenues of social integration, for example, meetup groups or language exchanges with other students at the university but not in the pre-sessional EAP program, or others not in the university. This would allow students to socialize with a variety of interlocutors in a low-stakes environment, while gaining familiarity with their new city. Further, having institutional involvement in the social program, such as the students’ unions, international office, and societies, would provide students with an introduction to the social and extra-curricular opportunities offered to them during their degree.

To further support students and allow them time to settle, housing students in dorms or host families for the pre-sessional EAP program would provide a dual purpose. First, it would allow students to create a bond with others in the pre-sessional EAP program. Second, it would allow students time to find private accommodation for their degree in a supported environment while also avoiding frauds which target international

students who may search for housing before traveling to Ireland (Fitzgerald, 2017; O'Brien, 2019).

My findings show that in order to help them integrate and adjust to their new country, students also need support in practical matters. For example, programs should develop holistic workshops for the students which focus on practical topics to help facilitate integration and adjustment to their new country (Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Scally & Jiang, 2020; Yan & Sendall, 2016; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014). These topics should also be covered in a pre-arrival document such as a handbook, and then re-iterated within the workshops in more depth. These workshops could take place as peer learning (i.e., students create the topics and lead the workshops), which would allow for confidence-building and autonomy as well, along with teacher or expert-directed sessions. Further, it would be beneficial to open these workshops to other students at the university, to encourage mixing of L1 and LX students (Yan & Sendall, 2016). As topics which affect students are individual and vary, pre-sessional EAP programs could adopt a list of workshops in conjunction with their students. As time and space are limited in any program, each program should select the most relevant and important topics which fit into their program. This could be done through a survey after registration with options of topics provided plus free space for students to suggest topics. This list could remain under review as the program continues, allowing for adaptability as students begin to settle into their new environments. However, it would be advisable to select a few topics from major themes which were developed from the findings of this study. These themes are the basis of the organization of the list below and include navigating a new country, navigating the university, personal well-being, general and conversational English, academic “skills” (This may introduce students to “skills” which are used but not taught in the pre-sessional EAP program or degree, e.g., teamwork strategies.), and intercultural communication and cultural diversity. Possible topics for these workshops include:

- Navigating a new country
  - finding accommodation
  - visas and immigration
  - history of the country and city
  - locations of cultural, social, and essential attractions
  - finding work during and after your studies
- Navigating the university
  - university administrative processes
  - accessing and using student supports

- degree program expectations
- discipline-specific content lectures with faculty
- head-start degree reading lists
- institution-specific language
- institution-specific software tutorials (e.g., Endnote, TurnItIn, Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, etc.)
- navigating supervisory relationships
- Personal wellbeing
  - healthy relationships
  - budgeting
  - cooking 101
  - confidence building (e.g., through drama)
  - mental health
  - accessing medical care
  - finding and engaging in hobbies
- General and conversational English
- Academic “skills”
  - reflective journaling
  - teamwork
  - unpacking feedback
  - project management
- Intercultural communication and cultural diversity

Along with these workshops, community integrated placements or community service may also be beneficial for social integration (Yan & Sendall, 2016). Students and faculty called for hands-on experience with tasks similar to those which students will encounter in their degree. Placing students into work placements during the pre-sessional EAP program will provide students with time to practice every-day and discipline-specific English, while acquiring a better idea of what their options post-graduation may be. For those who will encounter placements during their degree, this exposure will further bolster their preparation for this aspect of their degree. This could take place a few times a week, or once a week, as suited to the pre-sessional EAP program. This component is option for students as not all students will find a placement beneficial. Community service would allow students to gain familiarity with their new community, and for those who may not have a work-placement, community service could be found in an area close to their discipline or interests.

Further, a mentoring scheme could be implemented (Adisa et al., 2019; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Scally & Jiang, 2020, among others). This was explicitly suggested by a participant within this research, Patricía, and also inferred from the students' focus on successful integration and social life as something that is needed for academic success. Within this scheme, students would be matched with current or former students in their degree and/or L1(s). This could be past pre-sessional EAP program students or students who directly entered their degree. This supported mentorship would be on a voluntary basis and would have sessions where students are able to socialize and discuss academics matters, tasks, and assignments. This scheme would further integrate students socially and academically. Academically, it gives students a glimpse of what their degree program may be like. Socially, it links students to another social network outside of the pre-sessional EAP program. Further to this scheme, mentors could participate in workshops or panel sessions open to all students on the pre-sessional EAP program.

#### **7.4.5 Governmental and institutional implications**

This research focuses on EAP; however, EAP is not enough to address the challenges identified in the needs analysis. Further, the onus to adapt and academically succeed should not be solely on the students. If the present study were to only make implications for EAP without also making general implications for wider change, it would also place the onus on the students. Therefore, wider implications will be noted, though only briefly as the scope of this thesis forbids in-depth exploration of this aspect.

It is important to note here that currently the government of Ireland does not heavily regulate pre-sessional EAP programs, which can be both problematic and beneficial. Ireland should take this as an opportunity to more effectively design policy which is holistic and supports pedagogical best-practices. The UK has a “Secure English Language Test” policy implemented by the Home Office (immigration) which places pre-sessional EAP programs in a position where they are acting as border control, emphasizing security over quality of language testing on pre-sessional EAP programs and promoting xenophobic political ideologies (Harding et al., 2020). There is a danger of pre-sessional EAP programs in Ireland acting as border control, similarly to the UK, if regulation on pre-sessional assessments takes the same focus on security and on benchmarking to IELTS. In fact O'Connor (2018) calls for holistic internationalization strategies in Ireland to alleviate viewing international students as solely a source of revenue while simultaneously subjecting them to surveillance, racialization, and increasing restrictions. Creating policies which support and encourage holistic pre-sessional EAP programs, especially ones which do not act as border control and are low-cost and inclusive, is one part of this call for



holistic internationalization. Further, governmental policies are needed which allocate resources and supports to holistic internationalization efforts both within and outside of institutions.

Universities and governmental institutions should give serious consideration to providing subsidized student housing which offers affordable and mixed housing (i.e., both home and international students) to alleviate financial, housing, and social pressures for students. Housing was identified by participants in this study as both essential and as a source of struggle, given the accommodation crisis in Ireland. O'Brien (2018) spoke about how students in Ireland are being priced out of student accommodation, with the average rent for such purpose-built housing ranging from €1,000-€1,400 a month. Subsidizing housing to an affordable level would not only alleviate financial pressures on students, it would also help students avoid accommodation scams and would attract international students from around the world. Ireland would be recognized as being ground-breaking with their international-student-friendly policies by making housing and student supports accessible<sup>9</sup>.

It is also clear that institutional change needs to happen along with the reform of EAP provision. As Wingate (2019) states, Academic Literacies has the possibility of being transformative when it spurs institutional change which would be directly transformative for students. Here, the acceptance of Academic Literacies at an institutional level would begin to question what counts as assessment, which modalities are privileged in assessment (e.g., challenging the dominance of writing assessment), and which languages and varieties of Englishes are privileged in academia (e.g., a wider acceptance of translanguaging and Global Englishes) (Lea, 2004; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Lillis & Tuck, 2016; Wingate, 2015, 2019). Further, the acceptance of Academic Literacies would spur the integration of Academic Literacies into every course and classroom in the institutions, embedding EAP into the curriculum, with workload allocations changing to allow for faculty to integrate Academic Literacies and other holistic internationalization efforts (Lea, 2004; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Lillis & Tuck, 2016; Wingate, 2015, 2019). Discipline-specific EAP support nested within departments would additionally provide all students access to Academic Literacies (Wingate, 2006, 2015, 2018, 2019; Wingate & Tribble, 2012), and would be

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<sup>9</sup> Norway offers housing to students through student organizations which are affiliated with universities. These are often cheaper than the rental market (The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, 2021). Typically, housing subsidies are not offered to students in Norway; however, there are some exceptions (The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, 2021). International students do not appear to be able to avail of housing subsidies in Norway but may avail of student organization housing (The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, 2021). Ireland would be ground-breaking if they offered subsidized housing to students which included private, purpose-built, and university-affiliated housing.

best designed with progression in mind; for example, ensuring that students could remain in the department from undergraduate to PhD level and receive support throughout their studies.

Students in this study mentioned the lack of communication within the university and the lack of advertising of student supports, so there should be a particular focus on promoting and enabling easy access to EAP support, along with other supports, within the institution. Such supports should be culturally responsive and transparent. Administrative processes should be streamlined, made transparent, and support provided for navigating these processes for students.

Essentially, institutions should implement a holistic approach to internationalization which would better support both home and international students on campus and represent a two-way street adaptation between students and institutions. This includes improved student supports, curricula, communications, administrative processes, faculty and administrative training, and incentives for faculty and administrative participation in holistic internationalization strategies (Adisa et al., 2019; Aizawa et al., 2020; Andrade, 2006, 2010; Caplan & Stevens, 2017; Cheng et al., 2004; Clarke et al., 2018; Farrelly & Murphy, 2018; Haan et al., 2017; Jabeen et al., 2019; Martinez & Colaner, 2017; Nguyen, 2013; O'Connor, 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2013; Ryan, 2015; Schneider & Jin, 2020; Sheridan, 2011; Smith, 2016; Thies, 2016; Wingate, 2015; G. Zhou & Zhang, 2014). Suggestions for institutional change, as supported by the above cited research, include:

- Organized social interaction through societies, social events, and low-stakes events which support the mixing of home and international students
- Improved supports which are culturally responsive, adequately advertised, and easily accessible
- Improved communication and collaboration between professionals and student supports to provide inclusive and cohesive support (i.e., viewing international students as a part of the student body rather than as “others”)
- Improved administrative processes and support navigating these processes
- Improved orientations and support modules (e.g., EAP) which span the length of the students’ degree
- Faculty and staff intercultural communication, culturally responsive teaching, and internationalization training
- Faculty training for embedding Academic Literacies in courses
- Internationalized curricula, assessment, and teaching

- Incentives for institutional, staff, faculty, and student participation in internationalization
- Increased resource and funding allocation to student supports and internationalization efforts (e.g., studentships, scholarships, grants, study abroad, program funding)

#### **7.4.6 Summary**

A holistic approach needs to be taken in Ireland to internationalization in general and to pre-sessional EAP programs in particular. The development of pre-sessional EAP programs within Ireland needs to take a holistic approach. Opening such EAP programs to all students regardless of their L1, along with means-testing the fees or offering the programs for free, would make these programs inclusive and accessible to all who would benefit from such a program. Further, institution-specific and discipline-specific programs would allow students to gain familiarity with their institution and degree of choice.

Overall, an Academic Literacies approach to both the curriculum and assessment is suggested. This means focusing on navigating expectations and academia in a supported environment where strategies for navigating academia are taught, and similar tasks to those students will encounter in their studies are undertaken. Integrating translanguaging and Global Englishes into the program is also essential to better reflect the realities of language use in academia and better support students. Within the assessment, a move away from IELTS should be taken and a holistic assessment set in place. It is suggested that the *processfolio* (J. Pearson, 2019) be integrated with a writing task, where the genre and topic is the student's choice, to reflect the focus on the process rather than on the product. Additionally, a viva-feedback assessment should be incorporated where students have the opportunity to speak about their processes, choices, and product, and also to receive a talk-back-style feedback which would spur learning from the assessment.

In addition to the “main” curriculum, a robust social and activity program would help students socially integrate, build confidence, and place a focus on wellbeing. Aspects of this program would include the traditional social program with organized trips around the city and introductions to institutionally organized social supports (e.g., societies and students' unions). It would also include holistic workshops for practical skills and topics, work-placement or community service, and a mentoring scheme. Further, housing would be provided on-campus for students during the summer to offer a bridge to finding accommodation for the duration of their degree.

Governmental and institutional changes are also needed. This includes governmental policies, such as regulation of EAP provision supporting holistic programs,

subsidized student housing, and increased funding for holistic internationalization, and institutional changes. Institutional changes should be the inclusion of Academic Literacies at a wider scale, and embedded EAP within each department. Other student supports should also be made culturally responsive and easily accessible. Further, administrative processes should be improved and made transparent and easily navigated. More institutional changes have been suggested by other research, including re-structuring of workload allocation, incentives for internationalization, staff and faculty training, and increased resource/funding allocation.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter set out to explore the present study's findings in context with previous literature. Additionally, implications were made for pre-sessional EAP programs and for wider institutional and governmental change.

As the findings pointed to a high focus on literacy and productive skills, yet specific expectations also vary according to contexts, an argument for a curriculum and assessment based on Academic Literacies was made. Further, it was suggested that translanguaging and Global Englishes be intimately intertwined with Academic Literacies to reflect the wide variety of linguistic resources found in academia, while moving away from a "NS"-monolithic ideology. Ultimately, it was suggested that institutions should create in-house, discipline-specific, degree-level specific pre-sessional EAP programs which are inclusive, i.e., open to all students and means tested or free.

The present study found that holistic aspects such as institutional factors, internal/emotional factors, and integration were both challenging and important for students' academic success. It was therefore suggested that a robust social program be developed along with pre-sessional EAP programs. The social programs can include housing for the summer on the university campus or with host families, typical excursions and trips, holistic workshops, work-placement or community service, and a mentoring program.

Further, as Irish universities are still in the "baby" stages of holistic internationalization, it was therefore also suggested that governmental and institutional changes be made to better support international students. This includes training, better student supports, incentives, subsidized housing, increased resource allocation, etc. By drawing out implications for pre-sessional EAP programs, institutions, and the government, the present study emphasizes that the onus to adapt, internationalize, and succeed in their new environments should not be solely on the student, but rather the responsibility shared amongst all players. As needs analysis are local and vary over time

(Bocanegra-Valle, 2016; Long, 2005), the present study is only the beginning rather than the end of conducting needs analyses to inform decisions to support international students.

## 8 CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

### 8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters first began with the rationale and background to the study in the introduction. In Chapter 2, I explored literature surrounding the internationalization of Irish higher education along with the background to EAP and needs analysis. I further discussed both the needs and challenges for international students as identified in previous needs analyses. I took Academic Literacies as the main theoretical underpinning. However, I also explored Global Englishes and translanguaging, making an argument for their compatibility with Academic Literacies and used these two theories as supporting theories. In Chapter 3, I discussed the mixed-methods approach which I took to the study. The design of the data collection tools, the collection of data, and the analysis of data were also explored. Here, both a qualitative and quantitative approach to data analysis was used. Further, I acknowledged the changing nature of this study and my role as a researcher within the study.

Chapters 4-6 presented first the questionnaire results, and then the student and faculty interviews results. Chapter 7 was the discussion, which combined the results from the previous three chapters to explore the findings in light of previous research while identifying implications for pre-sessional EAP programs.

This chapter, then, first focuses on summarizing the findings of this study, including implications for pre-sessional EAP programs. It then summarizes the original contributions to existing knowledge that this study has made. After this, the chapter turns to limitations and recommendations for future research, followed by concluding remarks.

### 8.2 Summary of findings

#### 8.2.1 Research question 1

- Do international students feel overall positive or negative towards their educational experiences in Irish higher education?

Students generally spoke negatively about their institutions as a whole and more positively when naming specific people or services (e.g., a specific faculty member or a service such as counselling services). But overall, this study found that students have a generally negative experience with their higher education institutions in Ireland, which is cause for concern and justification in itself for conducting a needs analysis to develop better student supports, namely pre-sessional EAP provision.

#### 8.2.2 Research question 2

- What do faculty and international students feel that international students need for academic success, and what do they struggle with and succeed in?

When investigating international students' needs and difficulties, both from a student and faculty perspective, it became clear that students face linguistic, cultural, social, emotional, structural (institutional), and socio-economic challenges. These aspects are intimately intertwined, and while students identified more holistic factors as being more challenging than linguistic factors, it was acknowledged that language often compounds these difficulties.

### **8.2.2.1 Linguistic factors**

Linguistically, both students and faculty overwhelmingly focused on writing as both the most important skill for academic success, and also the most difficult linguistic skill. While faculty went on to identify the four skills of writing, reading, speaking, and listening as essential for academic success, students, while acknowledging that faculty expect these four skills, focused on more holistic factors such as institutional challenges and difficulties with integration and social life, discussed below.

Additionally, both faculty and students identified a mismatch between IELTS and the reality of academia, highlighting the need to shift EAP provision away from study skills. Beyond writing, students felt that discipline-specific academic language along with institutional language were the most difficult aspects of their studies. This shows a need for in-house EAP provision which is discipline-specific, rather than provision which is based on general academic language or IELTS.

Faculty and students tended to speak about needs and expectations in a very general manner. For example, they mostly just identified "writing" as being difficult or assessment types as being the expectations for academic success instead of identifying qualities which make writing successful or more specific challenges such as argumentation. This shows a clear focus on the product in academia rather than the process and may point to the fact that students and faculty are not aware of exactly what makes writing (or other assessments) successful. However, when faculty did identify qualities which make writing successful, they generally pointed to subjective concepts such as "clarity" and "engagement," which may be difficult to communicate concretely to students; there was also not a high level of agreement as to which qualities were most important, further showing the subjective nature of identifying successful assessments. These general descriptions may also be due to faculty and students speaking generally of a wider range of modules, as seen through their examples, rather than focusing on the details of each individual module.

As students and faculty described expectations, they explicitly identified a high level of variation in their modules, assessments, and practices. Along with this variation,

students and faculty spoke of the varieties of Englishes and translanguaging, which are encountered in academia and everyday life. While faculty expressed varying levels of acceptance of Englishes and translanguaging, students spoke positively of these aspects as they felt their familiarity with different varieties of Englishes and other languages is an advantage which helps them in their studies. Additionally, students and faculty used examples and anecdotes which provided a level of individuality and variation in terms of information spoken about in the interviews. Faculty also incorporated, or spoke from, a number of roles and identities, which influenced the topics, focus, and information provided in the interviews.

Further supporting the need for the acceptance of and incorporation of Englishes and translanguaging, students expressed a high level of ownership over English. The participants had complex past experiences with English, with students identifying English as their L1(s) and/or stating that they have taken English throughout their schooling in various levels (e.g., completed degrees solely in English, used a mixture of languages, had bolt-on English classes). This shows varying levels of comfort, usage (i.e., contexts), and identification with English. However, students also continually stated that they were “NNS” in a derogatory manner, showing how power and the monolingual ideology is still upheld in academia.

While students showed complex conflict with their usage and ownership over English, faculty also seemed to both stigmatize students and express that EAP provision should be non-stigmatizing. Faculty primarily referred to international students as “NNS,” despite also explicitly describing international students as being from countries such as India and Nigeria, which in many parts have English as a primary language. This shows that faculty are still placing students in a deficit view, despite most students describing themselves as legitimate multilingual students. However, faculty also felt that Irish home students (identified as English L1 students) faced similar difficulties as English LX students, pointing to a need for EAP provision for all students. Again, faculty, like students, seem to contradict themselves by both placing international students in a deficit view simply for not appearing to have English as an only language and also recognizing that all students struggle with academic language and norms. On some level this recognizes the unique challenges that English LX students may face in that linguistic challenges may compound other difficulties which they encounter in their degree program, yet simultaneously places them in a deficit by placing the responsibility for linguistic and cultural adaptation on the student. As with the variation theme, this conflict shows that while there may be a level of acceptance of non-standard Englishes in academia, students



are still stigmatized and placed in a deficit view. It also shows that there needs to be a push for the inclusion and acceptance of Global Englishes and translanguaging within academia to further challenge the monolingual ideology of academia.

### 8.2.2.2 *Institutional factors*

Students felt that institutional factors were more important, and also more challenging, than linguistic factors. They described difficulties navigating the system, citing unclear expectations and a lack of communication throughout the university as the primary two challenges. Despite faculty providing handbooks and assessment criteria, and discussing expectations in various ways, students still felt that these expectations were unclear. This reflects the view within Academic Literacies that institutional expectations are opaque, and the gap between faculty and students' understanding needs to be explicitly bridged. Students also felt that there was a lack of communication between the university and students, and between different elements of the university (e.g., schools to academic registry), citing a need for university reform which focuses on seamless, transparent administrative processes.

Broadly, students felt that their institutions were not responsive enough, and that responsive institutions are needed. This brings to the forefront the need for more student supports, and the facilitation of students accessing these services. Students stated that they wanted more supports, such as EAP. They also said that they are not always aware of the services, what they do, or how to access them; or that these services were not appropriate for their needs. This leads to the need for services which are improved, expanded, advertised better to ensure access, and more culturally responsive.

Students also focused on the classroom experience and their experiences with faculty members. Here, they also called for responsive practices. Suggestions of this could be implemented through training on intercultural communication, culturally responsive teaching, integration of Academic Literacies in the classroom, etc. While faculty recognized their role in supporting students, they also felt that it was not their responsibility to solve external issues for students. Likewise, students in this study felt that faculty should not be solely responsible for solving external issues. Rather, students asked that faculty remain empathetic, aware, and open to guiding students to appropriate services, and also that faculty intervene where they see an issue (e.g., noticing that a student is struggling and approaching them to direct them to appropriate services.). Many times, students felt that faculty were often not aware enough of the struggles of being an international student, and felt that faculty are often the first line of support in an

international student's life (in contrast with home students, who have familial and social networks already developed).

### **8.2.2.3 *Integration and social life***

Students in this study felt that they struggled with integrating and developing social networks within their new environment(s). Integration here also refers to other factors which may include well-being, living situations, and financial situations. Faculty also identified these factors as being essential for academic success, and a challenge for international students. Students emphasized their isolation and homesickness in their new environment(s), calling for institutionally supported venues of social integration; for example, societies and low-stakes social gatherings. Further, students and faculty focused on the housing crisis within Ireland, especially Dublin, along with the cost of living, which introduces challenges to the students' integration and well-being throughout their studies.

### **8.2.2.4 *Internal and emotional factors***

Students also identified internal and emotional factors as both a struggle and strength. Students implicitly and explicitly indicated a lack of confidence or self-doubt and struggles with anxiety, demotivation, and loneliness throughout their interviews. On the other hand, students identified internal factors as being a source of strength and a cause of academic success. These elements included confidence, self-motivation, determination, and goal setting. By pointing to internal and emotional factors as an influence on academic success, students signaled both critical reflection and an internalization of inadequacy or struggle, which may be caused by a variety of factors. However, with students feeling that academic success is based on such individual and internal factors, this points to a need for developing support which mitigates the negative factors and encourages or develops the positive ones.

### **8.2.2.5 *Culture***

Faculty in this study identified culture as a source of struggle for students, primarily referring to academic cultural differences. They felt that aspects such as plagiarism, classroom interaction, and familiarity with assessment styles were attributable to students' cultural background, and therefore, a source of struggle. However, students described these differences more neutrally, recognizing that the institutional culture in Irish institutions can cause just as much struggle as the students' cultural background. Faculty placed students in more of a deficit view here, while students stated that all parties need to adapt to the contact and incorporation of various cultures, rather than the onus being on students to adapt to a new culture.

### **8.2.2.6 External authority**

External authority added a layer of complexity which students and faculty must navigate. Here, faculty discussed expectations which are imposed on them, or which they must negotiate. Some elements, such as standardization and policies which improve learning, were spoken about positively. However, faculty identified a number of aspects which have a negative impact on their ability to support students or restrict their ability to implement supports for students. These elements included their workload, a lack of funding and resources, and university-wide business or numbers-driven policies. They also discussed the high level of negotiation needed when creating handbooks, marking criteria, and expectations. These elements of external authority show that power dynamics and external authority heavily influences faculty and student experiences in academia. Further, these structures should be made explicit, problematized, and challenged where needed. While the focus of this study is on the navigation of faculty expectations, student supports, and student experiences, the acknowledgement of external authority expands the scope of this research to recognize that the responsibility of change within academia cannot remain on just how faculty and students interact, or how students are supported within the classroom, or through institutional student services. Rather, it shows the need to look at all aspects which influence student success, from the governmental level down to the personal and internal level.

### **8.2.3 Research question 2(a)**

- What level of agreement do faculty and international students have with respect to the issues raised in the foregoing research question?

Students and faculty showed varying levels of agreement depending on the themes identified. With regard to linguistic factors, there was a high level of agreement as both students and faculty focused on writing as the most important and difficult skill. Faculty also focused on the four skills (writing, reading, speaking, and listening), with students also stating that faculty expect these four skills. Both sets of populations spoke primarily about assessment types and spoke in very general terms about expectations (e.g., writing in general or assessment rather than argumentation or critical thinking). Both faculty and students question whether IELTS is a fit-for-purpose admission exam, stating that the exam lacked relevance to the reality of academia. However, faculty also focused on the need to raise the band-score cut off for admission, which students did not discuss.

Integration and social life were discussed extensively by students. They focused on the need for, and the challenges of developing, a social life along with integration factors such as housing and finances. Faculty, however, primarily focused on the housing and

financial challenges of students. Here, students felt that institutions have a responsibility to support international students in their social life and integration. Yet, while faculty remained cognizant of these factors, they were explicit that it was not their responsibility to solve these problems for the students.

Students both described themselves as “NNS” in a derogatory manner and expressed different levels of language, usage (e.g., contexts), and identification with English. This simultaneously shows the “NS” standard and challenges that standard by showing ownership and complex relationships with English. Faculty, however tended to place students in a deficit view by describing international students as “NNS,” even in cases where students had English as an L1 or a primary academic language. Yet, faculty did identify that all students need EAP support as both English L1 and LX students struggle academically, especially with writing. Students implicitly agreed as English L1 students requested to take part in this study and expressed similar struggles as English LX students.

When speaking of culture, faculty primarily identified international students’ cultural background as problematic. However, students viewed their culture as being merely different from the institutions’ culture and did not express that either culture was necessarily the cause of struggle. Instead, students felt that both individuals and institutions should meet halfway in cultural adaptation, and that institutions should be more inclusive of cultural differences.

Both students and faculty identified a level of variation throughout their modules and assessment; however, faculty focused more on differences between disciplines than students. Both also spoke of the existence of Global Englishes and translanguaging in students’ everyday life and academia. However, students spoke more at length about these aspects than faculty. Students focused on the challenges sometimes caused by encountering Global Englishes due to unfamiliarity with different varieties or accents. They also identified that the speaker and listener share responsibility for communication and that they must “meet halfway,” signaling the need for Global Englishes training for all. They additionally focused on the positive aspects of translanguaging. Faculty, while generally positive about translanguaging, did focus more on the negative aspects than students. They also expressed a level of accepting Global Englishes, however they focused more on the “line” between “errors” impeding communication and acceptable “error.” The reference to “acceptable errors” or “appropriate” usage of translanguaging and Global Englishes shows a limited acceptance of translanguaging and Global Englishes.

Students spoke extensively about institutional factors which are both important for academic success and pose a challenge for students. However, faculty did not discuss such factors. In fact, students suggested that institutions and faculty lack good communication,

clear expectations, and adequate responsive supports. This is in contrast with faculty feeling that their rubrics and handbooks are “bibles,” presenting clear expectations for students to follow. Internal and emotional factors were only spoken about by students. Here, students discussed different internal and emotional factors as both challenges and strengths. Faculty did not speak on this topic. Faculty spoke extensively of external authority, whereas students only spoke of external authority when speaking of their English language learning history.

Overall, there was more disagreement than agreement. Primarily, faculty and students only agreed on the linguistic factors which influence academic success and present challenges. Otherwise there was a level of disagreement in the two populations’ views on different topics. Some topics, such as institutional factors and internal and emotional factors were only spoken about by one population (i.e., either students or faculty, but not both). Other topics, such as integration and social life, showed that faculty and students focused on different elements of these topics such as students focusing on social life and faculty focusing on housing and finances. Still other topics showed explicit disagreement in views. For example, students viewed academic culture as being neutral differences, suggesting that both institutions and individuals hold the responsibility to “meet halfway” and adapt to one another, while faculty viewed the academic culture of students to be problematic, suggesting that students must adapt to the institutional culture. This level of disagreement may indicate a gap to bridge with student supports, faculty training, and other institutional changes. Further, this disagreement shows the necessity of a needs analysis from a variety of viewpoints and through multiple data collection tools as only focusing on one population would put curriculum designers at a risk of developing a biased or skewed pre-sessional EAP program.

#### **8.2.4 Research question 3**

- What implications do the answers to the above research questions have for Irish pre-sessional EAP programs?

From the above findings, implications for pre-sessional EAP programs were drawn.

Additionally, some focus was placed on institutional and governmental change which is also needed to support international students; while it is beyond the scope of the PhD to make detailed recommendations, it is important to touch on as factors such as institutional factors and other factors (i.e., emotional, socio-economic, integration) impact student success.

Organizationally, it is suggested to implement the following aspects when developing a pre-sessional EAP program:

- Institutional in-house programs

- Discipline-specific organization and/or embedded within schools
- Degree-level organization
- Open to all students regardless of their L1
- Free or means tested

When designing the curriculum of such a program, this study advocates for an Academic Literacies approach supported with aspects of Global Englishes and translanguaging integrated throughout the course. This is due to the analysis of data which revealed that students struggle with a variety of factors which are not always straightforward or linked with English proficiency. Further, data analysis revealed that students encounter a variety of complex, and often unclear or hidden, expectations, institutional practices, and linguistic norms which they must navigate resulting in possible conformation and/or resistance to such norms. This analysis points to the need for employing the insights of Academic Literacies as the basis for EAP programs as the theory's main tenets are (Lillis, 2019; Lillis & Tuck, 2016):

- Literacy practices are socially and contextually situated, and therefore often unclear and not transferable from contexts
- Identities and previous experiences influence literacy practices
- Students are often seen in a deficit view, which is problematic. A range of semiotic practices should be accepted, and external authority/institutional ideologies should be critiqued
- Dominant discursive and rhetorical practices should be challenged

Translanguaging, then, allows for the recognition of all of the students' linguistic resources, while explicitly teaching strategies and supporting students in using these resources to their advantage (Canagarajah, 2011b, 2013d; García & Wei, 2014). Global Englishes further recognizes the complex nature of languages, focusing on the varieties of Englishes and on supporting students in navigating different types of Englishes (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Rose, McKinley, et al., 2020). While Academic Literacies also touches on the aspects covered in translanguaging and Global Englishes, each theory emphasizes one aspect a bit more than the other theories, and in different ways (i.e., translanguaging makes more explicit pedagogical implications for incorporating different languages and modalities into the classroom and in academia; Global Englishes emphasizes varieties of Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca; Academic Literacies focuses on the navigation of power, identity, and culture in academia), which makes the three theories complementary and supportive of the others.

Reflecting the suggestions made for pre-sessional EAP curricula, the assessment of such programs should also take an Academic Literacies perspective. It is suggested that a *processfolio* (J. Pearson, 2017, 2019), which focuses on the process rather than the product, along with a writing product which is customizable for students be the main forms of assessment. A viva-style feedback session would give students a chance to discuss their process and product while allowing feedback to be discussed to support further learning. Qualitative reporting along with institutional-specific marking would be the best manner of communicating students' results from the program. This study strongly advocates a move away from IELTS and other standardized exams in every way, from curriculum to assessment.

To address the factors of integration and social life as well as institutional and emotional or internal factors, a robust social program is suggested. This includes the typical excursions and events organized by pre-sessional EAP programs such as museum visits and social gatherings. It also expands this to acknowledge the need for supported housing situations for pre-sessional EAP students, which increases their social integration and also allows them to navigate the challenging housing crisis in a supported manner. Further, holistic workshops are suggested on a wide range of topics to allow students to find support in a number of areas such as navigating a new country, navigating the university, personal well-being, general and conversational English, academic "skills," and intercultural communication and cultural diversity. Volunteering and/or work-placement would give students opportunities to develop ties to the community and practice different types of English in a supported environment. Additionally, a mentoring scheme could be introduced to create links between former students and pre-sessional EAP program students, giving a glimpse as to what their degree program may be like and helping students develop a social network outside of the pre-sessional EAP program.

As has been stated, institutional and governmental changes also need to be made to implement a holistic internationalization policy. These implications range from needing holistic regulation of pre-sessional EAP programs to subsidized housing for all students during their degree. Institutional changes include improved student supports, curricula, communications, administrative processes, faculty and administrative training, and incentives for faculty and administrative participation in holistic internationalization strategies.

### **8.3 Contributions to existing knowledge**

This study makes a number of original contributions. First and foremost, it contributes to an underdeveloped field of EAP in Ireland. Research on EAP in Ireland is lacking, and this

study represents one of the first studies in Ireland which makes explicit implications for EAP provision. Further, it is the first study in Ireland to focus on pre-sessional EAP provision. While many of the findings echo previous needs analysis and Academic Literacies research, it is recognized that context greatly influences specific challenges, expectations, and norms which EAP provision must consider (Lea, 1998; Wingate, 2015). By conducting one of the few needs analysis conducted in Ireland and making explicit implications for EAP pre-sessional provision in Ireland, which has never been done before, this study advocates for context-specific, institutional-specific, and discipline-specific EAP courses which take an Academic Literacies approach while integrating Global Englishes and translanguaging.

This study further adds to the field of applied linguistics and EAP by expanding and confirming the complex needs and expectations of international students in higher education. Most previous research focuses on the students' perspective, so this study expands the field by including the faculty perspective as well. Additionally, research on pre-sessional EAP provision is not only lacking in Ireland, but more generally in the applied linguistics and EAP fields. Specifically, there is a lack of research on pre-sessional EAP curricula and assessment through an Academic Literacies lens. This study expands the base of knowledge surrounding pre-sessional EAP provision by providing a comprehensive needs analysis which is explicitly related to pre-sessional EAP curricula and assessment.

Methodologically, this study additionally builds on the few studies (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Kamasak et al., 2021) which provide statistical evidence for the influences on international student challenges and, therefore, the organization of EAP provision, e.g., the quantitative analysis of discipline-specificity and degree level. Additionally, this study builds on the interview analysis framework found in Garska and O'Brien (2019), providing an Academic Literacies-informed thematic analysis framework which has been expanded to include modalities other than writing. This framework can provide a way to view needs analysis through an Academic Literacies lens.

Besides making contributions methodologically and by being one of the few studies filling the niches of Academic Literacies-based pre-sessional EAP provision contextualized in Ireland, this study makes a number of substantive contributions. First, this study shows that a holistic approach to supporting international students needs to be taken. As expectations and needs range from linguistic to social to institutional, simply providing EAP programs will not adequately support students. Governmental and institutional changes need to take place as adaptation needs to be the responsibility of both



parties, rather than placing the onus solely on students. Then, EAP programs need to reinvent themselves to provide inclusive programs. This includes designing programs to be means-tested or free as well as open to all students regardless of their L1. As this study focused on pre-sessional EAP programs, an argument was made for institutional in-house programs which are discipline and degree-level specific. A robust social and “extras” program which addresses integration, housing, and other practical aspects such as wellbeing, institution-specific administration and language, etc. should be incorporated into pre-sessional EAP programs. Further, these programs should take an Academic Literacies approach to both curricula and assessment while integrating Global Englishes and translanguaging into every aspect of the program. While these three theories are generally kept separate in previous literature, this study makes an argument that these theories are indeed compatible and should be combined in practice.

#### **8.4 Limitations of the study**

This study has a number of limitations. First, the methodological tools chosen for this study limits the information gathered about international student needs in Irish higher education. Using only two population groups, faculty and students, along with only interviews and questionnaire instead of also using other tools, such as materials reviews, provides a narrower view of the needs and experiences of international students in Irish higher education. As with all interviews and questionnaires, there is also the issue of self-selection bias where participants may lean towards those having either a negative or positive experience of the research topic. In terms of response rate, there was a notably low response rate from faculty. Additionally, there is a strong bias towards institution 1, with most of the participants either working or studying in this institution. This was caused by access issues to other institutions, and low faculty participation could be due to the workload of faculty. Most of the participants were also in AHSS. These limitations on sample size and composition mean that the results must be cautiously interpreted and not over-generalized. A further limitation of the study is the length of the questionnaire, which was noted by some participants as being a bit too long. This could have affected participation in the study and resulted in research fatigue. Another aspect was the lack of listening constructs, only numbering two elements, within the questionnaire, which should be revised to reflect the questionnaire validated by Kamasak et al. (2021). In terms of the interviews, having only one interview with participants limits information, and a follow-up interview could have produced richer data.

### **8.5 Recommendations for future research**

In terms of future research, I hope that this study is one of the first of many to focus on Irish EAP provision, especially that of pre-sessional EAP programs. A wider study including more methodological tools such as materials review, observation, and analysis of student work and faculty feedback would expand the knowledge surrounding international student needs in Irish higher education. Likewise, engaging more participants in all higher education institutions in Ireland would allow the results and conclusions to be more generalizable. Conducting a study which explicitly includes English L1 and home students from various linguistic backgrounds would allow EAP provision to become more inclusive, and therefore provide a more robust needs analysis. This could also be used for comparison, e.g., L1 vs. LX needs. Other players such as governmental policy makers, administration, and student support providers could also be included in further studies.

Further, a study which builds on this study to create, implement, and evaluate a pre-sessional EAP program based on this research would be fruitful to test conclusions and refine results. Within this, tracking students, both those who have completed a pre-sessional EAP program and those who have entered the university without a preparation program, throughout their studies would allow for experiences, needs, and the impact of the pre-sessional EAP program to be better evaluated. In line with the creation of an EAP program based on this research, it is suggested to use statistical tests in future research using a larger sample size and investigating more factors as this may impact the organization and creation of an EAP program. Additionally, as this research showed, a more holistic view to internationalization is needed and research on faculty training, institutional culture, and changes within the institution and government to support international students should be conducted and implemented. Finally, as this research touched on ongoing EAP support, more research on the link and progression between pre-sessional EAP programs and embedded and/or in-sessional EAP programs would be fruitful.

### **8.6 Final remarks**

This study set out to investigate international students' needs, challenges, and experiences in Irish higher education from both faculty and students' perspectives. It then aimed to draw explicit implications for pre-sessional EAP programs. To do so, a questionnaire and interviews were conducted and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

From this analysis, it was found that international students face linguistic, cultural, social, emotional, structural (institutional), and socio-economic challenges which are intimately intertwined. Additionally, expectations are often seen as muddled and varied

depending on context, institution, discipline, and even lecturer. Further, aspects of external authority were identified as influencing expectations and practices in complex ways, most often pointing to the need to adopt holistic internationalization rather than internationalizing for economic reasons. While students were often seen in a deficit view, it is reiterated throughout that institutions and the government need to adapt and provide support while moving away from a deficit view of students. This support includes student supports (e.g., counselling services, EAP, etc.), responsive policies and practices, supported integration, and more explicitly formulated expectations.

Therefore, it was suggested that an inclusive, holistic pre-sessional EAP program be developed in-house in Irish institutions. These programs should be free or means tested, open to all students regardless of their L1, and organized by discipline and degree level. Taking an Academic Literacies approach, supported by Global Englishes and translanguaging, to the curriculum and assessment is essential. A robust social program including typical social activities, holistic workshops, and a mentoring scheme will aid students in their integration and confidence building. Further, changes at a governmental and institutional level were suggested. This included policies such as subsidized student housing, staff training, incentivizing internationalization, and embedding Academic Literacies in the content classroom.

This study has the potential to be impactful in addressing the gap of pre-sessional EAP research, especially that in the Irish context, along with adding to a base of knowledge surrounding international student needs analysis worldwide from the perspectives of students and faculty. Further, it adds methodologically to the field by adding to the statistical analysis of international student needs and challenges (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Kamasak et al., 2021) and expanding a qualitative analysis framework which takes an Academic Literacies perspective (Garska & O'Brien, 2019). However, beyond these contributions to the field, it is hoped that this study will be only one of the first on supporting international students in Irish higher education, especially in the context of EAP. It is clear that Ireland is still in a position to shift their internationalization policies and to implement changes at all levels to welcome and support their international students to the fullest extent. It is hoped that this research, and further research on the topic, will inform such transformative change and place Ireland as a leader in EAP provision and holistic internationalization. It is also hoped that this research will spur innovation and transformative change in EAP provision through creating and implementing truly inclusive programs.

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**APPENDICES****APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL**

12/12/2017

Application: Academic Year 2017/18

Title of Research: Increasing Academic Success of New Speakers of English through  
English for Academic Purposes Curriculum Revitalization

Applicant: MT3 Garska, Jessica

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Dear Jessica,

Your revised application for the research project above was considered by the Research Ethics Committee, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin, on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017, and has been approved in full. Good luck with the project,

Best wishes,



Professor John Saeed

Chair, Research Ethics Committee

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

**APPENDIX B: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**  
**SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES**

**Student Questionnaire: Needs Analysis**

Increasing the Academic Success of New Speakers of English through English for  
Academic Purposes Curriculum Revitalization

Principal Investigator: Jessica Garska, Ph.D. Applied Linguistics, School of Linguistic  
Speech and Communication Sciences

Supervisor: Dr. Sarah O'Brien, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Sciences

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your response is extremely important to the researcher as it will result in tangible changes to the English for Academic Purposes curriculum.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all data is confidential.

If you agree to participate, this will involve you participating in a 15-minute questionnaire about the needs of international students at Irish third level institutions, your experiences of using standardized tests as an entry level tool, and your experiences as an international student in Ireland.

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as this will guarantee the success of the investigation.

Thank you for your time!

You are free to contact the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Principal Investigator:

Jessica Garska, Ph.D. Applied Linguistics, School of Linguistic Speech and  
Communication Sciences

garskaj@tcd.ie

Supervisor:

Dr. Sarah O'Brien, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Sciences

Sarah.obrien@tcd.ie

Completion of this questionnaire implies informed consent. I agree to participate in this study, have been provided with an information pamphlet, and understand the information.

**Section 1: In this section, please answer using the lines provided or tick the appropriate box.**

- 1) My home country is: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Age:  18-24  25-29  30-34  35-39  40-44  45-49  50+
- 3) I identify my gender as:
  - Male  Female  Other\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)  I prefer not to say
- 4) What is the name of your University/College in Ireland: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Degree level:  Undergraduate  Postgraduate  PhD  Other\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) I am a:  Full-time student  Part-time student  Visiting student
- 7) Degree Discipline (e.g. business, law, education, etc.):
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) I have studied in an English-speaking country for:
  - Less than 6 months  6 months to 1 year  2-4 years  5 years or more
- 9) What is/are your first language(s)?
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) I have taken the IELTS exam:  Yes  No
- 11) If yes, what are your band scores (overall, writing, reading, listening, speaking)?-
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) If no, what type of exam have you taken (e.g. CAE, TOEFL, etc.)?
- 13) What was your score?
- 14) I have taken an exam preparation or English for Academic Purposes class before (e.g. IELTS class, classes focused on academic writing, classes preparing you for academic studies, etc.)  yes  no

15) If yes, which classes and for how long?

16) I feel that these classes prepared me for my studies.

Not applicable  Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

## Section 2: Short Answer and Multiple Choice

17) On average, how much time do you read in English each week for your studies?

0-1 hours  2-4 hours  5-7 hours  More than 7 hours

18) On average, how much time do you write in English each week for your studies?

0-1 hours  2-4 hours  5-7 hours  More than 7 hours

19) On average, how much time do you spend doing group work each week for your studies?

0-1 hours  2-4 hours  5-7 hours  More than 7 hours

20) On average, how much time do you spend in lectures each week for your studies?

0-1 hours  2-4 hours  5-7 hours  More than 7 hours

21) What do your assignments include? Please tick all that apply.

Essay or report writing  Reading  Presentation  Timed writing  Written exams  Other

22) What do your lectures include? Please tick all that apply.

Listening  Discussion  Note taking  Reading  Question and answer  Other

23) I feel that my professors effectively communicate their expectations.

1 = strongly disagree 2 3 4 5 = strongly disagree

## Section 3: Evaluation of skills and strategies needed for academic success

**On a scale of 1 (completely unimportant) to 5 (essential), indicate how important the following writing skills are for academic success at your Irish institution.**

24) Writing lengthy papers (e.g. dissertations, reports, and essays)

25) Writing exam essays

26) Writing introductions

27) Searching for appropriate literature

28) Evaluating literature

- 29) Referring to sources
- 30) Reviewing and critiquing the previous research
- 31) Creating a research space (gap)
- 32) Designing the research methods
- 33) Writing up the methods section
- 34) Summarizing and presenting data
- 35) Commenting on and discussing data
- 36) Writing references/the bibliography
- 37) Writing conclusions
- 38) Proof-reading written assignments
- 39) Using appropriate lexical phrases (e.g. on the basis of, it should be noted that) freely
- 40) Summarizing/paraphrasing
- 41) Writing coherent paragraphs
- 42) Linking sentences smoothly
- 43) Using proper academic language and vocabulary (style)
- 44) Using discipline-specific and technical vocabulary
- 45) Using the proper grammar (e.g. tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, and prepositions)
- 46) Taking notes

**On a scale of 1 (completely unimportant) to 5 (essential), indicate how important the following speaking skills are for academic success at your Irish institution.**

- 47) Participating in class discussions and group work
- 48) Communicating with lecturers
- 49) Communicating with classmates
- 50) Negotiating in group work
- 51) Linking ideas and sentences smoothly
- 52) Using proper language and vocabulary
- 53) Using proper grammar (e.g. tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, and prepositions)

**On a scale of 1 (completely unimportant) to 5 (essential), indicate how important the following reading and listening skills are for academic success at your Irish institution.**



- 54) Understanding specific language features of an academic genre (e.g. a research paper)
- 55) Understanding the required reading
- 56) Reading quickly
- 57) Reading for specific information
- 58) Reading critically (e.g. being able to reflect on and analyze the text)
- 59) Reading specialized papers (e.g. academic journals and reports)
- 60) Understanding accents
- 61) Understanding lectures
- 62) Please specify other skills and their importance to academic success at your Irish institution, if any:

**On a scale of 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very easy), indicate how difficult you think the following skills associated with the writing process are.**

- 63) Writing lengthy papers (e.g. dissertations, reports, and essays)
- 64) Writing exam essays
- 65) Writing introductions
- 66) Searching for appropriate literature
- 67) Evaluating literature
- 68) Referring to sources
- 69) Reviewing and critiquing the previous research
- 70) Creating a research space (gap)
- 71) Designing the research methods
- 72) Writing up the methods section
- 73) Summarizing and presenting data
- 74) Commenting on and discussing data
- 75) Writing references/the bibliography
- 76) Writing conclusions
- 77) Proof-reading written assignments
- 78) Using appropriate lexical phrases (e.g. on the basis of, it should be noted that) freely
- 79) Summarizing/paraphrasing
- 80) Writing coherent paragraphs

- 81) Linking sentences smoothly
- 82) Using proper academic language and vocabulary (style)
- 83) Using discipline-specific and technical vocabulary
- 84) Using the proper grammar (e.g. tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, and prepositions)
- 85) Taking notes

**On a scale of 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very easy), indicate how difficult you think the following speaking skills are.**

- 86) Participating in class discussions and group work
- 87) Communicating with lecturers
- 88) Communicating with classmates
- 89) Negotiating in group work
- 90) Linking ideas and sentences smoothly
- 91) Using proper language and vocabulary
- 92) Using proper grammar (e.g. tenses, agreements, reporting verbs, and prepositions)

**On a scale of 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very easy), indicate how difficult you think the following reading and listening skills are.**

- 93) Understanding specific language features of an academic genre (e.g. a research paper)
- 94) Understanding the required reading
- 95) Reading quickly
- 96) Reading for specific information
- 97) Reading critically (e.g. being able to reflect on and analyze the text)
- 98) Reading specialized papers (e.g. academic journals and reports)
- 99) Understanding accents
- 100) Understanding lectures
- 101) Please specify other skills and mark their difficulty, if any:

#### **Section 4: Final Section**

**Please answer the following questions fully and to the best of your ability.**

- 102) What percentage of your studies involves writing:
- 103) What percentage of your studies involves listening:
- 104) What percentage of your studies involves reading:
- 105) What percentage of your studies involves speaking:
- 106) What percentage of time in your studies involves other skills (e.g. critical thinking, negotiation, etc.)? Please indicate individual skills and their percentage.:
- 107) What are your strengths in terms of academic English?
- 108) What are your difficulties in terms of academic English?
- 109) What would you want to learn in a future English for Academic Purposes class:
- 110) What would have been useful to learn before starting your studies in Ireland?
- 111) What other factors impact your academic success (e.g. living situation, social life, knowledge of content, etc.)? How?
- 112) Do these factors impact your academic success more or less than your language skills? How so?
- 113) What other factors should be included in a summer English for Academic Purposes course?
- 114) What do your professors expect from you academically?
- 115) Could you please describe your English learning history (e.g. number of years studying English, where you have studied English, types of classes, etc.)?
- 116) Any other comments?

**Interviews will be conducted at a later date to gain a deeper understanding of this topic. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please provide your e-mail for the researcher to contact you. Further information is provided below.**

**Interviews will be conducted at a later date to gain a deeper understanding of this topic. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please provide your e-mail for the researcher to contact you.**

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C: STUDENT INTERVIEW**  
**TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**  
**SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES**  
**Student Interview: Needs Analysis**

Increasing the Academic Success of New Speakers of English through English for  
Academic Purposes Curriculum Revitalization

Principal Investigator: Jessica Garska, Ph.D. Applied Linguistics, School of Linguistic  
Speech and Communication Sciences

Supervisor: Dr. Sarah O'Brien, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Sciences

Section 1: Expectations, Modules, and Assessment

- (1) What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
- (2) Can you tell me about the work required in your modules? As a research student?
- (3) Can you tell me about the skills required in your modules? As a research student?
- (4) Can you describe the general structure of your lectures and modules?
- (5) Could you describe the form of assessment in your modules?
- (6) How would you evaluate your current academic success?
- (7) How do your professors assess academic success? What do they look for when grading?
- (8) How do your professors communicate expectations and assessment requirements to students?
- (9) Do you have access to the rubrics or guidelines before you complete the assignments? If so, how helpful are they?
- (10) In general, what do students need to succeed at Trinity?
- (11) How much of a factor does language play in academic success?

Section 2: Experiences with current entry and preparation tools

- (1) Did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before attending Trinity? If so, what type of preparation did you participate in? How do you feel about this preparation?
- (2) Did you take an entry assessment before being accepted to Trinity? If so, what type of entry assessment did you take? How do you feel about this entry assessment?
- (3) Do you feel that your preparation has adequately prepared you for the demands of studying at Trinity? Why/why not?

- (4) What type of preparation should international students undertake before studying at Trinity? Why?

### Section 3: Advice for students and faculty

- (1) If you could give advice to faculty in dealing with international students in the classroom, what would it be?
- (2) If you could give advice to organizations in preparing international students for studying at Trinity, what would it be?
- (3) If you could give advice to prospective students, what would it be?
- (4) Are you aware of any support that international students receive from your professors and/or your department? The wider college? If so, is this support adequate? If no, what could be improved?
- (5) Are there any questions that you wish I had asked, but I didn't? Is there anything else you would like to add?

**APPENDIX D: FACULTY INTERVIEW****TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN****SCHOOL OF LINGUISTIC SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES****Faculty Interview: Needs Analysis**

Increasing the Academic Success of New Speakers of English through English for  
Academic Purposes Curriculum Revitalization

Principal Investigator: Jessica Garska, Ph.D. Applied Linguistics, School of Linguistic  
Speech and Communication Sciences

Supervisor: Dr. Sarah O'Brien, School of Linguistic Speech and Communication Sciences

**Section 1: Expectations and Assessment**

- (12) Can you tell me about the work required of your students in your modules?  
As a research student?
- (13) Can you describe the general structure of your lectures and modules?
- (14) Could you describe the form of assessment in your modules?
- (15) How do you assess academic success? What do you look for when grading?
- (16) How do you communicate expectations and assessment requirements to  
students?
- (17) Do students have access to the rubrics or guidelines before they complete  
the assignments?
- (18) In general, what do students need to succeed at your institution?
- (19) In general, what weaknesses do students tend to have?
- (20) How much of a factor does language play in academic success?
- (21) What other factors play into academic success?

**Section 2: Experiences with international students**

- (22) What experience do you have with international students in your  
department?
- (23) What do you feel that international students need to succeed at Trinity?
- (24) Are you aware of any support offered to international students in your  
department or the wider college? If so, is this support adequate? If no, what could be  
improved?

**Section 3: Evaluation of entry and preparation tools**

- (1) Are you aware of the type of preparation your international students currently participate in? If so, how do you feel about this preparation?
- (2) Do you feel that the current preparation adequately prepares international students for the demands of studying at your institution? Why/why not?
- (3) Are you aware of the type of entry assessment that international students take to be accepted to the university? If so, how do you feel about this entry assessment?
- (4) What type of preparation should international students undertake before studying at your institution? Why?
- (5) What do you hope your students leave feeling after finishing their degree? Do you think they leave feeling this way?
- (6) Are there any questions that you wish I had asked, but I didn't? Is there anything else you would like to express?

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**APPENDIX E: STUDENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS**

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**Abeer**

5

6R: okay so first can you tell me what you think your strengths are academically like what  
7are you good at academically

8Abeer: academically I'm good at science maths uh basically maths so I think it's my  
9favorite subject and uh also physics chemistry they are also my favorite subjects yeah

10R: okay and what would you consider to be your weaknesses academically

11Abeer: uh weaknesses [clears throat] uh is that there are I don't think uh like in terms of  
12weaknesses I think that as learning opportunities because uhh this field of learning is  
13increasing everyday as you all know so a lot of research as is being done everything new  
14has is been coming up so weaknesses I won't I will just say that there's gap in the  
15knowledge that's it

16R: okay thanks and what would you say your strengths are in terms of English

17Abeer: in terms of English I uhh like since if you talk about the test IELTS uh [clears  
18throat] so it's categorized into four parts listening writing speaking and reading so I  
19personally got uh full marks in listening so I think I'm a good listener and I got the lowest  
20grade in writing but that also is because I was not able to practice much about the exam so  
21yea

22R: okay yeah and um can you tell me about the work that's

23required in your modules here at [institution 1] so what do you need to do for your  
24modules and your classes

25Abeer: uh in modules like we are basically being taught about the GIS software oh yeah so  
26GIS is a mapping software which is basically used how to map the different areas of  
27Ireland or in general but in the whole world in particular so [clears throat] it's basically  
28about the kind of terrains of a particular area has like rivers land forests and something like  
29that and so we have to monitor the changes over the period of time so that is basically uh  
30covered under GIS software another there's what we are being told is the R statistical  
31languages statistical as we all know it's uhh very important these days to like predict what  
32is going to happen in the future so to take the previous data uh so that is being compiled by  
33calculating all the statistical means and that is a software known as R so we have been  
34taught that and more recently we are being covered uh the hydrology and the ground water  
35quality of the [pause] Wexford area and of the different catchments over here so we are



36being uhh apprised about the kind of problems that are uh being faced by the agricultural  
37people like the uh inflow of nitrogen and phosphorus inside the ground water so yeah that  
38is the current module and in the coming modules there is going to be [topic] policy and  
39regulations and there are at around 13 modules over here so complete uh currently I am  
40doing the third one oh yeah

41R: okay perfect and are you doing any research as a part of your master's program

42Abeer: yeah we are also doing a research it's known as the desk study so in that desk study  
43we have to write a thesis of around 6,000 words and so the topic of my desk study is  
44[topic] to identify whether to help into the [topic] so yeah

45R: okay perfect and so what's the general structure of your lectures and modules like when  
46you're in the classroom what happens is it mainly a lecturer with a PowerPoint are you  
47actually using GIS is it group work things like that

48Abeer: uhhh right now it's more of uhh lecturer giving the lecture sort of thing and uh he or  
49she I'm not like since all my modules are either being taught by a person uh so I am saying  
50he or she [clears throat] so he or she the professor I would say the professor you know tries  
51uhhh the you know like wants the class to participate also and they try to ask the questions  
52also so they want involvement from the class also but more uh particularly right now they  
53are focusing on giving the developing the lectures and what is all being like their indiv-  
54PowerPoint slides and all so yeah

55R: okay yeah perfect and can you describe the form of assessment in your modules like  
56what assignments do you have to complete

57Abeer: uhh assignment basically are written assignments depending on the uhh number of  
58words so for my particular current coming assignment I have to write a 1,500 word uh  
59word document it's a it's a prob- based on problem so I have to identify all the issues with  
60the problem and try to summarize into the paragraphs and keep a word limit of 1,500 uh  
61words so that's kind of the assessments which are being done over here so basically I  
62would say written assessments

63R: written okay

64Abeer: yeah

65R: and um do all right what do you think your professors look for when they are grading so  
66how would they evaluate academic success

67Abeer: um over here what I have like uhh analyzed right now is that professors want you to  
68be in the foot of a like in a place of a person who is actually doing some work in an  
69organization or who has been given a responsibility of uh writing a report so we have to  
70write the report in from the perspective of the person who is like employed in some

71particular organization and we have to think that what kind of uh words we have to write  
72based on the like if you have to submit the report to the public so keeping in mind that  
73there are people who might not have that kind of knowledge which we have so we have to  
74be like [clears throat] particularly we have to use some normal words so that it's easy to  
75understand by everybody so so they think they kind of like uhh like judge us on that basis  
76how good we are in that kind of role so

77R: okay perfect and do you have access to any rubrics or guidelines for your assessment  
78before you complete the assessment

79Abeer: yeah sure we have yeah I guess that the guidelines about the word limit and also  
80like about theeee kind of uh like ways we can find the information from they also provide  
81us like previous year papers to like refe- ref- refer to and yeah

82R: okay and with those be posted on blackboard

83Abeer: blackboard yeah sure they also posted on blackboard and sometimes Faculty's also  
84give out the handouts also

85R: okay do they give it out in the beginning of term middle of term like

86Abeer: I think when the module has begun and that's when they give yeah so for example if  
87uhhh [sharp inhale] like today is Friday and we have to submit an assignment on Monday  
88so they will most probably give the handouts uhhh around in one week before that so yeah  
89seven days or ten days maybe yeah

90R: perfect um and how would you assess your current academic success how do you feel  
91that you're doing in [institution 1] right now

92Abeer: in [institution 1] I think I'm doin- doing good because right now I am I have  
93completed all my assessments and I also take uhh proper part in any class discussions  
94wherever there are and I like uhh ask questions which I feel that are not being covered or  
95should be covered so depending on that I feel that I am doing pretty good over here yeah

96R: and so in general what do you think students need to succeed in [institution 1]

97Abeer: in general I think they need [clears throat] a lot of focus in their studies and also  
98they need a good background of whatever like they are pursuing for example they are  
99pursuing a masters so they need a good background in uh their studies for the respective  
100studies also like uh the language is important so effective way of communication like for  
101example is English over here so you need to be good at good at that too and uh yeah I think  
102uh yeah both of this

103R: and so you just mentioned language so how much of a factor does language play in  
104academic success

105Abeer: uhh how much you mean percentage by or

106R: well percentage or just even a lot a little somewhat

107Abeer: uh I'll I think I would say a lot yeah

108R: how so can you expand

109Abeer: because first of all you have the active way of communicating between a professor  
110and a student is through verbal communication so that is passed part of linguistic thing so  
111for that you need to understand what the professor is trying to articulate his ideas like what  
112he's trying to convey in terms of uh his or her respective domain so for that you have to be  
113very good at listening powers and uh listening powers can only be uh like increased by uh  
114knowing the language so I think it is very important and also like while submitting your  
115answers and being evaluated for the assessment you have to write down all the notes and  
116everything in the class as well as well as while giving submitting your assignments also so  
117I think uh yeah like the language is a very important

118R: and so what other factors play an academic success and this could be inside and outside  
119of [institution 1] so what else impacts students in academic success

120Abeer: [clears throat] academic success basically depends on what particular subject you  
121are studying right now so for example like if there is a maths problem or something like  
122that so you have to be like good at solving that question not particularly of that particular  
123giving that derivation or the giving that particular answer will only give you good marks  
124and also depends like if you have kind of uhhh assessment that involves group work or like  
125voluntary work so for that you need to collect data from outside [institution 1] also so  
126mostly I think that in these time in today's time internet is also very important so lot of  
127information is also available over the net Internet so we have to consult that information  
128also and whatever being is being taught in the class also and like come up with a very good  
129answer in your own terms so in that own terms defines your capability so like for taking  
130help from other resources and taking help from the  
131class resources and then joining and getting the best answer out of that particular area is  
132defined like is how you how good you are at so I think that helps the teacher in judging the  
133person about this

134R: okay perfect and so what what else impacts an international student in Ireland

135Abeer: [pause] what else like uh I mean

136R: I mean this could be academically it could be not academic but basically what I want to  
137know is if you think that there is anything else that would impact an international student  
138that may affect their academic work

139Abeer: yeah there are a lot of factors actually ummm since I cannot uh like uh first of all  
140say in a generalized way because people come from various countries over here Ireland is

141the place which is being visited by around like so many people from so many backgrounds  
142different backgrounds so what background or their environment they have over in the place  
143is totally different groups will have specific to one person to another so as an [nationality] I  
144would like say keeping in mind that from I am from [continent] so I would uh particularly  
145focus on that first of all I think the weather is something different over here in our country  
146we don't have like this kind of weather in where there is raining and raining or there  
147sunshine in a complete day so we have to get used to this con- these kind of conditions in  
148getting used to these kind of conditions from somebody can get like easily uhh like they  
149can easily get used to this kind of weather or some people like mi- mi- might get here also  
150get sick also so since masters courses are only for one year so it's a very short time I don't  
151say it's a short time I think it's a very well-defined time but there is no more like uh like  
152time for such things like getting ill or something like that and you have to be completely  
153focused on your studies over here to get the maximum amount of your course so these are  
154one factor is the weather factor second factor I would say is that the accommodation factor  
155for master's student is a very big problem over here so like [institution 1] has some places  
156but around 40 are available for our master's and like more than like two thousand people  
157are coming for master's and uh different respective fields so I think that's a very big  
158problem over here so yeah so lot of time gets wasted and a lot of efforts get wasted and a  
159lot of money gets wasted in finding a good accommodation for one year and so that can be  
160physically as well as mentally harassing for a person and that can like impact uh like his  
161focus since I said it's very important that you have good focus in your academics so it  
162impacts your focus also because somewhere at the back of the mind you are like concerned  
163about your safety and since you're new to a place so you feel that it should not be like that  
164that you are being left alone and you have nobody to discuss also and then you like try to  
165discuss then everybody is having the same reply that yes accommodation is a problem  
166issue over here so that also like  
167increases the fear among a person so that fear factor I mean is very uhh like a problem to  
168the ac- for a person who is here to study so yeah second factor is this and third factor I  
169think can be about the food [pause] because people have different food at back at their  
170homes so yeah so these three factors I consider that are important which should we kep-  
171kept mind if these are resolved or a person like already has a solution to all these three  
172problem then he can focus on his academic properly yeah  
173R: okay perfect and so now I'm gonna kind of go towards the entry and preparation tools or  
174things like IELTS that you've you've mentioned um so do you take any linguistic or

175academic preparation before coming to [institution 1] like any classes or courses to help  
176prepare

177Abeer: mmm yeah we like uh have in [country] so for [nationality] it's mandatory to clear  
178the IELTS exam and there's also another TOEFL exam but that depends also where we are  
179applying so I personally had to give the IELTS [pause] and uh I scored around seven point  
180five overall so I was uh since I already had a background of English in my school and also  
181in my colleges so I was not very uh bit concerned about it so I since mean the mode of my  
182studies has always been in English so it was not that difficult for me to correct exam but  
183yeah in some places in [country] because it's in [country] the national language is  
184[language] and there are a lot of around 22 regional languages also so from depending on  
185which state a person is coming so this can be a problem yeah and then people also take the  
186ex- coaching classes for IELTS exam

187R: but you didn't take one

188Abeer: no I didn't take a help

189R: and and so how do you feel about the IELTS exam

190Abeer: IELTS exam mmm test student properly like uh as I told you that there are four  
191basic sections so they have uhh the testing they have the parameters set for each each of  
192the sector each of the secular segments and yeah according wh- they have like what they  
193have they have take made the test in such a manner that what is important can be taken out  
194of the exam so

195R: okay and do you feel that the exam adequately prepared you for studying in [institution  
1961]

197Abeer: uh it was just a general exam so basically I gave the ac- there are two types IELTS  
198exam one is for general and one is for academics so I gave the academics one so in  
199academics only the writing section was different in that there were some graphs and we  
200have to explain about the what we have understood from the graphs and we have to write a  
201report on that so apart from the writing section everything was common between the two  
202between the two the listening part was same the reading part was also same and the  
203speaking part was generally the same

204R: so do you feel that the academic exam does a good job preparing you for academic  
205studies or does a good job predicting how well you'll do in your academic studies

206Abeer: uh that depends because academically what you are studying uh is something very  
207different so you cannot pa- take a particular exam of a particular subject so it's basically uh  
208general in terms of academic so it's basically just testing what uh statistical or what our  
209conceptual knowledge a person has with write about writing and understanding the reports

210as I just mentioned so it's like basically uh what every field is having is a lot of uh  
211statistical data that we have to study so they have only those two kind of uh two graphs  
212question that is what they have nothing more  
213R: yeah and for you personally how well does it match what you need to do in [institution  
2141]  
215Abeer: uhh we have to also use lot of statistical um means also so we have to be good at  
216graphs uh so personally I feel that it is somewhat relevant yeah  
217R: yeah perfect and so what type of preparation do you think the international students  
218should do before coming to [institution 1]  
219Abeer: uh first of all study about the history of the college and also the uh like what course  
220you are studying you should be thorough with that since some people also try to change  
221their career into like while coming over here so they should first understand what the  
222course is demanding from a person so they thr- they should go and check it from online  
223sources and also like try to get an idea of what their work will be in classes so yeah that is  
224the best way of preparing yourself  
225R: okay and so if you could give advice to faculty in dealing with international students  
226what would that be  
227Abeer: [pause] uh advice to faculties would be that they should understand that uh there  
228can be some uh like uh uh there can be something uh that some there's some different and  
229difficulty in understanding by these students so they should understand this and not go with  
230the flow I would say and they would they should try to take a personal note and of this  
231situation and uh like some students are also hes- hesitant to come up with the problem and  
232since they are fearing that they may lose marks and they this may impact their assessment  
233so they don't like come up with the come up to the professors to like ask any questions or  
234doubts it if they might have because of this uhh issue but uhh yeah this is the only advice I  
235would like say yeah  
236R: and if you could give advice to future students or students who are looking to come to  
237[institution 1] what would that advice be  
238Abeer: uh first of all [institution 1] is a very good college I would say I would recommend  
239everybody who wants to co- who wants to learn who is passionate about learning there are  
240a lot of lot of events that are happen on the college every day and they will help you in  
241your overall development as a human being and it's a multicultural college so you will be  
242able to make friends with people from every part of the world over here and it's a research  
243driven University which requires people who are good at their fields and who want to like  
244contribute to the society so I would first of all say that [institution 1] is a very good college

245secondly uh since your question was that what students should do before coming to  
246[institution 1] uh and watch so they should basically hmmm understand about the culture  
247try to understand try to contact people who are already at the University um and also there  
248is nothing of different sort that you should keep in mind it's just that you have to come here  
249and you have to give your best at whatever you are doing and everything else will follow I  
250think yeah

251R: okay and if there were an organization that were to design a course to prepare students  
252to come to [institution 1] what advice would you give that organization

253Abeer: [pause] hmmm [pause] that depending on what kind of courses they are trying to  
254make so for like that organization if they are dealing with particularly like about the  
255engineering background or science background so that like it's a very vast uh like it's a  
256very open mind- open question @ so that so for I will just stick to my field so what [topic]  
257I will just say that or if a course is being designed so we should see the relevance of the  
258topic and also the current usage where we can use those particular fields and topics and  
259also the future usage of how what can be researched into that field so that uhhh like so that  
260I would say that this increases the uh interest of a person so research is just because of an  
261interest of a particular person into something so yeah basically how to increase the interest  
262of a person

263R: okay alright um and are you aware of any support that international students receive  
264either from your professors your department's the wider College

265Abeer: support wise uh if you're saying monetary wise then

266R: um well support could mean a variety of things that can mean monetary it can mean  
267academically it can mean um personal supports like you said with accommodation and  
268stuff it can mean linguistically it could mean anything

269Abeer: anything so for since it covers monetary also so I would say they uh have  
270fellowship for international students they also grant a scholarship to them so monetary  
271wise they do and I didn't personally took any help from any professor over here I just  
272applied depending on my background which I knew was very good since I have already  
273completed a master's and I already have an [topic] background so I was going into the  
274[topic] field since I thought that environment is a global issue which is being like for  
275example climate change is real we know and in [country] also we face a lot of  
276environmental issues so I chose my course particularly basing basis on the basis of that  
277itself since I wanted to I have an interest in the field of Environment and I also have a  
278background of chemical and a petroleum engineer so I know those fields are important but  
279they're also polluting fields there are a lot of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases

280emissions in those fields so I wanted to work more towards environmental side and try to  
281tackle those problems which is faced by the whole mankind has in general so particularly  
282in my case I did not take any help and yeah

283R: are you aware of support that's offered to students once they are already in [institution  
2841] so now that you're a student are you aware of the support that you can go to

285Abeer: yeah I know there's a lot of Facebook pages also and also on the website of  
286[institution 1] itself they have like a global room so in global room they have lot of events  
287coming up so for example there was a event umm like homesickness people who are  
288homesick for them they wanted uh to like have a discussion about that and uh try to take  
289out any help the person if he needs of some kind of help so there are I think there are  
290events which happen for the international students

291R: okay and do you think that that support is adequate or do you think that there's any other  
292kinds of support that students need

293Abeer: uhhh right now I will not heard that somebody's complaining hmm so I think these  
294kind of supports are adequate as you said but again I would say accommodation is a big  
295factor over here so people are still concerned about the accommodation things uh yeah  
296apart from that @ yeah I don't think

297R: okay thanks um and so those are all the questions that I have for you but are there any  
298questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

299Abeer: uhhhh I don't think no

300R: and is there anything else that you would like to say or express

301Abeer: uhhh since I have already que- answered the questions so most of my data is in the  
302questions itself so yeah apart from this I will just say to all those students who are coming  
303to [institution 1] all the best and uh just give your uh best to the when you come- coming  
304over here and also be aware of these surroundings and try to take the help from the  
305[institution 1] websites and Facebook pages and there are a lot of WhatsApp group also so  
306try to take as much help and as much know as much knowledge as you can from these  
307places so yeah more knowledge will help you in better information and taking good  
308decision so try to accumulate more knowledge as you can and come to [institution 1] it it's  
309a very good experience and thank you

310

311

**Anthony**

312

313R: okay um so you actually took the masters at [institution 1] last year so how would you  
314evaluate your academic success while at [institution 1]



315Anthony: [long pause] mm-hmm so can you be more specific on how would I define it like  
316R: so so did you think that you academically succeeded or do you feel like you struggled or  
317Anthony: oh actually I think I academically succeeded [pause] it was uh at the beginning it  
318was quite [pause] as I expected how hard it would be because I've never been in a foreign  
319university like studying in a foreign uh system [pause] so everything to me is new but after  
320studying for I think like two to three months maybe after the first semester I'd get into that  
321thing so af- the second semester was easier than the first one  
322R: okay all right brilliant also in terms of English what do you think your strengths are  
323Anthony: uh [pause] well according to the scores I got from IELTS and elsewhere I would  
324say listening is my best part  
325R: okay do you agree with that like do you feel that listening is your best part  
326Anthony: actually I do [pause] because this was actually the part I was intensely trained for  
327[pause] my my bachelor degree was English literature so I was there are part- part of the  
328course was to focus on the basic uh basic skills of English so writing listening speaking  
329and so those four skills [pause] reading yeah and listening was the part I was very  
330interested in and also speaking but listening was the part that I actually had a lot of training  
331speaking was I lacked a bit of training because we had only first two years with foreign  
332teachers the last for- two years was purely [nationality] teachers so we didn't and in the  
333course the teachers just use [nationality] when they're instructing us so they didn't use  
334English too we didn't have opportunity to use English in the class in the last two years  
335[pause] but listening was always I was constantly trained because I also watched TV  
336episodes and I get in touch with English materials after class too so  
337R: alright perfect and what would you say your weaknesses in English are  
338Anthony: [pause] hmm I was agree with the score that I got the writing  
339R: the writing okay  
340Anthony: it's uh [pause] I'm actually a bit scared of writing because of the score I got  
341[pause] but according to the results of my masters masters assignments [pause] I feel that I  
342actually did a quite a good job @@ because half of them are over 70 [pause] so that's kind  
343of strange to me  
344R: yeah so so you don't feel that your IELTS score in writing matched //the scores  
345Anthony: yeah matched the scores I got  
346R: that you've gotten| okay um so can you tell me about the work required in your modules  
347so what what did you have to do  
348Anthony: uh I took [module] from [institution 1] so the course included class presentations  
349and uh after class assignments [pause] and the after class assignments also in- not only

350included academic writing but also a personal reflection paper which was based on our  
351interview of [institute] after one [pause] class after one visit [pause] so those are basically  
352what it was

353R: okay and can you describe the general structure of your lectures and your modules so  
354like when you were in the class or what was expected outside of class as well

355Anthony: so during the class students are expected to listen to the lectures and the lectures  
356will be he's intro- was introducing different theories about the subject that we were  
357learning and uh after the class students are expected to read the rel- related materials like  
358books and uh essays [pause] and uh uh also for the reaction paper we were expected to join  
359to take part in the visiting [institute] so that was basically all we did

360R: okay great and can you describe the form of assessment in your modules

361Anthony: uh the assessments was uh there were only two new types of assessments one is  
362the classroom presentation which was assessed by the lecturer and also a following uhh  
363also accompanied lecturer and the other one is the assignments that we had so it's basically  
364just a uh three thousand words 3,000 to 4,000 words essay

365R: okay and so the presentations were those group or individual

366Anthony: the- they includes both

367R: okay both and the three thousand-word assignments were you given a topic or did you  
368have to pick one yourself or a combination

369Anthony: uhhh the specific title of the essay uh where p- were chosen by each student but  
370the topic are there is a set of boundaries for different subjects so there are boundaries for  
371the topics but the specific title is choose by the students

372R: okay right perfect um how do you think that professors assess academic success so what  
373do they look for when they're grading

374Anthony: I think the biggest part is critical thinking [pause] because I when I was reading  
375the broc- it was what was it I was reading the uh the handbook of our of our module  
376[pause] uh critical thinking was the part of that appeared in all of the courses course  
377descriptions and the expectations of students and after that I think it's correct and clear  
378logical writing to state that student has acquired certain knowledge of this subject

379R: okay all right and how do professors communicate the expectations and assessment  
380requirements to students

381Anthony: [pause] I feel this part um but for this one I think most of professors has taught  
382us during the class that what they expect from the from the assignments but this part was  
383like [pause] the some of us when we were discussing around classmates some of us didn't

384 actually get what the professor's wanted so it might be some misunderstandings between  
385 the students and the teach- and the lecturer

386 R: okay um did the lecture tell you verbally or did they give you rubrics or guidelines

387 Anthony: it was verbally taught

388 R: it was verbally okay

389 Anthony: so I think that might be the problem so some of the students might not  
390 understand what the professor actually talked about

391 R: okay alright

392 Anthony: uhh just to clarify I'm s- and about that that thing I just talked it's not that the  
393 professor didn't clearly instruct that but might be because the students listening ability

394 some or maybe the accent or something R: right yeah exactly so in in general so overall  
395 what do you think students need in order to succeed at [institution 1] or to do well at

396 [institution 1] Anthony: well at least for the least abilities should be able to listen and

397 respond to the professors during the course and also to be able to read the instructions of

398 all the assignment requirements [pause] and about that might be something like interact in-

399 interactions during the class so let the professor notice that you are engaged in the

400 classroom in the course and uh discussions between emails uh between the students and the

401 professor so to make sure that they understand the requirements for the assignments and

402 also to discuss the the uh the title or the topic that the students are writing on so that it

403 make it better to uh just to get a higher score I guess

404 R: okay perfect and how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

405 Anthony: [pause] hm [pause] to me I'll say around 40 to 50 percent

406 R: 40 to 50

407 Anthony: yeah because you have to have that ability to understand what the lecture is

408 talking about and also have to understand what the lecture was expecting from you and

409 also you have to have the ability to discuss with the lecture that what you want express to

410 him or her so that there is no misunderstandings about about the course and also the

411 assignments

412 R: okay brilliant and so with the 40 to 50 what do you think the other 50 to 60 would be

413 Anthony: I think the other 60 is their own reflection on the course [pause] because writing

414 assignments is not just copying or paraphrasing other researchers work is that you have to

415 have your own uh reflection on it [pause] uh it might be that you are collecting things is

416 that the whole essay might be organizing different studies different beliefs on the subject

417 but you have to organize it in a logical ways so that's I think that's the other part of the

418 essay

419R: okay and what other factors do you think impact academic success so this could be  
420things like your living situation how many friends you have anything like that  
421Anthony: uh as you mentioned the living situation is quite an influential factor in the life in  
422this study because if you are living too far from school you have to have a long you have to  
423take a long time to commute from your home to school and that time can that time is uh it  
424could be quite frustrating for you to get used to that schedule and also it takes a long  
425time it will just waste a lot a lot the time for you because if you have a closer home you  
426can just use that time to write or to read more books on the >maybe on the bus< but the  
427efficiency might be influenced and uh another thing might be classmates or friends uh  
428[pause] but to be specific that I mean what I mean is that you have students that are  
429working on the similar uh subject as you because if you are working alone on the topic you  
430don't have a you don't actually have anybody to discuss on what you are doing so and if  
431you are confused and if the professor didn't reply to you intime maybe after two to three  
432days or even a week during that that's the time in the middle is waste so that part [pause]  
433and another part I was thinking the the prope- materials that you gather and this might both  
434be the collection of the library and also the students own [pause] problem because interest  
435didn't can't use do not know how to use the library's search for the uh uh for the proper  
436material it'll also waste some time for him to find the thing that he need

437R: okay perfect alright and so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before  
438attending [institution 1] so things like English for academic purposes IELTS preparation  
439Anthony: uh I I did have a IELTS preparation before because I had to take the IELTS  
440exam but the IELTS preparation wasn't very official [pause] I I had this opportunity have  
441my bachelor- bachelors university that we had a free course offered by our teachers during  
442the summer I took that one but that one was very like it's just it's a basic introduction of  
443what IELTS is and some tips that you might be use- might be useful for you to take the  
444exam but it wasn't like something very official that you can take in [country] like those  
445courses that you pay for around [pause] fifteen hundred euro and they will guarantee that  
446you get six point five or maybe seven [pause] I didn't took those courses and apart from the  
447course I took in the university I [pause] after that I just practiced myself was the um those  
448Cambridge books [pause] and then I took the course I didn't take any EAP course before I  
449came here but I did take one during the course

450R: okay all right um and so can you tell me more about how you feel about the unofficial  
451preparation that you had and also about the entry assessment so about IELTS  
452Anthony: the unofficial uh course was basically the first part was the introduction of the  
453IELTS so it was talking about what IELTS is and what it was composed of the four four

454parts and which part what how long would each part take and how many exams how many  
455questions that would be included and the second part of that an official course was some  
456tips about for example rating and for rating they told the teacher told us different types of  
457uh how many types of questions that might be there and for example there are truths false  
458or not reference yeah those one might be a little difficult so when you are doing the course  
459you might want to be more careful about those questions and might be doing other  
460questions before that one so those techniques that you can use but it wasn't like focusing on  
461vocabulary building or reading ability building it was just tips and recommendations for  
462the course for the exam

463R: do you feel that it helped you with the IELTS exam

464Anthony: it definitely does because before taking that course I didn't know what IELTS  
465was and I didn't have any idea how I would be able to uh prepare for the course [pause] but  
466after that I follow the practice practice the recommendation of the course and practice by  
467myself but comparing to the efficiency of the official courses that offered by language  
468institutes [pause] to me I'm a little regret I didn't take that [pause] yeah @

469R: okay alright um do you think that the courses both the one that you took and also the  
470official ones do they help you prepare for university or only for the exam

471Anthony: no it's just for the exams it's totally focus on the exam nothing related to the  
472academic writing we required to for took in [institution 1] here it's totally different

473R: and so how do you feel about IELTS

474Anthony: IELTS to me is a- it's it's still useful but it's not a hundred percent accurate for  
475reflecting a person's academic ability it can reflect the person's ability of using language in  
476uh in the in the daily basis but not uh very accurate on the academic part

477R: okay and okay um what type of preparation do you think international students should  
478take before going to university

479Anthony: mm-hmm [pause] uh [pause] for one thing I'm thinking of is the uh academic  
480writing first this one is very important as I was in [country] so the [nationality] writing  
481academic writing style is different from the Western from the [institution 1] one so I would  
482recommend anybody to take the writing at least to take the writing [pause] because that is  
483just the formality and also the requirements and uh the writing style is totally different

484R: okay and do you feel um I mean we've kind of said this a lot do you feel that it's  
485different from IELTS so it should be a separate course or do you think having that writing  
486preparation for IELTS transfers to the University

487Anthony: uhh IELTS wri- uh writing for IELTS is like a basic level a very basic level of  
488the academic writing we do here [pause] it can be said that it's a transfer course or maybe a

489preparation course for academic writing but still uh the academic writing of uh the  
490university is different from that one

491R: okay all right um so if you could give advice to faculty so to professors in dealing with  
492international students at the university so either in the classroom or as their students what  
493would it be

494Anthony: [long pause] uh [pause] recommendations advices okay um [long pause] I still  
495want to focus on the writing part @@ but also like the listening part too because I feel  
496some of our classmates they didn't quite understand what the teacher was talking like in  
497certain moments [pause] generally they understand the the topic and the lecture of the  
498lecturer but some specific parts they didn't quite get it they didn't follow that part so the wr-  
499listening part is quite important

500R: okay so having professors slow down or

501Anthony: yeah professors might need to slow down for some of the international students  
502because actually people in Ireland speaks quite fast than the people uh in Britain that's  
503what I feel about it maybe it is wrong but that's what I generally felt about [pause] and also  
504the accent is different because students in uh foreign students are trained in the either the  
505received pronunciation of the British or the American The New Yorker pronunciation so  
506they are not very familiar with the Irish accent so at least during the first week or the first  
507month professors might need to slow down a bit and uh [pause] another part might be  
508encouraging more of the international students to speak in the course because I do feel that  
509it's generally just native speakers in the course are participating in the discussions in the  
510course >during the classroom< [pause] and the for the writing will be just uh get involved  
511in the academic preparation so that you will know what you are expected from the  
512professors and what general style of the writing that students should be following

513R: okay and so how can they get involved

514Anthony: one great way of course is to take the EAP course another way might uhhh listen  
515to the radio that's what actually I did before coming to Ireland because I know I had a  
516teacher I had an Irish teacher in my cour- in my university so I know that Irish accent is  
517different from what I was trained in so I searched online for some listening materials like  
518the radio radio stations like the RTE to just to get it get used to the accent before coming  
519here

520R: ok so that's what the students can do but how how can the professors get involved

521Anthony: maybe Skype interviews with the students and maybe not just Skype interview  
522with it might be some Skype discussions with the students [pause] which actually I  
523experienced was this professor from [institution 2] before coming here I was I did receive

524their a a conditional offer and they had this discussion with me to talk about what they are  
525teaching and what I might need to be prepared for [pause] so I think that might be helpful  
526for students too

527R: okay all right and so if you could give advice to organizations so these would be  
528companies or schools that are running programs to prepare students for studying at  
529[institution 1] what would that be

530Anthony: uh I would suggest them to use more academic related materials in the higher  
531levels not in not straight forward from the basic level because students in the basic level  
532they can't actually uh manage materials but in the intermediate or the advanced levels there  
533should be some involvements of academic materials like essays and authentic listening  
534materials for them to get used to the accent and to get used to the uh those phrases that  
535actually we would usually use

536R: okay all right and so you've given a little bit but what advice would you give to  
537prospective students

538Anthony: prospective students [pause] um well the first thing would be to be very specific  
539if you are applying for universities that's to be specific that which area you are applying for  
540and then do a little bit research on the uh on the local life of the area so that you know what  
541you might be facing like the life conditions and uh like how to get socialized in the area so  
542that you might have friends to discuss the future studies that you're doing and uh after that  
543will be the academic preparation so academic writing academic uh interactions like  
544presentations that's what I forgot to say the presentation because when I was in the course  
545the presentation between international students and the native speakers are vastly like it's  
546basically like two levels [pause] uh the coherency of the native speakers are much better  
547than the international but the materials are quite similar so that's actually not a big  
548difference

549R: um let's see so are you or were you aware of any support the international students  
550receive from your professors or your department

551Anthony: uhh well the support I know is that professors are always welcome you to ask  
552any questions you have about the topic or anything you want to ask and uh they'll be happy  
553to answer anything you have and a part that what I know is we have a lab we have a  
554language lev- language lab uh the digital one so that we can practice English or practice  
555other languages

556R: okay and so are you aware of any support that [institution 1] offers for students

557Anthony: [pause] uh this yes I know this involves a lot of them not only for academic but  
558also for the living supports too [pause] uh like the ni- night line the the phone line so that

559you can talk to somebody when you are stressed or you just want to talk to somebody and  
560also the student to student support that helps you to get involved in a student life of  
561[institution 1] and also getting like they will help you they'll give you suggestions on your  
562academic development and also that the most importantly our English for academic  
563purpose course which is perfect it's uh I would say I wouldn't say it's perfectly design but  
564it's there for supporting students to prepare for that connect writing and all academic things  
565R: okay um so I would say that's all the questions I have to ask and but are there any  
566questions that you wish I had asked you but I didn't ask

567Anthony: [pause] um actually that was very thorough around the research okay but I do  
568have another question about the future of our EAP course [pause] like would it be more  
569involved would have be longer or that there be more courses for students to apply for like I  
570like uh I know that we have evening classes every every night but would there be like two  
571classes at the same time so that more students can get involved in I

572R: uhm I hope so um we also yeah I can't really say um it all really depends on how many  
573students sign up and register yeah so if we have the demand we can try and open the  
574classes um yeah but I mean obviously that would be my dream is to have a lot of classes  
575running at the same time and so even with this research a lot of it is to do with trying to  
576improve and expand the summer program so hopefully that will happen soon

577Anthony: so also about the summer program so how many students are there in total for  
578now

579R: um it depends on the year last year we had 44 this year I have no clue yeah

580Anthony: was there a lot of [nationality] students like most of them or

581R: yeah well we had two different paths we had the EAP and then we had um it was the  
582IELTS pathway so half the day was IELTS half the day was EAP and all of the IELTS  
583were [nationality] and the EAP was fairly split yeah yeah

584Anthony: so the EAP was actually [pause] I mean this I feel the EAP is actually in the right  
585direction

586R: would you have any suggestions for EAP especially as being a former student

587Anthony: uh I for me I do feel the first semester of the EAP course was quite easy for me it  
588was quite like I I did learn a bit there but it was like 30% I was learning and the 70% things  
589that I have already know and but the second semester was really helpful

590R: and which courses did you take in the second semester

591Anthony: uh it was the academic writing

592R: the academic writing okay



593Anthony: uh it was like but to me I I feel that I didn't really [pause] well I wasn't very clear  
594about what I was lack of I didn't have a formal assessment before coming to the course so I  
595didn't know that's what I was really really lack of but I was a bit worried about my  
596assignments so I took the course [pause] so maybe a very formal formal assessment for  
597those students might be helpful for them

598R: okay do you have anything else that you would like to say um

599Anthony: uh another I would say is that I look forward to results off the research @  
600because I'm really into it

601R: okay perfect thank you so much

602

603

**Ariadne**

604

605R: alright perfect and so could you first tell me what you think your strengths are  
606academically

607Ariadne: Ummm I think I know how to [pause] manage my time to know when um I'm  
608okay for giving back studies or work or when I'm very late

609R: mm-hmm

610Ariadne: so I think that helps and also um [pause] I like working actually I like studying so  
611that can help as well because when you do something you like it's always easier and  
612[pause] you're better at it and then I don't know maybe in the reading area

613R: mm-hm

614Ariadne: I know that in [Country] because that's I'm [Nationality] ummm I'm better when I  
615have to write and to give essays than when you just have to tick answers

616R: mm-hm

617Ariadne: and then because you can elaborate your answers

618R: right

619Ariadne: so that's what I'm good at

620R: Okay and what would your difficulties then be

621Ariadne: mmm [long pause] [tick] I think sometimes it's hard to choose between two  
622answers when you're not sure and [pause] I may [pause] have not precise enough answers  
623[pause] and here umm [pause] I don't know if I read too much or if I don't read enough  
624books because that's a new way of working for me readings and giving back essays [pause]  
625so I'm a bit lost? but I think it's gonna be all right

626R: all right okay and so in terms of English what are your strengths

627Ariadne: mm [long pause] vocabulary I think in grammar? and yeah I feel good

628about English so I don't know yeah @

629R: @ Okay and do you have any difficulties in English

630Ariadne: Hm [pause] It's maybe like specific vocabulary? mm in some fields that I don't  
631know or just to write [pause] good uhh [pause] college information stuff [pause] because I  
632know the words like meanwhile nevertheless [pause] all that kind of words but [pause]  
633uhh I'm not used to read academic style English so [long pause]R: okay

634Ariadne: that can be hard

635R: all right and so can you tell me about your modules like what do you have to do for your  
636modules like outside of the class inside of the class// etc.

637Ariadne: Okay| umm [pause] so in most modules I have to write reaction papers umm  
638[pause] each week or [long pause] like in for the middle of term so it's a bunch of work that  
639you have to do every week and you have to do readings [pause] and I have a module where  
640I have to do exercises it's in grammar in syntax so we have to practice and [long pause]  
641yeah I think that's all we have books to read and things to @write @

642R: @ right okay and so what happens inside of the lectures like can you describe  
643when you're in the class [pause] is it mainly the professor giving a lecture  
644with PowerPoint//

645Ariadne: mm-hm

646R: is it group| work is it exercises practical

647Ariadne: Okay uh so it's mainly the professors speaking with the slides but [pause] some of  
648them asked us to do like group talks four times ten to five minutes and to exchange and  
649[pause] uh sometimes we have to answer questions so you have kind of a debate in the  
650class [long pause] uhhmm [long pause] yeah we are quite free to talk and to ask questions  
651and or just to [pause] give our opinion on what is said [pause] it's quite open

652R: okay all right and can you describe the form of assessment in your modules Ariadne:  
653[click] umm so I have one class where we have to give back seven reaction papers of 500  
654words [pause] it's one per week approximately and [pause] I have one [pause] umm  
655which is 4500 words in grammar we have to explain how a language works in comparison  
656to English [pause] umm another one is in phonetics we have to uhh [pause] study the way  
657a man speaks and produce words and then say ok he's doing that he's doing that  
658and [pause] compare two varieties of English? and the last one [pause] is [pause] more of a  
659reaction paper that what's going on in [institution 1] with multilingualism and [pause] the  
660one we have to give back at the end of semester I don't remember what it is @

661R: @okay

662Ariadne: @I @haven't @started @yet @so

663R: @okay umm and so how would you evaluate your current academic success so how do  
664you feel that you're doing in [institution 1]

665Ariadne: uhhh I think I'm fine? [pause] because so I have modules with a lot of  
666international students and some of them have difficulties in English [pause] or just in the  
667ummm class they have? and [pause] I think that if they can take this class [pause] and  
668[pause] possibly pass because [pause] I don't think Trinity will let us have classes we  
669would fail? since we are international students [pause] so yeah I think if they are going  
670to be fine then I can be fine as well and we can help each other so yeah I feel fine R: okay  
671and how do your professors assess academic success so what are they looking for when  
672they're grading

673Ariadne: hmm I think they are looking for [pause] personal [pause] thoughts  
674and arguments they want us to think about what we're saying and to [long pause] to give a  
675g- arguments for orient what is usually said and so they want us to be critical with the  
676readings we do [long pause] so I think it's great we can use our @minds @yeah

677R: and um so do your professors communicate expectations and assessment requirements  
678to the students

679Ariadne: oh yeah they do we have papers in the beginning of semester and e-mails so yeah

680R: Okay so they give it to you like in class at the //beginning

681Ariadne: yeah and then| we can ask a question we can ask questions every week if we have  
682some so [pause] yeah

683R: okay brilliant and so in general what do you think students need in order to succeed  
684at [institution 1]

685Ariadne: [click] I think we need to know exactly what we are supposed to give back  
686[pause] uhh [long pause] we need to have the information really early I think that we can  
687process it and then [pause] stress a bit and relax and work and [long pause] uhhh I think it's  
688good because that's something that that's happening is that teachers are always open to  
689questions and to help [pause] sooo [pause] because that can be [pause] really scary to  
690[pause] be in a new environment and to have to give back [pause] essays or things like that  
691when you're coming from another country are just when you're a new student so yeah I  
692think that could help and [long pause] maybe some tutorials on how to write an essay how  
693to use #turnitin and things like that

694R: okay and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

695Ariadne: Oh a @ [pause] @hundred @percent I don't know yeah it's very important  
696because if you don't speak the language you can't write or express yourself [long pause]  
697yeah

698R: okay and so what other factors do you think plays in in obtaining academic success  
699Ariadne: umm motivation? I think? you have to like what you're doing [pause] you [pause]  
700you need to understand what you're doing as well so the teachers have [pause] a big task on  
701their shoulders but [pause] it's their job so they're doing it great umm [pause] yeah I think  
702you really need to like what you're doing and you [pause] know why you're doing that  
703because if you're just following any path like [pause] studying languages because you  
704don't know what to do it's not going to be the best way to have good grades R: okay all  
705right um until did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before coming to  
706[International]  
707Ariadne: uhh yeah because that's my third year of linguistics so that's what I studied back  
708home yeah R: okay  
709Ariadne: so yeah nothing is new for me @  
710R: okay alright brilliant umm and did you have to take an entry assessment like IELTS or  
711TOEFL before coming to //[institution 1]  
712Ariadne: umm no| I only had to [pause] have a I think the B2 level in English? I'm not sure  
713[pause] but I only needed to ask a teacher to assess my level so that was [pause] really  
714easy  
715R: okay alright brilliant um and so what type of preparation do you think international  
716students should take before coming to [institution 1]  
717Ariadne: [long pause] hmm I think we should learn how the school system works here?  
718because it's totally different from other countries [pause] umm [pause] what the grades  
719look like because I'm still not sure about what my grades are going to be like [long  
720pause] because sometimes it's percentage sometimes it's numbers letters you never know  
721[pause] umm and what is really [pause] wanted from [pause] students to do to [pause] yeah  
722[pause] what kind of level is expected R: okay yeah so like the expectations  
723Ariadne: yeah R: yeah okay all right I'm so if you could give advice to faculty and  
724professors in dealing with international students what would that advice be  
725Ariadne: [long pause] mmmaybe have more meetings between teachers and students uhhh  
726[pause] after the first week of school because we had many but [pause] when the teachers  
727are talking to you about assessments which you don't have already it's [pause] very vague  
728and I think it could be great to have more like during fourth week something like that that  
729you [long pause] yeah to feel confident to ask questions [pause] and yeah I think the rest is  
730quite good here @  
731R: okay alright that's good to hear  
732Ariadne: @yeah

733R: Um and if you could give advice to organizations who are preparing international  
734students um before coming to [institution 1] what would that advice be

735Ariadne: I don't know any organization who does that so I don't really know what they're  
736doing or-

737R: okay well if you could do anything so like say it's a brand new organization and yeah

738Ariadne: okay [pause] ummmmm [pause] well maybe help students with academic things  
739but also with social cultural things [pause] like how to find [pause] a [pause] a

740home? because that's very hard especially in Dublin [pause] umm [pause] yeah give tips

741about the life in your new country City and [pause] umm to be like kind of home away

742from home like [pause] I think quite like the global room is doing in [institution 1] [pause]

743so that it's a place where you can go when you have any question about whatsoever and

744you will find help

745R: okay and if you could give advice to future students or students who are looking to

746come to [institution 1] what would that advice be especially international

747Ariadne: yeah ummmmm [pause] that would be to [long pause] to enjoy I think yeah just to

748[pause] not to be afraid to ask questions and to [pause] uhhh say when you have problems

749if you do [pause] and to [pause] to be confident because it's going to be fine even if it's

750very different [pause] because I think that [pause] when you're an international student and

751you are in another country it means that you really like challenges and you like to work

752[pause] so it's always going to be fine R: okay and and are you aware of any support like

753you've mentioned the global room are you aware of any support that international students

754have in [institution 1] in your department from your professors

755Ariadne: [click] umm we have the s2s thing so it's like all the students mentoring you but

756[pause] um I don't know if it's only my mentors or all of them but it's quite useless because

757we have only seen them once and then they try to have other meanings but it's always

758during the week when we have class so it's not possible and [pause] yeah and I don't know

759that they are not studying the same things as you do they [pause] you don't live the same

760thing so they are probably not the best people that can help you and they are only students

761who are maybe 20 years old so [pause] they don't have everything you want from them

762[long pause] yeah that's all I know @R: okay all right um and that's actually all the

763questions that I got for you and but is there are there any questions that you wish I had

764asked that I didn't ask Ariadne: [long pause] no I think all of them I mean I expected all

765your questions and [pause] yeah [pause] I think it's quite complete

766R: okay is there anything else that you would like to express or to say

767Ariadne: no I don't think so @

768R: okay all right thank you

769

770

**Balthazar**

771

772R: and so my first question for you is what would you say your strengths are academically

773so like what are you good at

774Balthazar: @ um I'd say I'm a really good academic writer [pause] I mean in terms of style

775and also you know proper organization of essays and things like that and [pause]

776researching eh sources the typical essay writing things [pause] eh I'd say I'm quite good at

777the time management and also discipline I mean if I have to get something done it's never

778really ever been a problem

779R: yeah //yeah just kind of

780Balthazar: I'm not much of a procrastinator yeah

781R: put your head down and get it done| okay um and what would your difficulties

782academically be

783Balthazar: eh my difficulties would be I think when I get [pause] stressed out I can

784convince myself that it doesn't eh I don't need to be very careful in a way I kind of just

785focus more on finishing than finishing well if I'm too stressed out or if there's an outside

786issues occurring or things like that eh I'm not very good at @finding opportunities or I

787don't know [pause] expanding my horizons in that sense I'd say

788R: yeah and um and so did you grow up bilingual did you grow up speaking both

789[language 1] and English

790Balthazar: yeah I did

791R: okay and all of your education is in English or some in [language 1]

792Balthazar: yeah all of my official education is in English but I had to do um like [language

793 1] school like in [movie] @@

794R: @ okay so would you have any strengths or weaknesses in terms of using English as an

795academic language then

796Balthazar: yeah I mean certainly English is my strong language without a doubt

797R: yeah um do you have anything you do have difficulties with in English

798Balthazar: [long pause] I mean like the odd accent it's hard to understand but no @ I don't

799think so

800R: okay so I'm gonna ask you both about the masters and the PhD simply because I know

801that you did master's at [institution 1] as well

802Balthazar: okay

803R: um so in the master is what modules did you have to take and what was the work  
804required for those modules

805Balthazar: ehm I had to take so I did an M.Phil. in [discipline] and I had the required  
806classes were called um [pause] theory and methodology and the other one was called ehm  
807[pause] [module] [pause] the first is as it sounds is designed to [pause] teach us how to  
808@find and you know properly apply theory and methodology to various texts and the other  
809was about um finding [pause] to be honest it was quite disorganized I have to say that was  
810a major complaint I had and there was no clear [pause] curriculum and every two weeks  
811we had a different professor who is you know had a completely different [pause] agenda  
812and thing to teach [pause] so the overall theme of the class was so weakly connected I  
813would barely even call it a you know a theme because I mean basically was just saying that  
814[content] @

815R: @ okay so basically you summed the whole module down into one sentence

816Balthazar: yeah yeah I mean because it seemed like there's no communication between the  
817professors [pause] so it just felt like every two weeks we had a different two lectures and  
818[pause] that was it @@

819R: and what were the assessments for those modules

820Balthazar: um I'm sorry you asked yeah they were basically at the end of each semester we  
821had to write a um [pause] research paper

822R: mm-hmm okay and were you given the topic or //did

823Balthazar: no we had to| choose them we were supposed to have an advisor for these  
824papers that wasn't really communicated to us until they were due [pause] um then some  
825professors occasional would ask us to prepare a PowerPoint lectures [pause] or speeches  
826whatever

827R: yeah and inside of those modules was it mainly just the lectures with the PowerPoints  
828giving a lecture or was it was there group work discussion

829Balthazar: ehm occasionally there'd be group work that it was I mean really I mean at the  
830maximum 10 minutes [pause] yeah so it was pretty it's mostly just hearing different  
831lectures twice a week @@

832R: and so as a research student so working on both your master's dissertation and also now  
833your PhD thesis what do the work required of you as a research student like what do you  
834do on a day to day basis

835Balthazar: ehm well for this semester uh to be you know perfectly frank not too much I  
836mean it's mostly I'm uh preparing my outline which I have to submit to my department in

837 January [pause] past that for the first year and a half I suppose is the same for most  
838 humanities and history students we have to take um 30 credits [pause] yeah and then I  
839 mean past that there's a rough outline of what our path is supposed to be like I'm supposed  
840 to transfer to the PhD register in a year and a half from now and then obviously complete  
841 dissertation

842R: and so are you taking modules this term or not yet

843 Balthazar: no not yet

844R: so yeah like when you were doing your masters what would you say like when you  
845 would wake up how would you describe your day when you were working on your  
846 dissertation

847 Balthazar: that's working on my dissertation solely for that period um [pause] like are you  
848 asking for my day-to-day activities

849R: yeah yeah yeah like um yeah like I went to the library I read then I did some right like I  
850 said yeah

851 Balthazar: ehm in the morning I'd wake up and usually have a run or something to do like  
852 to clear my head eh make some coffee and bring it with me @ and I'd come to the reading  
853 room here and read for a few hours or depending or you know depending on which stage I  
854 was in and find quotes all these kinds of things I need and then go back home and write  
855 there yeah

856R: so how would you evaluate your this is gonna be a hard question for you but how would  
857 you evaluate your current academic success like do you feel like you're doing well

858 Balthazar: um @ yeah I mean I guess I mean in terms of being accepted for a PhD guess I  
859 feel pretty good but I mean I only arrived in Ireland three weeks ago

860R: okay like you literally just got off the airplane

861 Balthazar: yeah so I can't really say completely but I'm um I I just got a research desk and I  
862 feel like just last week I'm starting to get into it yeah

863R: and during the masters how would you evaluate your academic success then

864 Balthazar: ehm [pause] I definitely felt like I had um improved from the first term to the  
865 next [pause] as I got to understand what was expected to meet in terms of um assessment  
866 and things like that what kind of things professors were looking for also @ I didn't know  
867 until I got my first marks back that there were two Assessors [pause] and things but I mean  
868 by the second semester I really felt like I had gotten in to the [institution 1] way of things  
869 and knew what I had to do and things like that [pause] in terms of like my academic  
870 writing I mean [pause] I think it was kind of the same as before @



871R: yeah and so you said it like it took you a while to figure out what professors expected  
872and the [institution 1] way of thinking uh so can you identify what the professor's expected  
873Balthazar: yeah well I mean for instance the first essay I had written I didn't as I said  
874realize that we were supposed to have a supervisor for each paper we wrote [pause] and um  
875I'd kind of been retroactively assigned one who disagreed with what I was saying [pause]  
876because he I was I was studying something or studying I wrote an essay about some  
877medieval stories and he was a medievalist and I'm not and he didn't like that I didn't use his  
878ideas [pause] or at least that's my interpretation of the events [pause] um but you know  
879once I understood that you're supposed to @have communication with somebody while  
880writing these papers it became a lot clearer and in terms of what uh the [institution 1] way  
881of doing things I mean in my undergrad in the [country] have been used to uh like quite a  
882lot more guidance [pause] whereas here I mean basically they were just telling us uh okay  
883write an essay [pause] with no you know prompt or idea of what the essay should be about  
884and like that ehm [pause] so I guess that was a little uhm odd to get used to  
885R: mm-hmm and what do you think um like I don't know how much contact you've had  
886with your PhD supervisor but  
887Balthazar: um yeah yeah I've had quite a bit because he's my um my advisor for my  
888M.Phil. as well  
889R: okay perfect so like what would you say your supervisor expects of you and how do  
890they assess the academic success  
891Balthazar: @ I guess I don't know if I have anything so explicitly tangible to say about that  
892but um I mean he is relatively hands-off I would say [pause] so far ehm I mean we [pause]  
893@ I don't know we kind of have different opinions about things and synthesize our  
894knowledge I mean he's a much more [pause] I mean like I'm in [discipline] area but he's  
895more he has a background in [discipline] and I've a background in [discipline] so we're  
896kind of finding a way to combine these two which is why I chose him [pause] ehm I mean  
897he knows that I've been really interested in applying [discipline] theory to [discipline] and I  
898mean he expects me to first of all justify it and also combine it with something a little more  
899[pause] I guess you could say traditionally relevant to um to our field and he's quite has  
900high standards and I don't know I mean I can't say so early on the PhD area but in terms of  
901the when I did the M.Phil. with him he ehm [pause] [click] @ I don't know just didn't  
902really hold back any punches if he disagreed with anything ehm I mean is there something  
903more specific you're looking for or

904R: I mean it so I guess the like that's brilliant but also like when you submit a chapter or  
905something like that to him what was he looking for how is he evaluating oh this is a good  
906chapter this is a bad chapter

907Balthazar: yeah well the structure of my PhD is we kind of agreed on it was really [pause]  
908rigid so I knew exactly what a good first chapter being would be and that'd be to introduce  
909the theory I'd be using and his you know standards for a good first chapter are clearly and  
910simply introducing the theory how you intend to use it where and why you use it why you  
911will use it and um the [pause] conclusions expected to draw from the theory used

912R: okay and so talking about your modules back in the MPhil um so basically you said  
913they just said write a paper etc. um but how do you think that they sat down and actually  
914marked the papers what were they looking for

915Balthazar: uhm well in this theory and methodology Course [pause] the objective was  
916basically just it was kind of like a tutorial you could say where there's like a miniature  
917dissertation it's just practicing the structure of the dissertation but in a much smaller scale  
918ehm so that one is pretty straightforward with the other class which was already quite  
919loosely defined I don't really know first of all @ and second of all it seemed like they were  
920looking for [pause] a comparative study of texts that [parameter] which again was very  
921loosely defined ehm so it partially depended on what do we agreed with your principal  
922marker from beforehand and um [pause] at least I felt like it also depended on if you were  
923lucky enough for the second marker to agree with your loose definitions of what cultures  
924are

925R: so I guess how did the professors communicate their expectations or did they  
926communicate expectations

927Balthazar: ehm the first that module I mentioned the theory and methodology I felt again it  
928was quite clearly defined even from the first class meeting [pause] with the other class and  
929you know perhaps is my fault maybe I should've been more informed beforehand but I  
930really felt um [pause] kind of set loose I mean as I said there was no unifying theme to the  
931class except this thing that's quite ill-defined anyway um I mean it was getting to the point  
932where I'd say less than 40% of the students were showing up then you can even tell I mean  
933at the very last class meeting I was the only person in the class ehm so I'd say the ideas  
934were not really communicated to us at all since [pause] none of us really [pause] knew  
935what the point of attending was

936R: so in general what do you think students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]

937Balthazar: ehm well [long pause] I mean I guess there's no single thing that works for all  
938students but in my experience ehm just [pause] at least a clearly stated objective for the

939course would have been helpful [pause] ehm you know more than just a title I'd say that'd  
940be really [pause] logical@ if the professor's had some sort of communication with each  
941other to have some sort of um I don't know flow between their sections of the course ehm  
942and apart from that for me specifically I wish on the very first day or the rotation that we  
943were directly told you need to supervisor for each paper [pause] uhm and again perhaps I  
944just missed it or maybe it was you know I had a book and we were supposed to if I read it  
945ourselves but I think that's kind of a basic piece of information that could have very easily  
946just been sent to us [pause] yeah and I would say also to kind of be informed that the  
947administration isn't so present @

948R: can you expand on that

949Balthazar: ehm well I mean there's so many things that stressed me out when I first arrived  
950in [institution 1] for my M.Phil. like for instance I remember I arrived on August 20<sup>th</sup>  
951[pause] and our classes started or at least mine for my modules started on the 24<sup>th</sup> of  
952September [pause] and I've saved the email because I couldn't believe it I found that out on  
953the 21<sup>st</sup> of September after emailing multiple people [pause] so I mean I think when you're  
954accepted or when you register they should send an email saying your modules classes  
955beginning the whatever times because when I had that answer other people had already  
956begun classes and it was really stressful I thought I'd missed my first meeting and things  
957like that and um [pause] it was kind of unbelievable that I didn't know until three days  
958before to me ehm [pause] so can you repeat the question I wasn't really focused on that @

959R: so you said kind of the lack of administration and so I just wanted you to expand on

960Balthazar: yeah I mean there's [pause] it doesn't really seem like there's very much  
961connection between the administration of the school and the MPhil [pause] um I mean with  
962in my MPhil we had multiple meetings where the professor simply didn't show up I mean I  
963think in the second semester we had like seven times and we went to complain once and  
964they told us that the professor was in a Cuba [pause] um and he didn't know he was  
965supposed to be teaching so I mean these are the kinds of things that really shouldn't happen  
966at this level or this kind of prestigious of a university yeah I say a lot of [pause] that @  
967shouldn't have happened

968R: so how much of a factor would you say that language plays in academic success

969Balthazar: ehm [pause] how do you mean

970R: just

971Balthazar: the ability of people to speak English in general

972R: well I mean English since we're here but also academic language so not just like us  
973we're speaking now but

974Balthazar: mm-hmm yeah I see um [pause] yeah I mean I mean I think it's critical I mean  
975like as I said I come from a [discipline] background so I'm pretty biased towards language  
976yeah I mean it's a huge factor and especially in humanities it may be the most important  
977factor I mean [pause] if you are you know assessed on your ability to effectively  
978communicate your ideas but you can't communicate in the main language of the institution  
979I mean [pause] @ you're in trouble yeah

980R: and so what other factors would you say impacts academic success and that could be  
981inside or outside of [institution 1]

982Balthazar: uhm well again I think effective management is critical in both the part of  
983students and [pause] @ school whatever ehm and obviously there's factors you can't  
984control like family issues personal [pause] issues I guess medical health ability to find uhm  
985proper accommodation money issues things like that [pause] ehm I suppose lifestyle choice  
986I mean if you're [pause] not really focused in school it's gonna affect it and how confident  
987in your abilities to succeed or to function [pause] all these kinds of things yeah

988R: okay so I'm gonna kind of move to entry and preparation tools and I'm I'm gonna sorry  
989I'm gonna skip a lot of these questions because a lot of them don't apply to you um but you  
990said that they wanted you to take the IELTS so are you familiar with the IELTS and other  
991standardized exams

992Balthazar: no

993R: no alright so then we're gonna skip all these question uhm so what sort of preparation  
994would you suggest that international students take before coming to [institution 1]

995Balthazar: ehm well [pause] I I don't know what the procedure for making sure your  
996academic English is up to par is but I mean that would be

997R: it's literally taking the IELTS exam

998Balthazar: yeah well okay yeah that I suppose but I'm apart from that I would tell them to  
999email or contact people in the department ahead of time so they know exactly when things  
1000are and why they are @ uhm I would advise them to come early to find housing especially  
1001if it's your first time in Dublin because it's really difficult uhm or at least it was for me  
1002[pause] ehm what else I would [pause] I mean depending where you're from talking tell  
1003them to be prepared for kind of darkness and rain @ and to take precautions against that or  
1004be ready to I'd tell some students to bring coffee with them yeah

1005R: and so is there anything that you wish you had known before coming to [institution 1]

1006Balthazar: um yeah I mean the two things that immediately jump out of me are one or a  
1007when the classes start [pause] and b eh I wish I'd known how difficult it would be  
1008accommodation

1009R: yeah um so if you could give advice to faculty in dealing with international students

1010what would that advice be

1011Balthazar: um faculties and professors or in general

1012R: professors yeah

1013Balthazar: ehm [pause] well [pause] speaking solely from my MPhil experience I would

1014say that [pause] especially in modules or courses where there's shared teaching they need

1015to connect the course the uhm [pause] lecture somehow I mean if every two weeks you're

1016changing professors even if the lectures are on different topics they need to have some sort

1017of [pause] flow they have to I mean the course has to be consistent in structure and I won't

1018say quality because they're all good lecturers but there has to be a trajectory somehow

1019otherwise it was kind of confusing and [pause] distracting I'd even say [pause] and apart

1020from that I'm dealing with international students I mean [long pause] I don't know I would

1021say I know a few people who ran into trouble ehm trouble I mean lower marks because

1022they I'd suppose their academic English wasn't quite at the level it should have been or

1023could have been and I think it'd be really helpful to not only have one assessment per

1024semester I make sense to have some other assessments so that if something is wrong you

1025can deal with the problem rather than being punished for it [pause] or even even if it's not

1026assessed officially I think there should be some sort of practice essay or something or

1027maybe you can submit a small part of it to be looked at beforehand

1028R: okay so some sort of continual assessment or //feedback

1029Balthazar: yeah exactly

1030R: during| the term instead of okay this is your one shot it's one hundred percent of your

1031grade go

1032Balthazar: yeah and ehm actually now that you're saying that I think it would be really nice

1033to have professors stay longer than two or four class meetings because it never gives the

1034opportunity to develop a relationship with any given professor and I think that's another I

1035mean it plays right into what you're saying about lack of feedback [pause] because I mean

1036it it feels like there's no chance or reason even to develop relationships on either side

1037R: mm-hmm okay and um so if you were to give advice to organizations so say [institution

10381] were to develop a summer program to prepare international students for study at

1039[institution 1] what would you suggest that that summer program involves or includes

1040Balthazar: um [pause] well I mean certainly like a workshop or something for developing

1041academic English is always helpful and necessary I think ehm I think the opportunity for

1042students who are maybe not completely confident in their skills in English to get some

1043feedback and kind of be assessed on a similar scale to what there will be when they start

1044their program of study [pause] I'd say that's more important especially for students going to  
1045the humanities cuz I suppose in the sciences there's kind of pretty [pause] there's kind of a  
1046template use when writing reports and things more so than in uhm the humanities uhm  
1047[pause] I suppose it could be nice also to some sort of a workshop or meeting for um  
1048finding accommodation in Dublin especially as an international student and yeah

1049R: you've touched on this a bit but if you could give advice to future students or since we're  
1050looking to come to [institution 1] what would that advice be

1051Balthazar: ehm [pause] like advice on suc- uhuh flourishing here or being accepted yeah

1052R: yeah

1053Balthazar: ehm yeah I'd say it's it'd be really especially if you're doing a one-year MPhil to  
1054try to develop the relationship with a professor and especially a potential adviser as soon as  
1055possible and [pause] I mean again I'll say the accommodation can be really difficult if  
1056you're not ready for it [pause] you need to give yourself some time ehm but I would say  
1057[pause] the [pause] thing here I felt and then for this the least opportunity for is developing  
1058a working relationship with a professor so I think that's the thing that is the most conscious  
1059effort which is something for instance I didn't quite grasp when I first arrived

1060R: because you are from the [country] and your formal education was there uhm can you  
1061identify like any differences between the systems that kind of not necessarily that  
1062negatively impacted you but something that you had to adjust to

1063Balthazar: yeah I mean in my program um I think it's not the same for every course in  
1064[institution 1] we didn't have a continuous assessment in [institution 1] for this whereas in  
1065the [country] I was used to continuous assessment and especially one with significantly  
1066more structure ehm I think it also had to do with the fact that I mean in the graduate level  
1067there is less guidance than the undergraduate level anyway but uhm to go from that to a  
1068system where there's only one assessment in the entire term or module uhm was not only  
1069[pause] I think not appropriate for a first-time graduate student but also uhm really stressful  
1070I think it'd negatively impacts students if you're assessed according to scale that you have  
1071no time to really adjust to

1072R: so it's more like the assessment and the expectations of the assessment and trying to  
1073figure all of that out and then not having a chance to get used to it before

1074Balthazar: being subjected to it yeah

1075R: okay so are you aware of any support that international students receive from your  
1076department or from the wider University

1077Balthazar: ehm I know that in the I remember in the beginning of the academic year there  
1078was an optional course for um getting up to speed with academic English [pause] the in my

1079school there was a optional course or module you can take on Mondays about general  
1080academic skills uhm and there were a few optional courses again about foreign language  
1081teaching because my school is the [school] and everything so makes sense @

1082R: and did you did you take advantage of any of that or do you know people who did  
1083Balthazar: ehm I didn't know anybody who took advantage of the English class I did go to  
1084a few lectures in the academic writing skills Monday course that I just mentioned and  
1085specifically for things like style guides and proper citation of quotes and sources you know  
1086these kinds of things [pause] and then as for the foreign languages I didn't because I  
1087couldn't fit any that I was interested in into my schedule unfortunately but

1088R: yeah um and so the academic skills course um did you find that useful was that  
1089adequate could it have been improved

1090Balthazar: yeah no uhm well I suppose anything can be improved but I felt like it was quite  
1091adequate and sufficient I felt pleased with it

1092R: okay and so you did things like like you said referencing citation do you remember what  
1093else

1094Balthazar: ehm there were I mean I I didn't go to each one but uhm there were some about  
1095like how to structure an academic paper how to ehm I think there's one for each style  
1096[pause] uh style guide like MLA APA Harvard yeah and the other ones I only went to the  
1097MLA one because that was the one that was relevant to me [pause] ehm yeah there was  
1098one I think specific for people studying translation which I also did not go to cuz I'm not  
1099studying translation @

1100R: and so you said obviously everything can be improved so speaking of those courses  
1101what would you have liked to see in those courses or it was there anything that you thought  
1102was missing or could be improved

1103Balthazar: uhm [pause] as I said I only went to the ones that were I felt could help me I  
1104thought that they were quite good uhm and I actually referred back to some of the material  
1105I was given while writing my dissertation uhm I thought they're really effective and good  
1106and all that

1107R: yeah well then but are there any like sessions that you're like oh if they had had a  
1108session on this I would have gone

1109Balthazar: hmm nothing I can remember yeah I don't think so

1110R: okay all right um and if they were to offer those kinds of modules now as you're  
1111entering your PhD would there be anything that you would like to see in those modules

1112Balthazar: ehm [pause] I think it could be nice for first term PhD students to have a maybe  
1113not necessarily a module but a seminar about the timeline expected of a full time PhD

1114student [pause] to be a little clearer but uhm then how to apply that you know effectively

1115and all that but other than that can't really think of anything else

1116R: so that's actually all the questions I have everything um but are there any questions that

1117you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

1118Balthazar: uhm @ I no like I can't think of anything off the top of my head

1119R: okay is there anything else that you'd like to say or express

1120Balthazar: ehm [long pause] I'd say that coming back as a research student I feel the

1121treatment of research students is a lot more professional and proper and I felt largely while

1122doing my MPhil that uhm it was almost as if we were there to make the university money

1123because there's so many classmates professors didn't show up and it seemed like there is no

1124repercussion for that at all [pause] whereas now I feel like the school is like aware that we

1125exist@ and it is more concerned about our happiness and success yeah@

1126

1127

**BK**

1128

1129R: okay so um first I was wondering how you would evaluate your current academic

1130success at [institution 1] like how do you feel that you're doing

1131BK: mmmm I feel um I'm doing okay? I've made some um progress? Hmm but it's not uh

1132what I was um expecting from the beginning so I'm kind of like aiming higher hmm

1133R: so you were expecting more I mean you don't feel like you're quite reaching that

1134BK: mmmm not yet no I would say

1135R: yeah okay is that based on personal feeling based on grades feedback from professors

1136both combination

1137BK: mmm I would say combination yeah [pause] both

1138R: okay all right so can you tell me what your strengths are academically

1139BK: mmm so for my strengths ummm [long pause] ummm I I would say uh like uh l- like

1140academic vocabulary like the word lists and also try to organize the uh cohesiveness so it's

1141like within the paragraphs but not generally speaking like to put them together and what

1142else being critical? and innovative to? Umm [long pause] yeah so that woul- that would be

1143my strength

1144R: okay and what would you say your weaknesses are academically

1145BK: uh so as I mentioned before uh li- like coherence like to flow the whole para- like the

1146whole para- like the whole paper would be uh difficult for me? and what else [pause]

1147[click] I found a bit hard to do the literature review part because normally I just know how

1148to you know I read these opinions and different thoughts from uh other academic figures



1149important people and uh it's bit hard for me to like to um to organize what I think? And  
1150then with what other people say so I know it's better to compare or being like criticize or  
1151maybe being like [pause] like try to raise a debate or whatever but it's when it comes to  
1152practical writing it's very difficult mm-hmm for me yeah

1153R: okay um so can you tell me about the work that's required in your modules

1154BK: okay so we uh so far we only were only required to write assignments uh so about  
1155uhhh like one for each module and it's graded and that's the only thing being assessed for  
1156the whole for the whole approach process but now this time we're getting another ones like  
1157group work project for [name's] module it's [module] so we're going to a presentation in  
1158the end and that's going to be 40% of the the grade you know so basically two different  
1159kinds

1160R: okay and as a research student what is the work required

1161BK: uhhh do you mean dissertation?

1162R: yeah

1163BK: all right all right yeah okay so yeah um yeah we are we are going to uh we are asked  
1164to write a dissertation yeah and that's going to be quite a big @thing @ yeah yeah so like  
1165research skills and methodology literature review and [pause] critical thinking um yeah lots  
1166of academic skills

1167R: okay alright so now can you tell me about the skills that are required in your modules

1168BK: the skills required uhhhm you mean if academic academic skills

1169R: yeah

1170BK: okay so for listening that would be um understand understanding what the lecturer like  
1171what they are actually speaking or delivering through the class and also understanding your  
1172peers in group work and as for speaking it's like you uh like uh using the right words like  
1173proper to join the discussion and expressing yourself and then reading would be uh you  
1174know reading different reading uh lists like all those reading things and papers and yeah  
1175journals as for writing is to uh write like assignments some papers or thesis yeah stuff like  
1176this

1177R: okay and then you started going into for your dissertation that it would require like  
1178research skills etc. what other skills are required as a research student

1179BK: so apart from the research skills

1180R: yeah or be even be more specific about what those research skills are

1181BK: hmm okay so uhh so we probably start with uhh reading first so would be literature  
1182review and then uhm then start to draft like write in different sections of dissertation so  
1183abstract then it will be a methodology uhh yeah and then the the other parts soo uh [long

1184pause] I would say like literature review it's very important and also um like being critical  
1185and original is also very crucial and uhmm proofreading is @very @important @in @the  
1186@end yeah so something like that

1187R: okay um can you describe the general structure of your lectures so when you're in the  
1188classroom what happens

1189BK: so normally we have uh [pause] I would say it depends on the module because we  
1190have practice modules so that would be more uh learner or student centered uhm as for  
1191those taught modules the uh lecturers would be talking maybe 80 percent [pause] of the  
1192time anndd [click] so normally like basically we have both for practical ones we would get  
1193chance to talk and work in groups and for the rest more like uh [topic] ones or [topic]  
1194based would be just hearing uhhm lec- lectures talking >most of the time< mm-hmm

1195R: okay and so how do your professors assess academic success so what do they look for  
1196when they're grading

1197BK: mmm [long pause] well according to their cri- >I mean according to [institution 1]  
1198criteria< I think they follow these criteria anyway so it's structure and uhh coherence mmm  
1199presentation is important too uhm what else uhm original thoughts and then um innovative  
1200thinking something like this yeah possibly so it would be a few of these points and it's like  
1201they're actually written on our feedback sheets but something we are actually confused is  
1202because we're just getting results from different uh lecturers um it's just sometimes it's  
1203quite strange because it's not really I mean uhm like written in details like how um I mean  
1204we have like different uh descriptors for different like 2.1 and distinction but it's um it's  
1205just because sometimes for students we get results like you get distinction like the first  
1206grade and then get like 2.2 at the same time too so sort of like lost you just don't know how  
1207this could be so like this distant like so different hmm yeah

1208R: okay so you're not quite sure like what really makes a paper a first as opposed to a 2.2

1209BK: hmmm I think I was but now I'm a bit confused hmm

1210R: okay

1211BK: and we were thinking it's actually quite subjective hmm because we well we found  
1212like if there's there's a bunch like a group of people writing about the same thing and none  
1213of them got really good results it's just okay but for people you know they think about  
1214something else and very uh rare topics uh if the lecturers found you know it's keen on um  
1215new stuff and they would probably get really high marks yeah

1216R: okay okay so it even kind of depends on the topic

1217BK: yeah

1218R: that you've picked

1219BK: yeah true

1220R: okay so how do professors communicate their expectations and assessment

1221requirements

1222BK: mmm so normally the announce like they talk through all these stuff details in in

1223classes uh normally maybe approaching the middle of the module they'll start talk about

1224assignments and their expectations and some some teachers are quite uh good because they

1225tried to like explain as detailed as possible but some just sort of like went through like

1226alright read this paragraph and that's it and uh it's written on blackboard and you can just

1227check it out yourself [pause] yeah so it depends on different people too yeah

1228R: okay do you feel that um they're explanation or guidelines were they clear were they

1229helpful

1230BK: mm-hmm yeah I think they're pretty helpful because when whenever we heard about

1231assignments people just get like ah [gasp] panic and then we found it's actually okay we've

1232got like something to follow to think about to start with and especially some lecturers

1233they're pretty good like [name] he even printed out like uh handouts for different sections

1234how should you uh start with and what should you be careful about yeah so it's pretty

1235helpful

1236R: okay and so in general what do students need to succeed at [institution 1]

1237BK: [sharp inhale] ohhh hmm @ that's a very big question uhm [pause] so generally umm I

1238would say critical thinking is very important and then umm also um original thoughts

1239would be quite important too umm what else [pause] yeah I think these two are like the

1240biggest parts because like I can work on presentation and coherence as well afterwards uh

1241but these two are like really um they're parts like really unique and can't be uh replaced

1242yeah that's what I think mhm

1243R: okay so how much of a factor does language play in academic success

1244BK: hmmm how much? uhm I would say [pause] language you mean like English

1245R: yeah so basically your your linguistic competence so your level of English

1246BK: hmm I would say more than 60%? Or maybe even more than 70% yeah

1247R: can you explain why that is

1248BK: um well I guess because you have to write in English >and especially academic

1249English< if that level is not that high you won't be able to express yourself properly and

1250people won't understand what you're talking about and that's very important uhm otherwise

1251even though everything's really clear in your mind uhm like the rest of the world won't

1252understand if you can't really find a way to express

1253R: okay and what other factors impact academic success

1254BK: hmm I would say maybe about uh personal life like the outside of the campus of the  
1255college for example when I um when I lived around [area of city] last term the beginning  
1256of the last term I didn't I didn't uh enjoy living there at all and it was really really bad for  
1257me because I couldn't focus on my study to be honest and I was so worried all the time and  
1258I was busy looking for somewhere to stay after that place and I've talked to a few of my  
1259classmates they had similar uh experience too especially one of the Chinese girls she's  
1260been moving from places to places like five times or six times and she was every time I  
1261saw her she was just so grumpy and she just said I don't want to study I don't want to work  
1262because she's just so occupied with so many different unnecessary things yeah [pause] so  
1263that would be a big issue I think especially in Dublin

1264R: okay and did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before attending  
1265[institution 1]

1266BK: mmm I tried to by myself @ I was actually asking like friends around who have been  
1267studying abroad because I know it's really different uhm but uh I was just bit busy and I  
1268didn't really find proper like websites are places I could use because I was in [country]  
1269many of the sites were blocked and yeah so I tried but I didn't really get much done to be  
1270honest hmm

1271R: okay and did you have to take an entry assessment before being accepted to [institution  
12721] so like IELTS TOEFL

1273BK: yes so I you mean the test

1274R: mm-hm

1275BK: yes I took IELTS yep

1276R: okay um so how do you feel about IELTS

1277BK: uhhmm it's @very @complicated? uhh I think well as an [pause] as an English  
1278language test it has its advantages but I mean at the same time it has so many uh problems  
1279the validity and also the reliability and [pause] I mean also um if you look at the context  
1280like what it's actually testing and how about like the level if you think about students are  
1281going to study abroad for masters or PhD it's far not enough and uh hmm people are just  
1282taking advantage of all these uhh #times they just want to pass get the good grades and  
1283then easily get into like through that gate and into the universities overseas so yeah I think  
1284you should be changed or refined

1285R: mm-hmm

1286BK: as soon as possible yeah

1287R: yeah how would you suggest they change it or refine it

1288BK: mmm [pause] ehh well it's another @big @problem but I think as for the reading part  
1289of IELTS is actually quite good because of the authenticity because it takes um original  
1290academic papers and journals and stuff like that and it covers all different disciplines hmm  
1291but as for the rest especially uhm writing and speaking uhm I wouldn't say they kind of  
1292match you know the expectation of academic students uh especially for writing uh yeah I  
1293think because if you if you have to you know you study abroad you have to do academic  
1294writing for your studies and that's just totally different things

1295R: mm-hmm okay um so do you feel that taking IELTS adequately prepared to you for the  
1296demands of studying at [institution 1]

1297BK: mmm I would say to some extent but mmm not it won't be over 50% even but it did  
1298help a little bit but not that much

1299R: and how did it help

1300BK: hmm I would say the reading because before I took the exam I did a few like tests  
1301myself? and the first thing I noticed was about the reading because it was so academic for  
1302me and so I started to read a lot of those academic papers and things so I think from that  
1303side hmm it did help yeah okay

1304R: and what type of preparation should international students undertake before studying at  
1305[institution 1]

1306BK: hmmm I would say EAP @ English academic purpose yeah so improve their  
1307academic skills it's not only about writing and also like listening uh understanding and  
1308speaking it's like a combination integrated [pause] course yeah

1309R: and so what should a course like that include

1310BK: mm-hmm [pause] so for example it could include uh academic writing for the writing  
1311skills and then maybe uhm like listening so say uh uh cuz they have to understand what the  
1312lecturer is talking about and also the speaking ability to be able to join the discussion in the  
1313group work or project and to express their opinions and negotiate with people and [pause]  
1314yeah I would say those abilities would be quite important

1315R: okay so if you give advice to faculty to professors in communicating supporting dealing  
1316with international students what would that advice be

1317BK: [pause] hmmm uhm @it's @another @very @bit @question uhh so I think it has  
1318many different aspects so firstly would be like uh for study uh [pause] hm I think if they  
1319could find like people from last year who did their course and to come and share uh that'd  
1320be quite good because they know what they're going to go through and everything and they  
1321wouldn't really panic before they start this journey and also maybe giving them some  
1322academic uhm tips [pause] hmm and also like the course you mentioned like to improve

1323their academic uh skills ability would be quite good as well and then also another big part  
1324is to the cultural part because I don't think many students would spend quite a lot a lot of  
1325time to learn or try to discover the cultural you know the country they're going to study and  
1326it's actually uhm cause causes like a lot of problems is that especially for people from  
1327really different backgrounds like huge culture shock and it actually affects uh a lot of  
1328students' personal lives too which could be avoided uh so I think culturally and then study  
1329hmm yeah and also maybe for students like maybe for me from uh [country] they're quite  
1330different backgrounds they could have like um like um I don't know like introduction or  
1331orientation for because the system is very different also university life like school life are  
1332quite different too uh so if they could give those students maybe some tours around and let  
1333them get to know societies and different events or activities and maybe also some like  
1334living tips that would be good

1335R: and if you could give advice to organizations who prepare international students for  
1336studying that [institution 1] what would that advice be

1337BK: can I just say the same as the @previous @one

1338R: yeah absolutely

1339BK: yeah

1340R: okay and so then if you could give advice to future students what would that be

1341R: eh hh [pause] I would include those points I mentioned before but then also um um I  
1342would say um like try to get involved into the local community and make friends with  
1343different nationalities as possible? and also trying to find like the real self and just try to  
1344um enjoy living like here uh don't think don't think too much like you're away from family  
1345and friends it makes you homesick and makes it difficult for you as well but it's a great  
1346opportunity for you to let yourself like open to all the new things and uh yeah like enjoy  
1347that's it

1348R: okay so are you aware of any support the international students receive either from your  
1349professors from your department or for from the wider University

1350BK: you mean specific ones for international students

1351R: um both

1352BK: okay hmmm yes yeah I think yeah I think I know like um it's funny like [name] we we  
1353actually uh I haven't taken any of his classes before and so for this term the first few  
1354classes he was speaking quite fast so I just wrote him an email I said like could you please  
1355just slow down a little bit because I'm not used to your like accent and things and then he  
1356emailed back he says yes I will try to slow as yeah a little bit so that could be some support  
1357from teachers and then I know in [institution 1] they have um career advisory advice

1358service and it's pretty good for students um being my supportive and we have GCS- GSU  
1359yeah that's also quite helpful and I know I know we have reps like [name] [name] uhm and  
1360they like they talk to ask a lot to make sure everything goes well and whatever feedbacks  
1361or comments um yeah and I think generally speaking the tutors and also the teaching staff  
1362are quite supportive especially for international students like [name] once said uhm before  
1363we wrote the dissertate- uh sorry the the assignment he said don't work- don't worry too  
1364much if you're not uh English native speaker just write whatever you think and it's okay  
1365yeah

1366R: okay so you feel that this support is adequate

1367BK: mm-hmm

1368R: alright um you flew through this all right that's actually all of the questions that I have  
1369for you so are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

1370BK: hmmm [pause] not really yeah

1371R: do you have anything else that you want to add anything at all no

1372BK: ehmm nope that's perfect

1373R: alright perfect thank you

1374

1375

**Cat**

1376

1377R: okay tell me what your strengths are academically

1378Cat: um I've I've always been pretty comfortable writing which is feedback I get from my  
1379supervisors as well even in the draft I wrote you know sleep-deprived right before I handed  
1380it up so I can write I can research um yeah I'm quite comfortable pattering around reading  
1381I enjoy that so that's easy um they're probably my two the two things I'm most  
1382comfortable with

1383R: and what would your difficulties academically be

1384Cat: focus. for a start first I think I've mentioned I'm an aspie right so I can get hyper  
1385focused but I don't get to pick what on which can be difficult to deal with and I get  
1386sidetracked by interesting research a fair bit um the main thing for all that I said one of my  
1387strengths is writing is I don't have a background in the kind of writing I'm expected to do  
1388for this [pause] so it is completely foreign and bless my supervisors are absolutely  
1389wonderful and try to help but they keep having to reorient because I can write but don't  
1390really know how research writing works they're oh y-you can write so we think you know  
1391this nope you didn't know that does that mean you don't know this? no you can do that so  
1392it's a weird sort of [pause] mix of stuff that you'd expect me to not be good at but I can do

1393or stuff you'd expect I would know that I don't and that's really difficult to get past because  
1394I'm never sure if I'm doing it right um I've had good support to help with it but it's just a  
1395constant is this how is this how structure is in something like this?

1396R: mm-hmm and can you give examples of those things that you're saying like that you  
1397have difficulty doing or that you're expected to know but you don't know

1398Cat: okay all right uhh one of those things that comes up in any project program like this is  
1399you have to do a lit review [pause] cool [pause] what [pause] so I can have the concept if  
1400I've had the concept of a literature review explained to me but I can't then put that into  
1401what I need to do so uh going over the literature all the usual stuff okay but then what does  
1402that look like [pause] how is that written up what style what structure um how do I know if  
1403I'm using the language correctly um it's so different from the kind of writing I did even  
1404when I was a you know an undergrad and a post-grad that you know like this is just [long  
1405pause] it's really hard to wrap me head around because it's so unfamiliar and I it doesn't  
1406seem to be a good language for a middle ground there's either you've literally got no idea  
1407so we need to tell you what things are or well you already know how to do things so you're  
1408fine and I fall somewhere in a gap between the two a lot of the time uh lit reviews have  
1409been the main sticking point @

1410R: okay yeah so what kind of writing um did you do an undergrad and like that you're used  
1411to

1412Cat: uh underground that kind of thing like keep in mind it's been a few years since I left  
1413uni and then decided I was stupid enough to come back um [pause] yeah that's that's that's  
1414essays that's reports that's the kind of thing you expect to be doing right yeah I've done the  
1415research you asked me to do use it write up here's the form you expect in it's usually no  
1416more than about five thousand words max um and a lot of them are shorter than that so it's  
1417particularly with humanities you rarely get away with less than a thousand [pause] but yeah  
1418I constructed that that's a basic here's my argument he's my very long five paragraph essay  
1419basically nice and simple this is obviously a bit more complicated and it's not [pause] the  
1420structure's while reminiscent of a series of essays is also nothing like an essay um and it's  
1421hard to get a foothold comparatively um [pause] because it's just different enough that you  
1422can't it's almost like another version of language um when people are talking about it um  
1423[pause] yeah just basic essays and stuff I learned how to churn those out when I was about  
1424oh God thirteen fourteen I had a pretty good teacher I learned the basics and I can just do  
1425them without [hand click click] thinking which is how I got away with writing stuff the  
1426night before it was due @@@ which is a terrible practice yeah can't really do that here um  
1427[pause] yeah ok sorry otherwise I just ramble



1428R: @ no worries it's a good ramble um so are you taking any modules here

1429Cat: no

1430R: no

1431Cat: um I'm still a student at my university back home so I'm visiting here um for the two

1432semesters which is a interesting position because I'm sort of not fish nor fowl [pause] uh I

1433don't have any modules associated with my project either though not even back home it's

1434purely research so I don't know a couple of modules @might @have @helped @me @in

1435@the @process @or @not but that's not how it's set up so

1436R: okay and so while you're here um what is the work that you're required to do

1437Cat: uh [sigh] the same work that I was essentially doing back home um keep doing

1438research keep doing the writing um mostly at the moment it's that dern lit review um

1439[pause] so for me at the moment that structure is um working on a section handing it back

1440and forth once or twice who they see me every couple of weeks so that I have more solid

1441goals but also more constructed? feedback because I that structure is really one of the few

1442things that's given me somewhere to start so I guess it's not vastly different from handing

1443up an essay every couple of weeks um and the reading that goes into it but there's a balance

1444between the yeah about a week's worth of reading and theoretically about a week's worth

1445of writing it's heavy on the @@@theoretically @@@ um yeah

1446R: and those meetings with the supervisor here or the supervisor back home

1447Cat: supervisor here um my supervisor back home I'm in touch with periodically but they

1448wanted to separate the two out um so um yeah

1449R: and so let's see how would you evaluate your current academic success

1450Cat: @@@@@ I think that's part of the thing I find most difficult because I don't know I

1451got really no idea what I'm doing and I I get that in a lot of ways nobody does which is the

1452thing that has been said multiple times but like I didn't I didn't do an Honors Program I

1453haven't come through [pause] any of the things I think someone in my position would

1454normally have come through so I genuinely don't know I don't know how long it's gonna

1455take me to do certain things I can estimate um I'm getting better at that me I think gosh I

1456know I can write reasonably well because I'm given that feedback which is nice but

1457writing well isn't the same as being this comes back to the structured thing so I'm never

1458quite sure where I'm at it's hard for me to gauge um [pause] in no small part because my

1459supervisors back home as well they are delightful always first want to make sure I'm not

1460panicking no no panic- panic- I mean not freaking out I mean I'm worried [pause] um I

1461think they used to slightly slightly more emotionally distress people and nah I'm too old

1462and tired but I don't understand I need something more concrete to work with and then

1463you're fine um so yeah I don't know I genuinely don't know because this is for all that I've  
1464been doing this for just over a year now it's still quite foreign um in terms of what's really  
1465expected um and because of the way my brain works I tend to need stuff to be very explicit  
1466I'm always never capable of picking up on the implicit or the generally under- gen-  
1467generally understood that or what wouldn't you have done this well I didn't know if I  
1468should or could or how you just send in a thing well what does that look like how long  
1469does it have to be what kind of terminology eehhm so yeah I it's mmhm hopefully  
1470someone will tell me if I'm muck up uh that's usually something I that's that's about it  
1471that's what I've got hopefully someone will tell me if I'm doing it wrong @@  
1472R: and so what do you think um I guess I'm gonna ask about your supervisor here first um  
1473what do you think your supervisor here is looking for like what do they expect how do they  
1474assess academic success

1475Cat: uhm I've only really had a couple of um meetings with [name] so far um [pause] and  
1476he's lovely and he seems to be mostly [sigh] most of the feedback I've got from him is  
1477things like research I might want to pull in structure that needs to be worked on so it's sort  
1478of fairly tangible concrete things which to be fair I'm pretty sure I specifically said it was  
1479what I usually need um [pause] but that that doesn't leave me with a lot in terms of where I  
1480am like h-how he's gauging my overall academic success but then he's also quite new to  
1481this project I've never even seen him since I got here um I guess at the end of the day I'm  
1482I'm back at [pause] they'll tell me they've gotta tell me 'cause if they don't I won't know @  
1483anything short of a flashing neon sign will usually go straight over of my head so I have to  
1484rely on what people tell me

1485R: okay and so how do you feel or do you get a feeling that expectations here and at your  
1486home um university kind of how do they compare are they different are they the same

1487Cat: the expectations given that it's the same program don't seem to be particularly  
1488different I think the way [pause] at least not when it comes to the the writing and the  
1489research that's I can't imagine that would be vastly different because it's doing a bunch of  
1490reading and then sitting at a computer and writing stuff there are certain parts of that that  
1491are probably not likely to change much in any context um I noticed things to do with they  
1492like admin and procedural stuff is quite different and it may be because I've been dropped  
1493in you know part way through a year um [pause] and it may just be because I've been on  
1494different sides of how things are organized um so I don't know about academic  
1495expectations being different but when it comes to things like day to day where to find stuff  
1496what to do who you talk to about stuff how stuff is organized like the bog-standard not the  
1497fun stuff there tends to be and this seems to be a lot more assumed knowledge here um

1498culturally this university isn't vastly different from the ones I've either studied in or worked  
1499in [pause] umm but I think particularly for someone like me that missing gap of well you'd  
1500know where to find that or you you can find this information is well no? where I know at  
1501least some other places back home tend to be much more oh you're new here you don't  
1502know anything that's what that building is for can you see the giant neon sign we stuck to  
1503that uh that's where these people are here it is written down I'll email it to you do you want  
1504me to remind you in a couple of weeks which is a little [pause] like they tend to over  
1505explain where to find resources um and the right people and make sure you've had  
1506meetings with them in that context because they expect that you're not going to necessarily  
1507know where to find stuff um that's the thing that I've noticed the most  
1508R: okay all right and so in general and based on your experience here so far what do  
1509students need to succeed at [institution 1]  
1510Cat: [inhale] [pause] I think the main thing with success for any student and this is partly  
1511as experience of a student but also partly as someone who's worked um as a teacher is not  
1512just knowing they have support but knowing the very specific details of who it is how to  
1513approach it what they can and can't do and if for example this came up with someone I'm  
1514living with who is also a student here um if they're having a problem not only who they go  
1515to but also what happens next because that's the source of a lot of anxiety it means a lot of  
1516people won't ask for help when they need it if they think oh if I if I'm having a problem  
1517with someone and then I say something oh there's gonna be this big fight but um even  
1518knowing like it's all very well to say student services for example is in this building this  
1519building and they're here to help with students okay what does that specifically mean  
1520because that will differ between different institutions different countries different and if  
1521people aren't sure? in a situation where they may need support or they may have a prob- an  
1522actual problem or they're just not sure what to do um even just not being sure which  
1523building to walk into can mean that they don't because they're already really uncertain and  
1524so it just it just and can either stop people from reaching out and heading off problems  
1525early um in some cases it can make things significantly worse if someone's already stressed  
1526or alienated or isolated um and you see them go what if I go in here and they say this what  
1527if they do the wrong thing and you get the you start having sort of more serious  
1528repercussions um and this is someone who's an English speaking student who granted bit  
1529wonky in the brain but [pause] um I've also seen the kind of impact that can have on  
1530students who do come from other cultural contexts where they couldn't trust that if they  
1531went to the counselor that it wouldn't get back to someone else um they wouldn't even  
1532though they needed to and um that destroy someone's entire trajectory

1533R: and so speaking of language and how much of a factor does language play in academic  
1534success

1535Cat: um [pause] well [pause] I th- I think it depends 'cause there's sort of two things there  
1536there's English speaking is the main most common academic language and then there's an  
1537academic Eng- English specifically which has its own oddnesses to it 'cause it's its own  
1538dialect but you add to that the internal language of the institution which is a different  
1539English again @ it's kind of like having to learn more than one language I speak English  
1540but there's a whole bunch of stuff particularly when I was brand new that I was being told  
1541that I I was taking in but I wasn't understanding at least not the way it was intended  
1542because their definitions for words that I was familiar with was just not the same um so  
1543even for me there's a language barrier when you're new and you don't understand the way  
1544the university you're dealing with talks about stuff all the way academia uses certain terms  
1545um or even if there really is necessarily a difference to look out for um while I haven't dealt  
1546with that from also a second language perspective I watch students grapple with that and  
1547it's frustrating because you want to default so I just need a definition for this um you've got  
1548someone in IT looking up what things like randomness or AI mean and the definition  
1549you're gonna get out of a dictionary or an online translation resource is not the same as  
1550you're gonna get out of academia generally #and more specifically all the internal admin  
1551language [pause] um so there's always more than one English to deal with

1552R: and what other factors impact academic success and that could be inside or outside of  
1553the university

1554Cat: ah I know isolation is a massive issue for people doing post-grad studies because it's  
1555pretty isolating because we spend a lot of time just on your own um [pause] and I guess  
1556one of the beneficial things about the [research institute] here is it fosters connections with  
1557other people other students other staff which means you are practicing language as well as  
1558making connections it's essentially the same thing just a different [pause] but but if you've  
1559arrived in a place that's unfamiliar and not in a space set up to do this even if you're an  
1560undergrad you might meet people you might not you might be someone who's good at  
1561making friends easily you might not and so much of that comes down to chance it's not  
1562always easy to know where to find even the communities where you know you expect to  
1563go like the the most universities have places for LGBTQ people or for people from  
1564particular parts of the world or international students specifically but you you need to know  
1565how to find them and look and you need to know what they are and that you can go to  
1566them they're not just for other group of people and [pause] um [pause] as someone who  
1567spent time dealing with the younger kids um the more isolated a student all the more their

1568confidence is damaged and those two feed back into each other really badly it doesn't  
1569matter how smart they are how capable they are how high achieving they are they won't  
1570progress even if their grades don't slip it stops them from being able to get past or to or to  
1571continue and that's really unfortunate

1572R: I'm going to skip that because that's all about language //entry assessment

1573Cat: they're broken

1574R: which you| wouldn't have taken

1575Cat: no I've I've had students who taken them who clearly couldn't speak the language

1576R: okay well go ahead and tell me your feelings about those in standardized exams

1577Cat: you end up teaching students how to pass the test instead of how to speak the

1578language you also tend to tea- the students who have even learnt useful English out of it

1579have only learnt one specific variant which often isn't really what they have to speak in any

1580context in the institution they come to um they're not used to hearing [pause] English in

1581different accents which is a nightmare to deal with for an English speaker let alone

1582someone who isn't um I understand why standardized testing it's it's hard to find a better

1583solution and it's not to find a better solution that isn't equally gameable as standardized

1584testing but standardized testing is so gameable and even with the best #one in the world

1585most students aren't served well enough by it its if you're delivering content to undergrads

1586in at a grade you know six to eight level of comprehension and they still can't get the

1587English and you can refer them to help but you can't even take it there are courses there but

1588those courses tend to cost extra money that they may not have access to and it sets them up

1589to fail um I can't come up with a better answer but it's not working

1590R: okay and so what type of preparation do you think that international students should

1591take before studying at [institution 1] um I guess I want you to speak as someone who is

1592coming from a native English-speaking country but you've also expressed that you still

1593kind of struggle with

1594Cat: yeah and that's the kind of thing I struggle with even outside of a university context

1595you know my brain it's a bit weird

1596R: yeah but even linguistically wise like you were saying academic language is completely

1597different you know so I do want you to say like

1598Cat: yeah you kind of have to learn it again um you have to learn when someone says for

1599example little things like student services [pause] those words are almost meaningless you

1600stop thinking of them as jargon pretty quickly but what is jargon [pause] like it's a lot

1601there's a lot um one of the things that I think would be beneficial as much as a language

1602course even if it's just a conversational language course is to do comprehension the tools to

1603comprehend different English different contexts um I would argue there is significant value  
1604in looking at something like cultural competency because that is going to help with the  
1605way language is used that is going to help with local slang which can make things sound  
1606like something very different for example craic is a word that means it's it's very funny  
1607when it turns up in conversation to me and I know that is a particular thing that is not going  
1608to be anywhere I'll keep that joke to myself but um we were at a party and great it was  
1609great craic I'm like [pause] good [pause] um @@@ you get arrested for that shit um  
1610cultural competence and comprehension is so important and the skills that you can the  
1611skills that we have to be part of that can be applied to [pause] the kind of problems that  
1612seem to crop up or that I've that I'm aware of cropping up um but it also it's more likely to  
1613help people cope with things like isolation you don't feel so isolated if you understand  
1614what people are talking about when they're talking about what they don't think is jargon or  
1615what they don't think is euphemism because we don't think about language that way um  
1616[long pause] yeah I think that would be the most it would also particularly if it was  
1617grounded in a particular University some of my other things that I found difficult would  
1618essentially be addressed because the local cultural of [institution 1] means that that's where  
1619this is and that's what these people do and in a western university culture such as  
1620[institution 1] these are this is what you can expect in terms of confidentiality that kind of  
1621thing

1622R: okay so I guess this is kind of leading from that is what do you wish you had known  
1623before coming to [institution 1]

1624Cat: @@Oh my God@@ so@ much@ my process getting here was a nightmare like it  
1625was an absolute nightmare the institutions didn't really talk to each other and the one  
1626person at least back home who was supposed to be charge of that I've heard from twice  
1627like I didn't know anything and the way [institution 1] organizes certain stuff is [pause] not  
1628the way [home institution] does it I don't think either institution realized until the last  
1629minute that they weren't speaking the same English? um I think personally one of things  
1630that would've been really useful before getting here was it comes down to the practical  
1631stuff again like um I turned up with my suitcase and wandered around campus for like an  
1632hour dragging this thing behind me because I wasn't sure where to go um or knowing like  
1633you know that's the person or you know this is this is where stuff is on campus um figuring  
1634it out but you know it's uh things that seems so obvious like how to get into the library um  
1635or where where you find the laundromat or who do you talk to um if you need to sort out a  
1636pass um are so easy to overlook [pause] but they're really hard to wrap me head around

1637when everything new and weird and strange um particularly when you're jetlagged

1638 @ @ @ @

1639R: so if you could give advice to faculty and professors here in helping supporting and

1640dealing with international students what would that advice be

1641Cat: umm [sigh] I guess it's easy to say don't assume that they know literally like any of the

1642things saying that it was only useful up to a point though because the whole point of

1643assuming you know something is you don't have to consciously think of it um but if you're

1644dealing with a student and something crops up [pause] having having something where you

1645go ah they didn't know where to find this [pause] keep hav- those kinds of records

1646particularly if they're shared um between between faculty can give people the opportunity

1647to go ah like five of my students didn't know where to find that out or I didn't find a year

1648after they left that they didn't know where to find this particular resource um you're not

1649gonna catch everything but some sort of central idea which issues keep cropping up I guess

1650it's kind of the design thinking principle that I've seen a lot you know getting press in IT at

1651the moment that okay well what are the problems we're seeing can we figure out why

1652they're happening this sort of needs to be some central place and some resources put

1653towards that so that so so so that faculty are capable of doing this without running

1654themselves more ragged than they usually are but the the the ability to keep a record and

1655comparing notes can be really useful as well as a useful way to support each other with I

1656don't know how to I've explained this to the 15 different ways and I don't know why it's not

1657getting across you might find someone who went ah I had student from that region that was

1658the same problem have you tried this [pause]

1659R: so communication basically

1660Cat: yeah um I think you know the idea of taking notes when you have a student come up

1661with a problem sounds daft you know no one's got the time but the experiences of

1662international students [pause] there's such a fine line between them succeeding and failing

1663particularly if they don't come from an English speaking background [pause] um there are

1664trends there there are the same problems all the same underlying issues being expressed in

1665different ways and I think being able to pinpoint that might also mean less having to run

1666around guessing what the problem is or why the student is having the problems they are if

1667you can go well as a communal thing going well these are all the records we've got we've

1668clusters this way you know data stuff um yeah a couple of teachers start doing that just

1669when they have the time [pause] maybe you can get it to catch on

1670R: well when they have time @

1671Cat: well yes this is the thing @ @ @

1672R: sorry I shouldn't be saying that in an interview @

1673Cat: oh no God no I've already said the same thing right it's um there's never enough time  
1674there's never enough resources um but whatever there is [pause] in the long run it can end  
1675up saving not just drama or failure it can actually end up saving work it's just having the  
1676time and the resources to put anything towards it to get it on the ground

1677R: yep and so if you could give advice to organizations who might be designing or running  
1678preparatory programs for international students so like three months summer courses what  
1679would your advice to those organizations be

1680Cat: uh [sight] [pause] it's important to listen to the students it's also important to  
1681remember that students generally don't understand how teaching works so the information  
1682you get it kinda has to be [pause] funneled through that any introductory course [pause] it's  
1683worth having voices from students who didn't have it or did it last time um but you know it  
1684still has to be wrapped up and reinterpreted through actual teaching methods I guess  
1685[pause] it's always tempting to go I think I know what the problem is um I mean I've done  
1686that in my own why don't we just teach cultural competency solution which is not a  
1687solution but um it's al- yeah it's always tempting to do it top-down and I think for  
1688problems like this that can be the way that it is so individual but also based in this network  
1689of cultural and social assumptions top down might be the wrong way? to approach a lot of  
1690that? sort of there's that bottom up [pause] who is this for first um it's an ethos that that  
1691turns up a lot in uh design for different things like physical needs right you don't start with  
1692how do I make a door handle work for this person it's how does this person's person who  
1693can't move their hand what can they hold so it's from their experience back up to a  
1694methodology or pedagogy as opposed to a pedagogy down to what can we do

1695R: and if you could give advice to future students of [institution 1] or students who are  
1696looking to come to [institution 1] what would that advice be

1697Cat: uhh make someone show you around campus just hu- just just accost a random person  
1698on campus uhh handcuff them to yourself make them show you around nah um [pause] but  
1699if you can get someone to show you where the important buildings are figure out what  
1700student groups [pause] apply to you so you know what safe spaces you can go to and ask  
1701whether that's the Chinese students association which a couple of universities back home  
1702have or you know the different nationalities if that's where you're comfortable start there  
1703but never just stay there because they won't have all the answers um and while I'm joking  
1704and talking about just accosting random people just do ask some questions if you can even  
1705if you're terrified of them um [pause] particularly staff they they're not allowed to leave  
1706@@ they kind of have to answer the question um [pause] this is you know you don't want



1707to be rude and you don't want to be thing you don't wanna be seen to be questioning people  
1708um particularly from certain cultural contexts where you do. not. do. that. um and it's a  
1709really hard thing to learn not to do um and as well as cultural contexts things like anxiety  
1710particularly which can be really bad when you're in an unfamiliar environment [pause]  
1711there- there's no good way to counteract it except I don't know keep trying? Um the worst  
1712thing you're going to do is um mildly annoy someone

1713R: okay and so are you aware of any support that international students receive from your  
1714department or from the wider college here

1715Cat: uh I mean broadly speaking again this isn't really my home institution which I'm  
1716much more familiar with um I am aware that there are uhh [pause] a couple of my like  
1717some of my housemates are students from around the world um and they're you know  
1718dealing with some of the student services and some of the financial services almost um I  
1719mostly know about that when they've been screaming about stuff that hasn't been #done in  
1720any fashion that's worked for them or just hasn't been handled um [pause] I don't know  
1721how much of that has been international student specific um I think partly bec- I suspect as  
1722my experience is quite atypical I haven't come through the normal enrollment processes  
1723um [pause] yeah I don't I don't really know um and to be honest I'm not entirely sure even  
1724looking at the university website where I would find that information [pause] um like  
1725looking at the university website it's not even immediately apparent where one can go to  
1726login and that takes a bit of hunting around so I think accessibility is kind of an issue there?  
1727'cause looking online is one of the first thing someone's gonna do if they don't know what  
1728to do

1729R: okay so with that are there any questions that I didn't ask that you wished I had

1730Cat: oh I'll talk about anything @@ usually until someone forces me to shut up um I don't  
1731I mean it's a weird thing being an international student in a country that's really not that  
1732different um of all the places I've been lucky enough to go to or at least spend a  
1733significant amount of time in um I wonder if sometimes already speaking English can be a  
1734bit of it- a a a different kind of handicap because we know you know you know what I  
1735mean yeahh um or you expect that you understood when [pause] I don't know it'd be  
1736lovely to see actual [pause] a lot time energy and resources actual resources both in terms  
1737of time time and stuff and staff to be able to do what generally speaking almost anyone  
1738who teaches wants to do which is actually support the bloody students um but yeah I don't  
1739know eh

1740R: okay is there anything else that you'd like to express or say

1741Cat: um I have all the answers and everybody should ask me to fix the world and um I'm  
1742always right even when I'm not @@@ um I think there's and yes I'm aware what this is  
1743going to sound it's going to sound pretty conceited I'm glad I've had the experience of a  
1744student and a teacher and as someone who has worked overseas and studied overseas and  
1745in multiple institutions even at home I have bounced around a fair bit I think [pause] I  
1746think that's really useful I think it's taught me there's a lot to learn from the way other  
1747places handle it sometimes what you're learning is dear God we better not do that  
1748@@@um and sometimes it's that's useful but wouldn't work here [pause] I think there's a  
1749centralized like there's a lot of central discussions throughout different teaching pedagogy  
1750and uh different uh student support in things like you know essay writing and that kind of  
1751thing I think I don't know if there's the same kind of centralized dialog specifically around  
1752international students I see uni- all the universities I've worked in or my friends worked in  
1753or I've been to have struggled with it but there's less awareness of what other places are  
1754doing or whether or not they're applicable other than the occasional someone coming from  
1755another university to talk about one specific thing um I think would be worth seeing more  
1756of that

1757R: okay thank you

1758

1759

**Carmen**

1760

1761R: so my first question for you would then be what are your strengths academically So  
1762what are you good at academically

1763Carmen: eh academically I'm really good at the study because I I have been award the last  
1764the last year for a finishing the master because I I finished I finished the course with the  
1765higher punctuation and qualifications and I started the PhD this the the same this same year  
1766I think that I'm good

1767R: Okay brilliant and do you have any weaknesses or difficulties academically

1768Carmen: well I think that the most difficult part I think is the level of English maybe  
1769because in [country] for example if you don't go any any extra course apart from the  
1770scholar course or I mean the university the university doesn't have any any good courses  
1771for for teaching I mean for studying English because all the classes are a massified eh  
1772massified yeah yeah because I I participated in a in a course many years ago and they they  
1773were more more than 120 people per class

1774R: wow that's a lot

1775Carmen: yeah so it's not good for for improving improving your your English

1776R: is your university in [country] the English medium or or [language] medium

1777Carmen: mmm most of the university's [language] medium yeah okay because well the

1778PhD is different because nowadays and there are many many conferences or a congresses

1779and all of them are in English but apart from that all day classes are in [language]

1780R: okay so you're having to flip between the languages quite a bit

1781Carmen: mmhmm

1782R: okay And Did you come to you came to [Irish city1] on Erasmus was that during your

1783masters or your PhD

1784Carmen: I'm doing the PhD right now I didn't stay in [Irish city1] because I stay stay in

1785[Irish city2]

1786R: Oh in [Irish city2] brilliant

1787Carmen: yeah

1788R: Okay and were you going to [institution 7] there

1789Carmen: sorry

1790R: were you going to [institution 7]

1791Carmen: ehh I went in September of this year uhm I I came back to [country] the 14th of

1792December

1793R: Okay and which college or university were you at in [Irish city1] or in [Irish city2]

1794Carmen: I stay with the [department] with with with a teacher

1795R: Okay okay brilliant um so in terms of English then what would you say that your

1796strengths are in English

1797Carmen: Sorry could you repeat

1798R: So what would you say you're good at in English so are you good at speaking are you

1799good at writing things like that

1800Carmen: I think I'm I'm good at using grammar uhm maybe test because is the is the most

1801important for me because it's the most well hm I usually read a lot of articles on something

1802similar so I think that I'm good at that area not rather than a speaking English

1803R: Okay and so then you would feel that you have some weaknesses in writing and

1804speaking

1805Carmen: Well hm when I when I write in English I I make some mistakes with using the

1806prepositions and the using of some phrasal verbs but is is the only a weak weakness in in I

1807think in in English but the most difficult part for me is speaking English

1808R: Okay and why do you think it's um speaking English that is the most difficult

1809Carmen: Well and I think a #combination because you need to think quickly use all the  
1810grammar all the vocabulary and um all the the structures apart from the phrasal verbs or  
1811some idioms uhm listening the conversation and follow follow the the speaker

1812R: Okay great so I'm going to ask you some questions about your time as a student in  
1813[institution 7] so could you tell me did you take any modules or classes in [institution 7]

1814Carmen: Well as a PhD student I didn't have uhh any module as compulsory but I need a  
1815course of level of English at C1 level I I mean the the advanced course for for improving  
1816the the the level eh it was a module but don't remember the name eh really well but I think  
1817is [module name]

1818R: Okay and could you tell me what those classes were like like what kind of work did you  
1819need to do for it

1820Carmen: Well you mean the how was the class in general

1821R: Yeah So did you do a lot of reading it was it very interactive did you write an essay for  
1822it things like that

1823Carmen: Yeah I I wrote two essays and most of the class were really interactive because in  
1824I think I think that they they were 20 or 25 people at the maximum many of the times eh  
1825we can uh speak together with other with other partners most of them were from different  
1826countries like a Germany France eh not only [country] so it was really really interesting in  
1827that in that point and apart from that the teacher was really good because she she support  
1828all the group uhm uh I mean that they she she is plan really well she eh taught some some  
1829really interesting things like idioms maybe idioms on on some typical expression in Ireland  
1830like eh how ya or grand eh something similar

1831R: Okay brilliant and so the two essays that you had to write on what were those essays  
1832about did she give you a topic or did you have to choose

1833Carmen: No in that point we have to read the book from a lot of I know I'm not quite sure  
1834by [Irish literary author] and then the topic was well uh she only gave the new structure  
1835that they use two two topics or two eh typical typical aspect of the Irish culture and eh  
1836explain eh how he how you can find that that aspects in the book

1837R: okay alright brilliant so those essays did you get a mark for them

1838Carmen: Well really in fact I think it was the same although we have two periods for for  
1839completing the essay one of them was a like a draft and the teacher correct that that draft  
1840then she she gave me again with some some feedbacks in order to correct some mistakes  
1841like prepositions and and she gave me some some orientations about the second point  
1842because it was it was not the best but eheh she gave me some some feedbacks about the  
1843essay

1844R: Okay brilliant so going back to your PhD so when you were in [institution 7] what kind  
1845of work were you doing for your PhD

1846Carmen: well uhm I I I had a supervisory in [institution 7] that I I agree with eh with eh  
1847with her and I I complete eh well I wrote my my first paper because I'm I'm trying to do  
1848my PhD but the thesis I I want to to present like a compendium of articles like rather than  
1849the traditional model so in that in that point I eh I wrote all the first the first paper I started  
1850the the second one

1851R: Okay brilliant um so thinking of your supervisor how does your supervisor assess you  
1852so how do they tell if you're doing a good job or if you need more work cetera

1853Carmen: well I think she said really good supervisor because at the beginning I had when I  
1854mean when when I arrived to [institution 7] I had an interview with with her and I showed  
1855eh all my previous studies on the previous hmmm not article but I mean some some  
1856analysis that I have run before I I went back and she reviewed that kind of analysis she got  
1857in contact with another two two professors that I had the choice to to to meet and  
1858participate participate with with them uhm all of them review they the analysis uhm my  
1859supervisor in [institution 7] and me choose the best results and we prepare the structure for  
1860for following I mean first I did I got the result so previously I uhm we decided what kind  
1861of journal and which kind of article it was better for prepare preparing

1862R: okay brilliant so when you give an article to your supervisor what is she looking for  
1863when she reads it

1864Carmen: well she she was looking for the the the topic what is the topic that she she she  
1865knows obviously but the most important was that the result could be a positive for for us I  
1866mean for her for for her a group team and for me because eh and she gave me some some  
1867ideas to put on the article in to to analyze the results so yeah the most important was #unt

1868R: okay so how do you feel that you are doing academically

1869Carmen: you mean that well I'm really really well because I finished I finished I have  
1870finished already the the first paper only that my [language] supervisor has to has to view  
1871right now but is the only part uhm apart from that I have already eh started the second one  
1872which is a systematic review eh I I actually hmmm cont- continue collaborating with with  
1873my my supervisor in [institution 7]

1874R: Okay brilliant

1875Carmen: yeah is the most important for me because the relationship it's really good and we  
1876we agreed before before I I come back that we will continue collaborating together

1877R: Oh brilliant good and so in general what do you think students need in order to succeed  
1878in [institution 7]

1879Carmen: well I think that in [institution 7] people have so many so many tools and  
1880resources to to have a succeed in in in that university because for example they they have  
1881an orientation group team and yeah there are many many many resources I think well I in  
1882comparison with the with my university in [country] for example for my home university I  
1883think that they the level of education in [institution 7] maybe is not the higher in  
1884comparison with [country] but I think is uh is better because in that in that point I prefer a  
1885study less less time I mean but eh all but the the studies are have more quality than the  
1886other

1887R: Okay alright and so how much of a factor does English play in academic success so  
1888how important is English and academic success

1889Carmen: well uh the academic uh English is really important I think is the most important  
1890for academic success but not only in [institution 7] because if you have any problem in in  
1891the [institution 7] for example writing writing an essay or something similar you have a a  
1892group that they they make a a orient orient you about the you're your essay or there are  
1893many many other ehm resources like um I think that there is a like a group of senior  
1894students that they they supported they they junior eh students or eh junior or maybe  
1895Erasmus students like me [pause] so I think that they have so so many so many resources  
1896in that point so if you have a level of English that is a it could be considered like medium  
1897like that you don't have eh so much problem because you can go to the to the course to to  
1898improve your your English and is there are many many tools

1899R: right okay and so then in [country] you're you're still writing your dissertation in  
1900English right

1901Carmen: yeah yeah all the all the articles that I'm preparing I writing in in English because  
1902many of the journals that I need to publish this this kind of articles are in English so it's  
1903better if I if I write in English previously

1904R: right and can you tell me more about that so any challenges successes the process of  
1905writing these articles in English even when you might be in a [language] speaking country  
1906or a [language] speaking university

1907Carmen: yeah ehh writing in English writing a paper in English it was a a challenge for me  
1908at the beginning because well I can uh write like an essay or something similar but a an  
1909article is different so my supervisor eh advice to me to review some some article of some  
1910articles of this journal and not like copy but like eh read a lot of article in order to eh to  
1911highlight some some expressions or some some kind of vocabulary that the the journal eh  
1912use a lot in order that when I submit the paper and the journal doesn't reject at the  
1913beginning

1914R: okay um so before coming to [institution 7] did you take any like language courses to  
1915help you prepare

1916Carmen: um yeah I well my my university in a took me the chance to do an online an  
1917online course like I think it's OLS to support is is like a program for for Erasmus students  
1918who who go abroad

1919R: Okay and do you feel that that course on did a good job preparing you for [institution 7]

1920Carmen: sorry could you repeat please

1921R: do you think that that course did a good job preparing you for [institution 7]

1922Carmen: well I think that [pause] that course it was a good because I I could remember  
1923some so many expressions and vocabulary not not at all the grammar but it was ok but I  
1924think that eh with eh with relate to [institution 7] it was the course was in a general for  
1925English eh so it was not it was not specifically for for a English in in Ireland

1926R: Right okay um and what kind of preparation do you think students should take before  
1927going to [institution 7]

1928Carmen: before going to [institution 7] I think that the most important for preparation  
1929could be a have having a medium high level of English because eh I think that the English  
1930is important well I mean speaking English really well but for example the most the most  
1931important is the they can they can speak English well in order to understand all the  
1932conversations or to maintain any any conversation with native native speakers because in  
1933[institution 7] for example there are many many international students so you can listen a  
1934lot of accents and uh I think that is eh really positive in my opinion and the most important  
1935for example for me at the beginning was the different accent of Irish people because it's not  
1936the same accent if you speak with someone who live in Kerry or someone who live in Cork  
1937rather than in Dublin or in Drogheda

1938R: right exactly yeah and so do you have any experience with taking standardized exams  
1939like IELTS or CAE or anything like that

1940Carmen: no I don't think so well I did on an exam of the English course and it was okay  
1941because the the exam only well I only need to complete the exam with all the things that I  
1942have already learned in that in that course like idioms ehm phrasal expressions hm  
1943vocabulary and grammar I think it was it was ok

1944R: ok alright so if you could give advice to faculty or professors to help support  
1945international students what would that advice be

1946Carmen: well but you mean if I advice to my home university or the [institution 7]

1947R: um and let's do [institution 7] first

1948Carmen: okay hm I think that uh well my experience in [institution 7] in [institution 7] was  
1949the best so eh all I think that if someone who living in [country] I mean in [country] go to  
1950[institution 7] maybe that person doesn't have any any problem if the competence in  
1951English is like B1 level or higher in the common common eh mark I think I think I mean  
1952the common European mark

1953R: yeah yeah the framework yep

1954Carmen: yeah the framework is B1 B1 level or higher is eh you don't have any any  
1955problem and in [institution 7] for example I well my experience was really really positive  
1956and nowadays I want to go back again @ yeah because I was really really comfortable  
1957studying in [institution 7] with my supervisor and the the other professors so yeah

1958R: right brilliant and would you have any advice to your home University then supporting  
1959students who like yourself are writing in English and doing your degree in English

1960Carmen: well [long pause] I think but you mean eh if someone I mean if someone like me  
1961go to go abroad and have to write eh in English you mean

1962R: yeah yeah

1963Carmen: okay well the most important I think that they I would advise people em do any  
1964any extra course before before going if your level English is B1 level or higher because it  
1965could be a good in order to prepare you listening and some vocabulary and grammar eh  
1966previously you you go to to the to to Ireland or another part I think yeah because many  
1967many students a usually eh that course is not like a compulsory I think so many many  
1968students have the the option to not to not to do that course and I think is a is a wrong is a  
1969mistake because eh that course eh although is a general course but you can do many many  
1970listening and support your your grammar and maybe you can you can expand your  
1971vocabulary so it's good in order to go to [institution 7] or to [Irish city1] with more with  
1972more eh vocabulary or something similar

1973R: okay if you could give advice to organizations who might be preparing say a summer  
1974course for international students what would that advice be what would you like to see  
1975taught on the course

1976Carmen: sorry could you repeat please

1977R: so if you could give advice to an organization who is creating a summer course to  
1978prepare international students what would you tell them to teach

1979Carmen: well I I I I suppose that I got the advice about the different accents in in Ireland in  
1980general so maybe I I prepare some I would prepare some eh audios or some a interactive  
1981classes with a different eh kind of uhm general situations like go shopping or a  
1982conversation a conversation with native speakers because I mean that for example when



1983 when I was a when I went to [institution 7] I usually I used to listen to radio so much but  
1984 the accent was like English in general but I that radio that radio the channel I mean it was a  
1985 really really good because I listened to so many interviews and the the speakers were from  
1986 different parts of not only in Ireland I mean in in UK or in USA so I could compare some  
1987 some structures and uh I mean the the general accents so it's important because for  
1988 example when I when I spoke with my my international friends they have a different  
1989 different accent say eh rather than my my roommates they were from from Kerry and so  
1990 yeah I think it's the most important because for example my my first experience in Ireland  
1991 was getting in contact eh waiting in contact with with a mother and her daughter in when I  
1992 when I get on the when I got on the bus for going to eh from eh [Irish city 1] Airport port to  
1993 [institution 7] and yeah and the woman the daughter were from from Ennis and at the  
1994 beginning it was so difficult for me the accent but two two days well I mean two days later  
1995 I could understand different different accents and understand most of the of the  
1996 conversations that people that I speak with people and yeah

1997 R: right okay um and what do you have any other advice for international students who  
1998 want to go to [institution 7]

1999 Carmen: well I think that the most important advice could be that they have fun @ because  
2000 yeah if if you if you are an international students eh student you have a lot of opportunities  
2001 to to study English and to study different things or modules but you have fun because I  
2002 mean for example when I when I went for the first time I think that the most important is  
2003 participating in many of the activities that the university arrange and for example I  
2004 participate in a in a course where it's not a course is like a project of I have the title I think  
2005 [pause] yeah I have it here [shows paper] yeah it was an initiative of peer tutoring for  
2006 languages I I don't know if you can read this so but is is like it was an initiative that the the  
2007 language building arrange arrange the beginning of the the semester and many of the  
2008 [language] people Japanese people French people I think that the German German people  
2009 and yeah French people were invited to participate in order that the speaking in [language]  
2010 ehm and speaking in English because the the initiative was creating a group of of chat with  
2011 a native speakers half half an hour was in in was speaking in English and half an hour was  
2012 speaking in [language] in order that the both parts improve the level of [language] or  
2013 English depends of the eh on the on the person apart from that I participate in that course  
2014 that it was like a group chat but eh like a three native ah native native native speakers one  
2015 or two a native speaker in eh [language] yeah in [language] eh and we have a we have a lot  
2016 of resources like a games or topics like we can chat with the group because the most

2017relevant part was eh creating a discussion group a dynamic dynamic conversation among  
2018eh four or five people at the same time

2019R: this is so brilliant that sounds like a really cool thing

2020Carmen: yeah so I participate in in in in both in both initiatives apart from that in order to  
2021improve my my level of English a little I I went out to to the parties of Friday nights and  
2022join two eh I joined two societies eh I mean ehm International Society of course and a craft  
2023society because it was another another chance to to speak in English most most of the time  
2024apart from the class or the groups and I have had so so many so many opportunities to  
2025speak in English with native speaker speakers on not only Irish Irish people I mean USA  
2026ehm partners or something similar someone similar and it was another opportunity to speak  
2027with other international students listening the different accents

2028R: Right brilliant I'm so that's actually all the questions that I have for you is there anything  
2029else that you would like to say or express

2030Carmen: well I think that in my opinion I think that my my experience in [institution 7]  
2031was really really good maybe I would suggest that the all the people who was who were  
2032thinking to go [institution 7] or to Ireland in general They have so many so many  
2033opportunities to speak in English and they can improve the their level uhm participating  
2034and collaborating with your partners or the Irish people is a good way to improve the  
2035English at the same time you can meet the culture

2036R: brilliant thank you so much

2037

2038

**Christina**

2039

2040R: okay so first what would you consider to be your strengths in academics so what are  
2041you good at

2042Christina: collocatio- what I'm good at yeah? uhm a good research of details patience uhm  
2043I'm in general a hard worker @ you know with mind @ okay and uhm uhm capacity of  
2044synthesis and I think that's all @

2045R: so what are your difficulties in academics

2046Christina: uhm collocations

2047R: collocations

2048Christina: uhm yes because I am not a native speaker of English and uhh almost all the  
2049time I have um problems in uh picking up the best preposition after a verb or a a noun you  
2050know? So collocations would be my my main issue yeah

2051R: okay and so have you done just a PhD here or did you do a master's in Ireland as well

2052Christina: uh no I graduated a master in [country] and uh it was a master in [discipline]

2053R: and so have you taken any modules here at [institution 1]

2054Christina: uh yes yes so I am doing right now the module of uh [professor] [module game]

2055and there is one more noun but I can't remember @@ but yes [module]

2056R: okay and what do you have to do for that module like what is the work required

2057Christina: uh we supposed to do an essay of uh four thousand uh words uhm about one of

2058the topics presented during the module

2059R: okay and what do you do what do you have to do like outside of the classroom on an

2060everyday basis for that module is there a lot of reading like preparation for discussions

2061things like that

2062Christina: uh I must read basically we have a list of references and uhm I supposed to uh

2063pick up the readings which might be uh fitted to my topic you know so I must read a lot to

2064be honest with you yeah

2065R: and so as a research student as a PhD student what is the work required of you there so

2066like what is your I guess the everyday life of a PhD student

2067Christina: [big sigh] I suppose uh to I'm supposed to read a lot for my thesis and to you

2068know [click] pick up the best ideas and to make the plan and all of this so I have to be

2069honest to do I have difficulties uhm as we speak uh I have difficulties organizing my time

2070because I supposed to do both readings uh as a good level you know I can't just go through

2071they must read understand and synthesize and make plans and so and so on so I have great

2072difficulties in sharing my time my uhm available time you know in doing these kind of

2073activities they are both very stressful@ I would say and very time consuming you know so

2074R: yeah I saw a lot of it is about time management

2075Christina: yes yes because I can't do it as a low-level you know I supposed to do something

2076good you know and @ takes time

2077R: okay alright and um so inside of the modules so in [professor's] class what is the

2078structure is it a lot of PowerPoints and [professor] speaking or is there group discussions

2079etc.

2080Christina: uhm he has a PowerPoints uh but he has um a lot of information um [click] and

2081we don't work a lot in groups we have few activities but not so many not so many activities

2082in groups and we must read you know for for the essay so this this would be the outlines of

2083this of the course

2084R: okay alright so how would you evaluate your current academic success so how do you

2085feel that you're doing as a PhD student

2086Christina: @@ um I wouldn't say that I'm great uh because um I had this these areas with  
2087you because of the death of my previous supervisor and second supervisor um with the  
2088second supervisor I didn't have a great communication so basically for me six months um  
2089have been um useless in this relation of help you know the support coming from supervisor  
2090for me it was almost nothing @ to be honest and right now I'm starting taking some things  
2091from previous work and trying to make connections with the new supervisors with their  
2092ideas you know it's and um moreover I have this difficulty of um learning language @ to  
2093be honest because um sometimes for me the time spent to read one page of a scientific  
2094book takes uh three times as for a regular native speaker you know because I must look for  
2095words and sometimes I mean most of the time I'm curious about the pronunciation as well  
2096so I'm clicking the sound as well so it's triple time it's sometimes not all the time I have I  
2097have um a bonus a kind of bonus because for example some some scientific terms you  
2098know concepts are coming from Latin and there are international words and I understand  
2099them because we have the same or almost the same words in [language] and being a  
2100[profession] I heard or I know the meaning of those words this is a kind of bonus for me  
2101but it's not very frequently to be honest @@

2102R: but you do notice you're like oh I know that word

2103Christina: yes yes yes I know the meaning sometimes

2104R: and what would you say that your professors expectations are for you so how do they  
2105evaluate academic success

2106Christina: oh [deep sign] I I don't know for example I had a course last year with  
2107[professor] okay and at the end of the course we received uh an evaluation scale with  
2108objectives and points how we are going to be evaluated it was very clear uhm and he told  
2109us that our works are going to be able to evaluate by a third party somebody not involved  
2110in our activity you know somebody impartial so I think I did pretty good not excellent but  
2111enough to to @@ have @ those ten credits@ now we didn't receive that we received only  
2112the reference lists you know list uhm perhaps we will receive we might receive the the  
2113evaluation scale you know with a bearing I think this is the word English bearing mark  
2114evaluation yes and um receiving this would make much more transparent um the mark you  
2115know and my work I know exactly what I have done what I supposed to do and what I am  
2116taking ten credits or not anymore for you know so yeah

2117R: yeah and so what do your what does your supervisor expect how is your supervisor  
2118assessing your academic success in your PhD

2119Christina: [long pause] oh oh [deep sigh] oh she didn't tell me yet because we didn't have  
2120we had only one meeting um I have two supervisors now but um one of them is not very

2121involved into my activity um the other one is @@ doing all the work with me @ to be  
2122honest and I had only one meeting with him he's very reliable and very understanding um  
2123towards my needs @@ professional needs of course but my my my um my um how should  
2124I say [long pause] um I'm quite sad about this lack of time because uh I would like to  
2125fulfill his his requests at a higher level you know and I'm aware that my level is not very  
2126high and it's not the level I like to you know right so but this is what I can do during this  
2127time I have you know so @ but I think he's okay he is he didn't tell me so far you do good  
2128did good or something you know so he's @okay @with my work

2129R: okay yeah but you're not exactly clear what he wants you wouldn't be able to say he  
2130wants this he wants that or like when you send him a chapter what does he look for in that  
2131chapter to know if it's a good chapter or not

2132Christina: ohh we didn't get the chapters yet @@ to be honest @ unfortunately because of  
2133this bad history I had you know uhmm he's he was very clear about his expectations from  
2134one week to another you know I'm still working to the plan you know and yes was very  
2135clear [pause] but he didn't say this he he didn't say his expectations in a very strict mode  
2136one way you must do this and this and this and this the demands came almost naturally  
2137from what I wanted to do and what I supposed to do so he j- helps me a lot to focus [pause]  
2138and sometimes to direct my >because I have some ideas< but I don't know which one I I  
2139should pick up you know for a a better planned consistent plan you know so he helps me a  
2140lot yes but he was very clear from one week to another what what I supposed to do you  
2141know

2142R: okay alright um and so in general what do you think students need to succeed at  
2143[institution 1]

2144Christina: uhm [long pause] um at what level because

2145R: um well speak as a PhD student yeah since you are a PhD student you'll have more  
2146probably more experience or ideas with that

2147Christina: uhm I think they need um [pause] ideas they need they need to focus on work  
2148really on reading @ because once you are here um this for me as a foreigner student you  
2149know I I don't have time for anything else to be honest I don't have a private life I don't  
2150have any other obligations except to pay a rent and feed myself you know and have clean  
2151clothes this >I mean basic< you know I don't have any other social life @@ and sometimes  
2152I talk to th- to my friends but [pause] no more than 10 minutes every week you know  
2153something like this so in terms of time uh for doing the PhD here I think they should  
2154expect to focus almost all you know during those three four years almost all the time on  
2155PhD if they want to follow the stages I mean if you want to to take a year off or then you

2156you could you know have fun or whatever you know but if you want to follow the typical  
2157route you must dedicate your time@ and energy to to this yes

2158R: okay and and so how much of a factor does language play in academic success

2159Christina: language oh I think it's essential no matter what what the subjects what fields  
2160we are studying language is essential because whether is a written or spoken aspect we  
2161need language to express our ideas and our findings uh it's almost useless to make great  
2162discoveries if you are not able to present uhh your findings to an audience you know and  
2163moreover is not about just language it's about an understandable language to um your  
2164audience because they could be people who don't have any idea about the technology of  
2165nano-chemistry so you must make yourself understood to this kind of people too I think it's  
2166it's basically a second a second course a second module which uh any graduate a PhD  
2167graduate should have and sometimes we get credits for them for this module sometimes we  
2168don't you know it's um very tightly involved in our activities yeah

2169R: and so what other factors would you say plays or impacts academic success and these  
2170could be factors inside of [institution 1] or outside of [institution 1]

2171Christina: um [long pause] it could be also family help for example the Irish students living  
2172with their parents or having their own houses or their own flats some of them even you  
2173know PhD students they don't have they have less stress regarding umm home regarding  
2174personal care you know sometimes even uh thirty thirty even more you know years old  
2175students they are minded by their mothers @ okay so they have more time to spend for  
2176studying or for having fun you know [pause] so from this point of view the foreigners are  
2177not very [pause] they don't have a bonus @@ you know so they have more concerns and  
2178more um problems you know personal problems and sometimes when this are added to the  
2179stress of the studies sometimes this could become too much you know to keep going you  
2180know and [pause] this this would be you know in my opinion one of the factors influencing  
2181directly the results of the students you know there are I don't know exactly what's the  
2182percentage now but uh I I found out last year the the the students with depression I mean  
2183um taking on a daily basis tablets for depression is very high you know in [institution 1]  
2184and depression is caused by what by stress by being alone by um needs you know all this  
2185keeps depression @ you know so unfortunately

2186R: and did you have any linguistic preparation before coming to [institution 1] like did you  
2187take like IELTS classes or academic English classes or anything like that

2188Christina: uh no I learned by myself and I passed the IELTS I passed the IELTS test in  
2189[institution 2] um and um I had seven years I think six years of contact with language  
2190[pause] people in Ireland so this was all really

2191R: okay and so you took IELTS and how do you feel about the IELTS do you have any  
2192opinions feelings what was your experience taking it

2193Christina: um I would say that from the psychological point of view of evaluation was very  
2194unfairly organized for students against against students basically why I'm saying this  
2195because in the morning time when we are we are fresh you know our minds are fresh we  
2196had the written tests which was okay from pedagogical point of view okay but then we we  
2197have been waiting [pause] I think four or five hours even until afternoon and they started  
2198the the oral evaluation at about 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon you know when everybody  
2199was tired was exhausted and uh the results didn't reflect the the ability the skills of students  
2200so probably [pause] or more than sure if the spoken tests uh have been the second day the  
2201next day you know the results would have been much improved you know the score would  
2202have been higher so from this point of view um I don't know if the evaluators had any kind  
2203of pedagogical training but uh it was really really bad organized I mean you can- you can't  
2204expect we have in there at 7:00 in the morning the written which was really stressful I  
2205mean time and questions and so on and so on you know and then wait five hours and then  
2206as to three o'clock start the spoken evaluation you know which wasn't easy at all I mean  
2207you're supposed to present a topic and you're supposed to think about organizing ideas and  
2208bringing vocabulary specific for that topic it's not so easy really at that time you know at  
2209that at that time I barely know @@ what @@ was my name you know what my name is  
2210@ you know what I mean yeah

2211R: do you think that the exam adequately prepared you for your studies at [institution 1]

2212Christina: uhm [long pause] not I don't I wouldn't say that I mean um my language now  
2213my vocabulary use now umm I haven't been used in IELTS no no but it was a good chance  
2214to read more and to make active some words which were passive you know so to make  
2215active part of vocabulary which was passive before so it was a good opportunity to to learn  
2216really which creates already a stage uhm a connection between non-academic and  
2217academic it it was good chance to make this step you know this this stage

2218R: and let's see um what type of preparation do you feel the international students should  
2219do before studying at [institution 1]

2220Christina: [long pause] [sigh] depends what they are going to study because for example  
2221uhm uh [topic] okay I pick up this topic I graduate my 8 level studies uh I think 20 years  
2222ago not 20 18 years ago you know at that time I learned only about [theorist and date in the  
222370's] you know the year when I was born >could you imagine< and now coming after so  
2224many years here I'm learning about [topic] coming to 2000 2004 sometimes even more  
2225recent so all these authors which are key authors of [topic] are unknown to me so I must I

2226 must read about this authors and the concepts and to assimilate the concepts while being  
2227 used for being able to use them you know so basically I'm feeling one more time  
2228 undergraduate @ you know

2229 R: right on top of the PhD

2230 Christina: yes yes just for being able to have the tools you know for my thesis for my  
2231 articles for my otherwise I can't write about [theorist] nobody would read read my my  
2232 thesis you know @@ so old @ he's father is grandfather you know I need the sons of  
2233 [topic] @@@

2234 R: yeah so you think that student should kind of um prepare content before coming or  
2235 become familiar with their field before coming to [institution 1] just to make sure that  
2236 they're up to date or things like that

2237 Christina: yes yes it would be a must you know because you yes is because you save your  
2238 own time and energy you know if you have something very updated or updated you know  
2239 now when you must write and use something previous already written it's very easy for  
2240 you to if you graduated ten years ago it's you know it's too old really it's too outdated

2241 R: yeah and what other preparation would you suggest for for international students

2242 Christina: um it would be required also the organizing the organizing skills of a text and of  
2243 um speech you know because for example me I as a foreigner you know when I must say  
2244 something in English sometimes I translate from my own language and uh I'm not using  
2245 that English syntax you see this kind of things nobody nobody teaches us in general you  
2246 know so ideally ideally when you have a speech or when you want to present some ideas  
2247 you need a small plan before this is the ideal situation but in practice if you are asking me  
2248 now a question I can't take two minutes to make a plan before answer you to your question  
2249 you know so this supposed to be in my mind it's supposed to be an automatically uh  
2250 process an automatic process in my brain but um you see it's very difficult to have this skill  
2251 if you are coming from abroad and also for the region aspect of language okay so I knew  
2252 the rules and I know the structure of let's say an essay [pause] as I have studied them in my  
2253 own language with [language] texts okay or French or Latin but here in English sometimes  
2254 they are requiring something else different you know even it's the same introduction is the  
2255 corpus the core of the text and the end you know somehow conclusion of the text you  
2256 know but the structure is quite different and especially in academia I need I need lessons to  
2257 for write for being able to write a good research article I need lesson is not @@ is not easy  
2258 even having ideas and plans and everything you know I need to structure them in a  
2259 particular way for being successful otherwise I think there's no point to work if you don't  
2260 have something you know



2261R: yeah okay alright and so if you could give advice to professors and faculty to support  
2262international students what would that advice be  
2263Christina: [inhale] uhm for example if they are organizing summer or summer schools  
2264okay uhm [pause] and I'm doing and I'm let's say I'm a manager or a professor okay if I'm  
2265doing I'm working with a group of 10 15 people okay which are going to be students  
2266master or PhD starting in September okay I'm not starting to talk with them about about  
2267what do you have in your handbags was do you supposed to put in a a uhm daily life okay  
2268or I don't know what time did you wake up what have you done then and uh what's your  
2269regular daily problem no I wouldn't discuss this because once they are in academia they  
2270don't discuss anymore what they are you know taking from home at school for eating or  
2271whatever for their lunch you know what they are putting in the lunch box they don't  
2272discuss this anymore they discuss about uh topics with specific terminology and they  
2273supposed to write texts with a specific structure so I'm not saying that during the summer  
2274schools we must do a thesis no because they would be frightened and they will run and run  
2275away you know but the little things closer to what they are what what it's coming you  
2276know from September onwards but if it even on an introduction to the library for example I  
2277remember myself last year when I came two weeks @@@@ I was completely busy  
2278looking in that library not finding anything @@ being frustrated tired @@ having enough  
2279you know @@ and then going to the office for for registering you know looking for  
2280documents and so on and so so these kind of things some sort of preparation you know just  
2281a little with the group look this is the library how could we find this book if I'm looking for  
2282James Joyce Ulysses what do I need I need a number I need the card of the students okay  
2283the card could be taken from there you know like treating uhm students as children because  
2284some of them or most of them have don't have any idea about this building about the  
2285organization within [institution 1] and it's very hard to to to find out places and people and  
2286sometimes I don't I didn't even know what should I ask for what's the exact word for what  
2287I need you know and I'm looking in the dictionary and they give me a few few words few  
2288possibilities but sometimes I use the wrong possibility if the other person is laughing  
2289because @@@ it's not the term that I supposed to use for that form that particular form  
2290you know what I mean so these type of things what in a practical way what a student need  
2291during the first week the first two weeks it helps a lot you know it really helps a lot and in  
2292this way when you start in September you are very enthusiastic and you want to write  
2293down if possible your thesis in two weeks okay @@@ everything is there @@@ you  
2294know to being able at least to start in a less stressful way and to start your plan I mean to  
2295look for books or you know

2296R: so what would you tell professors so what a student starts in [institution 1] and they're  
2297already here what would you tell what advice would you give professors in helping the  
2298students once they're here so like during term what can professors do

2299Christina: [deep sigh] uhm a little bit a a little bit of organization between tasks for each  
2300course for example it's very hard to go simultaneously with the reference lists for that  
2301module and with my thesis somehow I don't have any idea how this could be somehow to  
2302share the tasks and because I'm not a lazy student you know I do my best and I dedicate all  
2303my time to this but even so it's very difficult to to reach the deadlines you know if you  
2304don't reach them the deadlines you are losing points so you know what I mean somehow to  
2305share the time and the tasks in um in a good way for everybody and less distressful because  
2306the students and the professors as well because they have the administrative tasks they they  
2307add extra stress on themselves and the result the results are bad in terms of uh well-being  
2308okay which brings uh illness really ultimately illness you know there is no point to kill  
2309ourselves for reaching the deadline struggling to write an essay of four thousand words  
2310four thousand words means approximately ten pages write 10 pages but I can't write the  
2311story of my life you know I'm also read and work really hard for those ten pages you know  
2312so both categories you know the supervisors and the professor's for modules should discuss  
2313and um have um a connection somehow you know for sharing the tasks and it will be much  
2314more beneficial for them and for the the students you know there's no point to to get ill you  
2315know after first year of study because the second year there will be no students you know  
2316and professor will be unemployed @@ you know or will have ill students what's the point  
2317if he is taking medical you know medical off books for nine months nobody wins really  
2318everybody is loosing you know this kind of game you know

2319R: yea yeah if if you could give advice to future students or students who are looking to  
2320//come to [institution 1]

2321Christina: I'm not so smart so many advice @@ I'm not so wise @@@@ sometimes I can  
2322be very stupid I mean very very amazingly stupid @@

2323R: @@ but you're a student so you've experienced the life of a real-life student @@ you  
2324do have insights you do| so what would that advice be to them

2325Christina: [long pause] uhm [long pause] there's a very nice place to live some of us to live  
2326so many hours during the day here to live and to visit and to have fun really there are some  
2327exciting activities during the terms and uhm it's a good place to study because they are  
2328good professors in general and the standard is high and there is also uh the opening to  
2329outside to the industry world especially uh for um STEM category you know and there are  
2330big companies interested to fund uh projects projects made by students from [institution 1]

2331and professors as well and if if I I am uhm doing this the second time choice for a faculty  
2332in Ireland definitely I would go again to [institution 1] and try my chances you know  
2333definitely I would do it again you know I don't have any regrets there are ups and downs  
2334but uhm [pause] per total it's good it's good to be here

2335R: good and I wanted you wish you had known before coming to [institution 1]

2336Christina: oh more English more English more collocations unfortunately I have a just a  
2337high school level English you know I have been to the [topic] class and I had English an  
2338intensive program of English uhm however you know my English is not for level 8 this is  
2339the truth there are some elements key elements which are missing @ in my knowledge um  
2340so probably uhm things would have been much more easier for me if my English had been  
2341better yeah

2342R: okay and are you aware of any supports that international students receive either from  
2343your department or from the wider College

2344Christina: uhm international support in terms of financial help or what

2345R: well financial is definitely one but just kind of in a broad sense so financial academic  
2346um psychologically um well-being etc. resources

2347Christina: from abroad? Uhm I know about some exchanges of students it could be four  
2348months for after all because students through Erasmus for example program they are  
2349coming to [institution 1] and some of our students go abroad and have more experience  
2350okay and uhm [pause] financial there are companies investing in [institution 1] and uhm I  
2351don't know probably there are many more but I don't have and also uh there are this kind  
2352of international uhm programs of cooperation for example in the library we have the  
2353SWAN program which is an international kind of database and uhm probably there are  
2354many more but I I don't have any idea about this you know right now

2355R: okay and it so when a student comes [institution 1] are these are you aware of any other  
2356types of programs departments associations classes that they can go to to seek help if they  
2357need anything

2358Christina: if they anything I know that [students union] has some programs of um uh  
2359financial help fund and also there are all kinds of programs for helping students with  
2360anxiety depression uhm groups of LGBTQ right uhm yes in terms of psychological health  
2361yes [pause] we we could find out somebody to talk to and to help us with at least with an  
2362advice or somebody who could send us to another person professional eventually who  
2363would help us so yes I think from this point of view [institution 1] is very good you know  
2364in giving at least the first aid you know emotional and medical you know just in case  
2365@@@

2366R: so you said first aid like which is an interesting word to describe it

2367Christina: mechanical yeah

2368R: can I ask why you're calling it first aid

2369Christina: because you using it for example um I am a foreigner student right I don't have  
2370family in in Ireland I don't have so many friends either so in case something happens to me  
2371uhm [pause] I don't know how many people would come and help me or who who could I  
2372call for something you know and for example if I have an emotional low moment right of  
2373days or months okay and I can't afford to pay psychologists because they were quite  
2374expensive okay so first first things first I will go to somebody else Google I would look on  
2375Google you know and go to somebody from [institution 1] who could help me you know I  
2376I trust these people you know I mean they they could offer a professional help you know  
2377and then probably I'll take it from there somehow you know going try and trying the soft  
2378remedies or trying the hard ones you know going further to medical or you know for  
2379looking at medical advice for something like this you know but here you you could find  
2380somebody to go and tell what's going on and to what's wrong and get advice you know so I  
2381think this is a good thing for [institution 1]

2382R: okay and is there any other type of support that could be offered or any type of support  
2383that could be improved at [institution 1] for international students so basically is there  
2384anything missing from the support that's offered

2385Christina: [pause] you know what I I what yes uhm we have this major problem homeless  
2386okay which is a major problem for all Ireland especially for Dublin they are built up with  
2387those lots of rooms okay buildings for students but I tried to to get for myself a room over  
2388there a single room I about 650 750 per month it's a high cost it's a high rate for student if  
2389they are building some some something for [institution 1] students they should they should  
2390make something with affordable prices I mean let's say 500 per months even lower because  
2391a single room is very small I mean it's very very small you know so to be something  
2392affordable because people coming here students uhm wouldn't take a room just because it's  
2393cheaper they are coming here for studying basically and for studying as a high level okay  
2394they don't come here just you know for having fun or having few drinks because they  
2395heard that [institution 1] is it would be a good place for this it is but it is also a good  
2396environment for learning so if I'm coming to [institution 1] and to study and high-level  
2397okay it would be less it would be fruitful to have a safe place uhm and to have an  
2398affordable price for that place you know so this problem would be would be taken from my  
2399mind it'd be resolved so I could focus fully on learning okay so if they are if they are  
2400building something something some flats for students they should think about lowering a

2401 little bit the price 700 750 even it's a high price rise for students room you know it's very

2402 high yeah

2403 R: okay um that's actually all the questions that I have for you um but are there any

2404 questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

2405 R: okay yes

2406 R: is there anything that you would like to say or add or express

2407 Christina: uhmmm yes um as a personal I don't know personal wish to say so I would like

2408 to see for [school] particularly to see an email and email list okay of of addresses right sent

2409 by an administration representative I don't think I don't see okay advertising is good in

2410 general but I don't think it's appropriate to post all the programs running during the year

2411 only on Facebook or on Twitter is not appropriate because each each faculty school in the

2412 world has an administration group paid to do administration work full stop so if there is a

2413 person in charge with administration that person should be paid maybe some extra hours

2414 okay per month to send an information focused for to to students undergraduate okay we

2415 have this list and we have these activities okay so those students should not it's just a click

2416 really it's just a click should know about this okay because they are interested to know that

2417 program okay the PhD students okay another list another click and I is a professor from

2418 inside [institution 1] or outside okay if I want to present a material and material for PhD

2419 students I'm going I'm interested to to have the group target PhD students because there's

2420 no point to have a student level eight first year coming to my presentation because I'm

2421 going to use some terms some specific knowledge you know at the high level he wouldn't

2422 understand anything you know it would be boring really and my particular interest is to

2423 inform a PhD student because probably in the future there could be some collaborations

2424 international collaborations to some projects between the schools you know so I'm

2425 interested to inform first of all that student who could come in the future to my school and

2426 we could make a wonderful project you know paid by European Union you know what I

2427 mean so because Facebook is like it's social media platform is for fun for entertaining you

2428 know so I don't think it's appropriate to post on Facebook all your activities you know if I

2429 liked that particular person presenting I dunno what I could say few words you know well

2430 done or something a smile okay but it's it's me it's a personal thing you know [long pause]

2431 not an administration thing [pause] this is everywhere in the world you know so I don't I

2432 don't see I don't understand why a secretary or person in charge couldn't be paid extra few

2433 hours when so much money are spent for any other things you know just pay a person a

2434 responsible person who has three lists okay level eight level nine level ten that's it you

2435 know three clicks that's it this is not time-consuming just need means a little bit of

2436responsibility really and management this it's a minor thing you know but it's present

2437everyone in the world @@ and we don't have this unfortunately you know

2438R: yeah okay is there anything else that you would like to express

2439Christina: [deep sigh] no no this should be all this should be all really I don't have

2440anything so no no thank you very much

2441

2442

### Coma

2443

2444R: alright so the first thing I'd like for you to tell me is what do you think your strengths

2445are academically so what are you good at academically

2446Coma: okay so I think I'm really good at organize myself so to plan like my schedule my in

2447my day I think I'm I'm like study in general @@ yeah for example I am a really good

2448willpower and so I know that even if I need more effort than others that I am going to

2449reach the goal @ yeah willpower I think doesn't matter what I have to do yeah willpower

2450R: yeah what what would you say that your weaknesses are academically

2451Coma: okay I don't have a talent for language seriously like during my uni- uh my high

2452school I studied [language] and [language] and I was very poor in English so like I know

2453that I it's not my talent but I wanted to challenge myself so like when I arrived here more

2454than three years ago like may English was like zero and I decide like no it's something it's a

2455big gap I have this big gap so and maybe yeah okay sometimes yeah I'm not self-confident

2456so of course when I maybe I start something like for example when they accepted me here

2457it was okay no it's impossible I cannot do like my my English maybe is not enough or like

2458my level of English yeah maybe

2459R: okay so what would you say your strengths are in terms of English what are you good at

2460in English

2461Coma: so uhm okay I think maybe uh [pause] I can understand better then mmm speaking

2462for example yeah I think so ah in writing I'm not too bad I think I know more what I'm not

2463good @ in English than@ what@ I'm good uhm yeah like for example uh the

2464pronunciation for me terrible I love so much my language so when I'm speaking English

2465sometimes I trans- uh change the word I make a new word that is not like that in English

2466R: yeah so you sometimes combine [language] and English

2467Coma: yeah because they are more similar so maybe I'm more lacking than others because

2468sometimes like for example uh some academic words it could be the same because they are

2469from Latin in [discipline] it's it could be easier from this point of view I discovered @now

2470so yeah

2471R: yeah okay and so what do you see your difficulties in English are

2472Coma: [sigh] @ I have many difficulties@ @ um pronunciation and oh I'm so uh well now

2473for example I have to speak with you and like I feel very good speaking with you but

2474sometimes I feel the pressure like it's so uh how can you say uhmmm stressful when when

2475you know that your language we are really good at speaking you're like a talkative person

2476and in English you cannot be the same person so yeah sometimes yeah sometimes I'm

2477yeah for example during the lectures when the professor is going to ask something and

2478maybe I know the answer but I don't I don't like to answer because I'm always worried

2479about my pronunciation and about maybe the other people people they cannot really

2480understand me or the st- is it's strange because I work in a restaurant for one year it's been

2481more than one year so I had to speak with customer but in that area I was was like my

2482comfort zone so I know that I'm able to here not yet

2483R: ok do you find this I'm do you find yourself more comfortable speaking with other other

2484people who have learned English as a second or third or fourth language

2485Coma: yeah

2486R: yeah and why would you say that

2487Coma: because like we are in the same situation so maybe we can more we can understand

2488each other and we had the same experience because everyone has to start from like level

2489one@ so of course maybe my experience here is that like sometimes there are more the

2490people that like they have a good level of English even if for example they are [nationality]

2491like me but like maybe they don't have like like the passion- hmmm you cannot understand

2492my pronunciation sometimes okay ehm to to to wait a little bit because sometimes I am

2493thinking in the [language] so sometimes I need to like more time to find the word so but in

2494general yes I prefer to speak with people yeah

2495R: okay so can you tell me about the modules that you're taking so what's required of the

2496modules um inside and outside of the class

2497Coma: okay so we have to like when I had to choose what kind of exams like what kind of

2498lecture and although I decide for an assignment exams like essay and because I thought

2499that is more comfortable for me like to prepare myself like at home or like study and after

2500like writing an essay like the exam is done it's better than to a normal like written an exam

2501where I am to answer and I cannot use a vocabulary so I cannot check my my grammar

2502with the essay the assignment I can check my grammar so because I think that >even if I

2503may have to write in [language]< sometimes I always want to check maybe a more very

2504precise about writing I love writing so I really want to write perfectly@ and it's stressful

2505that I cannot do in English and and what they asked to us is like reading a lot of articles so

2506 we have of course a lot of research and of course we have to a [discipline] thinking like we  
2507 have to critical [discipline] thinking so at first maybe was difficult to understand what they  
2508 wanted because of course I am so like from a point of view of academic skills I think that I  
2509 have a [discipline] academic skills the problem was that I have in [degree] so and is  
2510 another kind of university so it's similar but they asked like us or- we had to do oral exams  
2511 and here is writing so when they asked us like okay this is the topic you have to choose the  
2512 topic and you have to give your your idea and sometimes it's like no it's like that it's like  
2513 one plus two is three so like @@ was difficult maybe this part and what they ask us yeah  
2514 maybe I spend a lot of time I need a lot of time to read so I know that maybe a native  
2515 speaker need just two hour maybe for me I need like four hour yeah to read an article  
2516 R: yeah and so you also have to do a dissertation can you tell me what's required of you as  
2517 a research student doing a dissertation

2518 Coma: so uh we okay well for example they asked us to choose our topic when we arrived  
2519 here it was like first no was October and I was surprised because for for me was the first  
2520 time I'm studying this kind of I'm a studying [topic] and is amazing I love it is a real  
2521 interesting but was my first time so if you ask me like to pick a topic where I have like to  
2522 study I have to study about like I was I don't know because I've never studied this subject  
2523 before so was a little bit like difficulty and of course is more than an essay for this  
2524 dissertation maybe I'm I'm more comfortable because I'm already done in [country] and  
2525 this more similar so it's like and and in [country] like we have to write more than here like  
2526 here is fifteen thousand word in [country] I wrote like more than 25,000 word like so is  
2527 like more or less it's more easy for me to understand what is a dissertation then an essay  
2528 R: right okay and so can you describe the general structure of your lectures so when you're  
2529 inside of the classroom what is it like is it the professor giving a PowerPoint presentation  
2530 or you guys working groups are you

2531 Coma: so [discipline] I think it is more different the others like economic or like we we  
2532 have the the professor who is going everyday like we have like PowerPoint presentation of  
2533 a professor and and I think that is really hmmm useful for example for students who are  
2534 like me who are not native speaker because you can follow more the lecture and the topic  
2535 and sometimes like the last semester I had a lecture where the professor was where was  
2536 just speaking but I'd didn't have like maybe the first month was difficult because I had to  
2537 like learn like the [discipline] translation the word sorry the word in [discipline] English I  
2538 had to understand what was in [language] as well like so just to understand some to to have  
2539 some to got some vocabulary [discipline] vocabulary so like was main difficult part but  
2540 after that was easy to understood depend on sometimes the accent depend for like for



2541example this professor really I was really I understood him [pause] but sometimes the  
2542others like for example we have some guest lecturers and sometimes it's difficult because  
2543they have so an Irish accent that like no please speak slow @ and yeah

2544R: and so the assessments you were talking about so you decided not to do the typical  
2545exam based one so you did the assignment how long were the assignments did they give  
2546you a topic um how much guidance to do have for it all that kind of stuff

2547Coma: yes so we have more or less we have five thousand six thousand words uhm  
2548sometimes included footnotes that for me is difficult@ because and they gave us like a list  
2549of topics like this semester just one professor like he um she asked us like to decide the  
2550topic so in this case could be difficult for me just because it's something new so subject is  
2551something new but now I have more knowledge about so maybe I can choose and yeah no  
2552they are always like kind and you can send them email so if you have some request or you  
2553have some doubt you can ask everything to the professor's yes

2554R: um so do they give you the guidelines or rubrics or like how you're going to be graded  
2555before you submit or do they kind of explain what they expect in the class

2556Coma: uhm [click] not really was one of them with my fellow we spoke about like we  
2557were wondering what they wanted from us like because they explained everything they  
2558were kind of for example the first semester one of the professor she's lovely and she gave  
2559us like the essay that won the pri- the prize uhm yeah the year after yeah was a contest so  
2560like she gave us this this essay and so for example was really useful for me and my fellow  
2561because we took this essay as an example and we try to study@ the essay to understand  
2562how to do our essays but they didn't like the really gave to us like I wanted this for you  
2563from you I expect more this than this just this professor I think that she gave us more and  
2564because she is like our tutor for dissertation so like she gave us more more information  
2565about yeah

2566R: okay so how do you think that professors assess academic success or how they they  
2567mark the assignments what are they looking for

2568Coma: @@@ I@ don't@ know@ no really like hmmm I d- for example I I got umm good  
2569grades and um really until the end until the the

2570R: the deadline

2571Coma: yeah no when they gave us the the results yeah before the result like until like the  
2572first hour I was waiting on my computer for results like it really for me from my point of  
2573view the grade could be like 40 or like 88 like so the first class second class really because  
2574I didn't know and I was just I can say proud of my job like in December before the  
2575deadline I say to myself okay are you happy about what did you write yes okay this is the

2576main point because really at first we didn't really know [pause] what they like what is the  
2577English

2578R: what they expect

2579Coma: yeah or like the when know that they gonna like grade you because of some

2580R: criteria

2581Coma: criteria yes yeah thank you

2582R: do you know do you still feel like you don't know the criteria now

2583Coma: [long pause] mmmm maybe I understood something like for example now like I

2584know that they want us in a structure in essay like introduction first chapter second chapter

2585third chapter is like your critical thinking and the conclusion but like I know that maybe

2586uhhh [click] not really I I think they cannot really say what they really how they do I don't

2587know like I know that I did a good job@@@ but yeah no not really I cannot say

2588R: okay yeah and so how would you personally assess your academic success so do you

2589feel that you're doing well in the program

2590Coma: uhm as I told you I have @willpower so like I think that I I thought what I'm

2591studying is really interesting soooo I really enjoyed studying it and so when you are

2592interesting something you always find the way [pause] so I found the way they only think

2593that now maybe I'm I I know that I gonna cry on my essays it doesn't matter@ but like the

2594first semester yeah maybe really was maybe I needed like more help just to to know okay

2595we want this don't worry like what do you need like maybe we need more like a tutor how

2596can I say because it doesn't matter if I'm post graduate because I know that for example for

2597undergraduate there are some [discipline] English lectures and I wanted to the same

2598because for example they never know if it's my first time that I'm studying ehm ehm

2599[discipline] in English yes so it's my first time so for me you don't have to how can I say to

2600take for granted if that I'm able to write in a [discipline] English in [language] of course but

2601in English it's different even if it's like a small difference maybe I even like one week we

2602can just okay [discipline] English in general like this this like we expect this from your

2603assignment this is these are the critical thinking the [discipline] critical thinking like

2604R: yeah so just a little bit more explanation

2605Coma: yeah just to be more comfortable and yeah

2606R: so in general what do you think students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]

2607Coma: [long pause] explanation yeah [pause] just when I start here I follow every every

2608lectures about everything like ehm but maybe I needed something more specific like in

2609[country] we are really alone the really university is something that is up to you and so I

2610thought that coming here was it's different because it's different it's more practical so I

2611really liked it and I like this kind of assignment I suffer on it I cry on it but I like because  
2612like you do you have to do some research so it's more easy to understand maybe to  
2613remember like in [country] we have to study like two thousand of pages and to know like  
2614that but after one month you forgot you forget it because it like is is it impossible to  
2615remember every kind of [discipline] but like yeah I think it may be more specific about  
2616your area like not too general

2617R: mm-hmm and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

2618Coma: [sigh] [exhale] @okay the main problem one of the main problem was that yeah  
2619you feel stressful when like you know that you have academic skills but you I felt like  
2620without my arms because like I have you have academic skills I am able to think in  
2621[discipline] way and maybe I am able to write about but I'm not in the same situation of a  
2622native speaker I'm not in the same situation because and for example I didn't know if like  
2623my way of writing English is not the same than a native speaker so yeah I think that there  
2624is the difference and I don't I don't how can I say I don't pretend to be like a native speaker  
2625is impossible I need here years and years and years but I want just maybe like some helps  
2626to be not at the same level but more or less yes because like is a I'm sorry if I'm saying this  
2627but that I pay as another one thing and it's like something is an investment on my life a  
2628master so like if you're arrive here and you don't know if you are able to pass the exams  
2629that is the main important things you've felt like really without arms because like I didn't  
2630have feedback

2631R: until you got your grades back

2632Coma: yeah so I discovered oh perfect everything was okay like I'm able to do but like if it  
2633wasn't like that if I didn't pass exams like now I don't know

2634R: yeah then you would have wasted you know six months and a couple of thousand euros

2635Coma: yeah

2636R: okay um so what other factors do you think impact academic success and that could be  
2637things inside and outside of [institution 1]

2638Coma: @@ like in Dublin you have to find a good place@ where you live@ no I'm joking

2639R: no I mean that's true@

2640Coma: @because if you live in a horrible place no ehm

2641R: I was going to say I think every single student has brought that up

2642Coma: @@@ okay yeah because yeah hmmm yeah you have to be able to organize

2643yourself to manage your time of course anddddd anddddddd [long pause] willpower @@

2644and maybe you're lucky to find some people to share like you're your thoughts or like your  
2645problems yeah you're lucky because is not always like that it depends because it's different

2646than University like you're in a different class everyone is run is running every day and we  
2647don't have a lot of time so it's different like the behaviors that we have each other they are  
2648different like it's like near you are near and you can understand me like the I can't say the  
2649job work the job world no how can I say it job work

2650R: the workforce?

2651Coma: okay yeah so like everyone is thinking about himself I think is it's not like in the uh  
2652undergraduate where you are like more I think a group so I think that in general like you  
2653have to think about yourself and you have to like to say okay how I can do like yeah

2654R: yeah so there's a kind of a level of competition almost or and the level of I just need to  
2655pass cuz I need a job after

2656Coma: yeah

2657R: okay so now I'm going to kind of switch to the types of entry assessment that you had  
2658coming into [institution 1] and preparation that you had before [institution 1]

2659Coma: okay so in doing my assessment essay or

2660R: no so basically did you did you have to take a standardized exam to be accepted to  
2661[institution 1]

2662Coma: ah of course yes there is the IELTS six point five I have a six point five yeah they  
2663all just ask me these about my English level yeah

2664R: yeah so how do you feel about the IELTS exam what's your experience with it

2665Coma: hmm @ I feel that IELTS is like more not about your level of level of English is  
2666more about like your way to manage the time if you know the how it's working the exam  
2667like how to ehheh because it's like four part and speaking part was okay but it's about my  
2668pronunciation so I was worried but it's okay but like the other part I think is more of course  
2669you have to have only uhm a level a good level of English because if you have to  
2670understand and comprehension so of course so I think that is it's not how can say like the  
2671result that you have in IELTS is it's like no in [language] what is the word you can trust  
2672more or less like is your level level of English but at the same time like maybe you can  
2673find a way to pass that exam even even even if you are not like a B2@ like like maybe for  
2674example from my point of view yes I'm like a B1 maybe for speaking and maybe for  
2675because I can really understand so maybe I'm B2 C1 could be I hope @in writing maybe  
2676I'm a B1 and B2 mix I don't know but

2677R: so it does kind of a good job saying what level you are

2678Coma: yeah

2679R: but also it's not perfect

2680Coma: no the main point is that like they prepare us about some subject but of course this  
2681is not my it about like for [discipline] or so if we start to speak we start to speak about  
2682science or something else@ maybe I'm not able to answer because of course you need you  
2683need #hears I think depending on what kind of life do you had from for example  
2684sometimes here there are some [nationality] so sometime no I'm stupid to speaking in  
2685[language] I know it's silly but like of course it depend

2686R: and so do you think that the IELTS accurately predict how you're going to do in  
2687[institution 1] so do you think it does a good job saying oh if you have a 6.5 you'll be  
2688academically successful in [institution 1]

2689Coma: [click] not really is is just a part maybe not really for example uh the difference  
2690between me and another girl that she studied already in English in [country] in a  
2691[discipline] university is that like she had already a background in [discipline] English  
2692because she is younger than me so maybe I was like unlucky because when I graduated  
2693like in my university they started from the year to do in English exam we now student can  
2694choose to do the exam in English and in [language] or or in [language] so I think that when  
2695I think about her I think that is more like what she has done during the university then they  
2696IELTS while you are preparing the IELTS really you are just more understanding the  
2697structure of an exam then when I decide to do four or five month of general English and  
2698only two of IELTS and was working yeah because it's just more structure so I think like six  
2699point I was worried about because I we said okay I only has six points five and the others  
2700maybe they are seven point five and like it's difficult when you are in the middle like I'm  
2701just I am just with six point five is I'm happy because when I'm able to do this University  
2702now is I discover I am able to do this master but I I I needed more effort I think more effort  
2703than the others and this okay but I think like if you accept people that have a six point five  
2704you have to give them something more than others they need something more than others  
2705we can do because we've academic skills and seriously if you want to do something you  
2706find the way it's true@ but like is enough to speak is enough to start to to study [pause] is  
2707too specific I cannot for example in [discipline] you need to have some [discipline] English  
2708something difference I didn't study from the IELTS to prepare my IELTS exam I had a I  
2709remember a test about crocodile so @@@

2710R: yeah which nothing to do with what you're doing here @@

2711Coma: no @@@

2712R: so can you describe so you came to Ireland three years ago

2713Coma: more or less yeah

2714R: can you describe kind of your English language learning story

2715Coma: @okay [sigh] I could speak for two hours @@@ no so first of all yeah during my  
2716high school I studied like literature so we stopped it this is a problem in [country] like I'm  
2717sorry to speak about it but it's true so now it's better but when I studied it's just about  
2718Shakespeare and was like really interesting but not useful and after during the University  
2719there we had like small exam in English was like more a problem for everyone just to pass  
2720because it was terrible and and after like I after my graduation I decided to come here to  
2721start to study English properly and I spent like here three month and after I I I went back to  
2722my country to do the internship it's a [profession] but after a while I understood that maybe  
2723like I wanted to challenge myself more like because now then [discipline] how can I say  
2724the [discipline] environment it's more like international so if something for example my  
2725father is a [professional] and for him was okay doesn't speak English and know more  
2726[languages] than English but now you cannot like you need to speak in English so this is  
2727very soon why I decided to come here again and I spent like seven months was like an  
2728academic year program in a school of English here in Dublin ehm where I did like five  
2729month of English general English and two more of IELTS I got the IELTS and after that  
2730for the summer I spent the summer in [country] and so yeah during the int- when I was a  
2731trainee [profession] I decided to study a little bit English you know training in um  
2732[country] with um a Cambridge school and just to to try to to keep going don't how can  
2733you say don't forget like what I has learned here and after the academic year program and  
2734after I got the IELTS okay I started to work in a restaurant and I worked before in a  
2735supermarket it was useful because was like like not in the city center @ and so I had to  
2736understand like eh Irish people and like more like from the countryside it was terrible like I  
2737I smile a lot when I do that @@ yeah so you can find other way to communicate and I'm  
2738[nationality] so I use my hands a lot and like and after that yeah I learned I think during the  
2739experience during the restaurant in the restaurant like more like how to understand like  
2740maybe I understand better because I have to use telephone and speak with customers so  
2741was really useful but of course at the same time I think that I miss some grammars I'm still  
2742doing many grammar mistake when I'm speaking and because of that because like I was  
2743just focus one on subject restaurant ehh vocabulary and so yeah because I got the IELTS in  
2744the 2017 I think 2019 yes yes yes 17 so like it's not something like when I got something it  
2745is like that you have to practice depending what are your practice and what field because  
2746like yeah

2747R: so the academic year so was it just general English and then exam preparation or did  
2748you do any sort of academic English and things like that

2749Coma: uh I did just five months of General English and I I'm lucky maybe with exams I  
2750don't know but like that first day my level was like was more than B2 but after I told them  
2751no just because I'm lucky @@you know it sometimes ehm in the English I try like two two  
2752schools of English here in Dublin so when they do the test sometimes like you can depends  
2753because if you're lucky not cross like and yeah I have still some gaps

2754R: yeah exactly um okay so do you think that that preparation helped to prepare you for the  
2755demands of studying at [institution 1]

2756Coma: not really I think they they helped me for living here for finding a job here not  
2757really for the [institution 1] ehmmm [pause] because was general English so no I I wanted  
2758to say about this this period that I spend like in the was interm- intermediate was more  
2759yeah upper intermediate yeah and so there they they were studying like more like business  
2760English it's more always is always business English and I @want like @[discipline]  
2761English so I don't know why in general like they start from business and so maybe they're  
2762like I learn a little bit more because one of the professor was like not a [professional] but  
2763he's studied [discipline] and after he did like a master in [discipline] something so like was  
2764like he gave us that but I didn't use after so like not really

2765R: okay so um what type of preparation do you think international students should do  
2766before coming to [institution 1]

2767Coma: so I think that maybe like for example if we had like or during the summer like  
2768before this or for example September September was a month that we spent just to follow a  
2769lot of lectures about how do you organize yourself how to plan yourself and seriously I  
2770need it because like I have like a big poster and posted about all the tips that they gave me  
2771so I really used these kind of things but like maybe I mean I needed more like I think they  
2772could be more specific more specific so about [discipline] about every subject maybe every  
2773field that need a specific have uhm yeah more specific yeah

2774R: okay so now I'm gonna ask you to give advice to various people and organizations and  
2775so if you could give advice to faculty here at [institution 1] to better help support  
2776international students what would that advice be so like your professors basically

2777Coma: okay for example I think is not something that is up to the professors I think it is  
2778something that is up to the like like the for example there was the drop in I did the drop in I  
2779did every kind of I find I try to find every kind of helps and like I think it really like they  
2780they gave me many useful helps but was like more in general and for example this  
2781structure of the essay if they just an example they told me like okay you to divide the like  
2782in three chapter okay and every chapter in another three small pieces and for example at  
2783first I started to do like that and like I wrote like a dissertation for my first essay was like

27847,000 of word and I after I destroy everything because it wasn't useful I wrote it really wro-  
2785I start I started to write a dissertation and and after when the professor she gave us the the  
2786essay that I spoke before okay no we don't have to divide like every chapter in subchapters  
2787so if I didn't find someone that it really was able to to explain me what they wanted from  
2788me in my field soo another things for example there were other during the first semester  
2789when I was following the general English lectures I saw that there were other people that  
2790they are studying with me in the master and I think that maybe if they give us like the  
2791possibility to have like the first month so September that we have more time just like some  
2792ehm ehm like academic English like [discipline] English or like how to structure the essay  
2793or what it's going to be like on exams but like about like our field like maybe seven people  
2794doesn't matter if you ask like for example maybe they can when you they accepted me  
2795maybe they could ask me like would you like to follow like the first term for the first ehh  
2796month like so two times a week like some hour or twelve hour [discipline] background like  
2797a [discipline] ehm yeah something like mor what they wanted from us or like oh maybe  
2798explain that were gonna be like like yeah more more more answers more answers like so  
2799you know that you can feel like comfortable that okay I know what do they want because  
2800everyone that is here they want to do a good job you know so but really the feeling was  
2801like I felt really without arms and it's just because it's a gap of languages not a gap of  
2802knowledge about [discipline] of course I have to study but like I want to do more effort for  
2803me is okay spend more hours than the others is of course it's normal because I am not a  
2804native speaker [long pause] but maybe if they gonna give me more how can I say means  
2805more [pause] maybe like if I suffered maybe I suffered a little bit less then what it was you  
2806know if I had more answers

2807R: right and so if you could give advice to future students of [institution 1] what would that  
2808advice be

2809Coma: okay @@sooo first of all start with doing a summary of all scholar like the citation  
2810style because like for example about [discipline specific citation system] or about to  
2811Turnitin be questionable like we didn't know how they could affect it the the grade of the  
2812exam no the results [pause] we didn't know like so at first was like a nightmare Turnitin  
2813because when I got like fifty four percent I thought okay because the professor said like if  
2814it's forty just be worried about it is more than forty like it's not good not so good but at the  
2815end I realized I asked any I asked to everyone to Irish people like how it's working like  
2816don't care don't care that doesn't matter like not really matter so like but like was something  
2817new for me or like [citation] is not so different than in [country] like we use more or less  
2818similar but like at first I thought it was really like important for example my first



2819assignment I was like ten minutes before the deadline @@ I was like @terrified and like I  
2820thought ok it's grade gonna be horrible because like the [citation style] ah citation style was  
2821like oh like horrible horrible was like like okay but wasn't [citation style] really wasn't  
2822[citation style] and after when I got good grade I thought okay maybe they don't care  
2823maybe so for example I did a some uh a [language] English like summarize of [citation  
2824style] that I gonna @put @online @for future students@ I'm gonna put online and like and  
2825I gonna I'm gonna use of course because I want to do things to use [citation style] because  
2826they want [citation style] but I really don't know already if it's like so important or less  
2827important ehm yeah

2828R: okay and so if you could give advice to organizations who are preparing international  
2829students for studying at [institution 1] what would that advice be

2830Coma: hmmm for example the IELTS was the academic IELTS blah blah blah was I don't  
2831remember but yeah so was not the general one was to enter in a university ehmm don't  
2832speak about crocodile really @@@ really @ like what if you are doing science something  
2833specific with animals of course but maybe I don't know I know that it may be it's  
2834impossible to organize that okay because I know that in that moment when they open that  
2835envelope is for everyone in the world at that moment they're doing this exam I'm  
2836understood like that something like but ehhhhhhhhh maybe change the subject a little bit I  
2837know that is from Australia [pause] so maybe they have @crocodile @there or something  
2838it's something that really I cannot forget like the crocodile it was terrible

2839R: okay and so you've touched on this a bit um so it seems like you're aware of all of the  
2840support options in [institution 1] for international students

2841Coma: yeah

2842R: um and you said that you tried it and it just it wasn't specific enough could you offer  
2843could you say more about like what support services you did take that you know about and  
2844um and how they could be improved

2845Coma: okay so first of like I'm a kind of person that I asked for help from the people that  
2846they they they have to give me help but I don't like bother really I don't like in general I  
2847don't like so maybe I'm not the kind of person that asked like two three four five times I  
2848ask like two times after two time if I understand that it's like something's in general I stop  
2849and I try other ways maybe know how to do so the drop-in was useful because he  
2850confirmed to us it was me and my fellow we went together how to like structure one two  
2851three okay we know that the structure in general is like that but was maybe general and he  
2852was kind because he asked us like if you want to send me they essay after we gonna I can  
2853check and for example not me but if one of the professor English professor like my

2854colleagues she did and like he answered but of course he needs more time to answer and  
2855the deadline is like in [institution 1] the deadlines are always like is most important point is  
2856to organize yourself because we have a lot of deadline so I think it like it wasn't fair from  
2857the point of view of the people that they are working like you this area that you had to  
2858handle like a lot of students is like from my point of view was like ok we have this kind of  
2859services we have this kind of people that they are gonna help this student but you know  
2860they cannot help everyone in the same way it's impossible and for example I asked some  
2861for my first assignment some helps to my friend that she's German and she's a  
2862[professional] here and like she's not really a [professional] but she studied [discipline] and  
2863it was because of her that I understood because I asked her >even if she doesn't know  
2864anything< about my topic my subject just to check and to told me okay in English when  
2865you have to cite [source] you have to cite like that you can say for example in [citation  
2866structure] no you have to >why I had to discover by my friend< like and in the and what I  
2867thought was like maybe like they needed more people #but of course 12 people that they  
2868are doing just this they're like helps like the student and maybe they can give every student  
2869like a feedback or they can say like okay you are doing well but maybe I don't I don't for  
2870example like the first professor that I had he helps many students I I saw him like no the  
2871critical thinking is another thing so but really how many students do you have you cannot  
2872so it was I thought like okay you have a big organization I love this place I love this  
2873campus I love [institution 1] but like come on you can really? you don't have this kind of  
2874support like I cannot have it I cannot have a person that is working here that is is paid from  
2875[institution 1] but in other university in Europe there is like to give me a feedback before  
2876the deadline was just what just is is I think it is not a big gap but it's something necessary  
2877because it doesn't like when I understood that there is for an undergraduate and not for  
2878postgraduate what is the difference between me and an undergraduate one I'm not a native  
2879speaker like let me follow this is lecture about a [discipline] English please@ @ yeah  
2880R: okay so that's all the questions I have for you but are there any questions that you wish I  
2881had asked that I didn't ask  
2882Coma: okay uhm no I think I'm I'm happy  
2883R: is there anything else you'd like to add or say or express  
2884Coma: no as I told you that really what I want to underline is that I think that the services  
2885that you can find in [institution 1] are useful so there is not a mistake about what there you  
2886can find but there is something that is missing I think [pause] so it doesn't like what I say  
2887doesn't mean that I didn't eh appreciate the helps that I receive I really appreciate but there  
2888is something it is missing

2889R: and that would be the more specific yeah focusing on your discipline having more  
2890people

2891Coma: yeah like someone that can when I spoke with my friend she was like surprise she is  
2892German and she was surprised like like and she told me that in Germany like for the  
2893student for example Erasmus student or for people that they are doing masters and they are  
2894studying every kind of subject we have some people that they are paid from university just  
2895to give some helps feedbacks even if they are doing like they they the master for example  
2896in English or in Germany they're not native speakers so of course they gonna give it if they  
2897need they know that we can like check because I think that for example ehm if you check  
2898like my grammar like I don't understand if it could be like uhh unfair for the native speaker  
2899but I think no because like hmm [pause] of course I need is wrote to you about equality and  
2900equity it's different like we are not in the same level we don't start from the same level I  
2901cannot be a native speaker so like I need more sources just to know that I can I can pass the  
2902ex- exams and like to do my better I don't know how to say

2903R: brilliant thank you

2904

2905

### Constance

2906

2907R: so um can you tell me in academics what are you good at so are you good at

2908Constance: ahhh academia I think it's either writing or

2909R: yeah yeah

2910Constance: oh maybe in [country] the most student are writing also including me uh  
2911because in our opp- our daily li- daily study we need to write very more and really to recite  
2912the article the teacher thing is good that we need to recite them and remember and  
2913remember them and recite for our teachers so I think the writing is very good for us but uh  
2914the spoken language like this I think is very bad in [nationality] student because in our  
2915study is we have the less opportunity to practicing so I think we're not great okay yeah

2916R: and so that's in English you're not good at speaking but you are good at writing in  
2917English

2918Constance: yeah

2919R: okay are you good at things like time management organization things like that

2920Constance: @@ I think I'm I'm in favor of time management uh because time is life we  
2921need to we need wr- we need to uhhhh [pause] organize it regularly uh so in my b- in my  
2922university study I really to have me a plan for my time um we I need you wake up at five

2923uh six o'clock and and then I need to go to the library uh like that I think I will have a good  
2924plan for it

2925R: mm-hmm okay and so you're used to that you're very good at time management

2926Constance: yes

2927R: yeah okay um what do you find difficult when you study

2928Constance: uhm actually uh as exam for here because my my my subject is [discipline] so  
2929it it should be include mathematics oh [pause] well I in [country] many people uh my  
2930teachers and my students also think is very easy for us to learn the mathematics in a #unt  
2931actually I think it's very difficult for us to learn it and your teachers say about your um  
2932concept after some formula uh it's very difficult for us to recognize easy I think

2933R: yeah and why why do you think it's very difficult

2934Constance: oh because there are some difference between the mathematics in there Euro uh  
2935in Euro and [country] in [country] also learn the mathematics just to remember some  
2936formula and @ just to remember but here we need to the teacher will who would teach us  
2937some very simple thing very simple things that we think is very simple but if the teacher  
2938use the English to say with us all of the students in [language] will think what is it @@@

2939R: right so it's it's the language of communication

2940Constance: yeah

2941R: that really makes it difficult yeah or

2942Constance: also they're all one formula the teacher will spend one hour or two hour to  
2943explain just one formula but uhm [nationality] student just think if in our university our  
2944teacher just need one hour can explain the altogether here the teacher spend one month

2945R: okay wow so a lot of differences

2946Constance: yeah because I'm not a native speaker @

2947R: right yeah and um so in your modules what do you need to do here is it a lot of reading  
2948a lot of practice um can you describe your modules here

2949Constance: uhuh [inhale] actually I think my module are we need to finish some report but  
2950[pause] I think it's not necessary for us we just have the exam so I think the practice is very  
2951important for us we need to know your how to use E how to calculate E uh I think this this  
2952aspect is the most important part for us to recognize E

2953R: mm-hmm okay and so you have written exams right or do you have essays as well

2954Constance: uh I don't have essays @

2955R: you don't have essays okay so in your exams do you know what your exams are going  
2956to be like going to like

2957Constance: uhuh going to be like

2958R: so do you know how the exam will look

2959Constance: uh it's the the form of the exam

2960R: yeah

2961Constance: @just the paper

2962R: just a paper okay and how much time will you have

2963Constance: uh two hours

2964R: two hours

2965Constance: yeah I have to five courses

2966R: okay five questions and two hours

2967Constance: no no it's a five five subjects

2968R: okay

2969Constance: yes maybe in the December 10th every day I would have exam and it last for

2970six days

2971R: okay wow that's a very long time

2972Constance: @@@

2973R: and the exams will the questions just be math formulas what what will be the content of

2974the exam

2975Constance: oh uhm the exam oh I think I suppose you need to uhm to distinguish what was

2976subject like mathematics also you have to many like a correlation for me the as for the

2977[topic] I think the practice is more important to the calculation so I will have some concept

2978uh some some some some some

2979R: it's OK take your time don't worry

2980Constance: @@@@ I need to I need to answer their concepts in English [pause] oh well

2981as well as for me I'm good at calculation something but if asked me to write something I

2982think [click] it's it's not good @

2983R: it's difficult yeah and do you get to practice for the exam during term

2984Constance: oh of course yeah my major is [discipline] and also I participated in exam um

2985it's the nationalism it's the qualification of the [organization] in the last in the last month so

2986I think I prepare it of three months before I get here before I got here so I think I can't have

2987the ability to finish my exam @

2988R: okay perfect it's good and inside of the classroom so when you go to class here at

2989[institution 1] what is it like is it a teacher speaking with the PowerPoint do you have to

2990talk to your classmates what happens inside of the classroom

2991Constance: talk with the teacher?

2992R: well when when you go to class yeah what is the teacher doing

2993Constance: [long pause] uhhhh [pause] because always late for them @@@@ for my  
2994class @@@@  
2995R: you're always late for them @@@ that's okay so when you go to class  
2996Constance: b- bec- like my apartment is far away here I need to spend uh one hours to walk  
2997so I was always late for my class  
2998R: okay @ and does the teacher just lecture do they just talk  
2999Constance: yeah  
3000R: yeah that's it okay  
3001Constance: uh just talk and maybe in the lessons they will ask they will ask us some  
3002questions theeeee uh the in in my class half the people are Indian half [nationality] so @@  
3003uh in the class just the Indian will answer the c- the lecturers question  
3004R: okay so only the Indians will answer and why is that  
3005Constance: we can't understand the question @  
3006R: okay because you can't understand the question is the teacher speaking too quickly do  
3007they have an accent or is it just difficult to understand  
3008Constance: uhhh [long pause] oh I think it's not it's not that in our in our education system  
3009um from my primary school to university we just to a listen to your teacher and it's very  
3010seldom to answer them the question so I think it's just a diff- different way too the  
3011different different way too it's a different teaching way for two different country the other  
3012thing is that because that because that it will influence us to answer  
3013R: okay yeah yeah so it's just different different ways of learning  
3014Constance: yeah yeah we always keep silent @@ yeah  
3015R: okay alright and um let's see how do you think you are doing in terms of academics so  
3016do you think do you feel that you are succeeding in [institution 1]  
3017Constance: what means succeed  
3018R: um succeeding would be like do you feel that academically you are doing good do you  
3019think you're doing good here or not good  
3020Constance: at [institution 1]  
3021R: yeah at [institution 1]  
3022Constance: eh [pause] I suppose it's good uhhhh [long pause] can I ask could I speak of  
3023library it's linked about it's link with their academic  
3024R: well like are you are you doing well in [institution 1] or do you feel that you are  
3025struggling  
3026Constance: uhhh I just go here for two months I didn't@ I didn't know@ it's good or bad  
3027for the academic

3028R: yeah okay so you don't know yet

3029Constance: yeah

3030R: okay um what do you think your professors grade on so what do they look for when

3031they are grading

3032Constance: mmm my lecturer

3033R: yeah

3034Constance: whoa @@@ that's a good question @@@ ummmm maybe some lecturers will

3035look for [pause] uhh actually my classes the lecturers also to uh speak for a while at the

3036class and then time time's up they go out @@@ I don't @@ know @ what @ they @ look

3037@ for @

3038R: okay alright oh so you don't know what they look for

3039Constance: yeah @@

3040R: okay do you know what they expect of you as a student

3041Constance: oh the first one also have the good grades and second second one uh [long

3042pause] maybe we need to respond them respond them from in the class

3043R: mm-hm okay and so let's see what do you think students need to do well in [institution

30441]

3045Constance: uhhh there there's no doubt that the first one is my time management uhh [long

3046pause] uh here uh the the course um because we we didn't we don't have class every day so

3047many students will saying today's very cold or their way is very it's far away the apartment

3048that the apartment is far away from school so they of always skip skip their class so I think

3049time management is very important to finish and I think it's their #operative it's our

3050responsibility for our study and second one [long pause] @@ let me think time

3051management and second one oh we need to practice we need to [pause] discuss our project

3052with our members uh in in my class we have many a group assignment if we also to to do

3053that by ourselves I think it's very hard to finish it if we have the cooperation with our group

3054members is it can save many hour is is save our time to finish it and is efficiency

3055R: and how are the group projects so do you like them do you not like them what is

3056difficult to what is easy

3057Constance: [long pause] actually I don't like that @@@

3058R: you don't like them okay tell me why

3059Constance: @ because the group member the group assignment oh well I'm a class I'm a

3060class about [topic] have you heard

3061R: no I haven't yeah

3062Constance: well [topic] is about some some financial products to how to control it and my  
3063group assignment is is use [app] and buy some stock and option and future in their website  
3064and it's just it's a not actually market but we can practice it on it and the teacher in the  
3065lecture ask us ask us to have a assignment for us to write a report and write the start- strat-  
3066strategies each about your practice but at the first time there we need to we need to we  
3067need to open we need to begin the begin the [pause] competition on one on the first  
3068October but the time is oh we also the first time to have this class with didn't we didn't  
3069know how to use it and how to how do how to do it well we just to buy the stock option  
3070um by our feeling um so we also complained about that [pause] oh if there if we need to  
3071write a report I didn't know how to write it #

3072R: mm-hmm right so it's just a lot of you weren't told how to do things

3073Constance: yeah just just just just I just it just not a gambling yeah to to think your stock is  
3074a rise or decrease today we just to guess yeah @@@ and the teacher don't and the teacher  
3075and teacher didn't teach us some strat- strat- strategy about the way to buy it so

3076R: okay alright I know how how do you like the group members how do you interact with  
3077the group

3078Constance: interact

3079R: interact like how do you speak with them communicate decide what to do

3080Constance: yeah it depends it depends what persons have a group with me if I have a group  
3081with Euro- European and Indian we are using in WhatsApp if all my groups are [language]  
3082I think we use it by [social media]

3083R: okay alright and do you have different groups

3084Constance: oh yeah and different cour- different courses I will have the different group  
3085with the different people now I the [module] I I I have a group with three three  
3086[nationality]

3087R: okay yeah alright and um what what is difficult about group work

3088Constance: hmmm [long pause] there is no doubt that the first one is communication  
3089with [nationality] they ask us ask us huh uhhh the pronunciation of [nationality] is very  
3090hard for me to hear because my I'm not a native speaker and if I hear the [nationality] or  
3091what is that is very difficult they also to uhh #unt or doodoo

3092R: okay yeah yeah and what is easy about group work

3093Constance: uhhh easy about group work mmm [long pause] is find your state because our  
3094library have a very strong a very strong library state library we can download what state I  
3095we need so it's very easy for us to do that

3096R: good and so how much does language affect academic success