

Reimagining migrant language education from the bottom up: an ethnographic study

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

Reimagining migrant language education from the bottom up: an ethnographic study

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This thesis examines the impact of prominent discourses that emphasize the learning of English as a marker of integration on adult migrant language education. Using ethnography, I focus on the lived experience of a heterogeneous adult migrant student body within and beyond the institutional setting of a Further Education (FE) college in west London. The ethnographic fieldwork took place between summer 2017 and autumn 2018 - a time marked by hardening attitudes towards immigration and migrant integration and increased anti-foreigner sentiment. The contextualised and multi-layered analysis in this thesis highlights the mismatch between top-down discourses and imaginations of immigrant integration and the reality on the ground in the context of increased migration-driven diversity.

To critically examine the phenomenon under investigation, I consider theoretical perspectives on the conceptualisation of modern states as a 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013) as well as understandings of citizenship which hinge on neoliberal imaginations and constructions of subjectivity promoting the 'neoliberal self'. In order to see beyond these perspectives, I make use of Skeggs' (2004; 2011; 2014) concept of 'person-value' which includes dimensions of both value (in an economic sense) and values (in terms of social values) and which makes it possible to highlight alternative value-practices.

This study makes a unique and timely contribution in the way it brings out the multifaceted dimensions of inequality that operate at different levels of the phenomenon under investigation and provides a vital addition to the field of adult migrant language education in the UK. As an outcome of the emergent findings, this thesis proposes a normative shift from 'language learning as the key to integration' to 'language learning for enriching solidarities in diversity'. I also draw attention to and question the way adult migrant language teaching is currently organised (and specifically the distinction between ESOL and EFL). An important part of the alternative approach is a shift from the register of the nation-state towards bottom-up perspectives developing in the different spatio-temporal register of everyday place-based practices and for the conceptualising of migrant language educational settings as 'micropublics'. This perspective facilitates a change in pedagogical practice, i.e., by being attentive to the fostering of convivial capabilities and the inclusion of critical pedagogical approaches.

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Notes on Terminology

Terminology denoting processes of migration

I agree with Jones et al. (2017) that '[t]he vocabulary used to describe ethnic, racial and migration identities is inevitably flawed and contested' (p. xvi). Thus, it is important to be precise in our terminology (Back et al., 2018). Following the suggestions of these scholars, in this thesis, I have chosen to use some terms and not others:

Migrant – I use this term to denote those who have moved, either temporarily or permanently, from one country to another.

Asylum seeker – Someone who has left their country of citizenship and applied for asylum (refugee status) in another country but whose application has not yet been decided.

Refugee – Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality or habitual residence and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country.

Illegal/irregular – I use the terms 'irregular' and 'undocumented' instead of referring to an individual as 'illegal', except when I refer to work or publication in which the term 'illegal' is used.

Minoritised – In general, I do not use the terms 'minority ethnic', 'ethnic minority' or 'black and minority ethnic', 'BME' or 'BAME', except when these terms are used in work or publications I am referring to or were used by my interlocutors, for example during interviews. I have opted to use 'racialised minorities' and 'racially minoritised' to draw attention to the active processes of racialisation that are involved in terminology.

EU citizen/EU migrant – Whilst the UK was still a member state of the EU (which was the case during the course of my research), those coming to live in the UK from other EU member states and thus exercising their right to freedom of movement were sharing many similar rights of settlement, work and welfare with UK citizens. However, in the UK, political and public debate has tended to refer to citizens of other EU countries who had come to the UK as migrants (Jones et al., 2017). During the EU referendum and Brexit debates, the use of 'EU migrant' has become even more pronounced.

Terminology denoting the teaching and learning of English

Alongside the global spread of English language teaching shaped by historical legacies of Empire and contemporary globalizing forces, a plethora of acronyms has emerged to describe the teaching and learning of English in different contexts and by different people, i.e. 'unequal Englishes' (Tupas, 2015). In my thesis, I take a critical stance toward these

historical and global processes. Thus, I contextualise these acronyms and labels as much as possible and by working from a decolonizing perspective elucidate their underlying logics. I am interested to illuminate how these labels and categories that are frequently used to describe the teaching and learning of English together with their underlying logics produce discursive, symbolic, and material effects and do cultural work.

The landscape of English language education for migrants at my field site is characterised by the side by side existence of two learning settings that operate under the labels EFL and ESOL. However, as this thesis shows, this distinction is not always clear cut. In this thesis, I use the terms in keeping with the language that is used to describe the two settings at my field site. Following Howatt and Widdowson (2004), Rosenberg (2007) and Williams and Williams (2007), in the UK context, these terms can broadly be understood as follows:

EFL – English as a Foreign Language. This term is mainly used to refer to English language teaching for students whose main purpose is to acquire the language per se and not because they have come to the UK to settle here. Howatt and Widdowson (2004) point out that ‘this phrase places its main emphasis on the language rather than on the learners’ (p. xv). Williams and Williams (2007) define EFL as

- (a) The teaching of English in countries where it does not have a significant role as a language of communication in the major state institutions (such as government, the law, education), for example the teaching of English in France, China, Brazil where it is carried out in state schools and private schools.
- (b) The teaching of English in the UK to students from countries referred to in (a). In the UK it is typically carried out in private language schools and further education colleges.

This thesis is concerned with the context described in (b), specifically the setting of a further education college. It goes beyond the scope of this thesis to describe the various different settings in which English is taught that fall under (a).

ESOL – English for/to Speakers of Other Languages. This term is mainly used to refer to English language teaching for migrants who need the language in order to live in the UK. Alongside the history of immigration to the UK, the field of ESOL has developed as an area of English language education policy and practice. The use of the term ESOL was adopted at an institutional and regional policy level in the 1990s. Before that the term ESL (English as a Second Language) was mainly used. The term ESOL was considered as being a more accurate representation of the many multilingual migrant students for whom English is a third or fourth language.

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| APPG | All Party Parliamentary Group |
| COMPAS | Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford |
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| ESOL | English for/to Speakers of Other Languages |
| FE | Further Education |
| IELTS | International English Language Testing System |
| NATECLA | National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults |
| OFSTED | Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills |

Transcription Conventions

| | |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| ... | a pause in the flow of speech |
| / | unfinished word or utterance |
| [...] | an omission of text |
| {xxx} | unintelligible utterance |
| [laughs] | contextual information and comments, not transcriptions |
| CAPITALS | indicating stress or emphasis |

Throughout the thesis I use italics when I quote extracts from interviews and conversations with my participants as well as for extracts from my fieldnotes.

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Preface

Seeds of the project and some autobiographical reflections

In this preface, I reflect on the seeds of this project that are to a great extent responsible for how I came to do what I did and provide some autobiographical reflections to position myself within my research. One of the major influences on this project is without doubt my academic background in social sciences and professional experience in project work with migrants and later second language education. After I obtained my degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in the UK, I completed teacher training and gained relevant professional experience in the field teaching ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) to a 'superdiverse' (Vertovec, 2007) student body in London for several years. The heterogeneity of the students I encountered was truly remarkable, in terms of countries of origin, migratory trajectories, citizenship statuses, and cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, religious, as well as educational backgrounds. This often led me to feel that I had a microcosm of the whole world in my classroom, together with the histories, geopolitical events and life-stories that this encompasses.

As I was going about what I was supposed to do - teaching English - I encountered many instances in classroom talks and discussions with students as they shared parts of their experience that gave me a glimpse into the fabric of their social worlds. It was during these encounters that I recognized the significance of letting my students express and raise issues that were important to them in relation to their everyday experience of learning English and navigating the everyday as an adult migrant in London. Stewart (2007) emphasizes the necessity of attending to the seemingly trivial experiences of everyday life and discusses the ordinary as an integral site of cultural politics. She argues that in order to even begin understanding what is going on, we must first simply take notice. To this end, I gradually started to take notice of my migrant students' lived experiences within and beyond the classroom. Their experiences often stood in stark contrast to dominant narratives about immigration/integration that were prevalent in the public debate. This mismatch underscored the multifaceted and by no means clear-cut nature of the learning and teaching of English in the context of migration and integration.

At the same time, there was my own ongoing personal experience of having come to the UK from Germany and setting up a new life here. I was myself challenged to negotiate my place and position here and at times had to resist how I was positioned by my new surroundings. Having initially come to the UK as an EU citizen, since the EU referendum I have become very much aware that I am now an EU migrant. As such, I embarked on this project inhabiting the double position of migrant researcher.

All these experiences and encounters cultivated my development of a 'sociological imagination', combining 'the personal troubles of milieu' and 'the public issues of social structure' (Mills, 1959, pp. 8-10). Eventually, this inspired me to go back to university - seeking to put my 'life experiences' into use for my 'intellectual work' and to 'use each for the enrichment of the other' (*ibid.*, p. 195-96), which I started doing during my MPhil and continued to do so in this PhD project.

In doing so, I moved from taking notice to gaining an in-depth understanding of the lived experience and struggle of my participants as they are learning English whilst trying to set up their lives amidst the 'superdiverse' but highly unequal dynamics of the global city and migrant metropolis London. Throughout my research I was often surprised, and I could by no means have foreseen the findings that would come out of the research and the outcome it has ultimately culminated in.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis presents an ethnographic investigation into adult migrant language education. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, I examine the impact of prominent discourses that emphasize the learning of English as a marker of integration on the experiences of adult migrants who have come to London to set up a new life and who are learning English to facilitate this process. I focus on the lived experience of a heterogeneous adult migrant student body within and beyond the institutional setting of a Further Education (FE) college in west London. The college's landscape of English language education for adult migrants is characterised by the side by side existence of two language learning settings operating under the distinct labels EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) – a distinction that I critically analyse in this thesis. My ethnographic fieldwork took place between summer 2017 and autumn 2018, which was a time marked by hardening attitudes towards immigration and migrant integration and increased anti-foreigner sentiment, as I explain below. The contextualised and multi-layered analysis in this thesis highlights the mismatch between top-down discourses and imaginations of immigrant integration and the reality on the ground in the context of increased migration-driven diversity. As an outcome of the emergent findings, this thesis proposes a normative shift from 'language learning as the key to integration' to 'language learning for enriching solidarities in diversity'. This study makes a unique and timely contribution in the way it brings out the multifaceted dimensions of inequality that operate at different levels of the phenomenon under investigation and furthermore provides a much needed addition to the field of adult migrant language education in the UK.

Research 'conjuncture'

The dynamics of an increased hostility towards people who appear to be different coupled with heightened inequality and a diminished welfare state denote what Hall (2017) describes as a 'brutal migration milieu'. This socio-political climate had gained traction at the time of my research producing a 'volatile life-world of migration in public discourse, policy, and everyday life' (p. 1571). My research saw the conjuncture of various different events and processes: the government's 'hostile environment' agenda which was officially

aimed at “illegal” migrants but had a significant impact on all migrants and racially minoritised communities (Taylor, 2018); the EU referendum in 2016 and subsequent Brexit debates; as well as the so called European ‘migrant crisis’ or ‘refugee crisis’ between 2015 and 2019 which saw increased migration to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea or through Southeast Europe. These processes which I discuss in more detail later in the thesis garnered a lot of attention in public, political, and media debates.

To this end, immigration and the resulting diversity was undoubtedly not only among the most frequently debated but also most emotive subjects in the public discourse throughout the time this project was being undertaken, exemplifying how immigration is ‘heavily entwined with public feeling and discourse’ (Jones et al., 2017, p. 6). The dominant narratives that were circulating put a heavy burden not only on “EU-migrants” or those who were perceived as “illegal” but all people who appear to be different and thus had an impact on the positionality of my participants as well as my own. Working from the premise that immigration has brought too much change to the nation’s demographic, economic, and social structures, these discourses increasingly instilled suspicion and hostility between the ‘us’ and ‘them’ and emphasized the need to secure national borders against the ‘other’. The latter was particularly emphasized through the slogan ‘take back control’ that came to define the campaign to leave the EU and the subsequent Brexit debates.

Moreover, as various studies have shown, dominant narratives around immigration are characterized by a negative, often toxic, tone of debate. They frequently devalue and evoke moral panics about immigration whilst immigrants are often scapegoated for various social anxieties, associated with criminality (e.g., through the use of terms like ‘illegal’ and ‘bogus’) and dehumanised (e.g., through using terminology such as ‘surge’, ‘flood’) (Jones et al., 2017; Philo, 2013). Particularly, in the rise of the so-called ‘migrant crisis’, there have been as, Jones et al. (2017) remark, ‘huge shifts in what is being said in public and in local debates about migration’ (p. 15) across the political spectrum. These debates, as they assert,

reshape the imaginings of the figure of the Immigrant and the categories of the 'them' and 'us' whilst displaying a distinct dehumanising nature¹.

These categorisations draw sharp distinctions between insiders and outsiders and have led to a situation where belonging is precarious and conditional. These categorisations further animate the segmentation of migrants into 'deserving' and 'undeserving' and the construction of 'hierarchies of belonging' within everyday 'economies of recognition' (Ahmed, 2000, p. 24). Belonging involves active and ongoing processes of boundary-making and shaping that operate within frameworks of power to separate 'us' from 'them' involving the inclusion or exclusion of particular people, social categories and groupings (Yuval-Davis, 2011). These processes, as this research shows, happen not only from the top down but also amongst those affected by this, i.e., in this case my participants, and bring questions of legitimacy and recognition to the fore.

In this context, this thesis investigates historical processes which have led to the current climate and produced inequalities through material and symbolic violence. In doing so, it elucidates how and under what circumstances the figure of the Immigrant, and particularly the Immigrant who is perceived as 'failing' or 'unwilling' to learn English and thus to integrate, has become a key emblem of moral and political concern. My thesis explores how this figure is racialised, classed, and gendered and the nuanced ways in which these inscriptions are reflected in the language learning for integration rhetoric that has emerged. I discuss the imprints this leaves on migrant language education, institutional settings that are teaching English to adult migrants, as well as adult migrant language students' 'volatile life worlds'. Whilst doing this, I am particularly interested in teasing out emerging counter-narratives to the knowledges these dominant discourses produce. Thus, my research not only adds to understandings of how power works and inequality manifests itself in the language learning for integration context, but also helps to challenge, disrupt and fracture dominant discourses and propose an alternative model.

¹ Jones et al. (2017) point to the increased use of 'visceral signifiers', for example David Cameron, the then Prime Minister talking in 2015 of 'a swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean, seeking a better life, wanting to come to Britain' (BBC, 2015). The use of such language or visceral signifiers, they assert reshapes 'the object of disgust (the migrant, or those suspected of being migrants) as well as 'the person who feels disgust' (p. 16).

Furthermore, the distinct spatial context of my research – the global city London – further exacerbates the dynamics of the temporal and socio-political conjuncture. The global city London denotes a key junction or crossroads within the circuits of global neoliberal capitalism² (Back and Sinha, 2016) where entrenched forms of social and economic inequality have become compounded, impacting both historical residents and newcomers. These inequitable relations have been aggravated in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008, particularly through the introduction of austerity plans which saw a massive decrease in public spending on welfare, which is a key ingredient of neoliberal processes³. London also has had a long history of immigration and attracts large numbers of international migrants. Once the British Empire's beating heart, contemporary London finds itself within a distinct postcolonial situation and is described by Back et al. (2018) as a migrant city. The post-colonial, global, migrant city context of London provides the backdrop for a dynamic urban multiculturalism that has evolved within high levels of inequality and social stratification, leading to a highly diversified setting in which conviviality⁴ co-exists with tension, dissonance, conflict, competition, and racism (Back et al., 2012; 2018; Back and Sinha, 2016). In their research on London as a migrant city, Back et al. (2018) observe a 'selective process of ranking and ordering of difference' that reaches into social encounters and results in 'pecking orders of integration' (p. 67) often reinforcing and reproducing divisions. Within the social landscape of contemporary London, old hierarchies of belonging are taking new forms. In this way, new hierarchies of belonging are established that display aspects of colonial racism but in a form suited to London's postcolonial situation (Back et al., 2012). To this end, my participants who have come to London in the pursuit of setting up a

² The characteristics of neoliberal economic policy are free trade, deregulation, privatisation, and subcontracting of public services as well as a decrease in public spending on welfare. The implementation of neoliberal policies has led to increasing stratification and greater socioeconomic inequalities (Harvey, 2005). These effects can be witnessed in particular in 'global cities' like London which have developed as control and command centres of the neoliberal market economy (Sassen, 2001).

³ Wacquant (2010, 2012) further explains how the retrenching of the welfare state under neoliberalism has been accompanied by a growing penal arm. This criminalising focus concentrates on the social disorders associated with the erosion of the Keynesian social agreement, i.e. those who are marginalised, resulting in a 'carceral' or punitive state.

⁴ In *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?*, Paul Gilroy uses the notion of conviviality to describe 'the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of urban life in Britain' (2004, p. xi).

new life find themselves caught up in these inequitable relations as well as the wider socio-cultural, socio-political and economic climate.

These dynamics of the research conjuncture leading to a 'brutal migration milieu' (Hall, 2017) became shaping forces of the research. They are thus elucidated in more detail throughout this thesis, particularly in chapter five which looks at the spatial dimension of the phenomenon under investigation riven by the socio-economic and socio-political volatility of the present moment. What is important to note is that this particular research conjuncture not only shaped the inquiry significantly, it also provided ample opportunity to investigate ways to counteract these dynamics and to imagine a different form of being in the world - alternative ways of relating to others within and beyond language classrooms and the creation of innovative place-based forms of solidarity in diversity.

Research aim and approach

This research conjuncture has created a precarious and highly toxic environment for migrants in the UK – including my participants. As such, there is an urgent need for a rethinking of adult migrant language education in order to disrupt the influence of these processes and furthermore to leverage these spaces as a catalyst for alternative and dynamic forms of solidarity and for a more just society. Therefore, this thesis employs a critical stance and social justice perspective driven by a desire to make language learning for adult migrants a more equal and socially just undertaking and experience.

To do so, I take an interdisciplinary approach to critically examine the phenomenon under investigation, i.e. adult migrant language education/adult migrants learning English in the context of current prominent language learning for integration discourses amid increased volatility. To this end, I draw on insights from migration studies, sociology, political economy, education, and applied linguistics to reach a dynamic and comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon occurring at the nexus between migration and language. This approach further helps to tease out the intersectional inequalities that have been established over time and are at work across different scales and which profoundly impact the lived experience of my participants through processes of im/mobility, hierarchisation and in/exclusion. In doing so I follow other scholars who have advocated for

an interdisciplinary theorisation and intersectional analysis of issues pertaining to migration and language including migrant language education as well as applied linguistics more generally (see for example, Canagarajah 2017, Capstick, 2020; Simpson, 2019). Moreover, such an approach makes it possible to locate the phenomenon within its socio-historical, socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economic context and to better capture the interplay of different temporal (past, present, future) and spatial dimensions (macro, meso, micro).

Particularly, including a political economic perspective highlights how neoliberal forces of globalization - that have altered people's lived realities around the world and continue to produce an ever-growing flux of migration - are important to consider as a wider framing of the phenomenon under investigation. The 'turbulence of globalization' (COMPAS, 2014, p. 5) is inextricably linked to the project of neoliberal transformation which has impacted human life on multiple dimensions and plays a prime role in shaping the current political, economic, and social order and relations on global as well as local levels. Although, it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss global neoliberal processes in detail, in the context of the spatial dimension of the global city London in which the phenomenon under investigation is embedded, it is important to understand how processes of neoliberal transformation have produced severe inequality. Chapter five looks at the global city dynamics in more detail and shows how they impact the lived experience of my participants. However, as many commentators note, the project of neoliberal transformation is far more than an economic policy and has become an 'economic common sense' (Bourdieu 2005) or 'common thread' (Hall, 2003). This way of thinking and vision of the world has triggered manifold political-economic, social, and cultural transformations (Peck, 2013). These transformations have allowed market principles to permeate all aspects of life (Standing, 2011) leading to the production of new subjectivities, new notions of citizenship, and also new ideologies of language and education (Shin and Park, 2016). Chapter two considers global neoliberal transformation as a cultural project premised upon a shift toward governmentalities that merge market and state imperatives, and which produce self-regulating 'good neoliberal subjects' that embody ideals of individual responsibility and in doing so promote a neoliberal understanding of citizenship.

This multi-dimensional framing and dialoguing between different dimensions of the phenomenon resonates well with the ethnographic nature of my research. As O'Reilly (2012) points out, a key tenet of doing ethnography is to 'employ a macro approach to gain knowledge of the wider context of action, as well as maintaining a close eye on the various ways that social structures are taking effect within and through agents in the practice of daily life' (p. 11). Furthermore, using ethnography has allowed for an emic perspective and a prolonged engagement with the phenomenon and my participants in the field in the pursuit of a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). I combined discourse analysis with participant observation over a period of about fifteen months, four focus group discussions, and ethnographic interviews with 39 of my student participants from 24 countries of origin, diverse backgrounds and with complex migratory trajectories (see table below for further details as well as the end of the chapter and Appendix 1 for a more detailed introduction to the student participants). I also included walking methods in the form of 'go alongs'. This allowed me to venture more into the life worlds of the adult migrants at the centre of this study, beyond the institutional setting and enabled a more participatory 'researching with' rather than 'researching on' my participants.

Table 1.1: Summary of student participant backgrounds

| Number of students | Age range | Length of time in the UK | Countries of origin | Previous countries of residence |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 39 22 female 17 male | Between 21 and 55 years old | From newly arrived to more than 12 years | Afghanistan, Albania, Belarus, Brazil, Chechnya, Chile, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Macedonia, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen | Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Dubai, France, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands |

I also carried out ten interviews with managers and teachers at the institution. This comprehensive approach rendered an in-depth and contextualised understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The thesis is also written up as an ethnography, which impacts the thesis structure, the way the findings are presented and the discussion is woven through, as well as the result, which ultimately is the proposing of an alternative approach to adult migrant language education.

My approach facilitates the juxtaposing of dominant top-down imaginations and discourses about language learning for integration with the struggle of adult migrant language students - providing a platform for their voices to be heard and for adult migrant language education to be reimagined. As a result, this thesis makes the case for bottom-up perspectives of adult migrant language education that de-hierarchise, rehumanise, and foreground innovative forms of solidarity instead of emphasizing the currently popular integration paradigm. I argue that this alternative approach to migrant language education necessitates a normative shift in our understanding from 'language learning as the key to integration' to 'language learning for enriching solidarities in diversity'. I further conceptualise migrant educational settings as 'micropublics'. The aim is to enable migrant language education to function as a site where an affective community of supportive sociality can be enacted, convivial capabilities can be fostered, and counter-narratives can be authored.

Deconstructing integration as a dominant discourse

Integration is currently a widely popular immigration policy paradigm, not only in the UK but across much of Europe. Given that this study focuses on the lived experience of adult migrant language students in the context of integration discourses, it is important to gain a critical understanding of and to re-evaluate these discourses.

Following a widespread pronouncement of the end or failure of multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010; Wills et al., 2010; Yeung and Flubacher, 2016), integration has increasingly been emphasized in political and public discourse as a prerequisite for migrants to participate in and contribute to the society and economy. Within this 'integration trend' (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010, p. 19) there is a growing emphasis on requiring migrants

to “fit in” and integration is promoted to counter and correct the ‘perceived dislocations of increasing diversification’ (Yeung and Flubacher, 2016, p. 600). This is deemed necessary by governments and policy makers to ensure social cohesion and to safeguard national values and liberal democratic principles which are perceived as being under threat by multiculturalism. Yeung and Flubacher remark, ‘[i]n this framing, integration is commonly voiced in the imperative: [...] immigrants “must integrate”’ (*ibid.*) and often has a punitive streak imagining migrants as not wanting or not being willing to integrate (Gidley, 2014). There is also a distinct moralistic dimension to this framing of integration as it is essentially about who are ‘good’ or ‘bad’ migrants or potential citizens (Fortier, 2017).

Within these debates, the issue of assessing and improving migrants’ English language skills as part of the migrant duty to “fit in”, contribute, and thus be considered as legitimate is often raised and made a key aspect. Not speaking the ‘legitimate language’ (Bourdieu, 1991), which in the UK context is English, is portrayed as unwillingness to integrate, failing to contribute, and conceived as hampering cohesion. This observable trend in the policy focus promotes the idea of linguistic competence/integration as a guaranteed enabler of all other forms of integration and inclusion into society (employment, educational, social, cultural), without taking structural constraints and inequalities into account. As many commentators have pointed out, the emphasis on the English language as a measure of subjects’ capacity or commitment to integrate as well as a condition of citizenship, participation, and inclusion into society is now well-established within the UK. Indeed, in the absence of targeted intervention strategies for integration, migrant language education is commonly expected to function as the key mechanism for integration (see for example, Fortier, 2017; Simpson, 2019, Spencer, 2011). Generally, the focus is on the field of ESOL which as an area of English language education has developed alongside the history of immigration to the UK.

These assertions are supported by key publications on the issue that were widely discussed in media and political debates during the time of this project: ‘The Casey Review: A report into opportunity and integration’ (Casey, 2016)⁵ and both the interim and final reports of

⁵ The report was commissioned by the then Prime Minister and Home Secretary in 2015 and published in December 2016.

the All Party Parliamentary Group into Social Integration (APPGSI) published in January and August 2017 respectively (APPGSGI, 2017a; 2017b)⁶. For example, the interim report of the APPGSG states

that all immigrants should be expected to have either learned English before coming to the UK or be enrolled in compulsory ESOL classes upon arrival. As was acknowledged by the Casey Review, speaking English is the key to full participation in our society and economy, and is a prerequisite for meaningful engagement with most British people (APPGSI, 2017a, p. 18)

Although acknowledging that the interim report had received some criticism and backlash and was perceived by many as controversial, the final report of the APPGSG reiterated this position firmly and further states that, 'no one should be able to live in our country for a considerable length of time without speaking English' (APPGSI, 2017b, p. 66).

As sociolinguists have long pointed out, dominant discourses about language, language learning and integration reflect language ideologies and make language and language learning a highly politicised and ideological issue. Language ideology, as Irvine (1989) explains, is the 'cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests' (p. 255). Thus, language often takes on the function of a proxy for a whole different set of socio-political interests and is connected to larger structuration processes that create and produce normativity and subaltern 'others' (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016). To this end, debates about language and language learning are bound up with questions of migration control, citizenship, in/exclusion, belonging, legitimacy, and imaginings of the 'them' and 'us' – which as we have seen were brought to the fore in an ever more toxic and emotive way during my research.

In this thesis, I follow Flubacher and Yeung's (2016) suggestion to treat integration as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense. According to Foucault (1972; 1980; 1984), discourse

⁶ The inquiry was launched in August 2016 in the aftermath of the UK's vote to leave the EU and was aimed at investigating, as stated in the interim report's foreword, 'how the UK's immigration system could more effectively promote integration' (APPGSG, 2017a, p. 4).

joins power and knowledge. Developing ideas from Foucault, Hall (1997) asserts that discourse is

one of the systems through which power circulates. The knowledge which a discourse produces constitutes a kind of power, exercised over those who are “known”. When that knowledge is exercised in practice, those who are “known” in a particular way will be subject (i.e. subjected) to it. This is always a power relation. Those who produce the discourse also have the power to make it true – i.e. to enforce its validity, its scientific status. (Hall, 1997, pp. 57f)

Discourses go beyond merely describing reality, rather they (co)constitute that same reality. Beyond a symbolic dimension, discourse also has a material dimension. From a Foucauldian perspective (neo-Marxist thinkers such as Gramsci as well as Althusser share this understanding) dominant discourses are integral and fundamental to the everyday lives of modern individuals, their experiences and relationships as well as the local practices and institutions by which their lives are governed. This form of modern power produces particular subjects and ways of life through mechanisms of discipline and normalization (Prins and Slijper, 2002). Through power relations implicit in orders of discourse, discourse becomes invested ideologically and is a means through which (and in which) ideologies are being reproduced. Thus, ideologies construct realities which give meaning to discursive practices (Fairclough, 1992).

In the fields of research on immigration, integration, multiculturalism, diversity, and so forth discourse analysis has been extensively adopted as a useful and important approach using a wide range of methodological frameworks depending on the background of the researcher referring to many written and spoken texts. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these various theoretical and methodological approaches and how different researchers have used them in detail. The analysis presented in this thesis can be perceived as sociological discourse analysis (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009), an approach that subscribes to a social constructivist view of the relationship between language and reality (see also Prins and Slijper, 2002; Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

As such, this thesis looks at dominant, top-down discourses that construct and impose a legitimate vision of the social world. The role of the state being central in this process as it has the power to create social divisions and to reproduce social identities through its dominant discourse, categorisations and judgments (Bourdieu, 1989; 2014). To this end, instead of employing a transnational perspective, in the context of this thesis the national context and the nation state as a primary category of analysis is foregrounded (chapter two discusses the theoretical framing of modern states as a 'community of value' which underpins the analysis in this thesis in more detail). For the study of dominant immigration/integration discourses (which are national debates) the nation which can be seen as existing as a 'discursive, communicative entity' (Prins and Slijper, 2002) remains a highly relevant site of investigation. As Villegas (2004) points out, 'the state has the power to (re)make reality by establishing, preserving, or altering the binary categories through which agents comprehend and construct that world' (p. 60), such as good/bad, willing/unwilling, moral/immoral, them/us. Drawing on Bourdieu, Crossley (2016) concludes that discourses produced by the state carry more weight than others because they are official and are viewed and often accepted as being authorised and legitimate accounts. Therefore, what is of interest in the context of this study are, on the one hand, integration discourses - with a particular interest in the role of language and language learning within these discourses - and the knowledge they produce. On the other hand, I investigate how these discourses shape the lived experience of my participants, e.g., their effect on the construction and stabilization of social realities, how they define subjects authorized to speak and act, and position them through historical processes and representations, and how my participants come to act on themselves and others in light of these discourses.

I argue that these dominant discourses of language learning for integration reinforce social hierarchies and reproduce wider power relations and inequalities as they circulate within historically established immigration regimes. They are thus part of a 'gendered, racialised, and class-based immigration system' (Griffiths, 2017, p. 156) that problematizes migration and the diversity resulting from it and often pathologizes the figure of the Immigrant. The pathologized figure of the Immigrant is in turn seen as being in need of intervention, that is integration, and in this way the subject that needs to be integrated is constructed (Blommaert and Verschueren, 1998). Thus, integration discourses and policies are

fundamentally complicit in and instrumental for the creation of social categories (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016). This brings processes of categorization, differentiation, and hierarchisation into sharp focus for my research as they shape the lived realities of people, such as my participants.

Research questions

In the context of the current socio-political volatility and predominant integration discourses as briefly described above, this inquiry was guided by the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: *What role do language and language learning play in dominant integration discourses and what are the historical processes that have led to their prominence?*

1a) How and under what circumstances is the figure of the Immigrant, and particularly the Immigrant who is perceived as “failing” or being “unwilling” to learn English, imagined as problematic and has become a key emblem of moral and political concern?

RQ2: *How do these integration discourses shape adult migrant language education?*

RQ3: *What is the lived experience of adult migrants in this context within and beyond an institutional setting offering English classes?*

3a) What possibilities and limitations do my participants encounter?

3b) How do processes of hierarchising, inclusion and exclusion work?

RQ4: *Are there possible counter narratives to dominant integration discourses and different ways of imagining adult migrant language education?*

4a) What are alternative perspectives and practices that can be mobilised in adult migrant language education?

Map of the thesis and chapter outline

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. Following this introduction, chapter two introduces the theoretical frames that were utilised to make sense of the ethnographic data collected and to critically examine the dynamic interplay of the different dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. The chapter further brings my research into dialogue with the work of other scholars mainly from within the field of applied linguistics and migrant language education.

Chapter three serves as a supplementary literature review, starting with a brief history of the developments in English language education provision for adult migrants. In regard to Britain's post-war history of immigration patterns and legislation as well as the evolution of a multicultural society, I critically elucidate the historical/post-colonial legacies which are shaping the present moment. Thinking historically makes it possible to deconstruct the dominant narratives that have been emerging in the context of immigration, integration, and the question of language learning and the ways in which they are prone to reinforce social hierarchies and reproduce wider power relations and inequalities.

Chapter four lays out the methodology employed in this research project and examines the overall epistemological approach adopted. I discuss questions of reflexive practice and epistemic responsibility, justify the approach taken, and introduce the reader to my field site. I further describe the ethical responsibilities and issues I faced. I examine the methods employed, the assumptions inherent to them and the way they produce knowledge in the field. I then turn to the process of data analysis and how I moved from writing down to writing up.

Chapter five unpacks the various spatial dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. In this vein, it maps the socio-spatial context of my field site and its surrounding area including its increased migration-driven diversity, the socio-economic context of the global city London, and the socio-political dynamics which are operating at the level of the nation-state. I show how inequality has been heightened in these contexts and how the specific dynamics inherent to these contexts have a disproportionate effect on migrant communities. This is further exacerbated by the hostility against migrants and socio-political volatility rendering those who are most marginalized even more vulnerable.

Considering the dynamics that are outlined in this chapter enables a more nuanced understanding of how language education for adult migrants inserts itself into these contexts, and how it is experienced by different adult migrants who are studying English at my field site.

Chapter six focuses on the institutional context and the landscape of adult migrant language education at my field site which is characterised by two settings: EFL and ESOL. I highlight the lived experience and im/possibilities my participants face as they are streamlined through these settings, the in/exclusionary mechanisms that are at play and shape the day-to-day operations and the pathologizing narratives that weave their way through the college.

Chapter seven shifts the focus from the institutional setting to the narratives of my participants and teases out ways in which my participants position themselves within prominent language learning for integration discourses that rely on certain cultural narratives and moral judgements. I discuss the different ways in which my participants draw on these discourses to delineate symbolic divisions between themselves and those they construct as problematic Others in their struggle for legitimacy and belonging.

Chapter eight shows how dominant discourses are not only reproduced but also challenged, counteracted and resisted. I discuss the way in which language education for adult migrants can function as a site where positive affects circulate and migrants' agency and solidarity within a hostile, volatile, and precarious environment are enhanced. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the importance of mobilizing hope for imagining alternative futures and empowerment.

In chapter nine, I build up on the emergent alternatives in the previous chapter and lay out how an alternative, bottom-up perspective to dominant integration discourses provides a possibility for re-imagining and re-creating a different and more equitable future for migrant language education. I argue for a paradigm shift from a top-down focus on integration to instead foregrounding innovative forms of solidarity in diversity, convivial capabilities and bottom-up acts of belonging and citizenship. I also advocate for the enactment of a critical pedagogy of hope, transformation, and social change.

Chapter ten concludes the thesis by revisiting the research questions, reviewing the study's strengths and limitations and assessing the contribution to current scholarship and discussions, as well as the implications for policy and practice. I finish by looking back and looking ahead.

Introduction to participants

In concluding this chapter, I would like to briefly introduce my student participants to the reader to, on the one hand, provide some background information about the participants and their individual migratory experiences and, on the other hand, allow for the following chapters to be read in the context and light of these diverse and heterogenous backgrounds and experiences. The names are a mix of pseudonyms and real names dependent on participants' preference.

Husam (m, Syria, 27)

Husam came to the UK as a refugee and had been in the country for less than a year. He had managed to find a job in a local pharmacy where he was hired to serve the many Arabic speaking customers. During my field work his pregnant wife was able to join him in the UK.

Meserat (f, Eritrea, 39)

Meserat came to the UK to seek asylum about eight years ago. She is married and has three children. She was working as a cleaner during the time of my field work and was acutely aware of her racialized position within the global city space London which she felt was reproduced at the college.

Salah (m, Sudan, 41)

Salah, a male Sudanese ESOL student in his early 40s often spoke about the ups and downs he had been experiencing since first coming to London with his family several years ago. He had often found himself up against a strict and rigid system. He holds a university degree in economics from Sudan and had been working in Dubai for several years before coming to London with his family about eight years prior to my field work. He was working as an estate agent for Middle Eastern clientele.

Ana (f, Russia, 45)

Ana who was born in Russia and also holds a Swedish passport came to London about a year prior to my field work to live with her daughter who had come to study law at the LSE and after graduating top of her class started to work in one of the leading law firms in the City. Ana has an impressive migratory trajectory moving from Russia to Latvia as a single mum, from there to Sweden (from where she regularly commuted to Denmark for a while) after she had fallen in love with a man from Poland who had a business there, and from Sweden to the UK. She was doing a floristry course which was a long held dream of hers.

Farida (f, Libya, 32)

Farida grew up in a well-off Libyan family and had been coming to London as a visitor several times as a young adult. The political instability in Libya had devastating effects on her family which forced Farida to seek asylum in the UK about five years prior to my fieldwork. She has severe health problems and had lived for some years in the north of England before moving to London. She is married to a Tunisian-born man who had lived for long time in France before coming to London to work as a chef. They have one daughter who is going to a good school which was very important for Farida. During the time of my field work she was trying to resist being rehoused by the council to an area which she was not very fond of and which is very far from her daughter's school, however, in the end unsuccessful.

Elira (f, Albania, 29)

Elira was born in Albania but had lived several years in Greece before coming to the UK. Through her Greek passport she could exercise her right to freedom of movement. She is married and has two school aged children who were not very happy about having moved to the UK. Elira is a trained hairdresser and was working as a housekeeper in a London hotel as well as in a hair salon but not as a stylist as her qualifications were not accepted. During the time of my fieldwork, she was accepted on a vocational hair and beauty course at the college which would upon completion in the future give her the opportunity to work as a stylist in a more upmarket hair salon in London, which was a dream of hers.

Izad (m, Lebanon, 32)

Izad came from Lebanon about two years prior to the field work to seek asylum. He studied philosophy and worked at a university in his country of origin for some time before coming to the UK. At the time of field work he was not in employment and was planning to take up a course in accounting at another college which he thought would secure a better future for him.

Agnes (f, Albania, 35)

Agnes had moved to London shortly before I met her during my fieldwork. She had lived in Wales for some years before coming to London. She was a fabric designer in Albania but had not been able to find any work related to her profession which was very difficult for her. She was working as a housekeeper/nanny instead.

Ronak (f, Syria, 39)

Ronak came to the UK via Belarus where she fled to from Syria. Although she like living in Belarus, she decided to move to the UK as she thought this would provide a better future for her three children who she brought up as a single mum. She was also caring for an elderly family friend.

Olga (f, Poland, 37)

Olga has been living in the UK for more than 12 years and working in different service giving jobs. At the time of my field work she was working for a bakery chain. She had started to attend ESOL classes at the college again after her experience of discrimination at her workplace. At the height of the EU referendum campaign, her then manager started to loudly bang the door to show her disapproval of Olga exchanging a few sentences in Polish with the delivery driver who came around in the evenings to pick up goods. After the Brexit vote, banging doors turned into her manager shouting 'Now we are gonna have Brexit and we can get rid of you people, then I don't have to listen to you anymore, you'll see!' Olga subsequently could change the branch of the bakery she was working for.

Pouya (m, Iran, 26)

Pouya came to the UK from Iran to seek asylum and join some family members less than a year prior to my fieldwork. He had started a university degree in Iran which he could not finish. At the time of my fieldwork, he was working in a corner shop and looking into the possibility to train as a health care worker. He was also trying to move away from his area to move to somewhere with 'good people'.

Leila (f, Iran, 42)

Leila is a trained lawyer from Iran and has a daughter who is studying at a UK university. As she was not able to work in her profession in the UK, she started a vocational course in hair and beauty and was working in different beauty salons during the time of field work. She was also volunteering for an Iranian lawyer once a week whilst trying to find a way into the legal route.

Julia (f, Belarus, 42)

Julia was born in Belarus and lived for some years in Latvia when she was growing up. Before coming to London about one year prior to my field work she lived for 20 years in Croatia. She is a trained teacher and married to a Croatian who is running his own cyber-security business in London. She has one daughter who goes to one of the sought after schools in the vicinity of the college where Julia started to volunteer in the school office.

Rak (m, Iraq, 26)

Rak was fairly new in the country when I first met him during my field work. He is a cameraman from Iraq where he did some work for BBC journalists. As the situation became too dangerous and unstable for him, he came to seek asylum in the UK. Through the help of his contacts, his case got processed very quickly at the Home Office and he could also secure some freelance work as a cameraman for the BBC studios in London.

Arif (m, Ethiopia, 25)

Arif came to the UK about three years ago. He had undergone training as an upholsterer in Eritrea and was able to find very similar work for a company specialising in interior decoration, carpet laying, etc. Arif often emphasized that he was doing the same job as in his country, which was very important for him.

Awet (f, Eritrea, 21)

Awet came to the UK about one year ago. When she first came she started to work as a leaflet distributor for an Eritrean restaurant but had found a job as a sales assistant in a high street fashion shop in the meantime which she was very happy about. Her dream is to go to university in the future and study journalism.

Ahlam (f, Somalia, 48)

Ahlam came to the UK more than 12 years ago from the Netherlands where she had fled to from Somalia. She is married and has proudly raised three boys. Her husband is working as a security guard and her children all attend good universities in the UK. Ahlam often spoke about being blamed for not having learnt more English which was difficult for her as her whole focus was to bring up her children well so they can have a better future.

Vanessa (f, Chile, 35)

Vanessa came to do her Master's degree at Imperial College ten years ago. She subsequently worked for different start ups. She is married and has two children. At the time of my field work she was in between jobs. She started English classes at the college as she missed being involved in collaborative team work. About half way through my field work she found a new position for an international company.

Ali (m, Yemen, 25)

Ali had been granted asylum in the UK about one year prior to my field work. He had lived in the north of England for some time before coming to London. He found a job as a sales assistant in a high street fashion shop during the time of my field work which left him really excited. He was also trying his luck with some modelling.

Salam (f, Eritrea, 28)

Salam, a female Eritrean student who had come to seek asylum in the UK about four years ago. She had previously lived in the north of England but moved to London to find employment. She found a physically demanding job as a cleaner, however, had to stop working after about half a year as it was too much for her health.

Daher (m, Syria, 33)

Daher came to Scotland as a refugee from Syria about three years prior to the research with his wife and daughter. He moved to London where part of his extended family are living and also in the hope that the capital would provide more opportunities for him. He is a trained dentist but was working in the hospitality industry during my field work.

Yousef (m, Morocco, 32)

Yousef is a Moroccan Berber who migrated to Belgium when he was in his mid-20s and holds a Belgian passport. He is a trained chef and came to the UK about two years prior to the research. He has been working in different restaurants to get more experience as he is planning to open his own restaurant in the future. He travelled several times to Dublin during my field work. He was thinking about relocating there and opening the restaurant there as he was questioning the possibility of a long-term future in the UK due to Brexit and the increased hostility towards foreigners.

Mo (m, Sudan, 27)

Mo came to the Netherlands from Sudan when he was a teenager. He trained as an electrician and moved to London about three years prior to my field work. He was working in health and social care for the council. He was considering moving to Sweden or Ireland as he was not very happy with the political developments in the UK.

Wiktorja (f, Poland, 55)

Wiktorja came to the UK more than 12 years ago. She had lived for more than twenty years in Paris before and is married to a French doctor who has a GP practice in an affluent part of west London. Wiktorja was quite involved in the French community. She has three children who are all grown up and work in good positions in Paris and London.

Faduma (f, Somalia, 30)

Faduma came to the UK via the Netherlands to be with her husband about three years ago. She was often talking about that she would like to go back to the Netherlands but her husband wanted to stay in London as he thought the city would provide better opportunities. Faduma was working as a cleaner in a nearby shopping centre in the morning and usually came to her English classes directly from her job there. Her husband was working as a security guard.

Kristina (f, Slovakia, 28)

Kristina came to London about six years ago and has been working for different families as a housekeeper/nanny in wealthy areas of London. She trained as a secretary in Slovakia and was considering moving back there in the near future as the situation for young people had improved there.

Tahir (m, Syria, 28)

Tahir came to live in the UK together with his wife (a UK-born national working who had worked for a UK based company in the Middle East) about two years prior to my field work as living in Syria had become impossible due to the war. Tahir is a trained engineer, however, he was working as a security guard. He was frustrated that he was often perceived as a refugee by others instead of being recognised as the spouse of a UK-born citizen.

Halima (f, Iraq, 32)

Halima came to the UK about three years prior to my field work to join her husband who was granted asylum here about six years ago for political reasons as he was working for an Anglo-American magazine which put him in danger in Iraq. Before coming to the UK, Halima had lived in Jordan for about three years. She has two young children.

Kassandra (f, Greece, 34)

Kassandra came to the UK about four years ago after having lived and worked in several other European countries for different lengths of time. She has different qualifications in the hospitality industry and was working for a wealthy family as housekeeper/chef, etc. at the time of my field work.

Irene (f, Macedonia, 35)

Irene joined her husband a few years prior to my field work. Her husband had already been living and working in the UK for about eight years. She has two school-aged children. Irene had trained as a dental nurse in Macedonia but was working part time in an Eastern European shop.

Amadi (m, Ethiopia, 28)

Amadi came to the UK two years ago. He first lived in Glasgow but decided to move to London where he had acquaintances and was also hoping to have better job opportunities. He was an athlete in his country but had to stop competing due to health reasons. He is currently working in a corner shop and preparing to embark on a nursing degree once his English has improved enough and he can secure a place on a training program.

Piotr (m, Poland, 34)

Piotr has been living in the UK for about ten years. He was working for a furniture company during the time of my field work and got promoted to a more office based position. He is married and his wife was expecting their first child. They both came to live in the UK from Poland together. They were able to secure a mortgage for a small house in one of London's suburbs which left Piotr very excited.

Andrea (f, Brasil, 38)

Andrea is a trained nurse from Brasil and would like to work as a nurse in the UK as well. At the moment she is working as a carer. She came to the UK about five years ago and often spoke about the close knit Brazilian community and how important this network was for her.

Maria (f, Venezuela, 46)

Maria has been living in London for about ten years. When she first arrived she started to work as a kitchen porter but got a job as a cleaner through her South American connections in London. She recently got promoted to a supervisory position. She often works double shifts to make sure she can afford rent in an area of London with better schools for her three children.

Jaah (m, Afghanistan, 40)

Jaah is a trained engineer from Afghanistan and came to the UK via Pakistan about eight years ago. His family could join him about four years later. Jaah has three children with his wife. He is working as a plumber and his wife is a carer. They are hoping that one of their sons is going to make it as a professional footballer.

Haz (m, Iran, 23)

Haz came to the UK to seek asylum with the dream to study physics at Oxford University and to become a famous physicist. His teacher often told me how they thought he needed to get a dose of reality and better look for a job at KFC. Haz was working in a take away shop but was involved in a lot of activities, such as language exchanges between university students and refugees, to build up a network. However, being up against a tough system and the dynamics of the brutal migration milieu often frustrated him. About half way through my field work he decided to not continue his studies at the college but we stayed in contact.

Patakin (m, Hungary, 30)

Patakin has been living in London for about three years. Before he was living in Scotland and also Manchester for a short while. He came to London in the hope of finding a job in his profession as an accountant, however, this hope had not yet materialised during my field work and Patakin was working for a catering company instead.

Asma (f, Chechnya, 34)

Asma and her husband came to seek asylum in the UK about seven years ago when it became untenable for them to live in Chechnya. They are both studying at the college whilst working full time in a shop and restaurant. They have one child and they are trying to secure a good school for their child.

Leo (m, Brasil, 34)

Leo has been living in London for about nine years mainly working as a cleaner with other Brazilians. He is a trained physiotherapist but has not been able to secure a job in his profession in London. He is married and has two children. Together with his wife and mother-in-law he is also running a kind of take-away service for Brazilian food from their kitchen.

Chapter 2: Theoretical underpinnings and situating the thesis within relevant scholarship

Introduction

Having in the first chapter provided an introduction to the thesis and an overview of the research including the research questions, this chapter firstly introduces the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis that are used to make sense of the ethnographic data collected and to critically examine the phenomenon under investigation, i.e. adult migrant language education/adult migrants learning English in the context of current prominent language learning for integration discourses. I consider theoretical perspectives on the conceptualisation of modern states as a 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013) as well as understandings of citizenship which hinge on neoliberal imaginations and constructions of subjectivity promoting the 'neoliberal self'. I then discuss Skeggs' (2004; 2011; 2014) concept of 'person-value' which offers a way of seeing beyond frameworks of the 'community of value' and neoliberal ideals of personhood. The second part of the chapter brings my research into dialogue with the work of other scholars mainly from within the field of applied linguistics and migrant language education. This also elucidates the value and timely contribution of my interdisciplinary approach to add to literature in the field, filling a gap in research into alternative approaches to migrant language education/integration and bottom-up understandings of citizenship which focus on the lived experience of migrant language students. In addition, I also show how my research contributes to scholarship which takes a critical stance towards global neoliberal transformation and its effects and brings discussions in this area forward, in particular by providing an empirical example of how inequitable relations shape the politics, practice and lived experience of migrant language education within the current moment, by situating inequality more centrally and bringing its raced, classed and gendered dimensions to the fore and ultimately by proposing an alternative bottom-up approach that harnesses alternative values that go beyond the neoliberal logic of capital and are based on relationality rather than exchange.

Theoretical underpinnings

Modern states as a 'community of value' and questions of legitimacy and belonging

To understand the currently popular language learning for integration rhetoric discussed in the previous chapter, Anderson's (2013) framework of the 'community of value' is a useful analytical toolbox. Examining how the dynamics of the 'us' and 'them' and the Other are constructed within UK immigration/integration debates, she contends that modern nation states do not depict themselves as 'arbitrary collections of people hung together by a common legal status' but rather are imagined as 'communities of value' consisting of people 'who share common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour expressed through ethnicity, religion, culture, or language' (p. 2). Thus, members of the 'community of value' have 'shared values' and 'partake in certain forms of social relations, in 'communities'' (*ibid.*). The emphasis of the 'community of value' is therefore on questions of morality rather than the legal status of its citizens. This gives way to a situation in which sharp moral distinctions and judgements are drawn between different types of citizenship as well as different statuses of 'un/deservingness'.

i) Differentiated citizenship: Good citizens, Non-citizens, Failed citizens and Tolerated citizens

Concretely, membership of the 'community of value' is contingent on being a 'good citizen'. This, in turn, is dependent on the workings of the wider historical legacies that helped to produce and legitimise certain class-, race- and gender-based constructions of the subject that are firmly anchored in liberal ideas. 'Good citizens' are 'law abiding and hard-working members of stable and respectable families' (*ibid.*, p. 3) – that is they share the same values (expressed through ethnicity, religion, culture, or language) and can produce value in an economic sense. They are subjects who pursue their self-interest, create exchange value and can accrue value to themselves, e.g. those who are productive and aspirational – the morally self-responsible subject or 'subject of value', i.e. the neoliberal self (discussed further below). Good citizenship is seen to be embodied within certain behaviours, while other behaviours are perceived as marking one unfit for being a responsible citizen or not

being able to “fit in” or contribute to the society and economy. Historically, the good (neo-) liberal citizen has been positioned against characteristics of the migrant or colonised Other. Moreover, the ‘community of value’ is depicted in political and public discourse as being in need of protection, externally from ‘non-citizens’ and internally from ‘failed’ citizens. At the level of the nation, outsiders or the external Other are correlated with foreigners. Part of being considered an outsider or ‘non-citizen’ is not sharing the same values (expressed through ethnicity, religion, culture, or language) which can easily become ‘not having the ‘right’ values’ (*ibid.*, p. 4). Furthermore, ‘non-citizens’ are described by different terminology denoting different categories, such as migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, etc. which, on the one hand, are legal descriptions (denoting a particular citizenship or immigration status) but, on the other hand, are value laden and - often negative - normative descriptions (describing someone’s moral status) (*ibid.*). Chapter three discusses, in further detail and in the context of the UK, the historical legacies that have led to the emergence of these different categories and the way they construct classed, racialized, and gendered subjects who are differently positioned in relation to the ‘community of value’.

From the inside, the ‘community of value’ is defined and seen as being under threat from the ‘failed citizen’, those who fail to fulfil or perform liberal ideals. They lack the resources and dispositions to be responsible or ‘good citizens’ and are thus ascribed with cultural problems, fecklessness, ill-discipline, welfare dependency, and so forth. This results in the lack of both value (e.g., economic worth) and the ‘right’ values (e.g., independence, self-sufficiency, self-responsibility, and hard work). Important to note is that both the ‘non-citizen’ and the ‘failed citizen’ are categories of the ‘undeserving’. Yet, they do not simply exist parallel to each other but define and co-constitute each other through shifting sets of relations.

Furthermore, the borders of the ‘community of value’ are permeable which means that different groups and individuals can slip in and out: sometimes accepted, sometimes marginal and at other times perceived as a threat to it. As such the categories of differentiated citizenship and their boundaries are constructed and easily collapse into one another. These dynamics are captured by the fragile category of the merely ‘tolerated citizen’, i.e., those who are not quite good enough, only contingently accepted and are thus struggling for acceptance, legitimacy, and belonging. They need to constantly prove that

they have the right values. Contingent acceptance turns them into ‘guardians of good citizenship’ (Anderson, 2013). In the end however, they only remain a ‘tolerated’ member of the community of value, not a ‘good citizen’.

ii) Neoliberal notions of citizenship and the ‘neoliberal self’

Furthermore, notions of the ‘good citizen/member’ of the ‘community of value’ are hinged on a neoliberal understanding of citizenship⁷ (see for example, Brown, 2003; Rose, 1999) in which subjects are constructed as morally self-responsible citizens who are expected to pursue their self-interest and accrue value to themselves, i.e. the ‘neoliberal self’ or ‘subject of value’. Such a notion of citizenship defines the ‘good’ citizen as the model neoliberal subject who ‘strategizes for her/himself among various social, political and economic options’ (Brown, 2003, p. 43), and is always under pressure to live up to neoliberal ideals. The neoliberal form of existence shapes the modes of living and relations with others as a world of generalised competition and self-representation (Dardot and Laval, 2013). The responsibility for exchange and to accrue value to oneself is put on the individual. In this way, individuals have the moral obligation to pursue their self-interest and compete on the market in order to legitimise themselves.

Locating individuals within a neoliberal frame of citizenship holds them (their morals, character, and behaviour) responsible for social problems, economic unproductivity, poverty, and inequality whilst failing to account for wider structural inequity (Jones et al. 2017; Rose, 1999). It thus has the capacity to separate people out (e.g. ‘good’ citizens from ‘failed’ citizens) and leads to the pathologizing of those subjects who fail to live up to neoliberal ideals. In this way, ever growing inequalities are justified (Dardot and Laval, 2013) as the focus is not on state intervention to achieve structural change but on individual self-improvement. This discursive neutralising of the market shifts the perception from societal inequalities to a ‘flat, neutral and equal space where everybody is free to exchange’ (Skeggs,

⁷ In terms of a neoliberal notion of citizenship, it is important to understand neoliberal transformation as a rationality that determines both the ways governments manage people’s actions and the ways people conduct themselves, i.e. what Foucault describes in terms of governmentality. From a Foucauldian perspective, within neoliberal transformation, individuals are governed not by direct exercise of power and discipline over them, but through ‘technologies of the self’. These are sets of practices that instil subjects with a willingness to conduct and manage themselves even if they are not overtly controlled (Shin and Park, 2016).

2004a, p. 63). The combination of the liberation of market forces with the accompanying morality to sustain, maintain, and reproduce it, subsumes people to the logic of capital and market forces. In doing so it creates the willing subject of labour, i.e., subjects who see themselves as responsible: 'an interested, morally responsible self' (*ibid.*, p. 63).

In addition, as various studies have shown, these dynamics became ever more evident through the political-economic and moral project of austerity (see for example, Clarke and Newman, 2012; Dabrowski, 2018) which reinforced the neoliberal agenda and had been in place for almost ten years at the time of my research. As Clarke and Newman (2012) note, 'the contemporary politics of austerity combines an economic logic with a particular moral appeal' (p. 11). This also reinforces division and blame inside the population, for example through the (classed, racialised and gendered) binary figures of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving'⁸ which are 'polarising, designed to censure, accuse and condemn, to de-contextualise and individualise blame for stagnant social mobility' (Jensen, 2013, n.p.). I return to this point in chapter five in which I shed more light on the volatility that was inherent to my research.

iii) The 'community of value' and the politics of citizenship

The differentiated categories of membership of the 'community of value' which are hinged on neoliberal notions of citizenship result in a situation in which belonging is precarious and conditional. This leads to a politics of citizenship as those at risk of failure or of not belonging seek to dissociate themselves, one from another in their struggle for legitimacy and belonging/membership of the 'community of value'. Having to struggle for acceptance in the 'community of value' can turn migrants into 'guardians of good citizenship' (Anderson, 2013, p. 6) affirming the 'community of value', thus reinforcing pre-existing

⁸ Tyler (2013) discusses the affective and embodied dimensions of these characterisations and categorisations. She argues that modern states are reliant on the production of 'abject subjects' and vivid imagery and intense affective reactions (such as disgust and repulsion) towards those 'abject subjects' whom she calls 'revolting subjects' (e.g., the immigrant, asylum seeker, Traveller, etc.). Those bodies are marked as outsiders, so that others can be considered insiders. Tyler views social abjection both as mode of governmentality and psychosocial theory and argues that in this way, citizens are actively encouraged to dissociate themselves from those who are made abject and position themselves against these 'revolting subjects'. Thus, the 'abject' or the 'other' functions as a 'constitutive outside': people define their belonging by contrasting themselves with the 'other' or 'outsider' who does not belong (*ibid.*).

social classifications and divisions in order to legitimise and validate themselves. As this happens within a socio-political climate that devalues migration and often dehumanises the figure of the Immigrant, it further propels the segmentation of migrants into ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ which goes hand in hand with the scapegoating of other social groups (see also Jones et al., 2017) rather than fostering solidarity.

iv) Switching between scales

Whilst often overlapping with ideas of the nation, the notion of ‘community’ allows for a seamless switching between scales, e.g. the imagined national and the imagined local community (Anderson, 2013). This localism implies the importance of daily practice and suggests different parameters of in/exclusion that are at work in different settings. This makes it possible to elucidate the local and personal consequences, including the affective and embodied dimensions of the characterisations and dynamics of the ‘community of value’ among my participants within and beyond the institutional setting of migrant language education.

Employing the concept of ‘community of value’ elucidates how language requirements aimed at immigrants are linked to the construction of who are ‘good’ or ‘bad’ members/migrants/citizens. Thus, my research reveals how learning English becomes a key site for these constructions and imaginations and highlights the moralistic dimension of prominent ‘language learning for integration discourses’. Furthermore, my participants find themselves caught up within an institution that offers language classes within different settings, which imagine and position their students differently. Chapter six elucidates the differing experiences of my participants and the often subtle processes of de/valuation, hierarchisation as well as mechanisms of in/exclusion within this context. Chapter seven further facilitates an understanding of the ways in which un/deservedness is negotiated and constructed in my participants’ lived experience within the context of language learning and integration. I accentuate ways in which my participants position themselves as the ‘subject of value’ within prominent immigration/integration discourses that draw on certain cultural narratives and moral judgements. I show how participants who find themselves as only contingently accepted and not firmly established in the ‘community of value’ act as

‘guardians of good citizenship’ (Anderson, 2013, p. 6) in order to distance themselves from the kinds of pathologisation that are associated with groups that are devalued and delegitimised by dominant discourses, and to legitimise their own claims to citizenship. In doing so they often reinforce social divisions and segmentations into ‘deserving/undeserving’.

However, my research also highlights that dominant immigration/integration discourses are not only simply internalised without question and reproduced by my participants but that they are also challenged and disrupted. Rather than engaging in the often pathologizing and exclusionary politics of citizenship within the ‘community of value’ they called for empathy and solidarity in diversity instead, thus resisting dehumanisation. In doing so, classrooms and encounters became spaces for the articulation of alternative values or the circulation of ‘values beyond [exchange] value’ (Skeggs, 2014).

Living and resisting devaluation and delegitimacy: a dimension of social values

I now turn to Skeggs’ ‘person value’ model which offers a way of seeing beyond imaginations of the ‘community of value’ as well as neoliberal imaginations and constructions of subjectivity. Her work makes it possible to highlight alternative value-practices of those who are imagined as lack, ‘undeserving’, failing to live up to neoliberal ideas, and who inhabit the precarious positions of ‘non/failed’ or merely ‘tolerated’ citizens in the ‘community of value’, i.e. those who cannot publicly legitimate themselves as ‘subjects of value’.

Skeggs’ ‘person value’ model includes dimensions of both value and values: value (in an economic sense and in relation to the ‘the neoliberal self’ or ‘subject of value’) as well as social values of people who are excluded from the mainstream in the form of action and affect (in the sense of relational values and use values). As such, she considers ‘person-value’ both economically and relationally. Although, Skeggs (2014) argues for moving away from a model focusing entirely on economic value and adding another dimension of relational values to the ‘person value’ model, she points out that values and value are not clear-cut, separate concepts, but rather ‘dialogic, dependent and co-constituting’ (p. 1). She works with the concept of personhood ‘in order to avoid the etymological traps of the terms

self and individual' as they are prone to 'produce singular, contained, individualised models of the social subject' whereas the point of her theorisation is to highlight 'a different relationality, a different sociality' (Skeggs, 2011, p. 580). She in particular draws on the tradition of ideas of personhood developed in anthropology 'in which personhood refers to *legal, social and moral states* generated through *encounters with others*' (*ibid.*, p. 581, italics in original)⁹. This allows her to consider the ways in which those who are positioned outside the dominant symbolic and are devalued and delegitimised, inhabit personhood and perform alternative value practices not only through the modes of exchange but through 'connections to others' (Skeggs, 2014, p. 19).

Furthermore, Skeggs contends that only paying attention to exchange, accrual, and interest, ignores a significant amount of social life. She draws attention to non-accumulative, non-convertible values (for example, altruism, integrity, loyalty and investment in others) which are central to social reproduction (Skeggs, 2004b). In her work on the working class, she highlights values beyond the dominant symbolic away from a lack or deficit view, such as hedonism, humour, dignity, loyalty and caring. She argues 'for a way of thinking beyond exchange-value, instead through use-values that do not rely either on a concept of the self, nor rely on a concept of accumulative subjectivity, which is always reliant on exchange value' (Skeggs, 2004c, p. 88). Thus, she proposes to look at different value systems that are outside the dominant symbolic in the form of social values, or use-values and relational values, which makes it possible to explore 'how something has different values in different relations, different contexts' (*ibid.* p. 89).

To this end, she includes social values 'as a more general ethos of living, for sociality, and connecting to others, through dispositions, practices and orientations' (Skeggs, 2014, p. 5). To highlight how these social values are experienced, she examines affect (the circulation of feelings), placing the focus on the social relations instead of on the individual cognition of the feelings generated by these social relations (Skeggs and Loveday, 2012). Her analysis is, on the one hand, concerned with negative affects, e.g. through emotions such as pain, frustration and fear as experienced in daily life, carefully contained or expressed as anger

⁹ It goes beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss different ideas of personhood in detail. Skeggs (2011) provides a discussion of the historical conditions of possibility for 'person value', i.e. how value is attached to different conceptualizations and practices of personhood.

and resentment towards symbolic violence. These negative affects can be produced by those who have been forced to inhabit social relations differently or are subject to devaluation (economically and symbolically) and are living the relations of injustice and inequality. However, these negative affects can be turned into action, for example in the form of talks of fairness and kindness against devaluation and delegitimization, fostering solidarity (*ibid.*). On the other hand, Skeggs also discusses positive, non-utilitarian affects of care (loyalty and affection). She points out that 'caring that is offered as a gift beyond exchange relations is of a different form to the relations established to promote and reproduce the logic of capital' (Skeggs, 2014, p. 13). This, alongside action such as an act of altruism offers us 'a different way of being in the world' beyond the logic of exchange, accentuating 'values beyond (exchange) value' (*ibid.*). Thus, devaluation and delegitimacy can be resisted and contested; the space for contestation occurs at local, national, and global levels as those positioned as marginal to the dominant symbolic, generate alternative ways for making value (Skeggs, 2011; Skeggs and Loveday, 2012). Skeggs' work makes it possible to highlight alternative forms of respectability and ways of being in the world by claiming an alternative set of values beyond the logic of exchange.

Her framework is very useful to shed light on the struggles and lived experience of my participants. My research reveals how these struggles relate to migrants' attainment of a sense of self, respectability, and personhood and shows how they often find themselves in a devalued position and thus inhabit personhood differently and perform alternative value practices. In chapter eight, my study shows how my research context appears as a site where alternative values and bottom-up perspectives are mobilised, thus contesting dominant perspectives and instead promoting the enactment of a supportive sociality that goes beyond the relations of exchange. To this end, my research context provides a platform to re-imagine adult migrant language education and to argue for the importance of these educational spaces to act as sites where alternative values can be articulated and networks of solidarity can be created. Relevant alternative theorisations on new forms of solidarity will be introduced in chapter nine in order to re-imagine and reconceptualise more equitable migrant language educational spaces from the bottom up.

Connecting the research with wider literature

Following on from discussing the theoretical frames that are utilised in my research to make sense of the data, I now connect the research with wider literature, particularly from within the field of applied linguistics and relevant work that has been done in the context of language and migration and adult migrant language education. I firstly discuss work that is concerned with questions of migrant language education, integration, and citizenship in the UK context before situating my work within research that is characterised by a critical stance towards global neoliberal transformation and its effects.

Migrant language education, integration, and citizenship in the UK context

My research adds to the literature that is concerned with questions of migrant language education, integration, and citizenship. The social framework of integration anchored to the territorially imagined nation-state and accompanying national ideologies of language as well as issues around linguistic and discursive standardization as crucial factors for the maintenance of a viable national polity have been richly explored by research in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (see for example, Baumann and Briggs, 2000; Blommaert, 2010; Blommaert and Verschueren, 1998; Gal, 2006; Wright, 2004). Various studies have shown that the belief that national and linguistic borders neatly map onto each other gives way to exclusionary and discriminatory attitudes in political and public discourse as well as in policy making concerned with integration. More recently, this has been found to be reflected in language testing regimes which many Western countries introduced as part of the retreat from multiculturalism. Although the practices and policies do not employ identical concepts of citizenship or nation-hood, they generally equate the concept of integration with the official verification and legitimisation of linguistic and cultural skills (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016).

Particularly, cultural-linguistic tests and testing practices together with ideologies of monolingualism as well as negotiations of citizenship ceremonies have been critically analysed in many contexts, including the UK where the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act introduced a system of testing migrants which requires those applying for residence or citizenship to take the Life in the UK test alongside a test of the English

language. The work of Blackledge (2005; 2006; 2009a; 2009b; 2009c) is notable in this regard, as is the work of Khan (2014) who investigates the increasingly strong links between citizenship, securitization, and suspicion in the UK's English language policy for migrants. This has led to an increased politicisation of language learning and teaching in the migrant context, firmly putting a burden on migrants to show that they have sufficient linguistic skills and are willing to integrate. Furthermore, there has been research into the history of the development of ESOL as a field of policy and practice as well as into the specific challenges this field of policy and practice has been faced with over the years (see for example, Baynham et al., 2007; Cooke and Simpson, 2008; Hamilton and Hillier, 2011; Rosenberg, 2007; Simpson, 2019).

My work highlights how in this context the question of language learning has increasingly been imbued with a distinct moral dimension and has become bound up with questions of who can claim legitimacy and belonging, i.e. who is considered a 'good' or 'deserving' member in the 'community of value'. Thus, my work shows the effects of this increased politicisation of language learning on the lived experience of migrants within the current socio-political climate and adds to this strand of research by proposing a paradigm shift away from the concept of integration to place-based solidarities in the here and now. I draw on this scholarship more comprehensively in the following chapter in which I trace the historical legacies that are shaping our current moment including in terms of migrant language education policy and practice and currently predominant language learning for integration discourses. My findings chapters subsequently reveal the lived experience, and the discussion and conclusion chapters argue for a normative shift in migrant language education/integration discourse, policy, and practice.

Recently, there have been several critical investigations into the role of migrant language education/ESOL in the context of the official citizenship regime in the UK which has increasingly become more prevalent (for example, Cooke, 2015; 2019; Han, Starkey and Green, 2010; Peutrell, 2019). This research interest was sparked by the introduction of so called 'ESOL with citizenship' courses and centred mainly around how institutions and teachers dealt with these developments whilst also trying to capture the experiences of migrants participating in these classes. Han et al. (2010) concluded that although the classes were often perceived as a means for migrants to demonstrate their willingness to integrate,

they denoted positive and enjoyable experiences. However, they also noted inconsistencies and contradictions regarding existing policies and discourses around language as well as funding. I return to these points in the next chapter. The studies by Cooke (2015; 2019) and Peutrell (2019) show how in the context of these classes teachers are explicitly required to act as intermediaries between, on the one hand, the official version of Britain and British citizenship produced by the UK government and, on the other hand, their students (Cooke, 2015; 2019; Peutrell, 2019). Through her analysis of classroom discourse and the stance taken by the teacher, Cooke shows how the teacher in her study adopted various strategies, such as personalisation and humour, to help navigate the challenges ‘to represent an image of Britain as a ‘community of value’’ (Cooke, 2019, p. 76). Cooke’s research further reveals how within the classroom setting, the top-down nature of the ESOL citizenship regime meant that the knowledge and experiences of the migrant students was often side-lined which was reinforced by certain characteristics of the (conventional ESOL) pedagogy adopted. Peutrell’s research focus were citizenship discourses among ESOL teachers and their professional identities in light of these discourses. With the introduction of the ESOL citizenship curriculum these teachers had seen their roles transformed by becoming ‘teachers of citizenship’ whilst at the same time their field of practice had become highly politicised (see also Cooke, 2009; Han et al., 2010). Peutrell’s research highlights the need for teachers to be given the opportunity for a more profound engagement with the notion of citizenship and ideas and theories about it as part of their professional development. He sees this as particularly pressing given the highly politicised nature of their work in the light of ongoing debates about immigration, integration, and citizenship (Peutrell, 2019).

Reflecting on their research of a top-down implementation of citizenship into the field of migrant language education, Cooke and Peutrell (2019) acknowledge the limits of such approach which they see as hampering genuine participation and a sense of belonging amongst migrant students. They advocate for the exploration of alternative approaches to migrant language education which take into account ‘its participatory and activist potential’ and in which citizenship is conceptualised as ‘participatory, emergent, informal and open-ended’ (p. 8). To this end, in their *Our Languages* project, they analysed how their students experience issues of language and citizenship in their everyday lives and how migrant language education might promote a different kind of relationship between English, other

languages, and citizenship. Employing the concept of ‘sociolinguistic citizenship’ (see also Rampton et al., 2018) as an alternative to top-down ideas of citizenship as a fixed legal status, they highlight the ways in which their participants perform ‘acts of citizenship’ (Isin, 2008), i.e. ‘actions which challenge the current status quo and which pave the way – potentially – for change’ (Cooke et al., 2019, p. 133). Another important function of acts of citizenship is the possibility for individuals to ‘imagine – even if only momentarily – how the future could be different from their current reality’ (*ibid.*). The work of Cooke and her colleagues provides examples of how migrant language education has the potential to provide such opportunities to students who are often faced with experiences of exclusion and discrimination in their everyday lives.

My thesis documents a tangible example of an alternative approach to migrant language education and bottom-up understandings of citizenship which these scholars have called for as I will lay out in chapters eight and nine of this thesis. Chapter eight found how my participants created spaces where a different form of being in the world was enabled and in doing so created an affective community of supportive sociality and hope. Building up on these notions of ‘acts of citizenship’, I argue that by shifting the spatio-temporal register from the nation-state to how people engage in the here and now, solidarity is imagined in a relational rather than a territorial sense which can foster feelings of belonging, participation, and emancipation from the bottom-up. I thus propose a bottom-up model which sees migrant language education as a vocation rooted in hopefulness for transformation and social change.

Furthermore, the very limited research into adult migrant language students’ own perceptions of integration has drawn attention to the importance of focusing on migrant students’ lived experience of integration processes. For example, in their project *Whose Integration*, Bryers, Winstanley and Cooke (2013) accentuate the ways in which these students negotiate different local and diasporic identities and competing expectations through ‘a complicated, dense set of intersections, crossroads and junctions’ (p. 33) pointing in multiple directions (see also Peutrell, 2019). The way in which my work situates the experience of migrant students at its centre makes a unique contribution to these current discussions in the field. It details the highly complex nature of the politics, practice and lived

experience of migrant language education by providing a multi-layered account of my participants' experience in the context of prominent immigration/integration discourses.

A critical stance towards global neoliberal transformation and its effects

With its critical stance towards global neoliberal transformation and the effect this has on society and individuals, my research resonates well with other work within applied linguistics that has been '[t]hinking and writing within a political economy frame' (Block, 2017a, p. 35). There has been a growing recognition of the fact that language takes up a crucial position in global neoliberal transformation and there is a growing body of literature which brings language to the centre of a critique of neoliberalism (see for example, Block, 2017a; Block et al., 2012; Holborow, 2015; Shin and Park, 2016). Critical voices depict the globally dominant language of English as the embodiment of neoliberal ideology in a neoliberal empire (Phillipson, 2008) or as the language of neoliberalism and globalisation (Holborow, 2015). On the other hand, English is often promoted by its advocates as a global social 'good' with unquestioned instrumental value and has attained a special status as a perceived tool for socio-economic success. Nonetheless, this has come under increased scrutiny and is being challenged by the inequality inherent to these developments. A more nuanced picture and analysis of the unequal relationships of power inherent to these developments is therefore needed (Park, 2016; Pennycook, 2007; Warriner, 2016). My research provides an empirical example of how inequitable relations shape the politics, practice and lived experience of migrant language education within the current 'brutal migration milieu' (Hall, 2017). These relations are often reproduced but also disrupted and resisted both within the institutional setting as well as my participants' narratives. This, as I argue, underscores the urgent need for rethinking and reimagining migrant language education, including the ESOL/EFL distinction, as well as for alternative bottom-up approaches that harness alternative values beyond the neoliberal logic that take a different ontology as a starting point based on relationality rather than exchange. Such approach has the ability to empower migrants' agency and to cultivate more equitable relations within migrant language educational settings.

i) *Marketization of education and language students as ‘entrepreneurs of the self’*

With its valorising of individual entrepreneurial freedom and marketization of society, neoliberal transformation is undeniably leaving a strong imprint on the social life of language, language education and those who are teaching and learning a language, which in the case of my research is English in the context of migrant language education in London.

Regarding the field of education, Block et al. (2012) point out that neoliberal transformation has brought with it a shift from pedagogical to market values, as education is increasingly marketized. According to their analysis, this involves another, more profound, shift in educational philosophy: ‘the abandonment of the social and cooperative ethic in favour of individualist and competitive business models’ (p. 6). This has resulted in greater social inequality, among other things and sets the priority of education to be ‘an engine for economic growth’ (*ibid.*, p. 7) which also rings true in the context of migrant language education. Particularly, their research into English language teaching textbooks has shown how discourses promoted in these publications often promote neoliberal ideas and values, e.g. celebrity discourses and aspirational content that connect English with wealth, individualism, cosmopolitanism and professional success (Gray, 2012, see also Block and Gray, 2018; Bori, 2018; Gray and Block, 2014).

On the other hand, their work also highlights English as one of the languages of global resistance (for example in Gray, 2012). In addition, Zacchi (2016) argues that this undoubtedly important critique of English language teaching textbooks promoting neoliberal ideas and values must not overlook power struggles that happen on the micro level within education, applied linguistics and language teaching. He uses the example of English textbooks printed for the National Textbook Program in Brazil to show how, although they do in part follow the trend of presenting neoliberal contents, they also include a discourse that is concerned with citizenship building and collective agency. Without an examination of these alternative discourses which have the potential for social change, he points to the danger of one’s analysis to be rendered ‘reductive and deterministic in itself’ (*ibid.*) The points Block et al. and Zacchi are making regarding resistance as well as the danger of one’s work becoming ‘deterministic in itself’ are important to consider. Thus, in my work, although not primarily concerned with the

production of textbooks but with migrant language education more generally, I actively counteract this danger by employing a lens which goes beyond the logic of capital. This enables me to not only understand how the dominant symbolic is put into perspective, how these market forces permeate institutional spaces and the inequalities this creates but also to accentuate how the neoliberal logic is resisted and to tease out alternative bottom-up perspectives that circulate within my field site. Building on these emergent alternatives in my findings, I suggest a model to language education based on a supportive sociality rather than on competition between 'entrepreneurial selves'.

ii) Neoliberal integration regimes, processes of categorization and hierarchisation

Furthermore, the fact that neoliberal ideology continues to subsume all aspects of social life into the logic of capital within the frame of free-market economics leaves language students as simply being 'entrepreneurs of the self' (Foucault, 2008), trying to increase their human capital by increasing their measurable competence in English through effort and hard work (Warriner, 2016). Language itself is commodified and takes the position of a pure skill or potential (Holborow, 2015; Park, 2016) in this equation with economic value production particularly reliant on speakers' ability to enact forms of linguistic distinction and flexibility (Duchêne and Heller, 2012). Thus, within neoliberal frameworks, language and communication are often foregrounded as a 'means for cultivating valorized dispositions of personal responsibility, agentive self-reliance, and entrepreneurial spirit' (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016, p. 604).

Such logics of valuation and framing of language as skill or potential also influence the practice of English language teaching and circulate in portrayals of the kinds of skills, competencies, and trajectories migrants have a need for, want, and should aspire to. In practice this means that migrants are often solely envisioned regarding their capacity to contribute to the economy and produce exchange value (*ibid.*). This is often reflected in public discourses as well as policy and various practices related to immigrant integration (for which, as we have seen, language education is expected to function as a key mechanism), for example emphasis is put on skills training, linguistic investment, employability, etc.

Critiques point out that such kind of instrumental view of language learning and teaching that is centred around 'skills' discourses makes the learning of the language a question of moral traits and responsibility of the individual without acknowledging and taking into account wider inequitable relations which do not provide equal access to linguistic capital in the first place (Shin and Park, 2016).

This is, for example, accentuated in Warriner's (2016) research with women refugees in an adult migrant language education programme in the USA. Warriner's work elucidates how such neoliberal belief system of language and language learning as commodified skill seen as paramount for self-sufficiency and social mobility underpin and mould the pedagogical policies and practices of the programme. She shows how such thinking not only influences how these women and their trajectories are imagined within the programme but has also become internalized by this group of language students who can be considered as amongst the most marginalized in the neoliberal regime. In practice, this means that these programmes have material effects in these refugee women's lives by preparing them solely for minimum wage and entry level employment as quickly as possible by teaching "basic" English to decrease government funding. The "basic" English approach in turn hindered these often successful language students from having access to language tuition that would be needed to secure better employment. However, the women still subscribe to the belief in the neoliberal mantra of individual effort and hard work to acquire English language skills for their self-improvement, self-sufficiency, and social mobility. Thus, the precarity of their position in their new surrounding becomes their individual responsibility whilst wider structural issues and lack of employment opportunities are ignored.

This is similar to Allan's (2016) investigation of the language and soft-skill approach to Canadian immigrant integration which shows how the focus of integration policy is on skills-based upward mobility rather than calling for more equitable work conditions as a means of countering immigrant and racialized poverty. She argues that wider socio-political issues, for example discrimination and a stratified labour market, were rendered as apolitical technical problems which were expected to be counteracted through individualized skills training instead of addressing their underlying pathology. Her analysis of the training programme reveals how the neoliberal view of agency which emphasizes self-responsibility and self-improvement through the accumulation of rational skills is racialized, classed, and gendered

and prone to pathologize certain bodies. To this end, those candidates in the training programme who were deemed to have 'cultural deficiencies' were reframed as having 'skills deficits'. Such framing rendered them to pathologizing narratives of not trying hard enough or being unwilling to adjust to Canadian manners and values (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016).

Regarding migrant integration there are other ethnographic studies into employment- and subsistence related activities which provide an understanding of how neoliberal ideological linkages are rationalized and instrumentalized across various contexts (see for example, Duchêne and Heller, 2012; Flubacher and Yeung, 2016). For example, in her research among migrants in an unemployment office in the Swiss canton of Fribourg/Freiburg, Flubacher (2016) elucidates how neoliberal logics of investment construct differing entitlements to language instruction. Similarly, looking at recent immigration policies in Switzerland, Yeung (2016) examines the emergence of the two social types of 'migrants' and 'expatriates' within linguistic integration discourses in Geneva according to a new discourse of 'skills' in line with contrasting assessments of risk and profitability. She argues that 'the expatriate-migrant distinction constructs differently valued immigrants whose contrasting relationship to the nation and "integration" is enacted in legal and social expectations surrounding language use' (*ibid.*, p. 723). She further teases out how these categorizations are co-constitutive of one another and become key figures around which integration policies are constructed. In this way, profiles of legitimate residents willing to integrate or legitimate candidates for the labour market are carved out determining 'who is welcome to stay or whose sojourn remains tolerated' (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016, p. 609).

My own research adds a UK perspective to these studies focusing on the highly unequal and 'superdiverse' global city and migrant metropolis London in the context of language learning for integration discourses that promote a skills-based view of language learning. These discourses put the responsibility to integrate and to "fit in" on the individual without taking into account wider structural inequalities. I highlight processes of categorization, hierarchisation and in/exclusionary mechanisms and interrogate the construction of differently valued migrant language students at my field site. I show how the ESOL/EFL distinction further reinforces these social hierarchies and is prone to reproduce rather than counter-act wider inequitable relations leading to the pathologizing of certain bodies whilst imagining and enabling other (white) bodies as cosmopolitan, mobile, forward-propelling

and value accruing subjects. I elucidate the effects this has on the lived experience of my participants and look at how they position themselves within prominent language learning for integration discourses that draw on certain cultural narratives and moral judgements. This brings out the highly morally charged nature of these dynamics that result in the drawing of sharp distinctions between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving'. However, I also accentuate how my participants resist processes of Othering, pathologizing, and hierarchisation and are calling for a being in the world that goes beyond the logic of capital and the performance of the 'neoliberal self', foregrounding social values rather than exchange value. I propose a model for a 'declassificatory' migrant language education with an orientation on intercultural encounter and exchange, solidarity in diversity, a supportive sociality, and empowering agency where counter-narratives are authored and the teaching and learning of English is rooted in hopefulness for social change.

iii) Situating classed processes and inequality more centrally

In addition, there has been a call to pay more attention to the notion of class in one's empirical analysis to be better able to grapple with the challenges of neoliberal transformation and exacerbated inequalities. This call has been led by Block (2012; 2014a; 2014b; see also Collins, 2006; Vandrick, 2014) who argues that class needs to be framed as a multidimensional and complex phenomenon in applied linguistics research. In my research I follow Skeggs (2004a) and conceptualise notions of class as a dynamic process and a site of struggle that is fought out at the level of the symbolic. In particular, her 'person value' model discussed earlier adds the dimension of use-values which makes it possible to tease out how things may matter to and be a resource for those outside the dominant symbolic beyond a commodity logic instead of simply perceiving them as 'lack'. My work highlights these struggles and their intersections with race and gender in the migrant experience within the UK's post-colonial and multicultural present in the context of the highly unequal setting of the global and migrant city London.

Research at the nexus of migration and language is framed by Block (2017b) as applied linguistic research studying the interrelationship between migration, identity and language. It is still very rare to find research at this nexus which situates classed processes and

questions of inequality more centrally. One example that contingently does so is Block's (2006) study with Spanish-speaking migrants from Latin America in London, which teases out processes of declassing and reclassing in one of his participants' trajectory and the positioning he was subjected to by his white working class work-colleagues with whom he 'was never completely at ease' (Block, 2017b, p. 140). A particular focus on migrant language students can be found in Darvin and Norton's work (2014). Drawing on Bourdieu's troika of field, capital, and habitus, their comparative account of the language and literacy practices of two 16-year-old Filipino migrants of contrasting social and economic backgrounds - Ayrton who is from an affluent and privileged family and John who is in a marginalized position – shows how social class is inscribed in their different social and learning trajectories offering them different (i.e. unequal) opportunities. The study highlights the key role language plays in marking distinction (as in the case of Ayrton) or deficit (as in the case of John) and how this fosters or impedes their negotiation of social class, and their possibilities to become 'entrepreneurs of the self' (Darvin and Norton drawing on Foucault (2008)). Although Darvin and Norton accentuate the need for these 'entrepreneurs of the self' to 'aspire not only for individual success but also for social change' (p. 116), how the latter is to be achieved remains untheorized and unaccounted for.

Employing Skeggs' lens in my analysis makes it possible to go beyond the logic of capital, exchange, and the 'neoliberal self' or framing my participants as 'entrepreneurs of the self'. Thus, my work reveals a dimension of non-accumulative social values which opens up a space for contestation and the alternative value practices of my participants. Moreover, an important element of my research is to pay attention to affect as a means to account for the possibility for change (see also Zschomler, 2019). In his work on 'unequal Englishes', Park (2015) among others has stressed the importance of highlighting the affective dimension of experiences of unequal power relations and inequalities to account for how social transformation may be brought about. He asserts that aspects such as affect and emotion 'are not simply matters of an individual's inner psychology, but constitutive elements of subjects as agents' (p. 60). He contends that by engaging reflectively with affect and emotion it is possible to make them a subject of metalinguistic awareness. Collective awareness in turn can foster the sense of solidarity and enhance collective agency as mediated by discursive action and solidarity. Affect is a crucial part of the theoretical

framing of 'person value' paying attention to the circulation of positive affects as well as the possibility for negative affects to be turned into action. My thesis reveals both dimensions, showing how my participants highlighted acts of altruism and kindness and were calling for empathy. It also discusses how they were 'talking back' to pathologizing discourses which provided opportunities for the reconstitution of personhood from devaluation, deligitimacy, dehumanisation, exclusion, and discrimination to legitimacy, dignity, respectability, inclusion and the rehumanising of social relations. They also collectively engaged in practices that turned the classroom into a space of togetherness and belonging in the face of hostility. In this way, language learning could function as a site where an affective community of supportive sociality can be enacted and actively co-created. The model I am proposing harnesses these emergent alternatives with the aim of developing them not only as a route into individual empowerment but also charting possibilities for collective agency.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a rigorous discussion of the theoretical underpinnings that are employed in this thesis to make sense of the ethnographic data. I have explained how theoretical perspectives on the conceptualisation of modern states as a 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013) as well as understandings of citizenship which hinge on neoliberal imaginations and constructions of subjectivity promoting the 'neoliberal self' together with Skeggs' (2004; 2011; 2014) 'person-value' model are utilised to capture the interplay of the different dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. The second part of the chapter has brought my interdisciplinary research in dialogue with relevant work from within the field of applied linguistics and outlined how my work can add to current discussions.

The next chapter serves as a supplementary literature review by tracing the historical legacies that are shaping our current moment, such as the evolution of Britain as a multicultural society, the hierarchies of belonging established within it, and the figure of the Immigrant in relation to the ideals of the 'community of value'. This is important so as not to de-historicize the phenomenon under investigation and further makes it possible to understand the development of adult migrant language education within its historical

context. In doing so, it sheds light on the policy context in which the phenomenon under investigation is embedded. Furthermore, it makes it possible to deconstruct the dominant narratives around language learning for integration and shows how they are prone to reinforcing social hierarchies and reproduce wider power relations and inequalities.

Chapter 3: Historical legacies shaping the present

Introduction

This chapter provides a brief history of the developments in English language education provision for adult migrants and traces the historical/post-colonial legacies which are shaping the present moment within the UK's long history of inward migration. I focus on Britain's post-war history as this marks a key juncture in terms of immigration patterns, legislation as well as the evolution of a multicultural society and policy responses to it. This allows for a critical understanding of the current s/State, including how the dynamics of the 'them' and 'us', the 'good migrant' and 'bad migrant', and the 'deserving' and 'undeserving', as well as hierarchies of belonging, are constructed within the 'community of value'. It elucidates how, within these dynamics, certain mobilities and bodies have increasingly become pathologized and how often unhealthy links between immigration and other social and economic processes, such as 'language learning for integration', have become established over time. I argue that understanding these processes and the discourses and the dominant narratives accompanying them within their historical and geopolitical context is important in order to make sense of my participants' lived experience. The adult migrants at the heart of this study have come to the UK during approximately the past ten to fifteen years and their experience within and beyond the institutional setting in which they are learning English cannot be viewed as a de-historized narrative.

The analysis in this chapter makes it possible to answer the first of my research questions: *What role do language and language learning play in dominant integration discourses and what are the historical processes that have led to their prominence?* In doing so, this chapter reveals how and under what circumstances the figure of the Immigrant, and particularly the Immigrant who "fails" or is "unwilling" to learn English is imagined as problematic and has become a key emblem of moral and political concern. I unpack and deconstruct the bodies of doxa, or taken for granted common-sense beliefs (Bourdieu, 1977) that have emerged and often escape critical scrutiny within what I term 'moralistic language learning for integration' discourses to illuminate the ways in which they act as active forces shaping social life.

English language education for adult migrants

This section provides a brief overview of the developments in English language education provision for adult migrants. In the UK, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) has developed as a distinctive field of policy and practice. This section focuses on England, as English language education for migrants is organised differently elsewhere in the UK.

The first major growth in the field started to occur from the 1950s onwards, in an attempt to respond to the language needs of large numbers of migrants in the post-war period, which was 'largely *ad hoc*, uneven and predictably an ethnocentric one' (Khanna, Verma, Agnihotri and Sinha, 1998, p. 9). This led, as Khanna et al. (1998) argue, to the concept of ESOL in the 'assimilative mould' particularly regarding non-white newcomers from colonies and the newly independent Commonwealth countries. It was a common perception that all they 'needed to learn was *the English way of life*' (*ibid.*, emphasis in original), however, these initiatives had little impact in terms of counteracting their marginalised position in society. This situation evoked a response from volunteers (mostly middle-class women) who were driven by their concerns to promote the well-being of the immigrants they were teaching. This response from within the liberal strand of British fabric transformed the ethos of ESOL teaching. This 'welfare' and 'missionary' approach has been viewed critically by some as solely offering English for 'survival'. In doing so, critics point out that it was restrictive, non-productive, short-sighted, and in essence supporting the state in its ethnocentric and assimilationist policies. (*ibid.*; Bhanot and Alibhai, 1988).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the provision of ESOL became more organised. Teaching started to take place in colleges or in workplaces, new qualifications were created and a national body to support teachers was introduced. However, as the field was not a prime concern in policy circles it remained rather fragmented. What is notable about this time was a change in attitude to ESOL provision with a growing opposition to and steering away from an ethnocentric 'welfare-based' deficit model towards cultural and linguistic pluralism and anti-racism and equal opportunities. The 1980s ended with the Education Reform Act 1988 which has shaped the education system significantly by introducing the philosophy of neoliberal 'market forces' and thus also had an impact on ESOL provision:

What would move from the centre ground would be the placing of ESOL within a commitment to sustaining a multicultural society and to combating racism and racial disadvantage. [This] would be replaced by a concern with targets and an increasing emphasis on evaluation, accountability, monitoring in terms of 'needs' analysis and well-defined 'access' and 'progression' routes. (Rosenberg, 2007, p. 190).

At the turn of the 21st century ESOL was brought under centralized control. This was linked to a more general overhaul of the provision of adult literacy and numeracy aimed at reducing the number of adults with low levels of basic skills. Thus, the *Skills for Life* strategy (a literacy and numeracy policy) was introduced in 2001 into which ESOL was incorporated which led to the ambiguous status of the field as an adult basic skill. The *Skills for Life* strategy brought with it the creation of the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* (DfES, 2001), classroom materials to support that curriculum, teacher-training and inspection regimes, and qualifications mapped against national standards. The centralised curriculum was statutory under *Skills for Life*, and to the present provides a framework for syllabus planning and assessment in many contexts in England, such as my field site. Bringing ESOL under centralized control and regulation was viewed critically by many. On the one hand, this move secured some kind of funding and resources. On the other hand, for teachers it meant a heavy bureaucratic burden, the prevalence of auditing purposes and economic motives related to global competitiveness which in their practice was now competing with the facilitation of language learning or the meeting of their learners' needs (Cook and Simpson, 2008). The orientation towards work and employment has been increasing as links in policy between learning in the adult education sector and business have been strengthened leading Cooke and Simpson (2008) to observe that this brought 'confusion between the broader aim of English language education and the pedagogic focus' (p. 17). The *New Approach to ESOL* in 2009 signalled the end of ESOL as a central component of *Skills for Life*. Central government was relinquishing both responsibility for, and control of, the field and increased emphasis was put on ESOL to be coordinated at the level of local authorities and councils. However, the implementation of austerity measures severely compromised their ability to do so (Simpson, 2019).

Also, the field of ESOL got very overtly linked to the question of immigration and citizenship as the relationship between migrant integration and language gained currency in political

and media discourses (these discourses are elucidated in more detail throughout this chapter). Given the lack of targeted intervention strategies for integration, ESOL has increasingly been emphasized as the main mechanism to foster or ensure integration (Spencer, 2011) which as Simpson (2019) observes causes discomfort among many ESOL practitioners. This was expressed in many conversations and interviews I had with practitioners at my field site.

ESOL practitioners take up different stances within the field and in relationship to the student body. Some practitioners are closely involved in political struggle around policy and pedagogy. Others, often those working with students regarded as vulnerable in some ways such as refugees and asylum seekers, see their work as a humanitarian endeavour (Hodge, 2004). Again, some prefer to distance themselves from the relationship between politics and applied linguistic knowledge (Baynham et al., 2007; Baynham, 2011). These were all stances that were all reflected among the practitioners at my field site.

As is to be expected, the student body is heterogenous and reflects the changing patterns in inward migration and the changing demography of the UK population. Besides its multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and internally diverse make up, it comprises different migrant statuses and is particularly marked by students' varied educational backgrounds, ranging from tertiary level education to those with no or just a few years of schooling. ESOL is taught in various settings, such as colleges of adult or further education (FE), the voluntary sector, the charity sector and work training organisations (Baynham et al., 2007). My research was carried out in an FE context. The specific research setting will be introduced in more detail in chapters four and five.

Overall, ESOL is poorly resourced, which greatly limits provision and access. This is an important point to note given the expectation for it to function as the main mechanism for integration. The approach to funding is 'piece-meal and partial' (Simpson, 2019, p. 31). Provision in Further Education colleges is mainly funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency's adult skills budget which was cut from £203 million (2009-10) to £90 million in 2015-16 (Martin, 2017). There is other more unstructured government funding available through project funding. This, however, is viewed by some as 'problematic and divisive' (Simpson, 2019, p. 31) as the sources and allocation of funding often reflect and

reproduce the wider dominant discourses about immigration and different immigrant groups rendering some as more 'deserving' than others (Simpson, 2019).

Looking back into the history of ESOL shows how it is deeply intertwined with the UK's history of inward migration as Sheila Rosenberg (2007) shows in detail in her analysis *A critical history of ESOL in the UK, 1870-2006*¹⁰. It is both a product of and response to patterns of inward migration and the various stances taken by successive governments which have reflected the dominant discourses around it. Thus, it has become highly politicised. Hamilton and Hillier (2011) remark that, discussions about migrants' language needs have been dominated 'by strong opinions about national identity and the English language' (p. 2). The field of ESOL 'has received uneven and often unhelpful attention from government' (*ibid.*) and is often construed as deficit and inferior (Motha, 2006) which has been a powerful trend within the British Education system and goes hand in hand with the depicting of migrant communities as pathologized and deficient (Hamilton and Hillier, 2011). In addition, the field of ESOL has been influenced by broader trends in government and education driven by neoliberal dynamics.

Before concluding this section, it is important to point out that the development of ESOL as a field of migrant language education policy and practice in the UK, where English is the dominant language, has occurred alongside the global spread of another field of English language teaching: English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Traditionally the two fields have had close ties, however they both define their own boundaries and distinct nature (Cooke, 2015; Williams and Williams, 2007). As Williams and Williams (2007) explain, within the UK, the distinction traditionally made between ESOL and EFL is characterised by ESOL as being generally associated with less privileged migrant and refugee mobilities and concerned with assisting migrants with settling and working in the UK whilst EFL is for foreigners, typically middle-class Europeans and overseas students, coming to learn English for general or specific purposes and largely developed by universities and the private sector. The teaching

¹⁰ Rosenberg (2007) gives a thorough account of these developments, marking the following moments as important: Jewish's settlement in London's East End at the end of the nineteenth century, the arrival of refugees as a result of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, migration from the Indian subcontinent in the 1960s and beyond, groups of refugees from Latin America, Uganda, Cambodia, and Vietnam, in more recent years from Kosovo, Somalia, Sudan, Congo, Iraq, and Afghanistan as well as increased migration from Eastern European countries. To which one has to add the inward migration patterns post-2006 due to continuing and new wars, forced displacements, and ongoing unemployment and economic hardship across the Global South.

of EFL in the UK gained particular traction from the 1960s onwards and was driven by a certain affluence as trips to the UK, summer schools, special courses, and so forth became increasingly popular (Howatt and Smith, 2014). Thus, within the UK and the specific context examined in this thesis, EFL is generally associated with more privileged neoliberal mobilities (Khan, 2014).

The need for and use of English has been steadily growing around the globe and thus so too has the investment in the linguistic capital of English, imbuing those who have access to and can use the language with privilege. English, as Phillipson (2008) asserts, goes beyond being an instrument for communication. Rather it denotes a highly usable value in the linguistic market (see also, Bourdieu, 1991). For example, in continental Europe, English is by far the most widely taught foreign language, and proficiency in English is increasingly required in key societal domains, such as business and higher education (Phillipson, 2006) as well as in European Union institutions (Phillipson, 2003). Institutions such as the British Council, which was established in 1935 with the aim of promoting British cultural, educational and linguistic interests worldwide, and Cambridge Assessment English, with its qualifications and tests, play important roles in facilitating the increasingly dominant role of English around the world. These trends have all furthered the relevance and importance of EFL and English Language Teaching (ELT) in its global sense. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the developments of EFL and ELT in its global sense and the ways in which EFL is used in other contexts within applied linguistics in more detail, for example the teaching of EFL in state and private schools in countries where English is not a language of communication in major state institutions (see also the distinction between different contexts for EFL by Williams and Williams (2007) in Notes on Terminology at the beginning of this thesis). However, Howatt and Widdowson (2004) and Howatt and Smith (2014) provide good discussions of the histories of EFL and ELT beyond the specific context that is examined in this thesis.

The developments outlined above regarding both labels or logics, ESOL and EFL and their associations with less privileged migrant and refugee mobilities and affluent neoliberal mobilities respectively, are relevant in the context of my research as they meet at my field site which offers English language classes which are taken up by students within two departments, the ESOL and EFL departments. The former falls under the auspices of the

government, the latter is accredited by the British Council. Chapter six further interrogates these labels and their underlying logics as well as the side by side existence of the two settings within the college's landscape and elucidates the meanings and value attributed to them in my field site, the way they were situated within the college setting and how they position their respective students in this educational space.

In order to better contextualise the experiences of my participants - i.e. a heterogeneous student body comprising different mobilities and migratory statuses which intersect with classed, racialised, and gendered identities and who are thus differently positioned in terms of their legitimacy and belonging - I now turn to discuss the ways in which the unfinished legacies of Empire are shaping the present in relation to the construction of hierarchies of belonging and responses to the evolution of a multicultural society.

Unfinished legacies of Empire, hierarchies of belonging, and the management of diversity

The UK and London have a long history of migration as a popular destination for many seeking refuge, asylum, safety, economic betterment, and so forth. Migratory patterns have often been facilitated by the legacies of Britain's imperial past and London's role as an imperial centre as well as the needs of the economy. These patterns are interwoven with the continuous construction of hierarchies of belonging as well as policy responses concerned with the management of diversity and 'race relations' within the emergence of a multicultural society. Discussing these dynamics highlights how 'race', racism, and multiculturalism/diversity are part of the political economy of modern Britain and are thus integral to not only understand the experience of migrants but also dominant discourses about language learning for integration which play an integral part in the current approach to managing diversity.

Legacies of Empire, 'old' and 'new' racisms, and hierarchies of belonging

I start by shedding light on the processes of ranking and ordering of difference in a diversified and multicultural society by drawing attention to the constructions of hierarchies

of belonging that are shaped by 'old' and 'new' racisms animated by both unfinished legacies of Empire in the present and contemporary migration patterns.

A major shift in immigration occurred in connection with Britain's post-colonial moment and is marked by the 1948 British Nationality Act which did not denote an immigration policy per se, but rather a nationality policy with immigration consequences (Anderson, 2013). It allowed the subjects in the British Empire (what later became the Commonwealth) to live and work in the United Kingdom. This mobility of subjects was very much needed to fill post-war labour shortages as the more than 300,000 Europeans who were recruited to work in the post-war UK economy were not enough. Many were brought to the UK by ships, notably the Empire Windrush which docked at Tilbury in London on 22 June 1948, carrying 492 passengers from the Caribbean, symbolising a key moment in the emergence of Britain as a multicultural society (Phillips, 1998). They were joined by immigrants from partitioned India, Africa, Hong Kong and also Pakistan, following its independence from India, and later Bangladesh. Popular areas of settlement besides London were industrial towns and cities, such as Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Oldham, Rochdale, etc. – all places which would feature heavily in the (re-emerging) moral panics and debates about 'segregated communities' from 2001 onwards primarily concerned with inter-group interaction rather than inequality and revitalisation of the segregation concept. These debates propelled a distinct shift in the link between immigration, integration, and language, which I discuss further below.

The post-colonial movement of people was greater than anticipated and particularly the fact that it denoted an influx of black subjects was perceived as a 'problem' both from within and outside the government (Solomos, 1988). As black subjects started to immigrate to post-war Britain, which thus far had been imagined as a homogenous society, 'race' became an important element in British policy and 'race relations' (mainly framed around colour) denoted the basis of hostility and conflict. Solomos and Back (1996) point out that from the post-war period onwards, political processes and institutions have played a key role in the construction of racial and ethnic questions in British society. As we have seen above, there had been a significant amount of European immigration in the post-war period. Yet, the arrival of 492 Caribbeans on the Empire Windrush in 1948 sparked much greater public

concern. They arrived in a hostile territory and were seen as rivals for women, welfare, and work resulting in social and 'racial' tension in various parts of the country. As a response, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 was introduced to limit further black immigration - largely based on the assumption that the 'cultural differences' of black immigrants would lead to 'racial' conflict' (Solomos, 1988) - and the period saw a racialisation of immigration legislation (Miles, 1984; Solomos, 1988). Miles (1984) argues that the notions of 'race' and 'immigration' became interchangeable, and, 'whenever, 'immigrants' and 'immigration' became the centre of debate, the reference was in fact to 'coloured people' regardless of their place and not to all people entering Britain' (p. 22)¹¹. They thus became positioned as 'problematic'.

Furthermore, it is widely argued that the post-war development of immigration control denotes a history of institutionalized racism (Hansen, 2000; Miles, 1984; Solomos and Back, 1996) as 'race' and racism became woven into the fabric of an ever diversifying society and emerged as ordering principles within the establishment of hierarchies of belonging. This means that immigration policy continues to be the most clearly racializing area of government policy (see also Balibar, 1991; 2004). Although migration patterns to the UK that were channelled by imperial relations with former colonies have now been destabilized and largely drawn to a close, the legacies of racism that shaped the lived experience of those arriving at that time and which were mainly framed around colour have not disappeared but rather have merely changed their form. To this end, although current migration patterns are more heterogeneous, diverse, and complicated, they are no less haunted by a legacy of racism that is rooted in Britain's imperial past (Gilroy, 2004). This history thus continues to shape the lived experience of those arriving today, such as my participants.

In addition, there has been a growing anti-Muslim sentiment in Western Europe, often characterized as "cultural racism" [...] in which culture or religion are essentialized to the

¹¹ From 1962 onwards, further legislation was passed. Restrictions on who was considered eligible to enter the UK gradually tightened as different classes of British subjects were recognized by differentiating passports and 'patriality' rules which required those wanting to come to the UK to have at least one parent or grandparent who had been born in the UK were introduced. This served as a mechanism to facilitate the entry for white Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders whilst restricting other racialised Commonwealth citizens and migrants.

point that they become the functional equivalent of biological racism and groups are seen as inherently inferior on the basis of their culture or religion' (Foner and Alba, 2008, p. 370). In light of a distinctive form of discrimination arising towards Muslims and Islam, the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia was established in the UK in 1996, and in 1997 the Runnymede Trust published its ground-breaking report *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all*. It is widely argued that Islamophobia lies at the heart of contemporary British and European cultural racism leading to discrimination and prejudice, enforcing social distances and contributing to inequalities including in residential segregation and employment patterns as well as exclusionary practices (see for example, Modood, 2005).

Also, the 'war on terror' has provided another context for the intensification of political anxiety around the issue of immigration in Britain. It also had a particular impact on the language of hate and resentment across Europe. Through this increased concern about terrorism and security, immigrants have become the target of suspicion and hostility and certain groups are singled out and portrayed as a security threat. In particular, this feeds into the framing of a problematic Muslim community, the construction of the Muslim as the main Other and the growth of a dominant discourse around anxieties of an 'Islamisation of Europe'. This cultural attitude has been affected by the discourse of the 'global war on terror' and has affected it in turn (Bhatt, 2007).

Furthermore, the dynamics of migration have been transformed and the last 20-30 years have seen perhaps the most intense phase of migration in Britain's history. It can be argued that the number of EU citizens coming to the UK unsettled at least superficially the ways in which immigration had been racially coded and signalled a shift in the patterns of migrant racialisation (Back et al., 2018). However, as Back et al. (2018) observe, 'this did not mark a complete break and the hierarchies of belonging established by racism have adapted to the new circumstances' (p. 13). Distinctions that are drawn often deploy a mixture of the 'old' and 'new' racisms, i.e. constructions revolving around issues of skin-colour, cultural identification, as well as legal differentiation due to different immigration statuses which intersect with classed, and gendered identities as I discuss in more detail further below (Gilroy, 1987; 2004; Wills et al., 2010). These processes of distinction lead to a situation in which some people are understood to belong more, or more rightfully, than others

(Bhambra, 2016). Moreover, Yuval-Davis et al. (2019) observe that these always shifting national hierarchies of belonging ensure that 'some categories of people remain in a low place' (p. 98).

I now turn to examining the development of policy approaches to diversity in Britain since the post-war period, highlighting how they are programmes to ensure social order rather than part of a redistributive politics that is aimed at tackling the underlying pathology within society. They are thus prone to ignore the often severe effects in migrants' lives, i.e. my participants, of the unfinished legacies of Empire, the 'old' and 'new' racisms, and hierarchising and exclusionary mechanisms facilitated by them.

Policy approaches to diversity: from multiculturalism to integration

The years following the arrival of the Empire Windrush and into the 1960s saw the emergence of a multicultural society. However, as we have seen, those arriving were marginalised and struggled with their designation as a generation of immigrants as they became positioned as 'problematic' and were met with hostility within the system and across institutions making it difficult for many to claim legitimacy, belonging, and inclusion in their new surroundings. It was at that time that the term multiculturalism as a policy approach to managing 'race relations' and diversity was introduced and popularized. Although the term was not clearly defined and in time became a 'fuzzy concept' (Markusen, 2003), it can be argued that multicultural policy was seen as fitting with universal liberal democratic principles and was therefore appealing to policy makers. To this end, there was greater emphasis put on training in 'cultural awareness' in the public sector and the organisation of multicultural events, what Alibhai-Brown (2000) refers to as 'saris, samosas and steel bands' and which were aimed at convincing the white population of the legitimacy and values of other cultures. These multicultural initiatives worked from the premise that this would eliminate the ignorance and intolerance which had led to previous acts of discrimination and conflict (*ibid.*). However, this approach was seen as problematic by many as it essentialised all experiences of immigrants or minoritised communities to their culture. Also, measures aimed at acknowledging and supporting cultural pluralism often remained

largely on the declaratory level, given the absence of specific national directives and resources. Moreover, the fact that these multicultural policies went hand in hand with discriminatory immigration controls was seen by many as merely denoting a gesture or symbolic political act which gave the impression that something was being done while in practice achieving very little (Solomos and Back, 1996). In what follows, I briefly contextualise and investigate the usages, key tenets, and the period of British multiculturalism before moving on to discussing the shift toward the currently popular integration paradigm with its associated policies.

The context of the emergence of multiculturalism denotes a shift from the 'race relations' problematic which was largely concerned with material dimensions of accommodation of immigrants in society. The key concerns of multiculturalism are different with an agenda focused on culture, representation, difference, and identity related to religion, tradition, values, and histories within the context of the state and particular power relationships within the state. Multiculturalism is an explicitly political undertaking. It is more subjective, critical, abstract than 'race relations' which are more practical, but there are also practical concerns. Key issues and questions are 'How do we understand sameness/groups?', 'How do we understand difference?', i.e. the 'pluralist dilemma', and 'How do we reconcile the two within society?', 'How to manage the relationship between different groups within society?' (Ashcroft and Bevir, 2019; May, 2002).

There are different usages of multiculturalism, e.g, empirical, philosophical, practical usages. The empirical usage is concerned with the demographic descriptive aspects of a multicultural society as an irreversible result of demographic change. The philosophical usage focuses on the question of how to generate inclusive nations which remains of crucial importance for many Western democracies, i.e. a nation which embraces the ethno-cultural and religious diversity of its population. Thus, it is concerned with a normative discourse, referring to ideology or the idea of multiculturalism, namely political multiculturalism or multicultural nationalism. The aim of multiculturalism is not to remove, but to add diversity, so as to generate a national society made of a plurality of communities, each of them placed on an equal foot (Parekh, 2000; Modood, 2007). In this sense, political multiculturalism can be read as a normative project aimed at pluralising the nation. The nation is seen not as an

historically stable, fixed, monolithic entity, given once for all, but as one that keeps adjusting to ongoing processes of globalisation, territorial reshuffling, and demographic transformation (*ibid.*). Within this context, multiculturalism legitimises the reframing of the nation to accommodate its increasingly diverse population. Key tenets are a) cultural variation within the nation - as each is seen as valid and needs to be recognised in its cultural specificity; b) reduction of discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity and the overcoming of barriers to full participation in society; c) allowing unconstrained access to public services; d) recognition of cultural identities (as opposed to assimilation) and the opening up of public space for their representation - a multicultural society is seen as having a duty to protect and promote cultural distinctiveness and as such people should not have their cultural identity stripped from them; e) the fostering of acceptance of ethnic pluralism and cultural understanding across all groups as multiculturalism understands cultural interaction as a power relation between majority and minoritised groups with uneven statuses (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010).

To sum up multiculturalism argues that nation states need to be fairer and promoting equal rights. It challenges the notion of a singular, common culture which is not seen as adequately representing the multi-ethnic composition of modern nation states and argues for greater public recognition and representation in the public and civic realm of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and/or religious identities (May, 2002). Multiculturalism has also a practical usage in form of social programmes and public policy.

Multiculturalism was ascendent in the UK from the late 1970s/early 1980s onwards, featuring a shift away from 'race' and 'race relations' to ethnicity, culture and multiculturalism, however, not an absolute break from the former. The emergence of the distinctive British approach to multiculturalism between 1962 and 1979 was due to a growing public resistance to non-white immigration and anti-immigrant public opinion which produced further legislation on immigration and nationality. Ethnic and racial hierarchies remained to be clearly visible in the society, whether measured in terms of economic inequalities, political underrepresentation, social stigmatisation, or cultural invisibility. Multiculturalism was developed to help overcome these lingering inequalities. Out of this arose a distinctive British form of multiculturalism (Ashcroft and Bevir, 2019).

During the Thatcherite government (1979 - 97) the multiculturalist regime persisted, although being constantly under pressure as Thatcher's anti-immigration rhetoric embodied a cultural nationalism with racialized undertones. Also, as we have seen above, immigration rules were significantly tightened from this point on in ways that seemed to target especially non-white immigration.

The other arm of British multiculturalism, i.e. the practical usage in form of social programmes and public policy, also remained broadly in place, despite more direct attacks on it by the Thatcher government as anti-racism and multiculturalism became core parts of teacher training and curriculum design, mostly inspired by the pluralist rhetoric of Lord Swann's 1985 *Report on Education (ibid.)*. Overall, British multiculturalism became 'entrenched' at the local level during this period. The distinctive approach arising out of the post-imperial experience remained largely intact and a broad consensus in favour of this distinctive type of multiculturalism was maintained until the early 2000s.

British multiculturalism was put under strain by events in the early 2000s and the policy approach to managing diversity entered a new phase from this time onwards. Race riots in the north of England in 2001 were the initial trigger for a re-evaluation of multicultural policy as the UK experienced a series of street disturbances amongst Asian (mainly "second-generation" Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) and white youths and police in the towns of Burnley, Bradford, and Oldham in northern England. They occurred in a situation of rising levels of poverty and high levels of unemployment, as well as increasing racial tension between the Asian and White communities which was heightened by the burgeoning popularity of far-right groups such as the British National Party (Kundnani, 2007; Pilkington, 2008; Dancygier, 2010). Referred to as the 'northern town riots', they were presented as having markedly racial dimensions (Anderson, 2013) and led to discussions about 'community cohesion', a term which had rarely been used in public policy and urban planning discourse prior to the 'riots' (Robinson, 2009). As the perceived racial dimension to the 'riots' was stressed, particularly the articulated concern of so-called 'parallel lives' among "second generation" Asian communities, firm emphasis was put on their long-term 'assimilation into British society' (Anderson, 2013). Yet, as Back et.al. (2002) point out, 'the young men of Burnley, Bradford and Oldham who took to the streets in the summer of 2001

had grievances that had nothing to do with “assimilation”. Indeed, they are all too well assimilated into a society divided by racism and discrimination’ (para. 5.4). Thus, the ‘northern town riots’ and their aftermath are generally viewed as the beginning of ‘a sustained critique’ (Rattansi, 2011, p. 69) of multiculturalism which was apportioned the blame for the segregation and perceived lack of cohesion. As a result, there has been a shift in government and wider policy thinking towards putting more emphasis on ‘community cohesion’, ‘integration’, ‘shared values’, etc. whilst still ‘valuing diversity’ (Cantle, 2008).

As these processes were accelerated by and merged with global events such as the 9/11 bombings, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the London bombings of July 2005 an ‘emerging discourse that sees institutional racism as less significant than the threat of Muslim disorder/terrorism and identifies the central issue as that of cultural integration’ (Pilkington, 2008, p. 3) was consolidated. Consequently, propelled by the events of 9/11 and the subsequent so-called ‘war on terror’, multiculturalism experienced a ‘backlash’ (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010; Berg and Sigona, 2013). The government responded with a more strident emphasis on the need for immigrant and minoritised communities to assimilate British values and traditions. British Muslims became particular objects of public and governmental suspicion, which exacerbated criticism of multicultural policies from both majority and minoritised groups.

In addition, there have been further reasons for the decline of multiculturalism in the UK. The white working class was once perceived as the bedrock in the building of modern Britain. The rise of multiculturalism in Britain paralleled the decline of the voice of the white working class through the deindustrialisation of the economy, leading to the marginalisation of the white working class. In this way white working class anxiety about fairness and equity from government in relation to public benefits fed into the ‘backlash’ against multicultural policies and the emergence of whiteness, class, and nationalism. Thus, national themes such as belonging and identity in a country that is being reshaped by immigration have become key political issues. This has been further entrenched after the success of many extreme right and nationalist parties. Furthermore, these dynamics found a very strong and influential expression in the publication of David Goodheart’s (2013) *The British Dream: Successes and Failures of Post-War Immigration* and have subsequently been harnessed by

political parties such as UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party) which received the largest number of votes in the 2014 European Elections under the then leader Nigel Farage who is now at the helm of the newly established BREXIT Party. These parties are major vehicles for anti-immigrant political rhetoric - often under the guise of 'common sense' and disavowing accusations of racism – mobilising a sense of a silent but deserving majority who have been betrayed by 'metropolitan elites' and whose livelihoods have been threatened by unwanted strangers (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019). Despite the populist fundamentalism of the white working classes outlined above it must not be forgotten that there are a range of views within the white working class. They are sometimes victims and aggressors, but they are also at the forefront of supporting immigrants and minoritised communities, as well as embracing multiculturalism (Beider, 2015).

Another reason for the failure of multiculturalism is the fact that within the country's institutions, structural racism and practices of preference and discrimination are deeply imbedded feeding into a negative perception of immigrants. In the context of the 'backlash' against multiculturalism and its focus on the 'figure of the Immigrant' (Gilroy, 2004) as well as the shifting of responsibility to integrate to immigrant communities, it is important to point out that structural discrimination and inequalities are the hidden causes and issues leading to 'segregation' and are not the responsibility of individuals. These deeply rooted, entrenched forms of racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, xenophobia, and inequality form part of the 'long shadows of colonialism and its entanglements with social exclusion' (Jones et al., 2017, p. ix).

As a result of the developments described thus far, increased attention has been given to the concept of integration which is promoted by policy makers to counter and correct the 'perceived dislocations of increasing diversification' (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016, p. 600), thus starting an 'integration trend' (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010, p. 19). On a policy level, ethnicity has been the primary lens that has been employed to handle the concept of integration, however, there has been a profound lack of clarity as to what the concept of integration is to entail (Gidley, 2014; Saggat and Somerville, 2012). In addition, aims have shifted throughout the years and within different governments. More recently, there has been a growing emphasis on requiring migrants to "fit in" which often has a punitive streak.

The term integration is also heavily intertwined with Durkheimian functionalism. For Durkheim, in order to bind strangers to the abstraction of the state, forms of organic solidarity were required which he saw in the civil religion of the nation. As Gidley (2004) remarks, "British values' and commitment to the 'British way of life' have taken the role of Durkheim's civil religion of the state, betraying a melancholic nostalgia for a monochrome Britishness that probably never existed' (n.p.). This is what Gilroy (2004) describes as 'complex ailment' of postcolonial melancholia in which discourses of 'culture loss' and racialised imaginations and longings for what is imagined as a homogenous and more glorious past play an integral part. This melancholia attempts to locate 'the place or moment before the country lost its moral and cultural bearings'. This desire for 're-orientation', as Gilroy remarks, cannot be severed from homogeneity's lure or aversion to newcomers, for wanting to turn back is a rejection of 'the perceived dangers of pluralism and from the irreversible fact of multicultural' (*ibid.*, p. 97). Gidley's and Gilroy's observations poignantly highlight how currently popular discourses and imaginations of integration, citizenship, and solidarity hinge on the idea of a homogenous society and nation-state – a fallacious imagination given that increased migration since the post-war period has made diversity and multicultural a fact of everyday life. This is particularly the case in urban centres such as London which are often described as 'superdiverse' (Vertovec, 2007). Chapter five describes this situation in the context of my field site in more detail.

In concluding this section, it is important to emphasize that both multiculturalism and the community cohesion and integration approach to managing diversity that has followed are aimed at providing social order not redistribution. The focus and scope of these programmes is not to reduce and counteract the underlying pathology, discrimination, exclusionary and hierarchising mechanisms within society. Thus, as Wills et al. (2010) point out, discussions focussing on community cohesion, ensuring integration, and promoting consensus-building through changing values are prone to 'ignore the racism and structural inequalities that have often created a lack of social and community cohesion in the first place' (p. 136). Whilst migrants often desire to integrate, in practice, their structural position and the wider economic and social exclusions that arise from their position in society present a barrier for them that hinders them from doing so, thereby rendering the imperative to integrate and "fit in" impossible to achieve.

This section has shown how racism, multiculturalism/diversity and the construction of hierarchies of belonging are part of the political economy of modern Britain. The following section reveals how migrants' linguistic proficiency and the learning of English has become integral to these often contradictory processes and dynamics.

Immigration, integration, and the question of language

Debates about migrants' language use, choice, and learning play an important role within the integration paradigm. Undeniably, the emphasis on the English language as a condition of citizenship and as a marker of integration is now well-established in policy (Simpson, 2019). In the UK context, the failure of migrants to learn or understand English is frequently depicted as 'a threat to national unity, British identity, social cohesion and democracy itself', as Blackledge (2011, p. 125) remarks. He furthermore asserts that these debates are not simply about language, but rather about immigration itself and policy in relation to immigrant groups, and the kind of society the UK aspires to become; 'in the beliefs and attitudes of the powerful [...] they have become a means of constructing social difference' (*ibid.*). To this end, language and language learning have become highly politicised and often pathologized in relation to certain immigrant groups.

A prime example of this are the discussions that followed the street disturbances in the summer of 2001 in northern England. The debates were concerned with ethnic segregation and a perceived lack of integration and cohesion in the affected towns. There was an explicit link made to a lack of English language competence in the Asian (particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi) community thus placing the blame for the 'riots' on the migrant communities and feeding into problems of polarisation between communities (Khan, 2014). Although this link between a perceived lack of English and lack of cohesion was contested by sociolinguists (see e.g. Blackledge, 2006; 2009a; 2009b; 2009c; Cameron, 2013), this trend has continued and 'poor English' has since been appearing regularly as a theme in political speeches and texts about integration, cohesion, terrorism, and security (Cooke, 2015) across the political spectrum. Also, as Khan (2014) highlights, the legislative response to the 'riots' in the form of the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act focused on immigrants' English

proficiency and acquisition of citizenship¹². This meant that language requirements were now framed within the same legislation aimed at managing immigration and dealing with illegal immigration, asylum, and citizenship (Greenwood and Robins 2002; Walters 2004). As Huysmans (2000) observes, the links between these discourses and technologies reified immigrants, irrevocably connecting them to societal instability and rendering them to 'suspicion'.

Such unhealthy framing of migrants' linguistic proficiency or the perceived lack thereof has continued post 2001, often in the context of the announcement of measures for dealing with Muslim extremism. In addition, the notion of 'fairness' and the 'moral obligation' of migrants to learn English has frequently been evoked. Certain migrant groups were often depicted as 'unwilling' or 'refusing' to learn the language leading to the idea of introducing 'penalties' for people who did not learn the language¹³. Thus, the increased politization of language and language learning in the migrant context has been imbued with a distinct moral dimension and have increasingly become bound up with questions of who can claim legitimacy and belonging as a 'good' or 'deserving' member in the 'community of value'.

In the light of these developments, it comes as no surprise that subsequently, 'moral panics' about large numbers of migrants 'not learning/speaking' English or being 'unwilling' to do so were evoked. As Critcher (2006) reminds us, moral panics highlight power structures and inequalities in society, in particular as we observe the rhetoric in political, public, and media discourses. These moral panics were often backed up by rather arbitrary numbers and framings of certain groups of people derived from the 2011 census which for the first time collected data on language - although it was criticised and viewed as problematic for its lack

¹² It introduced the Life in the UK test, requiring immigrants and would be citizens to demonstrate that they possess 'sufficient knowledge about life in the UK' and 'sufficient knowledge' of English language in order to become British citizens (Home Office 2002a).

¹³ Prominent examples are when soon after the 7/7 London bombings in 2005, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, announcing measures for dealing with Muslim extremism, spoke in a speech of 'an unhealthy separateness' in some communities where there were people 'who have been here for 20 years and still don't speak English' – despite the fact that the perpetrators of the 2005 attacks on London transport were native English speakers. Or Gordon Brown, who was Chancellor at the time, stated that: 'People who come into this country, who are part of our community, should play by the rules.[...] I think learning English is part of that ... I would insist on large numbers of immigrants who have refused to learn our language that they must do so' Also, in a 2015 speech the then Home Secretary Theresa May 2015 discussed terrorism as a result of segregation due to a lack of English language proficiency. She further (re)announced 'penalties' for people who did not learn English – a reference to Chancellor George Osborne's announcement of benefits cuts for those same people in the 2013 spending review.

of clarity and monolingual bias which raises doubts about the validity of the questions and the usefulness of the data (Sebba, 2017). Certain groups of migrants were focused on in particular, for example Muslim women have often been singled out - further feeding into a racialisation of language and in line with the points discussed above regarding the rise in Islamophobia. A poignant example is the then Prime Minister David Cameron's announcement of a £20 million English language teaching fund for Muslim women in 2016 whilst claiming that 'there is a lack of will in Muslim women wishing to learn English' and that 'language classes for Muslim women could stop radicalisation' (James, 2016, n. p.) - only four months earlier saw the withdrawal of £45 million of funding from English language teaching for migrants (*ibid.*).

As a matter of fact, despite demand rising considerably, funding for English language education provision for migrants has experienced a dramatic decline particularly from 2008 onwards as part of the austerity measures imposed by the government. According to a recent House of Commons briefing paper, funding declined by around 60 per cent in real terms between 2009/10 and 2015/16, with available places falling from 180,000 to 100,000 per annum in the same period (Foster and Bolton, 2017, p. 3) which disproportionately affected women (BIS, 2011).

There are also more recent examples of the continuation of the thus far outlined dominant rhetoric around immigration, integration, and English proficiency, such as both the interim and final report of the *All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration* set up after the EU referendum which I already referred to in the introduction chapter, the influential *Casey Review: A report into opportunity and integration* (2016). Particularly the latter continued the problematizing of those communities who have been in the spotlight since the 2001 'northern town riots'. This led Bassel (2016) to observe that the report officially reinvented the wheel by reinforcing the stigma of the figure of the Muslim woman which is characterised by social isolation, economic unproductivity, and the failure to learn English resulting in her perceived inability to manage her children. Also, the 2018 *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper: Building stronger, more united communities* describes the 'inability' of people living in England to speak English as a 'threat to society' and as one

of the main causes for the 'segregation problem' within the country and its communities whilst the learning English is presented as a 'transformative' power.

Needless to say, such uncritical framing of English language learning as the sole 'liberating force' enabling social mobility removes people from their social context and ignores the importance of existing social patterns and broader structural issues. Continuing the 'moral panics' about certain groups further pathologizes and constructs them as problematic. I would argue that it also echoes Sara Ahmed's (2010) observations of a 'civilizing happiness mission', i.e. the fusing of 'happiness' with cultural transformation. In her cultural critique Ahmed identifies the figure of the Immigrant, amongst others, as being positioned as 'stereotypically unhappy' and argues that happiness (or the desire for it) is used as a social control to steer individuals towards specific choices, lifestyles, and realities. Learning and speaking English in order to "fit in" and integrate are important part of these specific choices, lifestyles, and realities.

This section has outlined how language proficiency is seen as a key part of citizenship and as a prerequisite for being a 'good' or 'deserving' member of the 'community of value' and being perceived as a 'subject of value' whilst unhealthy links are established between language and security, and language and morality. The immigrant, or 'cultural stranger' - identified as a threat, causes unease and invokes 'moral panics'. As a result, measures are put in place to ensure 'integration', e.g. including citizenship and language proficiency requirements through which immigrants' willingness to comply and ability to integrate is demonstrated (Khan, 2014; Schinkel, 2010). To this end, the language proficiency of the figure of the Immigrant or perceived lack thereof has become a particular moral and political concern. What these often pathologizing and moralistic language learning for integration discourses fail to do is to take into account larger systems of power relations and persisting inequalities that are concealed beneath the dominant rhetoric.

In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss the different categories of mobility denoting the figure of the Immigrant that lie at the centre of a gendered, racialised, and class-based immigration regime and are important to understand how migrants, and thus my participants, are differently positioned in relations to the 'community of value'.

The figure of the Immigrant

The figure of the Immigrant provides a key political mechanism and becomes culpable in the creation of hierarchies of mobility/belonging through the 'gendered, racialised, and class-based immigration system' (Griffiths, 2017) and varying immigration statuses established within it. It leads to inequities among people in terms of their rights to belong and can have a criminalising effect (Back et al., 2012), as this section shows. This reveals the underlying ideals and ideologies of the 'community of value', e.g. in terms of who is valued and what values (political, economic) count leading to some bodies as being perceived as affirming it whilst others are seen as a threat to it (Anderson, 2013). This is important to highlight in order to be better able to understand the, often precarious, positionality and im/possibilities of my participants in terms of their belonging to and membership of the 'community of value'.

Currently, immigration policy is structured according to three broad categories of 'non-citizen' or 'immigrant': migrant, refugee/asylum seeker, and family member. National policy on asylum and family reunion is constrained by international treaty obligations, which means that neither category of entrant can be abolished. Policy regarding economic migration is mediated by the needs of the economy. Family migration is more difficult to fit into the asylum seeker/economic migrant dichotomy and has received less policy attention. The participants in my research were from across these three categories. Whilst each type of entrant is imagined differently, in practice, the distinction between the refugee (who is fleeing persecution) and the migrant (who is seeking employment) is by no means clear cut. The first category is refugee/asylum seeker which is part of international treaty obligations. There have always been people coming to the UK as refugees and to seek asylum. Until the 1980s there was a relative openness to refugees as they were seen to confirm the values of liberal Western democracies and the embodiment of liberal polity¹⁴. Thus, the contours of the 'community of value' were shaped by appeals to human rights (Anderson, 2013).

¹⁴ Gibney and Hansen (2003) point out that 'when the public thought about refugees, to the extent it thought about them at all, it associated them with Hungarian freedom fighters or Soviet ballet dancers, both of which were popular figures' (p. 1). These figures also have strong class associations and during the Cold War, the political refugee denoted the symbol of an educated choice for freedom over communism (Anderson, 2013).

The number of people claiming asylum increased after the end of the Cold War throughout the 1990s and thus posed the greatest challenge for immigration policy which gradually led to a significant shift in the policy and rhetoric around refugees and asylum. More restrictive laws were passed which were critiqued by opponents as having a criminalising effect. This legislative framework was accompanied by institutional changes, in particular the creation of an enlarged agency with greater powers, the UK Borders Agency (UKBA). To this end, asylum seeking and concerns over illegal migration have become inextricably bound up together in UK policy. They climbed the policy agenda at much the same time and were often deliberately conflated. There was, as Anderson (2013) points out 'a move from the figure of the white political refugee fleeing the oppressive Soviets to the black asylum seeker, running away from a failed state, or the Eastern European criminal looking for a better life, both likely to be 'bogus' and not political refugees at all' (p. 56). This trend has continued until today and those seeking asylum are often imagined as actually being economic migrants, e.g. they are portrayed as seeking to enter the UK because they are in search for work or benefits and not because they share liberal values and ideals. Therefore, they are not perceived as affirming the superiority and desirability of liberal values, but rather as a threat to them. The community of value is thus confirmed by rejecting them and not by their inclusion (Anderson, 2013; Jones et al., 2017). These trends were propelled further following the attacks of 9/11 which led to an increased securitisation of immigration (Bigo, 2002; Khan, 2014) as well as the 'war on terror' which began in 2001 and substantially increased the numbers of people forced to flee their homelands.

Continuing and new wars, forced displacements, and ongoing unemployment and economic hardship across the Global South have led to the so-called 'migration crisis' or 'refugee crisis' that started to make headlines all across Europe and the UK in 2015. The UK was reluctant to accept any refugees which were often portrayed as being 'not genuine' but rather economic migrants - poignantly revealing the potential slippage between the two categories. The widespread circulation of a picture of 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi, who drowned with his mother and brother off the Turkish coast while attempting to reach Europe and washed up on a beach in Greece triggered a shift in public sympathies. This led to a change in government policy to take in more refugees from Syria - but only those who were seen as

legitimate and more deserving than others. However, this was often disrupted by a link to potential terrorism (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016).

Secondly, in terms of economic migration, the beginning of the New Labour period in 1997 saw a shift in policy and the instigation of a more open attitude and managed approach. Thus, economic migrants were, in contrast to needy, criminal, and potentially 'bogus' asylum seekers, portrayed as social contributors and in the new post-Cold War globalized world the measure of worth was economic value rather than political values (Anderson, 2013). The category of economic migrant is generally divided into (highly) skilled and unskilled with the latter occupying a much more precarious position as they are always in danger of being imagined as undermining the conditions of 'native' unskilled workers.

This altered government approach to expanding economic migration eventually culminated in the immediate opening of the labour market to nationals of the new member states after the 2004 EU enlargement. This led to significant migration from the so called A8 countries (mainly Poland but also the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) and numbers significantly exceeded original estimates¹⁵. Overall, arrivals from Eastern Europe have worked mainly in low-paid jobs in sectors such as hospitality and catering, administration, and construction (Somerville et al., 2009). These developments led to marked public and media disquiet and the Labour Party was accused of being reckless in its labour immigration policy. These developments, together with a quickly changing global labour market, led to the introduction of a new approach in 2008: a points-based system that uses a slippery concept of 'skills' aimed at letting in those who would benefit the economy (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019).

Although the policy focus of successive governments might have shifted, the trend that was outlined above has continued overall. With the 2010 election of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition came a focus on numbers and the 'control of net migration'. The time since 2012 has been characterised by the 'hostile environment' strategy which, although initially targeted at "illegal" immigration evolved into a general approach to all migration

¹⁵ Many other EU member states had imposed transitional measures which made the UK an even more popular destination. When Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007, the Government put restrictions in place, to limit migration from these countries to students, the self-employed, highly skilled migrants and food and agricultural workers.

reflecting a broader hostility towards migrants in the UK (Taylor, 2018). Furthermore, since the EU referendum and Brexit debates, the extension and further development of the points-based system has been widely discussed by politicians and policy makers. Frequent reference has been made to the 'Australian style points-based system' which assesses applications to live and work in the country through adding up points earned on the basis of age, skills, qualifications, linguistic ability, and so forth. Such approach to immigration denotes a further manifestation of the neoliberal market logic by viewing migrants solely as 'human capital' rather than as members of the population (Jones et al., 2017). In doing so, hierarchies of human value and mobility are established, imbuing the 'subject of value' with more possibility and freedom to move.

Thirdly, before finishing this section, I briefly highlight some important points regarding the third category of entrant: family member (which is generally gendered as female whereas asylum and economic migration are mainly gendered as male). Family migration has contributed significantly to settlement numbers and has been causing much political concern. Family migration policy has become gradually more restrictive. Government guidance on family migration and descriptions of the ideal family migrant emphasize the genuineness of those applying as well as their ability to be hard-working and contribute to society¹⁶.

Overall, it can be argued that family migration policy reflects not only ideas about the nature of the family and nation but is also inflected with notions of race and gender. There is often an anxiety in public and media discourse about the fecundity of immigrant women. Although this generally does not evoke the notion of race directly, it often displays a concern with the 'stock' of the racialized nation (Anderson, 2013). Furthermore, the question of motherhood is highlighted which is an important notion regarding the 'community of value' as for women, membership of the 'community of value' is not only facilitated by race and class but is also about 'the right kind of motherhood' (*ibid.*, p. 7). As we have seen earlier, the debates and 'moral panics' about Muslim women not speaking

¹⁶ For example, the 2011 *Family Migration Consultation* states 'Those who want to make a real life here with their family, who want to work hard and contribute to their local community and who are not seeking to abuse the system or the rights of others. That is the type of family migration to the UK that we want to see' (Home Office, 2011, para. 5.1 – cited in Anderson 2013, p. 62).

English and thus potentially raising terrorists and which are prone to pathologize certain communities are markedly racialized and gendered.

To sum up, this section has outlined how the figure of the Immigrant has become a key emblem of moral and political concern for the 'community of value' within an immigration system that is as Griffiths (2017) argues, 'gendered, racialised, and class-based' (p. 156). This has real effects in people's lives, such as in the lives of my participants. With the intensification of political anxiety around the issue of immigration, certain mobilities and bodies have increasingly become pathologized. Thus, it is clear that immigration policy and control are 'not neutral sorting mechanisms' but rather should be considered as 'a factor in shaping actions and processes, productive of certain types of relations' (Anderson, 2013, p. 70). As different migrant categories are governed differently, they also assert certain values and positions with different bodies ranked even further within each category (e.g. unskilled/low-skilled/highly skilled or varying degrees of deservedness). What the different categories have in common is that it is the poor and 'undeserving', those who are outside of the dominant symbolic of the 'subject of value' and are not seen as contributing, who are perceived as a threat to the 'community of value' and are to be excluded, e.g. the illiterate global poor asylum seeker, the migrant worker who does not earn enough, the immigrant who lacks the required linguistic ability, and so forth.

Conclusion

This chapter has employed a historical perspective to enable a better understanding of the current framing of immigration, integration, and the positionality of migrants in the UK, such as my participants. It has revealed how certain types of mobility and immigration are pathologized and how the figure of the Immigrant is classed, gendered, and racialized - who needs to integrate in order to "fit in". Being able to speak English or learning English is seen as a paramount condition to doing so. Undoubtedly, the figure of the Immigrant alongside their language ability, use, choice, and 'willingness' to learn English has become a key emblem of moral and political concern for the 'community of value'. This is reflected in the moralistic language learning for integration rhetoric that has emerged as the dominant discourse around the issue. To this end, language and language learning and the field of

English education for migrants have become highly politicised and intertwined with questions of citizenship, belonging, and certain pathology narratives around immigration, mobility, and migrants.

We have further seen that, as immigration to the UK has increased, different policies regarding the management of race relations and diversity have developed to ensure social order. However, both multiculturalism and the currently favoured focus on social cohesion and integration - with ESOL expected to be one of the main mechanisms to foster the latter - fall short of constituting a redistributive politics and operate within a highly unequal society denoted by entrenched hierarchies of belonging and racism. How this has real effects in migrants' lives who are taking up language classes at my field site to improve their English as well as within the institutional setting itself will be elucidated in the empirical chapters of this thesis. These chapters also show how my participants dialogue with the dominant discourses that were critically scrutinized in this chapter but also often resist and counteract them.

The next chapter provides an account of the methodology that I adopted for the research.

Chapter 4: Researching with migrants in volatile times

Introduction

This chapter describes and provides an account of my fieldwork and research. I elucidate the ways in which I negotiated a range of methods, aiming to be as transparent as possible whilst not concealing the 'untidy, unruly nature of research' nor write over its 'messiness' (Letherby, 2003). Indeed, my research blueprint and ideas which were designed and drawn up at my desk, encountered many challenges in the field. Also, as outlined in chapter one, the time during which the research took place was marked by increased volatility. Thus, flexibility and the ability to step back, adapt and adjust were key tenets throughout my research process. Furthermore, I had previously been involved with my field site for some years which undeniably had a significant impact on my research in various aspects.

My research consisted of an ethnography combining discourse analysis with participant observation, focus group discussions, interviews with varying degrees of structure as well as walking in the form of 'go alongs'. This chapter begins with discussing questions of reflexive practice and epistemic responsibility as well as justifying the approach taken. I then introduce the reader to my field site, discuss the ethical responsibilities and issues I faced and negotiated more or less successfully. I then examine the methods employed, the assumptions inherent to them and the way they produce knowledge in the field. Lastly, I turn to the process of data analysis and how I moved from writing down to writing up. This chapter provides an underpinning for the rest of the thesis as it examines the overall epistemological approach adopted.

Reflexive practice and epistemic responsibility

Reflexivity - via the researcher's self-conscious awareness of their position - is frequently advocated to address and grapple with questions of positionality, representation, and legitimacy. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to remain sensitive to the variety of factors that can potentially shape the research design, the data generated, results obtained, and representations produced. This is particularly important given the constructional and reflexive character inherent to doing ethnographic work (Walsh and Seale, 2018, p. 261)

which I chose as my method of inquiry to enable me to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues at hand.

In the preface to this thesis, I reflected on the seeds of this project and provided some autobiographical insights that shaped the development of my 'sociological imagination' (Mills, 1959) and are thus to a great extent responsible for how I came to do what I did. Without doubt, these experiences influenced the types of questions I sought to answer, the way I went about answering them and choices I made in terms of representation. Also, my own biography might be responsible for certain preconceptions or biases which need to be acknowledged; and they have had without doubt an influence on my position as the researcher, observer, or primary research instrument for that matter.

One of the main critiques of ethnography is that the process of data collection is carried out 'by a biased human' (Kawulich, 2005). Furthermore, the information different researchers gain differs dependent on the people, settings, and bodies of knowledge they can access which in turn is dependent on their own positionality. Undoubtedly, as researchers, we are always located in many different ways, i.e., in terms of nation, gender, class, age, history as well as the economic, social, and cultural relations which we study. For me this meant, for example being a white European middle-class university student who had been living in the UK for a considerable amount of time. However, during the course of my research I found myself challenged to negotiate my place and position here and at times had to resist how I was positioned by my new surroundings due to the political project of Brexit. Thus, these positions informed my access to discourses and what I could envisage and perceive. I argue that having been living as a foreigner in the UK myself aided my ability to understand and to have empathy for what it means to adapt to changes and a new country of settlement, negotiating a different culture, surrounding, language, and so forth.

In addition, I was well aware of the fact that my experiences as a previous member of staff at my field site could make me prone to holding certain biases, jump to conclusions too quickly, being less able to liberate myself from some taken for granted ideas or that this could affect my openness during the research process. Undoubtedly, I came to this project with preconceptions concerning the research topic and had some assumptions and expectations about what I would encounter and find in the field. This was unavoidable given my personal, professional, and academic background to date as outlined in the preface. In

addition, this project also builds upon the research undertaken for my MPhil which has shaped my thinking and approach.

As such, it was crucial to assume a critical and open stance towards data through questioning my own assumptions, my research process, and my personal effect on it throughout. Keeping a research diary alongside my fieldnotes was useful for tracing how my own position and my understanding developed dynamically together with the project. In addition, I also actively sought to counteract any biases throughout the research through peer debriefing, e.g., by sharing ideas, 'hypotheses', etc. with other researchers and peers who were not involved in the process and could mirror a more 'neutral' stance.

These considerations regarding researcher reflexivity are undoubtedly important to consider, however, it is of similar importance to point to the limits and potential pitfalls of reflexivity. Indeed, many scholars have problematised researcher reflexivity and pointed to the fact that the position of reflexive researcher which can be seen as an expression of the mobile, ideal, privileged self of late modernity is not open to all (Adkins, 2004). For researchers, it is therefore important to differentiate between employing reflexivity as a resource in order to authorise themselves, i.e. in the sense of merely trying to be reflexive and, by contrast, doing reflexivity in practice, i.e. turning away from self-telling to paying attention to concrete research practice and participants (Skeggs, 2007). As such, I made my participants the centre of my research from the start and paid attention to their often volatile life worlds.

Within anthropological and sociological research, the process of telling the stories of the subaltern has become part of the research practice as a tool by which the self of the writer or researcher is known (Skeggs, 2004c). The danger, as Skeggs (2004c) points out lies in 'those who are excluded from selfhood, personhood, individuality' to merely become the object of the research, often objectified, by those 'who have access to the subject position of researcher/writer' (p. 128). Paying attention to this was particularly important given the heterogeneity and plethora of differing experiences, positionalities, and im/possibilities of my student participants. Concretely this meant a constant awareness of the systems of exchange value and positioning, the limits on the mobility of some of my participants as opposed to others as well as the circuits of symbolic violence when telling the stories of and representing my participants. Through being sensitive to the relations of production and the

possibilities for appropriation my aim was to not reproduce and reify unequal relations of exchange.

To sum up, I argue that the considerations regarding my own positionality are important in order to pay attention to their potential influence on the research process in line with my interest in interpretation, inequality, impact, and social justice. In this research, I actively seek to counteract fixing people through labelling and processes of hierarchising and to shed light on processes of racialisation, classification, and gendering and the ways in which they are negotiated by revealing the external spatial and social structures in which they operate. The aim is to meaningfully interpret my participants' actions and represent them as active agents rather than as objects without agency or as Others within the limits of a highly unequal context characterised by volatility, uncertainty, and precarity. Thus, I employed an ethnographic approach for my research which allowed me to gain an in-depth and contextualised understanding.

From taking notice to ethnographic explorations

Ethnography is an interpretive endeavour, examining meaning and discourse in social settings and how it is made through 'an elaborate venture in thick description', i.e. careful accounts of social phenomena in which layers of meaning are expressed (Geertz, 1973) or 'thick explanation' (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). It incorporates an experiential element through researcher participation as well as an intellectual element by using and developing theoretical concepts in order to 'write culture' (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Choosing ethnography as my methodological approach to my research aided my interest in exploring the lived experience of my participants with the aim of representing them as multi-dimensional individuals, moving beyond a mere reproduction of dominant discourses and imaginations. It thus helped me to gain a more holistic understanding of how they inhabit spaces, how their actions are enabled or constrained by their environment, how institutional processes work and what effects they have over time. With its focus on observation within a particular context and not relying on verbal self-presentation alone, using ethnography to collect data helped me to see 'what is really going on' (Gerson and Horowitz 2002, p. 202), bringing to light incongruities between what people say they do and

what they actually do. In-context action enabled a richer way of generating data and viewing the world in which individuals are not positioned as free-floating, decontextualised entities, but are rather situated within the social, cultural, historical, and economic conditions of their daily lives. As Haraway (1991) reminds us, how subjects are situated informs the kinds of knowledges they can hold or produce.

The emphasis of ethnographic research on a sustained commitment to a field site and group of people fosters the production of richly detailed, multi-dimensional, and multi-faceted data. For my research, it made it possible to observe processes of racialisation, classification, and gendering which could be considered in conjunction with how the discursive practices of the institution and wider socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural contexts are negotiated by different people. It also facilitated an examination of how my student participants both position themselves and are positioned and experience processes of inclusion and exclusion. This focus on daily processes and positioning lends itself to examining and deconstructing essentialised categories by querying how they are produced instead of reproducing them.

A critique ethnography is sometimes faced with is that it is prone to putting too much focus on the local at the expense of larger societal structures (Brandt and Clinton, 2002).

However, this is counteracted by the argument most ethnographers make that the strength of ethnographic research lies in its potential to enquire into and shed light onto the relationships between local lived experiences and practices and macro-level institutional and societal structures and global dynamics (Cooke, 2015; O'Reilly, 2012). To this end, I deemed using ethnography as the most appropriate strategy of inquiry for my research as it allowed me to explore relations between the different dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach also helped me to deconstruct dominant discourses, narratives, imaginations, and representations on the one hand, and, on the other hand, reconstruct and reimagine through teasing out bottom-up perspectives and alternative narratives, practices, and perceptions.

Therefore, the approach I took in my research was to some extent inspired by the ethos of 'live sociology', which is the term coined by Back (2007) and according to him is 'historically situated, reflective, contestable, uncomfortable, partisan and fraught' (p. 22) with an intellectual architecture attentive to the scope and scale of global social processes. As Back

(2007) explains, such research seeks to read against the grain and to tell alternative stories that do not necessarily feature prominently as part of the dominant narrative by recognising the importance of focusing on 'gaps' and 'absences' within conventional texts (Mills, 1957). By providing a platform for my participants' voices to be heard, my hope is to illuminate some of the less-dominant and more complex accounts weaving their way in, around and through the political and public 'moralistic language learning for integration' rhetoric.

A disadvantage of ethnographies is their time-consuming nature which often renders the research process as personally tiresome and stressful to carry out (Alvesson, 2003) which I certainly felt, although I thoroughly enjoyed the process of fieldwork throughout. Another challenge of ethnographic research is the mastering of closeness/distance. On the one hand, and particularly when researching settings that are very different from one's own context, there is the danger of getting caught up in details without being able to say something systematic of wider theoretical interest. On the other hand, studies conducted as an 'insider' within one's own context, which was to a certain extent the case in my research, risk getting stuck in the taken-for-granted assumptions and ideas that are broadly shared between the researcher and the researched as too much of the phenomenon under investigation is often too familiar (Alvesson, 2013). I elaborate more on this further below in the section 'Ethnographic Knowledge Making' when I reflect upon navigating a dual role as insider/outsider.

Next, I describe my fieldwork in more detail starting with how I gained access and a mapping of the field which is followed by discussing the ethical responsibilities and explaining the process of ethnographic knowledge making in this research.

Gaining access and mapping the field

To highlight issues around gaining access and to provide a starting point from where I will map the field, I am starting this section with an excerpt from my fieldnotes.

An air of familiar unfamiliarity accompanied me on my first visit back to the FE college which would be my focal research site. I had arranged to meet up with my 'gatekeepers'

after having taken a break from work for my MPhil. My staff card was still working and upon swiping it the metal turnstiles in the reception area allowed me to enter. The time of my visit was during the Easter break which meant that everything was rather quiet as I was crossing the courtyard and walking up the steps to the main building. There I was greeted with an open and empty looking space. As I was looking around, I noticed that the layout had changed significantly; drastic cuts in staff meant that the second reception and information point that used to be here and helped to create a welcoming atmosphere was gone. Instead I found myself staring at a large white wall (during the process of my fieldwork some posters advertising the college as well as a big plasma screen were mounted on the wall to mask over this rather depressing emptiness and the space is at times used for exhibitions, fairs, special events, etc.) [...] As I reached the ESOL manager's office, I was given a very warm welcome. We started talking about me, my plans for my research and doing it at the college which left her all very excited and I was assured that I would have all the support I needed. On my way out, I popped into the office of my gatekeeper for the EFL department who was equally excited about my research and pledged her support. She gave me an update on what was happening in EFL and on the 'commercial side of things' as well as generally within the college, which had been undergoing drastic changes. She told me that she had at one point applied for voluntary redundancy in the many rounds that had been derived to reduce staff numbers, however, that she was still there. 'I'm too expensive to get rid of, I guess', she laughingly exclaimed but switching to a more serious tone described to me that others had not been so lucky and were not there anymore. Our chit-chat made it very clear that, although on the surface everything still seemed familiar, many changes had occurred during the past couple of years since I had left which had left their mark on the institution and its people and culture. (Fieldnotes)

This excerpt from my fieldnotes shows that I used my existing contacts in London to gain access to my initial research site, a large Further Education (FE) college in west London, and potential participants. Undoubtedly, gaining access is one of the most fundamental tasks in relation to carrying out successful fieldwork for research of a qualitative nature involving not only securing entry into a particular institution but also making sure that individuals

associated with it will be willing to serve as ‘informants’. In order to tackle these challenges successfully, a range of strategies can be adopted of which ‘exploitation of past links with the organisation’ can be invaluable (see for example Shenton and Hayter, 2004). Although not without its caveats, returning to my former workplace as a researcher allowed me a relatively smooth first way in as my fieldnotes reveal and I was hoping to be able to capitalize upon the fact that the college offered different settings in which language and migration are dealt with differently, such as the ESOL and EFL departments.

The college is spread over four different campuses in west London of which three offer ESOL courses both for young learners (16–18-year-olds) and adults within the Skills for Life department or Skills Pathway (as it was renamed during my fieldwork) and two offer EFL courses within the Language School. Most of my fieldwork took place at the biggest and what is deemed to be the main campus or site with approximately 300 adult ESOL students and 80 EFL students enrolled in general English classes that run over the course of the entire academic year. In chapter five I discuss the college’s landscape with regards to English language education for adult migrants and the heterogenous migrant student body who is studying English there in the context of the inherent inequality that is characteristic of its locus in central west London in more detail.

Additionally, the fieldnote excerpt allows a glimpse into the challenges that have been facing the college and the changes determining its institutional life. Many of these are part of wider dynamics within further education which had taken hold of the sector due to ongoing neoliberal forces. This has resulted in increased marketisation, competition, and an overbearing accountability regime which has been propelled even more strongly by massive austerity-related funding cuts.¹⁷ This means that within the sector, the economic imperative is much stronger than the ethical or social (Keep, 2018, p. 10). Pointing at the impact these changes have had on staff, the teachers’ body National Education Union identifies stress, anxiety and workplace bullying as a key feature of the sector (Lambert and McNally, 2018).

¹⁷ As it stands, colleges are seen as operating as ‘business units’ striving to meet ‘targets’ or ‘outcomes’, with Principals being re-branded as CEOs, often with eye-watering salaries whilst other staff are subjected to pay cuts or freezes and particularly in larger institutions (such as my field site) a leadership culture characterised by an unhealthy emphasis on ‘fear and control’ alongside a pre-occupation on ‘empire building’ whilst quashing grassroots initiative and trade union activity (Lambert and McNally, 2018, n.p.).

In a similar vein, according to O’Leary (2016) ‘there is no more challenging time to be working in FE’ (n.p.) which often became painfully evident during my fieldwork.

As a matter of fact, my fieldwork college has been in financial difficulties since 2014 and two years later was in danger of being put into administered status by the FE Commissioner as it was unable to ensure a surplus and cash-generative position. In order to ensure the college’s success, a new Principal/CEO had been brought in who strongly pushed for a corporate data-driven agenda focusing on efficiency, targets, and outcomes. By the time I started my fieldwork, the institutional life had been dominated by the quest to remove costs, mainly staffing, which meant restructuring of departments, rounds and rounds of voluntary (and as was pointed out to me in many personal conversations not so voluntary redundancies) of both teaching and administrative staff and an overall rationalisation of the different sites. The unstable financial situation also played a key role in Ofsted’s¹⁸ decision to rate the college overall as inadequate and requiring significant improvement in 2015 which caused immense pressure to achieve a better grade upon re-inspection within 15 months and triggered a series of monitoring visits in between which meant a constant strain on everybody involved. The pressure and strain felt was something that came up constantly in conversations and meetings and several of the teachers would refer to Ofsted as ‘*Ofstalk*’ who they had thought ‘*would never go away*’.

Following on from my visit described above, I carried out a pilot study in June/July 2017 focusing on the ESOL department of the college. I introduced the study at one of the team meetings where all the teachers gave consent for me being there. I subsequently introduced the project to students in three different classes who I had contact with during my time there. In October 2017, I returned for the main part of my fieldwork. Again, I was given the opportunity to explain my research at an ESOL team meeting (these meetings take place on a weekly basis and throughout my fieldwork I was able to participate in them) during which some of the teachers invited me to come and speak to their classes straight away. Others would stop me in the corridor in the days after the meeting to do the same and I visited various classes to tell the students why I was going to be around for the foreseeable future.

¹⁸ The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) is a non-ministerial department tasked with inspecting services providing education and skills for learners of all ages as well as regulating and inspecting services that care for children and young people.

Shortly after, I was able to join an EFL team meeting to introduce my research there. Unlike in the ESOL department where team meetings are a weekly event and attended by all, the EFL department would only schedule them sporadically and those who did not have any pressing issues to discuss would just send their apologies. As I came into the room, two members of staff beside the manager were present. After explaining my research, they all tried to look and sound polite and friendly, however, the overall consensus was that my research was probably more suitable for ESOL and if I wanted to get involved in EFL classes I should approach the teachers directly and negotiate with them which I subsequently did. Overall, I would like to stress that gaining access was not something I did once by discussing my research with my main gatekeepers and securing their consent that it was okay for me to do what I was planning to do. It was something I had to negotiate all the way along to different groups, people, and topics (O'Reilly, 2012).

From the outset, the research was not intended as an ethnography of the institution as such or a classroom ethnography. The institutional setting was rather seen as a prime example of a space where the politics, practice and lived experience of migrant language education interface with each other. Thus, it was used as a setting to investigate those elements in more depths; on the one hand, as a site for primary data collection, and, on the other hand, as a platform to venture into participants' social worlds outside the institution. To this end, the project can to some extent be considered as a multi-sited ethnography in an attempt to illuminate links between people and places in order to tell a bigger story about the lives of my participants – to 'follow the thing, follow the metaphor, follow the life or biography, follow the conflict' (Marcus 1998, p. 90). Norton (2013), for example remarks that adult migrants we encounter in educational settings often occupy irregular spaces and positions which made it all the more important to go beyond the institutional context. I wanted to capture this adequately in my research which I decided to do through 'go alongs' as discussed further below.

The students at my fieldwork site are from diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, socio-economic, educational and linguistic backgrounds. Many live in the surrounding borough and areas, however, there is also a significant number of students from across London who deliberately chose to attend this college over others that might be closer to their place of residence. To this end, the 'community' under investigation is not a coherent or culturally

bound entity as it is often the case in ethnographic studies. One of the main characteristics is its heterogeneity. As a matter of fact, I chose to focus on the main college site as it comprises the most heterogeneous student body, which broadened the scope of the project and allowed me to capture the 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007)¹⁹ of experiences in a global city like London. In their discussion of ethnography, diversity, and urban space, Berg and Sigona (2013) remark that the emergence of superdiversity in academic and policy discourse, 'recognises that previous ethnicity-based clustering, which had to some extent superseded race-based clustering, no longer provides an adequate analytical lens for understanding the complexity and dynamism of urban multicultural' (p. 348). This turn to diversity or diversification of differences and complexity represents a productive alternative which entails a change from focusing on entities to focusing on relations and interactions (Berg and Nowicka, 2019; Olwig, 2013) which proved very fruitful for my research and will be made evident throughout the findings chapters. This, however, does not come without inherent challenges to the actual research process, e.g. in terms of appreciation of different contexts, conditions, trajectories, dynamics as well as the time needed to build rapport, acquire tacit knowledge to enable in-depths insights (Berg and Sigona, 2013). Current research addresses these challenges implicitly and explicitly in various ways, often in the form of incorporating sensuous, visual, and more participatory elements in their methodologies (see for example the articles presented in Berg et.al. (2015) *Ethnography, Diversity and Urban Space*) which I set out to do as well as I explain further below. However, in doing so, I was mindful of the critique directed towards the diversity discourse as not adequately capturing and engaging with the co-existence of conviviality (i.e. the often subtle processes of ordinary 'cohabitation and interaction' across difference (Gilroy, 2004, p. xi; see also Berg and Nowicka, 2019, p. 3)) and conflict within 'super-diverse' settings in urban multicultural (see for example Back et al. 2018; Berg et al. 2019).

¹⁹ The term 'superdiversity' is generally used to refer to current levels of population diversity that are significantly higher than before. It has been coined by Steven Vertovec, former director of the influential research Centre on Migration, Policy, and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. In his seminal article *Super-diversity and its implications*, Vertovec (2007) describes superdiversity in the UK as being 'distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade' (p. 1024). This will be discussed further in chapter five.

In terms of aiding our understanding of migrant language education, the complexity and diversity of the setting can be seen as a key advantage. Norton (2013) for example points out that 'language learners do not live in idealized, homogenous communities but in complex, heterogeneous ones', however, 'such heterogeneity has generally been framed uncritically' (p. 45). To this end, the multi-dimensional and multi-layered account of this research offers a critical and valuable contribution in terms of re-conceptualizing and re-imagining language learning in the migrant context by investigating my participants' diverse experiences in London as a 'world city of convivial multiculturalism' (Back and Sinha, 2016, p. 517).

Ethical responsibilities

This section will discuss the ethical responsibilities involved in the research. The concept of 'research ethics', as Given (2015) notes, reaches beyond the interactions between researcher and participants. Thus, it is rather about acting with integrity throughout the research process, i.e. during project design, implementation, and dissemination. In order to adhere to such ethical practice to the best of my ability, I kept a research diary separate from my fieldnotes, which enabled me to make notes and track research decisions throughout the entire process. In order to fulfil ethical responsibilities in relation to all individuals involved in the research, sound research practices were employed throughout the process. To this end, the research was conducted according to the ethical guidelines for educational research laid out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). Formal ethical clearance was obtained by means of the research ethics review checklist from the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge prior to my fieldwork. However, given the variety and complexity of ethnographic field work it is impossible to adopt a single set of standards for all ethnographers. Also, I felt that in light of my prior involvement with the institution as well as my long-term relationship with my participants, I had a particular responsibility to exercise care. Kulz (2013) who found herself in a similar situation as she returned to her former place of work (a London Academy) as an ethnographer proposes an 'ethics of engagement' that moves beyond the consent form and signatures to entail a continual process of flexible yet situated reflexive ethical negotiations.

In what follows I describe the different aspects of such continuous 'ethics of engagement' in the context of my research.

Informed consent and questions of anonymity

From the start, I ensured that my participants understood my reasons for being there. I obtained oral consent, handed out information sheets (Appendices 2 and 3) and clearly explained my research in team meetings and the classes I negotiated access to, including what kind of data I would be gathering, how the data would be stored, analysed and used (now and in the future) with the chance for people to ask questions and obtain more information. This was repeated to those who were participating in interviews and they were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 4). To the student participants, I also raised awareness of the fact that the research possibly involved communicating information of a very personal nature, which could be experienced positively but can also have negative effects or be very emotional. I will discuss feelings and emotions in research in greater detail below.

Throughout the period of fieldwork, I made sure to remind the people I interacted with that the primary reason for me being there was as a researcher and for research purposes. I also made sure that my participants remained comfortable with their decision to engage in the study. All participants had the right to withdraw at any time without stating a reason and to re-join again at a later stage, in case they wanted to do so. Participants were made aware of how their privacy and confidential details would be treated. This was of particular importance as some of the data is very personal, including details of participants' lives. Some of the student participants wanted their real names to be used in the study; the other participants' identities were anonymized and protected by assigning pseudonyms as well as by changing or omitting any potential identifying information in the transcripts. I took particular care in doing so with teachers/managers for whom I have omitted most of the biographical descriptors. I understand the risk of decontextualizing them, however, although I do not name the college, those who are familiar with the sector might be able to identify the research setting and thus individual members of staff were all this information included in my work. I communicated these concerns and decisions with all the

teachers/managers involved and everybody was happy for me to go ahead with it in this way. Consent forms, data and other research materials were stored password protected and consent forms were stored separately from other datasets.

Managing trust and expectations and giving back

At times, I felt there were ethical dilemmas at hand because of issues of trust and expectations, e.g. the fact that I gained access and consent partly because of my status as a previous employee and colleague coupled with the expectation that my research would prove the brilliance or effectiveness of the work that was done in the departments or that participating in it would help students pass their exams '*because of all the additional practice they get*' as pointed out several times by different teachers. Although I had made it clear from the start that my research was not so much of a pedagogical but rather a sociological nature which I reiterated throughout the process, I was at times unsure whether everyone involved was clear about what a sociological perspective entailed or whether it was seen as worthwhile to pursue. On one of the training days the ESOL team was joined by colleagues from another site which was not included in my fieldwork. As I was chatting with one of the teachers who I had met for the first time and explained what I was doing, he voiced his disapproval considering it a waste of time as he thought there was nothing new or relevant to be found out. After inquiring about the funding for the research he was even less impressed and shaking his head exclaimed '*What? And I'm paying for this? The taxes I pay are paying for this?*'. This was definitely the most sceptical reaction I received and fortunately for me, the staff involved in my fieldwork were very supportive.

With regards to the students in the ESOL department, there was at times an underlying assumption that participating in my research would result in 'more hours'. At the time of my fieldwork, ESOL classes were only offered for four hours a week which most of the students were unhappy about and wanted to see change. For example, in the early stages of my fieldwork, I was walking down the stairs with a group of three students after their lesson (which I had just participated in) when one of them exclaimed that he was really excited about my research and could not wait to read about in the newspaper one day so that everyone could see how important the classes were for people like him and the managers

would have to agree to offer more hours. I was rather overwhelmed by such high expectations at the time and flustered as how to react best. However, I made it clear to my student participants throughout that my research was done independently from the college and that participating in it would not have any effect on the hours the college decided to allocate for their tuition.

Overall, most of the students were inquisitive about my research and eager to participate, at times seeing their participation as a means to air their grievances with the college or their classes in addition to engaging with the topics and issues raised. Others used it to find out about the UK Higher Education system and ways to access it or asked for suggestions for improving their English. Sometimes I helped students with making calls to the Home Office, for example, or filling in forms, and so forth. Overall, I tried to be as helpful as possible and let the relationships be mutually beneficial but felt what I was able to give back was very limited in comparison to what I gained. It is impossible to ignore the fact that these relationships yielded data that I would use to generate material to advance my academic career. In this context, Wolf (1996) asserts that 'the crises and tragedies occurring to our respondents or study population may enhance our own research' (p. 20).

Questions of power

Another central concern pertaining to research ethics are questions of power. Undoubtedly, relationships with research participants are a key area in which issues of power differentials arise and the researcher conducting the research can easily be perceived as the one in 'control'. Whilst non-hierarchical relationships often remain an ideal, Kulz (2013) points out that 'we can still aspire towards more equitable relationships while remaining mindful that these relationships are a continual negotiation playing out across raced, classed and gendered lines' (p.70). Regarding my relationship with the teachers/managers, most of the time I felt that I was seen as a former colleague who they were happy to help out, however, at times some remarks were made, albeit jokingly, that '*they'd always known that I was a bright one who had made it to Cambridge*'. It is important to note that obvious power differentials that will impact on the way in which the data is gathered might not only be between the researcher and the participant but also between different groups of

participants involved which in my case rang true for the data gathered within the institutional context involving those who were there in positions of student, teacher, and manager. Throughout my fieldwork I was well aware that a lack of care could easily lead to an erosion of trust and confidence in my research and subsequently affect participation in it or even student-teacher relationships, team dynamics or relationships between colleagues which 'can last long after the researcher has left the site' (Ali and Kelly, 2018, p. 49). On a few occasions when there was a difference in opinions between the team or some members of the team and the manager, for example, I was called on to voice my opinion as '*an expert who is doing a PhD and who should know*' which put me in an uncomfortable position.

Power differences between the researcher and participants can be particularly exacerbated by social differences when working with people who are a different class, race, ethnicity, gender, etc. or with people who are structurally disadvantaged in some other way which was often the case regarding my student participants and which I was well aware of – the issue of power then becomes central to ethical practice. As Ali and Kelly point out, 'the consequences of differences in social identities and positions are not easy to predict, and perhaps the most that can be said is that it is important to recognise this complexity and be sensitive to it arising' (*ibid.*) in order to ensure research relationships that are characterised by trust and integrity to avoid causing potential harm. In my case, one way of overcoming power disparities with student participants was our commonality of being a migrant. Given the context of Brexit, many of the students were actually quite concerned that this would cause disruptions or changes to my life and if they were from an EU background or had come to the UK via secondary migration that was enabled through citizenship status they had previously acquired in another EU country were affected by it in a similar way. Overall, the toxic socio-political climate and hostile environment towards migrants turned out to be an unexpected platform to establish more equal relationships with my student participants characterized by rapport and solidarity. However, there were times when I was portrayed as the 'model immigrant' who had made it to university and was even doing a PhD now. In one of the group discussions when the participants were discussing different obstacles and hindrances they felt particularly exacerbated by the current climate in the country, one of the participants exclaimed that these were all just excuses for lazy people and if one was working hard and was determined there would be no problems. He then pointed at me and

said *'Look, we have the perfect example here'*. Such moments were challenging and luckily did not occur often.

Another way in which power is enabled can be seen in 'deciding to be silent, or acting in order to silence others' (Dabrowski, 2018). This became relevant when I heard prejudiced remarks during my fieldwork which at the time made me feel uncomfortable and unsure about how to react and points to the messy relationship between maintaining rapport and calling out prejudice which other researchers have written about (Gray, 1995; Griffin, 1991; Phoenix, 1994). Would I just see them as 'interesting data' as for example Phoenix (1995, p. 56) suggests who asserts that the reason to, for example, conduct an interview in the first place is to evoke participant's accounts or should I 'talk back' to avoid reproducing, legitimating and colluding in the ideas being articulated (Griffin, 1991)? Gray's (1995) description of how it was impossible to 'keep nodding along in encouragement but at the same time, to interject and enter into an argument' (p. 163) resonated well with me. I also did not want to present myself as someone who knew better or occupying the moral high ground. These are questions that could not be solved once and for all and I ended up negotiating these instances in different ways throughout my interactions with different participants which produced different outcomes. I also felt that carrying out an ethnography, which meant I was involved in interactions over a long time, bore the distinct advantage of being able to engage with these issues over time and pick topics and conversations up again and to understand such remarks in a much more multi-faceted way. This is explored in the findings that are presented in chapter seven.

Furthermore, there are issues surrounding the language of the research that need to be discussed. This is an important point to consider regarding power imbalances in the relationship between me and the student participants in terms of language proficiency as the research was conducted in English. This is not something unusual for this kind of research. Norton (2013) for example notes regarding her seminal study that she required a methodology that would allow her to explore complex and intimate experiences in a language that her participants were still learning. I also found myself in this position in my previous research for my MPhil, which solely relied on written and oral accounts of students' lived experiences. However, I did not find that the language was significantly impeding the research and my professional background as a language teacher helped to

cope with language barriers that arose – which only happened in rare instances. However, from the start I sought out possibilities to include visual and participatory elements so as to offer a different means of articulation and allow participants to move at least partially away from the dominance of language.

Feelings and emotions

Lastly in this section, I would like to draw attention to the inciting of feelings and emotions which is a crucial part of political and public discourses in the context of immigration. Jones et al. (2017) point out that immigration is a ‘sensitive topic’ posing distinct methodological and ethical challenges due to its polarising and emotive nature. Thus, it is important to consider the feelings of both participants and researcher and how these can have an impact on fieldwork, the analysis of data and ethical relationships. There can also be increased risks of sanctions and stigma for participants who might find confronting and telling their stories a stressful experience which means that the researcher has some responsibility for protecting the respondent (Brennan, 1988). It was therefore ever more paramount to build relationships with my participants over time, to demonstrate knowledge about the politics of an issue and to carefully anonymise data as ways of ‘desensitising’ and ‘dejeopardising’ (see Lee, 1993). A reminder of this was when around the time of the Windrush scandal remarks were made by my participants along the line ‘*don’t write this down – they’ll deport us if they find out*’. Other participants chose to add certain information after the recording device was switched off or waited for moments when we were alone to talk about certain things. However, I agree with Jones et al. (2017) that it would have been unrealistic to think that I could fully shield my participants from the emotionality of the issues discussed.

Also, how ethical is it for me to treat difficult emotions and experiences as data (Jones et al., 2017) and if so how to best go about it? Visweswaran (1994) regards such accounts as containing vital information and contends that they can force us to feel and investigate further the ways in which historical and institutional contexts affect the micro-interactions and ethical relationships in research. In addition, Riessman (2005) points out that ‘the investigator’s emotions are highly relevant to conversations about ethics because emotions do moral work: they embody judgments about value’ (p. 473). Feelings and emotions are

difficult to express in words and there was the risk of flattening them out in my research. Including 'go alongs' or visuals helped to counteract this tendency as did paying careful attention to extra-linguistic data, for example when participants were sarcastic, seemingly joking or feeling uncomfortable. I also included rich descriptions about localities and interactions, including my own feelings and emotions, in my fieldnotes and used them alongside the interview transcript during iteratively analysing the data. I also try as much as possible to provide contextual description in my findings chapters (particularly chapters seven and eight) so it becomes clearer where, for instance, an interview extract is situated within a wider interaction, social context, or biography and 'why there might be layers of meaning underneath what is superficially meant' (Jones et al., 2017, p. 122).

Ethnographic knowledge making

Ethnographic knowledge making denotes a process of, on the one hand, establishing rapport within, blend into, and participating in a community and, on the other hand, engaging in the process of removing oneself from the field and to get immersed in the data in order to understand what is going on (Bernard, 2011). Throughout the process of the research, I focused on both of these elements simultaneously, seeking to maximise the outcome and to develop a holistic understanding (Kawulich, 2005).

My ethnographic fieldwork took place for about 15 months between summer 2017 and autumn 2018 and, although I had devised a field work plan, I endeavoured to let my research develop gradually. I saw this as particularly important given my background and the fact that I had previously been involved with my field site and therefore was to some extent an 'insider' to the phenomenon I was investigating. However, I was now challenged to be in that same space as an ethnographer and not as a teacher whilst being sensitive to the wider socio-political and institutional context laid out previously. In addition, a particular aim of my fieldwork was to make the lived experience of my student participants both within and beyond the institutional boundaries a central focus and to provide a platform for their voices to be heard and adequately considered. I needed to gradually develop sensitivity and skill to do this aim justice, particularly given the context of the 'brutal migration milieu' and its inherent volatility which left their mark on the research and

required constant flexibility. My double position as a migrant researcher certainly aided me in this process.

Moreover, my development as an ethnographic researcher was significantly cultivated during the pilot study stage of my field work (June/July 2017) which is therefore important to be highlighted. I had initially planned to particularly pilot interview schedules and conduct some one-to-one interviews, however, this was not possible²⁰ which I first perceived as a lack of success. However, it made me pay much more attention to actually 'being ethnographic' (Madden, 2010) in my research, and developing an ethnographic gaze or 'way of seeing' (Wolcott, 2008), both in terms of how to observe and what to observe. My experimenting with this more general observing went alongside informal conversations with students and staff, for example in the staff room, whilst photocopying materials, with students outside the premises before or after their classes, or whilst 'going along' with students on the underground on their way home, etc. These informal or opportunistic conversations/ interviews are generally regarded as an essential dimension in ethnographic research (Richards, 2003, p. 51) and it became salient that they would most likely be forming a substantial part of my data which they indeed did. Also 'go alongs' became an integral part of my data collection.

The main part of my field work took place between September 2017 and October 2018 during which I employed different methods which generated different types of data: participant observation (including 'artefacts'), interviews, focus groups, 'go alongs'. This went hand in hand with an interdisciplinary review of relevant literature and policy. All these processes rendered different types of data which fed into the analysis and a 'thick' description ultimately producing a contextualised and multi-layered account to enable a better understanding of the politics, practice, and lived experience of adult migrant language education, as depicted in the diagram below.

²⁰ At the time of the pilot study, the institution had just successfully undergone its Ofsted re-inspection and the enthusiasm of having someone around and ask questions was therefore understandably limited. In addition, the fact that the pilot study took place at the end of the academic year meant that almost everything was focused on exam preparation. Similar to the teachers, the students also felt the pressure of being occupied with preparing for their exams which seemed to be almost the only thing on their minds. To this end, I decided not to conduct one-on-one interviews at this point in time which I first perceived as a lack of success.

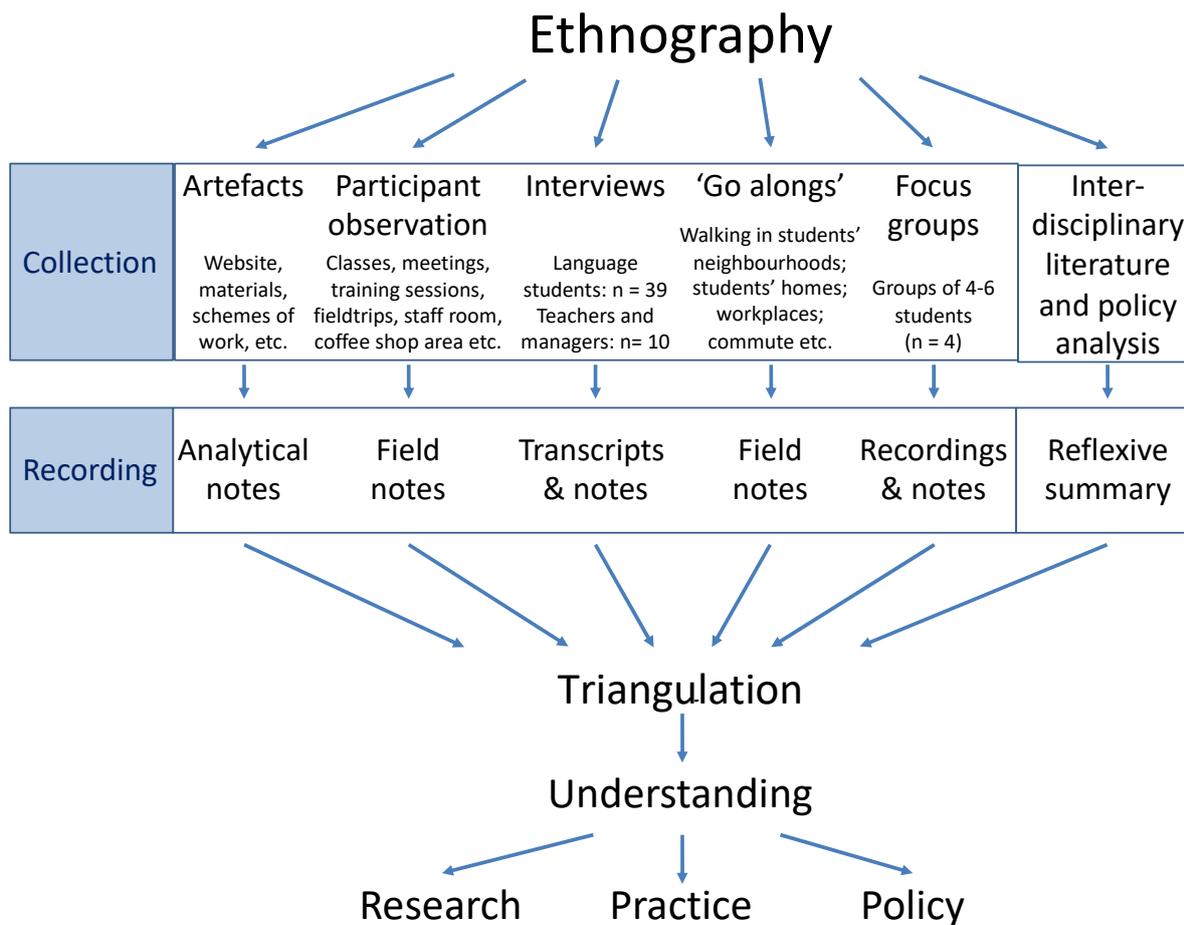


Figure 4.1: Diagram of the ethnography

The summary of the ethnography depicted above aims to convey the different streams of inquiry and data that developed throughout my research and came together and were triangulated in the analysis. However, the arrows suggest a linearity which is misleading and does not reflect the reality of ethnographic practice and often messy nature of connections between different parts of the inquiry.

In what follows I describe and examine the different methods which I employed and the way they produce knowledge in the field whilst providing insights into some of the challenges I faced during my field work.

Participant observation

I usually spent three to four days a week at the college as a participant observer in classes, meetings, training sessions as well as on fieldtrips, and more general hanging around in the staff room and in areas where students usually gathered before and after classes. I also attended a lobbying event for ESOL at City Hall organised by NATECLA (the National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults) which is the national forum and professional organisation for ESOL teachers together with one of the classes I was regularly observing. During my field work I further had access to artefacts, such as the college website, college marketing materials, schemes of work, classroom materials. All this fed into my emerging understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and aided the process of revealing context and thus complexity (Wittel, 2000). I did not carry out a systematic analysis of classroom materials or schemes of work as this was not the focus of my research. The college website, however, became a recurrent theme throughout my fieldwork and played an integral part in shedding light on the ESOL/EFL distinction. I thus analysed it as a 'digital artefact' in terms of its organisation and content in relation to the two settings and the ways the settings are embedded in the overall college landscape (see chapter six).

Throughout my fieldwork I took extensive fieldnotes (Appendix 11). I generally started with describing what happened during the participant observation or 'go along' to create a kind of 'verbal snapshot', including making notes of direct quotes or snippets of conversation, and so forth. However, I was very aware of the constructed nature of my fieldnotes, i.e. how they provide a glimpse of a point in time through a particular lens and from a particular perspective. I also added reflections on the experiences during participant observation, how I felt about the process, what I thought went well or what went wrong and what might have had influenced what happened. I also recorded emerging questions and analyses, for example potential lines of inquiry or theories and other work that might aid me in the process of making sense of my data.

There were several challenges I found myself faced with regarding my participant observation. Given my familiarity with the spatialities, the pace and the rhythm of the institution from the vantage point of a teacher, I had to now experience it as an ethnographer, find spaces where I could interact with students beyond the classroom. To

this end, I was challenged to find time and spaces for interaction with participants beyond the classroom walls and turnstiles that regulated entry and exit from the institution. Areas which proved particularly fruitful to interact with students beyond the classroom walls were the broad steps leading up to the entrance, the courtyard with tables and benches between the main entrance area and the main college building, the canteen and coffee shop area, and the heater benches on both ends of the corridors, and so forth. Overall, the college premises do not lend themselves particularly well for casual socialising and one is faced with a busy dual carriageway upon leaving the main site which at the beginning meant that my interaction with my participants often stopped there. However, over time I had more opportunities to 'go along' with individual or groups of students after their classes, generally spent more time with students outside college premises and was invited to students' homes, workplaces, places that had a particular meaning to them, and so forth as I explain more further below.

Due to my partial 'insider' position, for me, the process of participant observation was to a certain extent and particularly during the initial stages of my fieldwork one of learning to see beyond the familiarity of the institution, practices, labeling, and taken-for granted formulae of staff meetings, language classes, etc. and to be able to unveil the ideas governing them - to read against the grain. Navigating my dual role as insider/outsider, I gradually began to see what was particular and specific about my research site and the practices involved, rather than just perceiving them as "normal" – the process of 'breaking out' that Alvesson (2013) describes. In time, this allowed me to gain a critical understanding of the 'common sense' distinction between the ESOL and EFL setting and the ways the heterogenous student body is streamlined through these settings or the ways in which institutional processes are organised, for example regarding decision making about students' exams. My fieldnotes were pivotal to this and can be viewed as a living record of my observations, encounters in the field and of my analysis as it unfolded as well as an expression of my 'deepening local knowledge, emerging sensitivities and evolving substantive concerns and theoretical insights' (Emerson et al., 2001, p. 355). Part of the outcome of this lengthy process is documented in chapter six.

'Go alongs'

Through 'go alongs' I could venture more into the life worlds of my participants beyond the institutional setting and was integral to foster a more participatory 'researching with' rather than 'researching on' my participants. 'Going along' with my participants allowed me to incorporate elements of mobile methods, in a similar vein to what O'Neill (2006; 2008; 2015) exemplifies by using for instance walking as a participatory method. For her migration related research, she sees the usefulness of such approach in terms of a collaborative knowledge production by creating space for different voices. In this way, it is possible to counter exclusionary processes and practices through a focus on inclusion and participation, and to access the unsayable which can open a space for transformative possibilities (*ibid.*). This became particularly evident in the case of Olga who tended to be more on the quiet side in interactions on college premises but when walking with me shared troubling experiences of discrimination and alienation which she had encountered at her workplace since the EU referendum. Or Elira, an upbeat young woman who led me to a coffee shop which she described to me as her '*refuge*', a place where she would always go on her day off because you '*can just sit, look out the window or read and be like everyone else because you not have to speak*'. Whilst we were having coffee there, she told me with tears in her eyes about a very upsetting voice mail she had received from her son's teacher with derogatory remarks regarding her English language skills.

It was certainly fascinating for me to be invited to 'go along' to so many different places and in many ways revealing in terms of the research. These places and spaces were not mere backdrops, because space is alive, dynamic and relational, it is always affecting and being affected by what happens in it (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1968). The 'go alongs' allowed me to gain an understanding of my participants as co-producers of these spaces and as active agents in these dynamics and were helpful in counteracting the danger of constructing my participants as objects without agency or as Others. To capture what happened during 'go alongs', I made field notes in the way as described above; at times I made recordings of conversations that developed if the setting and situation lent itself to do so.

Initially I had planned to incorporate photo diaries as another participatory method into my research in order to move away from solely relying on text and talk and to give my student participants a different means to articulate themselves beside the interview's demand to

'speak the self' (Skeggs et al., 2008). However, in the end I refrained from doing so due to two main reasons. Firstly, the socio-political climate in which this research took place meant an increased scrutiny and surveillance of migrant lives, to which I did not want to inadvertently add. Secondly, asking students to bring in pictures or other artefacts of their lives in order to talk about it was not uncommon to the teaching practice I was exposed to and as a matter of fact the speaking component of the exam at all levels required each student to do so for one of the tasks. Still hesitant on the matter, I spoke to several of my participants with whom I had established good rapport and introduced the idea to them. The reactions I got were mixed but none of them were overly excited or keen. Most of them made a direct link to the exam requirements telling me that this was something they had to do anyway. To this end, I felt that I was immediately perceived as more of a teacher belonging to the institution and asking for a homework task which interfered negatively with the relationships we had built up thus far and which I wanted to avoid. However, throughout the research quite a few of the student participants showed me photos on their phones to illuminate points that came up in conversations and interviews or had taken pictures of certain things they wanted to show me.

To this end, there were visual elements to my research, however, it was not me who had asked for them in the first place and thus much more control was given to the students over whether or in what way they wanted to incorporate this dimension into our relationship and the research. When images became part of the research, they often initiated episodes of storytelling. However, the images were not used to elicit or extract facts, but rather treated as a collaborative meaning-making process within the interaction between myself, the participant, and the image to further 'co-construct the ethnographic story' (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 167).

Interviews

A further important element of my methodology were the semi-structured ethnographic interviews. I carried out interviews with 39 adult students (35 interviews as four were conducted in pairs) and ten teachers/managers (see Appendices 8 and 9 for an overview of the interviews and Appendices 5 and 6 for topic guides). Most of the student interviews

were rather extensive lasting between one and one and a half hours, some extended up to two hours. The teacher interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. With all of the interviewees, both students and teachers/managers, I had developed conversations and relationships over time prior to the interview which allowed for the interview to form more in-depth exchanges. I always let my participants choose the time and place for the interview. I used a small recording device to record them and transcribed them as soon as possible. After each interview notes were made to capture important contextual details, such as the location, the atmosphere of the location, the flow of the interview, and so forth (see Appendix 12).

The teacher interviews were mainly squeezed into their busy schedules. Some took place during lunchtime in the canteen or in their offices when they had some time to spare. One of the teachers made sure at the start of the interview that my questions would not jeopardize their institutional loyalties. Another teacher did not want to be recorded and preferred that I only took notes during the interview. At one point during the interview the teacher remarked that talking about all these things '*really brings out the political animal in me*' and that it was probably a good thing I did not voice-record any of it. Another teacher asked for a rough outline of the interview beforehand so that they could come well prepared which they did showing me pictures, artefacts and materials that had been gathered throughout the teaching career. One teacher did not want to be interviewed on college premises and we met in a nearby café instead. The latter two interviews were by far the most extensive interviews as far as the teachers are concerned and extended beyond one hour.

In terms of my student interviews, I was well aware of the potential challenges and sensitivities required when interviewing migrants. In general, migrants are frequently asked to give accounts of their lives by professionals in order to access certain rights or resources within the UK. Immigration officers often utilise narrative interviews in order to interrogate their interlocutors. Also, many times migrants have become used to 'performing' their narrative due to knowledge among migrants as to what narrative is deemed acceptable to gain a certain status. As such, many have developed strategies for dealing with constant questioning by professionals. Most of the interviews with students did not take place on college premises as they opted for places that were in some way important to them and

which they wanted me to see and experience. This aided a more equal form of exchange and non-hierarchical form of interviewing which I was aiming for in order to avoid simply eliciting 'well-rehearsed tales of self' (Jackson, 2015, p. 52). Instead, my aim lay in facilitating the interviews in a way that allowed for a more authentic self to be revealed in the encounter following Back's (2007) assertion that maybe the most important quality as a social researcher today is to take the people we listen to as seriously as we take ourselves. Overall, the interview material proved to be very rich which I would suggest was partly due to my ongoing presence in the life of the college as well as the nature of the relationships and high levels of trust I had managed to establish with my participants.

A major critique of interview data is its constructed and performative nature and some advocate for using them as only a last resort (Silverman, 2013). Hammersley (2003) points to 'the preoccupation with self-presentation and/or with persuasion of others' (p. 120) hampering the providing of facts or information. However, as part of an ethnography interviews can generate richer results due to the prolonged relationship between researcher and participant which allows researchers to develop their understanding over time and to ask better questions (Alvesson, 2003) which I would argue was the case in my research. Overall, I regarded the interview as a social relationship, a social encounter with a particular person in a specific context where - through active collaboration - accounts of the social world are produced. This view focuses on developing an 'active and methodological listening' (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 607) rather than trying to adhere to standardizing methodologies.

Furthermore, positions vary as to whether there is a 'truth outside of the telling' or if the accounts given in interviews should simply be analysed as 'moral tales that are interesting regardless of whether they are lies or simply wrong' (Back, 2007, p. 164). I would argue that although the accounts I gathered during the interviews can certainly not be taken as the whole, unmediated truth and must be seen as partial and incomplete, they held truth for my interviewees at the time. Being aware of their constructed status, I analysed them as constructed narratives, following Steedman (2000) and Skeggs (2002) who suggest that both the mode of telling is revealing as well as the substance of what is told. This made me pay attention to the different ways in which my participants narrated their experiences, how this reflected their more or less privileged or precarious positions, and how they not only

positioned themselves but also others during their narrations in complex and multi-faceted ways.

Group discussions/focus groups

I also carried out four focus group discussions with student participants (see Appendix 10 for an overview of the group discussions and Appendix 7 for the topic guide) in the classrooms at the college during the first part of my fieldwork. The group discussions allowed me to observe how ideas and accounts were formed, negotiated, and shared collaboratively in interaction revealing how ideas were articulated and justified in relation to others, thus shifting the unit of analysis from the individual to the group (Tonkiss, 2012). I used policy statements about language learning and integration that were widely discussed in media and political debates at the time to start the guided discussion. The focus groups allowed me to capture the ways my participants discussed and contested these government messages and were often emotionally charged. I recorded the group discussions and made notes to capture important contextual details. I listened to the recordings extensively afterwards making analytical notes which fed into my analysis and triangulation of data.

From writing down to writing up

Gathering different types of rich data throughout my fieldwork allowed for triangulation to find out how they corroborate one another during the 'move from writing things *down* to writing things *up*' (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 179, emphasis in original). The process of data analysis was iterative-inductive and a constant feature during the research. It happened in various stages and sequences and required a great deal of thinking (Fetterman, 2010), reflexivity and openness. In addition, I was particularly aware of the need to make sufficient allowance for serendipity, 'the art of making an unsought finding' (van Andel, 1994, p. 631) and not to resort too quickly to previously held assumptions as well as to be able to masterfully synthesize the insights that I had gained by drawing novel connections (Fine and Deegan, 1996). Serendipity, together with reflexivity and openness is generally considered a key characteristic and particular strength of ethnography requiring 'sufficient background

knowledge, an inquisitive mind, creative thinking and good timing' (*ibid.*, p. 178) – all of which I endeavored to bring to the project. On a practical level, I abandoned the use of qualitative software and resorted to more old-fashioned markers and pens to highlight and group data together and using Microsoft Office to make simple databases. Also, my fieldnotes were utilized to take me back into particular 'primal scenes' (Back, 2013) of my research, reliving them in order to describe them in my writing.

In order to make sense of the many different experiences and to structure and organize knowledge, I drew on various techniques whilst paying attention to the dialogical process in knowledge making. I pursued a dynamic interplay between the lived experience of adult migrant language learners and theory to help make sense of these experiences within the wider socio-political, socio-cultural, and socio-historical context through a repetitive process of reading and listening and re-visiting my data. Throughout the research I read widely and used theory to provide a critical framework to reflect upon the findings - in the sense of 'hovering responsibly above the empirical details revealed' (Philo, 2000, p. 2012) - by applying a layer of theoretical materials over the phenomenon under study and the encounters in the field.

I took a grounded approach to data analysis, starting with open coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1964) to be able to capture something of the literal essence of the data. This was embedded into more of a 'zigzag approach' (Rivas, 2012, see figure below) between data gathering and data analysis with the latter moving from preliminary thematic coding, to refined thematic coding to more refined categories. In this way, early analysis informed further data collection to, on the one hand, fill gaps in the data, and on the other hand, unpack new and unexpected themes. This 'zigzag' approach to data gathering and analysis evolved organically alongside the utilisation of the different data collection instruments (see figure 4.1 above) and continuously informed the development and refinement of my analytical notes as well as fieldnotes.

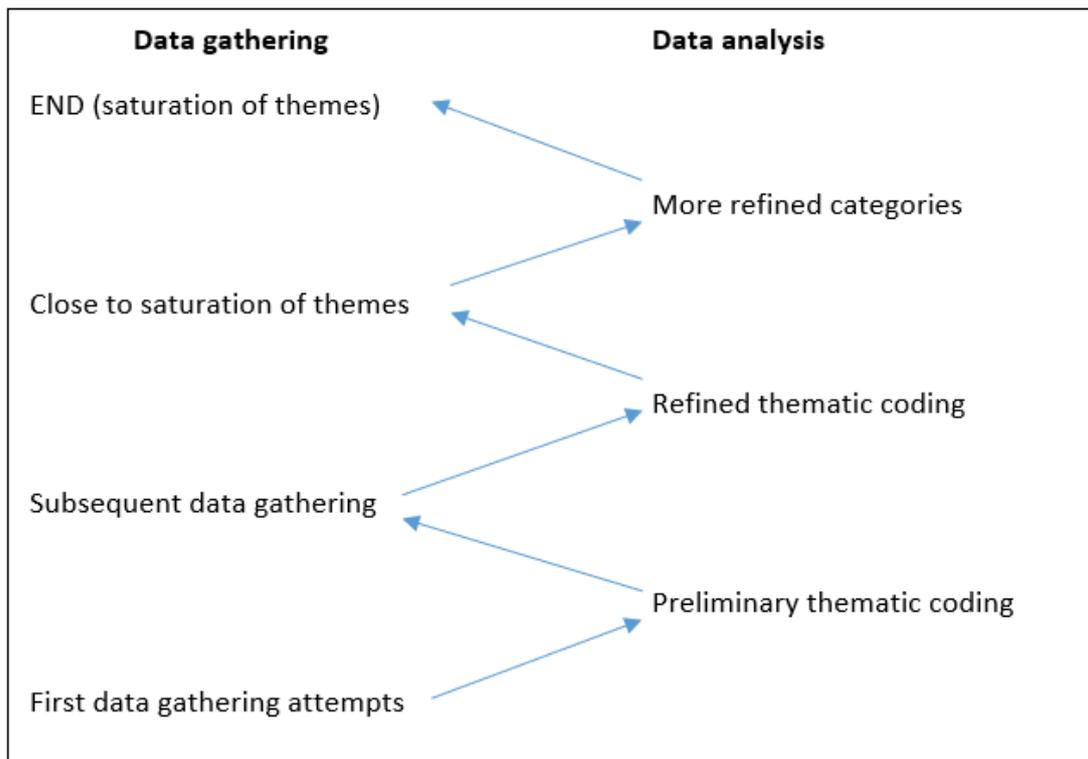


Figure 4.2: Diagram of 'zigzag' data gathering and analysis (based on Rivas, 2012)

To avoid codes being the product of my own interpretations, they were in vivo codes by taking terminology directly from the data, representing living language, metaphors or unconventional expressions, which can be quite significant given the fact that for the core of my participants English is a language they are in the process of learning. In addition, Charmaz (2006), suggests the use of the gerund in the process of open coding. This shifts the focus of attention on the actions that are being done and different behaviours in different situations and away from the people who are carrying out the actions and avoids putting labels on them. From this open coding I moved to the stage of category formation by grouping similar open codes together to form analytical categories before I embarked on developing them into themes (Rivas, 2012). For example, the phrase *'I know that it is bad'* was a frequent utterance made by my participants in instances that referred to decisions or life circumstances they deemed as hindering their language learning, e.g., when they interrupted their classes because of childbirth, etc. The phrase was thus recurring in my data across different data sets, e.g., from field notes, interviews, 'go alongs', group discussions and so forth. In my preliminary analysis I coded this as 'Saying 'I know that it is bad''. Further

exploration and probing revealed that it did not mean that the decision was bad, but rather that my participants were uncomfortable with how they are perceived by others leading to feelings of shame which could then be looked at within the wider theoretical framework, e.g. in terms of negative affects.

Dealing with numerous in-depth transcripts and notes, the central themes eventually started to emerge and consolidate from this dialogical analysis and my experience of immersion in the research setting. I was constantly learning from my participants, although I only had partial access to their lives and could only make interpretations based on this finite amount of knowledge. My long-term involvement with the research setting made it possible to take my interpretations back to my participants to get feedback on them and make adjustments. This has mainly happened with my student participants and only partially and in a much more fragmented manner with the teachers/managers, mainly due to their busy schedules and the pressurised environment there are working in. However, more recently I have been approached by the ESOL manager to share insights of my research in order to collaborate on the department's formulation of curriculum intent. In doing so, she expressed the wish to be better able to *'move away from a simple tick box exercise and just having something to put on top of each scheme of work'* but rather using it as a reflective process enabling the department to grapple with the challenges inherent to the increasing politicization of language and language learning. At the same time, I discussed my findings with other researchers and compared them with other research.

Additionally, in the process of data analysis, I drew on discourse analysis from a sociological standpoint or sociological discourse analysis (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009) in order to examine how subjects and meanings are constructed and reproduced, social facts are established, and the social is organised. As discussed in chapter one, discourses do not merely describe reality, but they (co)constitute that same reality and discourse has not merely a symbolic, but also material dimension. In the context of research on immigration, integration, multi-culture and diversity, discourse analysis has often been utilised and is seen as a useful and important approach to the issues at hand (Prins and Slijper, 2002). The term discourse analysis, however, covers a wide range of various theoretical frameworks and methods of analysis (see for example Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001) depending on the disciplinary background of the researcher which go beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in detail.

The way in which discourse analysis has developed in sociology has produced different styles and forms of analysis and is different from other approaches, such as for example those used in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (for a survey of CDA see for example Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). As Ruiz Ruiz (2009) points out 'rather than providing a particular method for analysing discourse from a sociological standpoint, sociologists resort to a series of practices and procedures that are used in very diverse ways in their professional practice' (para. 1). From a sociological standpoint, discourse is seen as any practice by which individuals imbue reality with meaning and is thus found in a wide range of forms (*ibid.*, para. 3). In the context of my research the interest was in discourse that took a verbal form, i.e. written or spoken, and the interrogation of how the social world was constructed through these discourses and what kind of reality was (co)-constituted through these discourses.

Hall (1992) defines a discourse as 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic' (p. 290). Aligned with the work of Foucault, the interest here is in how forms of discourse help the production of the very categories, facts, and objects that they claim to describe (Foucault, 1972). Discourse in a Foucauldian sense therefore goes beyond speech acts or the rhetorical and technical analysis of language and refers to the way language works to organise fields of knowledge and practice exploring its social and political setting, uses and effects (Tonkiss, 2012) which made it relevant for my research. The focus was not on looking for conclusive answers to specific problems but rather on understanding the ways in which both the problem and possible solutions are constructed with the aim of identifying categories, themes, ideas, views, and roles within the spoken or written text and discourse, as well as the performative effects that discourses might engender.

Following Foucault (1984), I analysed the text, for example interview transcripts, in terms of 'its structure, its architecture, its intrinsic form and the play of its internal relationships' (p. 103) and found Tonkiss (2012) tools for opening up a text useful:

- Identifying key themes and arguments: as a starting point I was looking for recurring key categories, themes, and terms which I then coded in the same way as the data gathered through other methods. As part of this analytical process I sifted, compared, and contrasted (*ibid.*) the different ways in which the different themes

emerged and identified the recurrent themes that were put across. This made it possible, for example, to interrogate discourses of pathologizing and Othering that emerged in different contexts and across data sets, in particular the idea of the “failed Muslim woman” as the analysis that is presented in the following chapters will lay out.

- Looking for association and variation: This pointer helped me to find patterns of association and patterns of variations within the text, for example between social actors and groups or problems.
- Examining characterisation and agency: This tool was useful to explore how social actors, agents, and groups are characterized, spoken about, and positioned and also to examine how agency is depicted with regard to social actors or groups.
- Paying attention to emphasis and silences: Understanding patterns of emphasis and patterns of silences in the data became very important with the former referring to large numbers of references to a theme, category or term and the latter referring to the gaps or themes that have been left out, excluded or unsaid in the organisation of the discourse. Tonkiss (2012) points out that in order to understand patterns of silence, the researcher is required ‘to read against the grain of the text, to look at silences and gaps, to make conjectures about alternative accounts which are excluded by omission, as well as those which are countered by rhetoric (p. 417). The emergence of counter narratives became central to the research and is the focus of the analysis presented in chapter eight.

Throughout the process of this research, my aim was to be rigorous and systematic in order to generate my analysis and to commit a coherent and consistent account to paper. Also, I was constantly trying to move between the micro level of the lived experience and the macro patterns the data speak to. Through prolonged activity in the field, triangulation of data and respondent validation I sought to address issues of validity and reliability, or ‘trustworthiness’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Regarding generalisability, there are certainly limits to this investigation. I will return to this point and discuss it in more detail in chapter ten.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have yielded an account of my approach to an ethical and reflexive ethnographic fieldwork and knowledge making whilst also querying reflexivity's limits. In particular I have argued that it was important for me to be aware of the manifold challenges and ethical issues I encountered throughout the research process, to remain open and engaged whilst continually (re)evaluating the impact they had on my work. By examining the overall epistemological approach adopted, this chapter provides essential groundwork for the rest of the thesis. Thus, the methodological considerations regarding the knowledge production discussed in this chapter were integral to the research process throughout. The next chapter turns to the immediate socio-spatial, socio-economic, and socio-political contexts within which the knowledge was produced.

Chapter 5: Unpacking spatial dimensions

Introduction

I was talking with one of the teachers, Hannah, about her experiences of teaching English at the college. She was telling me about her observations of a 'new type of client' she had found herself giving lessons to. They were migrant women working for rather wealthy families as housekeepers or domestic workers and they would usually ask for their lessons to be late in the evening, often between 7 and 9. She remarked laughingly, 'I guess they had to wait until they'd served their masters dinner before they could escape' before she continued how this had made her wonder about what had been going on in the vicinity of the college. 'There seems to have been this underclass developing pretty much around the college, like almost invisible they'd just been tucked away behind the pillars and walls of all those Georgian mansions. I mean, thinking about it, it almost takes you back to Victorian times'. (Fieldnotes)

This excerpt from my fieldnotes from a conversation with one of the teachers speaks to the different spatial dimensions of the research context that are important in order to gain a more complex understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It shows that what is happening beyond the college walls is inextricably linked to the teaching and learning of English taking place within my field site. It also points to an inherent inequality in the surroundings of the college which Hannah likened to the conditions of Victorian Britain; a time at the height of Empire which was characterised by severe social inequality along raced, classed, and gendered lines.

This chapter unpacks the various spatial dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation, which is crucial for providing a contextualised understanding of my field site, participants, and research findings. I start this chapter by zooming into the institutional setting, describing the college, its landscape with regards to English language education for adult migrants and the migrant student body who is studying English there. I then elucidate the socio-spatial context of the college and its surrounding area including its heightened inequality and increased migration-driven diversity. Next, I zoom out to London's urban

space in which my research setting is embedded and analyse this from a socio-economic viewpoint. This shows how the global city condenses many of the challenges faced in relation to integration, which have a disproportionate effect on migrant communities and thus my research participants, e.g., in terms of the distribution of social goods, access, and opportunities. The last part of the chapter captures the socio-political context and dynamics operating at the level of the nation-state, which left their marks on the research in different ways. These include in particular a hostile immigration strategy, the polarising EU referendum and Brexit debates, and austerity politics.

The college and its immediate socio-spatial context

This section expands on the brief introduction to my field site that was presented in the previous chapter and locates it within its immediate spatial context. My fieldwork took place within two different departments of a large further education college where different adult migrants come to learn English: ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

The college and its English language education programme for adult migrants

The college is situated in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham in the centre-west of London on the transport routes between the City and Heathrow airport. The college's distinct red brick building stretches along a dual carriageway and towers over a busy junction. Slightly elevated, its main entrance and reception area can be reached via several sets of broad steps that lead up from the street level and are flanked by banners displaying smiling faces of students and the message 'ready to work – ready to learn' reflecting the institution's strong focus on producing employable subjects. Past the turnstiles in the main reception area one is greeted with a courtyard where several sets of wooden benches and tables are scattered about. Another flight of steps at its far end leads further up to the main building which spreads across several floors and is home to the college's different departments, offering a range of courses to its student body and thus my participants. Happiness and expectation were generally palpable and written all over my participants'

faces whenever I encountered them hurrying up the broad steps, proudly swiping their student cards at the turnstiles and rushing across the courtyard to their classrooms, the library or, if time permitted, the coffee shop or canteen before the start of their classes, either in the ESOL or the EFL department.

Adult ESOL provision at the college is currently comprised of day-time classes ranging from Pre-Entry to Level 1 with no evening classes taking place at the main site. All classes on offer during my fieldwork were part-time with four hours of tuition per week (2 hours twice a week). The completion of one level is generally split over one year, i.e. two semesters with exams taking place twice a year (the combined Speaking and Listening exam after semester one in January, Reading and Writing exams after semester two in June). Students are generally expected to have completed all three exams in order to be able to progress to the next level. As discussed in chapter three, ESOL provision falls under the auspices of the government and is mainly funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency's adult skills budget. Thus, government funding is dependent on exam pass rates; a policy and practice which is shaping the day-to-day operations profoundly as we will see further in chapter six. Also, automatic fee remission for ESOL courses was withdrawn in 2006 and replaced by a means-tested system which means that only some students who are in receipt of certain welfare support can attend the courses for free whereas others have to pay part or all of their fee. As we will see in chapter seven the question of who pays and who does not pay for their fees could become an issue and lead to students changing from ESOL to EFL as they did not want to be associated with welfare claimants.

EFL provision is a commercial entity selling its courses to fee paying customers. It is accredited by the British Council and thus not under the auspices of the government. It is comprised of the English Language School and the exam centre for IELTS and Cambridge exams. There are different courses on offer, both part-time and full-time during mornings, afternoons, and evenings as well as one-to-one lessons or tailored small group study sessions, for example to prepare for English language exams for UK visas as well as the Life in the UK test (not a language test). The school also prides itself for offering bespoke sector-specific English language training for different London based clients (for example, during my research they were running a course taught to the cleaning staff at the House of Commons) as well as EU and international groups from educational and commercial clients. In addition,

it also offers teacher training courses such as the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA). The distinction between the two settings operating under the commonly used labels EFL and ESOL, the way they are positioned within the wider institution and how they position their students in this educational space are part of the analyses in chapter six.

It is noteworthy to point out that both settings enjoy a high reputation beyond the college walls which is something that came up frequently during my fieldwork and was mentioned by different members of staff as well as students. As such, the heterogeneous and diverse student body is both from the surrounding borough and areas as well as from across London as there is a number of students who deliberately choose to attend this college over others that might be closer to their place of residence. Nevertheless, the immediate socio-spatial context was regularly drawn upon in staff accounts about what was happening in these settings and as we will see in chapter six is thus inherent to the imaginations and construction of their 'typical' student which in turn lead to in/exclusionary practices and attitudes. Thereby, the inequalities that are characteristic of this part of London became integral to the co-existence of the two language learning settings.

The college's immediate socio-spatial context

Hammersmith and Fulham borough is bordered by six other boroughs, two of which are Brent and Ealing which rank top among concentrated migrant presence in London. Hammersmith and Fulham is a small and narrow, but densely populated and vibrant borough running north to south with a river border at its south and south-west side (see Figure 5.1 below). The borough has a large proportion of young working age residents and a low proportion of residents aged 65 and over. There are several good schools located in the area which makes it attractive for affluent families, and the au-pairs, nannies, housekeepers, and cleaners employed by these families often attend language classes at my research site. There are also several embassies in the area which bring with them a certain kind of people.

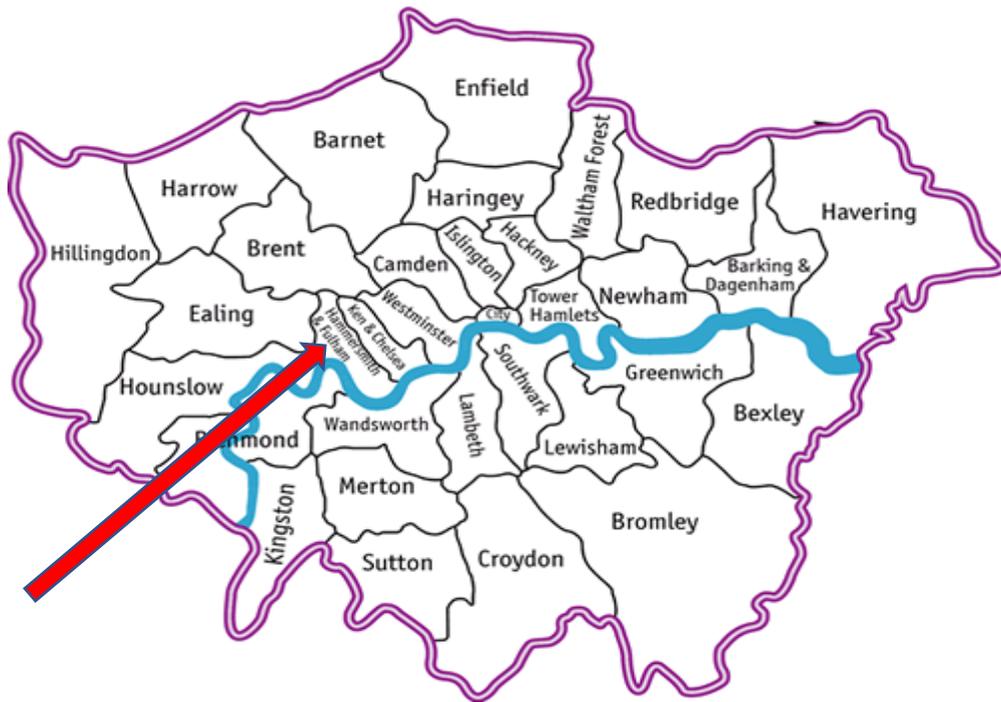


Figure 5.1: Location context – London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and London’s boroughs

My research site is not too far from the borough’s border to Kensington and Chelsea. Both boroughs belong to the affluent part of Inner London which is officially the wealthiest area in Europe containing the most expensive street and residential properties in Europe with many of the world’s wealthiest people living there. However, there is also widespread poverty among those living in high density social housing where recently arrived migrants are housed such as many of my participants alongside low-earning Britons. As rich and poor live side by side, inequalities, divisions of wealth and opportunity, and social rifts within small geographical areas are created²¹. These dynamics become visible in Figure 5.2 below showing a map of levels of deprivation in Hammersmith and Fulham.

²¹ This was made particularly visible by the disaster of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017 which caused 72 deaths and is under public inquiry. It occurred during the pilot stage of my fieldwork in close proximity to the college and impacted several of the students I was in contact with at the time in different ways. The first death announced at Grenfell was of a Syrian refugee who could well have been attending English classes at the college. In the direct aftermath of the disaster and throughout my fieldwork, the existing inequality in this part of London, not only between rich and poor but also along race lines, was the subject of countless reports, documentaries, news articles. Commentators often pointed out how people in the area were living very close to each other, but in different worlds evoking ‘the tale of two cities’ in contemporary London.

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

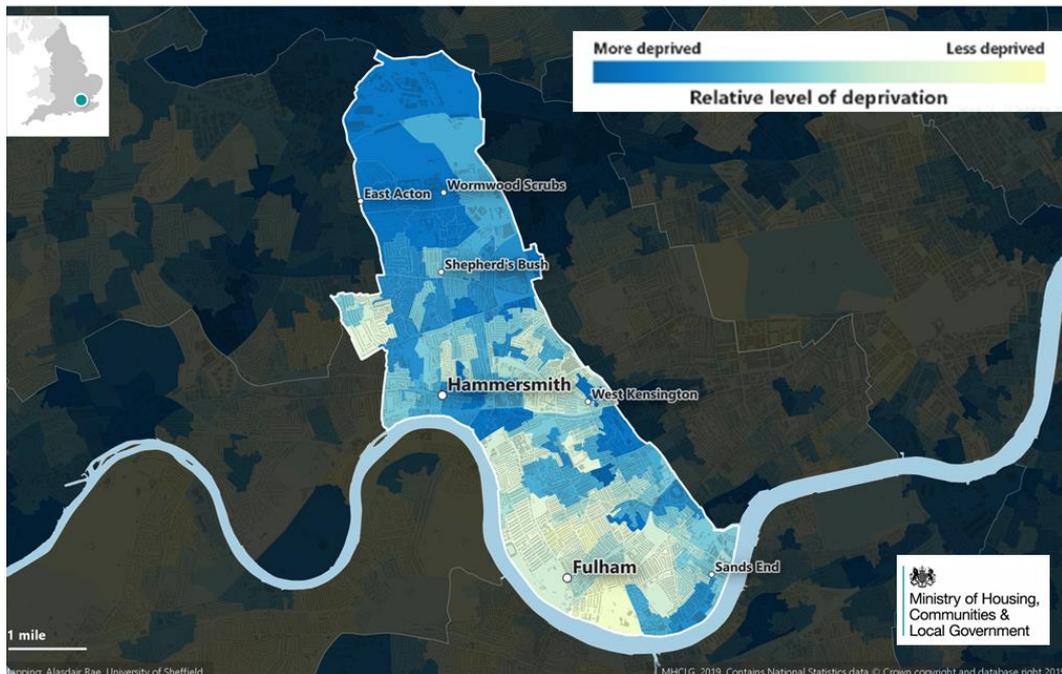


Figure 5.2: Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Index of Deprivation map, 2019

A context of increased migration-driven diversity

Overall, the area has high levels of migration in and out of the borough, and thus ethnic and cultural diversity which is reflected in my field site²². 14.3 per cent of the borough's residents are foreign born people who have resided in the UK for less than 5 years which is higher than the London average of 10 per cent. Both short- and long-term foreign-born residents made up 47 per cent of the borough's population in 2018. This is the tenth highest level of any local authority in England and Wales and higher than the London average of 37 per cent. Most of the foreign-born residents came from France, followed by Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, as well as South America, United States, Somalia, North Africa, Philippines, and South Africa. There is a well-established Polish community, with a community centre in Hammersmith. There are also Somali, West Indian, Syrian, Lebanese,

²² As I review population statistics, I would like to point out that these should not be treated as 'inert facts'. I am well aware that the different ways statistics are presented play an integral role in framing understandings of migration and that these processes in turn are deeply implicated in the nature of anxieties about globally mobile humanity (Back et al., 2018). Numbers have become misleadingly central to claims, fears and forecasts about immigration, race/ethnic relations and integration (Finney and Simpson, 2009) which makes drawing on census and demographic data a sensitive issue.

Iranian, Algerian, Moroccan and Afghan communities in the area. The borough ranked within the five highest local authorities in England and Wales in terms of proportion of population born in Italy, Iran and in proportion of Arab population. From this ethnic and cultural diversity flows a substantial linguistic diversity as many residents speak other languages besides English. In the 2011 Census 11,663 (14.5 per cent) of households reported to have no people that speak English as a main language; this is the 13th highest proportion in England and Wales. The most common foreign languages spoken in the borough are French, Arabic, Spanish, Polish, Italian, Somali, Portuguese, Farsi/Persian, and Tagalog/Filipino.

The diversity described thus far is also reflected in the make-up of the student body at the college. In terms of country of origin the students were mainly from the Middle East (e.g., Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, and the region of Kurdistan), Africa (e.g., Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen), South America (e.g., Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil), Europe (e.g. Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Greece, Russia, Italy, Spain), and Asia (e.g. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka). These students came to London for different reasons and under different circumstances and therefore hold different migrant statuses, such as refugee, asylum seeker, family reunion, economic migrant/migrant worker (see chapter one for more detailed information about the backgrounds, countries of origin, and migratory trajectories of my participants). Broadly speaking, classes within the ESOL department are attended more by refugees and asylum seekers whereas classes in the EFL language school have a higher proportion of European migrant workers and also include those who are in London on a temporary basis, such as au-pairs and exchange or gap-year students often from Korea, China, and Japan.

The diversity of the student body is part of the intense 'throwntogetherness' (Massey, 2005) of urban life and reflects the many factors behind migration and a heterogeneity in terms of ethnic, cultural, religious, educational, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds. Adult migrant language educational settings in the UK, such as my field site are often being described as 'super-diverse' (see also Rosenberg, 2007).

Super-diversity has been widely used to explore what it entails to live with the changing nature of migration within contemporary social formations in mainly urban contexts of increased migration. However, these urban spaces are also sites of exacerbated inequality

where global processes of migration intersect with lasting inhabitations of race and class (Hall, 2017). It is therefore important to be aware of the fact that in such contexts, the idea of diversity can also be instrumentalized in the making of shared spaces to mask hierarchies (Aptekar, 2015) and that the notion of 'superdiversity' can contain a sense of social romanticism that creates an illusion of equality within a highly unequal social fabric (Makoni, 2012). In order to avoid such pitfall, a deeper and critical engagement with the concept going beyond its demographic reality follows.

Vertovec's conception of 'superdiversity' is useful to some extent as it argues against the tradition of scholarship that has tended to emphasize the uniformity of ethnic groups, limited to the patterns of migration and settlement associated with post-colonial relationships. However, as Back et al. (2018) point out the concept is rendered 'politically one-dimensional' as it fails to pay equal attention to the ways divisions are drawn within urban multiculturalism and does not take into account the connections between the legacy of Empire and racism, and the newer racialised hierarchies of belonging as a result of increased migration. Although, in Vertovec's more recent work this position is slightly modified, e.g. through acknowledging the inherent ties of the conditions of superdiversity to power, politics, and policy (Meissner and Vertovec, 2015) and the intertwining of conviviality and conflict within urban life (Nowicka and Vertovec, 2014). However, how superdiversity links to structures of economic and political power and the inequalities they produce and how paradoxical impulses of conviviality and conflict work together are not explicitly advanced (Back et al., 2018; Hall, 2017). Hall (2017) is particularly critical about the concept's 'explanatory cogency for the brutal migration milieu in which we are located' (p. 1564) and which as discussed previously has been shaping this research. It is therefore paramount to not simply treat super-diversity as a demographic reality but rather as a 'physical and psychological constitution of difference, where discrimination and resistance prevail', particularly within the frame of the 'migrant metropolis' (De Genova, 2015) in which migration, marginalization and racialization are actively co-constituted.

Thus, grappling with the 'super-diversity' of the research setting beyond a mere descriptive factor and engaging with the co-existence of conviviality and conflict became integral to the research as I have briefly discussed in chapter four. My research needed to be able to capture the dynamics inherent to this 'super-diverse' and 'thrown together' setting within

the ‘world city of convivial multicultural’ (Back and Sinha, 2016, p. 517) whilst paying attention to the ways divisions were drawn and hierarchies were established within institutional discourses, labels, and practices as well as my participants’ narratives.

Following on from these discussions, I now turn to teasing out the forces and dynamics that are at play in London as a global city. The global city context of London, which is a result of global neoliberal forces, creates particular conditions for its migrants. This zooming out to the wider dimensions allows for a better and more complex understanding of the ‘micro-politics of everyday life’ (Wise and Velayutham, 2009, p. 15), e.g. the institutional setting and the lived experience of my participants within and beyond it.

The global city and its migrants

This section zooms out into the wider context of London as a global city and migrant metropolis. London has been shaped by the international flows of people, goods, and ideas from its very beginnings and within processes of global neoliberal transformation has developed as a global control and command centre of the neoliberal market economy (Sassen, 2001). This has shaped the city’s fabric profoundly and led to entrenched forms of social and economic disparity.

In 2018, London’s population stood at 8.9 million, 13 per cent of the total UK population with the city growing at twice the rate of the UK as a whole. London has a significant migrant population (51 per cent of the UK’s foreign-born population) with 38 per cent of Londoners born outside the UK compared to an average of 11 per cent in the rest of England (Vargas-Silva and Rienzo, 2019)²³. As Back et al. (2018) assert, London has become ‘largely a migrant city connected to the world beyond its geographic borders in unprecedented ways’ (p. 19).

²³ Analysing data from the 2001 and 2011 census, Krausova and Vargas-Silva (2013) remark that the capital’s demographic composition has undergone some profound changes. Between 2001 and 2011 the overall population of the city increased by a million, a growth of 14 per cent. During that period the UK-born population of the city declined by 1 per cent, around 50,000 residents, which means that the increase in London’s population was due to the increase in the foreign-born population, which numbered 1,055,360 residents by 2011. The foreign-born population has increased by 54 per cent over those 10 years and accounted for 105% of London’s population increase.

This population change is not only due to Britain's historical role as a colonial power with London as its imperial centre but is also related to general events in international politics causing different migrant groups to arrive in the UK (see chapter three). It has been even further reinforced by London's rise to global-city status (Sassen, 2001) denoting its role as a key junction or crossroads within the circuits of global neoliberal capitalism (Back and Sinha, 2016). A model of economic development/management with privatisation of public services and subcontracting as its favoured form of employment in the global North and structural adjustment programs imposed on struggling nation states in the global South has continuously created both the desire and necessity for people to migrate (Wills et.al., 2010). London attracts large amounts of international migrants as it is one of the global economy's 'command and control' points. It has a particular significance as a production point of specialised financial and producer services that make the global economy run (Sassen, 2001).

It is important to note that global cities are responsible for creating different types of migrants leading to the polarisation of social class divisions. On the one hand, there are 'privileged citizens', mainly highly skilled professionals brought by transnational corporations or drawn by the career opportunities the service industries in these cities afford them. On the other hand, the presence of these privileged citizens also requires and attracts less skilled and other service-giving people, such as waitresses, chauffeurs, cleaners, etc. in order to make sure that all the demands of the global city are met (*ibid.*; Getahun, 2012). To this end, various sectors of the economy have become dependent on migrant labour, such as care, cleaning services, and transport; without migrants parts of the economy would grind to a halt – as Wills et.al. (2010) observe, 'London has become almost wholly reliant on foreign-born workers to do the city's 'bottom-end' jobs' (p. 1). Their research explicates the emergence of this new labour market, which they refer to as London's 'new migrant division of labour' which is mediated by race, ethnicity, and gender and as such highly hierarchised and stratified, in the context of global neoliberal economic management.

Although not all migrants necessarily end up in London's low wage economy, Sassen (2001) shows that the increasing inequalities in global cities are resulting directly from these distinct patterns of employment. Growth at the top end of the labour market fuels growth at

the bottom and migrants from low-income countries (such as the majority of my participants) are heavily over-represented at the bottom. Research has shown that many social issues facing the city, such as poverty and inequality, are particularly likely to have an impact on people from migrant communities (Tinson et al., 2017). The dynamics and conditions of London's migrant division of labour became evident in many of the conversations, interviews, and group discussions I had with my participants throughout my fieldwork. This can be seen in the participant introductions in chapter one which also show how many found themselves tipped into what Standing (2011) has termed 'the precariat', a 'new dangerous class' of people facing insecurity, instability, and precarious work conditions.

Moreover, the continuous over-supply of low-skilled workers in London leading to a surplus to requirements means that there is a growing reserve army of largely foreign-born labour. According to estimates by HM Treasury (2007), this oversupply is as great as three low-skilled workers for every low skilled job in the capital. This supply and demand imbalance puts serious downward pressure on the terms and conditions of work resulting in increasing poverty and people needing to hold onto their job, regardless of the pay and working conditions. Research has shown that employees from racially minoritised and migrant communities are more at risk of being in low-paid jobs and insecure employment, as well as being involuntarily on temporary contracts (Tinson et al., 2017). Also, many skilled workers are compelled to take up less-skilled jobs for a lack of alternatives. The latter is often referred to as 'bumping down' (Wills et al., 2010, p. 47) or 'deskilling' (Garrido and Codó, 2017) and is a common experience among my participants (see for example Appendix 11).

In addition, an over-supply of would-be workers allows employers to apply further preferences, in particular adopting national and racialized stereotypes during recruitment processes in the form of a 'hiring queue' with workers from African heritage ranking among the lowest group in the queue (Model, 2002, p. 85). Similarly, Wills et al. (2010) point out that the racial heritage of European workers as white has further increased processes of racialization and hierarchization. The racialized hiring queue can also determine the scope of migrants' upward mobility once within a company's employment. Many of my participants shared their often painful experiences of these processes of racialization, hierarchization and hampered possibility to be socially mobile with me throughout the research.

Having outlined the structural inequality and entrenched forms of social and economic disparity my participants find themselves confronted with within London's migrant urbanism, I now zoom out further to examine the socio-political context in which the research took place, analysing dynamics which were operating at the level of the nation-state.

Hostility, Brexit, Austerity: mapping the uncertainty and precarity of the research context

This section elucidates the wider socio-political context of the research. I map the inequality, uncertainty, and precarity in which the research took place within the three realities of a hostile immigration strategy, the polarising EU referendum and Brexit debates, as well as austerity politics - all of which left their imprint on the research.

A 'hostile environment'

From 2012 onwards, the government's approach to immigration has been the implementation of what is generally referred to as the 'hostile environment'²⁴ policy. The effects of this started to show in the summer of 2013 with 'Operation Vaken', a Home Office campaign which saw two 'Go Home vans'²⁵ being driven through six of the most ethnically diverse London boroughs: Hounslow, Barking and Dagenham, Ealing, Barnet, Brent and Redbridge – places which were in many cases home to my participants, frequently mentioned by many of them and areas I was taken to on 'go alongs' during my fieldwork. The vans were accompanied by various Home Office press releases reporting on and sharing images of immigration raids and arrests of 'immigration offenders'. Many commentators pointed out Vaken's racist tropes connecting the language used with the history of the words 'go home', the racial profiling and targeting of racially minoritised communities as

²⁴ The policy derives its name from an interview in 2012 with the then Home Secretary Theresa May (who was Prime Minister during my fieldwork) who asserted that it was her aim 'to create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration' (Kierkup and Winnett, 2012, n.p.). Currently the government refers to it as 'compliant environment' policy.

²⁵ The full message carried by the vans: 'In the UK illegally? GO HOME OR FACE ARREST. Text HOME to 78070 for free advice and help with travel documents. We can help you return home voluntarily without fear of arrest or detention.' Along with these words was a close-up of a border guard's uniform and handcuffs, a telephone number to call, and the claim: '106 ARRESTS LAST WEEK IN YOUR AREA'. (Jones et al., 2017)

well as the kindling of racism and suspicion within local communities inherent to it (Jones et al., 2017). As I elucidated in chapter three when discussing how historical legacies are shaping the present, race and immigration cannot easily be disentangled in Britain's political culture (see also Gilroy, 2012).

The 'hostile environment' policy was subsequently translated in the Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016 leading to processes of 'everyday bordering' (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2019) by relocating border checkpoints in a multiplicity of spaces throughout civil society (Balibar, 2004), e.g. housing, education, work, health, banking, etc. turning figures across society into immigration enforcement officers (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019). For example, English language education providers such as those at my field site are often required to check the immigration statuses of students. The new bordering legislation, discourses, and practices have been transforming relationships and everyday life for everyone, not just for the figure of the "Illegal Immigrant" at whom it was originally targeted (see for example the House of Lords Library Briefing (Taylor, 2018) which details these effects).

This has had an impact on everyday encounters between all residents, differentially affecting individual citizenship duties and solidarities, however the most significant impact is on the lives of those migrants and racialised minorities who are suspected to be illegal or not deserving (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019). About halfway during my fieldwork, this peaked with the Windrush scandal which saw Afro-Caribbean British citizens who had the right to be in the UK facing desperate circumstances including deportation.

The 'hostile environment' had concrete effects on the lived experience of my participants. Around the time of the Windrush scandal, some of my participants would at times make remarks – albeit some of them in a slightly joking manner - about me better not writing certain things they said down during conversations so they would not get deported, etc. Also, during my participant observation, the Windrush scandal was brought up by students in their lessons. At the same time, many teachers shared with me how they felt their students were more afraid and painfully aware of their precarious being in the world amidst this increased hostility, scrutiny, and suspicion they are subjected to across the system. Chapter six elucidates how prejudices, suspicion, and scrutinizing practices from wider society at times seeped into the college setting and left their imprint on the experiences of students there as well.

EU referendum and Brexit

In addition, the EU referendum campaign largely focused on the ‘problem’ of immigration and the need for ‘taking back control’. It was marked by the use of increasingly hostile anti-migrant rhetoric in government and mainstream political debate which fuelled verbal and physical hate-filled outpourings in society (Jones et al., 2017).²⁶

This became further evident in the days immediately after the Brexit vote took place in June 2016. To this end, signs saying ‘Leave the EU, No more Polish vermin’ were left outside homes and schools in Cambridgeshire (BBC News, 2016) and also the Polish Cultural Centre in London which is in close proximity to my fieldwork site. Countless other reports of people – mostly nationals of other EU countries, and British Muslims – being threatened and told they must ‘go home now’ began to circulate in press and social media reports after the Brexit vote (Agerholm, 2016). During the course of time, they became part of my experience and more often than not they had become part of my participants’ experiences as well. In April 2018 whilst I was still carrying out my fieldwork, the United Nations human rights experts expressed serious concerns about racism rooted in the fabric of the UK’s society (UN News, 2018, n.p.). In May 2018 the UN’s special rapporteur on racism, Prof Tendayi Achiume, asserted that Brexit and the political context surrounding it had contributed to an environment of increased racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination and intolerance rendering racialised minorities (and thus my research participants) in the country more vulnerable (Gayle, 2018, n.p.).

Also, alongside these hardening attitudes toward immigration and fear of the ‘other’, debates about language and language learning that are generally linked to ideological agendas and used for political agendas intensified and got further politicized (Lanvers et.al., 2018). Instances of increased linguistic discrimination (or ‘linguicism’ as it is being referred to by some sociolinguists, e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas, 2015) were reported quite frequently in the time just after the vote to leave the EU in June 2016 as well as beyond that time and also as part of many of my participants’ accounts. The increase of such instances of linguistic

²⁶ As part of the Vote Leave campaign, the then UKIP leader Nigel Farage launched a poster with the words ‘Breaking Point: The EU has failed us all. We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders’ appearing above an image of a crowded queue of Syrian refugees at the Slovenian border. Shortly after this, the Labour Member of Parliament and pro-refugee campaigner Jo Cox was brutally murdered with witnesses reporting that the attacker was shouting ‘this is for Britain’ and ‘keep Britain independent’ (Jones et al., 2017).

discrimination point towards the fact that language is increasingly and more openly being used as a proxy for other prejudices and anti-foreigner sentiments (see for example, Cooke et al., 2019). The research team of the *Our Languages* project which took place in London in spring 2017 and explored the potential for incorporating sociolinguistic topics into ESOL classrooms found that racist and xenophobic attacks on those speaking languages others than English in public were a salient theme brought up by their participants throughout their research which they linked to the post EU referendum political climate (*ibid.*). The same was true for my research with many of my participants telling me about instances of racially motivated harassment and symbolic linguistic violence as part of their lived experience.

A poignant example happened in in November 2018 when a ‘Speak English’ graffiti which made headlines as ‘racist graffiti’ in the news appeared on several walls in Walthamstow, an east London borough and one of the most diverse areas in the country with 48 per cent of residents from a racially minoritised background. However, subsequently it was ‘transformed into a celebration of diversity’ (Andersson, 2018, n.p.) by a local resident and artist who, using photoshop, added ‘we’ and all the languages listed as spoken in the borough on the borough’s website (see both images below).



Figure 5.3: ‘Speak English’ graffiti (Source: Andersson (2018, n.p))

The new graffiti also made headline news, went viral on social media and sparked the organisation of various community events to show ‘solidarity and unity against racism’ (*ibid.*). This important example of an effective counter-narrative to dominant discourses shows new forms of solidarity emerging, which are processes and practices my research pays attention to and aims to foster. Particularly in chapter eight I show how language education for adult migrants can be a site to enhance migrants’ agency and solidarity within a hostile, volatile, and precarious environment. In chapter nine, I further discuss how an alternative bottom-up perspective to dominant integration discourses provides a possibility for re-imagining and re-creating a different and more equitable future for language learning provision for migrants.

Austerity

All this happened after the UK had adopted sweeping austerity measures going back at least as far as 2010. Austerity is generally regarded as both an economic agenda of fiscal management as well as a set of coexisting ideological (moral-political-economic) discourses and policies which I already highlighted in chapter two. Both aspects had an impact on my research setting and participants.

The measures that were introduced as part of the fiscal management saw changes to tax policy and public benefits and have dramatically cut public sector funding and services including cuts to language learning provision for migrants, education and particularly the further education sector which provided the educational setting for my research. Within further education, adult education has been impacted most severely and particularly ESOL provision has seen the most extreme falls in funding with cuts of 40 per cent since 2010 (Schellekens, 2019).

Scholars have examined how cuts and reforms have targeted already marginalised groups, have led to societal polarisation and disintegration and aggravated existing divides thus shaping class, race, and gender relations (see for example Dabrowski (2017) for an overview of this research). Some research has focused on racially minoritised women’s experiences of austerity and shown that they are particularly disadvantaged due to precarious employment, legal status and/or greater reliance on dwindling public services (Bassel and

Emejulu, 2015; 2017; 2018). Lonergan (2015) has discussed the effects of the austerity regime on migrant women and demonstrated how ESOL funding cuts challenged migrant women's social reproductive activities and their attempts to find paid work. This is not surprising given that a 2011 Equality Impact Assessment carried out by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills demonstrated that women and racialised minorities would be disproportionately affected by the government-imposed cuts to ESOL funding (BIS, 2016). When the Skills Funding Agency announced in July 2015 that ESOL courses for students receiving Job Seeker's Allowance would be cut with immediate effect, the Association of Colleges pointed out that this affected 16,000 individuals and again had a disproportionate effect on female and racially minoritised students (Ashworth, 2016). Also, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the introduction of the English learning fund for Muslim women one year after these cuts were imposed, had a further polarising effect feeding into the pathologizing narrative of the 'failed Muslim woman'. Emejulu and Bassel (2018) conclude that particularly minoritised Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Black African women are impacted by austerity measures discursively and materially.

The research and impact assessments highlighted above allow for a detailed and nuanced understanding of how austerity impacts people's lives in messy and multiple ways. Dabrowski (2017) points out that, 'those most affected by austerity measures have been labelled as 'undeserving' recipients of state support and blamed for the austerity programme [...]; those 'undeserving' include the 'welfare mother', the immigrant and the unemployed' (p.10). Particularly, the 'deserving/undeserving' dichotomy is discussed in detail in chapter seven when I show how my participants dialogue with top-down integration discourses that have evolved during the austerity programme. In their narratives, they were both reproducing as well as challenging them and were using the learning of English as a platform to perform the 'deserving' or 'good' migrant as opposed to the pathologized Other or 'bad' and 'undeserving' migrant. In this way they often aggravated existing divides. However, there were also instances of talking back and calling for more solidarity in austere and precarious times.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have mapped the socio-spatial context of the college and its surrounding area including its increased migration-driven diversity, the socio-economic context of the global city London, and the socio-political dynamics which are operating at the level of the nation-state. I have described how inequality has been heightened in these contexts and teased out how the specific dynamics inherent to these contexts have a disproportionate effect on migrant communities. I have shown how this is further exacerbated by the hostility against migrants and socio-political volatility rendering those who are most marginalized even more vulnerable. The dimensions and challenges discussed in this chapter became salient throughout the research, for example during interviews and conversations with both students and teachers as well as on 'go alongs'. However, having discussed these issues, I do not want to suggest that these dimensions materialised in the lived experiences of all of my participants in the same way. Yet, they are important to grapple with as this enables us to gain a more detailed and nuanced understanding of how language education for adult migrants inserts itself in these contexts and how it is experienced by different adult migrants who are studying English at my field site and are navigating their 'integration'. It further highlights how processes of hierarchization and inclusion and exclusion work, both within the college setting as well as beyond. The next chapter discusses these dynamics in more detail in the context of my field site and the experience of my participants.

Before I turn to chapter six, I would like to note that the outlined dynamics revealing the 'superdiverse' and highly unequal reality of the global migrant city urgently call for a rethink of top down language learning for integration discourses into the imagined homogeneous nation state or 'community of value'. Instead, more fitting approaches are needed which match the reality on the ground, empower marginalized bodies and support solidarity in diversity within migrant language education. I return to this in chapter nine.

Chapter 6: De/valued migrants, learning English, and the '*big sausage machine*'

Introduction

You could probably write a long list, a very long list of what the college could do but doesn't, erm ... it's a very limited institution, it's not very capable, it's a big sausage machine, it turns out people with qualifications and it's hugely valuable for that, hugely valuable for doing just that but there's a lot more that it could do, certainly a lot more ... (Luke, teacher, interview)

This chapter presents and discusses findings from my fieldwork focusing on the institutional setting - '*the big sausage machine*' - and in particular the two settings that offer language courses for adult migrants and are therefore relevant in the context of my research: EFL and ESOL. These two settings are positioned differently in relation to the college as a whole. They also differ in the way they imagine and position their students in this educational space. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the circulation of value and processes of de/valuation within prevalent narratives, discourses, and practices that are inherent to the side by side existence of the two settings as well as to their day to day operations. I critically elucidate the circulation of value in regard to the co-existence of the two English learning settings as well as in relation to the subjects that are streamlined through these settings, i.e., the neoliberal subject of value who either is valued and can accrue value to themselves or is devalued and seen as lack.

This chapter starts with a brief outline of the college's dynamics that are echoed in Luke's description of it as '*a big sausage machine*' with reference to funding and the culture of audit that has become the norm. This provides a necessary understanding of the backdrop in which the circulation of value and processes of de/valuation that are traced throughout this chapter are entrenched. This is followed by an explication of the EFL/ESOL distinction, including the observable uneasiness and discontent by members of staff surrounding it. I illuminate how the EFL/ESOL labels and categories together with their underlying logics

produce discursive, symbolic, and material effects. Drawing on Zygmunt Bauman's (1996) metaphorical pair of 'tourists and vagabonds', I then discuss how the 'typical' student is imagined and constructed in each setting which further shows how these long-established labels do cultural work. Constituting a hierarchy of student value, the labels give way to the pathologizing of certain bodies who are already subjected to a devalued position in the ESOL setting as 'hopeless' cases. These dynamics are accompanied by narratives of 'lowness' and 'stuckness' that weave their way through the ESOL setting as a whole. This leads to a discussion of the ways these labels and their underlying assumptions animate in/exclusionary mechanisms which result in experiences of free(er) movement for some and exclusion or fixing for others. Lastly, I briefly highlight the relationship of the students in the two settings to the institution as 'customers' and 'captives' respectively. The analysis in this chapter highlights the, often subtle, ways of the workings of race, class, gender, different migrant statuses and mobilities that are hidden away behind the learning of English whilst at the same time shaping it and thus profoundly impacting the lived experience of de/valued adult migrants who are endeavouring to improve their English. Throughout the chapter I present findings from a systematic analysis of fieldnotes, observations, interviews and conversations with managers, teachers, and students as well as documents and digital artefacts, such as the college website.

The '*big sausage machine*'

Luke's description of the college as '*a big sausage machine*' echoes the culture of audit and inspection accompanied by an increase in bureaucratic burden that has been encroaching upon education and thus also my field site. However, it was much more prevalent in the ESOL department which falls under the auspices of the government, whereas EFL operates as a commercial entity selling its courses to paying customers. The following discussions around the college's audit culture and issues of attendance and qualifications are thus much more relevant for ESOL. However, both settings operate in a highly competitive educational marketplace driven by global neoliberal forces and are thus required to deliver marketable results. The dynamics discussed in this section profoundly impact the co-existence of the two settings within the institution and thus also the experience of the students who are streamlined through them.

Within further education, of which the college is part, an 'audit culture' (Strathern, 2000) and standard of inspection characterised by a heightened demand for accountability has become the norm. Required to provide 'value for money', service providers are putting immense emphasis on outcome measures such as retention rates and qualification achievements, particularly as continuous funding depends on the latter. The effects of this culture of audit and inspection on ESOL are well documented (Cooke and Simpson, 2008). They are echoed in my field site's ESOL manager's remarks about constituting a '*simplistic and reductionist view of putting cash value on people's language learning*' and teacher Sharon's reflection on the changes she had experienced during her teaching career:

'It was just very different then ... when you just taught English... it didn't matter who came through the door ... you just taught some English to whoever came through the door and ... and everyone was happy. That was it. But now it's all about accountability and admin and paperwork. You're just busy with making people fit into frameworks and accounting for what you're doing so that you get your funding.'

Due to the pressure my field site had been under to prove its financial stability and the regular inspections associated with this (see chapter four), these forces and pressures of '*making people fit into frameworks and accounting for what you're doing*' could be felt immensely across the institution. The new CEO/Principal who had been tasked with the restructure programme regularly reminded all staff in emails and staff meetings of his '*obsessions*' with the most prominent being '*the data is the data is the data*'. Data meant numbers and figures relating to retention rates, achievement, progression, attendance, and so forth. Attendance and qualifications/exams were recurring themes during my fieldwork. They shape '*the sausage machine's*' day to day operations profoundly and can lead to a labelling and pathologizing of those who, often due to their precarious life circumstances, pose more of a challenge to be fitted into narrowly defined frameworks.

Attendance was constantly on the mind of teachers as it was high up the manager's priority list who again was under pressure from higher up. College-wide attendance league tables are regularly included into Friday's Corporate Communication's email pitting individual departments as well as the departments internally (if they were operating on different campuses) against each other. This competitive structure was the source of great dismay among teachers in the ESOL department. In addition, the introduction of a new college-wide

attendance policy which had no options for 'authorised absence' on the register anymore caused strong feelings of unfairness within the ESOL department, but little could be done. Although there was some success which saw the reintroduction of 'authorised absence' options for appointments with the Home Office, Jobcentre, and hospitals, if students could provide proof such as an appointment letter, nevertheless, given the precarity many students in the ESOL department are faced with and their increased vulnerability as pointed out in the previous chapter, these options are very limited. For example, appointments with lawyers, the council, support agencies, etc. which are part of the lived experience of navigating a complicated immigration process and life impacted by austerity were not seen as 'authorised absences' anymore, neither were any issues related to childcare or more general sickness.

There was immense effort from different teachers to counteract these dynamics in various ways. Some were 'rather generous' in interpreting the limited options for authorised absences. Others would help students after the official class time had finished concretely with phone calls and paperwork to support them in navigating the complicated and hostile system and directing them to other support networks outside the college, etc. Yet, as we will see later on in the chapter such pressurised teaching environment could affect the way some students were perceived. At times this led to the emergence of certain labelling narratives alongside these massive efforts of going the extra mile. Also, discussions during staff meetings and other conversations and interviews with teachers and managers made clear that low attendance was seen as a risk to high exam pass rate on which further funding was contingent. High exam pass rates thus play a crucial part of 'the data'.

As the allocation of government funding is dependent on outcomes and success rates, which is generally measured by exam pass rates – the *'sausage machine turning out people with qualifications'* - there is an immense pressure on ESOL teachers to make sure that students are prepared for and pass their exams. It was not uncommon to hear teachers talk about how stressful this was for them and the factory narrative was invoked several times. Moreover, it is common practice that only those students who are expected to pass are entered for the exam and allowed to take it. This is an area of constant contention between teachers and students. Those who are deemed as 'not being there yet' have to be content with a college internal verification which still allows the institution to secure a certain level

of funding. The paperwork and bureaucratic burden involved in these certifications as well as the administering of the exams is immense and thus increases teachers' workloads enormously.

The matters of attendance and exams are markedly different in EFL. As paying customers EFL students are not put under harsh scrutiny regarding their attendance as it is assumed *'that they will have their reasons if they decide not to come to a lesson'* (conversation with EFL manager). Also, EFL incorporates the option of taking exams, however, they are not automatically part of the courses which means students need to book them and pay for them separately should they wish to take an exam. Apart from those enrolling on IELTS intensive preparation courses, most EFL students do not take an exam. Therefore, students passing an exam is not a prerequisite for successfully completing the course, receiving a certificate for doing so or being able to move up to the next level. However, as paying customers they are usually actively encouraged to do so to ensure they are sufficiently challenged and happy and satisfied with their course overall.

As we have seen, the two language learning settings that were part of my field work are positioned differently in relation to the *'sausage machine'* although they are both teaching English to adult migrants. This is mainly because they are funded differently, i.e. government funded in the case of ESOL, commercial in the case of EFL. As such, their underlying logic of teaching English is also markedly different as previously discussed in chapter three. The former is expected to function as a mechanism for migrant integration and the latter is aligned with the global neoliberal spread of the English language and English language teaching industry. Although their separation in my field site was generally presented as a clear-cut outcome of these different funding regimes, their side by side existence was not without discontent. It therefore provided an opportunity to read against the grain of these labels and interrogate the assumptions, discourses, and practices that are flowing from them in more detail - to which I now turn.

ESOL and EFL – two 'silos', a website, and some discontent

Having looked at the dynamics of the *'sausage machine'* that are impacting the teaching of ESOL and EFL, this section interrogates these labels and their underlying logics as well as the

side by side existence of the two settings within the college's landscape further. As I briefly explained under notes on terminology and as we have seen in chapter three, ESOL and EFL are commonly used labels or distinctions, however, it is important to understand the meanings and value attributed to them in my field site, the way they were situated within the college setting and how they position their respective students in this educational space. I draw on interviews with teachers, observations, fieldnotes, and an analysis of the college's website to do so.

At the time of my fieldwork, the two English language teaching settings were working as separated departments. This organisational structure in place that was shaping day to day operations and practices has been changing over time. Most recently, the massive restructuring of the institution that had been carried out since 2014 in order to prove financial stability (see chapter four) had left its imprint on the relationship between the two. Several teachers pointed out to me that this has led to a completely separated situation where teachers who in the past *'would usually do a bit of both'* (Florence and Elena, teachers) and where *'there was quite a lot of blending'* (Dan, teacher) are now firmly allocated to one area of provision. This was to the regret of most of the teachers. Another teacher Jen, for example remarked that *'it's never been as separated as it is now. It's all become very, erm, like putting everything in silos as they say ... in different groups without coming together, it's a shame, a real shame'*. Jen's language is poignant by referring to the current situation as a creation of silos which is generally used for a situation of 'rigid streamlining' with 'settled categories into which we slot things' (Poole, 2015, n. p.) characterised by a lack of collaboration or in Jen's words a lack of *'coming together'*.

Before looking at the process of 'slotting things into categories' and 'rigid streamlining' in more detail, I now turn to elucidate the imagination and representation of the two categories and the relationship between them within the institutional context using the college's website as an entry point. Upon accessing the website of my field site, one is presented with the possibility to search for what is on offer at the college. One of the main options available is 'English' in the top toolbar or 'English Courses' on the side toolbar (see Figure 6.1 below).

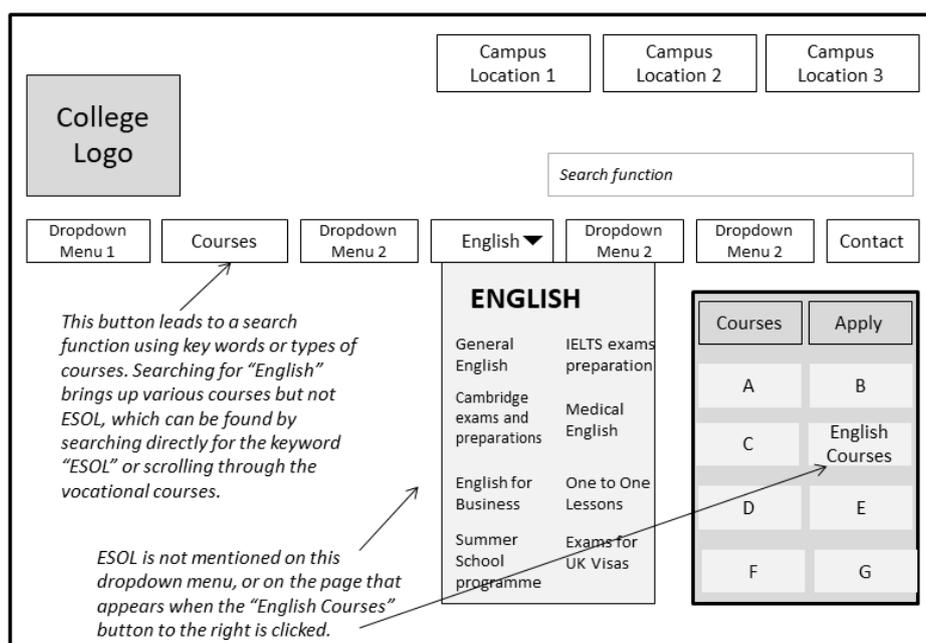


Figure 6.1: Stylized depiction of the college website

Clicking on either of these options, opens a link entitled ‘EFL English as a Foreign Language’ which details what is on offer as part of the ‘successful English Language School for over 60 years accredited by the British Council’. It further highlights the college’s position as ‘one of the biggest exam centres in Europe for IELTS and for Cambridge Exams’, pointing out that prospective students ‘will be studying English in a truly international environment in the heart of London’. It is then possible to click on further options to get more information about different courses and programmes, notably General English, IELTS exams and preparations, Cambridge exams and preparations, Medical English, English for Business, One to One lessons, English for TfL (Transport for London), English Language exams for UK visas and Life in UK test preparation, the Summer School programme, and the option of having bespoke English courses for London based clients as well as EU and international groups.

Overall, with regards to EFL there is a vibrancy and versatility displayed reflecting the contemporary state of the English language internationally as well as the widely developed English language teaching industry. The long running of the Language School for more than 60 years is emphasized and links its beginnings to the 1960s which is described as

a decade full of activity in Britain, and in that respect a complete change from anything that had gone before. The after-effects of the war had passed and there was growing affluence in Europe and beyond, making trips to the UK, summer schools, special courses, and so on, increasingly affordable and well attended. (Howatt and Smith, 2014, p. 87-88)

The affluence mentioned here as a main driver for what came to be designated as English as a Foreign Language to European or overseas students is reflected in the advertising of the college's language school today and so are the types of neoliberal mobilities generally associated with EFL. What is on offer is for those who *'want to travel around the world and use English as an international language'* (interview with Dan, teacher) and are seeking to enhance their capital portfolio via international mobility with valuable linguistic skills. The website invites them to *'study English in a truly international environment in the heart of London'*. All this points towards wanting to attract those who Brooks and Waters (2011) refer to as elites seeking to enhance their educational capital via international mobility so that they can confidently operate as part of a global, multicultural community. The opportunity to take internationally recognised and prestigious exams, such as IELTS and Cambridge exams underlines this imagined privileged trajectory further. This is accentuated by the way these exams are commonly described and advertised, e.g. on the Cambridge English website which states that, *'[w]hatever your goals or ambitions, Cambridge English Qualifications are a global mark of excellence, accepted and trusted by thousands of organisations worldwide'* (Cambridge English, n.d.). In short, what is on offer on the college's website is undeniably a valuable asset.

Some of the options on the college's webpage, such as for example English for UK visas or the Life in the UK test preparation, also point to the role of English in immigration processes. However, what is quite surprising in this regard is that under the option 'English Courses' on the college's homepage there is no mention of or link to the ESOL provision taking place at all. This is only accessible by clicking the 'Courses' option which leads to a 'Courses A-Z' search option which then under 'E' brings up ESOL (see figure 6.1). Thus, while EFL courses take more centre stage on the college's homepage ESOL courses are in the background.

Once one has managed to locate ESOL courses on the website, they are simply introduced as being *'for people whose first language is not English ranging from pre-entry up to Level 1'*.

The description further states that the courses are *'for people who live and work in the UK and who want to improve their English skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing'*. This statement fits with Bourdieu's (1991) notion of a nation state's 'legitimate language' which those who ESOL courses are offered for are seen to be lacking and need to acquire in order to be seen as legitimate and good members of the 'community of value'. This stands in strong contrast to the way the EFL subject is represented as highly mobile international elite that can accrue value to themselves. Prospective ESOL students are further told that they *'will learn in a friendly and welcoming environment'* and that they *'will either sit an Ascentis exam at the end of the semester in the skill they are learning (speaking, listening, reading and/or writing) or complete the course by working towards individual targets set by their teacher'* and that their *'progression is dependent on attendance and whether they pass their exam or achieve their targets'*. This echoes the discussions in the previous section about the importance of students' attendance and exam pass rates. The Ascentis exams are described in a markedly different way to the Cambridge and IELTS exams described earlier which give those who take them worldwide opportunity:

Ascentis ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are designed specifically for people living in Britain and focus on preparing learners for everyday life, further education and the world of work. The primary aim is to assist the learner in becoming independent of other people such as interpreters or translators when interacting with English speakers in a work environment and elsewhere. By improving their communication and fluency in English, learners will significantly improve their employability skills and their ability to fully participate in every part of life in Britain beyond their local community. (Ascentis, n.d.)

By emphasizing notions such as gaining independence from state support, e.g. in the form of not needing translators, the ability to be economically active and to participate in and contribute to society at large, this reflects the tropes within dominant integration discourses in which the need to learn English has become inextricably linked to questions of legitimacy in the 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013) and belonging to the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) of the nation state. All this is not surprising given the fact that the field of ESOL has developed as a response to inward immigration to the UK and is thus generally

associated with migrant mobilities and expected to function as the major mechanism for what is perceived as successful integration. What is somewhat curious however is that ESOL courses are not deemed relevant to be included under the category of 'English Courses' on the college's homepage alongside EFL.

This omission was by no means undisputed. The matter came up in some of the teacher interviews and was raised several times during ESOL staff meetings as some members of staff found it '*utterly bizarre*', '*unfair*', or '*slightly discriminatory*' (comments during staff meetings) that ESOL was not included under the rubric of 'English Courses'. The suggestion by some that this '*was deliberate*' and '*done for marketing purposes to make the college look good*' (*ibid.*) was brushed aside by the marketing team when it was brought to them. Still, these remarks indicate that ESOL teachers felt that the two settings carry different value for the institution with EFL coming out on top and being seen as an asset serving as good marketing material in a competitive education market whereas ESOL is hidden away. Although promises were made that the issue would be looked into and potentially changed, no change has been made to date.

This uneasiness and discontent about the website presentation and thus about the uneven side by side existence of the two English learning settings within the college's landscape went beyond the representation on the website and found its way into conversations and interviews throughout my fieldwork, as the following section shows.

Further inequitable relations: matters of space, voice, and racial dimensions

This section highlights the unevenness in the workings of and the value attributed to the two English teaching categories within the wider institutional setting regarding the spatial dimension of these inequitable relations, experiences of the ESOL setting being overlooked, ignored, and having no voice or not being heard within the overall college structure, as well as the racializing of student bodies. I look at each one in turn.

ESOL teacher Jen alluded to the spatial dimension quite often during my fieldwork and also spoke about it during her interview. Upon my question of how she perceived the side by side existence of the two settings within the college, she remarked:

Jen: I mean here at the college ESOL's being treated differently

Silke: Oh, really, can you

Jen: Absolutely, yes, it's being treated very differently... [laughs] you only have to look at the classrooms ... the classrooms and the corridor and the carpets ... [laughs] go to room XXX have a look at the carpet, it's, it's just awful but ... it's better than, erm, when I started here in the early ... 1990s, erm, ESOL was in a building over near XXX which is now a school, ... but there, ... the, the windows, erm, didn't close properly and, erm, erm, and, and ... it was really bad

Silke: ESOL taught from the college?

Jen: Yes, erm, they had, they had an out, yes, ESOL was taught over there, EFL over here ... there were complaints ... it got into the local newspaper ... and then they brought ESOL here, now it's all here

Silke: Really, they actually taught it in a different building?

Jen: Yeah

Silke: Do you feel, erm, do you think students are aware of this, you know this

Jen: Erm, I don't know. That's a good question ... it'd be interesting to know ... I don't think they, a lot of them, erm, they don't know about EFL, I mean it's now mainly downstairs ... they don't go downstairs so they don't quite see the nice flooring and all the rest of it

In this vivid description of inequitable relations with regards to the spaces allocated to the two settings and the level of maintenance, the experience of being treated differently and unfavourably and the feeling of neglect run throughout. This description raises many issues noteworthy to be investigated in the context of this research, such as who the bodies occupying these different spaces are and what discourses and practices in relation to these spaces and bodies tell us about the classed, raced and gendered dimension of English language education for adult migrants and how this reproduces wider inequalities. Also, accounts like this, in which teachers draw on their experience as a long-standing college

employee, help to put the remarks about the website being *'unfair'* and *'slightly discriminatory'* in more context. Placing the discontent about the website setup within the history of the co-existence of the two settings at the college also reveals that, although they might have worked more closely together in the past, this was by no means perceived as having been on equal footing.

Furthermore, there were numerous accounts by ESOL staff about not having a voice within the overall college structure and experiences of being ignored or overlooked. The ESOL manager, for example, often talked about how, although the department was as she referred to the *'backbone'* of the college in terms of securing funding, when it came to her raising ESOL specific issues at meetings with other managers and the college's leadership team this *'just falls on deaf ears'* making it difficult for her to have more impact. Being of economic value to the college (in terms of securing funding) did not automatically translate into symbolic power in the form of a voice that is being heard, given adequate attention, and thus has the possibility of having an impact or "deserving" better material conditions, such as a new carpet!

Similarly upon discussing events that one ESOL staff member had organised for the department for Refugee Week, she exclaimed at the staff meeting, *'Seriously, [name of teacher] this is all amazing and just great but I just think it's a shame that we seem to be doing all these things just among ourselves. This really needs to get out to the college, but I feel we are doing all this great stuff but are just presenting it to us ... it's just a bit frustrating'*. It therefore does not come as a surprise that, when teachers put on special activities with their ESOL students, such as fundraising events, upon congratulating each other on their and their students' success comments were made like *'I really hope you make it into the Corporate Comms on Friday'*. 'Corporate Comms' refers to a weekly email sent by the CEO/Principal; a vehicle that had been introduced for regular top-down communication to reach all college staff. Besides general updates it includes various league tables and what are deemed noteworthy and valuable news and contributions made to the college business. A mention in these emails was a coveted achievement.

Moreover, inequitable relations had a markedly racialised dimension speaking to the legacies of Empire. One particularly poignant encounter happened during a chat with the

ESOL manager in her office. Upon my mentioning the IELTS tests²⁷ happening that day on site which are part of EFL she turned around to me in her chair and emphatically exclaimed '*Ah, I don't like IELTS, they are so, so, white, if you know what I mean!*' She almost seemed shocked by her own words as she swiftly turned her head to the side swivelling back in her chair and abruptly changed the subject. This moment was quite remarkable as all of a sudden 'the unsayable' or 'taboo' which seemed to have been concealed behind the normally employed 'common-sense' notions of 'difference in funding', 'different learner profiles', 'different learner needs', etc. was expressed. This was put in racial terms. The manager's reaction clearly showed that it made her feel uncomfortable and through her body language and abrupt change of subject shut down all opportunity to follow-up. Yet her evoking of ideologies and identities of 'race' and 'whiteness' are significant. Working from the premise that 'race' is not a simple empirical description of skin colour, but is constructed and contested, a 'constellation of processes and practices' (Frankenberg, 2001, p. 73) helps to understand this comment about '*being white*' in more detail. Frankenberg (2001), for example has identified instruments of 'whiteness' as structural racial advantage, as boundary marker, a relational category and a site of privilege which found their resonance in the comment about IELTS being so 'white'.

During the college's restructuring, IELTS was being incorporated into the EFL setting at the main college campus and thus moving there from one of the other college sites. New office space had to be made available and therefore several, mainly ESOL, members of staff on the main site were asked to vacate their long-standing offices in order to provide that space. They were of course not happy about this but had no way of contesting this decision. I was working for the college at the time and witnessed heated discussions in which people aired their grief. What was striking was how often a colonial reference was invoked and IELTS were accused of behaving '*like colonisers moving in thinking they could just take whatever they wanted*'. A few years later during my fieldwork these events alongside these comments were at times recounted to me. It had clearly left its mark on people. In addition, a very visible mark has been left on the office space that had been repurposed and undergone

²⁷ IELTS tests carry a lot of prestige and hold significant gatekeeping powers due to the role academic IELTS tests play in admissions to UK Higher Education institutions and non-academic IELTS tests play within the UK Visa and Immigrations system. As we have seen earlier, the college prides itself in being one of the biggest IELTS test centres in Europe which also generates significant revenue as prospective test takers often enrol on intensive preparation courses for which high fees are charged.

intensive refurbishment to be 'IELTS-ready' (as it was referred to in conversations with teachers) at the time resulting in shiny (and very white) offices – yet the carpet in the ESOL classroom mentioned by Teacher Jen had still not been replaced, even years later.

The workings of 'race' and racism had further bearings in the way student bodies were racialised. Talking about enrolment processes during the time when EFL and ESOL were working as one department, another teacher, Hannah, remembers questionable practices:

Yeah, you know, there are all sorts of tales about that, I mean, erm, they used to be sort of enrolling everyone together and then discussing what, erm, what their needs were ... sometimes people really didn't know and it was purely random. I can remember one person who should be nameless [laughs slightly uncomfortably] who said well how do we sort them out who's ESOL and who's EFL ... and the person said anybody who's slightly tinted put into ESOL ... they actually said that, yeah, ... that was, you know, erm, 't was just based on skin-colour cause sometimes there really wasn't very much difference ... and you know, you just thought, well, it was just slightly random, erm, and in other cases of course you might have felt for funding reasons or perhaps because of their profile or their literacy skills there was a clearer division

While Hannah recounted this in her interview, a colleague of hers came into the room and unfazed by what she heard nodded along and made some approving noises. She clearly remembered these 'tales' as well. Similarly, the following entry from my fieldnotes recounts a chat with another teacher sharing their memory of practices that were carried out in a similar vein:

Back in the days you know we were working more together and I remember we used to enrol together, there were no separate enrolment sessions, everyone just came and we enrolled them and then decided later on the classes; but then that changed, probably because of some change in funding or who knows, but I remember standing in this large room with all those students we were supposed to enrol and then we were told we have to separate them out more and I was thinking how on earth do we do that now without having assessed them and spoken to them but then XXX [the manager at the time] came in and said, no problem, I'll sort it out, I'll take ESOL and you do EFL here and he just pointed at different students and said you, you, you come with me

and when he had gone I realised that only those with a lighter skin-colour were left in the room [laughs uncomfortably] well, I just thought how about if you've come as an au-pair or you're French or Italian and just got a nice tan during the summer [laughs]

These accounts of institutional racist practices were narrated to me as normalised practices. They reiterate how EFL is predominantly imagined as 'white' and is imbued with the symbolic power and superiority that is associated with this 'whiteness'. This stands in opposition to the '*slightly tinted*' ESOL, highlighting the racialised dimension of the inequitable relations between the two settings.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the symbolic power and superiority associated with 'whiteness' is coupled with the difference in prestige and value EFL and ESOL are seen to carry within the wider college marketplace, as outlined earlier. These interlinked dynamics together influence how relations between the two settings are experienced and have real material effects in terms of the allocation and upkeep of office and classroom space as well as the sorting of students. They also decide whether the setting is dealt with as highly marketable material carrying prestige or an actor with less symbolic power towards whom one can '*turn a deaf ear*'.

Tourists (au-pairs and customers) and vagabonds (refugees and captives)

Against the backdrop of the inequitable relations between EFL and ESOL discussed thus far, this section draws on participant observation of enrolment and classrooms, as well as conversations and interviews with teachers, managers, and students in both settings to highlight how the figure of the 'typical' student is imagined and constructed in each setting. Zygmunt Bauman's (1996) metaphorical pair of 'tourists and vagabonds' denoting the high unevenness in mobility within a polarized human condition is useful to understand these differences. For Bauman, we are all 'plotted on a continuum stretched between the poles' of the two. Our position on the continuum or 'rank in the social hierarchy' is thus determined by the 'degree of freedom we possess in choosing our life itineraries' (p. 14). Thus, the tourist metaphorically stands for the globalized elite whose movement is free, effortless, and desirable; the vagabond for the precarious poor whose movement is

forced and who need to find work and the means of sustenance. They also end up in different language learning settings in my field site.

The 'tourist-au pair' and the 'vagabond-refugee'

The 'au pair' was the most prominent example used by staff for describing the 'typical student' of the EFL Language School and it is therefore important to understand how this category of mobility is imagined. In the UK, the contours of the au pair are generally described as female child carers, middle class, young, European and mainly coded as white and Christian. Underlying the practice of au-pairing is the notion of 'cultural exchange' among those of the same (middle) class, or perhaps slightly better social status (Anderson, 2013; Cox, 2015). The college's location in West London means that there are many affluent families in the vicinity who engage in the practice of au-pairing as 'cultural exchange' (alongside hiring other domestic workers). Several teachers and managers pointed out to me that *'the Language School clearly benefited'* from these customers.

The descriptions of the figure of the 'au pair' align well with the discussions about the website presentation earlier and are useful to understand the EFL setting and the way its students are constructed, whether they are actual au pairs or not. One of the teachers, John, for example, described the typical EFL student as *'they could be 'your kind of average Italian or French person who is learning English to go into you know some kind of standard European type of professional job whether it is business or...'*. Luke referred to *'Spaniards who come as au-pairs or work as cleaners or in cafes to brush up on their English for professional purposes or Koreans and Japanese who can afford to spend some time in London and invest in their English'*. Another group of typical EFL students that was usually referred to alongside the au-pair were embassy staff, again due to the college's location which has several Middle Eastern embassies in its vicinity. The constructions of the 'typical' EFL student maps neatly onto Bauman's metaphor of 'the tourist'. However, as we have seen in chapter five the area around the college is characterised by high inequality and divisions of wealth and opportunity. Which brings us to the other side of the spectrum, Bauman's 'vagabonds', i.e. ESOL's 'refugees'.

ESOL students were usually described as refugees and asylum seekers. The idea of leaving a place because of the danger to one's life and livelihood in pursuit of better conditions and for gaining human rights which is ingrained in the imagination of the figure of the 'refugee/asylum seeker' played an integral part in the construction of the 'typical' ESOL student. One of the teachers, Olivia, for example remarked, *'ESOL for me are refugees and asylum seekers who are planning to live and study, no - live here'*. What is interesting in her remark is her self-correction from *'live and study'* to *'no - live here'* which is indicative about imagined trajectories of the students she is talking about. When I asked her about whether that meant that economic migrants are not part of ESOL she stated *'of course they are part of ESOL but for me refugees and asylum seekers are the essence because if you are an economic migrant who's maybe come from somewhere in Europe you can somehow muddle through'*. A bit later in the interview she added *'Okay, yeah ... for some yes, without a doubt, if you come from ... yeah, so there's students who come from let's say Brasil where life is really difficult where life is really hard and people are poor but you just want a better life for your family but they are not necessarily refugees'*. Her remarks accentuate a degree of need for help or humanitarian support as a mark of the imagination of the 'typical' ESOL student. This is not surprising giving ESOL's commitment to disadvantaged groups; many teachers in my field site saw their work at least partly as a 'humanitarian endeavour'²⁸ which is a common stance taken by ESOL practitioners (Hodge, 2004). Some of the ESOL teachers pointed out to me that they had made a conscious decision to teach in ESOL rather than EFL as they felt this was more *'meaningful teaching which would make a real difference in peoples' lives'*. Olivia described it as the possibility to *'empower them as much as possible, as well as giving them the nitty gritty of English'*. Similarly, John explains:

'I really like it although the workload is ridiculously large but I do, I love it and that's purely because of the type of student ... okay, erm, so like EFL to me, your typical EFL student has no, erm, so, is of no interest to me whatsoever, [...] at this point I'm not really so much interested in that as in more I'm actually interested in the individuals and, erm, their sort of personal experiences and helping them to obviously talking, but

²⁸ It is not possible to look at this with regards to themes of 'white saviourism' running through this 'humanitarian effort' in detail, although given the stance taken in this thesis this warrants further analysis. White saviourism refers to 'white people who feel compelled to help BME people, but within a context that can be perceived as self-serving'. This is rooted in racial superiority where white people, whether explicitly or implicitly, believe that they possess the skills to 'save' BME people as they cannot do it themselves (Akel, 2019, p. 27).

as asylum seekers and refugees mainly rather than Eastern European migrants or Spanish or Italians, I'm interested in the individuals, I'm interested in their stories, partly it's just a fascination with what they've been through, I just love being with them.'

Although within public and media discourses, the 'refugee/asylum seeker' is often depicted as a racialized figure and negatively stereotyped as 'bogus', 'needy and criminal', 'bad', John describes a fascination with their hardship and difficult lives instead and he '*just loves being with them*'. These sentiments were echoed many times in my conversations with ESOL teachers who thus distanced themselves from dominant pathologizing narratives around the figure of the 'refugee/asylum seeker' and saw their work at least partly as counteracting them. However, the '*ridiculously large workload*' and pressure this put teachers under competed at times with their emphatic interest in students' '*personal experiences*'. The fascination with their life trajectories could come under strain because the interesting yet precarious life circumstances of the asylum seekers and refugees were more difficult to fit into the college's attendance and progression regime than the less interesting '*Eastern European migrants or Spanish or Italians*'. This put pressure on teachers who were expected to have immaculate attendance records and high exam pass rates. Thus, at times, labelling narratives of '*hopeless cases*' or of students being referred to as '*flaky*' implying a lack of commitment were creeping up alongside teacher's massive efforts to support their students, ironically often singling out those 'vagabonds' who inhabit the most precarious positions and are faced with suspicion across the immigration system. For example, John remarked during his interview:

Also, to be fair to the institutions there has to be a way of pinning people's commitment down more, you know some are really hopeless and there are times when I feel very ... erm frustrated that you can't commit you know... or you always seem to have an appointment on one of the two days and..., no, come on it doesn't have to ... no ... but that might also be a result of peoples' education not having ever learnt to time manage to manage oneself and you know what [trails off].

Here John refers to his experience of students '*who always seem to have an appointment on one of the two days*' of their classes which he sees as an unfair lack of commitment. As we have seen in chapter three the notion of fairness is a popular trope in the moralistic nature

of current language learning for integration discourses. John also questions the credibility of these appointments and thus the trustworthiness of the students having them moving away from the '*I just love being with them*' towards viewing them to some extent as '*bogus*'. Accrediting this to a lack of education and an ability to self-manage brings out classed and raced aspects of the ESOL setting. However, the '*Eastern European migrants or Spanish or Italians in his class*', possess these qualities which the '*hopeless*' and '*flaky*' cases lack. As John points out to me '*they just work hard and get on with things*', although deemed as less interesting to him. Baynham et al. (2007) encountered something similar in their research and give the example of a teacher in charge of a programme which 'stands or falls on meeting its targets'. They conclude that the teacher's 'insecure position, coupled with the pressure to meet targets and retain funding, leads to an invidious categorisation of students as 'best-achievers' (likely to meet targets) and 'hopeless cases' (likely to lose us funding)''(p. 40). This resembles the dynamics of labelling in my field site. Under the pressures of the '*sausage machine*' those who are perceived as constituting '*the essence*' of ESOL and who teachers genuinely wanted to help or '*empower*' cannot fully escape the pathologizing narratives circulating in wider public and media discourses and are at risk of being labelled as '*hopeless*' or '*flaky*' within the college.

These dynamics had real effects on students. At times, '*hopeless*' and '*flaky*' students were asked to go to the manager to explain themselves echoing common practices across the immigration system which treats certain bodies and mobilities with increased suspicion. This treatment reflects and reproduces wider inequalities of the hierarchies of belongings within a postcolonial multicultural present elucidated in chapter three. In conversations with students such ways of being reprimanded came up as something they were unhappy about, likening it for example to being treated like little children. Also, often after the end of a class students who had missed a previous lesson would make great efforts to provide evidence of appointments waving letters and scrolling through their phone messages for notifications they had received for medical appointments. They did not want to run the risk of being designated as a '*hopeless*' case or '*flaky*' student seemingly lacking commitment and in danger of losing their place on the course or not being entered for the exam. Indeed, it was not rare to hear '*hopeless*' and '*flaky*' in teacher conversations when decisions about exam entries were made. This shows how students had to deploy additional emotional labour in

order to avoid being labelled as *'hopeless'* or *'flaky'* and therefore risk further exacerbating of their devalued position to the point of exclusion. This could weigh in heavily on top of their precarious life circumstances and often increased vulnerability.

Another example of the classed and raced aspects of the imaginations of the ESOL setting and its 'typical' students can be seen in John's remarks about the role of the college in providing integration measures to its refugees and asylum seekers. Reflecting what he had just experienced on his holiday in Italy, he stated:

but you know at least, I mean if you look at other places for example in Italy [...] but for adults there doesn't seem to be anything so if you are an asylum seeker or in Italy you are more likely to be illeg/ or clandestine there is nothing at least there is something here, the refugee population there are very visible as a kind of second class, third class at least with ... places like this at least there is somewhere where they can ... there is some kind of attempt to ... integrate them or call it what you ... where they can meet up where they can have a form of like an identity here, I quite like that it gives them, it gives them I don't know [trails off]

Emphasizing classed and raced aspects, John describes what he sees as the role for the college in the lives of those on the margins of society, those he refers to as *'second and third class'* citizens and who are *'very visible'* in places like Italy. According to his understanding, the 'typical' ESOL students have *'at least somewhere there is some kind of attempt to ... integrate them or call it what'* as he explains. The classed and raced aspects highlighted thus far in this section intersect further with gendered imaginations, which came to the fore in the construction of the 'typical' ESOL student in relation to the "failed Muslim woman".

The 'tourist-au pair' and the 'vagabond-"failed Muslim woman"'

The imagination of the 'typical' ESOL student was furthermore often expanded by staff as being *'students with literacy needs'*. They were then further described as students, often women, from the Horn of Africa, e.g. Sudan and Somalia and who were not necessarily newcomers but had already lived for some time in the UK or had come via other European countries. These descriptions correspond with the figure of the "hard-to-reach or Muslim

woman from segregated communities” which is often evoked within politicised integration discourses (see chapter three). Interestingly, this figure was often drawn upon as the polar opposite to EFL’s figure of the ‘au pair’. These figures or ‘types of women’ somewhat constitute limit cases of the two language learning settings. They particularly highlight the gendered dimension of the imagination of the ‘typical’ students which intersect with the classed and raced dimensions discussed above.

On the one end of the spectrum, the au pair is engaging in a kind of middle class ‘cultural exchange’ and in doing so is seen as transitioning into setting up her own family (Anderson, 2013) or, in other words, into taking up her role as a middle class woman. Middle class women are crucial in the reproduction of class society, not only as wives and mothers, but ‘as standard bearers for middle-class family values, for certain norms of citizenship and also for safeguarding the valuable cultural capital accruing to them and their families through access to education, refinement and other privileges’ (McRobbie, 2009, p. 133). Engaging in the kind of language tuition offered by the EFL department characterised by promoting such middle-class values and flexible neoliberal dispositions (see for example Gray, 2010; 2013) is thus very much in line with au-pair mobilities.

On the other end of the spectrum is “the failed Muslim woman” who is being stigmatised and perceived as having failed to integrate (see chapter three). She is a wife and mother but embodies the wrong kind of motherhood and because of her lack of English is accused of educating the wrong kind of citizens. She is very much the opposite of the middle-class woman described above. Due to her Otherness, e.g. being racially/culturally/ religiously different, she is imagined as incapable of or failing to live up to liberal ideals. She cannot participate in the kind of ‘cultural exchange’ as the au-pair does but is seen as a threat to social cohesion. She is as we have seen in need of “reform” and “transformation” via learning English, so that she can reach a ‘happier state of existence’ (Ahmed, 2010, p. 1250) and lead a “more fulfilling life” by becoming integrated into society. As I show in chapter eight many of my female Muslim participants were very much aware of this stigma and were talking back to such pathologizing narratives which are part of dominant integration discourses.

The two figures of the ‘au pair’ and the ‘failed Muslim woman’ are set apart by a difference in class denoted by the composition and weight of their capital portfolio, habitus, and

dispositions. This feeds into a difference in degree of foreignness/Otherness. The foreignness of the au pair is unproblematic as she is not othered racially/culturally/religiously, i.e. she is white, European, middle class, Christian. The racial/cultural/religious difference of the Muslim woman is markedly different and thus her degree of Otherness is read as problematic and she is therefore pathologized. As these two figures inhabit different positions in social space they are read differently by their surrounding and dealt with differently by institutions. They inhabit markedly different spheres of society imbued with different value, position, possibility and thus learning of English. The valued foreignness of the figure of the au pair is compatible with the college's English as a Foreign Language setting whilst the devalued Other Muslim woman learns English for Speakers of Other Languages.

The imaginings of ESOL students typically being '*students with literacy needs*' gave way to a general labelling of ESOL and further pathologizing as 'low' as compared to EFL. It was frequently pointed out to me by different teachers and managers that '*EFL doesn't deal with literacy issues and really low levels of English or Pre-Entry learners*', thus presenting 'lack' or 'lowness' as characterising the ESOL provision. Elena, one of the teachers, charted the trajectory of 'lowness' poignantly. After her interview with me, she reflected further on the wide range of issues we had discussed and exclaimed:

'You know, I just feel that when you hear ESOL now you automatically think low, ... low, low, low... low literacy, low education, low expectation, low everything. ... It didn't use to be like this but that's what I feel it has become, at least here'

She found this development from low literacy to low everything '*really sad*' but was not too sure about how best to counteract it - a perception that was generally shared by those members of staff who had been working a considerable time for the college, often in both EFL and ESOL settings. Many conversations throughout my fieldwork showed that they were very much aware of a distinct shift in the way ESOL is being perceived²⁹.

²⁹ This can be seen as having been propelled by ESOL's designation as a basic skill and the link between ESOL and literacy which came with the introduction of the Skills for Life strategy (aimed at reducing the number of adults with low levels of basic skills, literacy, and numeracy, see chapter three), this had concrete effects. Teacher Jen who has a vast experience of teaching English in different contexts all over the world as well as in the field of international development was talking to me about these changes. She remarked that '*because ESOL has been slotted in as a basic skill this has kind of shifted the discourse, the conversation around it has completely changed*'.

The more or less tacit perception of ESOL's interwovenness with lowness was at times more directly expressed as a perception of students as being less bright or unable to achieve academically. An example from my fieldnotes about a chat between two teachers in the ESOL staffroom elucidates this further. Sam had been observing a lesson given by Nina earlier that day and we were chatting about it in the staff room. Sam was really impressed by the lesson and made this comment about the students: *'But they were all bright, that was what struck me immediately how for whatever reason they were all like [snips her fingers] they were all like bright and there was no one like, who looked, you know what I mean'*. Pointing out the *'brightness'* of the students in Nina's class as an exception rather than the norm echoes Elenas's observation of ESOL having become *'low everything'*. Throughout my fieldwork it often became evident that the ESOL provision was more characterised by lack than possibility as opposed to EFL. Being pathologized in such a way and defined by lowness, lack, and deficiency carries the inherent risk of becoming fixed by it as Florence's observation highlights:

Placing people in ESOL feels a bit like you're shutting the door on them ... you know you, you get people who, erm ... I, I think students get wind of it as well, they don't want to be placed in ESOL cause some of them perceive it as ... that's for people who are like low level and aren't gonna go anywhere in life or not gonna achieve or not gonna go to university ... there is a slight perception among some students, that's the outcome which I think is unfortunate, and it wasn't like that in the past.

The expression of it *'feels a bit like you're shutting the door on them'* is quite strong and implies a lasting effect on someone's life. The danger of being defined by devaluation, lowness, lack is to get fixed in immobility, to become stuck. Stuckness, Jefferson et al. (2019) argue has a spatial and temporal dimension. Being stuck somewhere leads to un-freedom, lack of agency and social stagnation, however, being 'stuck is not just a question of being stuck in place but equally about being stuck in time. It is the sense of not making progress, of not seeing a future, which leads to a sense of stuckness that may linger' (pp. 2-3).

Florence's expression of students *'getting wind of it as well'* is interesting implying the process of becoming aware of something indirectly or finding out a secret despite not being supposed to. In chapter seven I discuss the reproduction of dominant discourses in student narratives and describe students who 'had gotten wind' of the negative perception of ESOL.

I show how they are very much aware of their positionality in society and within institutions and as part of this try to distance themselves from the imagination of the devalued ESOL setting by changing to EFL. In this context, Luke's explanation of why he generally advises against moving to ESOL from EFL is noteworthy:

If you have somebody who's actually ... looking for, erm, that occasionally happens, you get somebody, a student who wants to learn English and looks at the cost difference between EFL and ESOL and wants to move into ESOL because it's much cheaper, I find myself usually advising against it [...] I don't think the, the ... erm, calibre is maybe the wrong word but, I mean, erm the background and the profiles of students aren't the same, ... erm in the classes, in EFL classes, erm ...people are ... higher flying, I think, I don't think that again is quite the right word but it's the best word I can think of.

Trying to avoid prejudiced language and sound as neutral as possible, Luke is looking for the best way to explain why he usually advises against switching from EFL to ESOL. Although not sure whether they are the right words, he refers to a difference in 'calibre' referring to a person's quality, standard, level of ability, or distinction before reverting to the more generally drawn upon difference in 'student background or profile'. The difference in 'calibre' or capital portfolio allows people in EFL classes to be 'higher flying', e.g. they are read as inhabiting a different position in social space, having more opportunities and the ability to invest in a future-orientated version of the self (Skeggs, 2004; 2011). They are the opposite of those in ESOL who risk being perceived as low and overall, more defined by devaluation and lack; rendered to immobility and stuckness by having the door shut on them.

However, this distinguishing between 'low' and 'higher flying' is more nuanced as Luke explains. Describing students in his ESOL class who '*might have started off, let's say as a pharmacist or the ambition to become a pharmacist and because of language it is no longer a realistic option and they have to choose a different path*' he references processes of devaluation, 'deskilling', 'delanguaging' (Garrido and Codó, 2017), or 'declassing' (Block, 2006) which are common within migrant trajectories (see also Zschomler, 2016; 2019). Staying with Luke's metaphor of flying high they can be described as experiences of getting one's wings clipped. This was something ESOL staff had to grapple with regularly as part of

their teaching. Dan is very much aware of how difficult, or in his words *'annoying'* these experiences are for students and finds himself being faced with *'transmitting'* these harsh realities and playing a part in the clipping of students' wings. When I asked him what he thinks it means for his students to come to class he remarked:

Well for some students, they approach their ESOL class as aah something annoying they have to do in order to get on with the rest of their lives [laughs] whether this is going to university or working or ... I think some students have very unrealistic expectations of where they are and so one aspect of my job which is not very much fun is to try to give students an accurate understanding of where they are ... [...] and, aah, that's a difficult conversation, aah, to have and in some cases I have it every week with the same people, [...] so if students, if students are ... come to terms with why they are where they are ... yeah ... so sometimes, erm, that's, that's an important thing for students to understand, erm sometimes they don't.

The difficulty of this *'aspect of his job which is not very much fun'* was palpable in the interview. As he rendered his explanation, he gradually lowered his voice and after a pause sighed and continued slowly, with a very low voice *'sometimes it's really hard to transmit that'*. After which he looked to the floor and stayed silent for a while. Teaching those who *'carry the weight of the world'* (Bourdieu, 1999), e.g. those who are inhibited by structures that bear down on them and undermine their aspirations, includes *'transmitting'* to them an *'accurate understanding of where they are'* which weighed down on Dan as well. Sharon who had come to the UK as a child and referred to herself as BAME often talked about these inhibiting structures. Having been faced with structural racism and inequalities all her life she was very much aware of the conditions that *'make it very hard for people like our ESOL learners'*. *'They need to have aspirations and you should give them some hope, but then how much will they be able to achieve? It's tricky, not easy'*, she further remarked.

The imaginations and constructions of the *'typical'* student in each setting that have been unpacked thus far work at the intersections of class, race, and gender. This animates the de/valuation of certain bodies and gives way to further pathologizing in the case of those who are inhabiting an already devalued position. Reflecting raced, classed and gendered dimensions of dominant language learning for integration discourses and historically established hierarchies of belonging, these imaginations of bodies being *'typical'* ESOL or

EFL students are thus reproducing wider inequitable relations. Subjected to the streamlining of the educational marketplace of the college which is facilitated by flows of funding and different logics of teaching English, these differently labelled bodies are slotted into the college's differently valued 'silos' within a compartmentalised English language education setting. I now turn to highlighting in/exclusionary practises regarding the streamlining and slotting into these settled categories that flow from the imaginings of the 'typical' students laid out and the 'ranking' of bodies within a classed, raced, and gendered hierarchy of value.

Free(er) movement for some, exclusion for others

The imaginations of the 'typical' student not only construct those who inhabit positions at the poles of the metaphorical pair of 'tourists and vagabonds' but also establish raced, classed, and gendered hierarchies of value along the continuum stretched between the poles and as such within the two language teaching settings. Different positions on the continuum denote a different 'rank in the social hierarchy' (Bauman, 1996). This leads to questions of in/exclusionary practices that flow from these imaginations and constructions of the 'typical' student thus enabling as well as hindering bodies to move along the continuum. In the day to day operations of my field site, this mobility is, on the one hand, between the two language teaching settings. For example, in the reality of the EFL classroom the more 'typical' au-pair-tourists were often joined by adult migrants who had come to live, settle and work in the country³⁰. As we will see however, access to the white, European, middle class, Christian EFL setting was not granted to everyone. On the other hand, there is also mobility within the hierarchy of the settings themselves, particularly the ESOL setting, as we have already seen briefly in the case of certain bodies within ESOL being labelled as '*hopeless*' and '*flaky*' and therefore at a greater risk of exclusion as opposed to the European migrant workers in the class who are seen as simply '*getting on with things*'. I discuss each of these mobilities in turn.

Essed and Trienekens's (2008) observations regarding 'Europeanness/whiteness' are useful to grapple with the im/possibility to traverse these boundaries and move up hierarchies and

³⁰ The British Council inspection report of the EFL Language School mentions the high number of EFL students being migrants who had come to the UK on a permanent basis as a distinct characteristic of the EFL provision at the college.

aid our understanding of how imaginations and constructed differences of the 'typical' student can serve as a mechanism for in/exclusionary practices, enabling free(er) movement for some whilst fixing others:

European-ness probably means 'white' (whichever way white gets to be defined), 'plus' something else. This plus refers to a continuum between popular (everyday practice) and high culture. Thus, you can be white (racial categorization) but lacking social status, or the correct (read: Christianity-based) values, which taint the ability to claim real European-ness. By the same token, you can enjoy social status, and fully identify with Protestant values and European culture, but be too Asian or African or otherwise tainted, to qualify as 'real' national or European (p. 69).

Given Essed and Trienekens's observations, it is unsurprising that during her interview Florence, pulled out a class list of one of her EFL classes and explained:

'Look here, for example, pretty much all of these students could be in an ESOL class, they've all come to live here ... we've got a Russian ballet dancer currently looking for work, people from Spain, Italy, Greece, Poland ... most of them working in hospitality and so on... I mean they could all be in an ESOL class but I ... I think, they're better off in EFL'.

Undoubtedly, all those students map onto the white European imagination of the EFL space, however, Teacher Florence expanded her European imagination and included others into the group of those she considered *'better off in EFL'*. She explained that she had quite a few students *'you would typically more associate with ESOL'* due to their country of origin and migration trajectory but *'have the funds to pay for an EFL class'*, e.g. *'several refugees from Syria, people from Iran, a really hard-working woman from Venezuela who squeezed her English classes in between two cleaning jobs and taking care of her family'*, amongst others. Those bodies were included into those who are perceived by Florence as *'better off in EFL'*. They could claim a position in the EFL space which is characterised by 'Europeanness/whiteness' through possessing the right "'plus' something else' (Essed and Trienekens, 2008). Their type of foreignness was perceived as fitting for EFL by Teacher Florence, although they would typically be more associated with ESOL.

However, in juxtaposition to these examples of inclusion, I also encountered instances where these imaginations of the 'typical' student gave leeway to discriminatory attitudes and exclusionary practices. This meant that students were not perceived as fitting despite their ability to pay for an EFL course, as in the poignant case of Arush, a young Afghani student who joined an EFL class which was mainly attended by European adults. What was particularly interesting were staff and student conversations about him joining the class which were characterised by a more or less tacit perception of him being an unexpected or unfitting space invader, for example when the manager gave the class teacher '*a heads up*' and '*warned*' her about who he had just enrolled onto her course. The manager further explained that he had advised Arush to join an ESOL class instead, however, that was not possible as he was planning to take up a place in Higher Education to continue his law studies for which he had a conditional offer subject to him passing an FCE exam (FCE exams are part of EFL). At one point the credibility of this offer was questioned by the manager and suggestions were made that '*it was probably a bogus college anyway*' as it required FCE instead of the more commonly requested IELTS in Higher Education settings.

This had real effects in the experience of Arush. During my participant observation I witnessed how he was subjected to processes of othering in the classroom as some students were reluctant to work with him in pair and small group activities or were whispering and made some comments between themselves in their own language. This made Arush visibly uncomfortable and the teacher's efforts to integrate him only had limited effect. Arush decided to leave after two lessons, swiftly received his course fee back amidst a sense '*that this was probably for the better*' as the manager pointed out and with no efforts being made of retaining him as a customer. Clearly, Arush could not avoid being racialized, was met with suspicion as a 'vagabond' even evoking criminalising stereotypes of being '*bogus*' which are commonly used in relation to refugees/asylum seekers. Arush was perceived as an unwelcome space invader among this specific group of 'tourists' who had decided that he did not fit. Arush's presence in the class brought discriminatory attitudes to the fore and gave way to what could be described as racial microaggressions. Denoting a subtler form of racism, they often go undetected by those who are not on the receiving end. Sue et al. (2007) define racial microaggressions as:

brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities (p. 271)

In several chats I had with some of the other students in the class, they remarked that they felt that Arush had not really been fitting into the class. One of the students who had previously been in an ESOL class where she *'did not like the type of people'* and therefore deliberately changed to an EFL class remarked that an ESOL class would probably be a better fit for Arush. There were also some students in the class who felt that Arush leaving was a result of the hostility he had experienced among them. This was shared by the class teacher who further pointed out to me that *'the rest of the class felt rather remorseful and were wondering whether Arush's decision not to continue had to do with them'*. Unlike the students Teacher Florence thought *'were better off in EFL'* including Syrian refugees and Venezuelan migrant workers among others I encountered during my fieldwork, Arush was perceived as being better off in ESOL. He was *'too tainted'* (Essed and Trienekens, 2008) to claim his position in the white European EFL space. Of course, how these dynamics play out can be very different depending on the make-up of the class and attitudes present in a specific circumstance. However, it shows that, although migration between ESOL and EFL was not uncommon and a possibility for some, it could be impossible for others despite having the financial means to do so as prejudice from wider society easily and often seeps into educational settings and language classrooms.

The im/possibility to move is not only a question of being fixed in one area of provision versus being able to move freely between the ESOL and EFL settings. As the imaginations also create hierarchies of value within each setting, they can inhibit the possibility to move within them. This was a particularly pressing concern for ESOL students who were keen to move as quickly as possible through the pre-determined settings of the regimented *'sausage machine'*, e.g. by being entered for the exam and thus able to progress from one level up to the next. Having passed all three exams at each level is generally seen as a necessary prerequisite for being allowed to move to the next level; not being entered for

the exam means not being able to progress and getting stuck at the same level and having to repeat the semester again with the hope to be entered for the exam next time round.

Being faced with the rather strict regime of the *'sausage machine'*, students within ESOL were particularly aware of their racialized, classed, and gendered subject positions within wider raced, classed, and gendered hierarchies of value which they felt the college setting was prone to reproduce. This became obvious in many conversations with students and remarks made by them during my participant observation. After one ESOL lesson I was chatting with students Salah (a male Sudanese ESOL student in his early 40s), Ronak (a female Syrian ESOL student in her late 30s) and Husam (a male Syrian ESOL student in his late 20s). Husam had only recently joined the class and was also still fairly new to the UK. The class was at Level 1 which was generally perceived by staff as being very difficult for students to reach to the discontent of many students whose aspirations to be moved up from Entry level classes, particularly from Entry 3 which is the level below Level 1, were frequently squashed in lengthy discussions they had with their teachers and the manager. To this end, Husam's rapid upward movement from a much lower level class into which he was initially placed to Level 1 was seen as quite exceptional by his classmates Salah and Ronak who pointed out that they had been *'working and pushing hard'* for their place on the course. When Husam told us about his job in his local pharmacy where he was mainly hired because of his ability to speak Arabic in order to serve the high amount of Arabic speaking clients, he joked that his customers were actually always surprised when he started speaking to them in Arabic as he was regularly perceived as being European, often Polish, due to his appearance. Something he felt worked well for him in general as he was navigating his way through the system and society. Salah and Ronak remarked that this was a distinct advantage he had over them; with Salah being black Sudanese and Ronak, although also Syrian, with a more distinct Middle Eastern appearance. *'Look, I have to dye my hair'* she remarked whilst running her hands through her long hair which she had dyed dark blond *'otherwise very difficult, I have no chance'*. However, she still felt that she was perceived as *'too Middle Eastern'*. Ronak and Salah concluded that Husam's possibility of passing as European *'definitely makes his life easier, also in the college'* suggesting that it might have had something to do with his rapid ascension to Level 1. A few weeks later, I was chatting with Salah in the courtyard when Meserat a female Eritrean student walked past.

Salah and Meserat had been in the same class during my pilot study; however, Salah had made it to Level 1 in the meantime whereas Meserat had not. She was joking that he might have bribed the manager as he had been offered a place on the Level 1 course without completing all exams at Entry 3 whereas Meserat had not been that lucky. She was still in Entry 3. She laughingly remarked that the manager was probably impressed by his suit; Salah usually came to class in suit and tie as he was going to his office-based workplace in property management afterwards. She then struck a more sombre tone and looking down her body said: *'Look, what can I expect, me, I'm just a black woman from Africa working as a cleaner and everyone can see'*. At the end of the semester, Husam was entered for the exam in the Level 1 class whereas Salah and Ronak were not as they were not seen as 'being there yet'. However, when the results were released Husam had not passed the exam and had to be entered for a resit.

These examples show how these four students were aware of racialized hierarchies of value and felt that their experiences outside the college walls were reproduced within them. There was a distinct perception that their differing possibilities to move in space were based on their ability to attach 'Europeanness/whiteness' to themselves meshed with their social status. Husam's ability to pass as European and successfully perform 'Europeanness/whiteness' was firmly seen as giving him an advantage. By dying her hair, Ronak was trying to emulate this, however with limited effect; in the colour-coded visual economy her body could not fully perform 'Europeanness/whiteness' and was still marked as too Middle Eastern. Although Salah could not fully perform this either, his social status and suit and tie were seen as giving him an advantage over Meserat. Meserat's assessment of her own possibilities as a black Eritrean woman is rather bleak both within and outside the college. She was slotted into the low end of London's migrant division of labour with little possibility to move up as discussed in chapter five. An experience she felt was reproduced at the college.

This section has discussed the in/exclusionary mechanisms at work in the college setting. Students' experiences are infused by the raced, classed, and gendered hierarchies of value resulting from the imaginations of the 'typical' student which as we have seen enable but also hinder bodies to move. Yet, in the day to day operations of the college, the classed, raced and gendered dimensions of the settings are usually not out on the open. They rather

lurk behind the two long established labels of EFL and ESOL and the day to day operations of the *'sausage machine'*. Terminology of 'difference in learner needs' and 'it's got to do with funding' are generally drawn upon as are seemingly neutral assessments of students' linguistic abilities for justifying streamlining decisions, student placement, and exam entries.

'EFL-tourist-customers' and 'ESOL-vagabond-captives'

Lastly in this section, I briefly discuss the relationship between the imaginings of the 'EFL tourist-customers' and 'ESOL vagabond-captives'. This ties together the themes running through this chapter regarding the differently imagined students in each setting and the way they are differently positioned in the educational space of the college. As we have seen earlier, regarding his metaphors of 'tourists and vagabonds', Bauman (1996) emphasized 'freedom of choice' as the main stratifying factor resulting in different mobilities. This difference in 'freedom of choice' is echoed in the following excerpt of Luke's interview in which he describes EFL students as *'customers'* and ESOL students as *'captives'*:

Luke: In my EFL classrooms I've got fee-paying customers who vote with their feet, if they don't like something they go, erm... That's it. [laughs]

Silke: [laughs] They leave the college, or they go and complain?

Luke: Both, both! Whichever gets them what they want! ... ESOL doesn't work like this. They are more kind of captives in an institution.

Silke: But aren't many fee-paying as well, erm, I mean at least partly? Many don't seem to be on a fully funded course and sometimes it's quite difficult for some to pay.

Luke: Yeah, I guess so. I don't know all the details about who's paying and who's not and so on, erm ... but the institution treats them differently [...]

Luke perceives the difference in students' 'freedom of choice' as a given for EFL students but not for those who are in ESOL. This remark was the first response to my question on how he viewed the difference between ESOL and EFL.

EFL *'customers'* or *'clients'* was another word that was often used by members of staff to describe how EFL students can choose between different options that are available, e.g.

prospective students have the opportunity to create their own timetable according to their needs and wishes choosing from the various options that are available, such as special pronunciation classes, exam preparation classes, etc. If they are unhappy, they can go and complain.

This is very different for ESOL students. Luke's emphatic delivery underlined his strong feelings about how in his view ESOL students were '*treated differently*', even going as far as to referring to them as being '*captives in an institution*'. ESOL captives do not have the privilege to choose between options. The parameters are much more set for them as they are put through the pre-determined settings of the limited '*sausage machine*' and a strictly regimented ESOL provision that is as we have seen in chapter three highly underfunded, fragmented, and limited. There are no additional pronunciation classes on offer and there is no choice given regarding the exam or whether to take it or not. As 'captives' the students have little say in the process. As a matter of fact, Luke gave the way exams are administered in ESOL as an elucidating example when I asked him what he meant by students being captives. As I already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter when discussing the dynamics of '*the big sausage machine*' the issue of exams is a result of the way funding is allocated. In particular, not being entered for exams was constantly contested by students. Those who were not being allowed to take the exam were often frustrated and angered by these very concrete experiences of their lack of 'freedom of choice' and symbolic violence they were subjected to as 'ESOL-vagabond-captives'. Neither were the teachers happy about such '*pernicious practices*' (interview, Luke) they were asked to carry out, but had no choice '*you either work within the sector or you move out of it*' (*ibid.*). Unsurprisingly all brought up the allocation and structure of funding as well as the way the issue of exams is handled when I asked them during interviews and conversations whether there was anything they would like to see changed in their work.

Furthermore, '*being captives*' also evokes the notion of being punished. This resonates with what other teachers referred to as the '*unhelpful punitive nature of ESOL because of its association with the Home Office and immigration*' (interview, Jen). As we have seen when elucidating the relationship between immigration, integration, and language, English language education for migrants has become highly politicised. With ESOL having developed and commonly being expected to function as the main mechanism to foster integration

within the current approach to managing diversity, its students or *'captives'* are being "managed" and subjected to dominant integration discourses and regimes that circulate within a 'gendered, racialised, and class-based immigration system' (Griffiths, 2017, p. 156). In addition, processes of 'everyday bordering' (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019) which are part of the Home Office's 'hostile environment' policy as discussed in chapter five have led to increased suspicion and scrutinizing practices, thus, leaving their imprint on the institutional life and the experiences of both students and teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped my field site's landscape of English language education for adult migrants which is characterised by the side by side existence of the two language learning settings, EFL and ESOL. Reading against the grain of these labels and interrogating their meanings and differently valued positions within the wider college space as well as elucidating the way they construct their differently valued student body and hierarchies of student value has highlighted raced, classed, and gendered dimensions inherent to these labels. The discussion in this chapter has shown how the institutional landscape reinforces social hierarchies and is prone to reproduce rather than counter-act wider inequitable relations leading to the pathologizing of certain bodies. These inequitable relations, on the one hand, are inherent to the more immediate socio-spatial context which is often drawn upon by staff to explain or justify institutional practices and processes that are lurking behind the EFL/ESOL distinction. On the other hand, these inequitable relations also ingrained in the 'gendered, racialised, and class-based immigration system' (Griffiths, 2017, p. 156) including the dominant and often pathologizing integration discourses and regimes that flow from it and the hierarchies of belonging established by it. The unequal relations are further exacerbated by the institutional dynamics resulting from an audit culture and heightened pressure of accountability that are entrenched within its day to day operations – what Teacher Luke at the beginning of the chapter referred to as the limited and not very capable *'big sausage machine'*, which as he asserts *'could certainly do a lot more'*. Building on the tracing of the circulation of value laid out in this chapter, chapter eight examines possibilities of what 'doing a lot more' can entail by focusing on the dimension and circulation of social values to bring bottom-up perspectives to the fore, arguing for and

allowing a different, more sociable being in the world whilst disrupting dominant top-down discourses and regimes.

In the next chapter I shift the focus from the institutional setting to the narratives of my participants and tease out ways in which my participants position themselves and others within prominent language learning for integration discourses that draw on certain cultural narratives and moral judgements. They do so in order to legitimise their own deservedness in the 'community of value' which is always precarious and conditional.

Chapter 7: Struggles for legitimacy, deservedness, and the right to belong

Introduction

Having in the previous chapter looked at the institutional landscape of English language education for adult migrants, I now turn to my student participants' voices and their narratives of setting up their lives in the UK, coming to college to learn English, as well as their experience of navigating their "integration" into their new surroundings more generally. More precisely, I draw attention to the ways in which my participants dialogue with and often reproduce prominent immigration/integration discourses that problematise migration and the diversity resulting from it and emphasize migrants' agency and responsibility to learn English in order to "integrate" and to "fit in". Anderson's (2013) distinctions between 'good', 'failed', 'non' and 'tolerated' citizens and the performative aspect of the 'community of value' help to make sense of their narratives, particularly when they showed a certain complicity with a hostile 'us versus them' and 'deserving' and 'undeserving' rhetoric. The analysis in this chapter aids our understanding of how my participants think about their own space of possibilities (Bourdieu, 1983) in their own more or less precarious position within their new surroundings whilst allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how they are impacted by the moral-political dimension of integration.

The first part of this chapter discusses the ways in which participants marked their difference, drew symbolic divisions through processes of dis/identification, and framed and blamed problematic Others and teases out the various dimensions to these processes that became evident in their accounts. I further show how these symbolic divisions can have real effects and lead to an erosion of empathy and solidarity. However, this marking of difference and drawing of symbolic divisions is by no means straightforward as it often happens in contradictory ways. Therefore, in the second part of the chapter, I discuss what it means for my participants to draw such symbolic divisions. I argue that these processes need to be seen as part of their own complex and at times contradictory struggle for recognition and legitimacy. I draw on my fieldnotes, observations, informal conversations as well as interviews and focus group discussions with students to explore the various dimensions and to render a 'thick' and contextualised description of these processes.

However, I would like to acknowledge that the analysis of the accounts presented in this chapter is certainly limited and other researchers might reach differing interpretations. As I discussed in chapter four, ethnography is always limited, subjective, partisan, and fraught (Back, 2007). The accounts of my participants presented here might to some extent be performative of their cultural backgrounds and cultural scripts to which I had no direct access *per se*, only through our common experience in the classroom, the wider institutional setting and on 'go alongs'. Nevertheless, from my insights and knowledge gained through these common experiences throughout my extensive ethnographic fieldwork, it appeared that these narrated accounts show how my participants have internalised the marking of difference and drawing of symbolic divisions and the patterns and trends these accounts speak to became a recurring theme. To this end, I have chosen six poignant examples to illustrate the different dimensions, using one or two accounts for each. The themes I discuss by means of these representative examples were pervasive across my data and came up again and again in my participants' narratives, though of course with different nuances in each case.

(Not) learning English and processes of dis/identification

Aligning with the 'good integrated subject of value' and framing problematic Others

My participants frequently went to great lengths to narrate themselves closer to the 'good subject of value'. In many cases, this became the 'good integrated subject of value' as an integral part of their alignment with the 'good subject of value' was the narration of a successful integration story. Simultaneously, my participants dis-identified from those who they considered 'bad' and framed as problematic. In this way, my participants could positively construct themselves and claim legitimacy as opposed to others who they considered as 'bad' at integrating. The learning of English appeared as a key element in these accounts thus echoing tenets of prominent integration discourses that portray the learning of English as the key to integration whilst obscuring wider inequalities and structural constraints as highlighted in previous chapters.

In his interview, Pouya, a male Iranian ESOL student in his mid-20s, revealed the importance for him to align himself with the 'good subject of value' and explained that

investing in learning English was an integral part of being considered as such. When he first came to London from Iran to seek asylum, he was taken aback by the multicultural and mixed fabric of the city and found himself challenged to find his own place and position within it. Pouya described an experience which made him very aware of the criminalisation and demonisation of certain people/groups and the effects of being associated with *'the wrong kind of people'*. Once, when he was trying to find his way around Monument station, a rather confusing underground station which can seem like a maze to newcomers, he got lost and was frantically trying to find the right way. This raised suspicions with the security personnel who saw him on CCTV identified him as a potential criminal and took him into police custody. After this experience, he now tries to avoid being associated with *'the wrong kind of people'* at any cost. Pouya described to me the strategy he adopted to do so whilst acknowledging its potential limitations due to the prevalence of racist attitudes:

I always watch people, what they do, how they behave, and their clothes ... I take the good thing and I do it same. Then English people will accept ... but not all, there are many places, maybe you buy a house there but they say why you come here, many racist. Then you can't go this area.

Pouya further disassociated himself from the immigrant community of the area where he lived. During the time of my fieldwork, he was living in a part of east London with a high population of Eastern Europeans which as he told me was *'shocking'* for him at the beginning. He told me that he saw a girl one day who he thought *'looks nice'* and thus wanted to start a conversation with her. However, she did not understand and when he asked her *'you don't speak English?'*, the reply was no. He then went on to inquire if she had just arrived in the country and was thoroughly astonished when he found out that she had been living in London for four years already without learning English and mainly speaking her language. Shaking his head in disbelief he exclaimed, *'I think is bad, very bad. Why you not learn English? I'm here only nine months but learn English.'*

Here Pouya stresses the fact that he is learning English despite the fact of only having been in the country for nine months. By juxtaposing this with the girl's reality of not having acquired English which he terms *'bad'*, he links being a *'good'* person to investing

into learning English. As our conversation continues, he explains that he is planning to follow this symbolic aligning with 'good' people and distancing himself from 'bad' people by moving away:

Pouya: I don't want live there anymore. I want live other area with good people.

Silke: Ah, okay. So, are you trying to move?

Pouya: Yes, I want. I want live with good people. There is not good people.

Silke: Oh, really. You don't think the people who live in your area are good people?

Pouya: No, they are no good. They not speak English, I think they no good.

Silke: So you think learning English is really important to be a good person?

Pouya: Yes, of course. I also know for example my country people come here long time before. They live here ten years, twenty years but not speak English. I know some they live in very nice big house and have maybe two cars and very rich but not speak English. I think very bad. I think more important learn English. I always want learn English ... [...]

Silke: So, do you have a lot of connections to the Iranian community?

Pouya: No, not lot because not good. They only stay each other. They not, they not, I don't know how say it, they not [he is using his phone to translate the word he is looking for which comes up as 'integration']

Silke: Ah, okay, you think they didn't integrate.

Pouya: No, not, not in.. [looks at his phone to check the word he just looked up] not integration, not speak English. I think is no good. They make many problems.

Pouya's observations regarding the Eastern European community around him as well as his own longer settled Iranian community reflect the much-debated problem in dominant integration discourses of a pronounced ethnic and residential segregation. He suggests that both groups do not make enough effort to integrate which he sees as 'bad'. The focus is put on migrant individuals and communities creating segregation, as Pouya concluded it was 'them' who 'make many problems' rather than on structural constraints, discrimination, and

racist attitudes within society which he had briefly alluded to earlier. He clearly does not want to be like *'them'* but seeks to be with *'good people'*. Emphasizing the importance of learning English, making a greater effort to integrate and even trying to move to a different area, allows him to align himself with good people or *'good subjects of value'*. This strong determination of his is further highlighted through the following quote, in which he juxtaposes his previous experience in Iran with his experience in London:

My father always said me 'learn English'. When I was in Iran I think I can speak good English, better than others. I feel I know more and so proud. [sits up and pretends to look down on people]. Now I know my English is not so good, we just learn a bit in school but I try learn other way and always make me feel better than others. When I come this country I feel I know nothing [...] like nobody. So now I want learn English very good so I can feel better than other again.

Here Pouya talks about mobilising his own determination, aspiration and effort to learn English in order to *'feel better than others again'*, thus making himself a more legitimate member of the *'community of value'* and positioning himself closer to the *'good'* member/citizen or *'good subject of value'*. This was a recurring theme throughout my fieldwork with many of my interlocutors going to great length to construct themselves as better subjects than those they found themselves surrounded by, be it from different backgrounds or within their own co-ethnic communities. In the latter case, it was often important for my participants to still maintain some relationships to their own co-ethnic communities (which could function as social capital at some point). This often proved to be a challenging balancing act.

Further evidence on aligning with the 'good integrated subject of value' and framing problematic Others: classed and racialised dimensions

Ana's narrative is similarly poignant regarding the way she aligns herself as a *'good subject of value'* and presents her migration trajectory as a successful integration story. Her account further demonstrates the racialised, classed, and gendered dimensions of my participants' complex accounts of processes of dis/identification. Throughout my fieldwork, Ana, a

Russian ESOL student in her 40s who also holds a Swedish passport, often gave me insight into her rich experience of migration and language. She told me about her rather unforeseen migratory trajectory as a single mum from her native Russia to Latvia, from there to Sweden after she had fallen in love with a man from Poland who had a business there and now, single again, her coming to London to be with her daughter. Her daughter had come to study law at the LSE³¹ in London and after graduating as one of the top students in her class, had secured a position as an associate in one of the leading law firms in the city – something Ana is immensely proud of and made reference to frequently throughout all our interactions. She usually referred to herself as *'a simple person with a simple background'*, however, she had undoubtedly been upwardly mobile throughout her own migratory trajectory which was continued by her daughter's access to higher echelons. During my fieldwork, Ana was spending most of her time learning more English and was taking a floristry course, a long-held dream of hers.

During my interview with her, we came to talk about 'integration'. After pausing for a little while, Ana became very confident and invigorated. Sitting upright in her chair she slightly leaned forward and looking at me exclaimed enthusiastically *'integration - I think I'm very good with it, I think.'* She laughed a bit before she continued with *'I tell you why'*. She then explained to me that she takes on new traditions, wherever she goes. This *'picking up something good wherever I go'* as she referred to it resulted in her just having celebrated Christmas *'three times'* (Swedish on 24 December, English on 25 December, and Russian on 7 January). She did so together with her daughter and her daughter's circle of friends from her time at the LSE and from among her work colleagues at a top international law firm in the City who were very interested in being introduced to Swedish Christmas traditions. Ana further described this to me as an example of the *'mixed world'* we live in as she reiterated *'my daughter's friends do not only see me as Russian and ask me cook Russian soup but more international ... you know the world is so mixed now'*. Within the context of celebrating three Christmases together with those who are very much part of the international cosmopolitan elite populating London's higher echelons, Ana constructs herself as 'the good subject of value'. This is very much in line with the 'metropolitan habitus' that Butler and

³¹ The LSE (London School of Economics and Political Science) is a public research university located in Central London and among the country's top universities.

Robson (2003) identify as typical of London's middle classes, who value the social mixing available in the city. Ana is able to display a metropolitan or cosmopolitan habitus and disposition drawing on 'the international' as valued symbolic capital (Basaran and Olsson, 2017) among others who are like-minded. For Ana this also means that she is '*good at integrating*'. However, after she declared that '*the world is so mixed now*', she immediately pointed out to me that not all migrants are like her and tells me that '*many people coming somewhere and just think what can I take, but what you can give?*'. She did so without noting a broader class, race and ethnic dimension which might render her 'ideal' of integrating and participating in the middle-class cosmopolitan mixing impossible to achieve for those who are positioned differently and do not have the same resources and capitals available as she has.

Furthermore, integral to this cosmopolitan habitus is Ana's aspiration to invest in learning the language wherever she goes. Emphasizing this disposition aligns her more closely with the 'subject of value' and away from those who '*just think what can I take*' as she immediately continued during the interview:

For example, when I was living in Sweden, I worked in Denmark for 12 years and I learnt the Danish language ... I lived in many countries but I always learn language - in Latvia, in Sweden and then I start work in Denmark, I travel there every day and I learn language [...] now I'm in England because my daughter is here but I learn English [...] maybe I go back Sweden, I don't know but I learn English now [...] I'm always after language, I'm not like, like, hmmm, in Sweden so many people come now but don't learn, bad, bad, very bad, ...

Overall, Ana presents her own 'success' story very much through emphasizing her disposition of always investing in the language. In claiming legitimacy for herself and distinguishing herself from others she does not refer to wider structural issues, obstacles or difficulties migrants might encounter but rather emphasizes individual power and responsibility. All these wider power differentials are not seen to have any bearing on immigrants' lived experience as long as they invest in learning the language. Adopting this position allows Ana to again draw distance between those who '*don't learn*', e.g.

don't integrate, and are '*bad, bad, very bad*' and herself who is '*always after language*', e.g. the good, cosmopolitan, and integrated subject.

Both Ana and Pouya's accounts show how at the same time as my participants emphasized their own effort to integrate and their investment in learning English to position themselves in close proximity to the 'good' citizen/migrant, they framed problematic Others who they identified as 'bad' citizens/migrants and thus tried to dis-identify from. This framing of problematic Others can occur both towards Others from a different ethnic/racial/religious group as well as within the same ethnic/racial/religious group (as Pouya's example above indicates). However, throughout my fieldwork it was particularly prominent towards the 'Muslim Other', or to be more precise the 'failed Muslim woman' whose stigma was explored in chapter three and who as we have seen in chapter six is at greater risk of being pathologized within the institutional setting.

This framing of a problematic Muslim community/'failed Muslim woman' was prevalent in Ana's account who as we have seen above aligned herself with good, cosmopolitan, and integrated subjects as opposed to those who '*don't learn*', e.g. don't integrate, and are '*bad, bad, very bad*'. As my conversation with Ana continued, she made it more explicit who she thought belonged to the category of 'bad' migrants. I asked her how she felt about London in terms of integration and whether she thought people were integrated to which she answered with a straight '*no*'. She paused for a while before she explained her assertion further albeit in a slightly more hesitant manner by pointing out to me that '*you know here is ... Muslim society [...] I don't know these areas where people living and this kind of...*'. She gestures to indicate the wearing of a burka and hijab and goes on, '*maybe it is culture, but I don't know, I mean it's nowadays [...] they have own society*'. I then asked her whether she felt that everybody was doing their own thing:

Ana: Hmm, yes, example in Sweden is same, I saw they don't want integrate. They live in own society. They don't integrate [...] [she pauses for a while before she strikes a slightly more conciliatory tone] maybe it is because it is so expensive city and people live together and keep own community ... but for example, I live in east London there is part of street like market [...]

Silke: Do you sometimes go there?

Ana: I actually go there when I go to 'idea store' [the local borough's library and learning information service], very good, idea store, it is a very good place for study, education. I was looking there for English classes, but the time was not good, now I go there for computer course and learn some design I need to know for my floristry course. Everybody there is interested to study. It's a very good place. And every time I go there, I'm passing this market. First time I saw it I thought oh it is very good and interesting, I can buy vegetable and so but then I feel I don't belong there [...]

Silke: So, you feel you don't belong there?

Ana: I am going there because I go to this idea store not only for my course also to use the library or do different things. But that is another London, I don't know, that is not London [she is shaking her head]

Silke: Oh, really? What do you mean, it's not London?

Ana: No, not London, you know, like the big London with big history and so famous in world with important building and ... [she pauses for a while before she continues] the market and idea store is very close, next each other, the people in the market should be in idea store and learn, because if you study, work and develop yourself you will be fine.

Silke: So, there should be no market?

Ana: No, the market can stay but need to change, be different and the people should be in idea store.

Silke: Oh really, they should go to the idea store – what for?

Ana: To learn English.

Silke: To learn English? So, they don't speak English?

Ana: No, they do, but they need learn more. More English and other things.

Within this juxtaposition of the 'Muslim' market portrayed as a racialised site of cultural lack with the idea store portrayed as a reformatory space 'where everybody is interested to study' are several noteworthy points. Ana continues to present herself as a responsible and

active citizen who is always eager to learn more and invest in herself continuing to narrate her 'success' story and self-validation from before. She also explains more who in her opinion are the 'bad' migrants who she earlier referred to as unwilling to learn English, both in Sweden and London, those who '*don't want to integrate*' and build their own society; whose behaviour she problematises and continues to draw distance from. This allows her to construct herself as a good citizen frequenting the 'idea store' to continually improve and invest in herself in contrast to those on the market who fail to do so and therefore are much closer to the figure of the non-citizen or failed citizen. As Anderson (2013) remarks, '[i]n contrast to the [modern] Good Citizen, neither the non-citizen nor the Failed Citizen is properly modern. The Failed Citizen is not the flexible neoliberal subject, with a portfolio career, making the most of every opportunity, improving skills, and selling his labour to the highest bidder' (p. 7). Although Ana briefly mentions that London is an expensive city which alludes to broader dimensions of inequality and social stratification, she quickly moves on and chooses to mobilize pathology narratives of 'segregated communities' populated by failed citizens, e.g., the 'Muslim Other'.

At the end of the excerpt above, Ana suggests a 'solution' to the perceived 'problem' of the market which to her is marked as lacking value and not being properly modern: joining the idea store '*to learn English and other things*'. Learning English is thus portrayed as a 'liberating force' enabling cultural transformation, social mobility and getting closer to the figure of the 'good citizen', '*because if you study, work and develop yourself you will be fine*'. Such assertion echoes Sara Ahmed's (2010) observations of a 'civilizing happiness mission' or re-description of empire's civilizing mission as a 'happiness mission', i.e. the fusing of 'happiness' with cultural transformation, as discussed in earlier chapters. Ana identifies those who frequent the market as being in need of such cultural transformation particularly through the learning of English and suggests a change in their specific choices, lifestyles, and realities, i.e. away from the market and into the idea store to '*learn English and other things*'. Ana's suggested 'solution' can be seen as being aimed at making those who she positions as cultural Others fit into dominant value systems by wanting to make the market and its Muslim Others less culturally different and more white/European and middle-class, i.e. the market should change and the people should go to the idea store to learn English and other things. This 'transformation' or 'modernisation' assures that they '*will be fine*', i.e.

they can move towards a bright and modern future. Learning English is key to this endeavour of 'transformation/modernisation'. Given the importance that Ana attributes to the learning of English in this context, there is also an echoing, as I would argue, of what Phillipson (2008) refers to when describing the spread of English as a 'modern-day version of the 'civilising mission'' (p. 39). However, this mission is not being carried out elsewhere in the sense of a '*there*' concept but in the UK, in London's East End, in the sense of a '*here*' concept. Ana's observation about the market, her othering of the people she encounters there and her suggested 'solution' to what she perceives as problematic are particularly interesting when considering how London played an important role in the national imaginary as the capital of Empire. In particular the East End of London has been described as the conduit to Empire, a threshold or liminal space (McClintock, 1995). The deep interwovenness of what happened *there* (abroad) and *here* (at home) have been extensively discussed. For example, in her analysis of Victorian Britain, the feminist cultural analyst McClintock draws on literature, travel writings, diaries, journalism, research, and popular images to highlight the mutual constitution of race, class, and gender as categories in conjunction with one another within imperial culture through encounters at home and abroad. She explains how, in a similar vein to the 'wild colonies of Africa' abroad which imperialists sought to civilise and domesticate, the 'urban slums' of the East End at home came to symbolise epistemological problems as 'jungles without language or history and categorised by lack' (*ibid.*, p. 121) and were equally seen as being in need of being civilised. Her analysis helps to understand how civilising missions in London's East End that were aimed at salvaging London's poor and bringing structure to these unruly places at home were connected to imperial interventions abroad. Furthermore, Kultz (2013) discusses the interconnectedness of civilising missions abroad and in the 'Empire Within', i.e. in London's East End, showing how Victorian social reformers saw themselves as bearers of modernity to what they framed as regressive urban spaces in a similar vein as imperialists did abroad with regard to indigenous populations. In this way social categories and various internal Others were constructed at home that bore an imperial imprint. As such, London's East End caused considerable middle-class anxiety and sparked various initiatives to bring education and civilisation to these 'urban slums' and internal Others (see also Gidley, 2000). These initiatives were supported by these Victorian social reformers' argument that the adoption

of appropriate culture would remedy poverty and other 'failings' of these internal Others and 'correct' their lifestyles.

Furthermore, Ana also moves away from her earlier positive account of a 'mixed' metropolitan world as outlined previously. Throughout my interactions with her she frequently pointed out that she enjoyed the dynamic nature of London's metropolitan diversity and the affordances this provides in terms of appreciating different experiences, interactions, cultures, food, customs, and languages. However, this clearly had its limits and, as the excerpt above shows, on the site of the 'Muslim market', London's multicultural nature becomes 'a source of anxiety and worry' (Back and Sinha, 2016). The people she encounters on the market are no 'model immigrants' to her, they are not part of the 'multiculturally sophisticated middle classes' (Rogaly and Taylor, 2011) like herself but an embodiment of 'the unacceptable excesses of multiculturalism' (Back and Sinha, 2016). To give weight to her argument, Ana evokes London's past as imperial centre talking about '*the big London with big history and so famous in world with important buildings*'. In doing so, she draws on wider well-known and well-rehearsed discourses of what Gilroy (2004) has described as 'postcolonial melancholia' and which Yuval-Davis et al. (2019) describe as 'a post-industrial sense of despair in sections of the population and a growing autochthonic political project of belonging' (p. 98). Part of Gilroy's (2004) 'complex ailment' of 'postcolonial melancholia' are discourses of 'culture loss' and longings for what is imagined as a homogenous and more glorious past (which are racialised imaginations³²). Such longing for a lost past is characterized by its inability to value the ordinary, unruly multiculturalism that has evolved organically and unnoticed in urban centers and that goes beyond the cosmopolitan social mixing (Back and Sinha, 2016; Back et al., 2018).

Such remarks as Ana's were not uncommon by my participants, particularly those who mobilised their whiteness/ Europeanness as capital against racialised Others. These racialised Others were often constructed as being in need of investing more into learning English which was seen as a remedy for their perceived pathology of being culturally

³²Many academics and political commentators see the EU referendum and Brexit as the most significant political outcome of this 'complex ailment' of 'postcolonial melancholia'. To this end political and media discourses of 'culture loss' have been featuring heavily within EU referendum and Brexit debates focusing on immigration and characterised by historic racisms and xenophobia, and their articulation with nationalist imaginations (Back et al., 2018; Hall, 2017; Jones et al., 2017).

different and thus causing an unruly excessive multiculturalism that goes beyond the valued middle class cosmopolitan mixing. By framing these racialised Others as problematic, participants such as Ana were able to construct some form of 'superiority' over those who were seen as less 'white/European', 'metropolitan', and who are seen as needing to learn English to remedy their position as 'non/failed' citizens.

Narratives of (im)morality – blaming the bad feckless migrant

Another way of marking difference was for my participants to recourse to narratives of im/morality and their accounts were often heavily infused with moral assessments whilst emphasising certain neoliberal ideas of personhood, such as individual power and responsibility. To this end, instances of blame and 'moral boundary drawing' - 'the way in which social groups often distinguish themselves from others in terms of moral differences, claiming for themselves certain virtues which others are held to lack' (Sayer, 2005, p. 6) - were common in my participants' accounts. In this way a 'moral abstract order' (*ibid.*) was constructed through their narratives rendering some as more 'deserving' than others and thereby reproducing and further feeding into an unhealthy 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric. Those stigmatised as 'undeserving' were variously believed to be unwilling to learn English, to be work-shy, wanting to claim benefits, and so forth. The following examples illustrate this further:

In one of the focus group discussions, the participants were discussing instances of discrimination and racism which they had experienced and which had an intimidating effect on them and made them question whether they would ever be accepted as equal in this society even if they spoke '*the perfect English*' as several participants referred to it. One of the group members, Izad, had been rather quiet but suddenly declared emphatically:

No, no, don't look for reasons in these things like racism and discrimination, they are just lazy and use it as excuse, they are lazy, they don't want to learn, they are lazy and then they say is because of racism or such things. No, is not. They are lazy.

Here Izad, a Lebanese ESOL student in his 30s who had studied philosophy and worked at a university in his country of origin for some time before coming to the UK about two years

ago, rejects structural inequalities and racism in the fabric of the society. He instead chooses to decry those who point to issues of racism and discrimination as *'lazy'*, particularly in terms of learning English. In doing so, he takes the focus off wider structural issues and highlights individual responsibility for one's own circumstances instead.

Similarly, Leila who throughout my fieldwork was very proud to be *'always active, active, active and hard-working'* or *'me, I'm busy, busy and hard-working, always busy and hard-working'* echoed this imagined construction of the *'lazy immigrant'* during her interview. Leila is an Iranian ESOL student in her 40s who as a trained lawyer in her country of origin had experienced substantive downward mobility upon coming to the UK. Instead of being able to work in the legal profession, she embarked upon vocational training in Hair and Beauty. Until shortly before my interview with her, she had been working in a beauty salon in Acton in one of London's more deprived areas with a substantive Somali and Sudanese community which Leila told me had made up the majority of her previous clients. Leila often referred to them as *'Arab women'*. Shortly before my interview with her, she had secured work in another salon in Chiswick, in a predominantly white middle class area that according to her was *'much better because many English, many English and European people live there ... me I like English and European people'*. On other occasions she had pointed out that she chose the area where she lived (a predominantly white and affluent area) and the house where she rented a flat in because she *'felt closer'* to the people there, e.g. *'I like Holland Park because more English and European people there, me I'm from Iran I feel close with them'*. Having *'moved up'* from working in a deprived area to a more middle class area was thus of importance to her albeit as a hair and beauty professional and not a lawyer. It was further important for her to draw moral boundaries between herself who as an immigrant was *'always active, active, active and hard-working'* and those who did not live up to this ideal. Similarly, to Izad above, she constructed some of her former clients as *'lazy'* and a drain on the system:

I had one client she told me ten years she lived here but she don't speak English, not good [...] Here you need speak English, not all the time interpreter, interpreter for you. Interpreter cost money, is not good for economy, is not good for government, not good. Me I don't like interpreter... I just use interpreter one time, just one time I go to

psychologist, that time I feel very stress because she is English and for me is very difficult to understand, but I only use interpreter one time.

Here Leila focuses on the notion of im/morality around the use of interpreters because of a lack of language skills. Highlighting that she *'doesn't like interpreters'* and only *'used an interpreter one time'*, Leila then uses moral judgments to discuss those who she thinks use them all the time characterising them as complacent. A while later she reiterated her point by reproducing a combination of the negative connotations attached to the figure of the inactive and economically unproductive (female Muslim) welfare claimant failing to learn English. As she connects welfare, individual choice (to not learn English) and behaviour she suggests the government take more punitive measures:

Of course, government have responsibility for help people who immigrate to this country but the law in my opinion the law is no good. I think the government for example when immigrate to this country force people learn language and then give benefit. Somebody when immigrant to this country government get the house, get the money per week, get the everything. [...] No good. But if the government force people when you immigrate to this country you must seven months, eight months ... this is home, this is money, this is college for learn, you must learn language, you must learn language, if you don't learn language without money, all the benefit take from you, except some people mental they don't know, old people, they don't know, but young people, young woman, why you stay home, no learning. But some people, why stay home? They not go anywhere, they know nothing, not do anything, not speak with neighbour... Not good ... But why? Because the government pay the money for all children, just children, children, pregnant, come children, pregnant, come children because the government support, not good, not good. They didn't go to learn language and stay at home, this is not good, this situation not good. If you force to learn language is good. Work, working is very important. Some people is hard-working, look like me. Some people stay at home and just benefit get from government.

These are examples of my participants pointing at the perceived self-afflicted idleness of various immigrant Others, their economic unproductivity or lazy lifestyle choice reproducing

certain discourses around demonising welfare ‘dependency’ and well-known stereotypes of the benefit scrounger which were mixed together with discourses around migrant’s “unwillingness” to learn English. This was then contrasted with their own virtues, activeness, good morals, and most of all seriousness to learn English and still putting the effort in despite a busy lifestyle.

Thus, commonly invoked binaries of ‘work’ and ‘workless’, ‘striver’ and ‘skiver’, ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ were echoed and combined with the language learning for integration rhetoric bringing out its moralistic dimension. Although my participants did not specifically use this binary terminology, their comments and assertions reproduced the understanding that there are two types of citizens (*Some people is hard-working, look like me. Some people stay at home and just benefit get from government.*). These two types of citizens as Jensen (2014) notes, ‘are held in static, essentialist terms; those who work hard and those who don’t, with different morals, objectives and ideas’ (para 2.5.). As Anderson (2013) points out, ‘good citizenship’ is seen to be embodied within certain behaviours, while other behaviours are seen as marking one as unfit for being a responsible citizen wanting to learn English and/or work and be able to contribute. These stereotypes not only have a long history but are often drawn on in times of crises to draw divisions between citizens who help the nation and those who do not, regardless of structural conditions (Dabrowski, 2017)³³. By doing so consensus for the introduction of punitive economic and social policies is generated – something Leila was also advocating for. It can be argued that my participants’ narratives reinforced these divisions, thus aiding their continuous reproduction.

Symbolic divisions taking real effect: Switching from ESOL to EFL

These symbolic divisions had a real effect when students chose to change their classes from an ESOL class to an EFL class because they started to think of those in their ESOL class as ‘benefit scroungers’. This has to be understood within the wider institutional practices related

³³ In her work on austerity, Dabrowski (2017) refers to Weber’s (1905) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in which he discusses how the development of capitalism in Northern Europe had been influenced by the Protestant values of prudence and frugality, where idleness was regarded as a sin. In this context, Skeggs (2014b) points out that during this period, ‘idle’ persons were held up by the state and gentry as the constitutive limit to propriety.

to student enrolment. As outlined in earlier chapters, ESOL provision can be accessed for free by certain groups of people, e.g. those who are in receipt of certain benefits. Other students who are eligible for ESOL classes are co-funded which means the college passes the remainder of the costs on to the respective students. Determining who has to pay and if so, how much is done as part of the general enrolment process by the cashier's office. Before the start of each academic year, the college has enrolment days where prospective students are individually assessed and enrolled. This means that when students start their actual course in semester one (September) they do not know whether other students are paying for their course or not, and as a matter of fact many are not even aware of the differences that exist and think either everyone can study for free or everyone has to pay. However, this changes when students are re-enrolling for semester two (end of January/beginning of February) and their financial situation is assessed again. The teachers usually send their whole class 'down to cashiers' to process their re-enrolment and for students to pay if they have to. This is when it becomes evident to everyone that they are all 'different' as some have to pay, and others do not which often raises questions among students. It can also lead to narratives of blame being directed towards those who are entitled to access the language provision for free by those who are not. They were quite frequently vilified as 'benefit scroungers', although up to that point they had simply been classmates. This can cumulate in those students as being perceived as not really taking their learning seriously because it is free, or just being interested in getting more benefits and abusing their English classes to exchange information about how to get more out of the welfare system. As I said, this could result in students making the decision to look for other classes, i.e. EFL classes, because there they felt they were more with '*people like them*' or '*similar people*'. It could also result in subtle distinctions being drawn within the classrooms between 'them' - those who did not have to pay and were viewed with more suspicion or accused of missing lessons because of their perceived 'idleness' – and 'us' – those who paid and thus were seen as being more motivated, aspirational, and hard-working. The example of Julia elucidates this poignantly.

Julia is a Belarusian-born female student and trained teacher in her early 40s who had lived for 20 years in Croatia before coming to London about two years prior to the research. She is married to a Croatian who is running his own cyber-security business in London. She had started in an ESOL class at the beginning of my fieldwork. However, she had stopped attending

the class rather abruptly. A while later I bumped into her at the college and was surprised to find out that she had started attending EFL classes which she found more suitable 'because of the different people in EFL' who she thought were 'more like her'. As I met with her for coffee the following week, the topic came up again and she explained further:

... and I started ESOL and after then I spoke with people and I don't know how or information, but I spoke with people and they told me about EFL and I moved to EFL ... aha I don't know who said me but for ESOL ... ESOL we have a lot people in benefit and they are in group and only me and maybe two people pay, other one have free class ... I think ESOL we had different group of people [...] Here in EFL people all working and know what they want, all work hard, also we have students from international and the parents pay for their class because they want go to university ... ESOL we have people maybe from Syria and ... ESOL from council maybe give people money and say now you need to learn English and only go because if you don't go to college maybe you don't have money [...] In EFL people speak about travelling and university and ... in ESOL people speak about benefits, how have money, how you have flats and benefits and how possible get more benefit ...

Julia clearly applies the above mentioned 'skiver'/'striver' binary to draw distinctions along lines of class, race and immigration status between ESOL and EFL students. She describes ESOL students as only being interested in talking about benefits and wanting to make the most out of the welfare system (*in ESOL people speak about benefits, how have money, how you have flats and benefits and how possible get more benefit*) instead of being future-oriented, aspirational, or 'knowing what they want'. She even suggests that her former classmates only attend language classes in order to avoid their welfare being cut which is currently not policy in the UK system. Also, Julia's assertions clearly reflect the issues that were discussed in earlier chapters with regards to the institutionalised segregation and labelling of language class attendants and her deciding to change from ESOL to EFL shows how symbolic divisions materialise and have real effects.

Boosting own deservedness at the expense of showing empathy

On many occasions the marking of difference by my participants meant that they boosted their own deservingness by drawing on narratives of work ethic and activity in which making an effort to learn English emerged as being of prime importance. However, this boosting of their own deservingness and self-validation occurred at the expense of showing solidarity and empathy. This can be seen for example in Rak's case as the following excerpt from my fieldnotes shows:

I am arriving at the college in the morning. There is still almost an hour until the first classes start and I am surprised to find Rak sitting on the heater-benches outside the corridor to the classrooms which are all still really quiet. With his head leaning against the wall and his eyes closed it looks as if he is taking a nap. As he hears me walking past, he opens his eyes and we exchange greetings. 'What are you doing here so early?' I ask and he replies that he doesn't mind it, he actually likes it because for him it functions as proof that he is 'always active'. As he starts talking about himself being 'always active' he gets quite invigorated and no trace of tiredness seems to be left. His emphatic and repeated declaration still rings in my ears, 'I'm always active, I don't like stay home, I come here early after work. I always want learn more. I don't like stay home like others. Stay home is no good. Some just want stay home, they don't learn. No good!' As we continue our conversation, he explains that he had been working overnight at the BBC studios as he had just secured some contracted work as a cameraman there. He takes out his phone and proudly shows me pictures of him at his new place of work and with his colleagues. On previous occasions he had told me about his past and shown pictures on his phone where he is seen working as a cameraman for BBC journalist in Iraq. He had stayed in contact with them on social media over the years which proved to be very beneficial for him once he came to London when the situation in Iraq became more and more difficult for him and he made the decision to seek asylum in the UK. Today again he tells me, 'I am lucky because they help me, also I get my papers quickly. After three months I get my papers, now everything ok. I am lucky and I am always active, yes always active. Not like my friend. He is here two years but he always stay home, no good.' As he starts talking about his friend, I am surprised as I remember Rak telling me about him before. Only then it sounded different. It was shortly after Rak had arrived in

the country and he had just started his English classes. He told me how he worried about encountering the same fate as his friend who had been held in limbo by the Home Office for a long time now. This clearly had taken its toll on the overall wellbeing of his friend and also meant that his friend could not really do anything (including accessing English classes at a college) as his status was unclear and the treatment he received by officials was rather questionable. He was angered by the unfair treatment his friend received and would question the UK's immigration policies and its impact it can have on individuals which was very different to what he had expected before he decided to seek asylum here. In earlier conversations, Rak strongly voiced his concern for his friend and lamented the fact that there was nothing his friend could do but sit at home and wait as Rak himself was also waiting for his papers. However, today the way Rak spoke about the situation had changed and the fact that his friend couldn't really do anything but wait turned repeatedly and quite contradictory into 'he doesn't want to'. As I questioned his assessment of the situation that people who are not as lucky as him but might be victims of a harsh and hostile system he did not engage but stated again 'I'm always active, I don't like stay home, stay home no good'.

What stands out in this account is how Rak's perspective of himself and his friends changed as his structural situation improved upon securing employment, even employment which aligned well with his previous training and position (as such, he had avoided processes of 'deskilling' and being simply slotted into London's migrant division of labour). As I met him on that morning, he did not repeat his previously voiced empathy for his friend and empathy for his case or refer to the hostile treatment his friend had been subjected to by immigration policies and officials. He rather stressed the importance of always being active and possessing a certain work ethic. Throughout our conversation, Rak being lucky in the form of receiving support from his network (which turned out to be valuable capital), overlaps and gradually changes to him being more deserving or respectable because of his active attitude. In another conversation we had a while later, he reiterated this point by stating *'I always want learn. I don't like stay home like others. Stay home no good. Some want stay home, don't learn. My friend stay home. No good ... And I know other person, no good.'* Again, he holds his friend and other acquaintances responsible and accountable for

not being active like him instead of acknowledging the situation they find themselves confronted with within a hostile immigration system and without the same support Rak enjoyed due to his previous connections. He continued to validate himself and strengthen his position as a 'tolerated citizen' and moving closer to the figure of the 'good citizen' whilst moving further away from voicing empathy for others.

Performing the 'good subject of value': struggle for legitimacy and recognition

Thus far, this chapter has looked at ways of marking difference through processes of dis/identification, blame, moral boundary drawing, and emphasising neoliberal ideas of personhood that became evident in my fieldwork. We have seen how my participants drew on dominant symbolic circuits of personhood legitimation from where they can attach dominant symbolic value to themselves whilst positioning others as the constitutive limit to proper personhood, i.e. the 'failed/non citizen' consisting of lack and negative value. My participants' narrations of their personhood reflect and to a certain extent also reproduce wider discourses and stereotypes whilst they appear to normalise unequal power relations. However, as I have pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, it would be too simplistic to read these accounts solely as such. I argue that they need to be understood within the wider context in which migration and particularly certain groups of migrants are devalued and often pathologized and constructed as 'folk devils'. Those who seemingly "fail" to learn English and thus to integrate are at the forefront of this as has been elucidated in earlier chapters.

Anderson's (2013) observation regarding the fragile category of the merely 'tolerated citizen' - i.e., those who are not quite- good enough, only contingently accepted and are thus struggling for acceptance, legitimacy, and belonging - are helpful to make sense of this dynamics in my participants' accounts. They need to constantly prove that they have the right values. Contingent acceptance turns them into 'guardians of good citizenship' (Anderson, 2013). Seeking who to dissociate themselves, one from another in order to avoid being put into the same category with one another, they try to counteract certain associations. However, in doing so they also (re-) affirm the borders of the 'community of value'.

Contextualising these accounts in this way draws attention to the complexity inherent to them, the importance of multiple readings as well as their performative dimension. As we have to remember that 'personhood is produced through public performances that enable the public recognition and delineation between proper and improper selves' (Skeggs, 2011, p. 501). Thus, my participants' accounts and discussions are narrated through multi-faceted and at times contradictory dialogues of negotiation and distancing towards and away from the figures of the 'good' and 'bad' ('failed/non') citizen/migrant. In her analysis of migrant narratives in a Swedish context, Cederberg (2014), for example, concludes that her participants were trying 'to escape particular subjectivities while at the same time reproducing them by re-affirming the existence of a negatively loaded "other", from which the narrated self is presented at a distance, to give a publicly 'acceptable' story of 'integration'" (p. 143). Her observations resonate well with my findings.

Experiences of exclusion, discrimination, devaluation are part of the lived reality many of my participants face in their everyday lives. This became evident throughout my ethnographic fieldwork which enabled a prolonged engagement with my participants and corroborates findings from my previous work which highlights the effects of devaluation in the lived experience of adult migrant language students (Zschomler 2016, 2019). It is amidst these complex processes that we need to understand the accounts and narratives presented in this chapter as my participants' struggle for legitimacy and recognition. Shildrick et al. (2012) for example observed how in the context of poverty their participants who were very much aware of the stigma and shame associated with welfare 'dependency' used a 'them' and 'us' rhetoric. They argue that this should be understood as their participants' attempts to distance themselves from this stigma by deflecting it onto other people. In their research with migrants, Anderson and Ruhs (2010) also found that their participants who did not see themselves as being firmly established in the 'community of value' made an endless effort to position themselves as the 'subject of value' within prevalent discourses. Their participants did so in order to legitimise themselves, mark the borders of the 'community of value' and particularly decried each other to prove that they had the right values. They emphasized their own work ethic and contribution to society through being a taxpaying subject as key in their reproach of the 'lazy migrant' and 'lacklustre benefit dependent'. Similarly, Dhaliwal and Forkert (2015) found that in their research in the context of

immigration control, some of their participants who were devalued through dominant and xenophobic anti-immigrant discourses utilised the same language to talk about other excluded social groups. They argue that these dynamics need to be understood as part of their participants' own bid for recognition and legitimacy within a context where belonging had become increasingly precarious and conditional (see also Jones et al., 2017).

To illustrate this further in the context of my research, I would like to turn to Izad who was very outspoken against 'lazy' immigrants who he blamed for '*just looking for excuses*' when experiences of racism, discrimination or exclusion were invoked during a group discussion. However, on other occasions he presented a more sobering account about his complex experiences in London. For example, he recounted how he had managed to forge a relationship with one of his English neighbours who owns a dog and how they had become friends. He now regularly accompanies him on his walks with the dog – something that has become very important for Izad and his sense of belonging and integration as well as a valuable opportunity to practise his English. As I asked him whether he would sometimes visit his neighbour at home besides walking his dog with him, he looked at me with great surprise and disbelief that I would ask such question, exclaiming:

No, of course not. What do you think? He has a family, a wife and a daughter. He cannot invite someone like me in his house. Look at me, I am from Middle East. They will be very scared and think I am dangerous.

Also, during the time of the Windrush scandal I was talking to him and one other student about some things they were unhappy about in the college when at one point during our conversation he stated albeit in a slightly joking manner, '*Don't write this down ... they deport us if they find out*'. As we continued talking about deportations, he further remarked that '*people here not necessarily hate us, they just don't want us to be here*'.

These reactions clearly show that Izad is acutely aware of his own constraints because of the way he is inscribed and read by his new surroundings. This stands in contrast to the comments he made during the group discussion where he seemed to be unequivocally endorsing 'common sense' conceptions of the subject as a responsible and rational individual who has the power to influence their life situation and position and is 'choosing' their fate. Contrasting these apparently contradicting accounts, highlights that he is very

clear about his contingent acceptance as a young man from Lebanon who had come to the UK to seek asylum and thus always being in danger of exclusion (*They'll deport us.*). However, during the group discussion decrying 'lazy' immigrants allowed him to present himself as successful, legitimate, and accepted and not as a victim of exclusion and discrimination. Labelling others as 'lazy' allowed Izad to elevate himself.

Back et al. (2018) made similar observations in the context of their research on London as a migrant city and refer to these struggles for legitimacy and respect as a 'psychic balancing act' that reaches far into our lives and encounters in which we misrecognise others whilst they misrecognise us. Trying to uphold a certain social status and respectability and claiming legitimacy by drawing on popular discourses, on the one hand, whilst, on the other hand, sharing experiences of different exclusionary and discriminatory encounters was indeed a balancing act navigated by many of my participants. It was often more prevalent among those who had experienced greater downward social mobility and devaluation as part of their migratory trajectory in the first place, as was the case for example for both Izad and Leila.

Back et al. (2018) further assert that within the city's undeniable multicultural 'there is a selective process of ranking and ordering difference' resulting in what they refer to as 'pecking orders of integration' (p. 67). This process, which operates in the space of everyday life between different migrants, is captured by my participants' accounts and their judgements about who makes enough effort to integrate, who belongs and who can legitimately be included. Thus, these hierarchising processes of ranking and ordering difference impact on social relations and encounters people have with each other within London's urban multicultural, including in language classrooms and migrant language educational settings. It certainly needs to be borne in mind that the distinctions made by my participants are to some extent interwoven with historical and contemporary political tensions within communities, both on a national and local level, and potential animosity or suspicion between 'newcomers' and longer established communities (see also Jones et al., 2017). However, as we have seen these complex negotiations of legitimacy and belonging reproduce a culture of blame and shame and divisions at the expense of solidarity and showing empathy for various Others. Instead of problematizing wider structural issues, my

participants directed their attention towards those who they perceived as problematic and 'undeserving'.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined how my participants draw on language learning for integration discourses and a polarising 'us versus them' rhetoric and classificatory mechanisms of the 'good/bad', 'deserving/undeserving' to draw symbolic divisions. These binaries also constitute raced, classed, and gendered forms of personhood. My participants' accounts reflect the ways in which 'language learning for integration' constitutes itself as a site where problematic Others are produced, symbolically shamed for failing to learn English and are blamed for not integrating. As we have seen, in a time when migration is devalued and the migrant duty to "fit in" is brought to the fore, my participants often reproduce these dynamics in their own narratives by narrating themselves closer to the 'good citizen' or 'subject of value'. They do so by drawing on the resources, capitals, and dispositions available to be mobilised (for instance, through the use of a cosmopolitan habitus, race and whiteness/Europeanness, work ethic, morality, etc.). One can argue that in my participants' accounts hierarchies of belonging were translated into hierarchies of integration akin to what Back et al. (2018) refer to as 'pecking orders of integration' (p. 67). However, as I have pointed out, my participants' drawing of symbolic divisions should be understood as part of their struggle for legitimacy, deservingness, recognition or respectability within their own precarious situation.

However, throughout my fieldwork there were many instances when this culture of blame and shame was disrupted, and dominant discourses were questioned and counteracted instead of reproduced. In these instances, more critical accounts emerged which disrupted and fractured dominant discourses and distinctions with the potential to dismantle hierarchies of differently valued persons and to 'rehumanise social relations' (Jones et al., 2017). This will be examined in more detail in the following chapter which allows for a more complex understanding of the ways in which restrictive neoliberal ideologies of selfhood are negotiated by adult migrant language students. There I also return to discussing Izad's remark about 'lazy immigrants' as it did not go unchallenged during the group discussion.

Chapter 8: An affective community of supportive sociality and hope

Introduction

Chapters six and seven illuminated how top down discourses and the intersectional inequality inherent to them were often reproduced in the educational institution and internalised and reproduced in my participants' narratives. Following on from these discussions, this chapter details moments and practices which challenge rather than reinforce popular top down imaginations and disrupt negotiations of un/deservedness. I do so by turning to social values, or 'values beyond value' (Skeggs, 2014) in the diverse and multicultural setting of my field site.

I start by discussing ways in which my participants were 'talking back' to dominant discourses and imaginations and disrupted the culture of blame and shame that often flows from them. I then elucidate the social or sociable aspect of the ESOL setting highlighting how adult migrant language education can function as a site where empathy and solidarity are enacted, and an affective community is formed. This is followed by examining the circulation of positive affects in the language classroom and expressions of altruism with the potential to rehumanise social relations before considering the ways in which classrooms functioned as inclusive and hospitable spaces where experiences of exclusion and hostility could be counteracted. Lastly, I draw attention to the way in which 'hope' or 'hopefulness' emerged as an important positive affect for imagining alternative futures and empowerment. As such, this chapter brings out the potential of migrant language education to function as a site to de-hierarchise and rehumanise social relations and thus counteract experiences of inequality, misrecognition, devaluation, and lack. I draw on interviews and informal conversations with teachers and students, focus groups with ESOL students which were often emotionally charged and classroom observations to do so.

Talking back – disrupting a culture of blame and shame

This section teases out ways in which my participants struggled against hegemonic discourses, representations, and frames of personhood. Dominant discourses and distinctions were thus not only reproduced or used by my participants in their struggle for

recognition and legitimacy as discussed in the previous chapter but also disrupted and challenged, particularly by those who were positioned outside of the personhood possibilities of the 'subject of value'. This section firstly looks at forms of more overt 'pushing against' disparagement whilst rendering pleas for empathy. After that, I elucidate instances when a culture of blame and shame for failing to live up to neoliberal ideas of personhood was rejected and alternative altruistic values were drawn on instead to claim respectability and to relate to others.

Pushing against disparagement and calling for empathy

There were many instances of an explicit and overt 'pushing against' devaluing narratives and distinctions to challenge dominant discourses during my fieldwork, often during interviews, conversations, and focus group discussions with students. The 'moral abstract order' (Stanley, 2014) and stereotypes of immigrants as being 'unwilling' to learn English and integrate were thus contested and structural and other impediments they might be facing were highlighted instead. To this end, observations like the one made by Arif, a 25-year-old ESOL student from Ethiopia, were frequent. His class were playing a language board game in small groups during which they had to talk and ask each other questions about different topics. Upon rolling the dice, Arif landed on the topic 'Things that make you feel happy or unhappy'. He started talking about how happy he was when he first arrived in the UK but how he was unhappy about that other people often think that people like him pose a problem and '*don't do things right*'. One of his group members, a student from Syria who had come to the UK as a refugee, emphatically agreed with him and Arif continued:

Not we are a problem, for us things are different, not same to other people, not straight sometimes we have do things other way, maybe cannot come class for some time because of problems but we want learn, when everything good we come back.

Here Arif rejects the blame that is often cast about and the implications that migrants do not want to learn English or do not take their language learning seriously. Instead, he argues that migrants but in fact face challenges navigating immigration processes and structural inequalities. This might prevent them from regular attendance or having the time and energy to attend language courses at all as has been highlighted by several studies and

reports on ESOL (e.g. Foster and Bolton, 2018). As we have seen in chapter six, those students whose lives and circumstances were *'not straight'* were more difficult to fit into the college's audit and attendance regime and thus in danger of being characterised as *'hopeless cases'* within the institutional imaginations, which was something Arif and other students he knew had come up against. Thus, Arif is not only talking back to dominant political and public discourses but also the pathologizing narratives that are circulating within the institution where he is attending ESOL classes.

In other instances, for example during focus group discussions, participants challenged those who drew on popular discourses to construct themselves as more deserving over others or to draw moral boundaries and assign blame. In one instance, Elira, an Albanian-Greek female student who was exercising her rights of free movement upon moving to the UK, had voiced her fear and suspicion towards other more recently arrived migrant groups by questioning why so many *'new refugees'* were being accepted in the country. She particularly accused them of not making enough effort to learn English quickly and find a job as she had done. As Elira was reproducing the ranking of migrants into new hierarchies of belonging drawing on popular language learning for integration rhetoric, she was challenged by Farida, a woman from Libya who had been granted asylum in the UK. Farida who had been quiet thus far and who in general was a very quiet student stood up electrified and angrily declared *'Why you say not good, not good? Why you say they come here is not good? Why you say, oh look they not learn English, they bad.'* As she spoke, she raised her voice mimicking someone who is speaking down to others (being spoken down to and misrecognised was something Farida had been experiencing extensively and intimately as she revealed throughout my fieldwork). She clearly disapproved of Elira's attempt to cast about blame by verbally pointing the finger at others for apparently failing to show enough effort to learn English as quickly as possible. To reiterate her point, Farida even stretched out her arm and hastily pointed at various other students in the group with her finger. She continued:

You say, not good, not good. Look they bad, they not learn English...Not good, not good. Why you say not good? You not know about them. You not know their life. Maybe in their country not good, maybe war, maybe they sick when come here, maybe

many problem, need help ... You not know but not good speak like, like ... you think you good and they bad ... you not know their life ...

As she sat down again, the rest of the group members were voicing their approval and the consensus was reached that it was not good if different groups of migrants spoke about each other in a devaluing manner by stating that they were bad instead of asserting values such as empathy, loyalty or care towards each other. This situation was undoubtedly challenging for Elira whose comment had sparked this discussion. A while later she told me however that she was glad that this had happened and how through this instance of conflict the opportunity for a friendship with Farida had formed which continued to change her perspective and understanding of other migrant groups who were less privileged than herself.

Also, in another focus group one student shared his experience of discriminatory remarks being made to him outside the college by someone who suggested he was inferior because of his racial and ethnic background. The student also shared how terrible this had made him feel. Awet, an outspoken female Eritrean student in her early twenties, responded to this account by saying *'Why people say such things? Who says this?'* Shaking her head, she continued *'This is really bad, this just sounds white to me'*. The students continued to discuss their feelings of only being contingently accepted and welcomed in the country leaving them in racialised and marginalised positions. As they were questioning whether they would be able to overcome discrimination and inequality by speaking English better, Izad rejected the idea of racism and discrimination as impeding immigrant's lived experience. Instead, he spoke about his perception of them as being *'just lazy and use it as excuse, they are lazy, they don't want to learn'*, as I also discussed in the previous chapter. In her response, Awet challenged Izad's comment by stating that he *'sounded white'*. Thus, in her response to Izad she suggests that by *'sounding white'*, his comment had the same discriminatory connotation echoing colonial racism that filters and orders people into hierarchies of belonging or hierarchies of integration. In the end she stated that *'we [her gestures indicating that she was talking about everybody in the group] together with all migrants should be different and be for one another'*.

To sum up this section, Farida and Awet's reactions to the disparagement voiced by others are examples of how pleas were made by my participants for more empathy and solidarity

between and care for different groups of people who are misrecognized and racialised by the dominant gaze and treated as a social problem. Rather than endorsing the approach of seeking a more abject group against whom to define oneself as more deserving, the importance of creating moments of and space for solidarity in diversity is emphasized. In their research with young migrants, Back et al. (2018) have observed similar dynamics. They assert that their participants' 'reckoning with these divisions contains evidence of a counter movement or critical tendency [...] premised on an equivalent understanding of human worth that challenges the hierarchies that divide as they rank and order' (p. 74). In the case of Farida, this had an immediate effect on the 'micro politics of everyday life' through the friendship that was formed between her and Elira as a result of her intervention in the focus group. Farida and Elira as well as so many of my participants were as Back et al. (2018) assert 'forging new associations across very different experiences of movement' (p. 74). These 'new inter-ethnic alliances' have the potential to speak against the climate of fear and crisis (Fekete, 2009, p. 209).

Rejecting blame and drawing on alternative altruistic values

Another strategy of disrupting and talking back to dominant devaluing discourses and narratives that was employed by my participants was to reject blame for failing to live up to neoliberal ideas of personhood by drawing on alternative altruistic values. In doing so, it was possible for my participants to forge a subjectivity or produce personhood for themselves that goes beyond being mere subjects of value situated in neoliberal discourses. Many of my participants showed their strong awareness of being subject to misrecognition, of being read as out of place due to their embodiment of the wrong kind of cultural capital in the community of value and of being perceived as outsiders in the colour coded visual economy. They were also often acutely aware of being positioned as potentially pathological and deemed lacking in value (in part) due to their lack of English or perceived failure of having put enough effort into learning it. This becomes evident in the examples by Ronak and Ahlam, two of my female ESOL student participants who I look at in turn.

Throughout my encounters with Ronak, the theme of respect was prevalent as well as her pride of being a mother of three children doing everything to raise them well despite

difficult circumstances as refugees from Syria. Ronak had been living for a few years in Belarus before coming to the UK. She was very much aware of her devalued and racialised position in wider society. This led her to even dye her hair dark blond, as we have seen in chapter six to avoid being negatively stereotyped. The importance of respectability for her was also reflected in one of the first things Ronak said during our interview when I asked her how she felt about her life in the UK and learning English: *'I am a mother. I respect myself and I am proud I am a mother. You have children you always choose the children.'* A little while later we came to talk about being respected in relation to speaking English well and she stated:

Ronak: I know maybe in the future I can speak English without accent, maybe. Maybe I can speak English very well. I want to. I want to learn, slowly, slowly.

Silke: So, do you think that in the future when you speak English without an accent people will respect you more?

Ronak: I think yes. Because if I speak another language ... you know ... I have a lot of languages myself, I speak Arabic, Russian and now I learn English. I respect myself. I don't learn many years but I don't know if you respect me ... I think you can respect me because I am mother. I have three children. I take care about my children. All time I am worry about my children. I am afraid about my children and I give safe for my children you know

Silke: Hmm

Ronak: I think important. Not important only you speak English very well or you cannot speak English... ANYBODY MUST RESPECT MOTHERS.

Ronak pushes back against devaluation through the performance of respectability, e.g. by drawing on alternative altruistic values, such as caring and giving everything for her children to reiterate her self-worth and value. As Skeggs (2011) observes, motherhood is a particularly acute site for value production. This becomes further evident through Ahlam, a Somali woman in her 40s who had proudly raised three boys since coming to the UK. However, this meant that Ahlam had not been attending English classes and was not able to

speak English well although she had been living in the UK for a considerable time. She was thus positioned as a 'failed' member of the community of value. She told me how she was often blamed by others for not having made enough effort to acquire the legitimate language. This was an issue she raised with me several times during conversations during which she firmly rejected the blame and, similarly to Ronak above, drew on motherhood for value production. This came also up during my participant observation during one of her ESOL lessons on the topic of family which she used to confidently remark:

And then people always say learn English, learn English, oh, you not speak good English, why you not speak English ... I know is important learn English and I try but when we come here my husband start work and I stay with children. I give everything for children and I concentrate all for my children so they can grow up very good. And now they are very very good children. I always care my children. I am very proud my children... Maybe my English not so good but my children very good, very polite, very good with all people ... But now I am here, I come back college and I learn and everything.

Ronak and Ahlam's accounts reveal that they felt it unjust and unfair to be perceived as problematic and they reject blame that is often being cast on migrants for not having learnt English or not having learnt enough English. Instead, motherhood and prioritising caring for their own children as an alternative value system are drawn upon for respectability ('Anybody must respect mothers'; 'I give everything for children and I concentrate all for my children'). They thus shape the form respectability takes. This was not only the case in the examples of Ahlam and Ronak but a common strand running through many accounts of my participants in which 'attempts to attach value through respectability became central to the production of their personhood' (Skeggs, 2011, p. 503). Yet, the ways in which they claimed value 'were not acquisitive, not in the modes of the proper 'subject of value' but were defensive, against moral denigration and misrecognition' (*ibid.*). Particularly Ahlam's assertion can be seen as countering pathologizing integration discourses that blame especially Muslim women for failing to learn English and thus raising dangerous children as discussed in previous chapters. As Ahlam states, 'And then people always say learn English, learn English, oh, you not speak good English, why you not speak English'. Yet she is very

clear in asserting that her fully concentrating on taking care of and raising her children resulted in them turning out very *'good and polite'* despite her "lack" of good English.

Furthermore, as Ahlam finished her remarks in her ESOL class, a spontaneous round of applause erupted resulting in a celebratory atmosphere. Several other women also started to share their experiences which were in a similar vein to Ahlam's narrative foregrounding altruistic values such as caring for others. Such dynamic occurred several times during my participant observation of lessons and also during focus group discussions with students. After the 'celebration' of these women in the class, several of the students reiterated the importance caring for others had for them, particularly those whose lives were marked by precarity rather than opportunity. They pointed out that for them these were important qualities in a person, *'more important than have money, good job or speak very good English'* as one of Ahlam's fellow students summed up the general consensus in the class. They further pointed to the fact that supporting and taking care of each other was what they were also doing in their class. Thus, 'caring was a value that they promoted as an essential way to live with others' (Skeggs, 2011, p. 504). Caring for others was 'crucial to a supportive sociality' (*ibid.*) not only within my participants' familial and local networks but within their English classroom. The classroom became a pivotal space for 'alternative circuits of value/s' and the revalorisation of relationships leading to a supportive sociality. I now turn to discussing this social or sociable dimension of the language classroom which was frequently highlighted by teachers as being a distinct feature of the ESOL setting.

'Human companionship and class spirit': the social/sociable aspect of ESOL

The social or sociable aspect as a distinct feature of ESOL came up repeatedly in informal conversations and interviews with all teachers and managers who were at the time of my fieldwork either working in the ESOL setting at my field site or had done so in the past. Their observations frequently highlighted the role of adult migrant language education as a site where empathy and solidarity are enacted, and an affective community is formed.

The following remarks by teachers Hannah and Florence which they made during their interview are just two examples. We were talking about their experience of teaching ESOL and EFL at the college and I was asking them whether there was anything they particularly

liked about either one. Hannah had mentioned that she enjoyed teaching both and then she remarked:

There's the kind of sociable aspect as well, erm, in ESOL classes there is often a tremendous sense of unity in the class, you know we're all in this together, we're all studying together and we all have a good laugh and a good time together and we'll all learn, so there is a kind of socialising, the social aspect of attending a class is important, erm, I don't get this sense from the EFL classes, I sense that they're paying, they wanna get a grammar point or help with pronunciation, they, they get on with each other, they like each other, but there doesn't seem to be the, the kind of, erm, class spirit I suppose that I've experienced in ESOL classes, the kind of human companionship and friendship.

Similarly, Florence who at the time of the interview was not teaching any ESOL classes said:

When I did ESOL for many years I really loved the warmth of the students ... erm, I loved the way, I always felt like you could almost be a bit more natural with the ESOL students you could joke about things that were going on in the UK, they were far more willing to give political statements about things, so in a sense lessons were maybe a bit more real.

Both teachers emphasize the solidarity and supportive sociality they have encountered in their ESOL classes. Florence remarks on the '*warmth of the students*'; Hannah refers to it as '*a kind of human companionship and friendship*' and a distinct '*class spirit*'. Interestingly, she points out that this is something she generally does not find in her EFL classes where the acquisitive 'subject of value' model is more prevalent, i.e. 'a forward-propelling subject/object, individualised, always accruing through exchange and investment in order to enhance futures' (Skeggs, 2011, p. 502). Earlier in the interview, Hannah had talked about how her EFL students are '*more goal-directed and determined*'. She had also remarked how they '*know how to play the game in the language classroom, you know in the communicative language context*' which as we have seen is very much based on neoliberal frames of personhood and the 'subject of value'. Regarding ESOL students, she found on the contrary that '*their targets don't appear to be as smart*' and described them as '*having a*

more holistic approach' to their classes. At the heart of this '*more holistic approach*' lies a '*kind of socialising, the social aspect of attending a class*' as she remarked in the excerpt above. Thus, those in ESOL classes who are positioned outside the acquisitive 'subject of value' model found other routes to valuing each other outside the circuits of exchange through the non-utilitarian affects of care, loyalty and affection (*ibid.*). The following section elucidates this in more detail.

Rehumanising social relations and celebrating expressions of altruism

The circulation of positive affects in the language classroom and expressions of altruism can be seen as 'attempts to rehumanise social relations' (Jones et al., 2017, p. 130). Many times, students gave examples of their experiences of everyday acts of altruism as well as hospitality, warmth, and care that had a positive impact on their sense of self-worth and belonging.

The importance of meeting 'good people' or 'friendly people' was a recurring theme during my fieldwork and was often brought up in conversations, interviews, as well as classroom talk. For example, in one lesson about 'superstitions and good/bad luck', the students were asked to discuss different questions around the lesson topic. Ali, a male Yemeni ESOL student in his mid-twenties who had been granted asylum in the UK about a year previously, was given the question 'Have you ever been really lucky? What happened?'. After thinking about it for a little while, he remarked:

When you come to new country is not easy, everything is difficult and you know nothing. But I'm lucky. When I was in [name of UK city where he first lived] I meet good people, very good friend. He don't need help me but he became my friend [he talks in more detail about how this friend helped him] I feel very good, yeah very good.

After Ali finished his remarks, he leaned back in his chair and smiled whilst several of his fellow students made approving comments and others started to recount comparable encounters they had had after coming to the UK. A lively class conversation about meeting 'good people' developed – about people who had helped them, not because they had to but

out of altruism and genuine care. The conversation engaged everybody in the class and shifted the lesson focus considerably.

Such a comment as was made by Ali was indeed common and, if made in the classroom, was usually accompanied by approving comments from other students as well as animated gestures and facial expressions. At times fellow students would even show their approval of what can be described as 'attempts to rehumanise social relations' (Jones et al., 2017, p. 130) through clapping before starting to talk about similar experiences. As Jones et al. (2017) point out in the context of their focus group discussions with different migrants, 'seemingly banal comments about care, warmth, hospitality and love could be profound in a context where migrants were struggling against the daily strictures of immigration control and toxic public anti-immigrant discourses that are material, social and emotional' (p. 129). When students made such 'seemingly banal comments', it was often as though they relived these moments of care, warmth, hospitality, and love. By sharing them in their class, these positive affects were circulating in the classroom often shifting the focus away from more typical English language teaching topics (such as for instance 'superstitions and good/bad luck') to things that really mattered in their lives.

Furthermore, for many of my ESOL student participants it was their ESOL teacher who made these attempts to rehumanise social relations and who they felt expressed concrete altruistic acts of kindness towards them. Through this, my participants experienced care and warmth that went beyond teaching them the legitimate language and simply imbuing them with exchange value. This was something ESOL students often told me about in conversations and which I also observed during my fieldwork. Prominent examples were helping them with phone calls, taking the time to explain the contents of official letters, listening to their problems and giving advice as much as possible. As I laid out in chapter six, the strictures of the 'sausage machine' with its audit culture and pressure on teachers had encroached upon teaching practice and student-teacher relationships and often limited the time, resources and capacity of teachers to do so. Therefore, it was even more appreciated by students when teachers carved out time and energy to express care beyond the official class time as the following example of Salah explicates.

Salah, a male Sudanese ESOL student in his early 40s vividly pointed this out to me on a 'go along'. We were having dinner together in a Middle Eastern restaurant next to his place of

work near Edgware Road in central London. He had been taken a keen interest in the project thus far and on that day had told me about the ups and downs he had been experiencing since first coming to London with his family several years ago. He had told me of many instances when he saw himself up against a strict and rigid system, e.g. in terms of immigration, the council, job centre, etc. and advocated strongly for the ability of officials who deal with 'people like him', i.e. migrants and refugees, to 'think outside the box', as he referred to it. He saw this as paramount for giving people like him a better chance and more equal experiences. Unfortunately, as he pointed out to me, this 'does not happen often because the system is very strict'. However, when it does occur it can have a profound impact. He still remembers an instance several years ago not too long after he first arrived in the UK when he first started learning English at the college:

I give you one example [teacher's name] is really special, yeah, one day a student, when I was in Entry 1, a lady in the class she had a hospital appointment and she couldn't attend and she was afraid because she had the letter from the hospital and didn't know how to talk to them, erm, and the teacher she said stay with me after class and I, I will help you ... and I stayed because I want to see what she did ... and then [teacher's name] started calling from her phone the hospital, she called FROM HER PHONE, and waited and you know how it is here you have to wait a long time on phone and finally she could speak to right person, erm, and introduced herself and passed the phone to the student so the lady give all her security detail and then [teacher's name] took the phone again and start explain, please I need to postpone this appointment because this student has a lot of problems and so and so and the hospital accepted ... All this happened IN FRONT OF MY EYES, nobody tells me, that is really, erm, because it is not her responsibility ... I will never forget this, this is not like other teachers just ask you simply to go to the support office downstairs and then you have to explain again and it is not easy when you're only in Entry 1 ... but [teacher's name] DID IT HERSELF. I WILL NEVER FORGET THIS.

As Salah was narrating this to me, he became very animated and his tone of voice was upbeat and excited. Although this had happened several years previously and, in the meantime, he had progressed from Entry 1 to Level 1, he clearly had not forgotten this seemingly small act of kindness of the teacher. As we continued talking, Salah juxtaposed

this experience which had left such an imprint on him, with experiences he had had with another teacher who he described as *'nice, clear, explains everything well, but is strict in time'*. Salah pointed out to me that *'he is an amazing teacher in an academic way but personally you cannot ask him for help or so, he will not engage in these things'*. He concluded that when teachers decide to engage and show acts of kindness it goes *'over the expectation of students'* and *'makes you feel very different because the teachers show care and give you a warm feeling and make you feel welcome'*. Salah's observations were echoed by many of my student participants during conversations and interviews and they often differentiated between teachers who *'are amazing in an academic way'* and those who *'show care'*.

Moreover, Salah further juxtaposed this act of kindness when his Entry 1 teacher showed this genuine care and concrete expression of altruism to a recent experience of symbolic violence he had faced in the college. This also had left a strong imprint on him. For the first time during his four years of studying at the college he had not been entered for the exam. He had told me about this earlier on the 'go along' and had described the hurt and emotional stress this had caused him. When his current teacher told him about the decision he was devastated and shocked. He explained, *'You know me, I'm always happy and full of energy when I come to college. I love it. I can't believe when [teacher's name] told me. I just can't understand. I feel terrible.'* As a result, he had stopped coming to class which prompted his teacher to call him, inquire about his absences, and explain to him that if he were to continue not attending, he would lose his place on the course. Thus, he started coming to class again, however, he was *'still feeling bad'*. After telling me about the act of kindness of the Entry 1 teacher years ago, he remarked, *'You know this is completely opposite from when [teacher's name] told me I cannot take exam ... They just tell you without emotion and care. This is not good for people like us'*.

Expressions and acts of altruism could also take the form of more resistance to structural constraints. This happened on occasion when, for example, an ESOL teacher would allow students to continue attending their class despite them not being officially on the class register. Something they were of course not supposed to do. One of the instances I encountered during my fieldwork was the case of Salam, a female Eritrean student who had come to seek asylum in the UK about four years ago. She had previously lived in the north of

England but moved to London to find employment. I had first met her during my pilot study and later frequently participated in her class during my fieldwork. Together with her class she had been working hard to prepare for the exam in January and was overjoyed when she found a part-time job shortly before the exam took place. She told me how she felt that *'life was getting better'*, although her new job as a cleaner in London's migrant division of labour was physically demanding. She had to clean different restaurants across the borough every morning and had with great difficulty managed to arrange her time off so that she could continue attending her English class. When her exam was scheduled outside her regular class time, she came into college to do it in between two of her cleaning appointments! However, as she was trying to re-enrol for semester two shortly after the exam, she was told that she had to start paying towards her fees as her financial situation had changed and she was not solely dependent on welfare payments anymore. She asked me to double-check this together with her but the information we were given by cashiers was the same. As Salam was standing at the cashiers' desk with all her paperwork she almost started crying. Later she told me that in that moment she felt *'like someone hit me'*. It seemed unbelievable that she was asked to pay towards her fees from the little income she now had from a part-time cleaning job. In addition, her housing support had already been reduced because of her new income and she told me that she had barely any money left to buy food. There was no way for her to being able to pay towards her fees for her English class and she was distraught at the prospect of not continuing her studies. The upward trajectory she thought she had embarked upon seemed to have been put on reverse. When Salam's teacher found out about her desperate situation, she decided to unofficially let her continue in semester two even though Salam was not officially on the class register.

This act of altruism or resistance might seem insignificant yet for Salam in her marginalised position it was of great significance in the midst of an increasing hostile and difficult system to navigate for migrants and the *'brutal migration milieu'* (Hall, 2017, p. 1571) described in chapter one. When Salam told me about this, she again almost started crying but this time out of joy and also disbelief about her teacher's actions. It was *'a lifeline'* for her as she told me, something *'I will never forget'*. In their research on the new processes and realities of everyday bordering and belonging, Yuval-Davis et al. (2019) document cases in which ESOL teachers refused to carry out internal bordering controls which would have excluded some

of their students. The teachers instead allowed these students to attend classes - akin to Salam's experience. The act of altruism on behalf of Salam's teacher can thus be seen as what Yuval-Davis et al. describe as 'resisting everyday bordering'. As we have seen in chapter five, everyday bordering reinforces the hierarchies of belonging and increases the intersectional inequality inherent to them and often leads to the dehumanising of those at the lowest end of the pecking order. Resisting such practices and processes thus has a de-hierarchising and rehumanising effect which was experienced by Salam as '*a lifeline*'.

These acts of altruism and rehumanising of social relations highlighted in this section were something my student participants not only spoke enthusiastically about during conversations and interviews but expressed their gratitude for at the end of term when they brought cards, gifts, and flowers for their teachers. Teachers were often showing me these full of pride and joy. Usually there were class parties organised as well to which students brought a plethora of home-made food and specialities from around the world. Both students and teachers were looking forward to these occasions during which the '*class spirit*' that one of the teachers, Hannah, referred to above as being a distinct feature of ESOL classes came to the fore. On those days, laughter and music could be heard on the corridors outside the classrooms. Inside the classrooms, the socialising and celebratory atmosphere often accompanied by dancing was an exuberant expression of the '*human companionship*' and the '*social aspect*' discussed by Hannah and Florence in the previous section that made ESOL special.

Counteracting experiences of exclusion and hostility - creating inclusive and hospitable spaces

Another important function of classrooms that reoccurred throughout my fieldwork was their role in counteracting the negative experiences that were to a greater or lesser extent part of the lives of many of my participants. Everyday experiences of exclusion and hostility could thus be counteracted by positive experiences and affects generated inside classrooms. The following example of Olga demonstrates this poignantly.

Olga is a Polish ESOL student in her late thirties who has been living in the UK for more than 12 years. She had started to attend ESOL classes at the college again after her experience of

discrimination at her workplace. At the height of the EU referendum campaign, her then manager started to loudly bang the door to show her disapproval of Olga exchanging a few sentences in Polish with the delivery driver who came around in the evenings to pick up goods. After the Brexit vote, banging doors turned into her manager shouting 'Now we are gonna have Brexit and we can get rid of you people, then I don't have to listen to you anymore, you'll see!'. As Olga was telling me about this at the underground station opposite the college, she was breathing heavily and pausing between words; it was obvious what an impact it had had on her. She remarked that this experience had been the reason for her to take up English classes again. Not necessarily to improve her English as she was happy with the level of English she had acquired during her long stay in the UK. Rather she enrolled on a course to have '*a good place to go to after work where you can forget about the negative things*'. She told me that she remembered how when she first came to the UK and attended ESOL classes it always made her happy and therefore she decided to enrol in a course again.

Olga further explained that in the meantime, she had managed to request to work in a different outlet of her company where she had a new manager, a young Londoner whose parents had immigrated from Bangladesh. She told me,

'Sometimes I get sad at work because I think about what happened before, then my manager comes and says, 'Come on, let's do Brexit' and we laugh ... and then I feel happy again. When I come to college, I also feel happy and we laugh a lot together.'

Olga's class was indeed characterised by a distinct happy, supportive, and welcoming atmosphere which was not only pointed out to me by Olga but many of her fellow classmates. Some students referred to these characterisations as the '*speciality of our class*' in conversations with me and pointed out how this experience differed from other language classes they had been enrolled on previously both at the college as well as at other institutions. I frequently took part in Olga's lessons and sometimes filled in for the teacher. Whenever I turned up at the door to the classroom posing the general question to everyone whether it was okay for me to join on that day, Olga declared with a big smile on her face, '*Yes, of course. Please come in. Here EVERYONE IS WELCOME!*'.

Throughout my fieldwork it became evident during conversations, interviews, and informal encounters with students that the importance of spaces where one can be welcome has

gained momentum in the face of increased hostility. Thus, for many of my ESOL student participants their classes were places of belonging and community in the face of exclusion and alienation where negative affects could be transformed into positive affects. They signified much more to them than merely gaining access to the legitimate language, cultural and social capital, or the prospect of bettering their economic condition. To this end, the language classrooms were emphasized by students as really important spaces where *'everyone is welcome'*, as for instance Olga reiterated throughout my field work. Other students referred to them as places where *'we look out for one another'*, where *'we can laugh together'* and where friendships and relationships are forged that *'make London feel home'*. Similarly to Skeggs' working class women, in many ESOL classes my student participants more or less together with their teachers 'developed localised spaces of protection but also fun' (2011, p. 504) thereby making London a hospitable home. Olga's class can be seen as a case where this was realised. In her classroom, the empathy and solidarity that was highlighted at the beginning of the chapter and which students advocated for during focus group discussions were brought to fruition. Through this, a remarkable, supportive sociality was enacted counteracting hostility and exclusion and turning negative affects into positive affects to create more inclusive and welcoming spaces.

Mobilising hope for imagining alternative futures and empowerment

The last section of this chapter highlights 'hope' or 'hopefulness' as an affect that became prevalent during my fieldwork. Hopefulness, Hage (2003) argues, is 'a disposition to be confident in the face of the future, to be open to it and welcoming to what it will bring, even if one does not know for sure what it will bring' (p. 24). Hope is conceptualised as a means through which to imagine a better, distant future. It further includes a belief in the ability to initiate and sustain actions towards goals (Snyder, 1994) and is a powerful resource for social change in order to collectively effect change for those who through their material conditions are living and struggling on the margins of society (Courville and Piper, 2004). This aspect of hopefulness was emphasized by my participants during my fieldwork. The following example from my fieldnotes from one of my participant observations in an ESOL classroom is illustrative of this.

The lesson topic for today's class was 'our feelings' and the atmosphere in the classroom was relaxed. After successfully completing a matching exercise introducing different adjectives to describe feelings and practising the pronunciation of the new vocabulary, the students have moved on to small group work for further conversation practice. Daher, a male Syrian refugee student is getting up from his chair to talk to the teacher. After a brief exchange they are looking something up on the internet. Once the class are finished with their group work, the teacher announces that Daher had something he wanted to share with everybody and gives the floor to him. Daher explains that he really enjoyed today's topic talking about feelings, but he felt that 'one important feeling was missing – hope'. He continues, 'Hope really is the most important feeling. I show you a short film first and then say more'. As it turned out, he was starring as one of the main characters in the short film which was the outcome of a project from the Scottish Refugee Council and a migrant activist organisation. The film depicts the journey of a father and daughter from war-torn Syria to Glasgow and their experience of setting up a new life and becoming members and active citizens of the community there. The theme running through the film is the importance and power of hope for imagining alternative futures and for empowering those who are marginalised. These were also the points that Daher stressed when talking about the film, how he came to be part of it, and what it signified for him. Hope, he concludes, 'for people like us here is the most important feeling' although it was not included on the worksheet the class had been working on that day.

Daher's charismatic intervention in the lesson and his appeal to mobilise hope in order to empower those who live on the margins and whose lives are impeded by inequality points to the role language classrooms can play in fostering a common vision of social change. This points to a bottom-up participatory approach to migrant language education where adult migrants are not positioned as lack of value or simply as subjects that are slotted into hierarchies of student value, belonging, and integration. Bringing this dimension into the adult migrant language classroom can open up avenues for empowering those who are considered to be outsiders or as lack by the dominant gaze and can facilitate the creation of spaces or a community where hope can be revitalized into a motivating force for change (Courville and Piper, 2004).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the language classroom for adult migrants as an affective community of supportive sociality and hope. Turning to use values has shifted the focus beyond the exchange value self and the 'subject of value' situated in neoliberal discourses and propagated by top-down integration rhetoric. To this end, I have highlighted the circulation of 'values beyond exchange value' as observed during my field work in the diverse and multicultural space setting of my field site, particularly the language classrooms. We have seen how my participants were talking back to dominant discourses - disrupting a culture of blame and shame that is at play within the ranking of bodies into hierarchies of value and belonging. They were, on the one hand, pushing against disparagement and calling for empathy and solidarity, and, on the other hand, drawing on alternative altruistic values to perform respectability, foregrounding alternative values such as care and loyalty. Caring for others was further seen by students as an integral part of their classroom experience. This was also echoed by teachers who pointed at the social or sociable aspect of the ESOL classroom as well as the warmth of students and human companionship and friendship enacted by them as a distinct feature of ESOL. These features as we have seen give way to a supportive sociality that rehumanises social relations and brings expressions and acts of altruism to the fore in a climate of dehumanising dynamics and hostility. Classrooms can thus play a pivotal role in counteracting experiences of discrimination and exclusion by adult migrants, particularly when students and teachers succeed in creating inclusive and welcoming spaces. In these 'localised spaces of protection but also fun' (Skeggs, 2011) positive affects can be found and negative affects can be turned into positive affects, e.g., laughing together to counteracting hostility and exclusion to create more inclusive and welcoming spaces. Lastly, this chapter has discussed the importance of mobilising hope for imagining alternative futures and empowerment.

In the following chapter I discuss these issues further by advocating for a solidarity-based approach to adult migrant language education that fosters critical convivial dispositions. Building on the findings presented in this thesis, this approach is characterised by de-classificatory and de-hierarchising perspectives and practices. In such an approach, the classroom becomes a space of possibilities where the values and dispositions my participants were drawing on, as outlined in the emergent alternatives in this chapter, are

harnessed. This is key to re-imagining a different, more socially just and transformative approach to language learning in the migrant context.

Chapter 9: Reimagining migrant language education

Introduction

This research set out to investigate the experiences of adult migrants who have come to London to set up a new life, and who are learning English to facilitate this process, in the context of prominent discourses that emphasize the learning of English as a marker of integration. Following on from the discussions and findings presented in this thesis and which investigated the past and the present, the central aim of this chapter is to look to the future - charting a pathway to a more equitable migrant language education. I start this chapter with a summary of the overall trajectory of this thesis highlighting key points that emerged from deconstructing the top-down to reconstructing from the bottom up. I then argue for and propose a different approach to migrant language education and the project of migrant integration. This reimagining is based on a shift in the spatio-temporal register from the historically imagined homogenous nation state or the imaginations of the 'community of value' to the perspectives and practices that arise from the bottom-up within educational settings such as my field site, in which people engage across ethnic and cultural boundaries against the backdrop of increased migration-driven diversity. In this vein, I argue for a reconceptualization of migrant language educational spaces as 'micropublics' which have the potential to capture innovative forms of solidarity in diversity, foster convivial capabilities and the enactment of a critical pedagogy of hope, transformation, and social change.

From deconstructing the top-down towards reconstructing from the bottom-up

The findings and analysis presented in this thesis underline the fact that the politics, practice, and lived experience of migrant language education in the context of prominent immigration/integration discourses and debates is a complex phenomenon, even more so given the 'brutal migration milieu' (Hall, 2017) and volatility of the current moment (see chapter one).

Firstly, deconstructing the top-down has highlighted how this complex phenomenon is shaped by historical legacies that have led to inequitable relations which manifest

themselves within a 'gendered, racialised, and class-based immigration system' (Griffiths, 2017, p. 156). The analysis in this thesis has also dismantled dominant and moralistic language learning for integration discourses. As discussed in detail in chapter three, these discourses have become particularly pronounced as part of the 'backlash to multiculturalism' which was propelled by various events in the early 2000s. This shift in policy has had an impact on migrants and racialised communities who are differently positioned within complex hierarchies of belonging, characterising the post-colonial and multicultural present and has given way to the pathologizing of certain groups and people whilst also problematizing migration and the diversity resulting from it. The policy shift has also led to a heightened politicization of the fragmented and notoriously underfunded field of migrant language education/ESOL which, in the absence of targeted intervention strategies, is expected to function as the key mechanism for integration (Spencer, 2011). This thesis has elucidated the problematic nature of uncritically promoting the learning of English as a vehicle for integration and social mobility and emphasizing individual responsibility without considering and tackling wider inequalities. In particular, this thesis has highlighted how these dynamics have led to a situation in which adult migrant language education and the learning of English has become a platform for blaming and shaming, pathologizing, hierarchising, and so forth instead of leading to solidarity and cohesion – the nominal goal of integration. Ongoing processes of neoliberal transformation which have become even more pronounced through the moral-political project of austerity and a diminished welfare state have exacerbated these issues further and brought the highly morally charged and politicised nature of the learning of English to the fore.

Secondly, the locus of my field site within the highly unequal setting of London - with its distinct dynamics and the ways these play out in the immediate socio-spatial context of the college - has highlighted how global and local stratification and inequitable relations are impacting the phenomenon under investigation. These spatial forces were the focus of chapter five, which provided key discussions and insights regarding the challenges of neoliberal transformation and exacerbated inequalities where unequal dynamics intersect within the 'superdiverse' global city and migrant metropolis and the lived experience of its migrants, such as my participants. Considering the spatial context of the phenomenon under investigation has further drawn attention to the intense 'throwntogetherness' of urban life

(Massey, 2005) in which people live in the proximity of ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious Others. Thus, this thesis has shown that it is important to analyse the phenomenon under investigation within the context of everyday urban multiculturalism where the co-existence of conviviality and division are common-place and constantly negotiated as various scholars have also pointed out (see for example, Back and Sinha, 2016; Back et al., 2018; Berg, Gidley and Krausova, 2019 and as we also saw in chapter five). Therefore, this thesis argues that it is of paramount importance to develop a critical understanding of how the learning of English and migrant educational spaces such as my field site which ‘throw together’ people from diverse backgrounds become entangled in these complex negotiations. If this is achieved, adult migrant educational spaces can create possibilities for change from the bottom-up, as I will discuss in further detail below.

As such, an active engagement with the temporal and spatial dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation has been an integral part of the analysis in this thesis. This has proven pivotal for gaining a multi-layered understanding of how inequitable relations and inherent divisions manifest themselves at different levels. Against this backdrop, chapters six and seven have discussed the lived experience of my participants.

Chapter six discussed processes of categorising, labelling, and pathologizing that are at work at my field site where the ESOL/EFL distinction further complicates the picture. The imaginations of the ‘typical’ student in each setting are reproducing the inequalities that characterise the national immigration system and the socio-spatial context of the college. These processes create differences in the institution and the ways in which differently valued bodies are streamlined through it. We saw how practitioners at the institution got caught up in in/exclusionary mechanisms and processes of reproducing social hierarchies whilst trying to help their students navigate the im/possibilities and limitations they are faced with, such as being racialized, subjected to various discriminatory experiences or having to cope with processes of deskilling or declassing as part of their migratory trajectories. As such, the analysis in chapter six highlighted the raced, classed, and gendered dimensions of the labels ESOL and EFL resulting in ‘unequal Englishes’ (Tupas, 2015).

Chapter seven discussed my participants’ struggles for legitimacy, recognition, deservedness, and the right to belong within London’s post-colonial situation and multicultural present. The analysis revealed the complex ways in which my participants

employed moralistic language learning for integration discourses in these struggles whilst also reproducing place-based divisions. We saw how my participants acted as 'guardians of good citizenship' (Anderson, 2013) and, in doing so, were drawn into the ranking and ordering of difference, the framing of problematic Others and a culture of blame and shame. These symbolic divisions can have real effects, for example when students changed from taking ESOL classes to EFL. Overall, the analysis in chapter seven elucidated how my participants reinforced and reproduced divisions at the expense of solidarity and showing empathy for various Others. Instead of problematizing wider structural issues, my participants directed their attention towards those who they perceived as problematic and 'undeserving'.

To sum up, the findings presented up to chapter seven reveal the limitations and contradictions of the concept of integration and the uncritical employment of the idea of language learning for integration. Particular attention is drawn to the different ways in which various Others are constructed at different levels within the phenomenon under investigation. This thesis has highlighted how this works through the construction of hierarchies of belonging within London's post-colonial multicultural situation. At the level of my field site, these hierarchies were manifested as hierarchies of student value (chapter six) and within migrant student narratives, as hierarchies of integration (chapter seven). Thus, the discussions in this thesis corroborate the assessment 'that "integration" as a socio-political instrument is connected to larger structuration processes that create and produce normativity and subaltern "others", all the while proclaiming an integrative and inclusive policy' (Flubacher and Yeung, 2016, p. 606). Moreover, considering the spatial context of the phenomenon under investigation further highlights the mismatch between top-down discourses and imaginations of immigrant integration into a homogeneous nation-state or 'community of value' and the reality on the ground, i.e. the dynamic urban multiculturalism and increased migration-driven diversity in which the phenomenon under investigation is embedded. Thus, the discussions and findings in this thesis underscore the need for an alternative to the paradigm and socio-political instrument of integration. It is here that the findings presented in chapter eight become highly relevant as they tease out emergent alternatives from the bottom up.

Chapter eight discussed the language classroom as an affective community of a supportive sociality and hope within the diverse and multicultural setting of my field site. This chapter examined the possibilities for a different, more sociable being in the world as an emergent alternative from the bottom-up. Employing Skegg's (2004; 2011; 2014) framework of 'person value' which looks beyond the logic of capital revealed how my participants reject a culture of blame and shame and were advocating for a culture of loyalty, care, empathy, and solidarity within increasing migration-driven diversity. If enacted, classrooms became spaces where alternative values/social values circulate. Also, in the context of such supportive sociality, social relations were rehumanised and negative affects resulting from living the conditions of inequality, devaluation, discrimination, and 'stuckness' were counteracted. Hope for social change emerged as an integral part of such endeavours. As such, the emergent alternatives highlighted in chapter eight point to possibilities for rethinking current practices and for reimagining adult migrant language education.

In the rest of this chapter, I discuss and propose a way forward that builds on these emergent alternatives with the aim of developing them not only as a route into individual empowerment but also charting possibilities for collective change from the bottom-up. This necessitates a shift away from the paradigm of integration, which although promising inclusion and social cohesion has not proven fruitful to deliver on this promise. On the contrary, as this thesis has shown, top-down imaginations of integration and very often language learning for integration discourses have become a site where problematic Others are constructed, ranked, and ordered not only from the top down but also amongst those affected by this. Also, the 'superdiversity' and dynamic urban multicultural particularly in global city spaces like London render the historical understanding of Britain as a homogenous society increasingly fallacious. Therefore, I now turn to making the case for a normative shift away from integration into the nation state based on historical imaginations and toward place-based solidarities in the here and now in order to enable a more fitting conceptualisation of migrant language education for the 21st century.

A different spatio-temporal register: Developing migrant language educational settings as 'micropublics'

From integration into the nation state to place-based solidarity in the here and now

To better reflect the current conditions of 'superdiversity' and urban multiculturalism, Oosterlynck et al. (2016) propose an innovative framework of place-based solidarities which looks for 'solidarity in diversity, here and now' (p. 764). They argue that concepts of solidarity which are founded in the spatial boundedness of territorial states and the intergenerational continuity of supposedly culturally homogeneous nations can be enriched by solidarities that develop in the different spatio-temporal register of everyday place-based practices. Thus, there is a shift in perspective from the spatio-temporal register of the nation state to 'relationally constituted places where diversity is encountered and negotiated' (p.765), such as my field site. As such, the focus is on 'what diverse populations do, learn and collectively engage in here and now' (p. 765). This shift can function as an important catalyst to generate solidarities in diversity, which as we have seen is what my students called for and something the paradigm of integration is unable to achieve. Thus this research adapts their theoretical model to the educational setting of adult migrant language learning and proposes to move beyond normative integration discourses and policy concerns and the current approach to 'language learning for integration'. Instead, I advocate for an alternative pedagogical approach of place-based solidarities in diversity with a focus on micro-level practices and encounters.

In this framework, solidarity is imagined in a relational rather than a territorial sense, which is an important point as it makes it possible to focus on relationships between people, e.g. students and staff instead of positioning individuals in relation to the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) or 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013) of the nation state. As Oosterlynck et al. (2016) argue, making relationality the starting point creates possibilities for solidarity among heterogeneous populations who may not have any commonalities other than the place they share. Such solidarities 'do not necessarily presuppose assimilation into a pre-given set of shared values ... but require a willingness to negotiate the diversity of people and the practices that they are engaged in here and now' (*ibid.*, p. 775). As such, learning is not generated by claims of commonality or sameness, but derives from exposure to others, for example in a classroom. In these spaces, learning is not expected to produce

subjects that are better at “fitting in”. Therefore, instead of providing the ‘key’ to integration as is often recited in policy documents (see, for example APPGSG 2017a; 2017b; Casey, 2016 and chapter one), an adult migrant language education that is attentive to and actively fosters these everyday place-based practices can then be promoted as key to the enriching of solidarities under conditions of increasing diversity. The joint practices in which the heterogeneous student body is engaging are located in relationally constituted places and can foster feelings of togetherness and belonging, such as in Olga’s class where ‘everyone was welcome’ (chapter eight). When such feelings are fostered, migrant educational settings become sites of innovative forms of solidarity within everyday negotiation of diversity and difference.

Migrant language educational settings as ‘micropublics’

Following on from this spatio-temporal shift to concrete interpersonal practices in the here and now and in micro-level spaces such as classrooms, I argue that it is useful to think of migrant language educational settings such as my field site as ‘micropublics’. ‘Micropublics’ have been defined as ‘sites of encounters where mundane negotiations of difference are commonplace’ and which have the ‘potential for conviviality and intercultural understanding, as well as conflict and exclusion to emerge’ (Berg, Gidley and Krausova, 2019, p. 2725)³⁴. Contact across social and cultural difference is of course commonplace in migrant language classes. Additionally, the remarkable heterogeneity of the student body, as well as the staff, at my field site meant that difference had to be constantly negotiated and that intercultural understanding emerged within classrooms and beyond as students formed convivial relations and friendships. However, conflict and exclusion emerged in this context as well. In some cases, it prompted students to change from ESOL to EFL, for example. In other instances, such as with Arush in chapter six, discriminatory and exclusionary dynamics came to the fore as suspicion and prejudice seeped through the

³⁴ Berg et al. (2019) draw on the work of Amin (2002) who lists schools, workplaces, colleges, youth centres among other spaces of association as spaces that enable engagement across cultural difference. Amin terms them ‘micropublics of everyday social contact and encounter’ (p. 959), that is spaces of interdependence and habitual engagement that necessitate the daily negotiation of difference and facilitate ‘unnoticeable cultural questioning or transgression’ (*ibid.*).

college wall and were reproduced. Given these dynamics, within this co-existence of conviviality and conflict, migrant educational 'micropublics' provide opportunities for innovative place-based forms of solidarity in diversity to emerge in the here and now.

An active engagement with critical multiculturalism and antiracism

I do not want to suggest that such innovative forms of place-based solidarities that develop in migrant educational 'micropublics' are automatically successful in challenging the wider structural inequalities and macro-level processes which might hamper the ways in which these solidarities can take effect beyond specific places where they are fostered (Oosterlynck, 2018). Yet, such place-based solidarities are very often transformative in nature in the sense of the '*human companionship*' or '*class spirit*' (chapter eight) which were nurtured in some of the classes during my fieldwork. They can therefore provide a platform for more collective agency from the bottom-up.

As such, in addition to this approach of place-based solidarities within 'micropublics' and in order to better sustain its transformative nature, I argue for an active engagement with 'critical multiculturalism' which 'combines both structural and culturalist concerns – linking culture to power, and multiculturalism to antiracism – in its deconstruction and critique of the organization of modern-states' (May, 2002, p. 138). Similarly, McLaren (1997) makes the case for a 'revolutionary multiculturalism' as part of which he emphasizes the importance of the decentring and dismantling of whiteness. Whiteness as we have seen played an integral part in the symbolic power relations that are at work at my field site and within my participants' narratives. To this end, an increased focus on and engagement with antiracism should lie at the heart of migrant language education to counteract the complex hierarchies of belonging, student value, and integration that are reproduced from the top-down.

Shifting the focus from top-down integration to innovative forms of solidarity in the here and now, with an active engagement with antiracism, within migrant educational 'micropublics', allows the field of migrant language education to contribute to a more inclusive and democratic approach to addressing the 'multicultural question' (Hall, 2000). The following section describes this approach in further detail.

A bottom-up model of a supportive sociality

This section develops the idea of this new approach further into a bottom-up model of a supportive sociality. I discuss two integral elements: fostering of convivial capabilities and employing a critical pedagogical stance which supports the authoring of counter-narratives and sees migrant language education as a vocation rooted in hopefulness and for transformation and social change.

Fostering convivial capabilities

Migrant educational 'micropublics' such as my field site operate in the context of the co-existence of conviviality and division within everyday multicultural and are characterised by a multiplicity of possibilities for intercultural encounters and experiences across difference. As such, I argue that migrant educational 'micropublics' are in a prime position to foster convivial capabilities and capacities. Such convivial capabilities strengthen respect, understanding, and empathy for the lived experience of Others whilst grappling with the accompanying tension and conflict and providing tools to interrupt a culture of blame and shame, a dynamic which has become evident throughout my research. Back and Sinha (2016) identified different convivial capabilities in their research with young migrants, which they characterise as attempts to 'build associations that work with and through difference' (p. 518). In the context of the migrant city London, these tools can be utilised as a blueprint for the development of convivial capacities within migrant educational 'micropublics'. I now explain their relevancy for the proposed new approach whilst making connections to my fieldwork observations presented in earlier chapters.

Firstly, the strengthening of convivial capabilities entails *fostering attentiveness to the life of multicultural (ibid.)*. This has to do with curiosity toward and a capacity to listen to and appreciate everyday life in London's complex cultural and social landscape. It is similar to what has been described as an 'intercultural habitus' capturing 'habits, dispositions and speech practices of intercultural accommodation and connection' (Wise and Velayutham, 2014, p. 423.). An 'intercultural habitus' goes beyond the 'cosmopolitan and metropolitan habitus' (Butler and Robson, 2003) which is part of the valued social mixing of the middle

classes as discussed in chapter seven and in relation to the figure of the typical 'au pair' student in the EFL setting at my field site.

The convivial capability of such 'intercultural habitus' should go hand in hand with the second convivial capability I want to highlight, which is *fostering care for the life of the city* as Back and Sinha, 2016 argue that 'caring for London's heteroglot landscape and being curious offers an alternative tool for living in it' (p.524). Fostering this capacity has the potential to oppose well-known discourses of 'postcolonial melancholia' (Gilroy, 2004), culture loss and segregation, as well as anxieties and worries about too much diversity and difference. We have seen that traces of discourses of 'postcolonial melancholia' were a recurring theme in my participants' narratives, particularly by those who could mobilise their Whiteness/Europeanness to distance themselves from those who they identified as problematic Others. For example, in the case of Ana in chapter seven, these discourses played an integral role in the way she aligned with the 'good integrated subject of value' and her framing of problematic Others whilst drawing on her cosmopolitan habitus and dispositions. Cultivating an appreciation and care for the diverse and dynamic urban multiculturalism of the city aids the process of making London a place of belonging and home.

A third important convivial capability is the capacity of individuals to *put themselves in the place of others who might be very differently positioned within London's complex cultural and social landscape*, i.e. the complex hierarchies of belonging discussed throughout this thesis. As we have seen, the capacity to show empathy towards others was something my participants were calling for as an alternative to engaging in the ranking and ordering of difference and casting blame. Back and Sinha (2016) refer to this as the development of an aversion to the pleasures of hating and blaming the next stranger in line, i.e., an 'emphatic intolerance of intolerance' (p. 526). We saw an example of this in chapter eight when Elira was challenged by Farida for blaming newly arrived refugees for apparently not making enough effort to learn English and for making the situation of all migrants in the country more difficult. After having been challenged by Farida, Elira embarked upon learning to put herself in the place of others and to develop an aversion to blaming the next stranger in line, which was facilitated by a burgeoning friendship between herself and Farida. The heterogeneity of the student body in places such as my field site thus provides both an

opportunity and the social material for making convivial alternatives instead of reproducing hierarchising mechanisms of ranking and ordering difference.

Making the best possible use of migrant educational 'micropublics' for fostering convivial capabilities entails questioning the usefulness of the way in which migrant language education is currently set up and organised, at my field site and in similar contexts. In particular, we saw how the distinction between EFL and ESOL facilitated processes of hierarchizing and pathologizing narratives that weave their way through these settings, as well as in/exclusionary mechanisms. The distinction, which also reflects different funding regimes, created artificial divisions between migrants that were not necessarily related to questions of language learning. Rather, my analysis demonstrates the extent to which this distinction is related to notions of race, class and migration status. As it currently stands, the ESOL/EFL distinction is not the most useful way to foster convivial capabilities that facilitate a better negotiation of the co-existence of conviviality and division and are aimed at finding ways and possibilities to counteract hierarchising processes.

Although migrant language educational 'micropublics' provide the opportunity and the social material for fostering convivial capabilities, as Back and Sinha (2016) argue 'conviviality is not guaranteed by contact alone. Rather, the tools of conviviality shape the micro-publics rather than the other ways around' (p. 525). This means that the fostering of convivial capabilities within migrant language educational micropublics is not an automatic process, but something that needs to be intentional. As such, the approach outlined thus far, should come in combination with employing a critical pedagogical stance which sees migrant language education as a vocation rooted in hopefulness rather than oppression and for transformation and social change. The next section discusses this in more detail and shows how the authoring of counter-narratives is integral to this process. This approach provides opportunities for the reconstitution of personhood from devaluation, deligitimacy, dehumanisation, exclusion, and discrimination to legitimacy, dignity, respectability, inclusion and furthermore rehumanises social relations.

Counter-narratives and a critical pedagogy of hope, transformation, and social change

This thesis shows how the alternative bottom-up perspectives and practices that I observed in my field work can provide a platform for transformation and empowerment and increase adult migrants' agency. They resemble what Skeggs and Loveday (2012) discuss as 'just talk', i.e., 'talk of fairness and kindness that glues people together and is based on values of care rather than exchange' (p. 17). Being able to engage in 'just talk' is particularly important for those who have been forced to inhabit social relations differently, are subject to devaluation (economically and symbolically) and are living the relations of injustice and inequality. Such speech acts provide possibilities to counter-act experiences of devaluation and delegitimization with the aim of fostering solidarity. In this way, 'ugly feelings' (Ngai, 2005) or negative affects that arise out of experiences of symbolic violence can be turned into action. As I have argued elsewhere (Zschomler, 2016; 2019), 'just talk' can play a crucial role in the context of migrant language education. In what follows, I develop these ideas further by advocating for a critical pedagogical approach that facilitates and encourages the authoring and articulation of 'counter-narratives' or 'counter-stories' as a tactic of resistance for empowerment and social change.

Counter-narratives have been discussed by different scholars who are committed to a critical and transformative pedagogy. For example, Walsh (2012) has highlighted the transformative nature of counter-narratives for those who are labelled negatively, which he regards as a form of Othering and which works to disempower, oppress, and discriminate. These labels represent 'statements that are institutionally enforced and are widely circulated as 'Truths'' (p. 126). My research has highlighted a plethora of labelling and pathologizing discourses and practices circulating in dominant discourses, the institutional context as well as within my participants' narratives. Walsh contends that counter-narratives provide a possibility 'to creatively and critically read and critique the world with the goal of re-writing dominant storylines and discourses' (*ibid.*, see also Giroux, 2013; Giroux et al., 1996). In this way it is possible for those who are labelled to decentre dominant pathologizing discourses, representations, and imaginations that lead to labelling across social and educational settings and to create new narratives that challenge the dominant gaze. Also, as part of the important tenet of critical race theory of education to

recognise and value the experiences and voices of people of colour, counter-narratives are advocated for as a key method to give voice to those who are oppressed, marginalised, and devalued (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). Counter-narratives are described as 'naming one's own reality' or 'voice' (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995) or as a 'counter-reality that is experienced by subordinate groups, as opposed to the experiences of those in power' (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p. 20). In the context of race and racism, hooks (2015) has highlighted that a way of telling counter-stories or counter-narratives is by 'talking back', for example, 'daring to disagree' and 'having an opinion' (p. 15).

Instances of 'talking back', of 'naming one's own reality' or of narrating a 'counter-reality' to pathologizing discourses and imaginations and in doing so challenging the dominant gaze were a regular occurrence throughout my research, as I have discussed in chapter eight. We have seen how they happened in individual student narratives, during group discussions and when I was participating in regular lessons. The latter can be seen as critical pedagogical moments, which were often initiated by students and could change the lesson focus significantly as students engaged in critical dialogue. By doing so they disrupted and fractured dominant discourses, normative common-sense assumptions and the hierarchising, labelling, and exclusionary mechanisms that flow from them.

Having these critical pedagogical moments is of importance, particularly given the current socio-political climate in which as Taylor (2013) asserts stigmatization circulates and is employed as a form of governance and in doing so legitimises the reproduction and reinforcement of inequalities and injustices. Thus, Taylor (2013) urges us to engage with, understand and support the emergence of a 'declassificatory politics' where those who are considered and in some way labelled as 'failed/non' citizens can reconstitute themselves as citizens with rights and also as subjects of value in the sense of values beyond exchange value. In the context of my research and in light of my findings, I would argue that a 'declassificatory language learning' particularly in the context of migrant language education should form part of such 'declassificatory politics' – a language education that de-hierarchises and rehumanises social relations and empowers migrant students' agency. To this end, institutions and practitioners such as my field site and the teachers/managers involved in this research need to be enabled and supported in their efforts to create spaces/'micropublics' where migrants can author counter-narratives to disrupt and reject

the narratives and dominant discourses that devalue, delegitimize, blame, pathologize and marginalise them. As we have seen in chapter eight, my participants did this by drawing on alternative values, by engaging in ‘just talk’ of fairness and kindness that is based on values of care rather than exchange. In doing so they opposed their positioning as lack by the dominant gaze, thus creating the possibility to reconstitute themselves as ‘subjects of value’.

Authoring such counter-narratives as part of a ‘declassificatory language learning’ resonates with what Cooke et al. (2019, drawing on Isin, 2008) have discussed in their research as ‘acts of citizenship’, i.e., ‘actions which challenge the current status quo and which pave the way – potentially – for change’ (p. 133). As we have seen in chapter two, a significant function of acts of citizenship is the possibility to imagine a different reality or future, a different being in the world from the one that is experienced at the moment and which as this research has shown for my participants is more often than not marked by exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination, and devaluation. Daher’s intervention in his class on the topic of feelings which I discussed in chapter eight and which saw him arguing for hope as *‘the most important feeling for people like us’* can be seen as such a bottom-up act. In his intervention he narrated a counter-narrative of hopefulness which stands in stark contrast to the narratives of ‘lowness’, ‘stuckness’, and ‘hopeless cases’ (see chapter six) that were weaving their way through the ESOL setting at my field site. Also, in her approach to critical pedagogy, hooks (2003) in a similar vein to Freire, sees hope as crucial for transformation and change in the context of struggle. She advocates for a perspective on the practice of teaching and educating as a vocation that is ‘rooted in hopefulness’ (p. xiv). This is key for creating more socially just educational settings, a fairer society, and a more equitable future.

Practical considerations

On a practical level, employing the lenses and alternative bottom-up approaches discussed in this chapter requires a sensitivity to the nuanced and differing experiences of students within these symbolic meanings and hierarchies of belonging. As I have witnessed in my field work as well, addressing issues of inequality, racialization, racism, and other socio-

political issues in the classroom can arouse a wide range of emotions including uncomfortable feelings and defensive reactions, as also pointed out by Kubota (2010). This leads to the necessity of the acceptance of an unsettled pedagogical space of ‘unintelligibility’ of not having a definite answer to questions (Ellwood, 2009). Going away from fixed to more dynamic understandings of teaching and learning requires teachers and students to reflect on their understanding of themselves and Others. Productively negotiating these meanings aids the promotion of a more socially just migrant language educational ‘micropublics’ within situated ethics (see also Kubota, 2010). Practitioners, i.e., teachers, managers, administrators, play a crucial role in opening up instead of closing down such possibilities and in the facilitation of inclusionary instead of exclusionary mechanisms. Therefore, an awareness of such alternative approaches needs to be raised. Similarly to other researchers, I argue for a more inclusive approach to migrant language education anchored in critical pedagogy (e.g. Cooke and Peutrell, 2019 in the context of ESOL) and antiracist practice (e.g. Kubota, 2010; 2015 in the context of second language education in general). Practically this means a non-essentialist understanding of race, culture, and language, an explicit engagement in antiracist pedagogies, the critical scrutiny of teaching material and curriculum, and the transformation of institutional practice (Kubota, 2010). This of course needs to be accompanied by changes in the set-up and labelling of migrant language educational settings, i.e. in the case of my field site questioning the usefulness of the ESOL/EFL distinction³⁵, a rethink of the funding structure, the measuring of outcomes, and so forth which of course is only made possible by a change in policy. It goes beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these practical ramifications in detail.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions throughout this thesis, this chapter has mapped an alternative approach to and model of migrant language education. I have argued for a shift in the spatio-temporal register away from the nation-state to instead focusing on concrete place-based practices of people across difference in the here and now which in the context of this research is in migrant language educational ‘micropublics’. The outlined reimagining

³⁵ This also applies to the field of applied linguistics and ELT or TESOL more generally and should be part of decolonizing initiatives. It is beyond the scope of this project to discuss this in detail.

of migrant language education goes beyond a view of students as mere contributors in an economic sense or the aim of language learning as transforming them into a better form of human capital or making them more capable of being able to live up to the top-down expectations of integration. The emphasis is rather on allowing for critical agency based on innovative forms of solidarity and a supportive sociality and the creation of spaces or a community where counter-narratives are authored and hope can be revitalized into a motivating force for change (Courville and Piper, 2004). This can be seen as an alternative to the 'managing' of diversity and dealing with multiculturalism from the top-down by including bottom-up perspectives of those who are actively co-creating it and in doing so can fracture dominant discourses and imaginations and enrich solidarities in the here and now. It also helps to think about the role language classrooms or migrant educational 'micropublics' can play in making London a hospitable home and thus counteracting the dynamics and mechanisms of 'ranking and ordering difference' (Back et al., 2018) by fostering convivial capabilities instead.

Reimagining migrant language education in this way offers the potential to recreate educational settings such as my field site as convivial communities of supportive sociality and hope for social change. This would mean that settings such as my field site which was described as a '*big sausage machine*' and where 'slotting things into categories' and 'rigid streamlining' are part of its day-to-day operations would be able to 'do more' as proposed by one of my teacher participants (see chapter six). In doing so, the ethos of teachers to empower, to make a difference in their students' lives, and together with them create more equitable relations whilst disrupting the culture of pathologizing and blame can be harnessed and brought to fruition. Bringing the suggested alternative approach into migrant educational 'micropublics' can open up avenues for bottom-up acts of membership/citizenship that disrupt neoliberal notions of citizenship and imaginations of the 'community of value', empowering those who are considered outsiders or lack by the dominant gaze.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

In the light of prominent discourses that emphasize the learning of English as a marker of migrant integration, in this research I set out to critically investigate the politics, practice, and lived experience of migrant language education in socio-political and socio-economic volatile times. I did so by employing ethnography as my strategy of inquiry whilst considering the different temporal and spatial dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. By doing so, I have sought to overcome the limitations of ‘common-sense knowing’ (Cohen et al., 2007), the bodies of doxa, or taken for granted common-sense beliefs (Bourdieu, 1977) top-down perspectives give way to. A careful and rigorous analysis of the data and active dialoguing with different theoretical perspectives has rendered a nuanced, in-depth understanding of my participants’ lived experience which as I have argued cannot be viewed as a de-contextualised or de-historicized narrative.

This comprehensive approach has allowed me, on the one hand, to deconstruct dominant top-down narratives and ‘common sense’ notions and to highlight the kind of realities and experiences they create for a heterogeneous group of adult migrants within and beyond an institution offering English language classes. On the other hand, it has also enabled a way of seeing that is attentive to bottom-up perspectives that emerge in this context. Building on this analysis, in the previous chapter I have constructed a framework that reimagines migrant language education, promoting a more socially just, solidarity-based approach. This approach fosters capabilities to grapple with the co-existence of conviviality and division, provides spaces and opportunities for the authoring of counter-narratives and is grounded in a critical pedagogical stance of hope and social change.

In this concluding chapter, I revisit the research questions that were guiding this inquiry, reflect on the strengths and limitations of the research, evaluate the study’s contributions and implications, and look both back and ahead assessing possible avenues to build upon this research in the future.

Revisiting the research questions

The following table provides a concise summary of the answers to the research questions.

Table 10.1: Summary of Research Questions

| Research Questions | Where this is answered |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>RQ1: <i>What role do language and language learning play in dominant integration discourses and what are the historical processes that have led to their prominence?</i></p> | <p>Language and language learning are integral to these discourses as learning English is often viewed as the key marker of integration. This has led to the increased politicization of language learning intertwined with questions of citizenship, belonging, and certain pathology narratives around immigration, mobility, and migrants which is shaping actions and processes, productive of certain types of relations. These processes are described in Chapter three.</p> |
| <p><i>1a) How and under what circumstances is the figure of the Immigrant imagined as problematic and has become a key emblem of moral and political concern?</i></p> | <p>My thesis has also shown how language learning in the migrant context has become a platform for processes of pathologizing and Othering. Chapter three discusses the figure of the Immigrant and describes in particular the idea of the “failed Muslim woman”. The ways in which this is reproduced in the institutional setting is described in chapter 6 and the ways in which migrant students participate in these narratives and internalize and reproduce them is described in chapter seven.</p> |
| <p>RQ2: <i>How do these integration discourses shape adult migrant language education?</i></p> | <p>Chapter six describes in detail what kind of realities these discourses give way to on the institutional level, for example, in terms of how the provision is organised, how students are imagined. It also describes the audit culture how teachers view their role as well as the audit culture and focus on exam preparation, and ultimately the way language teaching is viewed as a way of making people a better form of human capital imbuing some bodies with value and possibility whilst others are devalued, faced with different impossibilities and often pathologized.</p> |
| <p>RQ3: <i>What is the lived experience of adult migrants in this context within and beyond an institutional setting offering English classes?</i></p> | <p>Chapter five shows how the dynamics of the global migrant city London and particularly its entrenched inequalities have a disproportionate effect on migrant communities. Chapter six outlines how the side by side existence of EFL and ESOL produce de/valuing discursive, symbolic, and material effects of im/mobility for my participants as they are positioned differently within them. Chapter seven shows my participants struggle for legitimacy and belonging as they reproduce dominant discourses. Chapter eight discusses how my participants resist and disrupt such discourses highlighting their altruistic actions and new forms of solidarity.</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>3a) <i>What possibilities and limitations do my participants encounter?</i></p> | <p>These inequitable relations lead to different possibilities and limitations in the lives of my participants which often functions along intersecting lines of migration status, class, race and gender. Chapter six in particular shows the unevenness in mobility and thus possibility within the institutional setting. Chapter seven highlights how students could position themselves differently toward these discourses.</p> |
| <p>3b) <i>How do processes of hierarchising, inclusion and exclusion work?</i></p> | <p>At the level of my field site, these hierarchies were manifested as hierarchies of student value (chapter six) and within migrant student narratives, as hierarchies of integration (chapter seven). Chapter six also revealed the in/exclusionary mechanisms that were operating within the institution.</p> |
| <p>RQ4: <i>Are there possible counter narratives to dominant integration discourses and different ways of imagining adult migrant language education?</i></p> | <p>Chapter eight shows how integration discourses were not only internalized and reproduced but counteracted. I show emergent alternatives and the ways that students engaged in critical pedagogical moments that enabled a different being in the world and an affective community of sociality and hope. Chapter eight also showed how teachers sometimes engaged in acts of resistance against toxic policies and acted as advocates for their students despite the strict regiment of the setting.</p> |
| <p>4a) <i>What are alternative perspectives and practices that can be mobilised in adult migrant language education?</i></p> | <p>Chapter nine builds upon the emergent alternatives from chapter eight and proposes an alternative ‘declassificatory’ approach to adult migrant language education based on innovative forms of solidarity in the here and now and classrooms as ‘micropublics’, with a focus on convivial capabilities and a critical pedagogy of hope for social change.</p> |

Reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the research

My ethnographic work and process of research has been, on the one hand, ‘a set of investigative procedures’ and, on the other hand, ‘a literary activity’ (Back, 2004, p. 204) happening at a particular point in time over the course of the last few years. As we have seen, the time during which my research took place has been characterised by increased socio-political and socio-economic volatility. Particularly during the write up of my work in these volatile times, I was always aware of time, i.e., what Back (*ibid.*) refers to as ‘writing in

and against time'. He discusses how 'we are writing in time, at a particular moment, which is partial and positioned in place' and which he sees as a 'major advance'. However, we are 'also writing against time, trying to capture an outline of existence that is fleeting' (*ibid.*). His observations resonated with me as I was writing about the politics, practice, and lived experience of migrant language education in a particular place and in a particular socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic context which are all subject to change. I am also aware that the perspectives of my participants are also subject to change and continue to evolve, grow, and adapt. As such, my research certainly has its limitations which need to be acknowledged and I have no intention to claim that my research provides 'the one and only' description and analysis of the phenomenon under investigation. Yet, what I have captured throughout my research process and the writing of this thesis represents an in-depth and relevant 'theoretical case' (Hammersley, 1994), albeit partial, of the politics, practice, and lived experience of migrant language education.

The nature of the study and its boundedness to a particular research setting can be seen as limiting what in the often positivistic language of research methodologies is referred to as 'generalisability'. This is part of the restraints qualitative inquiries are subjected to *per se* as they do not provide objective, statistically significant results or quantifiable outcomes and are context and setting specific. As LeCompte and Schensul (2010) remind us, generalisability is not achievable with locally specific research, rendering the concept as inapplicable in such kind of research (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993). Given the ethnographic nature of my research, I did not set out to produce 'precise, objective, generalizable findings' (Scott and Morrison, 2006, p. 92). Rather as I would argue, the strength and advantage of my research approach are the depth and richness of descriptions and nuanced explorations fostering the discovery of meaning and providing the reader with a sense of 'being there'. This enables a deeper and critical understanding of the issues at hand (rather than the verification of 'truth') from which implications for other similar contexts can be drawn. The knowledge gained from my research context and situation is certainly relevant or applicable for other contexts and situations or even the same context at another point in time. This has been described as 'relatability' (see for example Opie (2004) drawing on Bassey (1984)). To this end, the relatability of my research takes

eminence over its generalisability (Opie, 2004) which as I argue does by no means diminish its value but rather denotes a particular strength.

Another advantage of the approach taken in this research is the fact that it has allowed for a research process which resembles more of a 'researching with' than 'researching on' my participants due to the decisions and choices made regarding research methodology and methods. This was particularly enhanced by including walking and 'go alongs' into the research process which gave my participants more of a say, autonomy, and control and helped to foster more equitable relationships. Employing these methods also made it possible to expand the research beyond the institutional boundaries counteracting the risk of solely conceptualising my participants as students or learners (a term I have avoided using throughout this thesis) of English there. Rather this kind of multi-sidedness of the research illuminated links between people and places in order to tell a bigger story about the lives of my participants. It further helped to better capture the reality of migrant language students who as Norton (2013) reminds us often occupy irregular spaces and positions. This makes it even more pivotal to gain a dynamic and nuanced understanding of their lived experience and to provide a platform for their voices and perspectives to be heard and considered. As such, I 'researched with' my participants as co-producers of space in the global migrant metropolis London.

Assessing the contributions of the research

The contextualised and comprehensive analysis presented in this thesis has taken into account the different temporal and spatial dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation. I have utilised interdisciplinary perspectives drawing on cutting-edge insights and theorisations and my analysis highlights the importance of a multi-disciplinary dialogue between migration studies, political theory, sociology, education, and applied linguistics to gain a better understanding of this complex phenomenon at the nexus of migration and language. The multi-dimensional theoretical framework adopted in this research made it possible to capture the interplay of the different dimensions of the politics, practice, and lived experience of migrant language education in volatile times and in the context of a 'brutal migration milieu' (Hall, 2017). My interdisciplinary work allows me to critically insert

myself into current discussions within the field of applied linguistic and migrant language education research and in doing so modify and expand them through the theoretical and conceptual perspectives employed in my work.

Making questions of inequality a central concern

My research is notable in the ways in which it situates questions of inequality more centrally, which, as I discussed in chapter two, is something various scholars in the field of applied linguistics have been advocating for. This thesis fills this gap in knowledge by providing a thorough analysis of inequitable relations in the context of migrant language education and which circulate within a 'gendered, racialised, and class-based immigration system' (Griffiths, 2017, p. 156). The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis - the notion of modern states as a 'community of value' and conceptualisation of personhood and 'person-value' - have proven integral to grappling with the different inflections and nuances of the inequitable dynamics and relations that have been established over time and which impact the lived experience of my participants in different ways.

In addition, taking into consideration the distinct setting that London provides as a global and migrant city with its own distinctive logic of practice and complex hierarchies of belonging made it possible to tease out the ways in which issues of power and unequal relations manifest themselves at my field site. I have been able to point out how these dynamics work on the ground within this specific migrant language education context and how they impact the lived experience of the heterogenous student body which is streamlined through the two settings ESOL and EFL in different ways. We have seen that in the process of being streamlined through this educational setup, some bodies are imbued with value and possibility whilst others are devalued, faced with different impossibilities and often pathologized. The theorising employed made it possible to be attentive to the workings of class, race, and gender which are intertwined with different migratory statuses and trajectories. In doing so, my work elucidates how unequal dynamics are at work at different intersections of inequality within the phenomenon under investigation.

Going beyond the logic of capital and exchange

The ways in which my work highlights alternative perspectives which are central to understanding adult migrant's agency is another notable contribution this thesis makes. This has been enabled by the theoretical underpinnings that I employed at the level of the individual experience. As detailed in chapter two, employing Skeggs' 'person value' model entails going beyond the logic of capital and exchange as it does not hinge on the idea of the neoliberal self. This made it possible to tease out alternative perspectives and practices that are otherwise unintelligible and invisible to the dominant gaze. My work is particularly important to understanding those who find themselves outside the possibilities of the 'subject of value' or neoliberal self, struggling to accrue or exchange value and are exposed to inequalities and precarities of different kinds. Understanding their complex negotiations of legitimacy, respectability and un/deservedness and their engagement in alternative value practices shows how they inhabit personhood differently and how they create person-value not only through modes of exchange but relationally through connections to others.

Thereby my work goes beyond simply envisioning language students as 'entrepreneurs of the self' and language learning as increasing their 'human capital' or merely highlighting the limitations of such views or the ways in which neoliberal imperatives shape migrant language education and the lived experience of migrant language students. Undoubtedly, such investigation and critique are important, as for example Warriner's (2016) analysis of a language programme for women refugees in the USA or Allan's (2016) investigation of the language and soft-skill approach to Canadian immigrant integration discussed in chapter two show. However, I argue that it needs to be accompanied by gaining an understanding of alternative practices and possibilities for social change. To this end, by considering 'values beyond [exchange] value' and the authoring of counter-narratives which provide possibilities for the dismantling of dominant imaginations and for transformation and social change, my work offers a way of seeing beyond the logic of capital and neoliberal imperatives. In doing so, my research provides an innovative approach which imagines and theorises a more socially just migrant language education that increases migrant students' agency. As I identified in chapter two, although other authors have stressed the importance for migrant students to 'aspire not only for individual success but also for social change' (Darvin and Norton, 2014, p. 116), they have not theorised and accounted for how this is to

be achieved. This is therefore another contribution of this study. To this end, by reimagining an alternative model for adult migrant language education, my research remedies the 'collective failure of imagination' identified by Piller (2016, p. 165) regarding issues pertaining to language, migration, and social justice.

Promoting an alternative approach to and bottom-up understandings of migrant language education, integration, and citizenship in the UK context

My work provides a timely and much needed contribution to the field of migrant language education/ESOL in the UK which is an under-researched field. Particularly following the decline in ESOL funding from 2006 onwards, research has been scarce (Peutrell and Cooke, 2019). As I explained in chapter two, more recently there has been some very limited research into the top-down implementation of citizenship into the field of ESOL which was a short-lived government initiative to give migrants an alternative to taking the official *Life in the UK* test). Reflecting on their research in this area, Cooke and Peutrell (2019) acknowledge the limits of a top-down implementation of citizenship in fostering genuine participation and a sense of belonging amongst migrant students. They advocate for the exploration of alternative approaches to migrant language education which take into account 'its participatory and activist potential' and in which citizenship is conceptualised as 'participatory, emergent, informal and open-ended' (p. 8). My thesis documents a tangible example of an alternative approach to migrant language education and bottom-up understandings of citizenship these scholars have called for and which I have detailed in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, the way in which my work situates the experience of migrant students at its centre makes a unique contribution to these current discussions in the field and differentiates it from the research of, for example Cooke (2015) and Peutrell (2019). Both researchers focused on the experiences of teachers, with Peutrell carrying out an interview study and Cooke, who despite utilising ethnography as her method of inquiry to investigate two ESOL classrooms, felt as a former practitioner herself more drawn to the experiences of the teachers. She notes that she did not want to disregard the experiences of her migrant student participants but felt that, on the one hand, her project design did not allow her to

do so and, on the other hand, she lacked the level of skill and sensitivity to do this aim justice (Cooke, 2015). My research approach, methodology, and project design made it possible to make the lived experience of the migrant students who participated in the research a central focus of the research and this thesis. As I discussed in detail in chapter four as well as earlier in this chapter, my sensitivity and skill to do so developed dynamically throughout the process of carrying out fieldwork and writing this thesis and was further facilitated by me inhabiting the double position of migrant researcher.

Assessing the implications of the research

An important part of the alternative approach this thesis is advocating for is as we have seen a normative shift from the register of the nation-state towards bottom-up perspectives developing in the different spatio-temporal register of everyday place-based practices and for the conceptualising of migrant language educational settings as ‘micropublics’. This has implications for policy and practice.

Firstly, this alternative approach advocates a shift in our understanding of migrant language education from ‘language learning as the key to integration’ to ‘language learning for enriching solidarities in diversity’. This also means that a radical shift in dominant discourses about immigration and the ways in which language learning is envisioned in these discourses is required. This shift and new normative approach to migrant language education also has implications for a change in policy which underpins top-down discourses and imaginations as well as funding regimes that are put in place to support migrant language education. Both policy and funding need to move away from immigrant integration to enriching and facilitating innovative forms of solidarities in conviviality and everyday multiculturalism. There is thus a need for the focus of policy initiatives and the rhetoric that is used to promote these policies to change radically. As discussed in chapter nine, the framework of critical multiculturalism including an active engagement with antiracism and antiracist education would provide a possible alternative starting point. In addition, funding needs to move away from the current piecemeal and fragmented approach to increased and continuous funding ideally coordinated on a more local level through local government.

Secondly, the reimagining and recreating of a more socially just migrant language education from the bottom-up further calls for a critical scrutiny and overhaul of the practices which different funding regimes give way to on the ground in migrant language educational settings, i.e., how they regiment the day-to-day operations of the '*sausage machine*'. Chapter nine has already questioned the usefulness of the distinction between ESOL and EFL at my field site³⁶. The last section in chapter nine has further considered practical implications were an alternative approach to migrant language education adopted, for example in terms of raising awareness and training among practitioners, scrutinizing institutional practices, curriculum and material design, rethinking of pedagogy, and so forth. It goes beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these in detail. However, it is important to point out that there have been calls to foreground participatory approaches to the teaching of ESOL in the UK (Bryers et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2019; Cooke and Peutrell, 2019; see also chapter two where I discuss some of these projects). These initiatives align well with the prepositions put forth in my work.

Thirdly, practitioners, of course, play a crucial role in facilitating the alternative normative approach to migrant language education advocated for in this thesis. Within this new normative approach practitioners would not be tasked with facilitating 'immigrant integration' or top-down teaching of citizenship, which is something many are uncomfortable with. The perspective and model outlined in the previous chapter enable a change in pedagogical practice, i.e., by being attentive to the fostering of convivial capabilities and the inclusion of critical pedagogical approaches. To this end, a change in approach would mean a rethink of practitioners' ethos and professional identity and teachers will need to be given the opportunity to critically engage with this shift from language learning for integration to language learning for enriching solidarities in diversity as part of their ongoing professional development. As I have pointed out in chapter nine, practitioners in migrant educational 'micropublics' need to accept an unsettled pedagogical space of 'unintelligibility' (Ellwood, 2009) and although they are generally perceived as the knower, they become 'learners' themselves (see also Kubota, 2010), e.g. as they develop convivial capabilities or learn the vocabulary of students' counter-narratives.

³⁶ Similarly, Williams and Williams (2007) refer to the distinction between ESOL and EFL in migrant language educational settings such as my field site as 'unhelpful'.

Finally, a place-based solidarity approach and language classrooms that create a supportive sociality offer great potential to have a beneficial impact on the social fabric of the local community by fostering intercultural exchange and convivial capabilities in encounters across difference. It would also serve to increase migrant students' agency and strengthen their civic engagement through moving away from conceptualizing them as objects that need to be "fitted in" or positioning them as part of London's migrant division of labour which serves to make the global city economy run. Rather, they become local co-producers of space, establishing their belonging and membership and truly claiming their right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968). In this vein, one concrete suggestion could be promoting workshops where local politicians and decision-makers are invited to the college and given the chance to hear the stories and counter-narratives of the students. This active approach to encouraging encounters across difference would seek to promote more empathetic decision-making processes and allow those that are affected by the policies to become co-creators of policy.

Looking back - looking ahead

Reflecting on the course of this research, I certainly agree with Veena Das who sees the process of recognising and arriving at unpredictable limits as an integral part of any production of knowledge. Looking back on my endeavours and manifold research encounters, it is impossible not to acknowledge the limits of my situatedness, the incompleteness and boundaries of my capacity to see, know, and describe (in DiFruscia, 2010). As I have been immersed in the process of this research for several years, I have found myself being challenged in the process but also immensely enriched.

Also, as I explained in preface, this research was a continuation of my previous professional and academic experience and encounters which had fostered my development of a 'sociological imagination' (Mills, 1959). Toscano (2012) argues for making use of our 'sociological imagination' in a way that is propelled by a 'civic task' which 'is not to create pacifying knowledge, but to sharpen and concretise what would otherwise be a vague and powerless anxiety, while at the same time providing a realistic estimate of the powers necessary to alter, however minimally, the course of history' (p. 68). The nature of my

research lends itself well to encouraging and fostering discussions of the issues that have been elucidated throughout my thesis. Without doubt, an ongoing critical engagement with the increased politicisation of language and language learning and the effects this is having on the field of migrant language education, institutions such as my field site, as well as the lived experience of migrants is ever more needed in the volatile, uncertain, and precarious times we find ourselves in. An in-depth and nuanced understanding of the inequitable processes, mechanisms, and relations that are shaping these spaces and experiences within them is pivotal to animate change through reimagining and recreating migrant language education from the bottom-up.

To this end, I would like to see this research being followed up by projects that enable even greater participation and collaboration with both migrant students and teachers. There has been an increased awareness of the need for more participatory approaches, both to the teaching of English in the migrant context as well as research in the field of migrant language education and there have been a small number of projects utilising a participatory pedagogy approach. Expanding on these inquiries in light of my own research, I argue for subsequent research projects that are anchored in a participatory and convivial research practice (Berg and Nowicka, 2019). I would like to expand on my work with inquiries into the ways in which practitioners and students in migrant language educational 'micropublics' collaboratively devise and employ a language of critique, counter-acting, possibility and hope. Ideally, such research has the capacity to ethnographically capture how students and teachers engage in practices that foster the potential of challenging unequal symbolic relations for a more equitable and socially just migrant language educational experience. Another important point is to gain a better understanding of how convivial capabilities and capacities can be nurtured in these educational spaces in order to critically and creatively address the 'multicultural question' (Hall, 2000) from the bottom-up. Ideally, such research would theoretically and methodologically be anchored within the paradigms of critical multicultural, antiracist, declassificatory, and solidarity-based education and a critical pedagogy of hope and social change. Such research would also foster the activist potential of migrant language education, further the project of delegitimising the legitimate and challenge, dismantle, and fracture dominant discourses, perspectives, and common-sense understandings. Thus, further research in this vein not only has the capabilities and

capacities to give rise to voices, stories, and experiences that are often silenced, but also pursues social change through bottom-up collaborative and transformative advocacy and activism (Wink, 2005).

As I write this conclusion, in the autumn of 2020, the country is facing a situation in which the Coronavirus pandemic and a summer of multiracial Black Lives Matter protests have highlighted deeply entrenched inequalities and the ongoing presence of 'old' and 'new' racisms leading to the construction of complex hierarchies of belonging across institutions as well as society as a whole. Both the health emergency and the ways in which it has been disproportionately impacting racialised minorities and the climate of radical protest and counterculture have propelled the need for change through work at the local as well as national level into the spotlight. This thesis provides an analysis, ideas, suggestions, and food for thought regarding the ways in which migrant language education can contribute to and participate in fostering such change from the bottom up.

Indeed, many of the teachers at my field site have over the summer increased their efforts to use materials in their teaching to provide a space where the issues exposed by the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests can be critically discussed in their lessons as they are very much aware of how central they are in their migrant students' lives. Yet at the same time, the current UK government have brought forward proposals to stifle the use of anti-racist or anti-capitalist material in education which they frame as holding an extreme political stance, and being equivalent to endorsing illegal activity, and promoting victim narratives that are harmful to British society (Busby, 2020). Although currently this guidance is not directly aimed at migrant language education, nevertheless, such political move is prone to have an impact on government-funded language courses in the long run. It most certainly denotes a move which stands in stark contrast to what I have advocated for in this thesis. The government's suggestions have been widely opposed by academics and educators including those from within the field of applied linguistics.

Also, although it is currently propagated that the answer to the impact of the pandemic on the economy would not entail a return to austerity, it is widely feared that both the short and long-term consequences will be most severe for those who are already in disadvantaged and marginalised positions - something that is already felt at my field site. Many of the students have fallen victim to the digital inequality which the increased push to

move teaching and learning online has exposed. Moreover, in a recent meeting with the ESOL department, it was discussed how the college has opted to be '*less generous*' (as it was referred to by staff) in its approach to funding its ESOL provision in light of increased financial pressure due to the impact of the pandemic on FE colleges. This decision-making at the top has had an immediate impact on the ground particularly for women, making it impossible for several of them to afford their English classes, thus echoing the disproportionate effects the immense austerity related funding cuts had in the past (as discussed in chapter five). The department has been trying intensely to communicate this to the college's leadership team, however, as it currently stands, these efforts have been without success. In the meantime, many of those who are in need of their classes more than ever, given the increased uncertainty and precarity many of them are confronted with, face increased difficulty to access them. They are thus prevented from migrant language educational 'micropublics' where values beyond exchange-value circulate and a supportive sociality is enacted, counter-narratives can be authored, and hopefulness is revitalized into a motivating force for change.

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APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS

The following tables (summary and descriptions) provide some background information about my participants (gender, country of birth, age) and a brief overview of key aspects of their individual migratory experiences.

The names are a mix of pseudonyms and real names dependent on participants' preference.

Summary

| Number of students | Age range | Length of time in the UK | Countries of origin | Previous countries of residence |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 39 22 female 17 male | Between 21 and 55 years old | From newly arrived to more than 12 years | Afghanistan, Albania, Belarus, Brasil, Chechnya, Chile, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Macedonia, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen | Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Dubai, France, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands |

Descriptions

Husam (m, Syria, 27)

Husam came to the UK as a refugee and had been in the country for less than a year. He had managed to find a job in a local pharmacy where he was hired to serve the many Arabic speaking customers. During my field work his pregnant wife was able to join him in the UK.

Meserat (f, Eritrea, 39)

Meserat came to the UK to seek asylum about eight years ago. She is married and has three children. She was working as a cleaner during the time of my field work and was acutely aware of her racialized position within the global city space London which she felt was reproduced at the college.

Salah (m, Sudan, 41)

Salah, a male Sudanese ESOL student in his early 40s often spoke about the ups and downs he had been experiencing since first coming to London with his family several years ago. He had often found himself up against a strict and rigid system. He holds a university degree in economics from Sudan and had been working in Dubai for several years before coming to London with his family about eight years prior to my field work. He was working as an estate agent for Middle Eastern clientele.

Ana (f, Russia, 45)

Ana who was born in Russia and also holds a Swedish passport came to London about a year prior to my field work to live with her daughter who had come to study law at the LSE and after graduating top of her class started to work in one of the leading law firms in the City. Ana has an impressive migratory trajectory moving from Russia to Latvia as a single mum, from there to Sweden (from where she regularly commuted to Denmark for a while) after she had fallen in love with a man from Poland who had a business there, and from Sweden to the UK. She was doing a floristry course which was a long held dream of hers.

Farida (f, Libya, 32)

Farida grew up in a well-off Libyan family and had been coming to London as a visitor several times as a young adult. The political instability in Libya had devastating effects on her family which forced Farida to seek asylum in the UK about five years prior to my fieldwork. She has severe health problems and had lived for some years in the north of England before moving to London. She is married to a Tunisian-born man who had lived for long time in France before coming to London to work as a chef. They have one daughter who is going to a good school which was very important for Farida. During the time of my field work she was trying to resist being rehoused by the council to an area which she was not very fond of and which is very far from her daughter's school, however, in the end unsuccessful.

Elira (f, Albania, 29)

Elira was born in Albania but had lived several years in Greece before coming to the UK. Through her Greek passport she could exercise her right to freedom of movement. She is married and has two school aged children who were not very happy about having moved to the UK. Elira is a trained hairdresser and was working as a housekeeper in a London hotel as well as in a hair salon but not as a stylist as her qualifications were not accepted. During the time of my fieldwork, she was accepted on a vocational hair and beauty course at the college which would upon completion in the future give her the opportunity to work as a stylist in a more upmarket hair salon in London, which was a dream of hers.

Izad (m, Lebanon, 32)

Izad came from Lebanon about two years prior to the field work to seek asylum. He studied philosophy and worked at a university in his country of origin for some time before coming to the UK. At the time of field work he was not in employment and was planning to take up a course in accounting at another college which he thought would secure a better future for him.

Agnes (f, Albania, 35)

Agnes had moved to London shortly before I met her during my fieldwork. She had lived in Wales for some years before coming to London. She was a fabric designer in Albania but had not been able to find any work related to her profession which was very difficult for her. She was working as a housekeeper/nanny instead.

Ronak (f, Syria, 39)

Ronak came to the UK via Belarus where she fled to from Syria. Although she like living in Belarus, she decided to move to the UK as she thought this would provide a better future for her three children who she brought up as a single mum. She was also caring for an elderly family friend.

Pouya (m, Iran, 26)

Pouya came to the UK from Iran to seek asylum and join some family members less than a year prior to my fieldwork. He had started a university degree in Iran which he could not

finish. At the time of my fieldwork, he was working in a corner shop and looking into the possibility to train as a health care worker. He was also trying to move away from his area to move to somewhere with 'good people'.

Leila (f, Iran, 42)

Leila is a trained lawyer from Iran and has a daughter who is studying at a UK university. As she was not able to work in her profession in the UK, she started a vocational course in hair and beauty and was working in different beauty salons during the time of field work. She was also volunteering for an Iranian lawyer once a week whilst trying to find a way into the legal route.

Julia (f, Belarus, 42)

Julia was born in Belarus and lived for some years in Latvia when she was growing up. Before coming to London about one year prior to my field work she lived for 20 years in Croatia. She is a trained teacher and married to a Croatian who is running his own cyber-security business in London. She has one daughter who goes to one of the sought after schools in the vicinity of the college where Julia started to volunteer in the school office.

Rak (m, Iraq, 26)

Rak was fairly new in the country when I first met him during my field work. He is a cameraman from Iraq where he did some work for BBC journalists. As the situation became too dangerous and unstable for him, he came to seek asylum in the UK. Through the help of his contacts, his case got processed very quickly at the Home Office and he could also secure some freelance work as a cameraman for the BBC studios in London.

Arif (m, Ethiopia, 25)

Arif came to the UK about three years ago. He had undergone training as an upholsterer in Eritrea and was able to find very similar work for a company specialising in interior decoration, carpet laying, etc. Arif often emphasized that he was doing the same job as in his country, which was very important for him.

Awet (f, Eritrea, 21)

Awet came to the UK about one year ago. When she first came she started to work as a leaflet distributor for an Eritrean restaurant but had found a job as a sales assistant in a high street fashion shop in the meantime which she was very happy about. Her dream is to go to university in the future and study journalism.

Ahlam (f, Somalia, 48)

Ahlam came to the UK more than 12 years ago from the Netherlands where she had fled to from Somalia. She is married and has proudly raised three boys. Her husband is working as a security guard and her children all attend good universities in the UK. Ahlam often spoke about being blamed for not having learnt more English which was difficult for her as her whole focus was to bring up her children well so they can have a better future.

Ali (m, Yemen, 25)

Ali had been granted asylum in the UK about one year prior to my field work. He had lived in the north of England for some time before coming to London. He found a job as a sales assistant in a high street fashion shop during the time of my field work which left him really excited. He was also trying his luck with some modelling.

Salam (f, Eritrea, 28)

Salam, a female Eritrean student who had come to seek asylum in the UK about four years ago. She had previously lived in the north of England but moved to London to find employment. She found a physically demanding job as a cleaner, however, had to stop working after about half a year as it was too much for her health.

Olga (f, Poland, 37)

Olga has been living in the UK for more than 12 years and working in different service giving jobs. At the time of my field work she was working for a bakery chain. She had started to attend ESOL classes at the college again after her experience of discrimination at her workplace. At the height of the EU referendum campaign, her then manager started to loudly bang the door to show her disapproval of Olga exchanging a few sentences in Polish with the delivery driver who came around in the evenings to pick up goods. After the Brexit vote, banging doors turned into her manager shouting 'Now we are gonna have Brexit and we can get rid of you people, then I don't have to listen to you anymore, you'll see!' Olga subsequently could change the branch of the bakery she was working for.

Daher (m, Syria, 33)

Daher came to Scotland as a refugee from Syria about three years prior to the research with his wife and daughter. He moved to London where part of his extended family are living and also in the hope that the capital would provide more opportunities for him. He is a trained dentist but was working in the hospitality industry during my field work.

Yousef (m, Morocco, 32)

Yousef is a Moroccan Berber who migrated to Belgium when he was in his mid-20s and holds a Belgian passport. He is a trained chef and came to the UK about two years prior to the research. He has been working in different restaurants to get more experience as he is planning to open his own restaurant in the future. He travelled several times to Dublin during my field work. He was thinking about relocating there and opening the restaurant there as he was questioning the possibility of a long-term future in the UK due to Brexit and the increased hostility towards foreigners.

Mo (m, Sudan, 27)

Mo came to the Netherlands from Sudan when he was a teenager. He trained as an electrician and moved to London about three years prior to my field work. He was working in health and social care for the council. He was considering moving to Sweden or Ireland as he was not very happy with the political developments in the UK.

Vanessa (f, Chile, 35)

Vanessa came to do her Master's degree at Imperial College ten years ago. She subsequently worked for different start ups. She is married and has two children. At the time of my field work she was in between jobs. She started English classes at the college as she missed being involved in collaborative team work. About half way through my field work she found a new position for an international company.

Wiktoría (f, Poland, 55)

Wiktoría came to the UK more than 12 years ago. She had lived for more than twenty years in Paris before and is married to a French doctor who has a GP practice in an affluent part of west London. Wiktoría was quite involved in the French community. She has three children who are all grown up and work in good positions in Paris and London.

Faduma (f, Somalia, 30)

Faduma came to the UK via the Netherlands to be with her husband about three years ago. She was often talking about that she would like to go back to the Netherlands but her husband wanted to stay in London as he thought the city would provide better opportunities. Faduma was working as a cleaner in a nearby shopping centre in the morning and usually came to her English classes directly from her job there. Her husband was working as a security guard.

Kristina (f, Slovakia, 28)

Kristina came to London about six years ago and has been working for different families as a housekeeper/nanny in wealthy areas of London. She trained as a secretary in Slovakia and was considering moving back there in the near future as the situation for young people had improved there.

Tahir (m, Syria, 28)

Tahir came to live in the UK together with his wife (a UK-born national working who had worked for a UK based company in the Middle East) about two years prior to my field work as living in Syria had become impossible due to the war. Tahir is a trained engineer, however, he was working as a security guard. He was frustrated that he was often perceived as a refugee by others instead of being recognised as the spouse of a UK-born citizen.

Halima (f, Iraq, 32)

Halima came to the UK about three years prior to my field work to join her husband who was granted asylum here about six years ago for political reasons as he was working for an Anglo-American magazine which put him in danger in Iraq. Before coming to the UK, Halima had lived in Jordan for about three years. She has two young children.

Haz (m, Iran, 23)

Haz came to the UK to seek asylum with the dream to study physics at Oxford University and to become a famous physicist. His teacher often told me how they thought he needed to get a dose of reality and better look for a job at KFC. Haz was working in a take away shop but was involved in a lot of activities, such as language exchanges between university students and refugees, to build up a network. However, being up against a tough system and the dynamics of the brutal migration milieu often frustrated him. About half way through my field work he decided to not continue his studies at the college but we stayed in contact.

Kassandra (f, Greece, 34)

Kassandra came to the UK about four years ago after having lived and worked in several other European countries for different lengths of time. She has different qualifications in the hospitality industry and was working for a wealthy family as housekeeper/chef, etc. at the time of my field work.

Irene (f, Macedonia, 35)

Irene joined her husband a few years prior to my field work. Her husband had already been living and working in the UK for about eight years. She has two school-aged children. Irene had trained as a dental nurse in Macedonia but was working part time in an Eastern European shop.

Amadi (m, Ethiopia, 28)

Amadi came to the UK two years ago. He first lived in Glasgow but decided to move to London where he had acquaintances and was also hoping to have better job opportunities. He was an athlete in his country but had to stop competing due to health reasons. He is currently working in a corner shop and preparing to embark on a nursing degree once his English has improved enough and he can secure a place on a training program.

Andrea (f, Brasil, 38)

Andrea is a trained nurse from Brasil and would like to work as a nurse in the UK as well. At the moment she is working as a carer. She came to the UK about five years ago and

often spoke about the close knit Brazilian community and how important this network was for her.

Jaah (m, Afghanistan, 40)

Jaah is a trained engineer from Afghanistan and came to the UK via Pakistan about eight years ago. His family could join him about four years later. Jaah has three children with his wife. He is working as a plumber and his wife is a carer. They are hoping that one of their sons is going to make it as a professional footballer.

Patakin (m, Hungary, 30)

Patakin has been living in London for about three years. Before he was living in Scotland and also Manchester for a short while. He came to London in the hope of finding a job in his profession as an accountant, however, this hope had not yet materialised during my field work and Patakin was working for a catering company instead.

Piotr (m, Poland, 34)

Piotr has been living in the UK for about ten years. He was working for a furniture company during the time of my field work and got promoted to a more office based position. He is married and his wife was expecting their first child. They both came to live in the UK from Poland together. They were able to secure a mortgage for a small house in one of London's suburbs which left Piotr very excited.

Asma (f, Chechnya, 34)

Asma and her husband came to seek asylum in the UK about seven years ago when it became untenable for them to live in Chechnya. They are both studying at the college whilst working full time in a shop and restaurant. They have one child and they are trying to secure a good school for their child.

Maria (f, Venezuela, 46)

Maria has been living in London for about ten years. When she first arrived she started to work as a kitchen porter but got a job as a cleaner through her South American connections in London. She recently got promoted to a supervisory position. She often works double shifts to make sure she can afford rent in an area of London with better schools for her three children.

Leo (m, Brasil, 34)

Leo has been living in London for about nine years mainly working as a cleaner with other Brazilians. He is a trained physiotherapist but has not been able to secure a job in his profession in London. He is married and has two children. Together with his wife and mother-in-law he is also running a kind of take-away service for Brazilian food from their kitchen.

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET - STUDENTS

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of my student project from October 2017 to October 2018. I am currently studying for a PhD at the University of Cambridge. My project is about the experiences of adult migrants in London and how they feel and think about learning English and coming to their English classes. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this!

Who will conduct the research?

I will conduct the research myself. Nobody else will be involved. The research is independent from the college.

My contact details are: [name; phone number; email address]

What is the aim of the project?

The aim of the project is to help us understand the language learning experience of people who have moved to London from other countries.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You would be asked to participate in an interview and different other activities, for example taking some pictures about your life and telling me about it and some group activities with other students. I will also participate in some of your English lessons at the college.

What happens to the data collected?

I will use the data to write my thesis. This will be read by my supervisor and examiners at university. If everything goes well, I might have a chance to publish an article in a journal later or do another project in the future where the data might be useful.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All information you give will be treated confidentially. Your name will not appear in the study and you will not be identifiable. I will also tell you about what I found out.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to stop at any time without giving a reason and you can always join again afterwards.

What will be the benefits?

You will have a chance to share and talk about your experiences. By doing this you will help find better ways of teaching English to people who come to this country like you.

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET - TEACHERS

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of my PhD project at the University of Cambridge.

My project is interested in the politics, practice, and experience of migrant language education for adults in the context of migrant integration. As part of my research, I am very interested in finding out how practitioners in the field feel and think about these issues. To better understand your experiences of teaching adult migrants in the UK, I would like to ask you to participate in an interview with me. The interview will probably take about 45mins and centre around the following topics.

- Your experience of working in the field of adult migrant language education
- Your thoughts on developments in the field
- Things you are happy/unhappy about or like/dislike in the context of your work
- Anything you would like to see change
- Your thoughts on the experiences of your students of coming to the UK, learning English, attending classes
- Your thoughts on integration and the learning of English in the context of integration

It would be great if I could record the interview or, if not, make some notes during the interview to help me remember later.

All information you give will be treated confidentially. Your personal details will be anonymised, and I will take extra care for you not to be identifiable. You can withdraw from the research at any time.

You can contact me at any time: [contact details]

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have read the information sheet about this project • I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this project • I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions • I have received enough information about this project • I understand that I am free to withdraw from this project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At any time ○ Without giving a reason for withdrawing ○ Without affecting my future with the college • I understand that my research data may be used for a further project, but I am able to opt out of this if I so wish, by ticking here. <input type="checkbox"/> • I agree to take part in this study | |
| Signed (participant) | Date |
| Name in block letters | |
| | |
| Signature of researcher | Date |

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE – STUDENTS

Migration – possible questions

Can you tell me about your experience of coming to London? What was it like for you?
What did leaving your country mean for you? What did coming to London mean for you?
Previous migration experience?
What does it mean for you to live in London? What is it like for you to live in London? Can you describe your life for me? What is a typical day/ a typical week like for you?

Learning English/use of languages – possible questions

What does it mean for you to learn English? How do you feel about learning English?
What does it mean for you to speak/use English? How do you feel about it?
What does the English language mean to you? How important is it in your life? How important is it for you to know English?
What does it mean for you to use other languages? How do you feel about it?
Can you tell me about your experience of learning English? What do you find easy/difficult about it? Anything that stands out?
What does coming to English classes mean to you? How do you feel about it?
Can you remember a time when you were very happy/weren't very happy with your learning? Can you describe it for me?
Can you remember a time when you were very happy/not very happy in class? Can you describe it for me?
Can you describe your learning journey so far? What are your expectations for the course you are taking at the moment?
Is there anything that had an impact on your learning? Can you describe this for me?
Do you remember a situation you think was important for your learning experience? Can you describe it? How did you feel?
Can you remember a situation when using English made you very happy? Can you describe it for me? What was it like?
Can you remember a situation when using English didn't make you happy, was difficult? Can you describe the event for me?
What does learning/speaking English mean for living in London?

Integration – possible questions

What do you understand by integration? What does it mean to you?
What does it mean in your life? How do you feel in your community/neighbourhood?
Who is responsible for it? How do you think it happens or does not happen?
Can you think of some examples from your own experience?
How do you feel about people in London in terms of integration?

Future – possible questions

What do you think your life will look like in the future? How do you feel about the future?
Is there anything in particular you would like to do in the future?

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE - TEACHERS

Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of teaching English / managing the ESOL/EFL department? What do you like/don't you like about it? How do you feel about it?

What are your views on the development of ESOL/EFL over the years? Anything that stands out for you? What are your views on the distinction between ESOL and EFL?

Is there anything that makes you particularly happy/unhappy or anything you particularly like/dislike in the context of your work?

Would you like to see any changes in terms of your work? If so, what would you like to change and why?

What do you think does learning English or coming to college mean to your students?

What do you understand by integration? What does it mean to you?

How do you think it happens or does not happen?

Can you think of some examples from your own experience?

How do you feel about people in London in terms of integration?

What role does language play for integration?

What is your view of the role of learning English for integration? How do you see the role of instructed settings, your role?

APPENDIX 7: TOPIC GUIDE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

These statements are from two recent government reports about social integration in the UK:

All immigrants should be expected to have either learned English before coming to the UK or be enrolled in compulsory ESOL classes upon arrival. As was acknowledged by the Casey Review, speaking English is the key to full participation in our society and economy, and is a prerequisite for meaningful engagement with most British people'

No one should be able to live in our country for a considerable length of time without speaking English.

What do you think about these statements?

How does reading them make you feel?

How do you feel about living in the UK, London?

What is your experience of learning and speaking English?

APPENDIX 8: OVERVIEW – TEACHER INTERVIEWS

| | |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Teacher Jen |
| 2 | Teacher Elena |
| 3 | Teacher Olivia |
| 4 | Teacher Sharon |
| 5 | Teacher Hannah |
| 6 | Teacher Florence |
| 7 | Teacher John |
| 8 | Teacher Luke |
| 9 | Teacher Dan |
| 10 | Manager ESOL |
| 11 | Manager EFL – no recorded interview but numerous lengthy conversations about the interview topics throughout my fieldwork |

As discussed in the methodology chapter, I refrain from providing biographical descriptors or any other additional information about the teachers/managers who participated in the research to exercise extra care to protect anonymity and confidentiality.

APPENDIX 9: OVERVIEW – STUDENT INTERVIEWS

| Interview | Student Name (mix of pseudonyms and real names dependent on participants' preference) | Country of Birth | Age |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| 1 | Husam (m) | Syria | 27 |
| 2 | Meserat (f) | Eritrea | 39 |
| 3 | Salah (m) | Sudan | 41 |
| 4 | Ana (f) | Russia | 45 |
| 5 | Farida (f) | Libya | 32 |
| 6 | Elira (f) | Albania | 29 |
| 7 | Izad (m) | Lebanon | 32 |
| 8 | Agnes (f) | Albania | 35 |
| 9 | Ronak (f) | Syria | 39 |
| 10 | Pouya (m) | Iran | 26 |
| 11 | Leila (f) | Iran | 42 |
| 12 | Julia (f) | Belarus | 42 |
| 13 | Rak (m) | Iraq | 26 |
| 14 | Arif (m) | Ethiopia | 25 |
| 15 | Awet (f) | Eritrea | 21 |
| 16 | Ahlam (f) | Somalia | 48 |
| 17 | Ali (m) | Yemen | 25 |
| 18 | Salam (f) | Eritrea | 28 |
| 19 | Olga (f) | Poland | 37 |
| 20 | Daher (m) | Syria | 33 |
| 21 | Yousef (m) | Morocco | 32 |
| 22 | Mo (m) | Sudan | 27 |
| 23 | Vanessa (f) | Chile | 35 |
| 24 | Wiktorja (f) Faduma (f) | Poland Somalia | 55 30 |
| 25 | Kristina (f) | Slovakia | 28 |
| 26 | Tahir (m) | Syria | 28 |
| 27 | Halima (f) | Iraq | 32 |
| 28 | Haz (m) | Iran | 23 |
| 29 | Kassandra (f) Irene (f) | Greece Macedonia | 34 35 |
| 30 | Amadi (m) | Ethiopia | 28 |
| 31 | Andrea (f) | Brasil | 38 |
| 32 | Jaah (m) | Afghanistan | 40 |
| 33 | Patakin (m) Piotr (m) | Hungary Poland | 30 34 |
| 34 | Asma (f) | Chechnya | 34 |
| 35 | Maria (f) Leo (m) | Venezuela Brasil | 46 34 |

APPENDIX 10: OVERVIEW - FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

| Focus Group | Participants |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Izad (m) Awet (f) Tahir (m) Olga (f) Maria (f) Ali (m) |
| 2 | Irene (f) Andrea (f) Meserat (f) Mo (m) Husam (m) Piotr (m) |
| 3 | Kassandra (f) Salam (f) Patakin (m) Jaah (m) Farida (f) Elira (f) |
| 4* | Halima (f) Faduma (f) Vanessa (f) Asma (f) |

* This group discussion was not intended as female only but due to strike action on London's public transport the male participants were unable to attend. However, this accidental composition of the group centred the discussions much more around childcare, relationships to schools, childcare facilities, and other parents. Moreover, experiences of discrimination and racism in these contexts became a central topic of the group discussion due to the fact that one of the group members had just encountered a very upsetting discriminatory incidence with her son during the school run. She was still visibly upset and trying to process what had just happened as she joined the group discussion straight from dropping her son off at school. As the group were working together through this instance with other mothers in the group having been exposed to similar situations on numerous occasions, I abandoned the topic guide and stopped the recording.

APPENDIX 11: FIELDNOTES SAMPLE

24 January 2018

'Migrant division of labour in the classroom and the emotional cost/labour of being bumped down'

I am participating in the XXX class again. Everyone seems to be really happy and looking forward to today's lesson. As usual, the atmosphere is warm, friendly and supportive. As the lesson starts and everyone is settling down the teacher tells the students that she has a very exciting announcement for them. She projects a leaflet on the whiteboard from the borough. The large shopping centre which is not too far from the college is going to be expanded and there will be a recruitment fair in a few days. The teacher thinks it would be a really good idea for the students to go there. The students ask some questions and we are all going through the flyer together. It becomes clear that this job fair is only for service giving jobs, cleaners, security personnel, delivery drivers, and so forth. The excitement in the class goes down, most of the students are currently in employment and pretty much exactly in such kind of employment. So going to the job fair does not really provide an opportunity to move up or be socially mobile. The teacher keeps on encouraging everybody and repeats that this is really a great opportunity and they should go and have a look... Just as she is about to move on Agnes comes in. She apologises for being late and the teacher uses the chance to ask Leo to tell Agnes about the job fair. When Agnes hears the word job fair, she gets excited but when Leo starts talking about the kind of jobs that will be recruited for at the job fair she sighs deeply and starting to talk about her experiences she describes how difficult it often is for her to be faced with this reality that she only jobs on offer are 'low jobs' as she refers to them. 'It's so hard when you're background is different', she exclaims and almost starts crying. One of her classmates says some comforting words to her in Albanian but fails to cheer her up. Agnes continues to explain 'It's not easy... I mean I was a designer for curtains in my country but now...' The hurt and pain are written all over her face and are palpable in the room. Many of the other students sympathise with her but two of her fellow classmates become quite invigorated and tell her that she just has to accept this situation. 'You have to accept it and try your best'. The gist of the advice was that she should go there, market herself, albeit under value or for something different than her

profession. 'That's just how it is, when you come to a new place that's what you have to accept. Of course you will go down, only if you're lucky you don't have to. You have to try'. Their speech fails to encourage Agnes and makes her look even more in pain and hurt. She gets out a tissue as her eyes are filling with tears and just keeps on mumbling 'But, but it's not easy, it's not easy'. The teacher seems to be a bit uncomfortable and quickly gets today's lesson topic projected on the whiteboard and tells the class 'Okay, let's move on'. The class continues and all the activities are mainly about exam practice. Agnes stays really quiet for the rest of the lesson and after the class finishes, she leaves quickly. Some of the students decide to go to the cafeteria to have a coffee together and practise a bit more for the exam. They are inviting me to come along.

APPENDIX 12: INTERVIEW SAMPLE WITH NOTES

| | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Interview Transcript Ana 23/02/2018 (part) Integration -Muslim market - English as 'remedy' |
| Silke | <i>What do you think about integration? Do you kn/</i> |
| Ana | <i>Integration, I think I'm very good with it, I think.'</i> [laughs slightly] <i>I tell you why ... because, just for example, if I understood right what you mean, example when I came to Sweden and they have special way to celebrate example Christmas time, they celebrate 24, England 25, and they drink this Glögg with raisins and almond, that is not my tradition but it became my tradition. And when I was coming every year to my daughter her friends do not only see me as Russian and ask me cook Russian soup but more international ... you know the world is so mixed now'. I am not only Russian, and I see the world what is good, aha, that is good I do like that. That is not good, no I will not do that. Wherever I am I just try to pick up something good. For example, Christmas we now celebrate three times [laughs]. On 24th Swedish and my daughter has Swedish traditional things in her home too and her friends they want to know Swedish traditions too. And then we celebrate English Christmas on 25th and then after two weeks Russian Christmas is coming. So we celebrate three times [laughs]</i> <i>and this year actually I like it when we was sitting in, we bought special Swedish things and everybody of us was thinking thank you so much Sweden and we were cheers for Sweden. I think I am Swedish citizen also with love. And I think many people coming somewhere and just think what can I take, but what you can give. Also, for example when I was living in Sweden I worked in Denmark for 12 years and I learn the Danish language. ... When I cook food, I don't just cook Russian food, I cook different. The world is so mixed now.</i> |
| Silke | <i>That's interesting</i> |
| Ana | <i>But many people coming somewhere and just think what can I take, but what you can give?</i> |
| Silke | <i>I see, what do you mean exactly?</i> |
| | <i>For example, when I was living in Sweden, I worked in Denmark for 12 years and I learnt the Danish language ... I lived in many countries but I always learn language - in Latvia, in Sweden and then I start work in Denmark, I travel there every day and I learn language. Now I'm in England because my daughter is here but I learn English maybe I go back Sweden, I don't know but I learn English now. I'm always after language, I'm not like, like, hmmm, in Sweden so many people come now but don't learn, bad, bad, very bad, ...</i> |

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Silke | <i>So how do you feel about London in terms of integration and people? Do you think people are integr/</i> |
| Ana | <i>No [straightforward and assertive tone]</i> |
| Silke | <i>Aah</i> |
| Ana | <i>[more hesitant] You know here is ... Muslim society [tone of voice changes slightly] I don't know these areas where people living and this kind of [gesturing to indicate the wearing of a burka and hijab] maybe it is culture, but I don't know, I don't know. I also have Russian traditional clothes, but I don't wear it, because it is nowadays, excuse me But some people think that is ... I don't know, I don't know ...</i> |
| Silke | <i>So, do you feel everybody is doing their own thing?</i> |
| Ana | <i>Hmm, yes, example in Sweden is same, I saw they don't want integrate. They live in own society. They don't integrate. I have many examples and stories from newspaper and so. I always read newspaper and discuss with my friends. They do what they want to do [pauses for a little while, continues in a more conciliatory tone] maybe it is because it is so expensive city and people live together and keep own community ... for example, I live in east London there is part of street like market like in Bangladesh or Dubai or I</i> |
| Silke | <i>Do you sometimes go there?</i> |
| Ana | <i>I actually go there when I go to idea store</i> |
| Silke | <i>What's the idea store</i> |
| Ana | <i>Idea store very good place where my daughter live, is for study and</i> |
| Silke | <i>Is it like a community college or</i> |
| Ana | <i>You can study there and they have library I think I show you [shows me a picture on her phone]</i> |
| Silke | <i>Oh, I see, it looks very nice, very new</i> |
| Ana | <i>very good, idea store, it is a very good place for study, education. I was looking there for English classes, but the time was not good, now I go there for computer course and learn some design I need to know for my floristry course. Everybody there is interested to study. It's a very good place. And every time I go there, I'm passing this market. First time I saw it I thought oh it is very good and interesting, I can buy vegetable and so but then I feel I don't belong there ... and they gave me higher price than people wearing Muslim clothes.</i> |
| Silke | <i>So you feel you don't belong there?</i> |
| Ana | <i>I am going there because I go to this idea store not only for my course also to use the library or do different things. But that is another London, I don't know, that is not London</i> |
| Silke | <i>Oh, really? What do you mean, it's not London?</i> |

| | |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ana | <i>No, not London, you know, like the big London with big history and so famous in world with important building and ... [she pauses for a while before she continues] the market and idea store is very close, next each other, the people in the market should be in idea store and learn, because if you study, work and develop yourself you will be fine.</i> |
| Silke | <i>So there should be no market?</i> |
| Ana | <i>No, the market can stay but need to change, be different and the people should be in idea store.</i> |
| Silke | <i>To learn English?</i> |
| Ana | <i>Yes, English and other things.</i> |
| Silke | <i>So they don't speak English?</i> |
| Ana | <i>No, they do, but they need learn more.</i> |
| Silke | <i>Oh, that's interesting</i> |
| Ana | <i>I can show you some time, we can go together</i> |
| Silke | <i>Great, that would be nice</i> |
| Ana | <i>Yeah, and we can go together to idea store. I like idea store, very good, idea store</i> |
| Silke | <i>Yeah, let's go together some time</i> |
| Ana | <i>Yes</i> |
| Silke | <i>Oh, wow look it's already 4 o'clock. I didn't realise it was so late already.</i> |
| | <i>[a bit more chit chat and we conclude the interview]</i> |

Post interview notes - Ana

23/02/2018

Today I met with Ana in the college canteen. I have known her for quite some time now and have regularly met her in various lessons. I often have informal chats with her, she is very outgoing and always happy to talk about things. I was very much looking forward to the interview with her to get to know her more and learn more about her experiences. And I was not to be disappointed. Her migratory trajectory is quite remarkable from Russia to Latvia to Sweden (from where she regularly commuted to work to Denmark) and now to London to be with her daughter who has just embarked upon a high-flying career at one of the leading law firms in the City (after graduating top of her class from the LSE).

The interview was really extensive, Ana was happy to talk about her rich experience in detail and in the end we realised that we had been speaking for almost two hours! At times I felt a bit uncomfortable, particularly when we came to talk about integration and Ana voiced her anti-foreigner sentiments towards specific people which I found quite challenging and definitely have to read up more on how others have dealt with

such situations in their research. At the end we agreed to go to the market together one time and Ana also wants to show me the idea store she was talking about. So maybe there is a chance to talk about some of the things a bit more.

27/02/2018

Today Ana came to me saying that she had been thinking a bit more about the things we had talked about. Especially about how important it was to learn the language if you move to a new country. This is really interesting that she felt she wanted to add to what she had said previously. She told me that for her learning the language will always be important because when she moves somewhere she wants to learn the language and about the culture, traditions and history of the country. But she had thought about some of her friends in Sweden and she told me about one of them who is from Germany but is living in Sweden at the moment and has a job at Astra Zeneca. He is married to a Russian woman and at home they speak Russian. At work in the lab he always speaks English. So Ana told me that it is not necessary that everyone has to learn the language of the country. There are 'these important people with outstanding jobs and who the companies send around the world' as she referred to them, they are 'different' she added. So it depends, 'for a normal job and life', Ana thought it was necessary to learn the language of the country but for 'these important people' it was different because they work together and they speak English but then they learn the local language anyway 'because they are intelligent', she concluded.

