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Information sharing in ESOL classes: People, objects and places

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore information sharing in two ESOL classes. ESOL learners are migrants learning English as part of adult basic education. Information sharing is explored through a practice theory lens using the framework of information grounds theory.

The research investigates the characteristics of the two classes as information grounds, how people, objects and places mediate information sharing in these classes, how information sharing is interleaved with other practices and how critical theories of place and embodiment can inform our understanding of information practice.

The research was a constructivist case study of two community ESOL classes in an English city. Observation was the primary data collection method but a range of other methods were used to build an understanding of the case.

The characteristics of the two classes as information grounds were explored, giving a rich picture of the overlapping contexts of migration and ESOL and the particular contexts of the two classes. A structured contextual narrative of information sharing episodes was used as the basis for analysis.

Information sharing was identified as a core information practice for the two classes, and its links with information literacy were explored. The concepts of informative people, places and objects were developed to explore how information sharing was mediated in these two cases. Key characteristics of accessibility, mediation, pleasure and the non-cognitive were identified as central to the informative person, place and object. Further findings related to the need to take a critical approach to embodied information practice.

The research adds to our knowledge in a number of areas. It provides more context to LIS migration research; offers insight into information sharing more generally, and involves a novel application of information grounds theory. It also contributes to ESOL by demonstrating the value of ESOL classrooms as information grounds and suggesting what kinds of arrangements may be productive of information sharing.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis I explore the information sharing of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners, through a case study of two community ESOL classes in a city in the North of England. I adopt a practice approach to information sharing and use information grounds theory to frame the boundary to my cases. In this introductory chapter I begin to tell the story of my research journey; presenting my motivation for this research, setting out the research problem and research aims, and introducing my theoretical framework.

1.2 ESOL

ESOL learners are migrants learning English as part of adult basic education. I define my understanding of ESOL and migrant and discuss relevant research in chapter 2. However it is important at this early stage to frame ESOL learners as migrants as well as language learners, and the ESOL class as not only as a place to learn a language but as a complex communicative space in its own right (Baynham, 2006; Cooke, Winstanley, & Bryers, 2015).

1.3 Personal experience

Before starting this research I worked in ESOL settings as a researcher, a volunteer tutor and a learning champion. This professional experience showed me that ESOL classes are significant information sites for learners and that there is a relationship between their information practice and language learning. I also have experience of the complex and diverse information practices of some of these learners and have seen how these practices can impact on their lives both positively and negatively. As part of my work I met individuals who were finding it difficult to transfer their information practices to a new country and wanted to find ways to help them. The starting point of this research was then to find out more about the role the ESOL classes played in this process of migrants adjusting to new information practices.

1.4 Research context

I started this research in October 2014 and completed it against the background of the European Union (EU) referendum (HM Government 2016), an atmosphere of increased intolerance for migrants (J. Burnett, 2016) and a climate of sustained austerity (Hastings, Bailey, Bramley, Gannon, & Watkins, 2015). Participants in my first interviews expressed concern that the continued existence of community learning was under threat. My last visit to one of the classes after the EU referendum saw the teacher distributing leaflets that advised learners how to deal with racist incidents. My research was informed and shaped by these contexts and I do not take a neutral stance. As Elmborg (2006) suggests with regard to information literacy, neutrality is not an option. Equally Collins (2002) writing from a Black Feminist epistemology asks that knowledge production be for the purpose of overcoming social injustice and creating better worlds. I consider in chapter 8 how this stance was reflected in the final product of my research.

I have chosen to write this thesis in the first person to reflect my belief that all research is situated, limited and particular, rather than objective (Haraway, 1988). I note that it is still less common within LIS (Library and Information Science) to write in the first person. Nevertheless, a review of recently published theses from my own department suggests that there are a small but increasing number of doctoral students who have chosen to write in the first person.

1.5 Research journey

This research is a constructivist case study of two ESOL classes. Flyvbjerg (2011) suggests that the case study provides invaluable researcher training and an integral part of this case study is my journey towards being a researcher. I can trace this through the tension I experienced when I moved from working in community learning to researching in LIS. I can identify how I became inculcated within this discipline and learnt to evaluate my research in these terms. However I started my doctoral journey wanting to conduct research that was useful and made a practical difference. Becoming a researcher, producing a contribution to knowledge, and benefiting my participants were the three, at times conflicting and at times, aims that underpinned my research.

1.6 Research fields and theoretical frameworks

In this thesis I position myself within LIS and draw on research from four fields: information behaviour, information literacy, ESOL and to a lesser extent migration studies. I note the wide ranging discussion as to whether LIS can be seen as a discipline (Hjørland, 2014), nevertheless I have found it useful to place my research under its broad roof. I follow Limberg and Sundin (2006) in seeing that there is a value in bringing information behaviour and information literacy together. I also contribute by connecting ESOL research and practice with the fields of information behaviour and information literacy. This connection does not seem to have been explored in previous research.

I situate my research within the smaller and developing research field of information practice. Savolainen (2008, p.2) describes information practices as “*a set of socially and culturally established ways to identify, seek, use, and share the information available in various sources such as television, newspapers, and the Internet*”. Within my research I focus on practice theory as a way to understand how information activities shape and are shaped by a particular site. I take a broadly Schatzkian (2001; 2002) approach to practice. In this way I see the ESOL class as a site where information practices are part of arrangements with people and objects in a particular place and time. Their meaning comes from their positioning in these arrangements. This positioning is not only spatial, but based on rules, values and understanding. I discuss my understanding and application of practice theory further in chapters 3 and 4.

The other theoretical perspective I apply to my research is information grounds theory (Pettigrew, 1999). The premise of information grounds is that they are a social setting where people come together for a purpose and as a byproduct of this, share information. I significantly adapt this theory as I do not see information sharing as a byproduct but as a practice entwined with other practices. I follow Prigoda and McKenzie (2007) in using the theory as a staging post rather than an endpoint for my research.

The focus of my research is the practice of information sharing which I understand as a situated and collective activity (Pilerot & Limberg, 2011).

1.7 Research problem and research aim

This research was framed by the understanding that ESOL learners are migrants, that migrant settlement is an information problem (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Lloyd, Lipu, & Kennan, 2010) and that ESOL classes are a significant information site (Cooke & Simpson, 2008). However, this research was also emergent and inductive and so the research aims and questions changed over the course of the project. Simons (2009) identifies that an emergent design is common to qualitative case studies; suggesting the focus will shift due to an increased understanding, a change in events, or a change in emphasis on the part of the researcher or the case study partner. In section 3.2 I discuss when, how and why my research questions changed.

It is highly significant that during this emergent research process, information sharing was identified as the central information practice in these ESOL classes. It is equally significant that place-based and embodied information emerged as a key element in this information sharing. The research problem is therefore centred on increasing our understanding of the practice of information sharing for ESOL learners as one group of migrants with particular reference to place based information. Previous research has identified place as important for migrant settlement (Guajardo, Gomez, & Vannini, 2016; Lingel, 2014; Lloyd & Wilkinson, 2017) but has not considered this from a critical perspective. In the same way previous research has shown information sharing to be important for migrants (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004; Khoir, Du, & Koronios, 2015a; Qayyum, Thompson, Kennan, & Lloyd, 2014) but we still need to more about how this ac-

tually works in particular contexts (Caidi, Allard, & Quirke, 2010).

This research comes with the underpinning belief that understanding more about the information sharing arrangements for migrant language learners, has the potential to benefit this group. We can relate this to Lloyd (2010b) who says in her discussion of information literacy that we need to seek out the bundles of arrangements that make up information literacy activity, exploring how these can help or limit information practices.

The overall aim of the research is therefore to explore how the practice of information sharing is enacted in the site of two ESOL classes. Four research questions were developed to explore this aim.

RQ1 What are the characteristics of the two classes as information grounds?

RQ2 How is information sharing mediated by people, objects and places?

RQ3 How is information sharing interleaved with other practices within this context?

RQ4 How can critical theories of place and embodiment inform our understanding of information sharing?

1.8 Significance of the study

As I discuss, the motivation for this project came from my professional experience. However, it became doctoral research when I realised that there was no existing research to answer the specific questions I was interested in. ESOL learners have received little attention from LIS and equally, ESOL researchers and practitioners have not addressed information behaviour, information literacy or related concepts to any great extent. There is also very limited research on migrant information practice within the UK. Beyond this there is valuable international research, but we still need to develop a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of migrants and their information use. As my research progressed I became aware that my research potentially offers a novel perspective on information grounds theory, and further insight into information sharing as a practice.

1.9 Outline of thesis

Following this introductory chapter my thesis is composed of seven further chapters. In chapter 2 I situate my research in the landscape of previous literature. In chapter 3 I outline my research approach, while in chapter 4, I detail how I applied this approach and discuss the pilot stage of my research. In chapters 5 and 6, I present the findings of my two cases and in chapter 7 synthesise these findings with the existing literature. Finally in chapter 8 I conclude this thesis by evaluating my research, considering its contributions and suggesting further research.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on the literature from information literacy, information behaviour, ESOL and, to a lesser extent migration studies, where they are relevant to my particular research. In this chapter I first explain how I use the terms migrant and settlement, define my understanding of ESOL and discuss its research and practice. I then define my understanding of information and situate my work within the field of information practice. I then narrow the focus of the review to explore research on information literacy and language learning, the information practices of migrant groups, and ESOL learners and information use. I conclude by identifying how my own work is situated within this research landscape and how it can potentially contribute to our knowledge.

2.2 Search strategies

The construction of this literature review extended over the life of my doctoral research with three phases. Throughout this process, my search strategies were iterative and dialogic, rather than systematic. They were similar to Bates' (1989) berrypicking model where searching formed part of learning. I relied heavily on a process of backwards and forward chaining, and searching for additional work by relevant authors. I used Google scholar and LISA for much of my searching but supplemented this with databases such as Web of Science, SCOPUS and the university library catalogue, and more structured searching when I required

more exhaustive results. I reviewed the bibliographies of recent doctoral theses in related areas and found these useful sources. Personal recommendations were also invaluable to me, for example discussion at conferences, seminars, research group and supervision meetings, and on social media.

The initial stage of my literature review was conducted during the design phase and here my search focused on generalised searches for information literacy, ESOL and community learning, as well as more specific searches for information literacy and information behaviour in relation to migrant groups, and ESOL and information. I supplemented this by setting up search alerts on “ESOL or ESL” and “information literacy” in October 2014. The second stage of my literature review was in response to emerging themes from my data collection and analysis. New, more specific searches in areas such as low literacy, space, gender, small worlds, and information grounds were conducted as a result of this process. I also extended my reading in information behaviour more generally. As my theoretical framework began to take shape I added “information practice” in November 2015, “information grounds” in November 2016 and “information sharing” in January 2017 to my search alerts. The final stage of my literature review was conducted in tandem with the writing of my discussion chapter. This was a process of consolidation rather than the addition of substantial new literature, however, new areas continued to be added, for example, I looked more generally at theories of migration.

2.3 Migrants and settlement

ESOL learners need to be understood as migrants as well as language learners. However, the definition of what constitutes a migrant is complex and not used consistently. Andersen and Blinder (2015) provide a useful summary explaining that migrant has no definition within British law. In this way it can variously be defined as being foreign born, being a foreign national, moving to the United Kingdom (UK) for more than a year, or being subject to immigration law. Migrant is often also conflated with ethnic or religious characteristics as the popular distinction between expats and migrants suggests. This is problematic in public policy terms and challenging for academic research where precision is needed. Refugee and asylum seeker do have internationally recognised definitions; however, these statuses are often not used accurately within the UK. They are sometimes classified with other migrants and sometimes separately. Lloyd

(2017b, p.37), in a conceptual paper, argues that refugees are a particular and special case and need to be considered separately from other migrants stating *“the title of refugee is political and with this designation comes rights and resources. A refugee’s migration is forced and for those concerned it is outside their control”*.

This research acknowledges the complexity of these terms and takes the position that any definition of migrant needs to be understood within a particular context. A clear example of this is Britain’s colonial history. For example, Bhambra (2015) challenges the use of the word migrant for those coming from the former commonwealth as they should be regarded as citizens. In order to simplify this complexity this research draws on Castles, de Haas and Miller (2014, p.25) who suggest that *“migration and settlement are a long drawn out process that will be played out for the rest of the migrant’s life, and affect subsequent generations”*. Within this research therefore, a migrant is a person who has come from a different country to live in the UK. I also include refugees and asylum seekers within the wider category of migrant while remaining aware of their particular circumstances. As O’Reilly (2012) argues there are overlaps between forced and voluntary migration. Despite public policy seeking a clear division between these categories, the terms refugee and asylum seeker are political constructs. Yarris and Castañeda (2015) suggest that the analytic dichotomy between voluntary and forced migration needs ethnographic interrogation, given its severe impact on the lives of displaced people.

The concepts of settlement, social inclusion, and integration are equally problematic. Guo (2012) notes that only migrants are expected to integrate. He identifies that lifelong learning can help migrants in their transition but that we need to move beyond an approach which seeks sameness. I adopt settlement here in preference to integration and inclusion as it seems less normative. Settlement does have an official definition within British law as the status that gives foreign nationals the right to remain indefinitely in the UK (Andersen & Blinder, 2015). However it also has a wider definition as expressed by Caidi and Allard (2005) who see settlement as the initial stages of migrant transition; involving language learning, and the search for housing, employment, schools and health care. This is again different to Castles et al. (2014) who see settlement as a much wider and longer process closer to Caidi and Allard’s (2005) definition of integration. Within my research I define settlement as a practice. O’Reilly (2012) argues that settlement and migration can both be seen as practices with settlement as the local and particular, and migration the global and the general.

Within this literature review I draw on LIS research that focuses on migrants in the widest sense and uses a variety of terms for their settlement. This includes some studies of particular kinds of migrants such as refugees, migrants from particular countries and particular groups such as medical professionals. Some of the migrants within other LIS research are also identified as ESOL learners (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004; J. Johnston, 2016a; Lingel, 2014). Lingel (2014) usefully argues for a transnational approach to migration rather than focusing on a single nationality, and that her participants can be understood as newcomers. Finally I note that immigrant is also commonly used within LIS research as it denotes a permanent rather than temporary settler (Caidi et al., 2010). However I use migrant rather than immigrant in line with the discipline of migration studies, and with the recognition that migration is never finished.

2.4 ESOL

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is generally used in the UK to describe the learning of migrant groups rather than EFL (English as a Foreign Language) which refers to students learning English in their home countries, or overseas where the primary purpose of their stay is education (Rosenberg, 2007). Cooke and Simpson (2008) caricature the difference as a classroom language activity; in a restaurant role play the ESOL learner would be the waiter, and the EFL learner the customer. This is a troubling analogy, but it does reflect the status accorded to the ESOL learner in some discourses. While there is an argument that ESOL and EFL have in fact been unhelpfully divided from each other and should be brought more closely together (E. Williams & Williams, 2007), the position adopted within this research is that ESOL as taught in community settings has a particular status and cannot be fully equated with EFL. ESOL learners are different to EFL learners not only because of their backgrounds but because of the nature of their learning. Rosenberg (2007) suggests that ESOL learners are concerned with acquiring a tool rather than mastering a subject.

ESOL then also rests within community learning in general and functional skills in particular, as well as within second language teaching. The terminology surrounding post compulsory education is complex. I use the term community learning in this research rather than any of the alternatives involving lifelong, informal, adult or education. This matches the terminology of the case study site

Level	ESOL Skills for Life	IELTS	CEFR
Beginner	Pre-entry		
Elementary	Entry one	1	A1
Pre-intermediate	Entry two	2-3	A2
Intermediate	Entry three	4	B1
Upper-intermediate	Level one	5	B2
Advanced	Level two	6	C1

Table 2.1: ESOL levels comparison

but is not unproblematic (Billett, 2012; Jackson, 2011). However ESOL learners are also different from those learning the other functional skills of maths, literacy and IT. Roberts and Baynham (2006) suggest that their migrant status and the significance of second language socialisation set them apart from other functional skills learners.

ESOL provision moves from pre-entry level where the learners have no knowledge of English through entry levels one, two and three to level one and two. Learners who have accomplished level two have a relatively high level of English (broadly equivalent to the requirements for university entry as an undergraduate whose first language is not English) and beyond this move away from dedicated ESOL provision. Further comparison of ESOL levels is included in table 2.1 (British Council 2015). I include a comparison with IELTS (International English Language Testing System) because it is a standard English language test widely used in U.K. higher education and with CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) because it is a framework which seeks to standardise language competencies across the European Union.

Within the UK ESOL provision is devolved to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and this research is concerned with England although the four countries share some contexts. This review will not consider the full history of ESOL but will contextualise current provision.

2.4.1 ESOL research

A review of ESOL research from 2006 (Roberts & Baynham, 2006) identifies several key themes: sociocultural theories coming to fore, second language social-

isation; the classroom as a place for social interaction; language learning and identity, and the problem of the skills agenda, but argues that there is no strong research base for ESOL. MacDonald's (2013) more recent thesis shows that the intervening years have not seen a substantial increase in ESOL research while Jones (2015) argues we still need more research on the day to day practices of ESOL teachers and learners.

2.4.2 Current context of ESOL

Any discussion of ESOL has to be framed by the discourse of austerity prevalent at the time this research was conducted. This means that ESOL is chronically underfunded (Simpson, Cooke, & Callaghan, 2011). Against a posited figure of nearly a million in need of learning English in 2014 (Paget & Stevenson, 2014), there were 110,500 ESOL learners funded by the Skills Funding Agency in 2015/16 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016). This figure has been in year on year decline and there is general agreement of a significant and unmet need for ESOL (Paget & Stevenson, 2014; Schuller & Watson, 2009). The precarious status of ESOL and the community learning sector more widely has led to a drive to prove value, as shown by recent research which focuses on the economic value of community learning (Dolan & Fujiwara, 2012). Austerity also manifests itself in the dialogue surrounding professional teachers and volunteers. Podziewska (2014) writes on the anxieties of professionalism and volunteerism within ESOL. Roden and Cupper (2016) identify the need to safeguard the professionalism of ESOL teachers. Beer (2013) writes on how to design a community learning curriculum for difficult times and the need to do things differently as a response to austerity.

It is also useful to understand two previous turns in ESOL's recent history; the introduction of Skills for Life as the ESOL national curriculum in 2001, and the later re-framing of ESOL as significant primarily for community cohesion (Department for Innovation, Skills and Universities, 2008). These developments in ESOL have been controversial. Firstly, there is the argument that ESOL learning should be seen as a sociocultural practice rather than a set of skills (Baynham et al., 2007; Cooke & Simpson, 2008; Roberts & Baynham, 2006). This is connected to arguments that ESOL should not be seen in purely terms of employability (Macdonald, 2013). Secondly, the notion of community cohesion has been problematised by different models of citizenship (Guo, 2012) and ideas of super

diversity (Vertovec, 2007). Finally, the idea that ESOL or community learning in general can only be valued in economic terms has been critiqued by, for example, emphasis on its transformative capacity (Alheit, 2009).

Learning English is consistently seen as an essential element of migrant integration (Bell, Plumb, & Marangozov, 2017). A recent DEMOS report (Paget & Stevenson, 2014, p.11) highlights the importance of learning English to individuals and to society; *“the English language is vitally important to the capabilities and integration of migrants, long-term residents, newcomers and people joining family members already here who wish to build a successful future in the UK”*. Beyond this, applicants for settlement, as well as for citizenship are expected to have a relatively high competency in English (Home Office 2013). Those applying for citizenship are also required to pass a Life in the UK test.

ESOL qualifications from the Skills for Life framework no longer meet the minimum language requirements for settlement or citizenship. But, while there is no longer a direct link with settlement and citizenship, ESOL providers have a legal duty to show that they are promoting *“the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs”* as well as preventing radicalization under the Prevent agenda (Ofsted, 2017, p.37). This is a source of concern across educational sectors in the UK (Maylor, 2016). It also forms part of a wider debate about the purpose of ESOL and its relationship with the state. We can see this in Simpson and Cooke’s (2015) discussion of teaching culture as part of ESOL, in Simpson’s (2011) exploration of how ESOL learners can be confined into identities as test takers and potential employees, and in Macdonald (2013) who identifies how learning English can be used for social control rather than to help people perform in the world.

2.4.3 ESOL learners

ESOL learners have complex and particular backgrounds. They can often be seen as disadvantaged; not only due to their migrant status, but also because more are female, most are people of colour, some are asylum seekers or refugees, many have low levels of qualification and many are under or unemployed (Ward, 2008). Learning English is often seen as the first step for these disadvantaged groups to progress (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013). However, they are also a heterogeneous

group and so within this pattern of disadvantage there is a continuum between the very highly qualified and those with no qualifications; those with no employment history to those with professional experience; and from fluent readers and writers in several languages to no literacy in any language (Cooke & Simpson, 2008; Kings & Casey, 2013).

Even within the field of ESOL there are different kinds of provision. Community ESOL is different to the ESOL taught in further education colleges. Simpson et al. (2011) typify community provision as peripheral. They identify that women who have children, limited English, and limited support networks, are among the marginalised and isolated groups who are likely to attend community provision. Swinney (2014) challenges this emphasis on peripheral as meaning unimportant, and argues that community learning has a central place within communities. These community ESOL learners can be seen as similar to the vulnerable female migrants identified by Darby, Farooqi, and Lai (2016). Their definition of vulnerable is a combination of low income and low English proficiency. They argue that *“research needs to be undertaken into which methods and formats of English language teaching are most effective in engaging different types of vulnerable female migrants and enhancing their learning p39”*.

Many of the participants in my research were Muslim and there is a particular discourse within England surrounding Muslim women and learning English. Macdonald (2013) identifies how Asian women are seen as victims who do not want to learn English. Casey’s (2016) report typifies this, characterising Muslim women as victims of misogyny and domestic abuse who speak poor English and are unaware of their rights. Research with ESOL learners is then inevitably gendered and racialised. I discuss my positionality in relation to these issues in the following chapters however Spivak’s (1988) warning about the rhetoric of white men saving brown women from brown men is an important corollary to the positioning of Muslim women as victims.

ESOL learners with limited literacy

In the same way as community ESOL learners need to be recognised as a particular group so too do those with limited literacy. An estimated 12 percent of ESOL learners are not literate in their first language (Cooke & Simpson, 2008). Bigelow and Tarone (2004) evaluate previous research and write that there is limited research on second language acquisition and low literacy. They note Ong’s

thesis that literacy can transform thought but argue that there is a need to recognise oral cultures have sophisticated memory systems. A more recent review by Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) identifies the importance of recognising the capabilities that these learners possess beyond their limited print literacy. They suggest that it is only in the classroom that they are deficient. One field of research that recognises this focuses on the funds of knowledge that learners bring to classrooms (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Nieuwboer and van't Rood (2016) write from a Dutch perspective; argue that migrants with low literacy need special ESOL provision and recommending a dual language participatory model. Sbertoli and Arnesen (2014) discuss Norwegian language and literacy training and also recommend a two track provision. Kings and Casey (2013) again argue that some learners need separate provision. However they make the same argument as Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) that there is also a need to recognise that print illiterate adults have other competencies.

Field and Sellars (2008) argue for the importance of recognising the particular cultures that learners come from, for example whether their culture is pre-literate or their own schooling was interrupted. They suggest that learners need first language support and teachers who understand their particular background. Marshall (2015) focuses particularly on female Somali learners and identifies the importance of stories for learning. There is also significant work by Young-Scholten (2013); however this has a particular linguistic focus that makes it less relevant for this research.

2.4.4 ESOL as practice

The concept of language as a situated practice is central to research in ESOL (Hamilton & Hillier, 2009) just as the concept of literacy as a situated practice is central to current educational research (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000). This relates to the special status of ESOL where language learning is a social practice. ESOL classes teach learners how to perform in the world but are also discourse community in their own right (Cooke et al., 2015). In this way Macdonald (2013) suggests the classroom can be seen as a community of practice. However Street (1995) discussion of autonomous and ideological literacies is the underlying theory behind much of the research that frames language learning as a practice (Hamilton, Hillier, & Tett, 2006). The recognition of literacy as ideological res-

onates with Freire's (2014) work on critical pedagogy. We can see this in Blackledge's (2000) research with Bangladeshi women which adopts this approach. He argues that current school practices labels these women as deficient and suggests a critical literacy approach that values their literacies in particular their oral storytelling and religion is needed. There has recently been a move towards more participatory forms of ESOL that draw on critical pedagogy (Cardiff, Newman, & Pearce, 2007; Cooke et al., 2015). Within this research I adopt this definition of ESOL as a practice. However I situate this within practice theory rather than critical pedagogy. This is connected to my understanding of information and information practice which I develop over the following sections.

2.5 Defining information

Wilson (1981) suggested that information was a troublesome concept nearly 40 years ago and the intervening years do not seem to have made it any less troublesome. Pettigrew (1999, p.809) argues "*there is no single definition of information that will work in every research setting since information takes on different meanings in different contexts*". The definition of information I adopt here, emerged from this research and is particular to it. Within my research I draw on Buckland (1991) who argues that information can be seen as process, as knowledge or as thing. I am interested in the tangible aspects of information; on information as the already acquired "thing" of information sharing. From this I am then interested in the practice of information sharing as it is mediated by people, objects and places. Inherent within Buckland's (1991) definition of whether something counts as information is the importance of context; information is situational, consensual and temporal not a permanent state. In reaching this fragile and temporary understanding of information I drew on Sakai, Awamura, and Ikeya (2012) who argue for the importance of a common sense understanding of information that is meaningful to research participants.

2.6 Information literacy

During the early stages of this research I positioned myself within the field of information literacy. While the final product of my thesis is situated within information practice, my research is still informed by information literacy. Firstly

because much of the significant research that can help us understand how language learners and migrants engage with information, draws on information literacy. Secondly, my research is concerned with information sharing as a practice in itself but also as an activity within the wider practice of information literacy. Finally there are significant similarities between the perceived outcomes of learning ESOL and of becoming information literate, which suggest there is a value in synthesising these fields.

Effective ESOL is critical to empowering adults to gain independence and control over their lives, to increasing social inclusion and cohesion and to the country's skills agenda. (Grover, 2006, p.4)

Information literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations. (Garner, 2005, p.3)

There are challenges in seeing both ESOL and information literacy as empowering. I discuss above how Simpson (2011) identifies that ESOL can frame learners as test takers and employees rather than empowered citizens. Pilerot and Lindberg (2011) equally suggest that information literacy can be seen as an imperialist project. Nevertheless the potential of both ESOL and information literacy for individuals should not be dismissed. Rather as Lipu (2010) suggests there is a need to consider situated agency and localized practice when considering how information literacy may empower (and this same argument can equally be extended to ESOL).

There is an extensive and increasing literature on information literacy within LIS (Bawden, 2008; Sproles, Detmering, & Johnson, 2013), most of which I do not consider within this thesis. Limberg, Sundin, and Talja (2012) provide a useful overview of three major perspectives on information literacy; phenomenography, discourse analysis and sociocultural theory. These perspectives seem richer and more complex than skills based models.

Critical information literacy is a discourse based approach and has gained increasing currency in recent years (Elmborg, 2012; McDonough, 2014). It has a particular value in showing how knowledge and information are tied to power and capital (Kapitzke, 2003). The focus mainly from North America on critical

information literacy is ongoing and useful but this research is informed more by the Australian/ Northern European traditions which have long argued for a more complex situated view of information literacy. Critical information literacy can also be seen as directly relevant to language teaching with its links to Freire's (2014) critical pedagogy. There has, however, been limited application of critical information literacy as a research tool.

Phenomenographic approaches to information literacy (Bruce, 1997; Webber & Johnston, 2000) have convincingly shown how information literacy can be seen in terms of variation rather than as a portmanteau set of skills. In this way it offers a relational approach where understanding how an individual conceives information literacy is more important than determining their skills. Phenomenography is a research approach and I discuss in section 3.11.1 why I chose case study rather than this approach.

The third approach identified by Limberg et al. (2012) is the sociocultural and this is the approach adopted in this thesis. There is an increasing body of work that explores information in terms of practice, and within this work that considers information literacy as a practice. This approach, as does phenomenography, sees information literacy as contextual. The practice approach in information science is a research field in itself (Cox, 2012) and I discuss this in more detail in section 2.8. I draw on Lloyd's (2017a, p.93) practice based definition of information literacy in this research.

Information literacy as a complex practice (which) enables a person to understand the sources and sites of knowledge and ways of knowing that contribute to becoming emplaced. This knowledge, in turn, provides a person with the capacity to think critically about information ... The practice has, therefore, relational, situational, recursive, material and embodied dimensions, which are drawn upon to make it meaningful.

Lloyd's studies of workplace information literacy (Lloyd, 2007) and the information literacy practices of refugees (Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013) has found that information sharing is an activity that has information literacy as one of its ends. I use this as a way to understand information sharing in my research.

More generally I note that information literacy can be seen as very closely connected to learning, for example the approach adopted by Bruce (2008) that information literacy is concerned with experiencing information in order to learn. It can also be seen as one of a proliferation of literacies (Stordy, 2015). Within this approach I note the value of Buschman (2009) who argues that information literacy is a new literacy underpinned by the concept of critical reflexivity. In this research I however situate information literacy within information behaviour as suggested by Johnston and Webber's (2003, p.336) definition where they explicitly link information behaviour and information literacy. In Webber and Johnston (2013) they expand on this, demonstrating how information behaviour does not necessarily mean behaviourist.

2.7 Information behaviour

Wilson (2000, p.49) describes information behaviour as *“the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use”*. Much information behaviour research is outside the scope of this study as it is concentrated on information seeking or searching, or situated entirely within formal educational models rather than the everyday information sharing that is the focus of this study. However theoretical and empirical information behaviour research has informed this project. Wilson (1999) discusses the use of models in information behaviour research and traces their history back to the 1940's while Ford (2015) provides an overview of information behaviour, commenting that diverse models can build on each other. This is the approach adopted in my research.

The debate between Wilson and Savolainen (2008) about the value of adopting a practice approach is useful in considering the relationship between the two areas. Wilson suggests that replacing behaviour with practice is a straw man. Their dialogue highlights the importance of defining how practice theory is used in a study and how previous information behaviour research has emphasised the importance of many of the concepts that practice theory also explores. In this way I do not see information practice in opposition to information behaviour, but as a related tool for approaching many of the same questions.

2.8 Information practice

Practice theory is the theoretical framework for this research and so discussed extensively in 3. However it is also a research field and so a brief overview is given here to contextualise the following sections of the literature review. Huizing and Cavanagh (2011) identify five core premises of practice theory; that objects have a social role, interactions stretch to include human and non-human agencies, that there is a foregrounding of dynamics (with the focus on the practice not the actor), that knowledge is collective and that practice is a lens rather than an empirical object. They differentiate between this approach and the study of practices as exemplified by Savolainen (2008) where the practice is the object. Cox (2012) traces the history of practice theory from Wittgenstein, Bourdieu and Giddens, and demonstrates how different theorists emphasise different elements of practice theory with particular attention to Schatzki and Wenger (1998). He suggests that practice theory is a potentially productive perspective for information science that has not yet reached its full potential.

Pilerot, Hammarfelt, and Moring (2016) in a more recent paper provide an overview of how practice theory has been applied by LIS researchers and identify three different methodological approaches using the categories identified by Nicolini and Monteiro (2016). They suggest that these methodological approaches; the configurational, the situational and the dialectic can be identified with different theoretical stances and provide this as evidence of the diversity of approaches to practice theory within LIS. Lloyd's empirical work (Lloyd, 2007, 2010c; Lloyd et al., 2013) offers some of the most significant contributions to practice theory. Within this, the emphasis on different modalities; the corporal and the affective, rather than the solely cognitive is one of the most important strands (Lloyd, 2010a).

2.9 Information sharing

Pilerot (2012) suggests that information sharing is an emerging research field within LIS. This study's approach to information sharing is situated within information grounds and practice theory and so I do not engage fully with the wider literature on information sharing. Much of this focuses on organisations, academic settings, or the purely online. In the following sections I primarily consider the smaller body of work concerned with everyday information shar-

ing. Information sharing is the object of my attention and information practice the lens I use to understand it.

There are two useful recent reviews of information sharing research. Wilson (2010) reviews information sharing research across disciplines and identifies nearly 500 relevant papers noting that most of these come from outside LIS. The outcome of this review is an identification of four variables: trust, risk, reward and organisational proximity which affect information sharing. Pilerot's (2012) more focused review from within LIS identified 36 relevant texts which are then organised to illustrate the range of theoretical positions adopted on information sharing. Pilerot (2012) identifies three interrelated foci that distinguish the different kinds of research; what is being shared, who is sharing and where the sharing is taking place.

Savolainen's (2008) study of the information practices of environmental activists in Finland includes information seeking and use, as well as sharing. He suggests that these practices become meaningful in the context of furthering everyday life projects, that good enough is an important principle and that routine is important. He considers different motivations for information sharing and identifies the importance of networks as well as strong and weak ties.

The importance of affect and the intertwining of social relationships and information sharing emerge as important themes in much of the literature. Tinto and Ruthven (2016) explore the connection between positive emotions and information sharing through 30 interviews in a leisure context in the UK, and identify that sharing happy information has an effect on how people represent themselves. Fulton (2009) explores information sharing among amateur genealogists in the Irish diaspora. This research involved 24 interviews and found that information sharing strengthened social relationships. Her later research (2017) involved interviews with 17 urban explorers in the UK and Ireland and considered secrecy in relation to information sharing, and what motivates people to share or not share. Almeahadi, Hepworth, and Maynard (2016) studied information sharing with a population of 24 female academics in Saudi Arabia and developed a framework showing that information sharing and withholding were driven by a range of explicit and implicit motivations. Lingel and Boyd (2013) interviewed 19 people from the United States (US) involved in extreme body modification. They found that information sharing helped to form communities, particularly when sharing information that was hard to find.

Another significant aspect of information sharing is the importance of normative and shared values. Meyer (2009) reports on a historical case study of information transfer to traditional farmers in South Africa and identifies the importance of cultural boundaries. She argues that an understanding of information behaviour can help share information across these boundaries. Burnett and Jaeger's (2011) theoretical book chapter draws on theorists from sociology to suggest that people tend to remember shared information if it fits their existing cultural frameworks. Physical proximity is also identified as important for information sharing. Hersberger's (2003) study of 23 homeless parents identifies the importance of place as do Almejadi et al. (2016) in their research. This is a significant aspect of my research.

Within this larger body of research there is also significant work on information sharing as a practice (Pilerot, 2013; Pilerot & Limberg, 2011; Talja, 2002; Talja & Hansen, 2006). Talja (2002) identify four kinds of information sharing: strategic, paradigmatic, directive and social sharing in their study of document retrieval in academic communities in Finland. Pilerot and Limberg (2011) focus on academics in Sweden and define information sharing as a situated and collective activity that cannot be understood purely from a technological standpoint. They also emphasise that information sharing is concerned with already acquired information, and identify collaborative understanding as an end of information sharing in their research context. It is this definition that I adopt in my research.

2.10 Empirical research

In the previous sections, I have mapped out the landscape I am working within, and defined my key concepts. I now move to consider, in more detail, the relevant empirical research from information literacy and information behaviour where this relates to migrants or language learners, and ESOL where this relates to information.

2.10.1 Information and language learning

There is limited research from LIS that considers information and language learning. Most of the extant research relates to international students attending En-

glish speaking universities, as well as some studies of university students learning other languages. These are generally small qualitative studies that focus on information literacy as an academic discourse. Houlihan, Wiley, and Click (2017) conducted a systematic review of information literacy and international students which shows there has been a slight growth in publications in this area. This study looks beyond the international students focused on in Houlihan et al's (2017) review to consider language learners more generally. However the review that follows is selective; I have not included the literature on international students and library skills, experience or instruction. The research populations in these studies come predominantly from the US but also from Australia, Europe and Arabic countries. I did not find any relevant studies from the UK to include here.

N. Johnston, Partridge, Hughes, and Mitchell (2014) develop a detailed understanding of the information literacy experiences of EFL¹ university students in the United Arab Emirates. This was a phenomenographic study where 30 EFL students were interviewed and is one of the most substantial pieces of research in this area. They find that language has a major impact on information literacy experience. They identify both the challenges that EFL students face, and the strategies they use to overcome them. This includes the cultural difficulties of reading texts that are aimed at Western audiences, selecting texts on the basis of language rather than content, adopting surface reading strategies, having difficulty accessing information in Arabic and having translation preferences.

This identification of a relationship between language learning and information literacy is supported by research from the US. Amsberry (2008) reviews existing research and Conteh-Morgan (2002; 2001) draws on her practice to look at how librarians can use ESL strategies to teach international students' information literacy. Conteh-Morgan argues that librarians need an understanding of theories of language acquisition and the factors that affect language learning if information literacy is to be taught effectively. Bordonaro's (2010) research involved qualitative interviews with 22 international students. An important finding was that international students engaged in information literacy activities, saw these

¹In discussing language learners I use the terms ESL, ESOL and EFL when reporting on particular studies, more generally I use L1 or first language to indicate the language that could be regarded as "native" or "mother tongue". I then use L2,L3 to indicate subsequent languages. This can also be problematic it assumes a hierarchy but it seems to be the least contentious terminology.

as part of language learning and used language learning strategies as an information literacy tool.

Patterson (2011, p.13) in a case study of 23 English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in a U.S. community college describes them as “*marginalised students in a marginalised sector*”. He, again, sees a close relationship between language learning and information literacy. He shows that the students in his study develop information literacy and language skills concurrently and celebrates the strategies they adopt. He argues for the importance of contextualised teaching and making meaning through dialogue.

N. Johnston et al. (2014) suggest culture is important for language learners and their information literacy. Hick’s (2014) study of bilingual workplaces involving interviews and observations with four participants in the US makes a similar argument. This is reflected in Morrison’s (2009, p.97) doctoral research, a qualitative case study of three Hispanic university students in the US. He explores their information literacy and argues for the importance of understanding “*cultural ways of knowing and using information*”. His research is also significant because of its application of critical race theory, as race and racism is often not acknowledged within this research area.

These studies suggest that language learning is an information literacy strategy as well as a barrier. In this way language learners should not be seen as deficient. M. E. Conteh-Morgan (2003) summarises this position arguing that universities have had a simplistic attitude to language learning. She suggests that there needs to be greater recognition of how ESL learners can code switch and move between different literacies and different cultures.

Another key theme in these studies is that information literacy for language learners should be embedded and discipline specific. Patterson (2011) makes this argument for his ESL learners as do several other studies from the US. Hicks’ (2013), in a paper drawing on her teaching practice with Spanish language learners, argues that information literacy needs to be seen as transcultural competence and situated within the language curriculum. Hock (2007) and Bealle and Cash-McConnell (2010) also draw on their practice of teachers, to show how they embed discipline specific information literacy into the German and ESL curriculum respectively.

The language learners discussed above are university or college students who, with the exception of Patterson's (2011) participants, are significantly different from the learners in the current study. They also explore information literacy as an academic practice rather than the everyday information practices of the current study. Nevertheless they are valuable in identifying some of the challenges language learners face, and in establishing a relationship between language learning and information literacy. These studies are also generally concerned with proficient language learners and so it is notable that language is still seen as highly significant for these learners' information practices.

The special status of the English language in relation to both information and language learning needs to be acknowledged at this point. English has a particular status as a world language. Research from Ghana (Essel, 2016) and Thailand (Dokphrom, 2010) has found that proficiency in English is seen as an attribute of information literacy. In a similar vein, proficiency in English is seen as central to ICT proficiency (Warschauer, 2003) while Baron, Neils, and Gomez (2014) argue that English needs to be seen as a technology. English's status as a world language also has an impact on ESOL teaching. ESOL has a long history in the UK (Rosenberg, 2007) and language learning programmes in other countries do not draw on the same traditions or such a developed foreign language teaching programme. There is also the argument that we need to talk about Englishes in recognition of the fact that more people speak English as an additional language than as their first language (Jenkins, 2006).

2.10.2 Information practices of migrants

The discussion of the relationship between information and language learning can be extended and contextualised by research on the information literacy, practices or behaviour of migrants. In this review I draw from literature that is situated within LIS as demarcated by the author's affiliation or the place of publication. However, I also include limited research from other disciplines where there is a strong focus on information use. The literature in this section can therefore be seen as having a common theme in seeing migration and settlement as information problem. I include in appendix B a list of the relevant literature in this area.

Caidi, Allard and Quirke (2010) in a review of North American research suggest

a lack of empirical studies on how new migrants seek and make use of information. They also identify the need to know more about migrants' social networks and information grounds. The intervening years have seen an increase in research with migrant groups within information behaviour (Case & Given, 2016). Lloyd (2016) details an equal increase in LIS research with refugees. However the questions that Caidi et al. (2010) raise have not yet been answered.

The research collated here draws on a range of theoretical positions and frameworks but much of it is comprised of small qualitative studies from North America and Australia. The diversity of migrant experience even within a category such as refugee means that this research reflects an equal diversity of experience and practice that I attempt to capture here without reducing to generalisations. Quirke (2014) suggests in her doctoral thesis, which includes 28 interviews with 14 young Afghans who have migrated to Canada, that migrants are important for the study of information behaviour as their practices are in transition and so are more revealing than settled practices. There is a small but significant body of work that uses practice theory to explore migrant information behaviour, much of it with this emphasis on fractured or disrupted practices.

Information needs and settlement

There is general agreement in the literature that different stages of settlement have different information needs, and that the satisfaction of information needs is connected with settlement. Caidi and Allard (2005) conceptual paper suggests that migrants experience four stages of settlement. They emphasise these stages are overlapping and should not be seen in terms of a linear progression. Masinda's (2014) theoretical paper equally argues that migrants need to be literate in settlement services, learning how to negotiate them through a series of developmental stages.

This is reflected in empirical research. In Australia, Richard's (2015) research involved 34 interviews with refugees and 12 interviews with caseworkers in and summarised these differing information needs in terms of Maslow's hierarchy where more basic needs are replaced by the more complex as settlement progresses. Kennan, Lloyd, Qayyum, and Thompson (2011) report on a project involving interviews and focus groups with migrant participants and service providers, and identify three stages of settlement, transitioning, settling in, and being settled which they link to different information needs.

George and Chaze's (2009) larger study involved interviews with 50 South Asian women in Canada. They also identified settling in terms of an information problem: in order to settle migrants need information before and after moving to a new country. Shankar et al. (2016) in a study of one Canadian refugee participant again argue for seeing three stages of settlement: pre-migration, settling, and settled with different information needs at these stages. They suggest we need a three dimensional model of information practices, time and place and how these interact during the settlement process.

This is also reflected in research outside the West. Koo (2016), whose research involved surveys and interviews with North Korean refugees in South Korea, identified three stages of information needs; to be welcomed and feel a sense of belonging, to learn new social norms and to get information about jobs and finance. However she noted that the severely traumatised are unable to identify their needs. Shoham and Strauss Kaufman (2008), whose research involved 13 interviews with North American migrants to Israel, explore the pre-settlement stage identifying this as having particular information needs. While the number of stages may vary there is then clearly a consensus across these researchers that there is a relationship between meeting information needs and settling.

Information sources

There is also a relatively substantial body of knowledge about the information sources that migrants use. Case and Given (2016, p.345) summarise the importance of people as information sources for migrants "*print and digital documents will likely only serve as a supplement to the interpersonal sources central to immigrant communities*". This is widely reflected in the literature reviewed here.

George and Chaze (2009) identify the importance of both formal and informal networks for information sharing and that friends, relatives and other migrants are significant information sources. Su and Conaway's (1995) US research with 180 older Chinese migrants found people (as well as newspapers) were the important information sources. Olden's (1999) research involved interviews with 25 Somali migrants in London and he found that his participants depended on oral communication with other Somalis. Similarly Hakim Silvio (2006) in interviews and focus groups with 24 Sudanese refugees in Canada suggested that migrants prefer to get information from other migrants. Shoham and Strauss Kauf-

man (2008) research in Israel had similar findings. Kim's (2016) doctoral research with eight Korean migrant women who had recently migrated to the US, found that cultural brokers were significant and that the women had limited social networks. Kesete, Thom, and Harvey (2015) carried out 86 interviews with women on spousal visas, collecting quantitative data followed by qualitative focus groups, and found that women got information from informal sources and that their social networks were people from their own countries.

Quirke's (2014) doctoral study which involved observation and interviews with five settlement workers and seven migrants in Canada found that some of her participants mistrusted co-ethnic information sources. However the general pattern across the literature is that less settled migrants are helped by the more settled and they go on to be information sources in their turn. Baron et al. (2014, section 4.5) research which involved observations, surveys and interviews with Latino migrants in the US provides a useful summary of this process in relation to settlement *"their information practices help move them away from transience and toward endurance: from careful seekers of information by word of mouth, to savvy users of information from different sources, and to generous providers of information for others"*.

Within this general reliance on people as information sources, family members are particularly identified as important sources and intermediaries. Fisher, Yefimova, and Yafi (2016) look at how refugee youth act as ICT wayfarers for their families and Chu (1999) identifies children as gatekeepers. Metoyer-Duran (1993) looks at the significance of gatekeepers more widely. Srinivasan and Pyati's (2007) theoretical study suggests that an increase in digital information may lessen the importance of gatekeepers, however Koo (2016) identifies that cultural brokers are still important for her participants.

Lloyd et al. (2013), in research involving interviews and focus groups with refugees and service providers, extend our understanding of people as information sources by demonstrating how observing other people is a significant way that their participants gain information. Kim's (2016) participants also engage in the same activities of monitoring and observation.

Some of this research considers the potential problems of depending on the interpersonal. Fisher et al's (2004) study involved observations of community computing centres and interviews with 51 Hispanic users of the service. They show

how migrants can find it difficult to move beyond interpersonal and trusted community sources and describe a process of berry picking where a process of information seeking can extend over a long period of time. Reliance on the interpersonal often seems to be connected with difficulties in getting official information. Aarnitaival's (2010) research is a study of 28 migrant women in Finland, and finds that migrants move to informal sources when they have failed to engage with formal sources due to misunderstandings or hostility. Oduntan and Ruthven's (2017) research involved interviews with 22 asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. They consider the information gaps in refugee integration; identifying the difficulty refugees experience in negotiating formal systems and their subsequent reliance on personal information sources.

There is a mixed picture on how far migrants use digital technologies as information sources. The use of mobile phones as a method of communication is a central theme, but the use of the Internet or digital technologies, for example searching for information on the web or using online forums is not as consistent. Much research Khoir et al. (2015a); Komito and Bates (2009); Lingel (2014) identifies migrants engaging in these kinds of information activities but this does not supersede the importance of face to face communication. Some migrants groups are also very limited in their use of digital technologies (Alam & Imran, 2015; Baron et al., 2014). As I discuss below this is particularly the case for those with limited literacy in any language.

Information sharing

As the discussion on the importance of people as information sources suggests, information sharing is a significant information activity for migrant groups. I discuss this further in relation to information grounds below. Caidi et al. (2010) identify that the phatic aspects of information sharing are important for migrant groups. Kennan et al. (2011) identify information sharing as a core practice, particularly in the early days of settlement, and as a way of adjusting to unfamiliar information landscapes. They also identify the importance of stories as an information sharing activity. In related research involving 20 interviews with migrants to Australia, Lloyd (2014) identifies the importance of information pooling, where people share fragments of information to collaboratively reach a greater understanding.

Information poverty

A connection is often made between information poverty and migrants. Caidi et al. (2010) identify an assumption that migrants are information poor, but argue that this needs to be interrogated by further research. Waller's (2013) qualitative study of eight Australian households includes refugees as part of her study and shows how they experience relative information poverty. Oguz and Kurbanoglu (2011) conducted a survey of 77 individuals, including many British migrants, in Turkey. They found that many of these migrants perceived themselves as information poor. Aarnitaival (2010) argues that migrants can be compared to other vulnerable populations such as Chatman's outsiders. There are a range of identified causes of migrants' information poverty. Koo's (2016) study identifies several: self-deception and protective behaviour, limited information literacy capabilities, limited information pools and negative affect. Limited language and literacy are also seen as significant (Caidi et al., 2010) Information overload and misinformation can be as significant as a lack of information (Kennan et al., 2011).

However, information poverty is in itself a problematic term that is not used consistently across studies. Therefore any suggested association between migrants and information poverty needs to be treated with caution. Lipu's (2013) study of women from Papua New Guinea, which included interviews with 22 women attending university in Australia, explores how having access to richer information environments enriches the lives of these women both while studying abroad and once they've returned home. Clearly university students are a particular kind of migrant, but this does indicate there is a complex relationship between migration and information. This is supported by Khoir et al's (2015b) pilot study of eight Asian migrants in Australia which argues that an assumption of information poverty may not be helpful for all migrant groups, and that we need a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between settlement and information behaviour. It is then important not to typify all migrants as informationally poor.

There is connected research that looks more specifically at migrants' social exclusion as an information problem. This is identified in Caidi and Allard's (2005) literature review but the most substantial work on this has come from Australia (Kennan et al., 2011; Lloyd et al., 2013, 2010) where their focus is often refugees rather than migrants more generally. Lloyd et al. (2013) held interviews with ten refugee participants and two focus groups with service providers. They explored how refugees settle into new information landscapes after experiencing

a fracturing of their information practices. They identify a range of information practices that lead to settlement (information sharing, information mapping, observing and listening) and argue that social exclusion involves the disruption of information literacy practices. These are valuable insights but it is worth noting Quirke's (2014) different findings. She identified that her participants were not socially marginalised but did have problems with information poverty. This supports Khoir et al's (2015b) suggestion that we need a nuanced approach.

Translation and transition

A more valuable way to understand migrants' information practices is in terms of information translation or transition. This can be seen in Rayes et al's (2016) interviews with 20 international medical graduates in North America. They are high status migrants and so not necessarily a marginalised population. However they still found it difficult to translate their information practices, and those who were more information literate were more employable. The process of becoming information literate in a new environment which can in itself be equated with the process of settling in a new country can then be seen in terms of transferring information practices.

Caidi and Allard (2005, p.205) suggest that migrants are a "*population in transition struggling to deal with an unknown information environment*". Aarnitaival (2010) identifies that her participants faced problems as the result of differences between information environments and recommends that learning relevant information practices is central to migrants' participation in wider society. Lloyd's (2015) research included 20 qualitative interviews with mainly African migrants to Australia and introduced the concept of information resilience as a response to the difficulties of transition. Martzoukou and Burnett (2017) in a project involving Syrian refugees in Scotland identified information literacy as part of the process of wayfinding for new arrivals. Fisher, Durrance, and Hinton (2004, p.760) research also made connections between the process of information literacy and settlement; identifying that the process of becoming information literate creates building blocks that support migrants' transition. However their approach seems more instrumental than Lloyd's, as it is focused on measurable outcomes rather a wider consideration of information practice.

Information practices and migrant identities

There is limited but interesting research on migrant identity and belonging in connection with information. Srinivasan and Pyati's (2007) conceptual paper explores the effects of information technologies on migrants' identity formation and sense of belonging. Lingel (2014) looks at the information practices of transnational newcomers to New York. Her research involved 26 participants (eight of whom came from ESOL classes) and suggests a link between identity and information practice. There are also three studies that explicitly deal with race and racism in way that most LIS research on migrants does not and these are therefore particularly valuable. Colic-Peisker (2005) held 54 interviews with Bosnian refugees in Australia and identified that race and racism shape information practice. Caidi and MacDonald (2008) conducted a questionnaire survey of 120 Canadian Muslims (80 percent of whom were born outside of Canada) and discuss how information practices shape and are shaped by identity and experience. For example they show how some of their participants responded to hostility post 9/11 by a more critical response to information. Hultgren's (2013) research explores information seeking through a case study of one migrant. She uses stranger theory to understand migrants' information seeking practices, showing how a discourse of nationality shapes and is shaped by information seeking.

Migrants and place

The importance of physical places is emphasised in much migration research with information grounds a significant part of this. Some of Fisher and colleagues' most significant information grounds research is with Hispanic migrants (Fisher, Marcoux, et al., 2004) and migrants learning English (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004). From these studies, they identify churches, workplaces, schools and ESL classes as the most significant information grounds for their participants. Khoir et al. (2015b) identifies the importance of online information grounds but also places such as churches, homes, English classes, cafes and playgrounds. Sibal and Foo (2015) suggest that migrant domestic workers have a workplace information ground that is both online and physical. Johnston's (2016a) research was a case study of one conversation club programme for refugees in Norway. She notes the similarities between information grounds and conversation groups in that people from diverse backgrounds come together, social interaction takes place and people benefit from the information obtained. Information grounds

theory is clearly a potent concept for information research with migrants in general and ESOL learners in particular and one that has not yet been exhausted.

The significance of place is also reflected in research beyond information grounds. While information grounds theory focus on places as information sites, migrants also need to get information about places. This is explored in Lingel's (2014) interesting research. Through interviews, a walking tour and map drawing she explored the information practices of urban newcomers and identified mobility as its own information practice. She describes the technological and linguistic tactics people employ when they move round a new city.

Audunson et al's (2011) research involved interviews with nine migrant women in Norway and they write on the importance of public libraries as a place. They distinguish between high intensive and low intensive meeting places, and relate this to particularised and generalised trust. High intensive places build bonding social capital while low intensive build bridging social capital.

Jeong (2004) interviewed eight Korean graduate students in the US and identifies the church as an important place. She argues that the church is important in providing information however it can also prevent assimilation. Guajardo et al. (2016) in research involving 38 interviews with migrants in North and South America take a more positive view of place. They identify the importance of place in terms of situated knowledge. In their research, community centres and other gathering places were critical in creating an information rich environment because they were places of social trust

Lloyd and colleagues offer a more developed interest in place as a material space. Lloyd (2015, p.1039) suggests the importance of places "*for refugee groups, becoming information resilient requires a safe and non-judgmental place*". This is extended in Lloyd and Wilkinson's (2016) and (2017) explorations of young refugees and everyday learning spaces. In Lloyd and Wilkinson (2016) they note that "*a significant feature of the current everyday spaces study is the breadth and complexity of explicit, implicit and contingent sources of information that are present*". The young refugees in their study needed to gain access to the information affordances of everyday spaces in order to transition to their new communities. In Lloyd and Wilkinson (2017) they identify the importance of the visual, the vernacular and the digital for becoming emplaced and suggest we need to understand how information literacy is enacted in everyday spaces.

Finally Williamson and Roberts (2010, p.286) in a study of residents in an area of Australia ask how people develop a sense of place. This is not a study of migrants but it is a study of newcomers. They identify the importance of social information and information grounds and summarise that the “*concept of information playing a part in assisting people to develop and sustain a sense of place, or belonging, is worthy of further investigation*”. This provides a useful indication of the complex relationship between migrants and places. Places are not just information sites as learning about place is an important part of settlement.

While Lloyd and Wilkinson (2017) offer the most incisive analysis of the relationship between migrants and place

In the following chapter I draw on geography, linguistics and education to write about place and embodiment. It is striking that there is not the same consideration of race, gender and difference in relation to place within LIS research on migrants and place.

Migrants and digital technologies

There is, however, contrasting research that suggests geographical spaces are becoming less important as migrants increasingly occupy online worlds. Komito and Bates (2009) interviewed 26 Polish migrants in Ireland and suggest the existence of virtual ghettos; the participants depended on their transnational links rather than geographic communities. I have previously discussed Internet use as an information source but here look more widely at digital information practice. Much of migrants’ digital practice is related to maintaining links with and getting information from, home countries and the wider diaspora. This is effectively theorised by Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) who define these practices in terms of diasporic information environments arguing that migrants lead complex information lives. Mehra and Papajohn (2007) identify keeping in touch with home through technology as an information practice. There is also research that focuses on one particular nation, for example Issa-Salwe and Olden’s (2008) analysis of Somali web users and websites which builds a picture of the diasporic environments that Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) identify.

There is also research that suggests digital practices are liberating. Lee and Gilhooly (2014, p.394) in a case study of three refugee brothers in the US ar-

gue that the Internet and digital technologies create spaces free from the restrictions of limited language. McLean's (2010) case study of one migrant Caribbean teenager living in the US suggests a similar emancipatory narrative. Lam (2013) extends this arguing that digital literacy and migration lead to complex new literacy practices.

However this is also challenged. Aricat (2015) writing from a migrant acculturation perspective, rather than an information perspective, conducted interviews with 102 migrants to Singapore and argues that for lower status migrants mobile phone practices can be exclusionary rather than emancipatory. Alam and Imran (2015) explore the digital divide in research involving focus groups with 28 refugees in Australia. They argue that ICT can help with social exclusion but refugees face significant barriers centred around language, skill and cost. Wang and Chen (2012) in a survey of 139 migrant farmers in China found many had limited digital capabilities; they could use ICT for their leisure information seeking but not for their work. Sibal and Foo (2015) in a survey of 138 migrant Filipino workers suggested that their participants' online and offline worlds were blended but that they lacked digital and information literacy.

Baron et al. (2014) make a significant contribution to this suggesting that use of mobile phones and computers needs to be understood as intersecting with how migrants use English and transportation. In this way they argue that the English language needs to be understood as a technology and that individuals assemble configurations of language, transport and computers in meaningful ways. This is the approach that informs the research.

There is also a body of work on how people who have a different first language use the Internet in English. This is generally focused on search. It is not directly relevant to my research but some of the findings which demonstrate the importance of cultural knowledge, and the relationship between language and information use are worth noting. Some of this research comes from within LIS. Komlodi and Caidi (2016) review existing literature to demonstrate how when people search for information in English they also learn the language and learn cultural information. Alasmari and Komlodi (2016) report on a focus group of 11 Arabic speakers. Their findings include that people decide which language to use based on what they are searching for, that language is a challenge and that participants will often turn to interpersonal sources for help. Young, Komlodi, Rózsa, and Chu (2016) had a research population of Hungarian and Chinese

people searching the Internet in English. They found that participants had difficulty due to unfamiliarity with Web infrastructures as well as their linguistic capabilities.

Migrants with limited literacy

As I discuss above ESOL learners with limited literacy in any language need to be seen as a special case. The same can be argued more generally with migrants. Geronimo, Folinsbee, and Goveas (2001) held focus groups with 48 migrant participants who had limited literacy, in Canada. They argue that this group is fundamentally different because of their low literacy. They are marginalised and their literacy needs to be considered with other factors such as racism as the cause of this marginalisation; it cannot be isolated. They suggest that for this group basic survival skills take precedence over literacy skills and this leads to a cycle of poverty and isolation. Olden (1999) explores how Somali refugees coming from an oral culture survive in a Western information environment. Most of the participants in his study were educated but they still experienced challenges. Word of mouth was central for his participants and tended to be trusted over written sources. He suggests that this reliance on oral information can lead to potential misinformation.

There is limited research generally on the information practices of those who do not read and write. Turner's (2010) conceptual paper considers orally based information and argues that LIS needs to recognise the importance of social and collective memory. Raseroka's (2006) case study of a large scale project in Botswana is not concerned with migrants but discusses information literacy in the context of oral cultures. She argues there is a need to build and transfer existing oral information literacy, for example, through stories and that information sharing in oral cultures depends on interpersonal networks and trust relationships. Meyer's (2009) research with indigenous people suggests that for oral societies information resides in the collective memory, that trusted people play an important role, and there is less of a clear distinction between experience or opinion and factual information. Du and Haine's (2017) research with indigenous Australians identifies the importance of mobile phones, collective knowledge and oral structures of knowledge creation.

The most extensive migrant research in this area comes from Richards (2015, p.133) who writes about Sudanese refugees in Australia. Her findings are simi-

lar to those studying oral cultures. She concludes that their oral culture meant collective information was important and argues that the intense circulation of information through conversation came with a mistrust of written information. Trust in people rather than systems is important. She details the different ways workers communicate with refugees; finding that printed material had little value compared to word of mouth and face to face contact. She argues convincingly that there is a *“lack of congruence between paper as a technology for generating and ordering information and the mechanisms for creating taxonomies of knowledge that refugee entrants brought with them”*.

This focus on migrants with limited literacy and their particular needs, suggests the value of a nuanced approach to LIS research with migrant groups. In this way, while there may be broad agreement on areas such as the identification of a relationship between settlement and information practice, we need to know more about different kinds of migrants’ particular circumstances.

2.10.3 ESOL learners and information

I now move from discussing research concerned with migrants’ information practices to focus on research concerned with the particular migrant group of ESOL learners. The literature I draw on in these sections comes from the field of ESOL. Within community learning and ESOL, information literacy has gained little or no currency. However there is discussion of ESOL learners and their information use. Firstly there is an assertion that it is difficult for migrants to find ESOL provision and so learners who have managed to access a class have already met a significant information need as shown by Simpson et al. (2011) in their case of study of ESOL provision in one part of an English city. Darby et al. (2016, p37) support these findings: *“women’s isolation was not only a consequence of not speaking English, but also a barrier to learning English”*. Their report consists of interviews with eight community workers, five ESOL teachers and 34 language learners.

The ESOL teacher and the ESOL classroom more generally are both described as significant for learners in information terms. The ESOL teacher is seen as having an important role in information, guidance and settlement. Cooke and Simpson’s (2008, p30) review of ESOL describes teachers *“act[ing] as administrators, advice workers, counsellors and mentors, social organizers, literacy brokers,*

and interpreters”. Rosenberg’s (2007) history of ESOL also describes teachers as adopting similar information and guidance roles. Dimitriadou (2006) in a case study of ESOL provision in two English colleges shows how the ESOL classroom can be used to build social networks, and Swinney (2014) questionnaire of 325 English ESOL learners identifies the classroom as a stepping stone into wider communities.

Research on ESOL learners’ information use contains much that chimes with the discussion of migrants above. Language can be seen as the key barrier for learners to access the services they need (Macdonald, 2013; Phillimore, 2008). Cooke and Simpson (2008) note the day to day difficulties of being a low level speaker of English where most interactions in English are with bureaucracy and are sometimes characterised by miscommunication and hostility. They suggest it is generally only in ESOL classes that learners talk in English beyond these bureaucratic encounters.

Simpson and Whiteside (2015), however, note that becoming competent in a country’s dominant language does not in itself give newcomers the means to navigate their new society and that language and cultural competence are complex issues that need to be seen in relation to social capital. Guo’s (2012) theoretical book chapter supports this arguing that the limited opportunities for migrants in terms of accessing services will not be solved by ESOL alone. Darby et al. (2016) equally argue that ESOL cannot be looked at in a vacuum, while language is a barrier, there are other significant barriers including confidence and health, time and money, unsupportive families and literacy. They identify that personal relationships matter and that there is a need for safe and empowering community spaces and support for learning outside of the classroom. Rosi Sole’s literature review (2014) supports this, arguing that knowledge of host language is commonly seen as a barometer of integration, but the picture is actually more complex. Language learning can be the result of integration rather than the cause. She also notes how minority languages are seen as threatening to national security and to social cohesion. These insights into the complexity of the relationship between learning a host language and settling are a valuable addition to the LIS research discussed above.

The wider relation between ESOL and integration is then complex and extends beyond language. However ESOL classes are identified with integration. Cooke et al. (2015) describe a participatory ESOL project where ESOL is seen as the site

of integration in action. Johnson and Berry (2014) interview 15 ESOL learners and argue that integration should be two-way concluding that ESOL classes need to be part of the community. Macdonald (2013) in a case study of ESOL provision for women at one college argues that ESOL should teach learners how to perform in the world. As previously delineated, ESOL classes are complex communicative spaces in their own right (Baynham, 2006). ESOL classes are then an important information site, where learners can both practise how to perform in the world (including information activities) and find information for daily life in areas such as health, employment and education.

2.10.4 Digital literacy and ESOL learners

While information literacy has made little impact on ESOL or community learning, digital literacy has received increasing attention within education generally (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). It is striking that Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2013), in fact, categorise information literacy as one element within a framework of digital literacy and that their definition of digital literacy contains much that is relevant to my understanding of information literacy. I therefore briefly consider ESOL learners and digital literacy in this section.

We can see the adoption of digital literacy in the citizen's curriculum (Stevenson, Robey, & Downes, 2016) developed by the Learning and Work Institute (formerly the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) which identifies health, digital, financial and civic literacies or capabilities as key components in their citizen's curriculum. This draws on Schuller and Watson's (2009) report into lifelong learning. Webber and Johnston (2013) also use Schuller and Watson's framework as a way to structure an approach to information literacy for lifelong learning. This demonstrates how the community learning sector is exploring the same issues as information researchers even though their conceptual frameworks may differ.

Lankshear and Knobel (2011) identify two different approaches to digital literacy within education; a focus on fears for the digitally illiterate, and their preferred approach which focuses on the emancipatory possibilities of new literacies. In their discussion of new literacies in the classroom they suggest that much classroom digital practice is old wine in new bottles rather than genuinely transformative. Dudeney et al. (2013) suggest two further approaches in their teaching

guide; using digital literacy as a way to enrich students' learning or to teach them necessary life skills. They offer a practical guide to language teachers on teaching digital literacy encompassing areas such as personal, participatory and inter-cultural literacies.

Much ESOL research is then interested in digital literacy as a liberating classroom practice. Lotherington and Jenson (2011, p.227) argue that "*the affordances of new media have revolutionised social literacy practices*" and Simpson and Hepworth's (2010) observation of ESOL classes and interviews with three focal learners see new technology as enabling the renegotiation of identities from the deficit model of current ESOL. Simpson and Gresswell (2012) in a vignette of two ESOL learners look at how learners' identities are shaped by their online practices. They identify that ICT use is constrained by money, time, language and identity and conclude learners need to be encouraged to develop identities that differ from dominant discourses. Lam (2013) in a case study of one Chinese migrant teenager again echoes this finding, that the teenager used digital media to expand her identities and develop social, informational and linguistic capital. Webb's (2006) case study of ICT classes in England looks at whether ICT can reduce social exclusion for adult language learners. She argues that the digital can be an empowering space for the marginalised. Lotherington and Jenson (2011) suggest that it is the teachers rather than the learners who struggle with digital literacy. There is also connected research on digital literacy and languages that can be situated within CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). Jimenez-Cacedo, Lozano, and Gómez (2014) argue that digital literacies are re-defining common understandings of language learning and teaching in all contexts.

However there is more convincing research that challenges this emphasis on the digital as innately empowering. Barton and Pott's (2013, p.819) theoretical paper challenges this depiction of digital literacy as emancipatory, arguing that "*there is no reason to believe the affordances of online worlds are any more transparent or egalitarian than the resources of the material world,*" while Warschauer (2003) draws on data from a three year research project in Egypt showing that limited English is a barrier for learners to online as well as physical worlds. This ties with Essel's (2016) research where his participants saw English as fundamental to information literacy as they could not access online information sources without it.

Despite growing interest in this area from ESOL learners and practitioners, it is also worth noting a relatively recent report that shows there is a lack of research

on ESOL learners' use of digital technologies in and out of classroom (Litster et al., 2014). This suggests that this remains another under-researched topic in relation to ESOL learners.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter provides the final version of a literature review I have lived with for three years. During these years I have moved between my own research data and practice, and the literature of others in a process of continuous synthesis. It is therefore useful to step back from this; clearly outline the most significant aspects of this literature review and consider what my work can contribute to the research landscape I have mapped out.

Through my engagement with LIS research, I have defined my understanding of information sharing as a situated and collective activity. I have situated information sharing within information literacy which I also understand as a practice that emerges from a particular site and enables ways of knowing.

It seems significant that this review has drawn on literature from a range of disciplines and perspectives, and has needed to look at material from different fields. This is suggestive of the complexity of the issues that I am dealing with. My review has made new connections firstly between LIS and ESOL, and secondly between information literacy research with language learners and information behaviour research with migrants.

I have drawn on an extensive literature that considers information in relation to migrants and language learners. This has demonstrated that there is a relationship between information and settlement. I have learnt the importance of people, place and ICT for migrants in terms of both their information behaviour and their settlement. The importance of information sharing has also been demonstrated. I have identified that people's language and literacy is a key factor in their information practices. Information literacy research specifically shows there is relationship between information and language. ESOL research presents a complex and varied picture of one group of migrants and demonstrates a general pattern of disadvantage which improved English alone will not resolve. However our understanding of all of these areas is still limited. We need a more nuanced appreciation of the role information plays in migrants' lives.

This review shows there is very limited research from the UK that takes an information approach to migrant settlement. The research from Australia, North America and Scandinavia cannot necessarily be expected to speak to how people from other countries settle in the UK. As the history of ESOL discussed above shows, the UK's complex history of migration and citizenship shapes policy and practice and so there is a need to understand migration in this context. Beyond this, my review also demonstrates that ESOL learners are a significant migrant group in themselves and ESOL classes a significant place for their settlement. However again we know very little about ESOL learners in terms of their information literacy and practice, or how ESOL classes function as information sites.

The gaps my research potentially addresses go beyond illuminating the UK context and the particular context of ESOL. It has the potential to add to our understanding of place, information sharing, language, and low literacy in relation to ESOL learners in particular and migrants in general. More generally my research can potentially contribute to our knowledge of information sharing and information grounds beyond the experience of migrants.

Chapter 3

Research approach

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I outline my research approach. I first show how my research questions have evolved. I then explain my ontological and epistemological positions; I align myself within constructivism but also demonstrate the significance of critical approaches to my research. I discuss how I developed and applied my theoretical frameworks, and identify the significance of reflexivity and participatory research. I explain my selection of a case study, and then give an overview of my research methods. I conclude this chapter by explaining the criteria I have adopted to evaluate my research.

3.2 Emergent research design

My research was emergent and inductive and so in this section I detail how, when and why my research aims and questions changed.

My original research aim was to explore the relationship between information literacy and ESOL learning. My research questions were:

What is the relationship between the development of English language capabilities and information literacy?

How do learners interact with information at the start of their ESOL studies?

How do these interactions change during their studies?

What impact do the changes in participants' information literacy have on their everyday lives?

These questions were developed during my research proposal and remained in place during the pilot study in February and March 2015, the initial document analysis and interviews in May, June and July 2015, and my first visits to the two classes in September 2015. However my experience of the pilot had made me aware that it would be difficult to explore information literacy with my particular research population. Equally, discussion at my university confirmation review in June 2015 made me realise I needed to narrow the focus of my research. My first meetings with the two classes were the final confirmation that I needed to revise my research aims.

Following this I revised my research questions in October 2015 after attending the doctoral forum of the European Conference of Information Literacy. At this stage I adopted a very simple research question:

How are learners interacting with information inside and outside these ESOL classrooms?

As I collected more data and started the process of analysis I then added further questions about information and information literacy practices.

How are information practices shaped in these ESOL classrooms?
How can information literacy be fostered in the ESOL classroom?

On completion of my data collection and following attempts to analyse, I realised that I needed to narrow my focus again in order to meaningfully deal with the complexity and richness of my data. I then changed the focus from information practices in general to information sharing in particular as well as concentrating my attention on the classes. I also added the theoretical framework of information grounds and finalised my research questions.

RQ What are the characteristics of the two classes as information grounds?

RQ2 How do people, objects and places mediate information sharing in these ESOL classes?

RQ3 How is information sharing interleaved with other practices within this context?

RQ4 How can critical theories of place and embodiment inform our understanding of information sharing?

These questions then fed into the final aim of my research: to explore how the practice of information sharing is enacted in the site of two ESOL classes.

3.3 Inductive research

In the previous section I classify this research as inductive. Brewer (2003) describes the general principle of induction as the foundation of qualitative research. However, he also problematises the notion of analytic induction. It is important to clarify that my research is not analytically inductive. In fact contains elements of the abduction that Thomas (2010) suggests is common to case study research. I can recognise this in my research in my application of information grounds theory. I use this theory to understand my case better but also use my case to modify the theory.

3.4 Constructivism

The adoption of an interpretivist /constructivist position is at the centre of my research. The split between a positivist and interpretivist/constructivist paradigm can be seen as the key division in social sciences, more significant than the arguably false dichotomy of the qualitative and quantitative (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2014), and so the adoption of this paradigm can be seen as the root of a series of methodological choices. Pachirat (2014) suggests that the split between positivist and constructivist positions may be seen as a guerrilla war, while Soss (2014) argues it can be a choice determined by research questions.

Guba and Lincoln define a constructivist paradigm as relativist, transactional and subjective. Schwandt (1994) argues that constructivism and interpretivism are in themselves sensitising concepts, rather than absolute positions and the difference between them less significant than their similarities. This paradigm is however significantly different from positivist or post positivist positions which posit that there is an objective reality that may or may not be uncovered by a researcher. My understanding of research as a meaning making process is at the

centre of my identification as a constructivist and this is coherent with my understanding of information practice.

While the adoption of constructivism as epistemology was an early tenet of my research, my understanding of my ontological position was a more difficult process. My eventual adoption of practice theory as an ontological position follows Schatzki (2002) in understanding social life in terms of site ontology. Schatzki (2001, p.13) summarises that “*the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings*”. In this way social reality is not based on individual human experience and action, but on socially constructed practice that is organised into arrangements and orders with human and non-human entities.

3.5 Critical theory

My choice of a constructivist approach comes with recognition of the value of critical theory approaches, particularly in relation to gender, ethnicity or religion (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). ESOL learners in community settings are ethnically and theologically diverse, and many are women. Within my particular case study many were also Muslim. Stanfield (1998) argues that interpretivist approaches can fail to account for the circumscribed realities of ethnic minorities, while Stonebanks (2008) states that the identity and voice construction of Muslim people are misunderstood in Western social science narratives. Equally Schwandt (1994) suggests that one of the potential weaknesses of constructivism or interpretivism is the lack of a critical purchase. However my understanding of the multiple realities of myself and the participants meant that critical theory did not seem to be compatible with my research.

Nevertheless, as suggested in the literature review, research with ESOL learners is inevitably gendered and racialised. I was therefore broadly informed by feminist research. There is no agreed definition of feminist research (Ramazanoglu, 2002). Ahmed (2000) suggests that the challenge is to recognise women’s multiple voices without losing the power of the analytical category of woman. However Skeggs (2001) suggests that the defining purpose of feminist research is to ask questions about whose interests are being served by the research being done, and this association of research with power was useful for my understanding. I therefore draw on Skeggs’s (2001) work on feminist ethnography to inform my

methods in the same manner as I draw on Massey (1994) to inform my analysis.

The issue of race is more challenging for a white researcher and for one working within LIS in particular. Stanfield (1998) suggests that working within a Western social science tradition typically colonises the other, and Ahmed (2007) argues for a phenomenology of whiteness so we can recognise how whiteness dominates institutions. It is also important to recognise the whiteness of LIS in particular as Honma (2005) convincingly demonstrates. Pawley (2006) looks at race and multiculturalism in Library and Information Studies curricula and notes that race tends to be ignored in favour of multiculturalism. Sung and Parboteeah's (2017) recent review also shows how LIS is still limited in exploring diversity more generally. I recognise the importance of a critical approach to my own whiteness (McIntosh, 1989), and more generally of an intersectional approach Brah and Phoenix (2013) which recognises how oppressions are interlinked and cannot be explored separately.

3.6 Theoretical frameworks

In this section I provide an overview of practice theory and information grounds and discuss how I apply these theories within my own research. I also draw on theories of place and embodiment to develop both information grounds and practice theory.

3.6.1 Information grounds

Pettigrew's¹ (1999, p.811) ethnographic study of information flow in 30 different chiropractic clinics in the US was the starting point for the theory of information grounds. The central premise is that information grounds are settings "*temporarily created when people come together for a singular purpose but from whose behavior emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information*". The theory was then developed by Fisher and colleagues over a series of studies.

In a case study of ESL classes in a New York library Fisher, Durrance, and Hinton (2004) identified the seven propositions that remain central to our understanding

¹Karen Fisher originally published under the name of Karen Pettigrew

of information grounds. The theory is then developed further in a book chapter (Fisher & Naumer, 2006) where the theory of place is elucidated more clearly and in a large scale survey of college students (Fisher & Landry, 2007a) where the trichotomy of people, places, information, is expanded further and different characteristics are associated with these elements. These include characteristics such as familiarity and motivation associated with people; conviviality, privacy, ambient noise, permanence, and creature comforts associated with place and significance and frequency associated with information. A further study Counts and Fisher (2008) added information capital as a proposition in a study of online information grounds.

I identified 32 relevant studies relating to information grounds, included in appendix A. I excluded research that deals wholly with online worlds although I note Yeh (2013) and Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) who see the online and offline as indivisible. The majority of these studies are empirical but some research is reported in more than one paper and some papers synthesise previous research. I discussed the studies that are concerned with migrants and information grounds (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004; Fisher, Marcoux, et al., 2004; J. Johnston, 2016a; Khoir et al., 2015a; Sibal & Foo, 2015) in section 2.10.2.

The focus of the other studies include school (Davis & Fullerton, 2016; Lilley, 2014) and university students (Fisher & Landry, 2007a; Mansoori, Soheili, & Khaseh, 2016), workers in health care (Kelder & Lueg, 2011) and disability (R. D. Williams & Smith, 2016), teachers (Normore, 2011), house wives Yeh (2013), elderly people (Pálsdóttir, 2011; Williamson & Asla, 2009), vulnerable adolescents (Sabelli, 2016), and pre-teens (Meyers, Fisher, & Marcoux, 2009), and identified information grounds include cafes (Rohman & Pang, 2015), care homes, community associations (Pálsdóttir, 2011), workplaces (R. D. Williams & Smith, 2016), information stalls (Kelder & Lueg, 2011), help desks (R. D. Williams & Smith, 2016), sewing groups (Pálsdóttir, 2011), and knitting clubs (Prigoda & McKenzie, 2007).

Most of these studies are from North America with very few from countries outside the West. These studies use a range of research methods including interviews (R. D. Williams & Smith, 2016), focus groups (Meyers et al., 2009), ethnography (Kelder & Lueg, 2011), observations (J. Johnston, 2016a), surveys (Mansoori et al., 2016), and participant diaries (Fisher & Landry, 2007b). Information grounds theory is used in diverse ways; however, there is a tendency for information grounds research to take a constructionist view of information exemplified

by "information grounds are a social construct rooted in an individual's combined perceptions of place, people and information" (Fisher & Landry, 2007a, para. 27) and to work within post-positivist paradigms. Prigoda and McKenzie (2007) are a notable exception to this, adopting what they term a collectivist approach. Case and Given (2016) suggest that Fisher is working within a practice approach however I would follow Pilerot (2012) and Prigoda and McKenzie (2007) in not seeing her information grounds research in this light.

While information grounds research is relatively diverse there are some central ideas that echo across many of the studies cited above. Information grounds are generally seen as significant and important places for people's information behaviour. Some studies also argue for the possibility that information grounds can be fostered if we understand more about their characteristics (Fisher & Landry, 2007a).

The social aspects of information generally receive the most attention within information grounds theory. Social network theories, in particular the concept of strong and weak ties form an important part of this. Information grounds are commonly associated with a diversity of people in a diversity of relationships. Information grounds research has also explored both people's emotions and motivations for sharing information and the effect that this sharing has. Fisher and Landry's (2007b) research with 23 new mothers which involved interviews, observations and diaries explored the importance of affect. Meyers et al. (2009) in their study of tween information behaviour, involving focus groups and interviews with 34 young people in the US, also identified the importance of trust.

Information grounds theory also suggests the importance of place. This extends beyond the importance of physical proximity to consider characteristics such as quietness (Mansoori et al., 2016) and flexibility (Davis & Fullerton, 2016). However there is less attention to place as material. Pettigrew (1999) argues that while the physical setting of the chiropody clinic changes it is always the same information ground as it is attended by the same types of people. As Cox, Griffin, and Hartel (2017) suggests an information ground seems to primarily be a social setting rather than a specific material place. While some of the characteristics of an information ground do relate to place such as whether it is private or public or open or closed these do not seem to be as fully theorised as the social aspects.

The final aspect in the trichotomy is information. As with places this may be

less clearly theorised than the social aspects. There is an exploration of the kinds of information that are shared and there is often a distinction made between formal and informal information (Pettigrew, 1999). The theory generally focuses on information as a process with attention focused on information flow rather than information as a thing.

In my research I then build on existing information grounds theory. This can be seen as a continuation of the study of the New York library's education programme for ESL migrants (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004) and of community computing centres for Hispanic migrants (Fisher, Marcoux, et al., 2004). However, in contrast to Johnston's (2016b) recent work which focuses on the instrumental benefits of an ESL conversation club as an information grounds, my approach is closer to that adopted by Prigoda and McKenzie's (2007) exploration of human information behaviour in a knitting group held in a public library. They use the concept of an information ground as the starting point of their study arguing that their research goes beyond the constructivist assumptions of the information grounds to a collectivist analysis of the mutual shaping of information practices. They see that this direction of research follows the suggestion that there needs to be further research on the context of information grounds.

Information grounds theory has previously been used as one of multiple frameworks. Meyers et al. (2009) use information grounds in combination with sense making and normative behaviour while Fisher and Landry (2007b) use a range of theories and models including information poverty, normative behaviour and everyday information behaviour. This suggests using information grounds in combination with other theories is potentially valuable and methodologically sound. In this research the theory of information grounds became a hook which I could use to explore my data and so could be seen more in terms of a staging post than the final outcome.

The concept is then used to frame the ESOL class so I can understand the information sharing that happens there. My adoption of this theory was inductive and emerged after the completion of initial data analysis. In this section I discuss how I used the seven propositions identified by Fisher and Naumer (2006). I also indicate where I have modified the propositions so that they align with my research paradigm and the data I have collected.

The first proposition, that an information ground can occur anywhere in a tem-

poral setting and is predicated on the presence of individuals, was a useful tool to fix the two classes as units of analysis. This use of information grounds to fix the boundaries of my cases was of central importance to me, and I discuss this in more detail in relation to contexts.

The second proposition is that people gather in an information ground for an instrumental primary purpose other than information sharing. As I discuss above, I see language learning as a complex practice rather than an instrumental purpose. However it is the activity that an ESOL class is predicated on, and so is meaningful in these terms.

In the third proposition, Fisher and Naumer (2006) argue that information grounds are populated by a range of social types who play different and expected roles in information sharing. My early data analysis showed that the teacher, the learners, class visitors and I all mediated how information was shared and that I needed to understand in more detail how this was happening.

Proposition four is that social interaction is a primary activity within the information grounds and information sharing a byproduct. The proposition that information flow is a byproduct of social interaction does not capture my understanding of information practice. However initial data analysis indicated that social interaction was very significant in these classes and so I was interested in exploring this further.

The fifth proposition is that people engage in formal and informal information sharing, and that information flows in many directions. I discuss this further within subsequent chapters but the distinction between formal and informal was not the most meaningful distinction in the context of my research. I am therefore changing this proposition to consider the characteristics of informative objects more widely.

Fisher and Naumer (2006, p.99) suggest in proposition six *that “people use information obtained at information grounds in alternative ways and benefit along physical, social, affective and cognitive dimensions”*. This proposition is useful for my research as it recognises that information is not just cognitive. However the interpretive nature of my research means that I do not expect to measure how people benefit from information. I follow Prigoda and McKenzie (2007) in considering the meanings and values that seem to be ascribed to information. I also

consider information sharing as an activity within information literacy and this is connected to the value of information sharing.

Proposition seven states that many subcontexts exist within the grand context of an information grounds. During the process of analysis this became an important frame for my research. It helped me frame the two classes as different information grounds with some overlapping contexts. The emphasis on place as one of the subcontexts is one of the most valuable aspects of information grounds theory for me. In Pettigrew's (1999) original study, the chiropody clinic moves to different locations yet remains the same information grounds. She suggests that the move to a different physical space changes the information flow but does not explore this in detail. In my research the classes as information grounds also reconvened in different locations which then mediated information sharing differently. A focus of my research therefore became to explore how these different spaces and the objects within them offered different affordances for information sharing.

The discussion above shows how I used information grounds as a framing device for my research. I then worked within this frame using practice theory to understand the nature of information sharing in my case study.

3.6.2 Practice theory

The adoption of a practice approach was an early research decision, but my understanding of practice has evolved significantly over the course of this work. My original interest in practice came from the work of Street (2001) and particularly Brice Heath (1983) in their discussion of literacies as a practice. However, as I settled within the discipline of LIS my understanding of practice theory developed. Savolainen (2008) suggests that the term practice is often used uncritically in information science. Nevertheless there have been several useful reviews of practice theory within the discipline of LIS (Cox, 2012; Huizing & Cavanagh, 2011; Pilerot et al., 2016) that suggest a growing body of theory. Sakai et al. (2012, para 2) offer a useful summary of how practice theory can be used in LIS "*we argue in this paper that information activities of any kind are not independent and isolated from other work and everyday activities but are instead embedded within them*".

Nicolini (2013) emphasises the toolbox nature of practice theory arguing that it can be used in a bricolage approach; he argues there is a broad family of resemblances among practice theorists about what defines a practice. These are the recognition that practices give actions meaning; that practices are materially mediated, that they need to be understood in a temporal and spatial context, that they depend on human agency, but human agency also results from practice, and that practices are connected and form a nexus. However Pilerot et al. (2016) caution that researchers need to be clear what kind of practice approach they are adopting.

Schatzki's interpretation of practice theory is used as the frame for this research as his work has been used successfully in previous LIS research (Lloyd, 2010b; Pilerot, 2013). In this way I understand practices as "*embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity, centrally organised round shared practical understandings*" (Schatzki, 2002, p.2). However I also draw on Nicolini (2013) who offers more insight into the epistemology of practice theory, rather than the philosophical, ontological approach of Schatzki.

The significance of information sharing as a practice emerged during the process of data analysis. I see this sharing as situated and collective not purely technical (Pilerot & Limberg, 2011). I note Pilerot (2012) classifies information sharing research by whether it focuses on people, places or information. It seems that my research considers all three of these to some extent rather than falling into one of these categories. I focus on how people, objects and places mediated information sharing. My focus on people, objects and places is also a technique for exposing practices. Nicolini (2013) suggests that focusing on the material exposes the traces of practices. He argues that practices are easy to see but hard to transpose into writing which is a slight variance from Moring and Lloyd (2013) who suggest that practices are invisible and emerge during analysis.

The ESOL class can then be understood as the site of arrangements of people and objects and actions (Schatzki, 2001). Meaning comes from the positioning of these arrangements. An important aspect of this positioning comes from rules, values, and understandings as well as the spatial and embodied. Schatzki (2002) identifies human beings, artefacts (objects produced by humans), other organisms, and things as the elements within arrangements. These were useful categories for my research. In line with Schatzki, I differentiate humans as qualitatively different to objects. In this way objects have affordances that shape prac-

tice but I do not imbue them with the same agency as people. Beyond Schatzki, I acknowledge the work of theorists such as Knorr-Cetina (2001) in developing our understanding of objects in practice theory; however, I do not engage fully in this debate within my thesis.

Instead in this research my focus is on informative (Buckland, 1991) rather than material objects. I therefore include stories as an object within my research. This draws on Turner (2010) who argues that if we are to properly understand oral information we need to extend our understanding of documents to include ones that are spoken. In addition to practice theory I use Massey's (1994) theories of place to explore power, in particular race and gender, in relation to information practice and space.

My research is limited in how far it engages with digital objects or spaces. I acknowledge that online or digital spaces are as significant as physical in many studies of information practice and that the line between online/offline is increasingly blurred. Nevertheless within my research the digital spaces participants occupy are not explored as they were not accessible to me as a researcher.

Practice theory then emphasises the material, the social, the teleoaffective and the affective rather than the purely cognitive. An interest in the material is inextricably linked with an interest in embodiment and place. There has been significant recent interest in embodiment in LIS after a perceived neglect (Cox et al., 2017). Much of this is influenced by a Schatzkian (2010) interpretation of practice theory. Olsson and Lloyd (2017, para. 36) conclude that "*bodies are not passive, but actively create and anchor information, making the embodied experiences of practice visible*". Cox et al. (2017) identify three aspects to bodies and information; bodies possess knowledge, bodies produce knowledge and bodies provide knowledge and these are useful distinctions. However I move beyond practice theory in order to sharpen my focus on place and embodiment.

3.6.3 Place and embodiment

In this section I develop how I am using the concept of place and the related concepts of space and embodiment in my research beyond their use in practice theory and information grounds. Gibson and Kaplan (2017, p.131) suggest that "*LIS research has not developed a coherent, complex body of theory related to place,*

space, and information behaviour". However, there is longstanding research with an interest in these concepts. Chatman's (1991) small world theory explores the importance of location for information behaviour. Nevertheless the theories she draws on, such as alienation theory are social rather than place-based. Fisher and Naumer (2006) also identify the importance of place in an information ground using Oldenburg and Lukerman to theorise their position. Savolainen (2006) reviews different conceptions of the spatial factors of information seeking and identifies three approaches; the objectifying where spatial factors are discrete and are generally seen as constraining information seeking, the realistic pragmatist (within which he includes information grounds) where there is a relationship beyond constraining, and the perspectivist where space is constructed rather than independent of information seeking. More recently Lloyd and Wilkinson (2016) explore the importance of everyday spaces for refugee youth drawing on Lefebvre, Schatzki and Chattopadhyay in their theorizing of space.

A practice theory approach to information is informed by considerations of bodies and space and can be classified as the perspectivist approach identified by Savolainen (2006). However I also draw on Massey (1994) in my research. She writes from her discipline of geography where clearly place and space are core concepts and I do not engage fully with these debates. As other LIS researchers have shown there is a value in applying theories of space and place from other disciplines.

Massey's (1994) work is similar to a practice approach in identifying that space is the dimension we all live in and needs to be understood as material, while place has the same qualities but is also a specific location. Places and spaces are not solely physical; they are social, temporal and are the coming together of trajectories. Importantly spaces and places are not finished and so can be renegotiated. Her work acknowledges power, gender and class in a way that resonates with my research and does not seem to be as fully realised within practice theory. She argues that space should not only be imagined through the white male body. There is also precedent for using Massey in combination with practice theory (Hopwood, 2014).

Research from education, linguistics and language learning can also be valuable in helping us to explore place. Higgins (2016) develops the theorising of space and place to include language. She argues that space is shaped by, and shapes, multilingual language practices and that consequently spaces are sites where

power relations are made visible and can be transformed. She therefore argues for the importance of convivial spaces for language learning. In related research, Pennycook and Otsuji (2014) link local language practice to space and activity. Mills and Comber (2013) suggest that places enable and constrain social and literacy practices. A significant researcher in this area is Somerville (2007). She identifies that embodied sensory experience is more important than language and representation when it comes to learning about place. She suggests the importance of stories of everyday life where the body uses all its senses in order to develop place literacies.

Comber (2016) also suggests the special status of school as a place to negotiate ways of being and knowing. This can be extended to ESOL. Baynham and Simpson (2010) discuss the ESOL class as a liminal space; they identify different trajectories vertically by progressing through the levels and horizontally through impact on life. Related to this is Ade-Ojo and Duckworth's (2016) work on democratic learning spaces which suggest a different understanding of a classroom as a space. This is not an area that can be fully explored within this thesis, but it is useful in adding to our understanding of the qualities of space and place.

The particular nature of community ESOL learners also means that the relationships between their bodies and space need to be considered in a particular way. Massey's (1994) discussion of race and gender can help with understanding this but we need to consider further the relationship between visibly Muslim women and space. Mirza (2013) writes about Muslim women and space using the theory of embodied intersectionality. She considers Islamophobia as a macro regulatory discourse but also highlights that Muslim women have embodied agency. Bilge (2010) suggests that veiled women are signified as both threatening and as victims, and are at the intersection of race and gender domination. Day (1999) writes more generally about women's experience of race and fear in public space. Again this represents a body of research that cannot be fairly represented with this thesis but the racial and gendered aspects of bodies should not be ignored and there is a risk of this within current LIS research into embodiment. Lingel (2014, p.1240) argues that previous LIS research "*situate[s] information practices as deeply related to issues of race and class*". However I would argue that this relationship is currently insufficiently theorised, particularly in relation to information sharing.

3.7 Alternative frameworks

In this section I briefly acknowledge three of the alternative theoretical frameworks that I considered. These frameworks represent three alternative tools that I could have used to explore my case study. Each had a particular value they could have contributed to my research. However information grounds and practice theory seemed to be the most coherent and the richest ways to explore my case.

3.7.1 Information worlds

An alternative theoretical framework for my research was information worlds (G. Burnett & Jaeger, 2011). Information worlds theory draws on Habermas, at a macro level, and Chatman at a micro level. It provides another way to consider information behaviour providing an understanding of the intersections between information and its cultural contexts. There are five elements under consideration in this framework: social norms, social types, information value, information behaviour and boundaries. It offers some useful insights for my research, for example, by exploring how somebody's information behaviour exists in multiple cultural contexts. However my focus is on classroom practice rather than the learners' information worlds more generally.

3.7.2 Information poverty

ESOL learners in particular, and migrants generally can often be seen as not only socially disadvantaged but also informationally poor. Yu (2010, p.912) examines the concept of information poverty in LIS and identifies two strands, "*one which sees information poverty as perceived helplessness resulting from the perceived lack of useful information, and the other which sees information poverty as an objective state of deficiency in information access and use*". However Haider and Bawden (2007) argue that information poverty has come to subsume a curious mix of groups and problematise the notion by performing discourse analysis on LIS research in this area. They identify that the information poor are the product of LIS discourse. This is a useful alternative perspective.

The most useful definitions of information poverty for this research, however, come from Chatman (1996). Her definition is that people are information poor

when they perceive a lack of resources, are suspicious of information from outsiders, and engage in deception to maintain control. She suggests that an impoverished information world is one in which a person cannot or will not solve a critical problem, and because their needs are not being met they view their information world as dysfunctional. Her theory of information poverty intersects with her other theories of information behaviour offering a substantial understanding of the information behavior of outsiders. Chatman's (1992) description of women in an old people's home who live in an information rich world but lack the information that is useful for them and her association of information sharing and power are both themes that resonate with my research. However while the concept of information poverty can add depth to my exploration of participants' information practices my focus is on information sharing in the particular context of the class rather than in their lives more generally.

3.7.3 Information landscapes

The theory of information landscapes (Lloyd, 2017a) offers another way of understanding the ESOL classes I researched. However, while the idea of information landscapes has informed Lloyd's work for a number of years this theory was not fully developed until after I had completed the majority of my analysis. I note that this theory would have provided a method of exploring the classes particularly in providing a technique for fixing the boundaries of my cases. The definition she offers of information literacy as a practice that is shaped by the social site informs my research. However my identification of the ESOL classes as a learning environment but also a complex communicative space may also suggest that it does not easily fit into the landscapes identified by this theory.

3.8 Positionality

I now move to demonstrate my positionality. Questions of positionality have previously been addressed in LIS research with migrant groups. Lloyd (2017b, p.44) writes of the need for clarity in positionality and close attention to ethical issues when researching refugees. She suggests that researchers need to reflect on their own characteristics such as race and gender, their difference to their participants and how this may lead to different kinds of knowledge being valued. Morrison (2009) provides a worked example of this; reflecting on his privilege as

a white man researching Hispanic participants. Chatman's (1992) ethnographic writing also offers a clear demonstration of how to negotiate research relationship with participants different to oneself. My research is closer to these perspectives than to Pettigrew's (1999) discussion of her role where she strives to be unobtrusive and reduce the observer effect. I can also see connections with Gherardi (2000) who suggests that practice based research needs to be kitchen research with the researcher present as an embodied person. In my research my positionality is inextricably linked to my reflexivity, discussed in the following section and to my research ethics discussed in section 4.10.

3.9 Reflexivity

May (2017) argues that reflexivity is a condition of any good social science work that deals with social life. In an earlier work he (1999) suggests there are two forms; the endogenous; which asks how the academic community constructs reality and the referential, which is related to the researcher and the participants. He also suggests that the purpose of reflexivity is to make better accounts of social life not to be self-referential. This reflects Latour's (1988) critique that a text that denies its own believability is self-indulgent and instead we need to look for infra reflexivity; the attempt to make a text believable. This is related to Bourdieu (2003) and his discussion of diary disease; he argues that anthropologists instead need to analyse and objectify their own social world.

Beyond this, Skeggs (2002, p.361) argues that "*the ability to be reflexive via the experience of others is a privilege, a position of mobility and power, a mobilization of cultural resources*". In this way she also argues that reflexivity needs to be written into the design of the research rather than written into the self. Reflexivity therefore needs to move beyond self-examination. There was then the challenge to avoid being self-referential and consequently self-indulgent, while still recognising the "*knapsack of privilege*" (McIntosh, 1989) I carried in relation to most of my research participants.

At the simplest level, a reflective approach was central to giving my research rigour. I recognised my own role in shaping interviews and observations by keeping a reflective journal (Simons, 2009) to record how I shaped every stage of the research process (Charmaz, 2006; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). However, the challenge was to move beyond this to May's (1999) endogenous reflexivity.

Finlay (2002) suggests various models of reflexivity; introspection, intersubjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique and discursive deconstruction. Some of these seem more likely to lead to endogenous reflexivity than others. I identified collaborative reflexivity as one approach to this, and discuss this in relation to participatory research below. The model of reflexivity I finally adopted was reflexivity as social critique, which draws on the critical theory approaches discussed above. This model means that the researcher can draw on experiential accounts but situate them in a theoretical framework that takes account of power. Finlay notes that a strength of this approach is that it recognises the multiple positions of researcher and participant, but a potential weakness is that it can lead to an over preoccupation with egalitarianism and false authority claims. I consider this critique and evaluate my success in reflexivity in chapter 8.

3.10 Participatory research

In this section I outline my understanding of what participatory research means. In chapter 4 I explain why my research was not as participatory as originally intended. Collaborative, participatory or co-produced research is a complex and challenging area, but one that is becoming increasingly significant in the social sciences (Banks & Armstrong, 2014). Reason and Bradbury-Huang (2007) explore the value of participatory inquiry, while Campbell and Lassiter (2010) argue for a collaborative pedagogy that can disrupt academic discourses. The process of carrying out truly participatory research where knowledge is co-produced is challenging (Pahl, 2014) and not within the scope of this research project. Eubanks (2011, p.140) shows the importance of a long lead in to avoid imposing opinions, as the project needs to develop organically and argues convincingly that “*perhaps the most unequivocal lesson WYMSM offers is that cross-class, inclusive participatory research cannot take place without some form of direct remuneration*”. Comber (2016) supports the importance of this, detailing how her research collaborations have stretched over thirty years of working with her participants.

The particular reasons why I wanted my research to be participatory were closely related to how I perceived the value of my research. A participatory approach can make the research relationship more equal and so address the concerns I faced researching those different to myself. Participatory research is also more likely

to be directly useful for the participants as they help to determine the course of the research (Reason & Bradbury-Huang, 2007). Olden (1999, p.214) gives the views of one of his Somali participants: *“in his opinion many research projects were of more importance to the researchers than to those under research”* and this is what I wanted to avoid. The information literacy action research project carried out by Tavares, Hepworth, and de Souza Costa (2011) is a notable example of how participants can take an active role in making research that addresses the concerns of their community. However, I also note that LIS research projects can benefit participants even if they are not participatory as Webber, Johnston, and Salha (2014) show in their discussion of how Syrian librarians were helped by their participation in Salha’s (2011) information literacy research.

3.11 Case study

There are many varied definitions of case study. The simplicity of Eisenhardt’s (1989, 534) definition: a case study *“is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings”* is, however, a useful starting point. The theorists I discuss in this section generally take a qualitative and interpretivist approach to case studies with the exception of Yin (2013). My choice of these theorists reflects the dominant stance of case study approaches as well as my own theoretical position, but this is not a defining feature of case studies.

3.11.1 Selection of a case study approach

A case study is fundamentally concerned with researching a phenomenon in a real life setting. My research developed in just such a context: an interest in the information literacy of ESOL learners in a particular setting. Access also played an important part here, as I had an invaluable opportunity to explore this particular setting. My choice of a case study also follows a strong tradition within both LIS (Sproles et al., 2013) and education research (Bassegy, 1999), and as I discuss below it seemed an appropriate way to meet my research aims. The selection of a case study approach was a positive choice as, while I acknowledge the value of other approaches in particular the ethnographic and phenomenographic, it was the closest fit to these aims.

The initial aim of this research was to explore information literacy and ESOL

learning, in the case study site. One of the research approaches I therefore considered was phenomenography. This approach has been used successfully with a wide range of research populations including EFL learners (N. Johnston et al., 2014), young people (Smith, 2010) and trainee teachers (Essel, 2016). While this approach would have been valuable in helping understand the totality of the learner experience, it would not have helped me to understand the holistic context of the classes which was a key concern for my research. Nazari (2010, p.179) shows how case study “*can be used to explore information literacy holistically in the various contextual aspects of a case and develop robust contextual models*”. She contrasts this with phenomenographic approaches which show diversity but not the holistic picture.

There is a broad range of research that can be categorised as ethnographic; however, Creswell (2007) summarises that ethnography is focused on understanding the shared experiences of a particular group. Ethnography is an increasingly popular research approach for LIS (Khoo, Rozaklis, & Hall, 2012). Carlsson, Hanell, and Lindh (2013) suggest that ethnography can be a useful method for practice based research while Williamson (2006) shows how ethnography can be used within a constructivist paradigm. However in my research I was interested in the case, not the individual lived experience of ethnography. My research does, nevertheless, have an ethnographic texture. The methods I employed share much with the methods of ethnography. However I do not write within, or draw substantially, on the complex and varied literature of ethnographic research.

3.11.2 Strengths and weaknesses of case study

In contrast to the approaches discussed above, case study then offered several advantages for me. Case studies are good for creating thick description. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that the detailed narrative of case study can be its most significant part. There is then an emphasis on richness, on exploring a particular context in depth and on reaching a holistic understanding (Stake, 1995). This mirrored my interpretation and understanding of both information practice and language learning; that they are sociocultural and so context dependent.

Simons (2009) emphasises that case studies afford multiple perspectives: they deal with multi-layered and subjective experiences. An intrinsic part of capturing this complexity is in the use of multiple methods of data collection. Thomas

(2011) argues that case study loves all methods and that triangulation is used to capture richness rather than demonstrate validity. As I discuss below the opportunity for multi-method research was important for capturing the richness of participants' practices and for helping them to voice these practices without being limited by their linguistic capabilities.

A corollary of the case study as richly descriptive is that it is particular; "*singleness is the watchword*" Thomas (2011, p.4). There is then general recognition that the case in, and of itself, must be of central importance. This was potentially beneficial in terms of my relationship with my case study partner. A key concern for the provider was to understand and demonstrate the value of their ESOL offer. An in-depth exploration of ESOL learners' information practices seemed it might provide them with some qualitative measures of the effectiveness of their ESOL provision.

One of the major pitfalls of a case study approach is that it is typified as unforgiving of researcher weakness (Merriam, 1988; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2013) although Flyvbjerg (2011) inverts this as a positive seeing a case study as invaluable research training. Stake (1995) identifies that the researcher needs discipline, organisational skills and a strong conceptual framework, while Thomas (2011) warns that without rigour a case study is in danger becoming an unmade bed. Merriam (1988) suggests another potential danger in case study research is exaggerating or overclaiming findings. I consider this further in the following section.

3.11.3 Case studies and knowledge creation

Stake (1995) classifies case studies as intrinsic or instrumental, although he acknowledges the boundaries between the two are not clear cut. The question of whether and how case studies can be instrumental rather than solely intrinsic is a key concern for theorists. There is a general acceptance that case studies are valuable for exploratory research. This can be seen as matching my research focus in that there is limited research on ESOL learners and information. The iterative nature of case studies is one reason that they provide an opportunity for just this kind of exploration. Eisenhardt's (1989) road map demonstrates how the iterative design of case study can allow rigour as well as flexibility in order to build theory. In her road map and in my research the approach is inductive as

well as iterative. However while case studies can be used to build theory this is not the approach I adopted in my research.

Merriam (1988) suggests that case studies are heuristic and so can help to improve practice. This related to some of my original research questions; I wanted to explore information literacy in a way that might improve the practice of ESOL teaching and learning. This identification that case studies can provide 'useful' contextualised knowledge is developed in Flyvbjerg's (2006; 2011) work. He argues that formal generalisation is overvalued and that knowledge gained through experience is a vital form of learning for the social sciences. In this way case studies allow the generation of context dependent knowledge. He also suggests that narrative richness can be as valuable an outcome as theory in a case study. This is echoed by Thomas (2010) who argues that case studies should not be ashamed of providing exemplary rather than generalisable knowledge. A focus on exemplary knowledge also addresses Merriam's (1988) warning that case studies can overclaim. As I moved through my research, this understanding of case study became the most cogent for my research.

3.12 Data collection methods

The methods employed in this research were emergent. I discuss here my understanding of the various methods I employed and describe how I used them in my research in the following chapter. My discussion of these methods is limited; I do not provide a general overview, but focus on establishing how each method fits my research approach.

3.12.1 Observation

Classroom observation is a central data collection method for research in ESOL (Roberts et al., 2004) and in education more generally (Bassegy, 1999). However, for this topic the methods and techniques employed in information or digital literacy research were more relevant, and Rantala (2010), Hongisto and Sormunen (2010) and Patterson (2011) all offered guidance on how to observe information practices in the classroom. I was also informed by ethnography which offers some of the most detailed discussion on how to conduct observations.

The role and subject position of the researcher seems to be foregrounded in observation. Angrosino (2007) argues for a position of cultivated naivety and this was a useful starting point for me as an observer. Gold (1958) offers classic but, still relevant, definitions of the different kinds of observer. I had privileged access to the setting but in relation to the learners my role was more removed. The starting position for my role in the class was therefore what Gold (1958) would term observer as participant, in that I declared my role as a researcher and interacted with participants, but did not engage in their shared activity of learning. However this role became more blurred as my research progressed. I took on some aspects of a teacher and as I discuss in my findings became part of the information grounds.

Observation can be seen as having particular strengths as a method of data collection. Timmermans and Tavory (2007) argue that it is different from interviews as the data is given rather than seized. It is a way to understand practice in context and build thick description (Stake, 1995). Gobo (2008) adds to this that observation must be concerned with the meaning of actions, not just the actions. This relates to observation as a method for exposing the traces of practices (Nicolini, 2013). Crang (2007) suggests that sustained observation can be useful when language can be a barrier between researcher and participants. Beyond this I note his description of ethnographic observation as “deep hanging out” and realise the potential blurring between this, and interviews.

3.12.2 Interviews

Interviews can be seen as the default choice for qualitative research (Mason, 2002); however, my selection of this method was a considered choice. I used interviews understanding them as a practice and following Holstein and Gubrium’s (1995) position on the active interview. In this way interviews are a meaning making process and can be seen as a negotiated text. Eckerdal (2013) suggests that interviews can be a problematic method for research that takes a sociocultural perspective of information. However she argues that a practice approach to interviews is compatible with this perspective.

3.12.3 Group interviews

There is a significant body of work on focus groups that views them as a way to explore interaction and knowledge formation rather than as a way to canvass opinion (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999a). It is these definitions I draw on here. I see the difference between a focus group and a group interview as one of degree rather than an absolute so discuss them here together.

Kitzinger (1994) notes that focus groups that tap into an existing community allow the exploration of naturally occurring interactions in context. In this way they act as a bridge between interview and observation, although Barbour (2007) argues they are often seen as a poor relation to field work. In contrast to Holstein and Gubrium (1995) who argue that interviews are just as natural because all talk is constructed, I see a focus group as offering a different opportunity to explore a particular site where information practices are enacted. There are other potential benefits of using focus groups. They can be seen as more likely to be participatory as they shift power away from the researcher (Wilkinson, 1999). They can allow for mutual support and so provide a way to work with participants who lack voice (Chiu & Knight, 1999).

However, there are also difficulties in using focus groups. Barbour and Kitzinger (1999b) suggest that the rich dynamic data collected in focus groups can be difficult to manage and analyse, while Green and Hart (1999) identify that more informal groups are more challenging analytically, but also potentially more interesting. Beyond this it is important to recognise that focus groups will also not capture the full range of participants' individual experiences (Michel, 1999) rather they are concerned with collective experience.

3.12.4 Visual methods

Visual methods such as photography, video, drawing and mapping are becoming more popular across the social sciences (Rose, 2012) Pink (2007). These techniques are also an integral part of ESOL teaching and so a useful way to communicate with ESOL learners. The REFLECT model (Cardiff et al., 2007) offers the strongest examples of how to use these techniques as part of a critical pedagogy. Visual methods can help learners conceptualise and express their thoughts and feelings as well as having more instrumental uses such as teaching vocabulary.

There is also a growing body of research from LIS that uses visual methods (Hartel & Thomson, 2011) as well as information literacy and behaviour research in particular (Eckerdal, 2013; Julien, Given, & Opryshko, 2013; Smith, 2010). Most pertinent to this study is Lloyd and Wilkinson's (2016) recent work with refugees using photovoice.

However, participatory visual methods can be demanding of participants. I participated in a taught visual methods module and attempted to create a portfolio of photographs to reflect on my information literacy and produce images to use in focus groups. This was invaluable in helping me understand that a method such as photovoice can potentially be intrusive and time consuming, rather than a positive participatory method if it is researcher rather than participant-led.

3.12.5 Information diaries

I only include a brief discussion of diaries as a research method as their use within my research was limited. Toms and Duff (2002) identify that diaries are a promising method for information behaviour research, as they can capture rich detail in context through an everyday process. However, they caution that it is difficult to recruit and retain participants; that participants tend to not follow instructions, and that diary keeping modifies participants' behaviour. McKenzie and Davies (2012) also use diaries effectively but warn that it can be difficult to engage participants. Patterson (2011) intended to use audio visual diaries within his research with ESL learners but only collected limited data and did not use as a major research method. McDonald's (2013) use of diaries with ESOL learners was an instance of their effective use. She comments that the diaries became an ESOL learning activity and this was one of my intentions in considering this as a research method. My selection of diaries was intended to help me build context and gain other perspectives that may not be expressed in a group interview or observation.

3.12.6 Documents

Bowen (2009) outlines five uses for documents in research; to provide context; raise questions; as supplementary data; to track change and development, and to corroborate other kinds of data. He identifies documents as traces of activity; within this they can be printed or electronic, and in a range of formats.

He suggests the analysis process needs to be systematic and iterative, and that documents should be seen as social facts to be analysed using thematic or content analysis. Merriam (2009) adds to this that document analysis also needs to be serendipitous. She notes that document analysis is underused as a research method. Ginger (2014) offers a more incisive method for analysing documents drawing on interpretative content analysis. Within this research my approach to analysing documents was restricted to using them to provide context and corroborate other data, rather than to their full potential as a primary research method.

3.13 Data analysis

The question of how to analyse was revisited extensively during the first two years of my research. The process of selecting a method of data analysis was iterative, involving comparison between epistemological and theoretical understandings, research aims and the strengths of different methods. The discussion in Lauckner, Paterson, and Krupa (2012) of the process of methodological choices was a useful guide when considering the alternative methods of analysis discussed below. I initially planned to use constructivist grounded theory as a method of analysis. Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) can be seen as a break from conventional grounded theory in that it is interpretive rather than positivist in its approach. In this way theory is built from data through a process of coding and constant comparison, but with the recognition that the researcher creates rather than discovers the theory. However, my early attempts to use grounded theory were not successful. The longitudinal nature of my research meant that the theoretical saturation of constructivist grounded theory did not seem to be a realistic outcome. I also wanted to preserve the richness and complexity of my two cases rather than necessarily produce a framework or model.

Narrative analysis was another inviting method; as it allowed an emphasis on story that had an immediate appeal to me. It has the potential to be an empowering (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008) and reflexive (Elliot, 2005) research method. Detmering and Johnson (2012) also show how it can be used for information literacy research. However, it did not seem to meet all of the objectives of my research as I was interested in the holistic context of the cases rather than individual experience. Nevertheless stories formed a significant element of my research.

Finally I considered discourse analysis. This is a recommended approach for literacy research (Street, 2001). Macdonald (2013) uses critical discourse analysis effectively in her research with ESOL learners. However, while I acknowledge its effectiveness for critical theory approaches it did not match my interest in practice rather than discourse. I would also have needed different methods of data collection, as the observation notes that became my main data source would not be suitable for this method of analysis.

Thematic analysis is one of the most flexible and widely used methods in the social science Bryman (2012). I identified this as the most likely method as I embarked on data collection. However over the process of analysis I moved away from the coding process associated with thematic approach. The approach I eventually adopted is closest to that suggested by Stake (1995). In his description of analysing case studies he suggests that observation tells the story and that the analysis is a process of winnowing and sifting with an emphasis on vignettes.

I describe how I executed this in section 4.8 and explain how I used information grounds theory as part of my analysis. Previous information grounds research has employed a range of analysis techniques. It is often used deductively to test hypotheses (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004), particularly to develop a greater understanding of the theory itself (Fisher & Landry, 2007a). It is also commonly used with thematic analysis (Kelder & Lueg, 2011; Rohman & Pang, 2015) to understand how information is shared in a particular place.

3.14 Evaluation

A significant challenge of a constructivist approach is the question of its value. The question of what value research holds, is inextricably linked to the question of what kind of knowledge the research generates. In this way research that does not seek to generalise but to build situated knowledge, has to be judged by appropriate criteria. Lincoln and Guba (1985) still provide one of the strongest methods of evaluating qualitative research. I outline their criteria below as a useful tool to evaluate my research.

The criteria identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for evaluating the trustworthiness of research include credibility, where they suggest techniques includ-

ing prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checking. For transferability they suggest thick description; for dependability inquiry audit, and for confirmability an audit trail, triangulation, and reflexivity. I do not consider these criteria as a checklist but as a guide for me to understand the strengths and weaknesses of my research. Shenton (2004) summarises the positivist alternatives for Guba and Lincoln's work suggesting that credibility can be seen as substituting for internal validity, transferability for generalisation, dependability for reliability and confirmability for objectivity. There is of course an inherent contradiction in this process however it is still valuable to evaluate the claims to knowledge made by interpretive research.

I also note that my evaluation must include how far I was successful in addressing the challenges I experienced in reflexivity, in providing value to my participants and in researching people different to myself. Beyond this my research needs to be evaluated as a case study, where the singular interest is the case.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter has laid out my theoretical, ontological and epistemological positions. I have demonstrated how these are coherent with my research questions, adoption of a case study approach, and research methods. In the following chapter I show how I applied these principles in the execution of my research design.

Chapter 4

Research methods

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss how I applied the research approach outlined in chapter 3. I first explain the selection of my case and detail my research population. This is followed by an outline of my data collection methods and how they relate to my evolving research questions. The following sections detail the process of analysis and a discussion of research ethics. The chapter concludes with a summary of the pilot stage of my research.

4.2 Overview of research design

The emergent, inductive and iterative nature of my research means that it has a 'messy' quality (Cook, 2009). The diagram in figure 4.1 gives an overview of my research design. It shows how the research was inspired by my professional experience and documents how the research methods and questions developed and evolved over time. It shows how my final theoretical framework was developed at a late stage of the research process, but my research paradigm was a common thread through the project as a whole. Equally it demonstrates how I maintained a literature review and a reflexive diary, until the final stages of synthesising the literature. The diagram finishes with one further uncompleted stage: my final feedback to my ESOL learner participants. This lies beyond the scope of my submitted thesis but is a commitment I need to make to these participants.

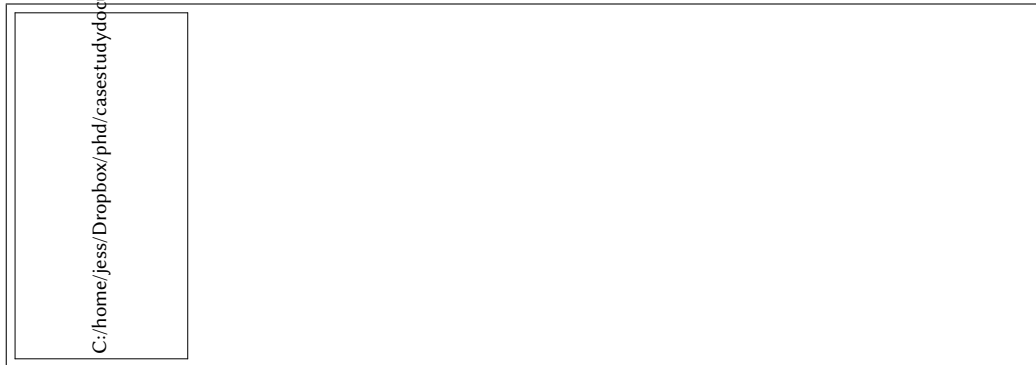


Figure 4.1: Overview of research

4.3 Selection of case

My selection of a case study partner was based on local knowledge. This was coherent for my research as I was not seeking the unique or the representative, but a rich setting to explore. I had previously worked in the setting and continued to maintain links with them. This meant that I had a substantial knowledge of the setting, and an insider status to some extent. I used my existing contacts and knowledge to recruit both initial interviewees and classes. I chose teachers who I thought would be engaged with, and supportive of, my research. After recruiting the teachers, I visited the two classes and asked the learners if they would be happy to take part in the research. I had originally planned to use three classes, but T3 was unable to take part in the research due to a change in circumstances.

4.4 Research population

The case study site is located in a city in Northern England. The focus of this research was two ESOL classes which were nested cases within this site. The provider for both classes was a section of a city council department. The ESOL classes in this site were contracted by the provider to a range of third sector organisations. The provider managed the tenders for these contracts and allocated funding which came from central government funding streams. Many of the third sector organisations had long standing relationships with the provider. The majority of the teachers were self-employed and managed by one of these

T1	ESOL teacher (participant in main study)
T2	ESOL teacher (participant in main study)
T3	ESOL teacher
I1	Manager
I2	Manager
I3	Trustee
I4	Policy Officer

Table 4.1: Initial interviewees

intermediary organisations. ESOL provision was part of a wider offer of community learning including other functional skills, family learning, vocational, and leisure courses. ESOL classes were free to learners on benefits who paid a small registration fee and charged at a relatively low rate to those on higher incomes. The majority of ESOL learners who attended these classes were women, many were not working and most provision was targeted at the entry levels of ESOL.

4.4.1 Participants

There were two stages to this research after the completion of the pilot. The first was a series of short interviews with two managers, three teachers and one trustee of a charity, all from the case study site as well as a policy officer from a national organisation. Their details are provided in table 4.1

The main data collection involved two ESOL classes. Their details are provided in tables 4.2 and 4.3.

Class A taught by T1

Class A were beginners in English, in a women-only class taught in a primary school. Most of the women had been taught by T2 in previous years although their ESOL studies had often been interrupted. There were normally between ten and twelve learners in the lessons I visited. Most of the learners were mothers of children in the school or a local nursery. However from those who were there at my first visit A16 was a grandmother, A11 was pregnant with her first child and A5 did not have children. The women apart from A6 who joined in the second term were also all Muslim. There were regular discussions of faith and Islamic practice which framed both activities within lessons and the women's experiences.

Class A		
Number	Terms attended	Country of birth
A1	1,2,3,4	Yemen
A2	1,2,3,4	Yemen
A3	1,2,3,4	Pakistan
A4	1	Yemen
A5	1,2,3,4	Yemen
A6	2	Eastern Europe
A7	1,2,3,4	Yemen
A8	2,3,4	Yemen
A9	1,2,3,4	Yemen
A10	2,3,4	Yemen
A11	1,2	Central Africa
A12	1	Pakistan
A13	3,4	Yemen
A14	1,2,3,4	Yemen
A15	2	East Africa
A16	1	Yemen
A17	3	Yemen
A18	3,4	North East Africa
T1	Teacher	UK
V1	School worker	UK
V2	Volunteer	UK
V3	Volunteer	UK
V4	CVI worker	UK

Table 4.2: Class A

Class B	Terms attended	Country of birth
B1	1,2,3	Western Asia
B2	1,2,3	Western Europe
B3	1,2	Central Europe
B4	1,2,3	Eastern Europe
B5	2,3	South East Asia
B6	1,2,3	Europe
B7	1,2,3	Middle East
B8	1,2,3	East Africa
T2	Teacher	UK

Table 4.3: Class B

The learners had typically come to the UK for marriage. However there were two refugees and one EU citizen in the class. The learners had generally been resident in the UK for over three years and most for much longer. Some learners did not tell me their immigration status and I did not ask. Many of the women had little schooling and were not literate in any language although two learners (A11 and A18) were university educated. Their level of spoken English was generally far higher than their written capabilities and their ability to communicate was also much higher than their level of English would suggest. The women often supported each other linguistically with peer translation and checking understanding in their first languages (many but not all the learners spoke either Urdu or Arabic). T1 was an experienced and qualified ESOL teacher who had been teaching in the case study site for several years.

Class B taught by T2

This class took place in a community centre. The learners had an intermediate level of English. Several of them had been learning in this class with T2 for at least two years preceding the start of my research. They were able to express themselves well in English in most situations. They were all women, but T2 was male. They came from a range of ethnic backgrounds and a range of different countries. Some learners were Muslim and others were Christian or of no identified religion. They had come to the UK for a variety of reasons including marriage, to find work, and to claim asylum.

Most of them were mothers with children in local schools while B4 was a grandmother. They were generally well educated and some had professional qualifications. Some learners were working part-time, some were not working, while one was retired and another learner found work shortly after my data collection finished. There were normally between five and eight learners attending the sessions I visited. There were two learners in this class who engaged very little with my research and who I saw infrequently and so I have not included them. T2 was an experienced and qualified ESOL teacher who had been teaching in the case study site for several years.

4.5 Challenges of working with ESOL learners

There are substantial ethical and methodological issues involved in conducting research with ESOL learners. Part of this is the challenge of conducting research with participants in a language where they lack proficiency. The use of interpreters is a relatively common way to overcome language barriers. Lloyd et al. (2013) use interpreters in their research as does a significant body of research from ESOL (Cooke, 2006). Their use is not, however, unproblematic as Robert's (2006) discussion of the challenges of working in a multilingual environment shows. It was also not financially or practically possible to use interpreters within the current research beyond translating participant information forms where needed. There were a number of languages spoken within each class, and I made multiple visits to the classes.

I discuss below how my research methods were designed to support the participants to express themselves in English. However I also note Edward's (1998, p.198) argument that "*as things stand researchers wishing to hear the voices of some of the most disadvantaged and silenced members of society will on the whole need to use a translator*". Macdonald (2013) and Roberts et al. (2004) found that their participants welcomed the opportunity to talk in English and this is significant as ESOL learners often have little opportunity to practise English with native speakers outside of their ESOL classes (Cooke & Simpson, 2008). I anticipated that a concrete benefit of my research could then be an opportunity for them to practice their English with a proficient speaker. As I discuss below my research was generally limited to class time and so this was not fully realised.

Participants in class A were beginners in English when I started my research.

This therefore represented a significant communication challenge. We adopted a range of strategies to aid communication. I had access to a volunteer who spoke Arabic and a school worker who spoke Urdu which were the two main languages spoken. The participants frequently also used peer translation although this was clearly not possible for those who were the sole speaker of their first language. Beyond this my focus was on what they did, rather than what they thought about what they did. However I recognise my own limitations as a monolingual English speaker and the limitations that language imposed on my research.

The contrast between the two classes was one useful way for me to interrogate my understanding of class A. I note in my reflective diary *“In fact it is only after I visit the higher level class that I realise how much time I will need to spend with class A in order to overcome the language barrier between us”*.

4.6 Participation

The impetus of this research was driven by me; the research questions and methods were developed by me and I analysed the data and wrote the thesis. However, I have engaged all the participants in my research to some extent. In this way, I consulted with people working in the case study site while drafting my PhD proposal, and used initial interviews and ongoing conversations with the teachers to shape my research. I have modified my research questions and methods in response to participants if not in partnership with them. I have also shared research findings with all participants to some extent.

My collaboration with the teachers was genuinely participatory; we worked together and learnt from each other. There was far less collaboration with learners. With class A, research only took place within class time and they had a limited understanding of what research was. However my research developed in response to them even if it was not guided by them. My relationship with class B was also not participatory however we did negotiate research methods. As I demonstrate in my findings, it took several months of visiting and trying different approaches before these learners began to engage with my research.

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) highlight how their PhD research became more instrumental due to institutional pressures and I can recognise this in my own research. The fact that my research was not as participatory as I had hoped meant

that my approach to reflexivity also shifted to reflexivity as social critique.

4.7 Data collection methods

Prior to data collection I had considered a range of potential methods as outlined in chapter 3. If the ESOL learners were keen to fully engage as co-researchers then I anticipated methods such as photovoice and diaries. If they wanted their participation to be more limited then observation was likely to be a more effective tool. The research could equally have had a narrow but deep focus with a smaller number of participants or a wider but shallower approach with a larger number. In practice, learner engagement was limited and generally confined to class time.

I used different methods with the two classes. This was due to the difference in language ability as well as the different relationships I developed with them. With class A, I primarily used observation, class activities and class discussion. A wider range of methods was used with class B including diaries, interviews and observations. However my engagement with class B was more limited, and class A is the much richer of the two cases.

Generally I made my research fit into the teaching and this meant it sometimes took a secondary role. The most obvious example of this was when T2 offered to let learners come to interviews with me rather than attend their class. I refused saying their class should come first. As I discuss in subsequent chapters my research generally aligned with teaching.

In the following sections I detail how I used a range of methods and demonstrate how they contributed to my overall research design. I include an overview of these methods in table 4.4.

4.7.1 Document review

One of the first stages of my research was a review of relevant documents. This was conducted concurrently with the initial interviews discussed below. At this stage my research questions centred around exploring the relationship between ESOL learning and information literacy. The document analysis involved a review of national and local documents relevant to the case study site. These re-

Feb-March 2015	2	Pilot focus groups and 1 observation
April-June 2015	8	Initial interviews with case study site staff (generally 30 minutes)
May 2015	18	Initial document analysis
Sept 2015 -Dec 2016		Class A
	17	Number of observations (36 hours in total)
	21	Documents collected (for example lesson materials)
	120	Photographs (researcher and participant generated)
Sept 2015-June 2016		Class B
	8	Number of observations (12 hours in total)
	7	Diary entries
	2	Pieces of learner writing
	2	Focus groups (5 students in total)
	6	Class documents collected
	30	Photographs: researcher generated
Apr 2015- Mar 2017		Reflective writing
	119	General memos (used as part of writing)
	33	Memos from interviews/observations (used as data)
	49	Memos from coding (used as part of writing)
May 2016- Sept 2017		Feedback
		Wrote a book for Class A describing my research with them
		Wrote letters to 5 Class B learners
	2	Closing interviews with teachers (generally 30minutes)

Table 4.4: Overview of data collection methods

sources were selected using my own knowledge of the sector and following advice in the initial interviews. At a national level this review centred around these websites and documents downloaded from them:

- www.excellencegateway.org.uk
- esol.britishcouncil.org
- www.skillsforlifeframework.com
- www.talent.ac.uk (now closed)
- niace.org.uk (now www.learningandwork.org.uk)
- www.trinitycollege.com/SfL
- www.nrdc.org.uk (unavailable in July, added in October 2015, now permanently closed)

In my review, I looked for references to information literacy, digital literacy and then more generally for activities, practices or competencies that I could identify as connected to information. While references to information literacy could be quickly identified, the second stage was more interpretive. I discuss in section 4.8 how I then reinterpreted this analysis to develop the contexts of the classes as information grounds.

At later stages of the research I conducted some further document analysis. This included learners' writing, and resources developed by the teachers. These documents were used to triangulate other data.

4.7.2 Initial interviews

I held initial interviews with the participants in table 4.1. These interviews were intended to explore participants' conceptions of information literacy and its relationship with language learning, inform my research design, contribute to thick description and help me understand the boundaries of my case study. Interviewees were selected based on my knowledge of the site, and on suggestions from other interviewees. These interviews were semi-structured and a list of question prompts is included in appendix F. I found Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) guide

to interview questions useful in helping me develop these questions. The question prompts were used only as a guide and many of the interviews were closer to a conversation. Two further requests for interviews were made but I received no response. Before each interview I re-read my notes from previous interviews and revised my questions. For example, the last two questions concerning digital literacies and digital technologies were added when I realised these were key issues for some interviewees.

The withdrawn interview

I conducted one further initial interview. However, this participant decided to withdraw after being sent the transcript. This became a significant event in my research for a number of reasons. It made me question my research process and whether I was failing to explain my research effectively. It also made me examine my interview technique; these early interviews were discursive in nature and involved circling round the topic. I had to consider whether this interview style was likely to alienate participants.

This interview also made me change my practice as following this I sent participants a summary of the interview rather than just the transcript. I felt that the participants would be more likely to read a summary and it would demonstrate that the interview was a meaningful dialogue. I also reviewed how I presented the transcript to further interviewees. My research did not involve discourse analysis and so I did not represent speech, but I had tried to convey some of the features of the spoken word. Following the participant's unhappiness, the transcripts I produced were tidier with more of the grammatical features of writing. This helped me realise that for this research, transcripts were only one way of representing data. I found Back's (2010) discussion of how transcripts and recordings should be treated with caution and not reified useful here.

I also became aware that I was trying to recreate this lost interview, as I searched for interviewees who may share her views. This made me realise I needed to curtail the initial interviews. Information literacy seemed to have made little impact within the community learning sector and there was a wealth of opinion raised on it. I realised that a small number of interviews was enough to demonstrate this to me.

4.7.3 Teacher interviews

I interviewed T1 and T2 again after completing the first stage of my data analysis. I used these interviews to discuss my initial findings with them. These interviews were unstructured. I prepared some notes for each teacher explaining my thoughts on information grounds, and information sharing in their classes. I then asked general questions such as *“Has my research changed anything you’ve done or thought about?”* and *“Did the activities we did together seem to be normal ESOL activities or something different?”* as well as more specific questions *“What do you think the learners do with the information you give them about yourself?”* and *“Do you consciously manage and plan the debate in your class?”*

My research also involved a significant number of email and face to face conversations, where we discussed my research and planned potential activities. I was however selective and used these to guide my research rather than as research data. These conversations at times crossed the boundaries between personal and research and so I wanted to keep them separate from collected data.

4.7.4 Observation

Observation became the central method for my research with T1’s class and an important one for class B. I include a summary of the activities of each class visit in appendix I. I also include in appendix J an outline of one observation with class A.

Observations continued through different iterations of my research questions. The first observations were at the stage when I had realised my initial research questions would not work. The majority of observations were carried out under the very broad question of how learners were interacting with information in and out of the classroom.

After each observation I wrote an initial set of notes, and a reflective memo. I wrote little while observing but made brief notes when the opportunity arose. With class A, a significant proportion of observations were spent talking to learners individually or in groups or taking on some elements of a teaching assistant role; typing on the smart board or searching on the Internet. Relatively little time was spent simply watching.

Observations were also an important data collection method for class B although these observations were generally shorter and much less frequent. Visits to class B involved more active discussion with learners centred on my research. I therefore observed less 'normal' teaching in class B. I also did not take on the same teaching assistant role although I would answer learners' queries and be asked my opinion by T2.

With the majority of observations, I recorded and then listened back to remind myself and to take some quotations. The trips were particularly challenging as it was not possible to record them and it was more difficult to make notes. I relied on making brief notes on my phone and occasionally withdrawing from the group to write more extensively. The recordings were in themselves problematic, in that the teacher's voice and mine dominated as it was difficult to hear learner voices on the recordings. There was also the challenge of how to represent ESOL learners' speech in writing. I used little direct speech and relied more on reporting with an attempt to retain some sense of their speech.

I recognise that I became far more accomplished at observation over the course of the research. From my diary in February 2016

I'm worried that I haven't got enough detail, that my early observations aren't good enough. Needed to be better crafted. Would it be better to have focused on one or two learners in each session? Does it matter I don't have consistency across observations?

However I reconcile this with the knowledge that this is inevitable if doctoral research is regarded as an apprenticeship.

Many of these observations were a blurring between observation, class activity and focus groups. With class A this included lessons where we discussed different information sources and personal documentation. With class B this included discussions about when they first moved to the UK and a lesson on assessing the truth of claims made about EU referendum.

4.7.5 Class trips

One of the most significant activities I engaged in with the two classes were three trips I made with class A (to a city farm, a centre for the visually impaired, and

a photography exhibition) and one trip with class B (to a local museum). These trips were planned while I was asking how learners were interacting with information in and out of the classroom. The initial interviews with service providers and early observations of the ESOL classes had suggested that I needed to consider information in its broadest sense; the embodied, social and affective as well as the cognitive. I therefore secured a small research bursary from the John Campbell trust to fund these four educational visits. This meant that I could observe a class visit from the planning through to the evaluation. It also meant my research did provide some benefit to participants. Community learning does not have the funding for enrichment activities but they are important for learners, and so this element of giving back was important for my research. I include more detail about the trips in chapters 5 and 6.

4.7.6 Information diaries

My research question at this stage was asking how learners were interacting with information in and out of the classroom. A discussion with the class, suggested that diaries would be a useful data collection method. I wrote two different diary tasks which are both included in appendix G. I also include an extract from one of the completed diaries in appendix O. The first attempt at keeping diaries where I provided examples from my own information encounters was not successful. None of the learners completed the task. A simpler form of diary was proposed following further discussion with the class. Four learners then wrote a diary entry for me with one of these learners providing three entries. It was, however, not sustainable to ask the learners to continue to produce diaries as they had not engaged enthusiastically with the task. In both these tasks I mention information sharing but it does not have a central focus.

4.7.7 Group interviews

I held two group interviews with class B outside of their lesson times. At this stage I was again asking how learners were interacting with information in and out of the classroom. I include a list of the question prompts in appendix H. I drew on Chatman (1992) and Richards (2015) in developing these questions. These group interviews were intended to find out about the learners' information practices and followed on from the diaries they had completed for me. It is notable that none of the questions I prepared asked about information sharing.

However the learners did talk about sharing information within these interviews.

4.7.8 Visual methods

My use of visual methods was far more limited than I anticipated. Class A were initially very cautious about the idea of taking photographs as part of my research, although as the observations showed they took photographs as part of their lives. Class B were not interested in taking photographs when I discussed this with them at our initial meeting.

Participants took a large number of photographs on the trips. These were useful to discuss in class and as documentary evidence for me. However participants took pictures for enjoyment not for my research purposes. I also took my own photographs and these were valuable to aid my memory rather than as objects of analysis.

Both teachers also used drawing and photographs as part of their teaching to a lesser or great extent. These therefore became part of my research practice. However they were used for data collection rather than as objects of analysis.

4.8 Analysis

The process of analysis was the most challenging stage of my research. I have included a selection of reflections from my research diary to illustrate the travails of the analysis process. In order to begin my analysis I had to move away from trying to build theory to exploring a problem (and so recognising my research was a case study). In order to complete my analysis I also had to narrow my focus to information sharing and information grounds.

I discuss above how the data collection methods I used blended with each other, and so too did the process of analysis and data collection. My observations involved conversations with participants and the process of analysis and meaning-making started with these dialogues. My ongoing interactions with T1 were the foremost examples of this but dialogue with T2 and class B learners also started the process of analysis. The same level of analytical conversation was not usual for class A. They could be insightful about their own experience and they surprised and challenged me, but they did not have the same capability for reflection

in English.

The first stage of analysis was exploring the initial interviews and collated documents. The intention of this early stage was to provide context and an overview and so a line by line approach to coding was not taken. Instead the documents were read and re-read with the lens of the research questions to build a picture of information and information literacy in this context. The initial interviews were also loosely coded, with these codes primarily used to suggest emerging themes to guide my research. Once I had identified the theoretical framework of information grounds I then revisited this analysis to inform my writing of two of the subcontexts of the information grounds.

Once I had started the main period of data collection I wrote a separate descriptive and a reflective account of each observation. I then coded these observations writing memos on those that resonated with me. I added to this by a similar analysis of learners' writing and the transcribed group interviews.

I used the initial stages of data analysis to guide the direction of my research, for example my memo writing on space led me to apply for the funding to take the classes on trips. Coding was an iterative process involving constant comparison between the data, the generated codes and my research questions.

However I was not able to move beyond the extensive list of codes that I had generated. I note in my diary in November 2015 "*Why is analysing so hard? 1. Because I don't like generalising 2. I worry about writing people's lives for them. I need to stop seeing it as generalising as this seems the real stumbling block.*" A later diary entry from May 2016 shows how I am still struggling with analysis:

Now have 626 codes. Have tried pruning and combining by going between the data and the codes and the memos. Still trying to find a pattern or structure. Need to go back and think again about my research questions. Think about what is interesting about my cases and focus on that.

It was not until data collection was complete that I began to make real process on my analysis. Early attempts to find overarching patterns in my data were unsuccessful and it seemed as if I simply had a disparate collection of codes. At the same time I was also finding it challenging to identify the boundaries of my

cases. I include two photographs illustrating my attempts to find meaning in my codes in appendix K. My final list of aggregated codes is also included in appendix L. Finally through a process of sifting and winnowing (Stake, 1995) these codes I identified that information sharing activities seemed to be the significant aspect of my data. I then focused on this and returned to my data identifying around 120 significant episodes of information sharing.

I then identified the most salient episodes of information sharing for the two cases. I now had 51 episodes. I drew on my observations, reflections and other available sources such as photographs, documents and participants' comments to write fuller accounts of these episodes. The final decision of which episodes to include or exclude was only made once I was close to completing my discussion chapter. Appendix M gives an example of the process of selecting and writing these episodes. These structured narratives provided context and preserved participants' voices. However they were limited to my perspective and do not reflect the different realities experienced by the teachers and learners.

In order to guide my research I concurrently considered which theoretical framework would help to give me insight into my data. In my diary in October 2016 I write

Am making major revisions to analysis process. I'm following Sheila's suggestion of trying different models to understand the data. Have finally identified information grounds as a useful framework. I think this is the way to fix the classes as cases. Now need to work out how to structure.

At this stage in my analysis I had familiarised myself with the propositions outlined in section 3.6.1. I then examined the two classes against the propositions and found that, as I show in chapters 5 and 6, they could usefully be understood as information grounds. I therefore started to use information grounds as a tool to fix the boundaries of the classes, and to map out their particular characteristics. This was a significant moment in my analysis as it meant I understood how my case study was delineated. I used the adapted propositions I discuss in 3.6 to explore the classes in more detail. Information grounds theory was the starting point of my analysis rather than its final outcome but nevertheless an integral step in the process.

I then used the information sharing episodes as the basis to analyse the people, objects and places and how they mediated information sharing with a practice theory lens. Nicolini and Monteiro (2016) caution against an approach that relies on labelling and categorising activities and practices and the creation of information sharing episodes seemed one way to avoid this as it reveals practices and activities in context. Through my method of analysis and representation I therefore hope I have conveyed the nexus of the practice of information sharing in these two classes framed by the context of information grounds.

In addition to my solitary attempts at data analysis I also received invaluable feedback, beyond the ongoing dialogue with my supervisory team. I mention my confirmation review and attendance at ECIL's doctoral forum in chapter 3. In addition to this, in June 2016 I attended the doctoral forum at the Conceptions of Library and Information Science conference where I started to identify what was interesting and novel about my research. In November 2017 I presented to my research group within the university and received feedback on my initial idea of using information grounds and information sharing episodes. Finally I presented my methods and findings at the i3 conference in June 2017 where I received both positive feedback and challenging questions.

4.8.1 Use of Nvivo

The significance of the selection and use of software during the process of data analysis needs to be acknowledged. However my selection of Nvivo was opportunistic rather than strategic (it was the supplied software for my university) and my use of it was fairly limited. Welsh (2002) provides a valuable overview of using Nvivo to code qualitative data and summarises that it can be a powerful tool for a particular level of data interrogation but less useful for the interrogation of themes that emerge from this initial analysis. This reflects my experience of using Nvivo. I used it to organise the multiple data sources I had collected and during the process of initial coding. However much of the analysis took place outside of Nvivo in the selection, crafting and analysis of information sharing episodes. Therefore while I acknowledge that tools shape activities, within the context of this project the human rather than the software mediated the analysis.

4.8.2 Involving participants in analysis

I produced a book for the Class A learners giving them a personalised account of my research findings (extracts from this are included in appendix N). However while they enjoyed reading the book their responses to it were fairly limited. The book was linguistically challenging for them; it was written in the past tense which they would not formally learn until entry level 2. On reflection, it is likely that this meant it was difficult for them to give me extensive feedback. For class B I summarised what they had told me by writing an individual letter to each participant. I received two responses; one correcting a factual error and one initiating an interesting dialogue that my research was too negative. I include extracts from one of these letters and B4's response in appendix P. I had realised by this point that it was unrealistic to expect further involvement from participants but B4's comments were useful and interesting. As I discuss above the teachers were more involved in the process of my research.

4.9 Synthesising findings

The final stages of this research were to re-engage with the literature, synthesise existing knowledge with my research findings, and identify my own contributions. As with my overall research design this was an iterative process. It involved negotiation and dialogue between my findings and previous literature to identify how previous work could illuminate my own, and where my research offered new perspectives or insights.

4.10 Ethics

I finish this chapter with a discussion of the ethical dimensions of my research. This research received ethical approval from the Information School as shown in appendices C and D. I discuss here the ethical complexities that extended beyond the formal procedures of the university. I see ethics as situated, context dependent, and embodied in me as a researcher rather than in the formal procedures conducted through my university. The procedures and language of applying for ethical approval seem very different from the description of ethics as '*fields of uncertainty*' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.76) and the recognition that consent is a process not an event (Miller & Bell, 2002). Halse and Honey (2005) discuss

this divergence as a moral and often undisclosed dilemma and suggest that the formal procedures of university ethics are inherently positivist. I can recognise this in my own research and consider this more fully below.

4.10.1 Research with groups different to oneself

This research is ethically complex. The learners who participated in this research were potentially vulnerable; some were refugees, all were limited by their English language skills to some extent and all could be affected by the imposition of the researcher in their classroom. Many of the participants were also from BME communities, and many were Muslim. For class A there was also the significant challenge that many of them had limited literacy in any language and little formal schooling. Hooks (1989) suggests that writing about a group different to oneself risks perpetuating and reinforcing domination of that group. An integral part of my ethics is then to acknowledge my own identity as a middle class, highly educated, atheist and white woman; recognise the need to interrogate my privilege (McIntosh, 1989) and reflect on my own value positions rather than seeing them as universal. I also acknowledge my participants' identities as Muslims and/or BME but do not consider these identities the subject of my investigation.

4.10.2 Informed consent

The formal procedures of obtaining consent seemed problematic for my research. For the ESOL learners involved I chose to record their verbal consent. My previous experience of working with ESOL learners meant I was aware these learners in their everyday lives were sometimes required to sign forms they could not read, and I wanted to avoid this bureaucratic alienation. I followed the toolkit in Simpson et al. (2011) adapting their forms and processes for my own participants and research design. The information sheet included in appendix D was then translated into the first languages that class A spoke. Class B were all able to read the English version. I asked the teachers to confirm in writing that they had witnessed the learners' consent. I asked the teachers and the other initial interviewees to complete a conventional consent form, and on reflection I could have used this process with class B.

I include here a brief description of my first meeting with both classes and the

process of gaining consent to contextualise my discussion of ethics. With class A T1 had already taught the learners the word information but we discussed what research was, arriving at a definition of finding things out to make them better. In this session all the learners were from either Yemen or Pakistan. I handed out the information sheets in Arabic and Urdu. The women were already sitting in these two language groups. One learner then read the Arabic out loud for those who were not literate while V1 sat with the Urdu speakers reading the information sheet with them. The two groups then discussed amongst themselves in Arabic and Urdu. They asked me questions about taking photographs and about privacy. The women then all confirmed they were happy to take part. I told them to take the information sheets home and ask me more questions next time.

Class B had a sufficient level of English to understand the information sheet in English. They read it individually and then we talked about it. I checked that they understood what ethics was by giving an example. The learners asked some questions, mainly about taking photographs, and queried why I was interested in them but confirmed they are happy to take part.

The process of gaining informed consent had to be regularly repeated when either new learners joined, or I met learners who had been absent at the initial meeting. This also served as a useful reminder for existing learners who often read or listened to the information sheet again. There was one learner from class A who joined in term 3. I only saw her on two occasions. I explained my research to her but did not seek informed consent. This is because there was no one available to read the information sheet to her in her language. I did not record the observations where she was present.

There is a need to consider what informed consent actually means, particularly for those learners in class A who had little formal schooling. Bigelow and Tarone (2004) talk about the ethical difficulties of researching people with low literacy. When participants do not have a real understanding of what doctoral research is and would not be able to read the final product of a thesis, there are serious questions about what their consent means. There are questions here about representation, but also the question of what my participants are consenting to and how far this consent is meaningful. With class A I generally felt my initial acceptance by the class was due to the trust that T1 and V1 showed towards me and as I spent more time in the class I gained the personal trust of the learners. There was a different quality of response from class B and from some learners

within class A, for example A18 who was university educated.

I obtained informed consent from all those who participated in the research. However we also made four trips as part of the research and so engaged with the wider public. I followed the guidance of university ethics policy in conducting research in public places. I informed those who were directly involved, for example the volunteer who showed us round the museum about my research but did not seek formal consent.

4.10.3 Anonymity

There were challenges in maintaining anonymity in this research. I stated in the information sheets for participants that it was not possible to guarantee anonymity, but saw it as my responsibility to preserve participants' privacy as far as possible. I therefore had to find the balance between providing thick description and losing anonymity. There were some potentially identifying details I could not change; for example the majority of ESOL teachers are female so the participation of a male teacher made it much easier to identify that class. However there were other details I could either obscure or change. For example, if only one participant came from a country I anonymised this to region and I changed some people's job titles. There were however times, particularly in writing about places when there was a loss in not being able to use the vivid descriptions from my notes.

I recognise that those who know the setting well, may be able to recognise the classes. However I tested the anonymity of my research with the assistance of a colleague in a doctoral writing group. She was unable to identify the classes from my descriptions, despite knowing the city where the research took place.

4.10.4 Reflexivity and representation

I discuss my approach to reflexivity in the previous chapter but highlight here the central relationship between ethics and reflexivity. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) in fact suggest that reflexivity rather than ethics committees should be the basis of how to resolve ethical questions. The ethics of my research came from reflexivity as social critique rather than from the collaborative reflexivity that was my original intention. One aspect of this was being reflexive about my

practice during data collection. Duncombe and Jessop (2002) discuss the ethics of fake friendliness and the commodification of rapport and this is an issue I confronted in my pilot study and during data collection. I acknowledged my difference from participants but also recognised my similarities and considered how I negotiated these to build research relationships. I also recognise that conducting research in a setting where I have existing connections through my previous employment has particular challenges as well as substantial benefits and demands careful management of my different selves.

I note that ethics is a question of knowledge creation as much as it is one of practice (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002), and again this issue was foregrounded in my research and addressed through reflexivity. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that thick description and narratives offer a way to overcome ethical challenges in representation. My research does include this thick description but in writing these descriptions I interrogated my own practice by considering how these representations could be viewed by certain key figures. These included external voices; in particular Skegg's (2002) caution about spuriously giving voice to the dispossessed, and hook's (1989) challenge about perpetuating domination. However T1 who cautioned against treating the ESOL classroom like a zoo, and A16 who said I have to promise not to laugh at them, were also important for shaping my practice. Finally I considered how my representations could be interpreted by the British tabloid press who often demonise migrant groups.

4.10.5 Ethical challenges of doctoral research

I finish this section by identifying the particular ethical challenges of doctoral research. This has two strands. Firstly there is the conflict identified by Birch and Miller (2002) between the instrumental demands of a PhD and the participatory research that they wanted to engage in. Secondly there is the problem that doctoral students are learning how to do research, but this learning must not be at the expense of participants. Aleixo, Hansen, Horii, and Un (2014) describe the challenges of learning how to perform as a researcher while representing migrant participants. They note that ethnography can do harm at both personal and institutional levels and that novice researchers should engage in reflexive communities to address these challenges of representation. Merriam (1988) writes of case study that there will always be ethical dilemmas and this resounds across the literature (Bassey, 1999; Simons, 2009; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2013). I encountered

many such dilemmas in my research and consider in my concluding chapter how well they were navigated.

4.11 Pilot

In this section I discuss the pilot stage of my research. I describe the two focus groups and the single observation that were my preparation for the main case study. I highlight some points of interest that emerged and note that these findings are particular and not transferable. I reflect on the methodological lessons of the pilot as the most significant aspects.

4.11.1 Background

I conducted a small pilot for the research consisting of one observation of an ESOL and Art workshop where the participants learnt print making and two focus groups. The focus groups were held in ESOL conversation classes. These are groups run by volunteers which provide learners with the opportunity to practice English in an informal setting at no cost. They are identified as group 1 and group 2. Group 1 meets in a school and group 2 in a community centre. The workshop took place within an established ESOL class, but was run as a standalone activity which I had organised with the teacher. I was also evaluating the workshop as part of the reporting for a separate project.

I had several aims in conducting the pilot. Firstly I wanted to explore how far rich data could be collected about the information literacy experiences of learners with limited English. I also wanted to explore the suitability of some of the methods and sensitise myself as a researcher in this particular context. Finally I hoped to collect initial ideas from ESOL learners that could shape the research. The overall aim of my research at this stage was to explore the relationship between information literacy and language learning and so the pilot needs to be understood within this context.

4.11.2 Focus groups

In the two focus groups the learners were shown a selection of picture prompts and realia, and asked questions about their information experiences. Details

about the prompts and questions are included in appendix E. This was similar in format to the initial focus group I conducted with class A in the main study. Group 1 had four participants all women from Arabic and South East Asian backgrounds and two volunteers who were also women. Two participants were not literate in their first languages, but had some literacy in English. One of them was a recent migrant who had come to marry a British husband while the other had been in the UK for over twenty years. The other two had higher levels of education, one was a recent migrant and the other had been in the UK for a long time. In group 2 there were five participants four women and one man, from African and Arabic backgrounds with a male and female volunteer. Three of the women had partners who were doctoral students and all the participants were literate with a relatively high level of education. Four of them were more recent migrants; in the UK for less than five years, and one of them did not disclose this information. The difference between these two groups in terms of the learners' backgrounds, and the effect of this on the focus group was one of the most significant findings of this pilot study.

There were significant challenges in running both of these focus groups. Participants came late and left early, stopped to answer phones or take care of their children and my questions were sometimes sidetracked or left unanswered. However, this also meant the interactions were rich and complex. There were also language and communication issues in both groups. Some participants struggled to express themselves with peer translation a useful strategy at times. However limited English did not prevent participants from talking meaningfully about their information experiences. There was also evidence that the focus group could be a language learning activity. In group 2 this was driven by one of the volunteers who took the opportunity to find teaching moments within the discussion. The second group mainly related positive information experiences while the first group had more negative accounts.

Several themes emerged from the groups. People, particularly those who spoke the same language were important information sources. Digital information was also significant with smartphones the primary digital tool with some participants saying they were unable to use computers with keyboards. Religion emerged as a significant part of participants' information experiences with religion being an information need and places of worship information sites. News about home countries was an important information need for all participants and one that they all found easy to meet. Both groups were themselves significant informa-

tion sites for participants and there was also evidence of meaningful social relationships. There was, however, a significant difference between the two groups in that group 1 mainly related difficulties with information while group 2 had far more positive stories.

The concluding activity for both groups was a discussion of the concept of information literacy using a diagram of different translations. None of the participants had heard of the concept and several found it difficult to translate into the languages that were not represented; Urdu, Kurdish and Amharic. This activity was also problematic with the first group as it foregrounded two of the participants' lack of literacy in their first languages. With group 2 the activity led to a discussion on my proposed research, but the first group were not able to contribute in the same way. This reflects their different backgrounds; the women whose partners were PhD students had a clear understanding of the nature of research and this fed into the group as a whole. Participants in the second group suggested that personal relationships should be a key focus for my research and that I should look at the early stages of the settlement process to identify key information moments.

4.11.3 Observation

The observation of an ESOL class took place after I had completed the two focus groups. I was guided by Crang's (2007) questions, but did not try and structure my observation in any other way. I made some notes during the observation and then wrote a narrative account which I quote from in this discussion. I found I occupied an ambiguous role sometimes as a quasi-teacher; the learners asked me for help or advice, but also seen as a guest and outsider. The major discovery of this observation was in recognising the complexity of the ESOL classroom. In this way I could identify the rhythm and flow of the class as a whole rather than a collection of individuals; there were times of quiet intensity when the learners focused on their own projects; times of teacher talk and times of intensive talk between learners. The classroom was an intimate place with warm personal relationships. The learners were ESOL entry two/three, roughly equivalent to an IELTS of 3 or 4 or generally pre-intermediate. They were able to express relatively complex ideas, although in simple language, and significantly could reflect on their learning. However, more of the learner interactions than I anticipated were in languages other than English and this made understanding challenging

at some points.

4.11.4 Reflections

May 2015

The following section was written in May 2015 and I have preserved the reflections as they were written at that time.

One of the most valuable outcomes of the pilot was that it demonstrated that the learners had sufficient language to engage meaningfully with my research. This showed my methods were conducive to working with participants with limited English without using interpreters. The pilot also suggested that my research could be a language learning opportunity for participants as I had hoped and anticipated.

The pilot advanced my understanding of research methods. I had anticipated that the focus groups would inform me about the participants' individual information experiences. However, the focus groups instead showed me how these experiences were constructed and understood within a particular group, each having a dominant agreed narrative with little space for dissenting voices (Barbour, 2007).

After completing the pilot I also understood the potential value of observation as a method; the ESOL class, an environment I am familiar with, was a different place when I was there as a researcher. I could see how observation had the potential to not just provide thick description, but to help me understand the meaning of actions and practices (Gobo, 2008). However, I could also identify that observation needed to be prolonged (Bassey, 1999) and sustained (Crang, 2007) if it was to be meaningful.

The pilot informed me about the ESOL learning context and learners' information experiences but there was far less directly about their information literacy experiences. Information literacy was a new concept for the participants in the pilot and one that they found difficult

to understand. The pilot was therefore useful for me in demonstrating the potential challenges of researching information literacy with this particular research population.

Perhaps most significantly, the pilot helped to develop my understanding of myself as a researcher. Firstly there were the questions it raised about my position in the field. I was an outsider in that there were significant differences between me and many of my ESOL learner participants particularly in terms of ethnicity, citizenship, religion, and in some cases education. It showed me that I needed to consider my position of relative privilege. Bridge's (2002) discussion of outsider research was useful here. He comments that we have lots of different selves and this reflects my experience in the field. My identification as a woman and a mother connected me to many of the participants and conversations about our children were some of the most expansive. I note *"After the recording I talk more about [my son] breaking his arm. One of the participants is a medical doctor (as well as a mother) and offers me advice and sympathy"*.

However, Duncombe and Jessop (2002) discuss the commodification of rapport and the ethics of faking friendship for research purposes. I can see how I may have shifted selves in order to identify with participants and so collect richer data. I also had an insider status in that I had worked in this particular setting and this affected the power relationships. I knew the volunteers and the teacher, had met some of the participants before, and so there were shared frames of understanding. This insider status was a privileged status as it gave me access to the participants in a position of trust.

The pilot made me question how to analyse my findings. As mentioned above, during the observation and the focus groups, I felt that the power resided in the participants and I was there as their guest. I noted my feeling that I was an invited guest; the power resided with the participants, and they could challenge my interpretations of their stories. However, this changed when I attempted to analyse my findings and I felt the shift in power to me as researcher. During the analysis when I came to code comments such as *"they tell me everything. I don't go anywhere. My relatives are all I need"* I struggled

with the feeling of writing participants' lives for them.

The first focus group was particularly challenging; there were contradictions, silences and seeming vulnerabilities in what the participants said. It was tempting for me to shape these into particular interpretations about the difficulties and challenges of settling into a new place. These interpretations were then challenged by the participants at the second group.

September 2017

The reflections I completed over two years ago contain much that is prescient for my finished research. Some of these reflections changed my research design. However I am also struck that I did not realise the full significance of the pilot at the time.

I outline in section 4.11.1 my aims in conducting the pilot and I draw on them here to reflect on how the pilot influenced my research design. Firstly, I wanted to explore how far rich data could be collected about the information literacy experiences of learners with limited English. The pilot warned me that I would find it difficult to grasp information literacy with these participants, and so prepared me to change focus to more observable information activities. I also wanted to explore the suitability of some of the methods. This was invaluable for me, in showing how useful observation could be, but also giving me insight into what I could expect to learn from a group discussion. This was reflected in the final outcomes of my research where my focus was on the collective activity of information sharing. I also wanted to sensitise myself as a researcher in this particular context. Again, this was useful as it showed I had to think about my difference from participants from a theoretical perspective, rather than relying on my previous professional experience of negotiating these differences. Finally I had hoped to collect initial ideas from ESOL learners to shape my research. The pilot showed me how difficult participatory research could be if my research involved those with limited English and limited education.

However, there were also the lessons that I did not learn. My comments regarding the difficulties of analysis are striking to me; I re-visited these same struggles in my main study and wonder now if I could have been more responsive to this warning. A final section of my reflection, not included here, suggested further

reading on information grounds but it was not until I had finished data collection that I adopted information grounds theory as part of my theoretical framework. I also notice that I identified the importance of the visual, embodied and affective but did not relate this to information until after starting my main data collection.

It was then later in the research process that I realised the full implications of the pilot. However it did guide me in reconsidering my research questions, developing my positionality, interrogating my methods and problematising the aim of doing participatory research. The pilot of my research was small in scale, but its impact was significant particularly in sensitising and preparing me for the challenges of my case study.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of my research population and my research design. I have described my methods of data collection and data analysis and demonstrated how they are positioned within the overall design. I have also discussed the complex ethics of my research and shown how ethical choices have informed every stage of my research. The final section of this chapter discusses the lessons learned from the pilot study. Now the methods of this thesis have been clearly established, the following two chapters are concerned with the research findings.

Chapter 5

Shared contexts and first case

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two that set out the research findings. In this chapter I discuss the shared contexts and class A, and in chapter 6 I discuss class B and the cross case analysis. I start by analysing my cases using Fisher and Naumer's (2006) information grounds theory propositions as discussed in section 3.6. I first discuss the two shared subcontexts of ESOL provision, and being a migrant. These two subcontexts combined with their different locations form the grand context of each class as an information ground.

I then consider each case individually, firstly through a structured contextual narrative that draws on the propositions to build a picture of each class as an information ground. I do not consider the information grounds propositions separately as I see them as intertwined. I describe the particular subcontext of each class, namely its physical locations (proposition seven), the temporal setting (proposition one), the purpose of language learning (proposition two), social interaction (proposition three), the different social types (proposition four) and information sharing in relation to people, objects and places (adapted proposition five). These sections can be seen as broadly answering RQ1.

I then move to consider RQ2 in more detail by focusing on the people, objects, and places within each class. Within this analysis I also consider proposition six, how information is valued. However the main focus at this stage is to explore each class with a practice theory lens. RQ 3 and 4 are addressed in chapter 7

where I draw on previous research to answer these questions.

5.2 Overview of cases

In section 4.4 I gave a brief overview of the case study site, and details of the initial interviewees and the two classes. Class A was the beginner class taught by T1, and class B the intermediate level class taught by T2. The initial interviewees included two managers, a national policy officer, a trustee and one further teacher (T3) who did not take part in the main study. The case study site is not named and some minor details were amended or omitted to ensure privacy. I have limited the contextual detail about the case study site to try and preserve anonymity, but compensate for this by the detail I provide in the information sharing episodes.

5.3 Shared subcontext I: ESOL provision

The first shared sub-context I identify is ESOL provision. This is both the national and local context of ESOL provision and the characteristics of ESOL learning and teaching.

I have built the description of this context from my data collection. This includes the seven initial interviews discussed in section 4.7.2 and the review of policy and curriculum documents detailed in section 4.7.1. I have also drawn in a more limited manner on observations and interviews from the main data collection period where codes such as “defining ESOL” (from the full list codes given in appendix K) indicated that these were relevant. As I discuss in chapter 4 these findings are indicative rather than exhaustive.

5.3.1 Structure of the case study site

As outlined in section 4.4 this research takes place in the community learning provision offered by a council in a city in the North of England. The two classes (A and B) were nested cases within the same site. The two classes were managed by different third sector organisations under council contracts. Links were maintained between the council and the contracting organisations by meetings

organised by locality, teacher training activities, an online learning management system, formal review processes such as teacher observation, and statistical analysis of learner retention and success rate. Learners also studied for the same national qualifications. Provision was however distributed to a large extent; teachers planned their own schemes of work and had a large degree of autonomy.

5.3.2 ESOL curriculum

The same level of distribution can be seen if we look at the ESOL curriculum. The ESOL national curriculum was developed in 2001 as part of Skills for Life. It is still used by teachers and by exam boards but has not been updated since that time. The teachers in my case study prepare individual schemes of work for each class using the curriculum as a guide. They also follow a topic defined by the examination board. For class A this was health and for class B it was travel. T2 describes how he creates a scheme of work:

I've just got boxes and boxes and boxes of stuff. So I trawl through them and try and sort them, pick stuff that might be useful or I use the Internet so I suppose I construct a scheme of work by looking at what exactly the syllabus is requiring of them and then looking at where they have weaknesses maybe or strengths.

T1 and T3 described similar processes. The ESOL curriculum should not be then be seen as a prescriptive document; individual teachers do have considerable freedom to plan their own work.

5.3.3 Views of ESOL in the case study site

Stepping stone

One of the most consistent views of ESOL for all interviewees was that it was an essential first step for learners. Learning English and attending ESOL classes were seen as necessary steps for people to settle in the UK. I3 suggested that English “*is the essential connective in all sorts of ways in which information literacy is one*”. His understanding here seemed to be that speaking English was an essential stepping stone in becoming information literate in their new society. The importance of ESOL classes as a stepping stone was discussed extensively by T1:

That's right but you've got to offer them a safe world haven't you? Not too big a world where it's just so alien to what you believe that you are not going to go there. You might as well not bother but this is it, it's this compromise.

The significance of the ESOL classroom then went beyond being a place to learn English. It was also a place where learners could become more confident, and engage more widely with the world. I1 talked about how she saw the role of ESOL in people's lives: '*they've got to go out and find things, to seek things, they've got to learn how to use things like you know going out on a bus which they never used to do before*'.

Austerity

ESOL provision in the case study site needs to be understood against a background of austerity and funding cuts. This was a concern for all interviewees. It meant that provision was seen as insecure; '*that it's not guaranteed to carry on*' (I1). This led to a perceived need to both prove the value of ESOL and to adapt as expressed by I2

I can't think of anything worse than, I can't think that further education will survive if [it does not change] and I don't know whether it will to be fair but I can't see that it can survive in its current form.

Interviewees linked these concerns to potential positive outcomes of my research; particularly whether my research could help them find ways to do more with less. These concerns about funding extended through the main period of data collection.

Digital technology

This again was a preoccupation with interviewees but there was more variation in their conceptions. It was seen as a necessity for the sector as a whole and the provider in particular, to engage more with digital technology. The drive to do more with digital technology was partially due to external pressures; two interviewees made reference to a report that suggested fifteen percent of FE teaching should be delivered online. However there was also recognition that better use of digital technology would improve learning and teaching, and give learners

skills they needed for their everyday life. For I2 this was positive and potentially transformative *“and I think that that in terms of using digital technology to enhance what we do in the classroom we’ve got some massive opportunities in doing that at the moment”*. But for others it was a concern and anxiety that they do not have the skills *“using MOOCs, MOOCs, Kooks and Books or something or other my God”* (I1) or the infrastructure *“we’re a bit limited with IT in the classroom...We don’t have Wi-Fi. That’s a real issue and it’s difficult to promote independent learning without that”* (T3).

Diversity of ESOL learners

All interviewees resisted the idea you could generalise about ESOL learners and commented on their heterogeneity. T3 comments *“I feel like some learners. I think a lot depends on how long people have been here. And their situation and how dependent or independent they are and their sort of needs as to how clued up they are”*. There was particular concern for learners who had little formal schooling but also recognition that some learners were highly skilled and qualified while others had very spiky profiles. This variation was reflected more widely in perceptions of diversity in how learners used digital technologies, whether they had supportive networks, and how quickly they could be expected to progress to further study or work. Nevertheless despite this diversity, the timing and location of the classes, within the school day and in the community as well as the subsidised cost encouraged certain kinds of participants; women, mothers, the unemployed, and those who wanted to study close to their homes.

Connected to the real world

Interviewees also saw it was important for ESOL to extend out of the classroom. This was something that all interviewees wanted to do better but interpreted in different ways. The two managers (I1 and I2) were both keen for learning to extend outside the classroom *“you bring stuff into the classroom that you’ve actually done yourself and whether that then raises confidence and if we think in terms of information literacy that’s something”*. The teachers seemed to have a slightly different focus. T1 and T2 distinguished between the instrumental learning their learners needed to pass their exams and different, potentially more valuable, kinds of learning. T2 discussed his planning *“although it’s not ideal, it kind of tends to focus on the exam at the end rather than just I don’t know, let’s talk about something today. Let’s write about it, let’s read about it”*. This could also be seen

in T1's conversations with learners; *"we have been doing lots of fun things but now we need to do something for the exam"*. I4 explicitly questioned the value of exams for lower level learners and suggested the need for different curricula.

5.3.4 Views of information in ESOL

I explore the meaning and value of information for the two classes when I write their individual cases. However, here I set the initial context by looking at how information and information literacy is conceived within selected ESOL resources and by the initial interviewees at the start of my research.

Information and information literacy in the curriculum

None of the learning materials, policy documents, or websites made any reference to information literacy. There were, however, limited references to digital literacy on ESOL Nexus, on Excellence Gateway and more extensive references on NIACE. At times information literacy seemed notable by its absence, for example, the introduction to the ESOL curriculum identifies *"learners' wider needs for skills, such as Information Technology, study skills, problem solving, job-search or specific subject skills"* as relevant for ESOL teachers to consider.

A closer examination of the learning resources revealed that there seemed to be information literacy-like activities across the curriculum. An examination of both the Skills for Life curriculum and the exam descriptors showed that certain conceptions of information or information literacy could be identified. Within Skills for Life the cultural specificity of information was clearly significant at all levels; entry one learners are asked to consider differences and similarities for textual, verbal and non-verbal information; *"looking at, and identifying, appointment cards, letters, signs, bills, learners are asked whether they look similar to those in their own languages and what the differences and similarities are"*. Recognition of the importance of non-verbal or non-textual information was also carried through the levels; learners should be able to *"use non-linguistic clues, such as the immediate environment or the speaker's body language"*.

Learners at all levels needed to be able to obtain and convey information and this became increasingly more complex. Typical entry one activities included distinguishing between fact and opinion, and skills based tasks, for example, *"Learners*

enter information on a simple database or produce a class survey". One example from level one was a more complex information literacy task where learners were encouraged to gather information from written and spoken sources:

In small groups, learners are asked to prepare a short talk on either the life of a famous man or woman they admire or life in Britain in the 21st century. They are encouraged to research their chosen topic using reference material, the internet etc. and to interview other learners.

From the exam descriptors it was again clear that learners at all levels needed to be able to convey and obtain information. Entry 1 included descriptors such as *"obtain necessary information"*; and *"extract straightforward information"* while at level one learners were expected to *"recognise that relevance of information will depend on listening communication on a purpose, context or task"* and *"present information using an appropriate structure for a given purpose"*. It is noteworthy that appropriacy and relevance were important terms at all levels. However, the word critical was not used until level one where learners were expected to *"read critically to evaluate information, and compare information, ideas and opinions from different sources"*.

These descriptors suggested a close relationship between some aspects of information literacy and some aspects of language learning in that some of these language learning activities could equally be framed as information literacy activities. They also began to build a picture of what information may look like in a typical ESOL class; contextual, cultural, relevant and appropriate are some of the defining terms.

A full review of all the learning resources on all the listed websites was not undertaken. However a sample was made of other resources and three discussed in the literature review need to be mentioned here. Firstly, I considered the materials from REFLECT (Cardiff et al., 2007) which draws on critical pedagogy. Again information activities were seen as part of language learning, one aim from Reflect was that *"participants are enabled to access new information and ideas from new sources"*. However the activity session on information was very different, adopting an approach where information was linked to power and communication, for example, *"this sheet seeks to explore some of the issues that surround access to information, its reliability and the power attached to those holding information"*. A further approach that offered an alternative to the ESOL curriculum

was the citizen's curriculum developed by the Learning and Work Institute which I briefly discuss in chapter 2. I4 made an explicit connection between information literacy and the capabilities addressed by this curriculum. Dudeney's et al's (2013) guide for language teachers provide a nuanced and holistic understanding of digital literacy to both enrich teaching and provide learners with life skills.

Information and information literacy in the case study site

The initial interviews showed that information literacy was not a concept that was used within the case study site. However, it was seen as a useful term and the teachers in particular felt that it was something they did and that happened in their class without them being aware of it.

Information it's not a neutral thing, that's what I'm trying to say. So I think I've always been aware. You know if you pick up a newspaper you've always got, you are being asked to believe something. But I've never given it a name before I suppose. You know what I mean? I think it is a really useful term; information literacy, if it begins to ask you to think about what is it you are being presented with (T2).

T1 was equally interested "So the more and more I've thought about it the bigger and bigger it seems. And what that means as an ESOL tutor is that we've got to teach people to understand information". The managers I interviewed were particularly interested in the digital aspects of information literacy.

Beyond this the ESOL classroom was also seen as an information site.

I can't think of one where people haven't shared information about all sorts of things. Yes you know they might get phones out and show each other what they've found or they might you know talk about anything really. (T2)

And T3 saw the ESOL teacher as playing an information role

Yes I suppose so but without knowing it maybe yes. I give them information about where they can find things. I encourage them to read, to use libraries, to use public facilities, to go to places where they are going to find information.

In this section I have first provided an overview of the shared subcontext of ESOL provision, and then focused more specifically on understandings of information in this particular context. I now move to consider the next shared subcontext; being a migrant.

5.4 Shared subcontext II: Being a migrant

The ESOL learners in this research need to be understood as migrants, or people settling in a new place. I only collected limited data on this; however I can still provide some insights that reflect the variability of settlement experiences, while identifying common threads that pull some of these experiences together. As I discuss in the literature review I am focusing on settling as a practice within wider migration processes.

The data collected for this section came primarily from five diary entries and two focus groups with class B, one group discussion with class A, and the interviews with the teachers. These were combined with data from other observations in the initial coding process. A range of codes such as “*remembering early days*”, “*communication problems*”, “*language as the information problem*” were identified as relevant to understanding participants’ experiences as migrants.

5.4.1 Overview of migration in the city

This brief summary was collated from various policy and information documents produced by organisations such as the city council and those working with migrant groups. The city had a long history of migration which increased post World War II. There were settled populations from countries such as Yemen, Bangladesh and Pakistan from people coming to work in industry since the 1950’s. There were also more recent settled communities from countries such as Somalia in the 1990’s as the city had welcomed refugees for many years. Finally migrants from countries such as Poland and Romania had come with the expansion of the European Union. Many international students also lived in the city. It was estimated that 11% of the population were born outside the UK. Only a small proportion of these were asylum seekers or refugees.

5.4.2 Variations of migration and settling

Within my two cases there were some learners who had been resident in the UK for less than two years but many had been here for much longer. This was particularly true in class A, the majority of whom had been in the UK for closer to ten years. Some had come to get married, some to claim asylum and some to look for work. There was also the significant difference in language level between the two classes. There were then, very varied experiences of being a migrant amongst the participants of this research.

The learners felt that coming as a refugee or asylum seeker was different to other migration experiences. In a group interview B5 differentiated her own experience *“and actually I didn’t have anything, any problem because my husband waiting for me to come here... anything I need, he do anything for me”* from that of refugees who have *“too much struggling”*. The other learners in the interview agreed with her and showed similar sympathy. When I visited class A in March 2016 I found out they were raising money for refugees suggesting they also recognised them as a special category.

However the division between refugees and other migrants was actually far less clear than this suggested. Some of both classes were themselves refugees. B8 commented on her own situation *“we had caseworker so there wasn’t a problem. If we go somewhere they would take us. Wherever we want they were supporting us”*. Sympathy for refugees also obscured some of the settlement difficulties other learners had. In a separate conversation with B5 she talked about the difficulty she had experienced when coming to the UK and how her English class had helped her, giving her confidence and independence. Learners who were not refugees could also come from difficult circumstances. In class A on one occasion several learners contrasted the UK with Yemen and Pakistan as a place of safety and independence where one could go out without a man, and ask the police for help. The Yemeni women had the same concerns and anxieties as refugees about the family they had left at home as their country was experiencing war and famine.

There were differences between how the two classes discussed settlement. In an early meeting with class A many of the learners told me about the problems they experienced travelling round the city, asking for help, going to the doctors, communicating with schools and other official bodies, and managing bureau-

cracy. This was markedly different to my early conversations with class B. From my notes:

B4 says maybe we're not very interesting for you? Because now our language is OK, we are fine. B3 speaks with anger about her early experiences and how you can only get help if you can ask for help. She contrasts this with her current situation that now she does not have any problems and can express herself.

This suggests that settling was a smooth process with a clear end. As people's language improves they adapt to living in a new place.

However again this was not a clear division. Some of the women in class A had lived in the UK for a long time, had children and grandchildren here, and could manage in many situations. A16 contrasted her early days in the UK where she got lost in a market and couldn't read any of the signs to now when she could help herself. As I continued my research with class B, it also became clearer that settling for them was not such as a smooth process. The focus groups and the writing they did for me emphasised again how their early days before they could speak English were hard; I compare them to war veterans in my notes. However while they had learnt to manage many practicalities, they still experienced difficulties and still needed help. B6 described how migrants in general, experience difficulty summarising that "*can't get your rights and prefer to ignore that*". B8 talked about how happy she was to be in the UK but showed a certain caution in her behaviour "*but what I learn is to follow and respect the rules. If I didn't respect the law I will be in trouble. I learnt that so I am very careful, following the rules*". B1 talked of how she did not yet have the confidence to look for work and was not ready to move on from her ESOL class. Settlement therefore seems to be both iterative and varying and this is an important element in understanding the characteristics of these classes as information grounds.

5.4.3 Being a mother and a migrant

Many of the learners in both classes were mothers. The experience of bringing up children as a migrant, particularly in terms of language learning was a recurring and seemingly significant topic. T1 told learners that "*you can help your children and your children can help you*". Several learners in class A said they wanted to learn English for their children. There were also difficulties in being a

migrant mother: *“A6 says that her daughter complains about her English. T1 says well it’s what children do”*.

The difficulties of being a parent and a migrant, were developed more by class B where three of the women spoke about the issues they encountered with their children not wanting to speak their first languages. B1 in particular was concerned about her child growing away from her culture and language. She talked about trying to teach her son the Arabic language and Arabic songs *“He does not like it. I try, yes. I don’t know. No it’s boring [laughter]. Because I have another culture and language but how can he? Born here so he’s English, in his life”*. B2 tried to share advice with B1 about how to manage this, but in the next interview session B1 disputed this advice *“they say you can learn with them. So I think this theory is not real. If my son he doesn’t want to speak my first language so it don’t make sense. So he doesn’t speak Arabic and what’s the point?”*

5.4.4 Digital technologies

In this section I focus on digital technologies as part of the experience of settlement. I take a simplistic approach looking at the digital in terms of tools rather than space. I draw on those codes from those listed in appendix L where I identified learners using digital technologies to maintain contact with their home countries and where they used them in their lives in the UK. One common experience to nearly all learners was that they described using digital technologies such as Skype, WhatsApp and video to keep in touch with family and friends in their home countries. Most learners then had access to digital technology. The vast majority of learners, but not all, had a smartphone. I note in my field diary after a conversation with T1: *“we’ve been talking about smartphones, changed in the last two years. But the least privileged still don’t have them. Disadvantage after disadvantage, not really about digital skills or language or information for most marginalised and abused”*.

If we move to look at how learners were using digital technologies for their life in the UK the picture becomes more complex. In class B I saw evidence of learners using smartphone applications such as mapping and translators. Some learners expressed confidence in their use of technologies for living here. B1 and B2 both felt that any problems they encountered while searching for information online was due to the limitations of their language not digital capability.

They used English to search for information and approached this as language learners; B1 described how when she looked for information on a website she would write down lists of words she did not know and then look them up in a dictionary. However, other learners reported they preferred face to face communication rather than searching online. Two described fairly laborious attempts to get particular information that could have been quickly resolved online. B8 said she had limited Internet access so found it frustrating when official documents referred to a website for more information.

Many learners in class A had digital access at home; several learners in listed the Internet as a utility along with gas, electricity and phone. However I never saw them use computers with keyboards in this class. T1 reported that their keyboard skills were limited and many had never used a computer before participating in an ESOL and IT class run at the school. I saw smartphones used as telephones, as cameras, to show photographs and as mirrors. While there was some awareness of the different functions of smartphones, these were used by very few learners: *“A learner tells me you can use a phone to look up bus times. I ask her if she does this. She laughs and says no my daughter uses it to find out when the bus comes”*. In contrast A6 says she taught herself English using Duolingo, a language learning app, and I observed two learners using their phones as dictionaries. I explore how learners used digital technology further when I look at information sharing in more detail but it is important to recognise at this stage that learners engaged in a range of digital practices as part of their settlement, with varying degrees of skill, confidence and access.

5.4.5 Interactions in English

In group discussion in class B, learners were keen to tell me how friendly and helpful the public were. B2's comments were typical *“yes they were kind. I think that English people are very kind and they notice that you can't manage and they help, they are helpful, really yes”*. However Class A identified times when people helped but also mentioned when people didn't listen or were rude. Even the majority of learners who insisted on friendliness still said they had *“little touch with the English people”*. The one participant who said she spoke in English for her work clarified that this was not to English people but as a lingua franca to other migrants. Communications in English outside the classroom were then often limited to the official or bureaucratic. For class A many of these interac-

tions were confusing and difficult. Class B also remembered their past difficulties vividly and some mentioned they still faced difficulties in dealing with bureaucracy.

The corollary to little interaction with English people was the importance of those who spoke the same language and were either family or came from the same community. The learners in class B discussed how friends or relatives helped them adjust and adapt to life in the UK. They also showed how they were now helping people in their turn. B4 discussed her friend from the same country and how she helped in her struggles with bureaucracy. B2 talked about the advice she gave to her clients in the small business she ran. In class A many of the women came to marry men who lived in the UK and they described how family members had helped them. This also included older children (whether adult or secondary school age).

In these two sections I have given an overview of the contexts that the two classes share as information grounds. For the remainder of this chapter I now focus on class A.

5.5 Class A

In this section I analyse class A by writing a structured contextual narrative. I order this narrative by writing about each location, and the information sharing episodes that took place there, in turn. These locations are sub-contexts for the information ground. The other propositions for the information ground; the particular activity of language learning in this class, social interaction, different actors, formal and informal information flows, are threaded through this narrative. However the proposition of temporal setting is discussed in a separate introductory section as it cuts across all the locations. The information episodes are written in the present tense to distinguish them from the analytical sections that follow and to convey the immediacy of my observations. I also write less formally to capture some sense of participants' speech. I discuss in 4.8 how I selected and crafted these episodes. Each episode is centred on one significant instance of information sharing such as telling sad stories about home countries or talking about the queen that has relevance to my research questions. My decisions about how much detail to include about, for example, extracts from conversations or physical descriptions were rooted in my analysis. In this way

the episodes are interpretive rather than descriptive accounts. The information sharing context is described with the minimum level of detail needed to answer my research questions.

5.5.1 Temporal setting of class A

The class meet for a two hour lesson, twice a week, for three ten-week terms that coordinate with the local school holidays. Attendance in the class is generally very high, but learners sometimes come late and leave early due to other commitments. For example, A3 has to regularly miss class to attend the job centre until T1 manages to reschedule her appointment. Many learners are early as they come to class after taking their children to school. When it is time for the class to start the teacher signals this by taking the register. However the learners are often engaged in language learning before this, either completing writing or reading tasks, or talking in English. While taking the register, T1 establishes why learners are absent by asking other learners or checking her phone for messages.

Break times are signalled by T1 telling learners they can make a drink, however, language learning activities again extend into this time. There are more conversations in other languages but learners often carry on discussing in English or working at the task they have been set. However the level of noise increases and T1 sometimes has to tap the table or raise her voice before she can re-start the lesson. The ends of lessons are again signalled by T1. Learners start to pack away, some leave quickly and others stay to chat or ask questions.

I see activities that happen within the temporal setting of the lessons as language learning activities. This extends to the three trips we went on although here the temporal setting was less clearly defined: we did not have a formal break, and, as some learners came back to school with us while others continued their day out, we did not have a formal ending. The temporal setting of the ESOL class can also be seen as intersecting with other temporalities. My experience of the lessons is within the longer temporal arc of my doctoral research, for the teacher it is part of her working day, for the learners it is both part of their everyday lives and a space away from these everyday lives. Their attendance is also determined by other temporal arcs; learners leave to have babies and others join when their children start school or nursery.

5.5.2 Classroom 1

In this section I describe my first visit to the class to build a picture of the context. I then present information sharing episodes that happened in this classroom. I include a plan of classroom 1 in appendix Q.

Class A takes place in the extended services room of a primary school. The school is in a residential area where there have been successive settled communities of migrants. The area scores highly on indices of multiple deprivation and is one of the poorer areas of the city. The school is surrounded by housing and close to busy shops and other facilities.

At my first visit to Class A I am greeted at the entrance by V1, who I haven't seen for two years. She is a regular visitor to the class; the learners depend on her for both emotional and practical support and she recruits many of the learners. She hugs me, helps me navigate the security system and takes me to the classroom. In subsequent visits when I have completed the necessary paperwork I can walk to the classroom alone but it takes several visits before I am confident finding my way up the stairs and down the corridors. The classroom cannot be accessed except by those already in the school. However the class has many visitors. These include school staff, regular volunteers and invited guests.

On this first visit T1 and eleven learners are already in the classroom and are involved in a whole class discussion. I have visited before so it is a familiar space to me. There is a u-shape of tables facing an interactive whiteboard. The teacher uses this board to access the Internet as well as to write and draw for the learners. She also uses small whiteboards to write words when learners are working independently. The class has several tablets which are used less frequently. As I become a regular visitor I start to assist T1, typing for her and carrying out Internet searches as well as leading some activities. Learners are expected to bring their own pens, notebooks and folders but there is a cupboard where stationery such as scissors, hole punches and glue is kept.

T1 introduces me and says they are talking about Eid. I recognise one woman, A3, and we smile at each other. It takes me some time to learn the names of the other learners and even longer to get to know them. The lesson continues with the learners talking about likes and dislikes. There are frequent jokes and laughter. T1 and the learners know each other well and the intimacy of these

relationships makes an impression on me each time I visit. T1 and the learners generally live very locally within easy walking distance. Their relationships extend outside and sometimes pre-date the class, for example two women are sisters and two women who join in the second term are sisters-in-law. When I come to the next enrolment session in January, T1 already recognises many of the new learners who come to register either because they have attended class before or because she knows someone from their family.

In the break the learners produce food they have brought from home and this again is a feature of most visits. This can be elaborate, for example when A2 brings in the herbs and spices to make a special kind of tea. They are keen to offer food to T1 and over the weeks they become keener to encourage me to eat. Towards the end of the lesson a learner's phone rings and she ducks under the table to answer it. We all laugh and T1 turns to me saying you mustn't tell people what goes on in here. When the class finishes I talk to T1 and V1. They are both enthusiastic about my research. I leave after making arrangements with T1 for my next visit.

Episodes

The following episodes are from different visits to class A and are arranged chronologically.

Houlba After the break the learners discuss food from different countries. One of the Yemeni learners mentions a food "houlba" that she enjoys. Neither I nor T1 understand what this is and this leads to a discussion that lasts a few minutes. Four learners try to explain to us in different ways. They start by using gestures (I realise afterwards it is grinding) and one says small seed holding up her fingers to demonstrate. T1 asks a series of questions to try and understand what kind of food they are talking about and we both make suggestions. The learners are very engaged in trying to explain and T1 and I are equally interested in trying to understand and work out the English word. When we still don't understand and the learners seem to have exhausted their English vocabulary they try different methods to explain. A16 uses her mobile phone to call her bilingual daughter but tells us there is no answer. At the same time another learner searches on her smartphone. She stands up and comes to me at the front of the class. She shows me a list of search results that are all videos. She plays one of the videos to me

but I don't understand what she is showing me. T1 has also been searching on one of the class tablets and she works out that it is a dip made of fenugreek. She writes the word fenugreek in English on a small whiteboard. The learners are then satisfied that she understands.

Joke about chickens This episode took place in a lesson where I was asking the learners what kinds of information they used in their everyday lives. I start the recording after checking that they are happy for me to do this. The learners say their English is very bad and ask if I will laugh at them. I reassure them and say they are learning, and that I can't speak any Arabic or Urdu. T1 talks about a lesson last week saying that she only laughed when someone said she put children in the curry but the learner laughed as well. There is general amusement following this. A16 then starts to tell a story about her mother saying that she has good Arabic now. Teacher interjects to explain to me that her mum is English but moved to Yemen as an adult. A16 continues when she first went there she wanted to buy seven chicken legs but she said can I buy seven man? When she realised, she said what am I going to do with seven man? This is followed by lots of laughter and a comment by more than one learner about who would want seven men. She then explains to me that the words for chicken and men in Arabic are quite close. T1 summarises and closes the discussion saying that was a very funny joke.

Sad stories from home countries This episode took place in the same lesson as the episode above. There has been a whole group discussion about the difficulties some learners experience with public transport in the UK inspired by me showing them a bus timetable. One learner then tells a story she heard from Pakistan about a woman being robbed. There is conversation in Arabic as some other learners explain to each other and then ask questions in English to understand what happened. The story is about a woman who got in a taxi by herself and was then robbed of her jewellery. I understand the word haram (forbidden in Arabic) which several say in chorus at one point. T1 tries to move the lesson on to the next task which is to talk about health information. But the learners want to keep talking about the robbery. One learner then says it is much safer here; you can go out by yourself and ask the police for help. Another adds that in Arabic countries you can only go out with a man. T1 is interested now and asks the rest of class if this is true. Several learners agree.

There is then another tragic story from Yemen. T1 asks so you got the information about Pakistan from a Pakistani news programme? So do you watch the news in your own language? Do you watch the news in Arabic and Urdu? Several learners say yes and then someone says they use WhatsApp. I ask if this is to talk to your family in Yemen and she says yes. T1 asks what about the news in English? Do you watch English news? Some hesitancy but some (maybe only one or two but I'm not sure) say yes. Someone else starts to tell another sad story and T1 says no more, please. After the learners leave I talk about this discussion with T1. She is clearly emotional and says to me who wouldn't want these women to be safe? I also include the comment about feeling safe in the UK in the book I wrote for the class A learners (further details of this book are given on page 107). However; when we discuss this page, most of the learners say that they do not go out by themselves.

Stories of accidents This episode took place in a lesson where the learners drew pictures about themselves and their lives, and then practised asking and answering questions. During the break time T1 tells me we had an amazing story from A3 the other day about going to a shop and slipping on a banana skin. I am surprised and ask whether she really slipped on a banana skin. T1 says everybody laughs when you say that but she really hurt herself. I say it's something I only hear in jokes. A3 tells me she hurt her back. T1 says I didn't ask you, but when it happened did people help you? She says she ran from the shop because she was embarrassed. T1 says that is exactly what I would do. I describe cycling into a lamp post. I say I fell over and hurt my leg really badly but I was so embarrassed I said I was fine and ran away. T1 talks about her friend falling off his bike, skidding past a queue of people, and landing in a hardware store. This is followed by lots of laughter. She concludes by saying it wasn't even the branch that repairs bikes. T1 then talks about A3's story about a medicinal drink that her mother-in-law makes or made. She tells the class I have typed the story for you so we can all read it; it was really interesting.

Zumba leaflet This episode takes place during an enrolment session for the class. The learners come to complete their paperwork and then leave. T1 sits at the front with each learner to fill in their course paperwork one by one. She shows them where to sign and fills in the rest of the form for them. For the returning learners she already knows some of their personal information but each form still involves her asking a series of questions. Several of the learners

are told they need to bring documentation in for the next lesson. When this is the case T1 writes it down on a post-it note and gives it to the learner. I am sitting with two learners while T1 is at the front with a third. I am looking through a folder kept in the class that contains flyers for different activities in the local area. I am talking about the flyers and showing them to the two women. I show them a flyer for a Zumba class and ask them if they are interested in going. The immediate reaction from the learners is no, they don't want to go. I explain that the photo which shows a very fit woman in shorts and a crop top doesn't reflect what the class is like. I tell them that normal women go. T1 has overheard us and joins in. She says that she went once and that there are women there in hijab and abayas. The women then seem more interested. I explain where the class is and they both know the location. However nobody says they will go.

Document lesson These episodes took place during a lesson that T1 and I had planned together where we looked at letters, leaflets and other personal documents. It is the end of break and T1 gets the learners' attention saying OK we will look at the letters. Each pair show me one thing. You can keep eating and drinking but let's look at what A11 is going to show us. She asks A11 can you pass it to me? A11 passes her a leaflet and T1 holds it up. A11 says it's a leaflet and T1 asks what is it about? Can you see what this says? Somebody says NHS. T1 says yes. She points at parts of the leaflet saying there are pictures of families and there's a form to fill in. She says it's for Healthy Start. She asks if anyone got that and some say yes. T1 explains you can get fruit, vegetables, milk and vitamins when you are pregnant. She explains that she got this leaflet from the job centre. She shows them the form and the envelope and says you can put it in the post. A group of learners are talking about one of the other documents in Arabic and T1 asks them to be quiet and listen. T1 writes on the board, do something as a category and then explains what this means to the class. She summarises; so this leaflet is important and you need to do something. It was lucky because A11 is going to take it home and use it.

Later in the lesson, T1 notices the Poll card in a pile and says we should look at this. She holds it up. She says this one is about voting. There is little response. She explains if you have a British passport you can vote in the local council elections and you can choose the government. In May you can go and put a cross on a paper to show who you want to be the government. Again there is no response from the learners. T1 pauses and asks the learners if they understand but they

don't respond.

I included a page about this lesson in the book for learners however they didn't offer any comment on this activity. On a separate occasion I talk to T1 about talking about elections with this class. She says it is difficult to talk about in class as it would have to involve a series of lessons rather than a single discussion.

Video of G's dad This episode happened during the break time of the lesson above. T1 is telling me a story about her daughter when I hear the sound of singing. I look around and ask who's singing. Someone points at A10 who has got her own tablet out. The learners sitting closest to her are all watching something. T1 asks A10 to show her. She holds out her hand but has to ask again. There is lots of laughter and talking in Arabic. Eventually A10 passes us the tablet. We watch a video of a man sitting under some trees and singing. He is with a group of other men. A10 explains it is her dad in Yemen. All the Yemeni women in the class are laughing now. A9 says in English he is like Michael Jackson which causes more laughter. T1 asks what he's singing about. They talk in Arabic and V3 explains it's a sad song about him missing his loved ones who are travelling. T1 says it means he misses you and is thinking about you. A10 smiles. T1 then asks A6 about her brothers and sisters, and her mum and dad and whether they are still in her own country. She says your mum must miss you. A6 says yes.

Talking about the queen This happened during the lesson where we were talking about our visit to the centre for the visually impaired (CVI). After the break we look at pictures of the queen and her family. T1 searches on the Internet and finds an article from the Daily Telegraph about the queen's 90th birthday. While she is searching, T1 jokes to me that she is demonstrating British values. I say you can tick it off the list now. T1 shows photographs of Charles, the queen, William, George, and other members of the family. She explains what king and queen mean. A18 asks lots of questions and writes words down. A13 doesn't believe T1 that Charles will be king next as she thinks it will be William, T1 insists saying I know and eventually A13 accepts her statement. T1 says the queen looks very well for someone who is ninety. There is then a short discussion in Arabic with lots of laughter. A13 translates some of it into English. She says it is easy for the queen to look good for her age because she has massages every day and people taking care of her. She demonstrates massage on her arm but also

says the word in English. She continues she has the best doctors; it is easy for her to be healthy. It is different for us. There is more laughter.

Ramadan This episode took place during Ramadan and is from a lesson where the learners are making collaborative posters about Eid. They had spent the previous lesson drawing and writing about what they do during Ramadan and we are looking at this work which is spread out on the tables. I ask what special foods people eat during Ramadan. A13 says you can eat what you like. I point at a picture of dates and say but why do you eat dates? A learner explains they should be the first food you eat and I ask her why. Another learner tells me that they are good for energy and health and a traditional food for the Middle East. T1 says that's true and points out the two meanings of date. She asks for the Arabic and gets A18 to write it down on a whiteboard. The learners explain how you break fast with dates and water. A13 then enthusiastically lists other foods that she eats when she breaks her fast: kebab, samosa... . I say but that's because you like them isn't it? There is laughter. T1 says dates are Islamic aren't they? A18 explains that you should eat three or five dates. T1 says this is why there are dates everywhere. If you go to the shops there are piles and piles of dates. It would be a busy time for people working in a date factory. A learner says a long time ago in the Middle East people ate dates as their main food. T1 says yes she can believe that; in the past people did not have lots of different kinds of food.

5.5.3 Classroom 2

I make my final visits to class A in the autumn term of 2016. The class has moved to a new location in the school. There is a plan of classroom 2 in appendix R.

The move to the new classroom has been mirrored by the move to a higher language level as everyone has passed their exams. T1 prefigured this move extensively the previous term, telling the learners we will be entry two soon, we are going to do some entry two work today. Some learners have left and four new learners have joined. I explain my research to the new learners but do not ask them to be research participants and do not record these observations.

T1 is excited about the possibilities of the new room. The classroom can now be accessed without going through the school office, but learners and visitors still need to sign in and collect identification. The room is much bigger with a

kitchen, a seating area and a small office attached. The tables are still in a u-shape but they now face a physical whiteboard rather than an interactive screen. There is also space to move round behind the learners. Learners' work is displayed on the walls and T1 points this out to me. The room does not have an interactive whiteboard and the teacher has not yet managed to access the school's Wi-Fi. This changes the lessons I see with the teacher now using the physical board to write and draw. I had taken digital photographs of the menu for the cafe museum but we can't access them. For the follow up visit I print out photographs to take with me. However the new space also brings new opportunities. T1 sets up a bring and buy stall, described below. There are also new informative objects for different reasons; T1 introduces the class to using dictionaries explaining they are now entry two and need to know how to use them. She hands out books and asks who uses dictionaries on their phone; only two learners A18 and A13 say they use them.

Episodes

Bring and buy stall T1 has organised a stall in the class where learners can donate items they no longer want and buy items donated by others. There is a class discussion about donating. I say that when we went to the museum lots of them put money in the donations box. T1 says that she thinks the Islamic tradition means that they all give lots of money to charity. A learner tells us about her husband who gives money to a water project in South Africa to remember his mother. T1 encourages everyone to get up and look at the cabinet where she has arranged the items for sale. The learners take a while to move, but they then all gather round and most of them buy something. They are worried about how much money to give and ask T1 how much they should donate. She tells them they don't have to give very much, 20p, 50p, whatever they think. A18 looks at a pair of trousers and holds them against her legs. She asks me if they are for women or men. I say men. She looks at the label and we talk about whether they will fit her husband. She says they are too short and puts them back down. A2 has picked up a box of something. T1 asks her what it is and she explains you need to heat it and it smells nice. T1 say so it's like incense, for your house.

Problem with national insurance At the start of the break a learner comes up to T1 and shows her a letter from the job centre. The letter says she has been refused a national insurance number because she doesn't have the right to

work. T1 reads the letter and explains it to the learner. The learner then gets her passport out of her bag and shows this to T1 as well. She shows her the stamp which shows she has the right to work. T1 takes the letter and phones the number on it. She listens and then puts the phone down. T1 then calls over to me and says that it's ridiculous. She explains that the phone number is automated and doesn't give an option to talk someone if you have been refused a national insurance number. She explains to the learner and says you will have to go to the job centre. The learner seems to understand but T1 says I'll write it down for you. She writes on a blank piece of paper and gives it to the learner. She says give that to your husband, you need to go with him to the job centre and take your passport. The learner puts the piece of paper inside her notebook. T1 then turns back to me and says this is an example of an information problem. She says the learner probably didn't understand that she needed to send her passport and now there is no help for her to fix the mistake.

5.5.4 Trips

As part of my research with this class we took three trips: to a city farm, a centre for the visually impaired (CVI) and a photography exhibition in a museum. We spent the lesson before each trip planning, and the lesson after each trip engaged in follow up activities. T1 and I took shared responsibility for the trips both in the planning and on the day.

Episodes

Travelling Each of our trips were made by bus and on foot. Travelling by bus is a common method of transport in the city. Most areas are accessible by bus with a small number of subsidised private companies running the service. Being able to get around particularly by bus was an important information need for this class. They told stories of finding it difficult to say place names, of getting on the wrong bus, and of difficult encounters with bus drivers. Some learners were confident getting buses alone while others rarely travelled by bus.

I have drawn on examples from the different journeys to demonstrate the kinds of information sharing I observed and participated. As a researcher my understanding of what was happening was limited. The physical characteristics of a bus; people sitting in pairs, upstairs and downstairs means that the information

shared was different and that my researching was different.

On our first trip I count everyone onto the bus and buy the tickets. This pattern is repeated each journey. I try and joke with the bus driver telling him “*I’m your best customer today*” but he does not respond to me. The bus seems full but we all have space to sit around the bus in pairs. Two learners sitting in front of me ask what bus we got as they want to visit the farm again. A15 sits with her daughter at the front of the bus. An older woman talks to A15 and smiles at her daughter. I can’t hear what they say. The bus goes a different route to the way we expected and we miss our stop. Two men realise we are not sure what to do and they explain to T1 and I, that we need to get off the bus and walk back the way we came. When we talk about the trip in the next lesson I mention this saying that is good to know people will help. T1 says she heard the men say when we got off; it will be quieter now.

On trip A returning home we wait at the bus stop. I point at the timetable to explain when the next bus will be, showing how to follow the lines across. However nobody is very interested in listening to me.

On trip B we get off the bus and I have to shout upstairs to T1 that it is our stop. We start to walk through the city centre. We keep as a group crossing roads together although people talk in pairs and threes. T1 and I both take this as a learning opportunity, pointing out landmarks to the learners as we walk. I point out the new fairground ride to A5 and A8. Some of the women walk very slowly and we have to wait for them to catch up. T1 asks what’s the Arabic for hurry up and calls it to the back of the group. A8 jokes about them being slow.

On each journey I sit next to someone and talk to them and sometimes the people in front or behind. On trip C I sit next to A4 and two other women sit in front of us. I talk about the hospital as we will go past it on the bus. I say I visited last week as my son fell off his bike. I try and explain what concussion means, saying he banged his head. I say they were very good; very kind and saw him very quickly. She talks about her son explaining with gestures he has to have a camera put down his throat to look at his stomach. I say that’s horrible and ask if he will be awake. Before she can answer I realise it is time to get off the bus. On the way back I sit next to A8. It is a double decker bus and we sit on the top deck at the front. She shows me the photographs she took at the museum flicking through her phone. I ask her questions about what she enjoyed at the

museum.

Before we leave for trip B we stand outside the school waiting for the last learner to arrive. I see somebody in the distance at the bottom of hill but say I can't see who it is. I ask somebody if it is A8. They say it is and as she moves closer I recognise her. I say you can tell who people are by their walk if you know them and the learner agrees with me.

These journeys also allowed serendipitous information encounters and I write about two of the most significant here. We were returning back from our first trip. Many of the learners had stayed in town so it was only T1, myself, V1 and three learners; A3, A6, A15. T1 is pointing to a church as we walk past and someone who volunteers there notices us. She invites us to come and look round and tells us about the history. The woman tells us that there are three 'Mohammedans' which she thinks means Muslims buried in the unconsecrated part of the cemetery.

Another serendipitous encounter was with a war memorial which we walked past on a date very close to Remembrance Day. T1 explains about the world wars and we stop to look at the memorial. However there is little response from the learners. T1 talks about red and white poppies and why people wear them. I say there was a poppy on the front of the bus on the way here. As we walk on, T1 and I talk about how the learners were not very interested in the memorial and wonder what it means for someone from Yemen for us to be remembering a world war when their country is at war now.

The farm (trip A) The city farm we visited is one of several in the city. The farm is open to the public. It covers a small area with a cafe, a gardening centre, a small playground and a series of buildings and enclosures for animals. When we visited the larger animals; one or two horses and cows, and several sheep and goats were in pens and stables. There was another building with cages for guinea pigs, rabbits, snakes, spiders and birds. Chickens and ducks were in larger outdoor enclosures. At the farm we stayed as one large group but talked in smaller groups. The learners took a large number of photographs both on their own devices and on the class tablets. There was a range of languages used and conversations in English were centred around me, T1 and V1. There was also a lot of laughter.

This happened during the planning session for the farm trip while we were looking at the menu. T1 is talking about the cafe saying a good thing about the cafe is that it's vegetarian; they don't sell any meat at all. So you don't need to worry about food not being halal. Nothing has been near meat; it's good for vegetarians and good for Muslims. She asks again what time are we meeting but then notices there is lots of conversation in Arabic. She asks what's the matter, are you worried about something? We find out that A5 doesn't want to come, she says it's better that I don't come. There is more Arabic. T1 tries to persuade her saying it will be good for you and says A8 you'll have to come so A5 will come. I will come, Jess will come. She names the volunteer and school worker who will both come as well. She says we talked about this before and everyone wanted to come but now you're worried. The farm is small, friendly and safe. She explains that it is the same size as the school and playground. There won't be hundreds of people there. I say maybe there will be just some women with little children. It will be very quiet. T1 continues you don't have to have cups of tea; you don't have to eat anything if you don't want to. She starts to check with other learners asking are you OK? She asks A3, who says she's looking forward to it.

On the day the cafe is empty when we arrive. There are blackboards displaying the menu and a counter where cakes are displayed and orders are taken. Everybody orders for themselves, the more confident ordering first. We sit on different tables, talking about and sharing the food. We nearly fill the cafe. A2 gets out a cake she has made and offers it round; she encourages me to have a second piece telling me I am skinny so I can have more. A member of staff who is clearing the tables says to me it is nice to see different people here. As we are leaving some women come in with children and seem surprised to see us.

While visiting the farm we stand in a group looking at the ducks and chickens. Many of the women don't seem to know what ducks are. Somebody tells me we don't have them in Yemen. However everyone likes the chickens. One woman talks to them very affectionately. We laugh about one cockerel and a learner says he is like a fancy man. I suggest we go inside to where the small animals are. A14 looks at a cage with finches in. I read the sign and tell her they are from China. She says to me we have birds like this in Pakistan and she watches them quietly. I take a photograph of the birds. Some other women are looking at some empty cages. I explain that the chickens are outside. There is one chicken still in a cage. I read the sign about Millicent, the angry chicken who has to stay in

and explain it to the group of learners. I tell them she can't go out because she bullies the rest of the chickens. There is lots of laughter about this.

The centre for the visually impaired (trip B) The CVI is a large building which offers a range of services for the visually impaired. It contains both staff offices and facilities for its clients. At the front of the building is the reception desk with a seating area to one side and a small cafe on the other. Visitors are expected to sign in and access beyond the front desk is only by arrangement, or for service users. The session we attended was in a room towards the back of the building down a long corridor. The room is set up with three tables which will each sit around five people. There is a further table set up with a range of aids for the visually impaired as well as leaflets about eye health. At the planning session only one learner (A18) was worried about the visit and she did not come on the day. As we arrive at the centre there is some awkward negotiation of space as we sign in. We do not understand how the floor space is arranged to help visually impaired people and a member of staff from the centre does not realise that women do not want to be taken to the room by a man. Some of the learners seem unsure about writing their names and T1 assists them showing them what to fill in. In the room we sit at the tables and I join three learners.

V4's session has been carefully planned and she uses a range of realia including fruit and vegetables, blindfolds and specialist equipment. T1 and I both say we learnt something from the session and the following week the learners remember much of what they learnt. We try to ask them why they think this is, suggesting it is because the session was practical and visual but do not get a response.

V4 asks for two volunteers to have their eyes tested. A17 and A13 stand up eagerly. A5 volunteers as well then sits back down again when she realises that V4 only asked for two people. V4 says she will test them for long sight and gives them a book with words on in different sizes. T1 interjects to say that they might not be able to read the words. V4 reassures them that they don't have to read the words; that's why it is so good as you just have to say if you can see them. Both A17 and A13 can read all the words. She then says now we will test them for short sight. She uses a retractable tape measure to mark out three metres. There is laughter about the tape measure as it flicks out. V4 then asks who can drive? You need to be able to see this far to drive. No one puts their hand up except

T1. A13 tests A17's eyes and tells her you have perfect eyesight. She seems to be enjoying telling A17 what to do. V4 tells them it isn't an official test, you still need to go to an optician so they can see what is behind the eye but it shows that it does not have to be frightening and that the optician does not have to touch you.

Before we visit the cafe there is an involved negotiation in Arabic over who needs to leave to collect children and who will stay in town. Again we are blocking the floor space and the manager explains the lines to us, asking us to move to one side. Eventually A17 and V2 leave early and everyone else stays. The cafe is set to one side of the main vestibule with a counter and a small number of tables. Orders are taken at the counter and served to the tables. T1 takes the learners' orders and then T1 and I collect the drinks and food and distribute them. We fill nearly all the tables sitting in groups of four and five. I sit with T1, A3 and A14. V4 comes to join us and praises the group for their willingness to participate. After about thirty minutes I notice the time, tell T1 and then we tell the learners we have to leave.

The museum (trip C) The final visit we made was to a museum to look at a photography exhibition. The exhibition we visited was a temporary exhibit within one room of a city museum. The photographs were portraits of people who had migrated to the city. The museum has a small number of other galleries which focus on the city's history, art and culture. There is also a large cafe and a shop.

Learners who had previously been on trips were happy and excited about this visit. Some of them had been to the museum before. When we arrive we visit the cafe first. It is a large cafe with seating for around fifty people. There is a counter where orders are taken and food and drink is served. I collect everybody's orders for tea, coffee or juice and choose cakes to share because the cafe is expensive. I order foods I think of as British such as scones, Bakewell tart and muffins. We occupy three tables at the back, moving furniture so we can sit together. I sit with four learners talking to them but also to T1 who is at the next table. There is a lot of conversation about the food which we cut and share between us. I explain how to make Bakewell tart. Several learners try it but nobody likes it very much. There are similar discussion about chocolate muffins and shortbread. Many of the women are very interested and have a good knowledge of baking techniques.

We then go to the exhibition. At the entrance to the gallery T1 stops us as a group and shows the learners the exhibition sign at the entrance. She then takes us to see a photograph of someone she knows and had told us about the previous lesson. We look at the exhibition in small groups. Learners take many photographs of each other and of the pictures. Two ask to take my photograph. I look round the exhibition talking with different learners. At one point A9 comes up to me to show me a photograph of someone she knows.

I notice a photograph of an Asian man standing outside a mosque and point him out to a learner. I name the mosque and she looks at the photograph and checks with me where it is. I find the information sheet about him and encourage her to read it. She struggles with a few words but manages it. I explain what fall in love and army mean. I say it is a nice story, he was in the army but then he came to the UK, got married and fell in love. We laugh about the story. A man overhears and says that is the right way round, better than getting married and then joining the army. T1 comes over and asks us what we are laughing about and I explain. I take a photograph of the text as I think it is a good text for them to read and understand. At the next lesson I pass a photocopy round the class. They look at it in pairs or threes. I can see that some learners are trying to read the text. However nobody comments or asks any questions.

5.6 People, objects and places in Class A

In this section I draw on the narrative accounts above to answer my second research question which explores how people, objects and places mediate information sharing in this class. I consider the characteristics of people, places and a curated selection of objects. At the heart of this analysis is the recognition of how people, objects and places, are intertwined and that they shape and are shaped by information sharing. People are also informative objects; objects and people behave differently in different places and objects are different when they are mediated by people. As I establish in section 3.6 I see people as different to objects because of a difference in agency even though I recognise that objects shape information sharing.

5.6.1 Objects and information sharing

I write here about a small number of objects that I use as exemplars. They have all been discussed in the sections above and have been chosen for their significance.

Menus

During our trip planning sessions we looked at the menus for two of the cafes we planned to visit. These menus were formal, written objects with a specific purpose but they offered more complex affordances than this within the class. In the planning lesson the menu for the city farm was the focus of intense attention and it shared different kinds of information. It was a language learning object used to teach the learners new words such as porridge and cappuccino and with this, information about British culture. It also exposed rules about what to do with a menu; when asked to practice ordering A3 said she would have anything and T1 told her you have to choose something.

The emotional affordances of the menu were also significant; these centred around worry about going to the cafe and reassurance that it was safe. The reassurance did not come from the object but from T1, me and other learners. The CVI menu did not need the same mediation as our previous experience of going to the cafe meant the group did not express the same concerns. Instead there was a joke about A10 not liking her drink last time. At the end of both lessons the learners put the menus in their folders and they became more fixed as language learning objects. The menus were part of language learning, information sharing and cafe going, and intersected these different practices.

Bus timetables

Bus timetables were a significant informative object particularly because of how their affordances changed in relation to people and places. The first interaction with a bus timetable was when I showed them a printed version. None of the learners could identify what it was when passed around the classroom. This led T1 to the conclusion that she needed to spend some time looking at how to read tables. It also led to a lengthy discussion about their experiences of catching buses focusing on feelings, problems, and coping strategies.

Our next encounter was with a bus timetable on our first trip. The learners had

little interest when I showed them how to read the timetable. Sharing information about how to read the timetable seemed less important than the experience of having a nice time on a trip. For our second trip I made the decision not to show them the bus timetable saying to T1 I could not find a simple enough version. The discussion about getting the bus again did not focus on the skills needed to read the timetable and plan the journey but rather on one learner's worry about getting a bus with men. The bus timetable was an invisible object here and codified information about bus times and destinations was not the important information. On the final trip A8 told me where we should go to change buses, sharing her knowledge with me. The activity of how to read a bus timetable therefore seemed to be far less important than affective experiences about bus travel.

Signs

Our trips meant that we encountered a range of signs and notices. The status of these as informative objects varied. At the city farm I read notices out loud to learners paraphrasing where I judged it useful. I saw T1 and V1 doing the same but was not aware of any learners looking at the signs. On our return to the classroom T1 had taken lots of photographs of signs that she explained to learners and this became a classroom exercise. After our final visit to the museum, I told the learners that I was impressed because they could now read some of the texts in the museum. The signs at the museum were also formal and institutional but they told a personal story meaning that they were accessible to learners in a way the signs at the farm may not have been. At the museum I chose the text about the man getting married because of its simple language and accessible story and supported the learner in reading it. I was then still mediating the information but in a different way. The learners were also a year further on in their language learning which meant they were interacting differently with information. For me the act of reading the sign was as significant as the information it contained; it was sharing the information you can come to the museum and read things. The teleoaffective aspects of information sharing were then significant here. Interaction with signs should also be seen as part of the wider interaction these learners have with written texts which were limited by their literacy and language.

Videos and photographs

I am looking here at photographs and videos as informative objects and these were primarily digital. It is outside the scope of this study to consider digital technologies in their fullest sense and here I look at them as a mode for sharing images. Digital images were used in lessons and at break times bridging language learning, social interaction and information sharing. When learners showed videos or photographs it was generally about their home countries or their families. They also took a large number of photographs and videos on the first and third trip. They took these photographs on their own devices and on class tablets.

There were similarities between the video A10 played of her father singing, and another occasion when A8 brought in printed photographs of her daughter's wedding. These were passed round the class and talked about in detail. Both contributed to the intimacy of the classroom and were only shown because of the intimacy that already existed. On another occasion in a break time A18 used her phone to show me pictures she had taken in her home country when I said I did not know very much about it.

T1 regularly searched for photographs on the Internet to explain English words but video was used far more rarely for teaching purposes. One occasion where T1 played a video of a panda playing in the snow in New York showed the potential of video for language learning and information sharing. The video encouraged the class to talk about the weather in New York and then in Pakistan as well as where pandas came from. It was also remembered by learners when we talked about it later.

Visual images often seemed to be more accessible than writing; however, this kind of object still needed to be mediated. This could be seen in the discussion of the Zumba leaflet where the image of a woman in revealing gym clothes discouraged the learners from going to the class. In a similar way I did not understand the video of A10's dad in the same way that A9 did. Digital visual images can then be compared with drawings and contrasted with writing in terms of the affordances they offer. They also offered one of the most accessible aspects of digital technology for these learners.

Official documents

Helping learners with queries about their own documents was something T1 did generally before and after lessons and in break times. A18's letter was an immediate information need and something personal to her, she needed help understanding what had gone wrong. T1's indignation about it then made it into a research object. In the lesson where T1 and I brought in our own documents we made our personal information into language learning objects. This again signals the intimacy of the classroom; T1 said "*we don't mind you seeing but don't take them home*". The social aspects of these had the most interest; we had conversations about children, hospitals, window cleaners and trees. These documents were clearly formal and not created by participants. They did not have the same resonance as the more personal: the learners showed little interest when we read about this lesson in the feedback session.

Some information was too far away from learners' knowledge and these objects lacked affordances. In particular the discussion about poll cards did not resonate with these learners. However, the learners showed engagement with the task as a whole; they did not want to stop at break time and it was hard to bring the discussion to a close. This task also showed the strategies that they used when their language or literacy prevented them understanding. They tried to guess using pictures which was sometimes effective and sometimes misleading. The image of a phone on an insurance letter was very difficult to understand while a picture of water on a water bill made it much easier to understand the context. Even with intelligent guesses and collaborative working many of these documents remained inaccessible to the learners. This sharing of our documents led to A11's serendipitous finding of a leaflet that meant she could apply for healthy food vouchers. This was not then the byproduct of social interaction but of language learning.

Stories

One of the most significant ways that information was shared in class A was through stories. Stories were explicitly valued and praised by both the teacher and learners; T1 was keen to tell me about an "*amazing story*" from A3 and a learner praised the book I wrote for them as "*a good story*". During my visits to the class I started to tell more stories and this was encouraged by T1. On one occasion she told the learners "*listen, Jess is telling a story*". These stories crossed

between lesson and break time. Stories were again objects where the practices of language learning and information sharing intersected with social interaction. The learners were learning how to tell stories in English and so this information sharing was also part of modelling language.

Knowledge about British life was conveyed through T1's stories. Learners also told stories about their lives in the UK and in their home countries. When A3 told me the story about an embarrassing accident she had, I responded by telling her a similar story about myself that made a connection between us as well as possibly sharing information about the expected British way to respond to embarrassing situations. Some stories assumed a particular importance and seemed to have talismanic qualities. I heard a story about a learner getting a bus to the wrong town and spending all night walking home several times. A3's story about a medicinal drink also reoccurred. Stories then transmitted values and understandings, the intangible as well as the tangible. Storytelling could also be seen as identity forming; connected to being or becoming part of a group. When A16 told the joke about chickens I was the outsider who needed the story explained.

Food

Different kinds of food were one of the most commonly recurring informative objects in this classroom. As with stories, food bridged break and lesson time. Learners cooked and then wrote a recipe for yoghurt curry as a language task, they showed pictures of food on phones, we talked about the food on menus, we ate food on trips and people brought food to share in the class. A significant break time activity was learners explaining to me, T1 or V3 about how to make a particular food. Many of the learners were authorities in discussions of food; when we talked about food in the museum cafe they had far more knowledge of baking than me. During the lesson where we discussed the city farm menu, T1 and I were authorities in conversation about tea cakes and marmite but this switched at the break time when A2 took out a small packets of herbs to make tea and explained the process to me.

Food was also emotional and pleasurable. The sharing of food was like the sharing information in that both built personal relationships. In one break time, T1 said the class was turning into a tea party as learners brought out an elaborate array of food they had made. There was an important relationship between information about food, and information about culture. Discussions of food generated

new vocabulary but also a way into both British life and to the learners' home countries. The discussion about Ramadan identified food as part of cultural and religious practice; you should eat three dates to break your fast, and as source of pleasure; A13 expressing her liking for samosas and kebabs. At CVI food became a different kind of object again, a way of learning about health. V4 had brought examples of food that were good for eye health and passed them round the class. T1 was slightly rueful in talking about how often food forms part of her lessons but it was evident here food had many and varied affordances for this class.

Drawings

Drawing pictures formed a significant part of two lessons I observed. These were informal objects as they were created by the learners but formal in that they were part of class teaching. In the lesson where we discussed Eid and Ramadan, the pictures were the stimulus for language learning and information sharing. They were used as the basis for discussion and reflection so their importance was as scaffolding objects. However as with stories they were also a source of pleasure and laughter; A2 laughed about her drawing of her husband and took a photograph so she could show it to him at home. Within this class, the learners' limited literacy meant that written objects had limited affordances and so visual objects became more significant.

Animals

The animals at the farm were one of the few instances of informative objects that were not artefacts. The photographs from the farm taken by the learners were nearly all of animals demonstrating how they were the focus of our attention. Many learners were confident and affectionate with the animals particularly the goats and chickens. Several talked about their own experiences of taking care of animals in their home countries and had authoritative information. There was a difference between those animals they associated with home and those that were unfamiliar; the Yemeni women did not recognise ducks but were happy to see chickens. It was the emotional affordances; A14 watching the small birds, laughing about the angry chicken, my own liking for the horse as it reminded me of my childhood, that were significant here rather than the information about the animals given on the notices. The photographs of animals discussed in the classroom became more focused on language learning with T1 eliciting information about animals' appearance but the affective aspects still retained significance.

The importance of enjoyment and pleasure in information sharing was again evident here. The animals were again linked in the practices of language learning and information sharing.

Dictionaries

T1 introduced dictionaries when the learners moved up a language level. There was then a direct relationship between the presence of particular informative objects in arrangements and the practice of language learning. As with other written objects, literacy was the most significant factor in how learners interacted with dictionaries. The two learners who were literate in Arabic could use the physical dictionaries most competently and they were also the only ones in that class who used smartphone apps such as Google Translate. Again we can see here that digital objects do not have a separate status; digital capabilities were bound up with other capabilities. Other learners who had smartphones and used them competently for photographs, videos and keeping in touch with home needed support for both physical and online dictionaries.

5.6.2 People and information sharing

In this section I analyse the role of people in mediating information. The teacher, the learners and myself were the focus of my research but I acknowledge the other people who were also part of the information ground. I demonstrate above that the class was a private space, only those invited could come in. However there were regular visitors; a school worker and two volunteer teachers.

My role in the information grounds

As I discuss in chapter 4, I was a participant as well as an observer in the information ground. My research was intertwined in the information ground with language learning, social interaction and information sharing. There were times when my role as researcher slipped even though I did remind learners that I was researching them. For the learners I think my research was closely aligned with their ESOL learning. I was someone co-opted into the class becoming part of their ESOL learning and part of their information ground. I also experienced this same slippage myself. As I continued to visit the class I told more stories and talked more about my life. I also formed closer relationships with the learners helped

by the trips we made. My absorption into the information ground can be related to the nature of the class; visitors were an expected and important part of the class, my own experience of working in community learning, and my research paradigm which meant I developed a particular kind of research relationship.

Information authorities

Learners identified that the ESOL classroom was an important information source for them; “*teacher help, V1 help*” and “*we help each other, we are like sisters*”. This was closely connected to questions of who was trusted and who could be seen as an information authority. The friendships and family relationships in the class were very significant for information sharing. People who were personally known were authorities. A12 said they trusted T1 because she had “*been here for a long time*”. I could see this in my own role in the class. In early visits I was more likely to be an outsider, the person who needed things explained to them. But by the end of my research learners were more likely to ask me for advice and share information with me. I could also see this in my own observation notes; there was a slow change from using “*they*” to far more frequently using “*we*”.

Authority was also associated with personal experience; mothers were identified as an authority on children because they had raised their own children. T1, V1, V3 and to a lesser extent me were authorities because of our local knowledge and knowledge of British life. This was also connected with linguistic capability as shown in how T1 helped learners in dealing with bureaucracy. This direct help happened before and after lessons and in break times. In this way it was marked as separate from activity of language learning.

T1 had a particular importance as an information authority. She controlled what information was shared; “*no more sad stories*,” and had a role in establishing what information was valued; “*that was a funny joke*”. It was very unusual for her authority to be challenged; in a conversation about the monarchy one learner would not believe that Charles rather than William would succeed the throne and T1 closed the discussion by saying I know. There were other times when she foregrounded her lack of knowledge, for example she positioned herself as a learner of Arabic and asked one learner to write the Arabic translation for her. She also seemed keen to show that she was not expert at using digital technology; she foregrounded difficulties rather than trying to mask them.

There were times when learners were the information authority particularly when they were speaking from their own experience. Information sharing where the learners were the experts was encouraged by the teacher as part of learning. This was clearly seen in the discussion about Ramadan where T1 told me she that she was the one who was doing the learning.

Language and literacy

The learners in this class were able to express themselves in English to a far greater extent than their language level suggested. They also used their first languages for some discussions and often relied on peer translation for communication. This scaffolding was an important part of communication. However there were some discussions they could not have in English. After our visit to the museum I spoke to T1 about my disappointment that the learners were not engaged in the following lesson. She commented “*you see the thing is about response to artwork and photographs and whatever they can’t do that in English, they do that in their mother tongue. It’s emotional, experiential*”. This was recognised by the teacher in her planning; there were certain topics she found challenging to cover because it was difficult to have a nuanced discussion when language was limited. Activities that involved reflection often seemed challenging to discuss in English. In discussing the trip to the CVI both T1 and I tried to explain why we thought the learners had remembered so much information but could not explain ourselves effectively.

There were instances where the learners recognised they could not communicate effectively in English and effectively adopted other strategies, for example the discussion of houlba. However there were other times when I was left not knowing or understanding the learners; for example, I did not know what meaning the visit to the cemetery had to them. It had meaning to me but I could not extrapolate from this what it might have meant to the learners.

There were also other factors beyond literacy and language that mediated learners’ information sharing. T1’s attempt to talk about the poll card showed that information needed to be of the right kind in order to be accessible. The war memorial seemed to be similar as we got very little response from learners when we stopped to look at it.

People as informative objects

Learners got important information from their peers. They would often do what other learners were doing whether this was ordering in a cafe or going into the city after the trip. A5 was persuaded to go to the cafe because A8 was going. Bodies and what they did were then important in this class. People were embodied informative objects. There was an importance in safety in numbers, of filling a space and being noisy on the bus. Learners were also aware of each other's bodies, we can see this on the occasion when participants could recognise another learner from a distance by the way she walked when she was too far away for me to see her face. T1 also used learners as examples, making them into informative objects, this was clearly seen when A18 joined the class and T1 told her about A10 getting the bus by herself.

T1 talked about the participants as learners as well, sharing information about how they needed to improve that was then applied generally. Language learning then became collaborative; T1 would comment we need to work on telling the time rather than making a comment for an individual learner. She knew the learners well and they become informative objects for her, informing her teaching. She told me "I'm nosy" but then elaborated

the content as well. I often my brain clicks and I think oh that's interesting. I can use that. So when I did that lesson about turmeric that had come from knowledge from hearing many times, take turmeric for this. So it can inform what I do.

T1 also made her own life into an informative object for learners. Some of the stories about her life were written into lesson plans while others were more spontaneous but the information shared was still conscious and managed. She explained in the closing interview

The other thing that they'll do is find out about me and I think I hope that they'll make a connection with a White British women ... it will put them in a better connection for learning but it might also go on outside their communities that white people, English people they are the same as me. So hopefully it might get replicated outside of the classroom.

Valuing information

Information had to be accessible and useful. Local information was therefore valuable. The practical aspects of information were then valued; one learner suggested they would ask their mother for advice because they might then provide practical help.

Social information also seemed to have a high value in this class. One of the most significant and prevalent kinds of information that the learners shared was about their home countries. They did this through photographs, videos and stories. While learners also talked about their lives in the UK, discussion often came back to their memories of home countries.

The act of information sharing in English, of making oneself understood was also an activity in its own right. There was a satisfaction when information was successfully shared, for example in the discussion of houlba and irritation when it was not such as when I could not understand A18's explanations about making bread.

A concern for T1 in our initial interview was how learners remembered information that has been shared. We had the opportunity to explore this in the session where we read the book I had written for them. The pages the learners responded to were when the information discussed was social, affective, visual, place based and embodied.

5.6.3 Places and information sharing

In this section I am exploring how information sharing was different in different places and how places shared information. This draws on information grounds theory which suggests different characteristics of places around privacy, openness and whether they are hostage or fluid. However this is combined with a practice approach which considers rules, values and understandings in relation to place and space.

Particular characteristics of these ESOL classrooms

The ESOL class occupied a physical space and this space was also imbued with the affective and the social. Both classrooms can be characterised as intimate,

friendly, female and safe. These characteristics mediated what information was shared in the class. The physical characteristics intersected with the affective, for example, the classrooms were physically difficult to access and this contributed to the feeling of safety. I did not see any conflicts in this class but there was tacit and explicit understandings of what constituted acceptable behaviour. This included trying to speak English, sharing experiences and listening to each other.

The learners in class A can also be seen as learning how to learn. There is a connection between this and learning how to be in a classroom. Some of the objects in this classroom such as the prevalence of drawings, and T1's explicit instructions in relation to classroom objects directly relate to this experience of learning how to learn.

In the move to a different classroom there was a change to the physical space. This affected information sharing and language learning to some extent. There were also some changes to the social and affective characteristics. For example classroom 2 was a more private space as fewer school staff visited.

Classroom extended to other places

We planned the trips choosing places that had similar qualities to the classroom such as small, safe, female dominated and local. This was most clearly seen in the room at the CVI which very closely replicated the classroom, but both the farm and the museum were described in similar ways. The farm was described as being the same size as the school playground and populated by mothers and children. Everyone being together was an important part of this both in terms of strength in numbers; "*the men will stay away from us*" and in terms of acceptability; it was appropriate to go here. However one learner still decided not to come on a trip. For her it seemed that the affective and social characteristics of the classroom did not extend to a different physical place.

Different places offer different informative objects

In its simplest form going to different places provided different informative objects and changed the affordances of other objects. We can see this in the move to a different classroom. Classroom 1 'belonged' to V1, when she was away it became untidier, while T1 had more ownership of classroom 2. The loss of digital technologies was balanced by having the space for new objects such as the bring

and buy stall. Digital objects did not have a unique status; they existed alongside other informative objects.

There was also a relationship between the characteristics of places and the availability of informative objects. The safety of classroom allowed for the inclusion of certain informative objects such as family photographs, personal documents, and stories. Moving between places provided the opportunity for serendipitous encounters with different informative objects such as the war memorial and the Muslim graves.

The different characteristics of places also meant that the affordances of objects changed. We can see this in the discussion of signs as informative objects: their affordances were different in the classroom to in the museum or farm.

Different places offer different affordances

The different characteristics of the places that we visited meant that my relationship with participants changed. I could see this in my relationship with one learner; A9. On each of the first two trips we talked together in conversations initiated by me. On the third trip she approached me and started a conversation. When I talked to her again in class she was not as forthcoming. This change can be seen as connected to the affordances of a different space, her development as a language learner and her growing confidence. There was a difference in sharing a story in the classroom and sharing a story between two people as we did for example on bus journeys. The fluidness of walking also encouraged different kinds of information sharing.

On the trips my conversations with learners were personal, small scale exchanges of information that could be seen purely in terms of social interactions. However these encounters seemed to have value for participants. A17 said her favourite part of one trip was talking to V2 on the bus on the way home. More broadly the trips we went on were what the learners remembered and enjoyed from my research. T1 commented:

There is the emotional and social thing of going on a trip because they don't go anywhere independently without their husbands very much. So there is that aspect. That enjoyment thing, feeling liberated, I'm off into town.

The importance of enjoyment as part of information sharing threads through my research with this class.

Getting information from places

The act of going to different places met a practical need for learners. However the information shared by going to places was not simply how to get from place A to place B. Some information about places could only be shared by going there, and the experience of going there changed the place. We can see this in how different the planning was for our first and subsequent visits to cafes; the previous group experience meant that people were happy going again. This was even more clearly seen in the trip to the exhibition as shown in this T1's comment

But I think we might have to go to five exhibitions. And say we are going to another exhibition, what's this one about? You know rather than trying to explain what an exhibition is and what it is for and so on.

Related to this was the importance of sharing information about how to occupy space. This was most clearly seen in the negotiation of space at the CVI where none of us understood what the rules were about where to stand and where to walk. Equally the manager of the centre did not understand that the learners did not want a man to take them to the room. More generally our physical and visible presence as a group was important. This was explicitly stated by T1; she reassured learners that the men will keep out of our way and told the story of us being noisy on the bus on more than one occasion. It was significant that we were a group where nearly everyone was visibly Muslim (for example wearing hijab or niqab). Our difference was noticed even if this was not negatively. In one of the places we visited a woman told me that the learners would make a lovely photograph. T1 talking to me afterwards says that she noticed people looking at us we walked through town. My negotiation of space as a white, non-Muslim, fluent English speaker was very different to some of the learners' negotiations. In this way T1 and I took on a mediating role, managing interactions and managing space for the learners.

There were then implicit and explicit rules attached to all the places described above. An ESOL class has rules and expectations just as a bus, a museum, a cafe and a city farm do. T1 was explicit about some classroom rules, for example

those related to using other languages apart from English. Some of the rules of the classroom were extended into the trips (such as the safety discussed above) and some were adapted (there was less of an emphasis on speaking in English). But the places also had different rules that needed to be learnt; what to do in an exhibition, or how to order in a cafe. Going to these places allowed these rules to be shared with learners.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I firstly explored how the classes were complex settings with two overlapping contexts. The most significant aspects of the context of ESOL provision are how ESOL is framed as learning for life rather than as an academic subject and how information is seen as contextual and cultural. The most significant aspects of the context of being a migrant are a “*lack of touch*” with English people and their experiences of settlement as iterative and varied. As I discuss in chapter 7 these have a significant relationship with information sharing.

The second half of this chapter has focused on information sharing in class A. I summarise here the most significant aspects of this class. Firstly they need to be understood as beginners in English, many of them with limited print literacy in any language. The class also needs to be understood in terms of safety with the trusted relationships between the teacher and learners as centrally important. People are also important as information objects. Access to and renegotiation of place and its relationship with information sharing is significant as is making connections between the UK and home countries. Stories and food are important information objects but more generally certain properties of objects such as whether they are affective and accessible determine whether they are informative. It is also important to recognise how the properties of objects change according to their context. This is further developed in chapter 7 where I explore how people, objects and places are intertwined with information sharing.

In the following chapter I first analyse information sharing in class B and then briefly compare the two cases.

Chapter 6

Second case and cross case analysis

6.1 Class B

In this, the second chapter of my findings, I discuss my second case using the same structured contextual narrative approach that employed for class A. I also include in this chapter, the cross case analysis where I draw together the similarities and differences between the two classes.

6.1.1 Temporal setting

The class follows the same terms as class A. It takes place in the afternoons, finishing in time for the learners to collect their children from school. T2 talks to learners as they arrive, sometimes giving feedback on their work, sometimes engaging in more general conversation. He fills in the register without calling names but asks about absentees, and is concerned about unexpected absences. Learners normally communicate with him by text message and it is expected that they will inform him if they cannot attend. Learners however do sometimes come late and leave early due to work or childcare commitments.

In my observations the lessons often extend into break time. T2 makes drinks but the learners continue with their activities. The ends of lessons are marked more clearly; learners and T2 have to leave promptly to collect their children. T2 teaches a different ESOL class in the same room in the morning and has his lunch in the classroom in between the sessions. As with T1 the class is part of his working day. The learners fit the class round their children's schooling, work

and other commitments. B5 says she does not have time to talk to me about my research as she has to go to mosque and then collect her child from school. The class is, again, part of my doctoral research although my visits here are less frequent. The learners normally ask me how my research is going when I visit and on several occasions are surprised by how much longer I have until I finish.

6.1.2 Classroom 3

There is a plan of classroom 3 in appendix S.

Class B is based in a community centre in an area of the city where immigration has traditionally been much lower than class A. However it also scores highly on indices of multiple deprivation. The community centre occupies several buildings of a small shopping arcade. A chemist, pub, sandwich bar, convenience stores, and a boarded up shop form the rest of the arcade. The surrounding area is residential with flats, modern housing estates and few amenities. The learners all seem to come by bus or car; I don't think any of them live close enough to walk. T1 also takes the bus or occasionally drives.

The first time I visit the class I arrive early and only T2 is there. The door opens directly into the classroom and I do not need to knock. Over the course of my visits, community forum staff and volunteers, and visitors occasionally call in. Passersby often glance in and once a child peers through the glass making the class laugh. It is a large, bright room which is spacious for the relatively small class size. The tables are arranged in a u-shape facing a whiteboard. T2 generally uses this as a screen to project from his laptop although he will occasionally write and draw directly on the board. There are cupboards running along one side, over the year these are repainted and tidied. On this first occasion I sit and talk to T2 and we wait for the learners to arrive. He makes me a cup of tea and we talk about community learning and austerity.

Over the next ten minutes four learners arrive. In my visits over the next year this number generally varies between five and eight. T2 introduces me and I explain my research handing out the information sheets in English which we read together. We discuss what research is, and what ethics are. B4, who will become one of my most involved participants, is keen to demonstrate that she understands what research is, mentioning a relative who is a university lecturer.

The learners all say they are happy to take part. However B4 questions whether she is too old. I explain that I know ESOL learners are very diverse; of all ages, nationalities, backgrounds and levels of education. It feels to me that the room becomes friendlier after this exchange. We talk for around twenty minutes about my research. Two women dominate the discussion: B3 and B4. B3 expresses her anger about how she received so little help when she first came to the UK. They raise a question about why I am interested in them; saying that now their English is good enough they do not have any problems with information. This is a question that will return over the months of my research with them. The others are quieter but smile and contribute a little. B4 describes the other learners in the class as the hope of Britain. This remark is the only evidence of the warm friendships of Class A. However as I continue to visit I realise that although these learners are more geographically distant there are still close relationships. In subsequent visits I meet the other women who make up this class.

There are laptops that the class can use and Wi-Fi in the classroom. Learners sometimes use their phones in class to help them with language learning. They use notebooks or paper to record their lesson notes. There are also printed dictionaries. The learners often hand in written work at the start of class or have it returned to them. T2 prepares and distributes printed handouts for the class.

Episodes

Talking about information problems When I arrived T2 had already handed out the diary task included in appendix G. He told me about the homework he had just marked as he'd realised that two of the stories were actually information stories. He asks the two learners if they want to tell me. B4 tells a story about trying to get a trolley in Poundland (a discount shop). It is a vivid descriptive story that she acts out standing up at some points. She describes how when she first arrived in the UK she went to Poundland and couldn't work out how to get a trolley. So she went up to a man who had finished shopping and tried to take his. He took his bags out and gave her the trolley. Then an employee came up (she explains she could tell who he was by his uniform) and told her there was a problem. He pointed at the slot and told her she needed to put a pound in so she gave him a pound. He put it in his pocket and walked away. She puzzled about this while she was doing her shopping. After she finished she didn't know how to put the trolley back. A woman showed her how to release the pound using the key from the next trolley. She then felt very embarrassed. She looked round

to find the employee who had taken the pound from her but couldn't see him. Since then she knows how to use trolleys but still feels embarrassed when she thinks about it. The other learners laugh and smile.

Talking about my research I wait in the cafe but no-one comes to talk to me and I go into the classroom for the start of the lesson. T2 encourages them all to come and talk to me next week. I say it is OK; they only need to come if they want to. B4 tells me about her friend and her problem with being overcharged for council tax and says she will send me the story. T2 explains that he ended up phoning the council on B4's friend's behalf and says he found it hard to understand what was happening. However her friend will now not have to pay any tax this year and will get a new bill in March. T2 says he took the name of the person he spoke to in case there are any problems. B4 makes some scathing comments about bureaucracy in England.

Talking about buses I ask B1 if she remembered to bring the bus ticket. She doesn't have the ticket and says she couldn't find it. We start talking more generally about how expensive travelling by bus can be. T2 tells a story about getting the bus. He describes a short journey saying it's only 5 stops but it costs £2. He describes how he was carrying shopping, miming holding two heavy bags so he did not want to walk. He says the driver refused to charge him £2. The driver told him that his son does archery and he could reach that bus stop with an arrow so he's not charging him £2. There is laughter from the class. T2 concludes saying he would only take £1. B1 says she buys a day saver for £4 on the days she comes to class and I say I think £4 is OK or if you buy a weekly pass but for short journeys it is too much money.

Talking about roofs This episode took place while T2, B5 and I were waiting for the other learners to arrive in the lesson after we visited the museum. We've been talking about the museum which reminded B5 of her grandparents' house in Pakistan. She is trying to explain what the roof was like. T2 and her are both very involved in this conversation. She tries to explain about a big beam and smaller beams with T2 telling her the word beam. T2 asks if the roof is flat on top. B5 says it has mud and T2 asks what happens when it rains, doesn't it get washed away. B5 says no because there are branches on the top. He draws a picture of what he thinks the roof looks like on the whiteboard. She agrees with his picture but then explains that roofs aren't made like that anymore. T2 returns

to talking about the museum, asking do you remember what the roof was made of? B5 says it was made of wood, T2 agrees that the rafters are wooden but what was on top? He draws on the board again and says they were made with really big pieces of stone. B5 explains again about how roofs are made in Pakistan.

Talking about exams T2 asks everyone by name if they want a drink and then makes teas and coffees. B5 gives him very precise instructions about how to make her drink. While he is making the drinks B1 walks over to where he is standing and asks about the exams; who will be taking them? He says everyone has to pass a practice test before you can do the exam. He thinks she might not be ready for the writing yet but she can do another practice. She asks if she can do the speaking and listening instead. He says they need to have at least three people for the speaking and listening. B1 says we have, we have four, maybe more than four, and names several learners. T2 agrees with her list saying B6 has passed, he doesn't know about another learner, but he thinks she has passed. She says if she can't do the writing she would like to do the speaking. T2 says he thinks that's fine and he'll ask for the papers. He says last year the topic was health. They can look at some past papers and decide who should do it.

Museum writing task While T2 is reading B8's work, B5 and B1 are writing individually on loose paper or in notebooks. B1 is looking at her phone and writing, while B5 is writing, looking at the guidebook and referring to some of her own written notes. T2 then looks at what B5 has written. He tells her now she is level one she needs to be really clear where sentences end and where to put full stops. He asks her about a sentence in her current writing and reminds her of some of her early writing. He again praises her work but also corrects her grammar, particularly her use of tenses. She has written about the water tank we saw on the way, he corrects her vocabulary saying water tower. He says he doesn't really know what they are for and asks if I know. I say maybe they store water until it's needed but I don't know either. He tells B5 that little things are important; they will count in your exam. He praises her use of 'expected to be' but corrects the tense. He also checks the content, he is not sure if it is the oldest building but it is one of the oldest. After he has commented on B5's work the learners work independently for about fifteen minutes talking occasionally.

Talking about migrants It is the start of the class. T2 and I are in the classroom when the first learner arrives. She asks me how my research is going and then she

starts talking about migration in her home country. She talks about her relative who wants to migrate because he's lazy. T2 says that everyone he has met who came from her region has been hard working and came here wanting to work. She then talks about migrants to her country. She says there were problems a few years ago with migrants behaving badly and attacking women. T2 and I try to challenge her. I say there were stories like that about Germany and they were shown not to be true. However she does not listen and tells us how the migrants were beaten up by the police and after that they started behaving. She says they spoke to each other on the Internet and learnt that they have to behave. Another learner arrives and T2 changes the topic to today's lesson.

Researching the EU referendum This episode is part of a lesson where we are assessing the truth of claims made in the referendum. This was a lesson I planned with T2. The two learners are searching together on a laptop. They are trying to find out if the claim that we pay £350 million a week to the EU is true. We are looking at the results from an Internet search. These include a link to an article in the Daily Telegraph which gives an amount of how much we pay a year to the EU. B4 starts working out how much that figure would be a week. I say why have you chosen that article; how do you know it is telling the truth, who has written it, why did they write it? B8 says that all the results are from the UK. B4 says she likes to compare, she looks at one and then looks at another, then makes her mind up. She tells me not to worry; she always looks at more than one thing. B8 clicks on the link to the Telegraph article and I ask again who is writing it and why. B4 says she always likes to read the comments first as it helps her English. I say I never like to read the comments. They spend some time trying to work out who has written it. Eventually they find out he has written a book *The Great EU Rip Off*. We discuss the meaning of rip off and identify he is part of Taxpayers Alliance. B4 asks who they are. I say they want a low tax, low benefits society. B4 says she would be positive about him, she shares his view; normal people pay too much tax and businesses should pay more. I ask but what does the book he's written tell you? B4 says she would like it and she would trust him.

6.1.3 Trip

Museum visit (trip D)

The museum we visited is a historical house that has been restored. It is a small local museum away from the city centre. It has limited opening hours and has been opened by arrangement for us. We were the only visitors there, and were welcomed by a volunteer. The museum contains rooms that have been furnished to show how they may have looked in Tudor times, and other rooms with more general historical and replica artefacts from the period.

Episodes

Planning the trip I tell them I have some money for a trip but appreciate that their class time is important to them. T2 clarifies that the problem is whether we can get there and back in two hours. B4 says it would be a good memory of our class. He starts to ask whether they would be interested in doing something outside of their class. I interrupt and say I've had an idea to go to a local museum as it is quite close. T1 agrees and we try to explain what the museum is. B2 asks if it is a museum or a cafe. T2 finds a picture on his laptop and displays it on the screen. We spend some time talking about where it is and how to get there. T2 finds it on a mapping website. He says it is very close to his house and shows us on the map. We discuss different buses and how to get there. Several learners seem very knowledgeable about buses. There is a conversation about complex travel arrangements; who will need to pick up their children from where. Once we have worked out there is enough time, everyone is keen to go.

Travelling to the museum We meet in the classroom and then walk two minutes to the bus stop. We wait a few minutes. I check the bus timetable with B2 but she doesn't find it easy to read. We look at the daffodils and I talk to B4 about native flowers in her country. She talks about the permafrost. I have to tell her the word after she has explained the concept. She says that daffodils can't survive because the earth freezes. I ask her what flowers they do have. She says that wild flowers can survive; they have a different kind of seed. B1 rushes up apologising for being late and two minutes later the bus arrives. I pay for the bus tickets. B1 has a ticket already. I tell her I can give her the money back if she brings me the ticket. She asks me why and I say I have money to pay for everyone.

Dresses There are some imitation period dresses kept in a bedroom. B5 pulls out the dresses and shows them to me. She says these are Indian dresses and then takes another in a different style and says like this as well. She says this one and this; they have this style in India. She then talks to me about the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 and seems to relate this to the dresses but I don't understand what she means and eventually she gives up.

Looking at the scold's bridle In the next room B2 is looking at a glass case which is about crime and punishment. It contains a scold's bridle, some ankle chains and a spiked collar. There is a notice board which gives information about the items. B2 asks me about the bridle. I explain how it is used gesturing to show how it is fitted over the tongue so you can't talk. I emphasise it is only for women and was used to stop them criticising their husbands. B2 sucks in her breath and seems horrified. She says we have come far. B5 asks me about the spiked collar. I don't know so I read the notice and explain that it was worn by criminals. We both shake our heads.

Chicken cake The volunteer has made some coffee for us. We sit down looking at photographs of the museum. B8 has brought some biscuits that she shares round. B2 comes in complaining that we didn't tell her we were having food. She takes out a plastic box containing a cake she has made saying it is chicken cake. Everyone seems surprised. She continues explaining it is a traditional food from her country; it is usually made with pork but she made it with chicken so her classmates could eat it. She says she knows that some of her class don't eat pork. I think everybody except me has some. I don't explain that I don't eat meat and I don't think B2 notices I don't have any. B2 gives T2 the rest to take home for his family and he thanks her.

Evil eyes T2 asks if we have seen the daisy wheels. We say we don't know what he means and go to look. There are some faint patterns scratched on the wood at the bottom of the staircase. He explains that they were put there to ward off evil; to keep the devil out. B8 smiles and says we have the same, exactly the same in my country. B1 says yes we have the same as well. She explains about eyes that keep evil away. I ask her if it is like the evil eye in Turkey. She says yes and explains people put them outside their houses, on babies' beds and wear them on their lapel (she has to gesture to explain this word). B8 asks if she still believes and smiles a little. B1 says yes I do, why not? I had them as a baby; my

sister uses them, I use them in my home to protect my child. B8 doesn't challenge her any further.

Travelling home After we have finished looking round the museum, I check who needs to get back. I look up the next bus on my phone and say there will be one in ten minutes. B2 stands up saying let's go. I say it's OK we have time and we slowly move outside. I check with T2 where the bus goes from as he is going straight to his children's school. He shows me, and we all start to walk that way. We have a long complicated discussion about who is going where. Eventually B1 and B8 walk down the hill with T2 to get a different bus. B2, B5, B4 and I wait at the stop. They see the bus coming the other way and think we've missed it. I reassure them that it is not ours. B4 asks me what kind of person lived in that house. We talk about gentry and peasants, merchants and farmers. She challenges me when I say it was a farmhouse saying there is no land. I explain that the other houses weren't there when the house was built. I get the leaflet out to show her and realise I shouldn't have taken the laminated one with me. They laugh with me a little. I point out a blackbird and B4 asks me what it's called in English, she looks at me in disbelief when I tell her.

Eventually the bus comes and we get on. I check with B2 she has enough time to get back to school and we talk about our children. While on the bus T2 phones B4 and asks to speak to me. He explains that he left the tablet at the museum so is on his way back there, and asks if I have the volunteer's number. I say I'll try emailing her. I get an immediate response giving her phone number. I ask B2 if I can use her phone to call T2. There's no answer so I try to send a text message. It takes me a long time to work out how to use her phone and she has to show me how to do it. I eventually manage it after we get off the bus. She hugs me goodbye.

6.1.4 Group interviews

As part of my research with this class we had two group interviews. The first interview was attended by B2, B1, B8 and B4, and the second by B1, B4 and B5. I arranged to meet them in the cafe near the classroom for an hour before their class. We sat round one table and the learners came in gradually. On both occasions I spoke to one learner alone and then others joined. The first meeting was interrupted by the cafe manager as she was closing the cafe. We continued

standing outside classroom and then when T2 came and unlocked the room we spent a few more minutes talking in there.

Episodes

B4 talking about benefits I am talking to B1 when B4 comes in. She seems upset and changes the subject to say that her and her husband are now prisoners. I ask her to explain and she says that because they have housing benefit the government has decided that they can't leave the country for more than four weeks. She explains further from April 2016 we can't go out for more than 4 weeks or we will be losing benefits. I am confused and ask her who told you this? B4 says I know it exactly and repeats who told me? I ask her how she found out and B1 repeats the question who told you this information? B4 says I searched it on the Internet because there will be lots of changes after 30th April. I am very confused about what she is saying and ask B1 if she understands. B1 says no and B4 explains that there is a change in the law; if you are on benefits you are not allowed to leave the country for more than four weeks. It used to be thirteen but now it is four weeks. I eventually understand what she is saying. I am still surprised and when I get home I search online and find out it is a change to the benefit system that has been introduced with very little publicity

B8 showing me her book We are standing outside the classroom talking about which languages she speaks. I ask if her first language is Arabic and she says it is my second, my first is Amharic; it is very different from Arabic. We have our own letters and our own. She pauses and then says I will show you. She looks in her bag and finds a book to show me. I look at a few pages; I don't know what the book is about and don't recognise the script. I say oh it is completely different isn't it? I've heard it: I've never seen it written down before. I then say I did not know she spoke three languages and ask her when she came to the UK how she communicated with her caseworker. She answers only in English and explains it is her third language. She says she studied English in high school but never used it. She explains that she learnt how to listen to English but not to speak it so when she came to the UK she had to learn how to have conversations in English.

B1's migration story B1 was very keen to tell the story of how she came to the UK. She explained her husband's story of coming to the UK first as a student

and then to work. She then explains that her husband used to be her neighbour. After he came to the UK he decided he wanted to get married so he talked to their families. And then four years later they got married and she came to live here. B4 asks did you meet him before? B1 repeats that yes he was her neighbour but he was in the university and she was in the secondary school. B4 says so it was not an arranged marriage? B1 says no, I was engaged for three years and then I came to the UK on a visa. So I don't have any benefits until now and now because he's working we don't have any. B5 asks her how long have you been here? And B1 says I came here in 2010 so about 6 years, nearly 6 years. The learners were keen to carry on discussing this but I drew the interview to a close saying T2 will be wondering where you are. B4 makes some final comments about the problems of migrants not knowing their rights when they first come to the UK and then I finish the interview.

6.2 People, objects and places in class B

In this section I follow the same process I conducted with class A in section 5.6. I therefore draw on the narrative accounts to explore my second research question; how people, objects and places mediate information sharing in class B.

6.2.1 Objects and information sharing

Museum objects

The objects in the museum were physical artefacts, some historical and some replicas. Their positioning firstly within a museum and then also within a case or accompanied by an explanatory notice signalled that they were a particular kind of informative object. The learners responded to the information shared by these objects in a range of significant ways. Firstly, they reminded the learners of home. B5 talked about the partition of India and Pakistan in response to the dresses. The daisy wheels encouraged a similar discussion. B8 seemed happy that the history of her country had connections with history here. Secondly the objects informed learners about British history. B2 was shocked by the objects that revealed the cruelty of British history in particular the treatment of women. Her comments on the day and in her writing about the visit showed these objects had an emotional significance to her. Thirdly, the objects were a source of pleasure; B4 stroked the dresses saying how beautiful they were. The learners

preferred to talk about the objects than read about them. T2 and I both read information and then conveyed to this the learners as well as explaining the objects using our existing knowledge.

Learners' writing

Learners engaged in sustained writing in this class. Most learners handed in handwritten homework although B4's was usually typed; she commented to T1 that she preferred to write like this. This writing was directly related to the practice of language learning but was also significant for information sharing. One aspect of this was how the learners responded to the feedback they receive about their work. They took this feedback seriously. T1 commented on their work in detail and they responded, identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. They were happy for these to be discussed openly and were reflective about their own mistakes. In the episode where T2 is reading B5's writing, he comments on her language but also engages more widely with her discussion of the topic.

The diaries I tried to encourage learners to keep were also nearly all handwritten and nobody used the online journal that I suggested. At the museum the learners made written notes as well as taking photographs to answer the task set by the teacher. I only saw learners writing in English. However the learners were literate in other languages. B8 showed me a book with Amharic writing. She wanted to show me how different it was to Arabic and seemed to attach importance to me recognising her written language.

Stories

Stories were a significant part of information sharing, language learning and my data collection with this class. Stories were part of formal learning; they were set as homework tasks and a story about a journey would form part of their exam. But people also told stories that may seem more incidental to learning. T2 told stories about his life and learners told stories about their home countries and about their lives here. The visit to the museum encouraged learners to tell stories about their past. The act of telling a story was in itself significant. The learners told vivid, well-crafted stories both in writing and speaking. They were a keen audience for each other's stories as was T2. He asked questions, scaffolded their storytelling and praised their stories.

The learners told me stories in the group interviews, in class and in writing. These stories were a way of giving me information for my research. B1 was keen to tell her migration story and kept returning to it despite interruptions. I gave the learners examples from my life when I tried to get them to write diary entries but I did not tell very many stories to these learners. My role was more as a listener.

Websites

I am only considering websites in terms of information sharing. The episode where we discussed the EU referendum contained much that was interesting but my focus here has to be limited to information sharing. The learners knew what kind of questions to ask and were well informed about bias when reading a website, but did not have the existing cultural knowledge to answer these questions. In this lesson the useful information T2 and I shared was broad cultural information such as where on the political spectrum did a newspaper website fall or what were the interests of a particular organisation.

Another aspect of websites was that the learners saw them as learning objects and so they were also informative as part of language learning. B1, B2 and B4 all described approaching websites using language learning techniques. B1 described sitting down with a dictionary while B4 liked to read the comments sections of websites because she found the language easier to understand.

Food

The only significant instance of food as an informative object in this class was the chicken cake that B2 made. She explained that she made the cake with chicken not pork so her classmates could eat it. When interviewed B2 had said that learning about other people and cultural exchange were fundamental parts of learning ESOL for her. The chicken cake therefore becomes an object invested with information, it was evidence that she had learnt about Islamic practice and responded to it. B2 also valued the opportunity to share food with her classmates; complaining that we did not tell her we were eating. Food was then connected with social interaction and cultural practice.

Dictionaries

Dictionary use was an expected part of this class. T2 had ESOL specific dictionaries on a table in the classroom. Rather than explain words to learners he would pick up a dictionary and read out the definition. I did not see learners using these dictionaries; instead they used translation applications on their phones or asked T2 what words mean. However B1 explained that she used a printed dictionary outside of the classroom. I noticed that I explained words by giving an example in contrast to T2's deliberate practice. On one occasion a learner asked what the name for the canopy over a four poster bed was. Neither T2 nor I knew. T2 said it would not be in his dictionary. I looked it up on my phone saying it was called a tester. T2 was enthusiastic about the word, telling the learners you have learnt something I did not know.

Visual images

In the lessons I observed I saw little use of visual images but the limited time I spent in this classroom means I need to be cautious about the significance of this. Learners took photographs on the trip and used these when writing about the trip in the next lesson. They did not share these with me or T2. T2 showed the photographs he had taken on the trip, using his laptop to project onto the whiteboard. There was some detailed discussion about the photographs and they were used to identify some vocabulary items. T2 commented that he was unhappy with most of the photographs he had taken as he had taken too many pictures of notices. This may suggest that he had been focusing on codified written information rather than other aspects when taking these photographs.

Official documents

The learners in this class reported that they needed help with documents “*yes, every one of us, when we receive some kind of letter from the council, or from...we bring to [T2] so he can help us with it*”. However I did not see learners bring in anything to show T2. I did once observe T2 helping B4's friend with her council tax problems. This happened before the formal start of the lesson. In my final interview with T2 he said he did not think they needed help anymore. These documents then were invisible informative objects but they informed discussion within class.

6.2.2 People and information sharing

The people I identify in this information ground were the teacher, the learners and me. There were other visitors to the classroom. For example volunteers or workers from the community centre would come in to hand out leaflets about other activities and courses. However while I recognise that the community centre was part of the information ground I do not focus on it here. The volunteer from the museum was also significant in the sharing of information but again I do not focus on her role.

My role in the information ground

I feel that I remained a visitor to this class rather than becoming a full participant. I still became part of the information ground but my predominant role was as a listener. The learners shared information with me to help me with my research but I only shared limited information with them about my own experiences.

Information authorities

T2 had a complex role as an information authority. Several learners identified T2 as very important for them. B1 said *“The first option is really T2. Many times when I feel I need some information and I can’t get it, I will ask him... If he knows but sometimes really he says I don’t know.”*

However while T2 saw the class as a place to get information from this was primarily through dialogue rather than him as authority.

It’s something they are surrounded by and a lot of their questions are about information. So this morning we were talking about the fines you might get if you take your children out of school. They have had different responses to that, some are much more worried about authority, some are more confident. That kind of thing. Where do they get that information from? Schools are sending it out. And people still say different things. It is obviously important. I suppose if one person can say you deal with it like this then it might give them more confidence to deal with that situation.

Despite playing down his authority he did challenge learners; he told B1 she needed to check where she was getting her information from, when she was

talking about the language requirements for citizenship.

The classroom was a place where debate and discussion was encouraged to happen. It was then a particular kind of information ground. T2 played an important role in this debate. He challenged learners' opinions, for example B4's views about migration and asked a lot of questions. He was also happy to say when he did not know and this set up the particular context of the class. He did not then position himself as an authority; he was happy when I explained to him how to use street-view, pleased when the class learnt the word tester and when B5 knew something about the museum that he did not.

I was not generally an information authority for this class. They did ask me questions about vocabulary and about British history. But there were times when I was not believed, for example when I tried to explain what a warming pan was or what a blackbird was called. B4 did not accept my authority when we were discussing searching for information; she told me not to worry: *"I know about this but I don't know the English words"*. They were then the experts in our relationship as they were explaining their lives to me.

The learners were also information authorities when talking about their home countries and their own experience. B5 had authority on the history of India and Pakistan while I did not understand what she meant. T2 encouraged them to speak from their experiences. There were some occasions when their authority was challenged. B2 tried to advise B1 about her son and his language learning. However her authority was not accepted by B1 who challenged the advice with me on a later occasion.

People as informative objects

T2 talked about his life to the learners commenting in the final interview *"yes, why would I not? I don't know, I don't know how many English people's lives they know in any detail"*. He saw it as part of his responsibility as an ESOL teacher and contrasted it to his other role teaching adults a foreign language. Learners also learnt about each other's lives and from this got more general information about different cultures and countries. They seemed interested in each other's lives and asked each other questions. People in this class knew each other and knew T2 well. I did not seem to be an informative object for these learners.

Valuing information

There was no single meaning of information in this class however it is possible to build a picture of the kinds of information that were valued. Information from known sources was valued; T2 was trusted as were family members. Information based on personal experience was also valuable. B1 did what her family had done before, emphasising the importance of tradition and experience in deciding whether to use evil eyes in her home. In the discussion about the EU referendum B4 valued information that supported her existing beliefs. She was explicit in this as a deliberate information strategy. B2 valued information that was useful for her “*you know if that information helps me with many things, if I can get any benefit of any information*”.

Information was often related to home countries and interpreted in terms of existing knowledge. B1 talked about the museum and was pleased she had worked out why Arabic countries had indoor bathrooms before the UK did. Social information was valued; they liked to hear about each other lives. Information about learning was also valued and T2’s comments on their written work were taken seriously.

T2’s role in establishing what information was valued was possibly more significant. As discussed above he had information authority in the classroom. He valued their stories and genuine communication. He saw it as important to tell them about life in the UK. He encouraged reflection and open discussion about their learning as well as debate and criticality rather than accepting what he says as true.

Language and literacy

The learners in this class were all competent in English. English was the only language I heard in this class apart from phone calls made outside of lesson time. There were only very limited occasions when communication broke down. T2 would still scaffold and support their speaking for example when B5 was trying to describe about roofs in Pakistan but it was possible to have nuanced discussion with this class. This meant that language and language learning could be an object of discussion. The learners in this class displayed a high level of reflective thinking in relation to their learning. This did not seem to extend to their information use which they saw as unproblematic. However they also showed this

reflective attitude in, for example discussions of different cultures at the museum.

6.2.3 Places and information sharing

Characteristics of places

The class could be seen as a safe place for learners and as a stepping stone into a wider world. This was shown by B1 who described how before she found the class she was too frightened to answer the door at home. She was now worried again as she was coming to the end of her ESOL study within the provision and was unsure about her next steps. It was closed in that only people who were language learners or a teacher were expected to be there. However it was porous in that it was physically open, visitors could come straight into the classroom and passersby could see into the room. As I discuss above it was a friendly place with longstanding relationships built over time. Many of the characteristics of the class also extended to the trip and the group interviews. We were the only people in the museum which meant it replicated the physical classroom. The group interviews I held with class B shared some characteristics with the class. However it was physically more intimate, we sat much closer together and we did not have classroom objects around us. The learners' stories and their questions to each other were similar to the practices I observed in class but they talked more about difficulties and problems than in their class.

Different places different objects

The different places in this case were the classroom, the interview space, the museum, and travelling. These different places meant at the simplest level that different objects were incorporated into the information ground and into language learning. As the following section shows there was value in changing location. More interesting however was whether and how objects had different information affordances in different places.

Some of the objects I discuss here only appeared in one place; official documents, websites, dictionaries and food. Stories, writing and visual images crossed the different locations. Stories were told in the classroom, in the museum and in the group interviews. In the interviews the stories were less language learning objects and more research objects. However social interaction with the learners asking questions happened in all the locations.

Learners wrote in the museum and in the classroom. Their writing in the museum was private while in the classroom it was more public. Pictures in the classroom were public, taken by T2 and shared with the class, while again pictures taken in the museum were private. We looked at photographs in the museum but they held less interest for the learners than physical artefacts. In the classroom we discussed and wrote about the objects we saw in the museum. The affordances seemed to carry across to the classroom environment.

Different places different relationships

As I discuss above my research relationship with this class remained fairly limited. However I can identify that these relationships did change as a result of the interviews and the trip. One particular instance was with B2 where my incompetence in trying to use her phone made her feel more warmly to me. The interviews were also a positive experience with B4 commenting “*it’s good for us*”. They became more interested in me and my research as I spent more time with them although the interest may have been personal rather than research related. There was no evidence that the learners’ relationships with each other changed however being away from the classroom meant they had more opportunity to share personal information.

Getting information from places

The learners’ writing and class discussion showed that they valued the trip; two comments were “*it was amazing*” and “*it was fascinating*”. However it was harder to unpick what the trip meant to them in information terms. It gave them knowledge of British life and history which they did not have before. B5 commented that it would be easy to pass your Life in the UK test¹ if you lived at the museum. The written accounts I saw were factual and drew fairly heavily on official information provided by the museum. However discussion both in the museum and in the classroom suggested the trip was informative in different ways. B2 seemed to situate herself in history from looking at the crime and punishment objects. B8 linked her country’s history with Britain and seemed to get satisfaction from this. All the learners engaged in this same process; they related the museum back to their home countries and seemed pleased to find connections

¹This is a test about British life that people applying for citizenship need to pass

and parallels

The learners involved in this trip understood what a museum was, and what kind of activities people were expected to do there. In the museum learners were then behaving like people in a museum. They asked T2 and I questions but did not seem to be copying our behaviour. They were confident in looking at things, touching them and talking about them. They looked at notices but were more interested in conversation. I comment in my diary “*so if I didn’t learn much because they were probably just doing what people do what did I learn? That it is useful to do things in ESOL lessons that involves touch, affective, spatial and culture*”.

The trip was also useful for their language learning. T2 commented on their written work.

Going to the place helped their writing and their language learning. I think it did because their writing showed they picked up words they wouldn’t have known before and in some cases when they were writing some of them wrote freely and some took chunks of information from the literature they were given or picked up on the day.

We can also think about our journeying; the bus stops, walking and the buses in terms of information sharing. The mechanics of getting on a bus did not seem informative to them but there was a value in going somewhere different. Learners’ knowledge of the local area was relatively limited. Two learners said that at first they did not think the museum looked any different to other houses in the area.

T2 reflected on the value of the trip at some length. However I did not have the opportunity to ask the learners for their own extended reflections.

I think they got knowledge of their local area which they wouldn’t have had before. And that idea that there are things that are out there that are not the everyday mundane things that your life is normally centred around. And they got some knowledge of the place itself and they got some vocabulary about the way that life was 500 years ago and so in that sense it was really useful. I think for me it was the sense of getting out of the classroom and going into the community a bit.

6.3 Cross case analysis

In this section I briefly explore the similarities and differences between the two cases. These differences are brought into further focus in the following chapter.

6.3.1 Shared contexts

In sections 5.3 and 5.4 I identify the two shared contexts of ESOL provision and being a migrant. These contexts form part of the information grounds and shape how information was shared. One of the most significant aspects of the context of being a migrant was “*little touch with the English people*”. The learners in these classes had limited interactions in English in their everyday lives. This meant that the information sharing in these classes, particularly the interactions with the teacher, was important, because they were not happening elsewhere in these learners’ lives. The context of ESOL provision is particularly significant in that these classes were not just about cognitive learning but learning for life. Beyond this in the curriculum documents I analysed, information was seen as contextual, cultural and, relevant and appropriate. This will have contributed to the kinds of information that were valued and shared in these classes.

These shared contexts are also significant for the temporal dimension of these classes as information grounds. The learners are engaged in the practices of settling and learning English. These are both temporal; people generally become more settled over time and learners move through the levels to progress in learning English. However they are not straightforward trajectories; learners leave and rejoin their ESOL lessons and settlement is also iterative and varying.

6.3.2 Research methods

As I discuss, the process of data collection and my research relationship with the two classes was very different. The difference in methods will have contributed to the difference in data. I have to be particularly cautious about class B as I spent less time there and cannot over assume about what I did not see. I would also argue that the difference in research relationships, informs us about the difference in the classes as information grounds. Class A was more porous in terms of visitors, even though it was more physically closed and so more welcoming for me as a visitor. Equally my research has shown the importance of “*been here*”

a long time” and my existing if tangential relationship with this class meant that I already had some status within the class.

6.3.3 Temporality

The amount of time I spent with the classes then affected my role in the information ground. Time was important more generally in terms of how information was shared particularly in relation to the social actors. Firstly in both classes there was a correlation between the timing of the class and the type of learners that attended. Secondly the relationship between the different actors was affected by time. I saw evidence of warm relationships built over time in both classes. Learners knew each other in both classes although in class A these relationships sometimes predated the ESOL class. This intimacy built over time affected information sharing in both classes.

6.3.4 Spaces

During my research I observed language learning in three different classrooms, and the other locations from our trips. The classrooms had many similarities in the arrangements of desks, chairs, whiteboards and drink-making facilities that were familiar and expected for an adult learning classroom. However there were also differences in the spatial arrangements and in terms of the rules, values and understandings of these arrangements.

The classes had some different and some similar rules and understandings. In class A there was an explicit rule to try and speak English. This rule was never mentioned in class B but I did not hear any other languages. Implicit in class B was that it was a place of discussion and debate where people were expected to share their experiences. In class A people were expected to share their experiences but there was not the same level of debate, the focus was on shared rather than diverse experience.

Some of these differences can be understood in relation to the classes as information grounds. An ESOL class is nominally a closed space; only the teacher and learners who were registered to be there have admittance. However class A and class B were both porous in different ways. T1’s class was porous because visitors were a regular and expected part of the class while T2’s class was phys-

ically porous. The only uninvited visitors to class A were school staff and the door was never opened without first being knocked. Class A was physically a safer space than class B and this affected the nature of the class and who attended.

We can also consider how the classroom characteristics of open or closed were extended to the other places we visited. A bus, a museum or a cafe were to a lesser or greater extent open. However on our visits with class A we closed these places to some extent. We sat in pairs on the bus so nobody could sit next to us and had a strong physical presence; T1 reassured the learners “*the men will keep out of our way*”. We also chose places which although open to the public were characterised by certain kinds of people; farms and museums in the day were typically habituated by women and children. Interactions with people outside of our group were generally mediated by me and T1. The visit to the museum with class B was equally closed; we were the only visitors in the museum. However the bus was less controlled with class B and more open.

On the trips we made there were important differences in how the two classes experienced space. Class B can be seen as “blending in” as opposed to class A who were a larger group with all but one of the learners visibly Muslim. There were no negative comments to us but we were marked as different by members of the public. Equally class B were not learning to negotiate space in the same way; feeling safe and secure by filling a space did not seem to be significant to them. We can see this in their experience of the bus journey. It was still possible to see the bus as an information ground and the learners shared different kinds of information because of the change in place. However, the act of getting on a bus did not seem to be informative in itself.

6.3.5 Objects

There were some objects that I have identified as significant for information sharing for one class more than the other and some which were common to both. Class B interacted with signs and notices more than class A. However; while they were able to read them, they still preferred to talk about objects rather than read about them. Stories were important for both classes and for my research. Food was very present in class A and far less important in class B. It was an area where the learners had expertise and where a link could be made between their present lives and their home countries. In the lessons I observed with class

B food only made a single appearance. This cannot be seen as due to the topics they studied; class A were studying health and class B travel and both of these could be imagined through food.

In my selection of significant informative objects I chose museum artefacts with class B but I could also have included the bring and buy objects with Class A. Physical, tangible objects seemed to have a particular value for both classes whether food, animals or clothing. These were productive of language for both classes. It was also notable that in class A I looked at visual images more generally rather than focusing particularly on the photography exhibition. This was in part because the class A's response to the exhibition remained inaccessible to me on some level.

Dictionaries were significant informative objects for both classes and a useful marker of how information sharing was intertwined with language learning. For class A I saw dictionaries introduced as a result of change of level from entry one to entry two. For those learners with limited literacy the act of looking through the alphabet was something that had to be learnt. There seemed to be a slight disparity between the teachers' emphasis on physical dictionaries and the learners' practice in using online versions when they had the necessary literacy.

The difference in levels between the classes also affected the arrangement of objects. In classrooms 1 and 2 I saw different objects than in classroom 3; more stationery, more photographs, more drawing, less writing, more tablets, no keyboards. These differences in tools can be seen as due to differences in language and literacy, and the demands of the curriculum. There were also other differences between the classrooms. Classroom 1 and 3 had Wi-Fi while classroom 2 did not. However it offered different affordances such as a kitchen, a bring and buy stall and room to display learners' work. This represents an important finding; information sharing in these classrooms was mediated in many ways not just through digital objects.

6.3.6 Teachers

Both teachers had a defining role in how their classes functioned as sites of information sharing. T1 was more explicit in sharing information that she thought the learners would need. She wrote this into her lesson plans but also responded

opportunistically. I only saw evidence of T2 planning in this way once when he gave out flyers about racism after the EU referendum. However he also saw it as part of his role to share information about his life. Their roles as information authorities were also different. But both teachers had a considered response to their and their learners information use. It was part of their practice as teachers and was shaped by their interactions with their particular learners.

6.3.7 Learners

The learners in class A were more clearly informative objects than the learners in class B. T2 knew the learners well; there was evidence of longstanding relationship as well as a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as language learners. However he did not seem to use this personal knowledge to inform his teaching to the same extent as T1. In both classes the learners were positioned as the authority in their own lives, their culture, their home countries and history by the teachers. Opportunities to share this kind of information were encouraged and fostered in both classes.

The learners in class A were far more homogeneous than in class B. This affected the kind of information that was shared. Learners in both classes learnt about British life but the learners in class B were much more diverse and cross cultural information was more of a feature. When class A shared their experiences the response was more likely to be “me too”. There was some discussion of difference between the learners but more emphasis on shared experience. Learners talking about safety in Yemen and Pakistan, identified the commonalities between their experience while in the lesson about Eid the learners were jointly explaining to T1 and me their religious practices.

However there were outliers in class A. T1 was aware of those learners who were ‘different’, either because they were university educated or were not Muslim, or were not an Arabic or Urdu speaker. She identified at different points that she had to make sure A16, A11 and A15 felt included, and I saw her do this on several occasions. This was not the case in class B: there was no language or culture that was likely to dominate and so create outliers.

All the learners in the classes were women. In class A this was because it was a woman-only class, while in class B it was because only women had enrolled.

Class A was then closed in terms of gender and this affected the kind of learners who chose to attend. Women who did not want to be taught with men may not have attended class B.

6.3.8 Language and literacy

Language and literacy played significant roles in information sharing and this was displayed in the difference between the two classes. Some of this related to level; both teachers regularly referred to their classes' level; "*for level one you need to*", "*we are entry one*", "*now you are entry two*". In class B the higher level of language may have allowed learners to take a reflective approach that was not possible in class A. Class A were limited by language and drew on their first languages to communicate. Breakdowns in communication were far less frequent in class B while scaffolding learners' communication was a significant activity in class A.

Those who were not literate in their first language were a special case. There seemed, not surprisingly, to be far more visual information both drawing and photographs in class A. There were then general differences in the status of writing between the two classes. However individual learners in class A such as A18 were literate. Both her and B8 showed me examples of the script of their first languages so there were similarities across the classes.

Those in class A who did not share a language with anyone else were also a particular case. We can see this in A15 who had no common language with other learners and limited literacy. T1 commented to her "*I don't know whether you understand or not sometimes*". A5 also had no common language but had capital as a previously successful learner of other languages and a good level of previous education.

The learners in class A can be characterised as learning how to learn, while class B were already successful learners. This was reflected in the arrangements of the two classes. For example; T1 included more explicit instructions such as put this in your folders and marked transitions more clearly by calling the register rather than marking people's names.

6.3.9 Talking about home

Talking about home countries was a significant information sharing activity for both classes. This involved stories about before they moved to the UK, stories about what was happening in these countries now and finding similarities between the UK and these other countries. This can be related to wider practices of settlement. There was individual variation in this but no clear split between the classes. A learner in class A's conversation about the beauty of Pakistan was similar to B4's happy memories of the country of her birth, even if the level of language meant the story was different. Home was, however, an inaccessible, missed and imagined place for some of the learners. Many of those who were not refugees also found it difficult to travel to their home countries. A3 told me she had not been able to afford the flights for many years. Those learners from Yemen were also cut off from home due to war and famine (the UK government currently advise against travel to Yemen).

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented a narrative account and an analysis of information sharing in class B and then compared the two cases.

It is important to recognise that the learners in class B are all successful learners of English able to communicate effectively in many situations. Their reflective and collaborative attitude to learning is also significant. The friendships and warm relationships within the class are another important feature. Making connections between home countries and the UK is a significant activity for this class and telling stories an important information sharing activity with learners interested in each others' different experiences. The learners are all print literate but spoken or visual information objects seem to offer more affordances. There is a relationship between information sharing and place but there is less evidence of learning about place through information sharing in this class. There are then significant differences as well as similarities to class A. For example, class B is more heterogeneous than class A and this is reflected in their information sharing.

The comparison of the two cases brings into focus the most significant aspects of my findings and starts to foreground the areas I focus on in the following chap-

ter. We can see what counts as informative is often visual, social, affective, and embodied. Pleasure and trust are also significant for information sharing. There is also the importance of interaction for example how the menu changes in different contexts or dictionaries become an information object due to the change in level. The complex relationship between information and place emerges as another significant theme with who has access to places and whether places can be renegotiated as important questions. In the following chapter I discuss these findings in relation to previous research.

Chapter 7

Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I draw on relevant literature from chapter 2 to illuminate my own findings. This discussion has three main sections. I first discuss information sharing as a core information practice within my case, and identify how it is linked to the wider practice of information literacy. I then develop the concepts of informative people, objects and places and explore how they mediate information sharing in my two cases. Finally I draw on research on place and embodiment to consider the potentially negative aspects of embodied information practices. By synthesising this literature with my findings I therefore move towards meeting my research aim of exploring how the practice of information sharing is enacted in two ESOL classes.

7.2 Information sharing as core information practice

During the process of initial coding, information sharing emerged as both a prevalent and important activity within my cases. There is then an underlying question of why information sharing is so prevalent and why it seems to be so important. I consider the first question in the following section where I discuss informative people, objects and places. As my research focuses on mutual shaping rather than cause and effect, I can only offer a limited response to the second question by drawing on previous literature.

Aarnitaival (2010) identifies that as part of their information poverty, migrants can have problems knowing what questions to ask. As I discuss in chapter 3 I did not use information poverty as a frame for my research. However, there was some evidence that some participants perceived themselves as information poor in at least some aspects. A16's description of "*too many doors*" in her story about getting lost can be seen as a metaphor for information overload and B6's "*We can't get our rights and prefer to ignore that*" is a more general description of information poverty. It may be possible to connect the significance of information sharing with information overload and information poverty more generally. There were instances in both classes of information seeking when the learners asked their teacher for help to solve a particular, urgent problem. These information seeking episodes could be related to the crisis moments identified by Chatman (1996). They seemed different to the far more frequent episodes of information sharing I document in my research which may provide answers to information needs that are not so easily expressed, articulated or even recognised.

Fisher and Naumer (2006) identify that the information shared in a group benefits participants in a variety of measurable ways. There were times within my research when it was possible to identify quite clear instrumental benefits of information sharing. When A11 takes the leaflet about how to claim vouchers for healthy food there is a discernible benefit for her. However the effects of information sharing were often more complex and less discrete in my two cases. In an alternative perspective, Qayyum et al. (2014) argue that for refugees information sharing is a core activity in learning about information landscapes; it helps the refugees situate themselves in society, engage with new environments, develop inter-subjective understandings, and map information sources. While the participants in my research are not all refugees, there are parallels that can be made here. I discuss this further in the following section in the connection I make between information sharing and information literacy.

7.2.1 Information sharing as part of information literacy

In earlier chapters I demonstrate how I follow Lloyd (2010b) in framing information sharing as an activity within the practice of information literacy. I am therefore suggesting that information sharing as mediated by informative people, objects and places has the practice of information literacy as one of its ends.

However this is only meaningful if we can understand information literacy in this particular site, and how it connects with information sharing. In this section I therefore give an account of information literacy in these classes. To do this I am drawing on Lloyd's (2017a) description of information literacy as a complex practice with different dimensions that enables people to understand the ways of knowing of a particular site, and so think critically about information. This account is suggestive rather than exhaustive.

Lloyd (2010b, p. 252) suggests that information literacy in educational settings is generally "*framed through a Cartesian mind-body duality ... focused on information modalities that draw from codified forms of explicit knowledge*". As my findings demonstrate this is not the case in these classes. This is connected to the identification of the ESOL class as a complex communicative space Baynham (2006). The information literacy that emerges from these ESOL classes is not solely related to academic practice but to learning how to perform in the world. If we consider Caidi et al's (2010) suggestion that information sharing is important for phatic information, and Qayyum et al's (2014) that it is important for social or teleoaffective information (i.e. not codified) this may in part explain why information sharing is a central activity within the particular practice of information literacy in these classes.

Being information literate in these classes was often about possessing local and situated knowledge. Information was judged valuable if it came from someone personally trusted; who had direct experience. This is similar to Guajardo's (2016) findings about the valuable knowledge for migrants being local and situated. Bigelow and Schwarz (2010) discuss how learners with low literacy can be rendered incapable by the classroom when they are competent in other places. The emphasis on knowing through experience established in class A may counteract this happening to the low literacy learners in this class. Connected to the importance of experiential knowing for both classes was the way that learners linked their experiences in the UK with their experiences in their home countries. A significant activity for learners in both these classes was making connections between their home countries and the UK through information sharing. This formed part of the practices of information literacy, language learning, and settling.

I establish in chapter 2 that previous research has also shown that there is a connection between being information literate and being able to speak English

(Essel, 2016; N. Johnston et al., 2014). The same connection between information literacy and speaking English is made in these two cases. We can see this most clearly in Class B's suggestion that they are not interesting for me because they can speak English now, and so do not have problems with information anymore. Class A equally identify that they need better English to get the information that they need. Part of the connection between speaking English and information literacy was the importance of being able to tell stories in English. The activity of telling a story was part of language learning, a way of identity forming and a way to find connections between home countries and the UK. This was not just an attribute for the learners: as I became more situated in class A I started to tell more stories.

Thinking critically about information is a feature of many definitions of information literacy. Within these classes there is some evidence of a relationship between information sharing and criticality. This was limited in class A. Trust was far more significant for this class than a critical response to shared information. It is very important to be clear that I am commenting on my observations of them as English speakers and not commenting on their practices in their first languages. Even with their limited English there was still instances of criticality, for example when A13 challenged the idea the queen should be praised for her good health.

There is much more evidence of criticality in class B in how they respond to information that is shared with them. However this still was a mixed picture, in one instance from B4's discussion of the EU referendum, being information literate seemed to be finding information that corresponded with her existing beliefs. It is not clear in either class whether sharing information in itself develops criticality.

For the learners in class A, learning how to be in a place seemed to be a very significant part of their information literacy. Part of this was learning how to be in a classroom. Learning how to be in a place was also associated in both classes with the practice of settling. When B3 moves house she says she feels like she is new again because she does not know where anywhere is. We can relate this to Somerville's (2007) theorizing on place literacy and see it as part of this particular practice of information literacy. Sharing embodied, affective or social information all seemed to be significant to learning about place and I discuss this further below when considering particular qualities of informative

places.

7.3 People, objects and places

In the previous section I discussed how information sharing can be understood as having information literacy as one of its ends. In this section I focus more on the practice of information sharing and my findings in relation to how this is mediated by people, objects and places. I relate these findings to our existing knowledge of information sharing, and I use Buckland's (1991) discussion of informative objects to develop the concepts of informative people, objects and places.

7.3.1 Objects

Fisher and Naumer (2006) suggest there is a distinction between formal and informal information sharing, and that both occur in an information ground. This can be a helpful insight in understanding people's information behaviour. For example in her study of chiropody clinics Pettigrew (2000, p.76) suggests that "*informal, interpersonal sources are preferred over formal, institutional resources*". There is evidence that formal information sources such as the job centre or the council were difficult for some of the learners in my research to access. Equally if we consider the practice of teaching there was a distinction to be made between the formal aspects of the curriculum; "*we need to do this for our exam,*" and the more informal learning activities such as trips.

If we relate this to objects in my cases we can then distinguish between a formal object such as a printed menu and an informal object such as a personal photograph. However, in the context of these classes, objects have a range of informative properties of which formal versus informal is not the most meaningful distinction. In this section I therefore identify these different properties. Objects will generally have several of these properties, and the particular combination will shape how informative that object is, in this context.

Written objects

Written objects were clearly part of the arrangements of the practices of teaching and learning. However their affordances for information sharing could be lim-

ited. Whether something was printed was often the defining characteristic for objects with some of class A because their print literacy was limited. Learners in class B could engage far more with written texts. Some expressed a preference for written information when talking about their out of class information practices. For example, B7 found people's accents hard to understand. Their own written work was important as a medium for sharing information about their learning. However written objects, for example, at the museum were not as productive for information sharing as for example, physical objects. This context then seems different to Pilerot's (2013) research with academics where written documents are very significant for information sharing. This is to be expected in an academic context but the members of Prigoda and McKenzie's (2007) knitting group also shared written objects such as newspaper articles in a way I did not see happen in my research.

Spoken objects

The focus in existing information grounds research is often on verbal communication and this is analysed in terms of information flow rather than informative objects. There is however valuable LIS research that explores information sharing through material objects (Pilerot, 2013). Within my research I argue that oral information needs to have the same status as written, digital or visual objects. Within these classes, a spoken story is as much an object as one that is written. This is demonstrated most clearly by the stories that are retold; this shows how they are objects with discernible boundaries rather than simply part of speech. Stories were valued objects in both classes. This can be seen as particularly connected to developing our understanding of information sharing among those with limited written literacy (Richards, 2015) but stories are important for all the participants in my research. The importance of storytelling for sharing social information is identified in Lloyd et al's (2013) research as well as in ESOL research (Marshall, 2015).

Language

One of the most basic properties for many informative objects is language. Some of the clearest examples of this come through my own experience as a monolingual researcher. Some objects were inaccessible to me or needed extensive mediation because of their language. The information sheets had been translated into Arabic and Urdu and I found it difficult to distinguish the scripts. The song A10's

dad sang in Arabic and the joke about chickens had to be explained to me in English. Both ESOL research and LIS migrant research emphasise the importance of language for people trying to settle in a new country (Caidi et al., 2010; Darby et al., 2016). This research translates this to considering language as a property of objects as well as people.

Affective objects

The affective aspects of objects were often more significant than the cognitive. This is clearly seen in the discussion of bus timetables which were an unexpectedly affective object for class A. Class A's interest was not so much in learning how to decode the timetable but in the affective, experiential aspects of bus travel; the difficulties in making oneself understood, anxiety about getting lost or tactics to overcome these difficulties. Beyond this, learners from both classes linked objects they encountered back to their experiences in their home countries. This could be seen as part of the process of settling, of the here and there identified by Allard (2015). For class A, food was one of the most significant objects for this process and was productive for information sharing and language learning. Santos, McClelland, and Handley (2011) also identify the importance of food for ESOL learners, in terms of learner authority and cultural identity. Informative objects that were pleasurable were also significant for information sharing. Again we can see this in discussions of food and in the responses to the museum artefacts. We can relate this to existing research which posits a relationship between information sharing and happiness (Fulton, 2009; Tinto & Ruthven, 2016) but extend this to the properties of informative objects.

Digital objects

Whether an object is digital may seem to be a central facet in its informative properties if we consider research such as (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011; McLean, 2010) that details the transformative capacities of digital technologies in ESOL classes and migrant lives. However, the correlation between the usage of online and physical dictionaries, suggests that for some of the learners in this research whether an object is digital is not its most significant property. The use of digital objects in these classes can be usefully compared to Baron et al. (2014) who identifies the English language and mobile phones as having a similar status as technologies and to Barton and Potts (2013) who suggest that online affordances

replicate offline inequalities. Within the classroom digital objects mediate information sharing as part of arrangements but their role is fairly limited. Whether an object is, for example, written or visual can be more significant than whether it is a photograph on a phone or a printed photograph.

Physical objects

Schatzki's (2002) definitions of objects include artefacts and organisms. Physical artefacts, such as food or museum pieces, and organisms, such as the animals in the farm, seemed to be very significant for information sharing in these classes and were the centre of discussion and the stimulus for participants to talk about their own lives. However mediation was still needed, these objects needed interpreting just as much as a written or visual object. The richness of affordances offered by physical objects is relevant to the practice of language teaching which often includes realia (as evidenced by the documents reviewed in the initial stage of the case study).

Visual objects

Visual objects, whether digital or analogue, played important roles in the practice of information sharing. This was particularly the case in class A. The affordances of these objects were again complex, and there was a need for visual literacy. We can see this in my difficulty interpreting the video of A10's father singing, or the learners' difficulty in interpreting the photograph on the Zumba leaflet. Kennan et al. (2011) suggest the importance of visual information for refugees settling in their new countries. Visual information seemed equally important for the ESOL learners in class A. There is less evidence of this with class B.

Objects created through practice

Within the two cases a distinction can also be made between objects that are created by the participants' practices and external objects. We can relate this to Wenger's (1998) discussion of objects created by a community's practice. In class A drawings, food, photographs and stories are created by the participants' practices while in class B, participants create writing, photographs, stories and on one occasion food. Some of these objects are the products of learning and others of socialising or my research; although as I continually show these are

not separate activities. These created objects can tell us about the practices of the classes showing their differences and their similarities. They often seem to have more information affordances for the participants than external objects.

Embodied objects

I follow Schatzki (2001) in seeing people as different to other objects because of their agency. In the following section I therefore consider people in more detail but here I consider them as embodied informative objects. I recognise this division is somewhat artificial but it is useful for the purpose of clarity. Lloyd et al. (2013) has identified the importance of observing what other people's bodies do, as part of refugees' information practices. I observed similar practices in class A, particularly on the trips where information conveyed through bodies was an important aspect of information sharing. Gesture was important for making meaning in both these classes; whether it was me demonstrating how a scold's bridle worked, B4 using gestures to tell her story about trolleys, or the learner trying to explain grinding through a gesture in the conversation about houlba.

7.3.2 People

In this section I focus on how people mediate information sharing in the context of my two cases. I draw on the characteristics relating to people from information grounds theory but extend this to consider other relevant research from information sharing and LIS migrant research.

Expected roles

Fisher's research suggests the importance of different actors in an information ground. In both classes there were a range of different actors and they fulfilled different information sharing roles. We can particularly see this in the teachers. Being an informative person was therefore part of their professional practice. Part of this for both teachers was as a sample British citizen, T2 commented when questioned why he shared information about his life "*why would I not, I don't know how many British people they know*". Previous research from ESOL Cooke and Simpson (2008) has demonstrated the emotional labour of being an ESOL teacher and this research shows this emotional labour extends to their information roles. The teachers then play an important role in fostering information sharing in these classes.

Homogeneity

As I discuss on page 164, class A was much more homogeneous than class B. Audunson et al's (2011) theory of low intensive and high intensive meeting places seems to have some relevance here. But neither class falls easily into one of these definitions. This partly speaks to how people have multiple identities, for example ESOL learner, mother, Muslim and migrant, some of which they share with other learners. Both classes also seemed to contain high intensive and low intensive relationships. So in class A there were sisters but also learners who were very different. In class B at least two learners had become friends and met outside class. ESOL classes may then have a particular status for both bonding and bridging social capital. This in turn affects information sharing in these classes.

In one aspect the learners from both classes were homogeneous in that they were all women. Class A was a women-only class while class B was an ESOL class that was only attended by women but open to all and taught by a male teacher. It was significant that class A was a women-only space; T1 emphasised that the men would keep out of their way, those learners who wore veils uncovered their faces in the classroom. Some kinds of information were only shared because there were no men present for example the wedding photographs of unveiled women. Gender did not seem to shape information sharing in the same way in class B.

“Been around a long time”

Familiarity is identified as significant in information grounds theory and this is the case for these classes. Information sharing is often considered in terms of strong and weak ties Almealmadi et al. (2016). This is not a frame I use in this research but I can say that familiarity and trust were significant for information sharing. In class B I was often not a trusted information source. In class A there was evidence that I became more trusted over time. Fulton (2009) suggests that information sharing strengthens social relationships and I can see this in my own research relationship with class A. As part of my research I recorded information about learners but could see that this information was also a social commodity. Remembering who had been to the dentist or who had hurt their knee, strengthened my individual research relationships with learners. The familiarity the learners had with each other also affected the kinds of information that were shared.

Language and literacy

Information literacy research with language learners suggests that language is a critical factor in their information use (N. Johnston et al., 2014). LIS research with migrant groups also identifies both language and literacy as significant factors in shaping information practice and in affecting settlement (Caidi et al., 2010). The difference between the two classes in their linguistic capability may be reflected in the different kinds of information sharing; in particular the greater evidence of reflection and criticality in class B. There is then a relationship between information sharing and language. Equally the limited literacy of class A affects how information is shared. But these language and literacy practices are entwined with other practices and capabilities not isolated from them as powerfully shown by Street (1995).

7.3.3 Places

Fisher and Landry (2007a) suggest that information grounds form in different physical locations and can sometimes move to new locations. They also identify some of the characteristics of place that may influence information sharing: conviviality, permanence, creature comforts, privacy and ambient noise. However as Cox et al. (2017) suggests there is a limited engagement with the materiality of place. In this section I focus on how places shape and are shaped by information sharing and start to consider what makes an informative place in terms of these ESOL classes. I therefore move beyond the definition of place as understood within information grounds theory.

Conviviality

Conviviality is one of the characteristics of place identified within information grounds theory as having an effect on information sharing. Fisher and Landry (2007a, sec 4) describe this as “*a convivial atmosphere often includes food or drink and is associated with good company and a festive mood fostering interaction among people*”. Both the classrooms and the places we visited on our trips fall within this description. A high proportion of the information sharing episodes I recount with class A happen at break time while people are eating and drinking.

Food and drink are also common features of ESOL classrooms beyond the two cases here. It is therefore interesting that this is associated with the convivial

atmosphere identified by information grounds theory. Research from linguistics (Higgins, 2016) also identifies the importance of convivial space for language learning. Her understanding of convivial space is closer to mine than Fisher and Landry (2007b) where they are more concerned about categorising the characteristics of information grounds than understanding mutual shaping.

Learning about places

Somerville (2007) suggests that embodied experience of a place is necessary for the development of place literacies. As I identify above, learning how to be in places seems to be an important aspect of information literacy for these classes, particularly class A. We can think about this in terms of how information sharing can help learners' develop their ways of knowing about places in these different ways.

We can see this in the tacit understanding of how to behave in places. The visit to the CVI with class A is the place where the tacit rules about occupying space come most to the fore. As Nicolini (2013) suggests it is when practices break down that they become exposed. This helps to demonstrate how all spaces have rules, both explicit and tacit, that need to be understood by newcomers. It was useful for these ESOL learners to make these tacit understandings about place explicit. We can see further examples of this in V4 explaining what happens in an optician through physical demonstration and T1 explaining what happens in a cafe; "*you have to choose something*" and on a bus; "*you don't have to sit next to someone you don't know*". There was also information sharing about places' values. For class A this centred around places being safe and appropriate to visit. This was conveyed through embodied and spoken information.

The importance of knowing about space and place as part of migrant settlement is well established and this research shows how these ways of knowing can be developed within ESOL classes and indeed can be seen as integral to the practices of teaching and learning ESOL. Williamson and Roberts (2010) suggest that social information plays a part in helping people develop a sense of place and this is clearly evident in this research.

Renegotiating space

Massey's (1994) identification of how places are not finished, and can therefore be renegotiated, can help us to build our understanding of the relationship between information sharing and place. The trips that I made, particularly with class A, can be understood in terms of places being renegotiated and remade just as the menus are different objects when they are revisited. Information sharing plays an important part in this renegotiation.

Pennycook and Otsuji (2014) identify the importance of "rubbing along" small scale encounters for language learners. The same significance can be attached to the information sharing I observed in these classes when we visited places. For class B this renegotiation of place could be seen in sharing information about their home countries to find similarities and differences. This can be seen as part of the overarching practice of settling. For class A, the renegotiations included the sharing of cultural information but extended beyond this. The places were also remade as being safe and appropriate through embodied information sharing, for example showing that the food in cafes was acceptable for the learners to eat.

Related to this, but beyond the scope of this research is Comber's (2016) argument that schools have a particular status; they are meeting places where people are forced to negotiate ways of being and ways of knowing. This connects to ESOL research that explores the classroom as a liminal space (Baynham & Simpson, 2010). We can relate this to these two ESOL classes and see that information sharing plays a part in these renegotiations.

There is also a temporal dimension to this renegotiation. Places change over time; for example class A learn how to be in a classroom. However, this is not a straightforward trajectory, rather it is bound with the other relationships and interactions discussed here.

Different arrangements

Information sharing was different in different places. Whether we were walking along rather than sitting still, sitting on a bus rather than around classroom tables or looking at exhibits in a museum rather than photographs in a classroom affected the kind of information that we shared. I do not develop a typology of

the relationship between place and information sharing but I note the significance of this relationship. Just as the properties of objects shaped information sharing so too did the spatial arrangements of these objects, bodies and places. This adds texture to our understanding of how space shapes information sharing and so begins to answer Cox, Griffin and Hartel's (2017) suggestion of how information grounds could be developed as a theory that focuses more on the material and embodiment.

7.3.4 Informative people, objects and places

Buckland (1991) identifies that what counts as information is situational, consensual and temporal. In my research I build on his discussion of an informative object to also include informative places and people. These informative objects, people and places intersect language learning and information sharing, and are part of the arrangements of the dispersed practice of information literacy and the integrative practice of settling. In this section, I bring together the key elements from the preceding discussion and consider what it means to be informative in the context of my two cases.

Embodied, social, visual and affective

For these classes what counted as information was often visual, embodied, social and affective rather than solely cognitive. Sharing information built caring relationships, and caring relationships encouraged information sharing. With class A I write about how the bus timetable becomes an unlikely affective object. This demonstrates how dominant affective information could be in this class. Embodied information was particularly important for Class A. Class B's information sharing was still concerned with social and affective information but less with embodiment and how to occupy space. There was also more evidence of sharing cognitive information in this class, particularly information about learning.

Mediation and interaction

As Buckland (1991) suggests whether something is informative is situational and consensual. In these two cases, places and objects often needed to be mediated by people if they were to be informative. However this mediation needed to be by the right person. This is most often someone who is known and trusted. This

mediation extended to places and objects. The informative properties of an object depended on the characteristics discussed above but also the arrangements that these objects were in. The re-sharing of objects also changed their informative properties. There is clearly a temporal element to this; people, objects and places changed over time. However it was not the passing of time that in itself made an object more informative. It was the interaction and relationships between the particular people, objects and places in a particular temporal context.

Pleasurable

Information grounds theory suggests that information sharing is a byproduct of social interaction and that conviviality is significant. The importance of pleasure also cuts across my discussion of people, objects and places. In this context pleasure is a significant element in information sharing. Participants in my research share both sad and happy information but it is within a frame of conviviality. There is an interesting contrast between this, and some of my perceptions of the difficulty of being a migrant in section 5.4. This may indicate the special and particular status of ESOL classes.

Accessible

Accessibility is the most significant aspect of whether something is informative in these two cases. Chatman (1996) describes her participants as living in an information rich world but one where the information is inaccessible to them. This seems to speak to the realities of some of my participants. The most illustrative example of this is in the lesson about documents with class A. Much of the information shared by these documents was not accessible. But the social, the familiar and the visual aspects as well as mediation from other people were what made these objects informative. The difference between the poll card and the response to other documents also suggests there are broad issues of accessibility relating to existing knowledge and experience, as well as accessibility relating to whether objects are written or spoken. We can relate this to T1's comments from the initial interviews

That's right but you've got to offer them a safe world haven't you? Not too big a world where it's just so alien to what you believe that you are not going to go there.

I discuss the accessibility of places in more detail in the following section as this seems a wider issue in my research.

7.4 Critical embodied information practice

Information research has shown an increased recent interest in place and embodiment (Cox et al., 2017; Olsson & Lloyd, 2017). In this section I explore three aspects of embodiment that I suggest would benefit from further attention within LIS. Firstly, I discuss the methodological challenges of researching other people's bodies, secondly how some people are constrained by place, and thirdly how embodied information practice includes being observed as well as observing.

7.4.1 Methodological challenges

My research adds to our understanding of how we can meaningfully research non-cognitive information as well as advancing our knowledge in this area. My method of actually visiting places with my participants gave me a particular kind of understanding. Methodologically there are some similarities between my research and Lingel (2014); her wandering with participants is analogous to my accompanying participants on trips. However there are differences in the purpose of our research and our positionality. Equally while Pettigrew's (1999) original information grounds studies drew on ethnography and observation, the methods of this research were different in that I analyse myself as a participant in the information ground rather than trying to be unobtrusive. This potentially helps to address, or at least acknowledge the troublesome power relationships in my research. My own body was written into the research as my observation notes demonstrate, whether this is telling stories of my physical mishaps, being told I should eat more cake by a participant, or modelling reading signs in a museum. In my notes I am however very cautious in describing participants' bodies. I am even more cautious in describing these bodies within my thesis.

It is important to recognise that writing about people's bodies if they are different to one's own is problematic. This is not represented in current information research that considers the embodied practices of professionals such as firefighters (Lloyd, 2007) or hobbyists such as runners (Cox et al., 2017). As a white, non-Muslim, non-migrant researcher it is not appropriate for me to consider brown, Muslim, migrant bodies without an enormous caution.

7.4.2 Different bodies have different access to places

Connected to the problems of researching embodied information practices, are the different affordances places offer to different kinds of people. Being poor, being a woman, being BME, being Muslim, or having limited social capital all potentially affect people's relationships to place. Massey (1994) clearly demonstrates how gender and class affect how freely people can occupy and move through space.

We then need to recognise within LIS how some people are constrained by space and place. This recognition of space as constraining is not the objectivist approach identified by Savolainen (2006). It is closer to the approach adopted by Mills and Comber (2013) discussion of space in relation to literacies where they also recognise how places constrain as well as enable.

For class A, some of the most important information shared about places was whether a place was safe and appropriate for them to visit, as clearly shown in the discussion about the city farm menu. Equally space defined their behaviour in particular ways. In classroom 1, A18 sat with her back to the door so she could replace her veil if a man came in. However, as classroom 2 did not have school staff regularly coming in she was able to sit where she wanted. The women in this class had varied relationships to space. Some of the other learners did not go out without their husbands while others would go out with friends, or by themselves.

Conversely the ESOL classes in general, and the trips we went on, in particular, had the potential to act as a stepping stone in allowing these women greater access to the information affordances of everyday spaces. In preparing for trips, T1 emphasised the safety of places and how we would all be together. A5 initially did not want to visit the city farm but after the trip went into the city with her classmates. Lloyd and Wilkinson (2016) found the young people in their study needed to gain access to the information affordances of everyday spaces. This has resonance for the women in my study. However I develop this by considering how some places were inaccessible to some of them. In this way, the story of us being noisy on the bus becomes an important story. It shared information with the women that they had the right to occupy public space.

7.4.3 Migrants as embodied information sources

A connected element of this is understanding how embodied information practices for migrants are not just about observing but about being observed. Lloyd (2015) demonstrates how the body is a source of information for migrants; they learn what to do by watching others. However migrants and other groups marked as different are also information sources for other people. We can see this in the attention that class A attract as we walk through town in a large group. It is important to note that we did not receive hostile responses but the women in class A were still marked as different. This can be related to Mirza's (2013) writing on embodied intersectionality. She notes there is a preoccupation with Muslim women's bodies in public spaces where they are considered against labels such as victim, fundamentalist or terrorist. We can interpret this in terms how their bodies become informative objects for other people. Therefore, while they may watch others to gain embodied knowledge they are also watched. There is research within LIS that recognises the hostile environment migrants can face (Caidi & MacDonald, 2008), but this has not been considered in relation to their bodies.

7.5 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore information sharing in two ESOL classes. In this chapter I build on my research findings from chapters 5 and 6 by drawing in the wider literature that can help me meet this aim. I have therefore established that information sharing is a core practice in these classes. I have considered how it contributes to information literacy and why it may be so prevalent. I have explored how information sharing is mediated by people, objects and places and developed an understanding of what counts as informative in the context of these classes. I have also considered in more detail embodied information practice and the need for a critical approach. In the following chapter I consider how what I have learnt contributes to our existing knowledge.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes my thesis. I first consider whether I have answered my research questions and then evaluate how trustworthy my research is, using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. I then identify my contributions to our understanding of migrant information practice, ESOL learners and information, and information sharing. Finally I briefly suggest areas for further research that emerged during the course of this study.

8.2 Research questions

The aim of this research was to explore how the practice of information sharing was enacted in the site of two ESOL classes. In order to explore this research aim I identified four questions. I briefly consider here how far these questions were answered.

RQ1 What are the characteristics of the two classes as information grounds?
This question was to some extent a staging post; however, using the propositions from information grounds theory allowed me to develop a rich account of the two classes.

RQ2 How do people, objects and places mediate information sharing in these ESOL classes?

I answer this question by providing a theorized account of information sharing in my two cases, synthesizing previous research and providing a novel perspective.

RQ3 How is information sharing interleaved with other practices within this context?

My analysis of the two cases have explored the relationship between information sharing and the other practices of language learning, information literacy and settling. This research shows how these practices are connected; for example, the activity of telling a story is an action within all these practices. However, it was not possible to build this into a fully theorised account.

RQ4 How can critical theories of place and embodiment inform our understanding of information sharing?

I add to our existing knowledge of place and embodiment within LIS by drawing on theorists such as Massey (1994) and Mirza (2013) to raise questions about which bodies have access to different places and identify how embodied information practices can constrain as well as enable.

By answering these four questions I have provided a rich picture of information sharing in two ESOL classes. From this I have been able to identify the contributions to knowledge discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

8.3 Evaluation

In this section I use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria to evaluate my research. This section has been structured using their criteria but I note that these divisions are to some extent artificial and should not be seen as a checklist. My research also needs to be understood as a case study and so I draw on Stake's (1995) reminder that the primary task is to understand the case and his description of a good qualitative case study as holistic, empirical, interpretive and empathetic, and Thomas (2011) who suggests case studies need to think big but stay particular and honour the ordinary. Finally I need to consider how far I was successful in researching those different to myself (hooks, 1989) and creating better worlds (Collins, 2002).

8.3.1 Transferability

Shenton (2004) suggests that the question of transferability can over-preoccupy qualitative researchers. There was a tension in my research between seeing the case itself as having primary importance and my desire to create useful knowledge. However Flyvbjerg's (2006) identification of the importance of context dependent knowledge has helped me to reconcile this conflict. The importance that Lincoln and Guba (1985) accord to thick description is shared by case study researchers and practice theorists. My research does have the thick description needed to produce context dependent knowledge. I had to find a balance between preserving anonymity and providing context but this research is "*a good story*" (class A learner) with a sufficient level of detail for LIS researchers to understand how my account of information sharing may resonate elsewhere.

I also need to consider how far I was successful in benefiting my participants and providing useful knowledge for them. There is evidence that the teachers found my research useful. From my reflections on the closing interview with T1 I note "*T1 got practical stuff from my being there, managed to translate it*" and from my closing interview with T2 when asked if he found it useful to apply an information lens to his teaching "*yes definitely. It's something they are surrounded by and a lot of their questions are about information*". This suggests that other ESOL teachers may also be able to meaningfully translate my research into their own classes. This is supported by recent conversations with two ESOL teachers who responded to my summary of my research with stories of their own experiences of information sharing in their own classes. However it is more difficult to identify the value of the knowledge created in my research for ESOL learners. I discuss below how I would like to translate my findings into a meaningful account for ESOL learners but that this is beyond the scope of my doctoral research.

Transferability is often associated with typicality. I did not select my case study site because of its typicality. I selected it from my local knowledge: because I had access and an interest in finding out more about this particular site. I also chose teachers who I thought would be interested in my research, which clearly has an effect on how they responded to it. However the two classes in this research do seem to represent a typical case both in the context of ESOL provision and the experience of being a migrant.

The initial sections of the findings demonstrate how this case study site can

be seen as typical of community ESOL learning within cities in England. The cases are similar to those in Swinney (2014), Simpson et al. (2011) and Macdonald (2013), but very different to much of the provision in further education colleges. The concerns expressed by initial interviewees about austerity (Paget & Stevenson, 2014), their identification of the imperative to embrace digital technologies (Dudeney et al., 2013), and their conceptions of ESOL as a stepping stone (Grover, 2006) and of ESOL learners as heterogeneous (Kings & Casey, 2013) are very similar to the discussion in the literature review. This research also supports previous descriptions of ESOL classes as a complex communicative space (Baynham, 2006).

The one consistency across migrant research is that there is a diversity of experience and practice amongst migrant groups. However, with this proviso, my research participants' general discussion of migration and settlement resonates with other research. The information practices of my participants are then very similar to those identified in other research. They got information from their friends and family, in particular people from the same country who spoke the same language (George & Chaze, 2009). Those who were more settled often then helped people in their turn (Hakim Silvio, 2006). They found it difficult to access official sources of information (Aarnitaival, 2010). They valued information from people they trust (Richards, 2015) and had limited interaction with British born people (Jeong, 2004). Many of the learners were mothers, and this formed a significant part of their experience as migrants. The importance of children as family gatekeepers is evident in this research and has been seen as significant to the information behaviour of migrants for a considerable time from Chu (1999) to Fisher et al. (2016).

The similarities between the findings of the pilot study and the two cases also suggest that my research can be seen as a typical case. While the pilot findings are too limited for any independent credibility, they nevertheless chime with the main study. In this way the significance of limited literacy; mixed use of digital technology, the significance of family and friends as information sources are themes that emerged from the pilot as well as the main study. I did not re-analyse the pilot using the theory of information grounds but I believe there is strong evidence to suggest the two conversation classes were also information grounds.

I would suggest that my cases can be seen as typical within a fairly limited context. The difference in ESOL provision in the United Kingdom's four countries

suggests that its typicality should be limited to England. Equally the variation in migrant experience between rural and urban areas suggests that the case can be compared to similar cities. These cases are also likely only to be typical in relation to classes where the learners are all women. This typicality suggests that my findings can be applied to these similar cases and the thick description means that these findings may have resonance to contexts beyond these similar cases.

8.3.2 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest a series of criteria connected to the credibility of research. Two that are of particular relevance to my research are persistent observation and prolonged engagement. The sustained time I invested particularly with class A is reflected in the finished product of my research. I did not spend the same quantity of time with class B and there is a difference in the richness between the two cases. However, class B due to their greater linguistic ability may not have needed the same time investment. For class A I found that people who had “*been here a long time*” were important for information sharing and equally being there a long time was important for the success of my research. From my diary in April 2016 writing after a visit to Class A I comment “*Regret, if only I had known them at the start, like I know them now. Would have been so much richer. Problem of research: spent a long time getting to know them*”.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggest that researchers need to be cautious about becoming over-immersed in the field. I can recognise this danger for myself in that I was not able to analyse my data until I had withdrawn from the field. I also felt a real reluctance to finish data collection, particularly with class A. I document this here but the warmth of the relationships I built with class A does not detract from my research in terms of lost objectivity but rather adds to it in terms of deeper understanding. I can relate this to Stake’s (1995) emphasis on the importance of empathy in case study research.

Triangulation is another of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria. This is where class B becomes the richer case. I note Silverman’s (2006) caution regarding triangulation that it should not be seen as a way of creating a single bigger picture divorced from context. Triangulation was useful in a limited way in my research. For both classes I collected photographs and documents as well as observations and recordings to help me build a more faceted understanding. The photographs

and documents I collected were also useful to triangulate with my observation notes in a very practical way, providing factual corroboration.

With class B in addition to observations I conducted focus groups, assigned information diaries and collected some extracts of learners' writing. This meant that there was more opportunity to recognise contradictions and complexities and I discuss this further below. I include an interesting example of triangulation in B4's story about the Poundland trolley. Different versions of this story appear in this thesis; her written account in appendix O, my representation of her spoken account in section 6.1.2, my response to her story and her comments on my response in appendix P. This was the only time where there was this degree of triangulation, but it usefully demonstrates how triangulation can add complexity rather than completeness. There was also a real value in researching such different classes and this could be seen as another form of triangulation. The two classes revealed each other through their similarities and differences. The different relationships I had with the two classes also helped to highlight my role in shaping the research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also discuss the importance of member checking. While my research was not participatory it did involve substantial member checking. I believe this contributed substantially to the rigour of my research again not to create a bigger picture but to add detail and richness.

Negative case analysis is suggested as another important element in the credibility of qualitative data. This involves seeking out examples that do not fit the analysis or interpretation, refining the theory and then collecting further data to explore whether the theory still holds. It is then close to how Charmaz (2006) recommends sampling through constant comparison until theoretical saturation. As I outline in chapter 3 I moved away from this method of analysis when I found that my research was more concerned with exploring a problem than generating a theory. And in a similar way negative case analysis is not a useful criterion to evaluate my research.

This does not mean that I was not concerned about whether I had sufficient data to justify my interpretations. My diary entry after my final visit to class B identifies the point where I reconciled myself to the data I had collected:

Aftermath of referendum. Visit to [class B] Helped to (finally) reassure

me I have enough data. I can keep adding layers of complexity the more I get to know the learners. Their responses also change as they start to understand me and my research better. I just need to have enough to write a convincing picture.

I made a final visit to class A in the spring of 2017 and accompanied them on another trip. This visit was more personal and less research focused, and again reassured me I already had enough data to create a rich picture and explore my problem.

8.3.3 Dependability

In this section I evaluate my research methods and explore how they shaped my research. Soss (2014) suggests that all research methods are inappropriate and imperfect, what is needed is to acknowledge this and put the imperfections on show. This seems particularly the case with doctoral research. In my research this has involved documenting both my own learning as a researcher and the changes to my research design. I include details of the different elements of data collection in the appendices and have attempted to show how they relate to my evolving research design.

Observation was my major research method and this aligned well with both a practice theory and an information grounds approach. Timmermans and Tavory (2007) highlight how data collected by observation is given rather than seized and this was reflected the practice of my research. In this way I consciously did not ask participants their reasons for coming to the UK. I felt these questions risked forming part of either xenophobic or bureaucratic discourse. In my previous employment I had experienced the potentially alienating effect of having to ask people about their residency status in order to assess if they were eligible for adult learning courses, and was conscious to avoid this in my research. This means that I do not offer comprehensive demographic data about my participants. This may be seen as a limitation.

My use of observation as the primary data collection method affected my findings. This is shown by the interviews and diaries with class B which allowed more varied experiences to emerge, in contrast to the discussions within class where there was more conformity in opinions. One clear example of this is B1 who disagreed with B2's views on children helping their parents learn but did

not voice this disagreement until she was alone with me. This does not mean that classroom experiences were less true, simply that they reflected a particular reality.

It is therefore important to be aware of what may have been unsaid within these class observations and discussions. In particular it means that the deceptive information behaviour identified by Chatman (1996) and the secrecy identified by Fulton (2017) as part of information sharing did not form part of my research. There were points where traces of this could be seen, for example, in one discussion in class A learners talked about going out by themselves while in a later discussion they said they did not. My research is primarily concerned with the collective practice of information sharing in the classroom and it is important to recognise that this is a limited perspective.

I discuss the difficulties of representation elsewhere but it is also important to recognise the limitations of observation from this perspective. I note from my diary when listening back to recordings

There is a problem with the learners' voices. My voice and T1's dominate. Observations are an imperfect tool and reflect the power dynamics in my research and in the class. Sometimes I can't name the learners in recordings. This matters.

This comment goes beyond being an issue about recordings to the wider question of me as the research instrument and how well I can represent those different to myself. Another aspect of this was how I was selective in what I reported from my observations in my research. In an early observation T1 made a joking comment that “*you mustn't tell anybody what goes on here*”. And there were several times in the course of my research where I did make the decision not to tell. Finlay (2002) shows how this is a common dilemma faced by reflexive researchers. As I discuss in chapter 4, a range of voices informed my writing from hooks (1989) to the tabloid press, and these informed how I crafted my representations of my participants.

I used other data collection methods to a more limited extent. One method that was less successful was encouraging participants to keep diaries recording their information encounters. Previous research has suggested that it can be challenging to encourage participants to keep diaries and this was reflected in my

research (Carey, McKechnie, & McKenzie, 2002; Toms & Duff, 2002). The two versions of the diaries that I produced demonstrated the importance of simple prompts, clear structure and most significantly for me recognising that people do not look at their lives with an information lens.

My use of visual methods was also far less than I had anticipated or wanted. I was guided by participants in this, and adopted a cautious approach. Visual methods became a method of data collection but visual images did not become units of analysis. I was aware of some of the cultural complexities of using photographs with this particular group of learners (on trips some learners did not want to be photographed). However it may have been productive to return to using visual methods once I had gained the learners' trust as photographs and videos were clearly significant to them in their lives.

Another method I only used in a very limited way was document analysis. I collected documents such as student writing and teacher worksheets during the main period of data collection and reviewed policy documents as one of the initial stages. In one lesson T1 and I used documents from our own lives as the basis for an activity. The discussion surrounding these documents revealed how illuminating these documents could be as part of information research. I think there is real potential in developing this further by looking at ESOL learner's information practices through their documents. I note from my diary "*Hadn't realised how significant documents are, show a person's life... even junk mail is revealing*". If I consider Bowen's (2009) suggested uses for documents I can see that I used documents to provide context and as supplementary data but did not engage in the systematic rigorous approach he recommends.

Greater learner engagement with diaries and visual methods, and a greater focus by me on documents would have produced a different piece of research with different but not necessarily better interpretations. The emphasis in my research on the collective activity of information sharing therefore comes in part from my data collection methods.

As I have made clear the analysis was the most challenging aspect of my research. On reflection this is also where there is the clearest evidence of my research apprenticeship and where I have developed most. However while this process could certainly have been quicker, the different permutations of analysis I engaged in have given me a rich understanding of my data. I think a greater

appreciation of abduction rather than induction as a feature of case studies as Thomas (2010) suggests may have helped me in this process.

Beyond documenting and evaluating my research methods I have had the opportunity to discuss my research with a range of external audiences at every stage and these discussions are a significant element in the dependability of my research. This is principally through discussion with my supervisory team who have had full access to observation notes, transcripts and reflections. Beyond this I have discussed my work informally with professionals working in ESOL and community learning, at postgraduate and international conferences, as well as university writing group and research group meetings.

8.3.4 Confirmability

In my diary after the pilot I question “*How do I know it is not just me making stuff up about people?*” and it is this question I try to answer here by showing how I have shaped the research but also developed a narrative that has a meaning beyond my own subjective interpretation.

In relation to my research, the question of confirmability is closely related to the question of representation. I note the particular risk with class A that they did not have sufficient English to be represented fairly in my research. I follow Skeggs (2002) in asking “*how do we listen?*” and try to consider whether I have listened well enough. For me a significant part of listening is acknowledging and highlighting those places where meaning broke down. I include some of these moments within the episodes in chapters 5 and 6. There is, however, an emblematic example of this. In one early observation in class A, A16 told a vivid story about being lost in an indoor market describing how “*there were too many doors*” and she “*cried and cried*”. I wrote my observation notes pleased with this story as a rich description of the early days of being in a new country. However several months later I listened to the recording again and realised that she may have been saying “*I tried and I tried*”. This participant was no longer attending the class so I could not check with her and I had to leave it as ambiguous and as a warning to myself. This example is particularly concerning in relation to how Muslim women are often denied agency in white western discourses and I need to question my initial hearing of “*cried*” in terms of this discourse.

The cornerstone of my response to this problem of representation and the wider question of confirmability is reflexivity. I identified in chapter 3 my hope to have collaborative reflexivity and my eventual adoption of reflexivity as social critique. Here I consider how successful this was. One tactic was to write myself into the research as a participant in the information grounds. My own identities; the fact I was a white atheist woman but also that I was a mother and a former community learning worker, shaped the research and this was one way for me to demonstrate to the reader how this process took place. By placing myself within the research I do not avoid the mobilization of power that Skeggs (2002) identifies, however I hope I expose it to some extent. Finlay (2002) suggests that reflexivity as social critique can be problematic because it can claim false authority. I hope that placing myself within the research can address this to some extent.

In a diary entry from March 2015 I consider my motivation as a researcher and this is one example of a continuous process for me:

Social justice, proving that ESOL works, helping individuals, anger at how migrants are treated. Remembering [list of names of ESOL learners I met in my previous employment]. What about me? University and community self. Are they the same person? Will there be conflict?

However the question of how far I moved beyond what Bourdieu (2003) would regard as diary disease to social critique or endogenous reflexivity remains. We can see this if I consider the analysis stage of my research. I have been aware of my own whiteness, gender and privilege and have considered to some extent how gender and race act on information practice. However I could have gone further with this. I particularly note a failure to consider class in my research. Massey (1994) explores the relationship between class and space, and I acknowledge the importance of this and the related issue of poverty. Some of the learners in this study were the low income, low English proficiency vulnerable migrants identified by Darby et al. (2016). However the intersections of race and class are complex and were outside the remit of this research.

I also found a particular difficulty in writing about how and why some of the participants may not have access to particular places. I use the word constraint to describe how some of class A did not want to go to certain places but am fully aware this may not be how they see their lives. I recognise that my own values

have shaped my representations of participants. Equally I wanted to show that there was a varied experience of being a Muslim woman in this research: the experiences of any one woman should be taken as typical.

While reflexivity is the most significant way to address the problem of “*making stuff up about people*” making work available for audit is another strategy that can lead to confirmability. I recognise that there is a current drive for open data even in qualitative research (Tsai et al., 2016) but this was appropriate for my research. Firstly some of my research data cannot be shared as it would be potentially identifying. There is also data that I have recorded that I do not consider should be published. The nature of my research also means that the methods and the data are so closely entwined it would not be appropriate to reuse this data without the context. However I have tried in other ways to create an audit trail. I have included rich description in my thesis, documented the data collected, and shown my process of analysis.

8.3.5 Ethics

Ethical considerations have informed all stages of my research. Many of these considerations have been discussed above but I highlight here their connection to the ethical stance I developed in section 4.10. Overarching the discussion of evaluative criteria is the question of how far I was successful in avoiding the trap identified by hooks (1989) that researching a group different to oneself risks perpetuating domination.

One of the ethical criteria I used was whether my research directly benefited participants. My research was not participatory in the way that I had hoped. I discuss in chapter 4 one of Olden’s (1999) participant’s criticism that research projects are more important to the researcher than the researched. An episode with class B helped to contextualise the status of my research with participants. B5 joined class B in term 2. When I met her for the first time I gave her the information sheet to read. She told me she did some research for a university before; they paid her £20 and asked her some questions but she could not remember what the research was about. It is likely that this reflects how unaffected by most research most participants are. By the end of my research with class B there was some evidence that they had derived some benefit from my research with B4 commenting “*it’s good for us*” however it was not the transformative experience

of the librarians in Salha's (2011) study.

It was particularly difficult with class A to understand how far my research benefited them. In the closing interview with T1 I discuss my feelings about the trip we took to the museum.

They seemed more confident about being out, they were much better at reading but then when we did that follow up lesson it was kind of well I don't know what they got out of it. They weren't coming forward in the same way.

They benefited from the trips we went on and from me as a visitor, but the closeness between my research and their ESOL learning meant it was difficult to understand this benefit in any meaningful way.

Another aspect of ethics that I discuss in chapter 4 is the problem of "doing rapport" (Duncombe & Jessop, 2002). I identify this tension in my own practice in a diary entry from April 2016

Cross between researcher and human, analytical brain versus friendly face. I cede control, let them lead, keep it open, listen to their stories. But am I being disingenuous? Establishing myself as useful friendly persona. Relaxed and casual but always watching.

I can also relate "doing rapport" to my work in community learning where there was a similar need to make connections with diverse people, by bringing to the fore different parts of my identity. However I can justify these tensions by my commitment to Skeggs' (2001) tenet that the purpose of my research was to learn and not to hurt. This is also reflexivity; I was consciously managing different selves rather than faking identities.

Another aspect of the ethics of my research was around representation and knowledge creation. While I discuss these more thoroughly in preceding sections I draw attention here to the fact that these are inherently ethical issues. To demonstrate this I include two diary entries where I consider this. In May 2016 I question "Is my research actually challenging enough? ... Is my first responsibility to the learners? How far does this compromise my research? And a year later from May 2017

What does it mean that most of my research that it will be inaccessible to the participants? Need to find other ways of sharing with them. Feels increasingly awkward, preparing the poster, moving from intimacy of research to exposing their lives. Why do I feel like I'm doing something wrong?

In the following sections I move to consider my contributions to knowledge but note how these are inextricably linked with the questions of trustworthiness that I have addressed here.

8.4 Contributions

This thesis potentially contributes to several different areas; to the growing body of LIS research with migrant groups, to our understanding of information in ESOL research and practice, to information sharing as a practice, and to information grounds theory. The question of the contributions that my research will make preoccupied me over the life of this research. I started my research wanting to provide practical benefits for ESOL providers and learners and create the better worlds identified by Collins (2002) in my introductory chapter. However as my research progressed I realised that the knowledge I produced needed to be within LIS. In a research diary entry from December 2016 I note:

I attend a meeting with ESOL providers and I have the realisation that I've become inculcated in LIS. I have a conversation with a former colleague telling her that I'm worried I'm not going to find out anything interesting for ESOL people. She responds saying that's fine, you just need stuff to tell them.

It also took me a long time to understand what a case study was. I first needed to recognise that the importance was the case and my focus was exploring a problem rather than generating theory. Once I had explored my case in depth I was then able to move beyond it to identify how this exploration had resonance beyond my particular case.

8.4.1 Information sharing

I add to our knowledge of information sharing, expanding on Buckland's (1991) concept of informative objects to include informative people and places and con-

sidering what informative means within the context of my research. Within this my research makes three particular contributions that have resonance beyond these cases.

Firstly there is my identification that stories should have the same status as other material objects adds to our understanding of information practice. There is increasing interest in LIS in stories and in oral information more generally (Turner, 2010). My research provides a way to include stories within a consideration of information as practice.

Secondly my discussion of how we need to look beyond differentiating between formal versus informal in understanding information is potentially useful beyond the context of this research. These two labels do not seem to fit the information in my research. It may be that this reflects a change from the time of Pettigrew's (1999) original study in terms of the different forms and channels that information now takes. For example, a government office may now contact by text message or a bank communicate on social media. Further consideration of this lies beyond the scope of this thesis but it is suggestive of the challenges of being information literate when different types of information may not easily be distinguished and categorised as formal or informal.

Finally and most significantly, my insights on embodiment in LIS; in considering how bodies and place constrain as well as enable, how migrants are observed as well as observing, and how researching bodies is methodically challenging, have resonance beyond these cases. This seems a valuable contribution to recent LIS research on embodied information practices (Cox et al., 2017).

8.4.2 Information grounds

In this research I use information grounds as a starting point for my exploration. I followed Prigoda and McKenzie (2007) in how I used information grounds, and believe I have demonstrated that it can be successfully combined with practice theory. I also add detail to our understanding of information grounds. My two cases are different information grounds with overlapping contexts and different locations which seems to be a novel application of the theory. Beyond this the main strength of existing information grounds theory seems to be in exploring the social aspects of information sharing. My research adds to this by bringing

out the material and embodied aspects of these classes as information grounds (Cox et al., 2017).

One of the defining characteristics of an information ground is that it takes place in a temporal setting. In my research as well as developing the materiality of information grounds I also develop their temporality. In these classes as information grounds there is movement through space but also movement through time. We can see an example of this if we consider Fisher and Landry's (2007a) identification of familiarity as important for information grounds. My research contains the process of becoming more familiar with people and places within it. These information grounds were not then a single point in time. The changes over time were bound into the relationships between people, places and objects.

8.4.3 Migrant information practice

In this section I consider how my research contributes to our general understanding of how migrants interact with information.

Migrants' information grounds

Caidi et al. (2010) suggest there is a lack of research about how new migrants get information and in particular about their information grounds. My research then adds to our knowledge of how migrants share information. Previous research has suggested that ESL classes or conversation groups could be seen as information grounds (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004; J. Johnston, 2016a). My research has provided a detailed exploration of two such information grounds. It also contributes more widely to our understanding of how migrants experience place.

Complexity of migrant experience

I have shown there is little LIS research with migrant groups from England despite the UK's long history of migration and so my research contributes in adding to recent work from Scotland (Martzoukou & Burnett, 2017; Oduntan & Ruthven, 2017) and older work from England (Olden, 1999). ESOL learners are an important migrant group in themselves, and so my exploration of their information sharing is important.

My research also suggests the need for a fine grained approach if we are to understand migrant information practice within LIS. There is a difference between the refugee or asylum seeker experience and other migrant groups, but many other factors also influence the settlement process. Many of the women in my study came from Yemen on spousal visas. However, the current situation of famine and war in their home country meant that some of them were in a situation similar to refugees. Equally, someone who comes to the UK as an educated refugee may find it easier to settle than someone coming to the UK for other reasons who does not have any formal education. It may be that intersectionality (Brah & Phoenix, 2013) offers a way to understand the web of factors that affect settlement. Race, gender, religion, education, linguistic capital, disability, wealth and social capital have to be taken into account not just immigration status. I am not suggesting that this is not recognised by previous researchers in LIS, rather I am suggesting that we need to know more about how these factors relate beyond immigration status. My research does provide some of this texture, particularly in the relationship between language and information practice, and literacy, as discussed in more detail below.

My research also shows that we need to take a long view of migration and settlement and not just focus on the new migrants identified as important by Caidi et al. (2010). The two cases in my research reflect O'Reilly's (2012) in showing that settlement is recursive and that migration is not a process that is finished. This is supported by other LIS migrant research such as Lloyd et al. (2013) and Caidi et al. (2010) which show the iterative nature of migration. However this research extends the focus of LIS migrant research to those who are not recent migrants. There is a more complex question beyond this about what counts as settlement and what being settled means. The Yemeni and Pakistani women in class A lived in an area where they joined settled communities of people who spoke the same language. Many had also married British husbands who could be second or third generation migrants from their home countries. These connections provided significant support but they had not settled into British society on Casey's (2016) terms. We can relate this to Castles et al. (2014) who see migration as stretching into the next generation.

Migrants with limited literacy

Many of the women in class A can be seen as sharing characteristics with the vulnerable women migrants in Darby et al. (2016) and to the low educated second language and literacy acquisition learners identified by Bigelow and Tarone (2004). Geronimo et al. (2001), Lloyd et al. (2013) and Richards (2015) show that migrants with limited literacy in any language are a particular case who need attention from academic researchers, educators and policy makers. Richards' (2015) research in particular is very valuable in developing a rich understanding of the information practices of refugees with limited literacy. My research adds texture to this showing how the information that was valued by ESOL learners with limited literacy was visual, social, embodied and affective.

Methodological contribution

Lloyd (2017b) identifies the importance of positionality and ethical practice for LIS researchers working with refugees. This research is with migrants more generally, however, I do provide a worked example of ethical practice. This suggests that observation is a valuable method for exploring the information practices of migrant groups; however, this observation needs to include the researcher as both an embodied and reflexive person.

8.4.4 ESOL

In the early chapters of this thesis I say that knowing more about the arrangements that encourage or limit information sharing may be beneficial for ESOL learners and teachers. In this section I draw out from my findings and discussion chapters what I think might be useful for the ESOL sector in understanding information sharing in their classes.

In the initial interviews I held, several interviewees told me how they felt my research could be useful. They wanted to know more about the relationship between ESOL learning and information literacy, how information literacy could be fostered in the ESOL classroom; how information literacy could help learners transition, how ESOL teachers could present information better to ESOL learners, how they could demonstrate the value of ESOL, and how digital technologies could be used more effectively in the classroom. My research cannot fully

answer any of these questions but in this section I suggest where I do make a contribution to these areas.

Information arrangements in the ESOL classroom

I saw a wide range of information sharing activities in these classes such as telling a story, showing a photograph, modelling behaviour, offering food, talking about learning, and giving advice. These were intertwined with language learning and the integrative practice of settling. It is potentially useful for ESOL providers to understand how information sharing interacts with other activities and what kinds of objects encourage information sharing. As I discuss in previous chapters, information in these classes cannot be understood in purely cognitive terms. This was suggested in the initial document analysis (section 5.3) where information was associated with contextuality, culture and appropriacy. In my study of the two classes information emerged as social, embodied, visual and affective. There is then a need for arrangements and objects that mediate these kinds of information sharing. My research potentially provides this insight for ESOL teachers.

This research also shows that space and place matter for information sharing in the ESOL classroom. In particular, it demonstrates that visiting other places is a valuable part of ESOL practice and is productive of information sharing and language learning.

ESOL class as information grounds My research establishes that these classes were information grounds, and suggests that other similar classes are also likely to be information grounds. If teachers and other service providers know their classes function as information grounds, it may help them both manage information sharing and demonstrate the value of their teaching. This study showed that the classes were particularly important as my participants did not have other similar spaces in their lives. My research therefore supports existing evidence that ESOL classes are important beyond being places to learn a language. This partially at least meets the hope expressed by initial interviewees that my research could provide a means of demonstrating the value of ESOL. This directly contributes to the need to prove the social value of learning identified by Beer (2013).

Digital technologies Litster et al. (2014) explored how mobile technologies could be used within basic skills classrooms noting that there was a lack of research in this area. While my research is not concerned directly with these technologies it does provide texture as to how digital objects are used in these peripheral classrooms. The majority of learners used mobile technologies in their everyday lives. Sharing visual information was an important part of this, and greater use of photographs and videos may offer a useful first step for greater engagement with digital technologies.

Research from language teaching in other contexts suggests that digital technologies have impacted on teaching and learning in a significant way (Lotherton & Jenson, 2011). This does not seem to be the case in these classes. We can see this when class A moves to a classroom without Wi-Fi and with no interactive whiteboard, the changes in digital objects do not seem to qualitatively transform the teaching. In this way the availability of new physical objects; a bigger kitchen and space for a bring and buy stall changes teaching practice as much as the changes to digital objects do. I cannot speak confidently for class B as I did not spend enough time observing them. But from my observation the inclusion of digital objects again does not seem to be transformative. We can relate this to Knobel and Lankshear's (2006) discussion that classroom digital practice can often be seen as putting old wine in new bottles.

Meeting needs of curricula As I demonstrate in chapter 2 this research is not concerned with cognitive models of information literacy or behaviour. It is also focused on everyday information sharing rather than academic practices.

However; the information activities I observed and engaged in, can be seen as relating to the ESOL curriculum discussed in section 5.3. For example in class A, the entry one description "*looking at, and identifying, appointment cards, letters, signs, bills, learners are asked whether they look similar to those in their own languages and what the differences and similarities are*" is similar to the document session T1 and I delivered described on page 138. Equally for these learners, the trip to CVI where they learnt about eye health related to the competency described on page 146 "*were able to extract straightforward information*". For class B, the lesson on the EU referendum described on page 169 met the requirement to "*read critically to evaluate information, and compare information, ideas and opinions from different sources*".

These activities were planned with the class teachers who clearly brought their ESOL expertise to my research. This suggests a value in bringing an information perspective to ESOL by engaging in genuine collaboration. It also confirms that the connection I made in chapter 7 between language learning and information literacy activities is meaningful.

Professional practice Within ESOL policy and practice there is concern about the professional status of ESOL teachers (Roden & Cupper, 2016). This research shows how even conspicuously casual learner-teacher interactions are significant for language learning and information sharing, and need to be carefully managed. One instance of this is promoting British values. The need to promote British values under the agenda of Prevent is a current issue in ESOL. I would suggest that within these case studies both teachers (with more evidence of this with T1) share information about their lives in a way that could be associated with promoting British values. The broader question of what these British values are or should be is outside the scope of this research. Nevertheless I can demonstrate that within these classes information sharing is part of these teachers' professional practice.

8.5 Further research

In this section I bring together a number of points which would merit further investigation. These are some of the paths that I did not have the opportunity to follow in this current study either because of the circumstances of my research or because they were not possible within the scale of this thesis.

8.5.1 Information literacy and ESOL

I feel a significant outcome for my research is that it demonstrates the value of applying an information perspective to ESOL. One of the initial interviewees suggested it would be valuable to produce a model of how to foster information literacy in ESOL classes. My research followed a different path but this is an area that merits further consideration. Information literacy and language learning is still an under-researched phenomenon particularly outside higher education.

My research suggests there is real value in further collaboration between the fields of ESOL and information literacy.

8.5.2 Male ESOL classes

It is significant that the learners in these classes were women. As I suggest this is not unusual for community ESOL classes and an all-male class would be far less likely. However it would be interesting to explore how different these classes would have been with male learners. I do not consider the relationship between gender and information sharing, beyond identifying that the relationship between gender and embodied information practice needs to be considered. I do consider my own gender as significant in the research particularly with class A which I identified as a female space. There has been little research on gendered aspects of information behaviour (Urquhart & Yeoman, 2010) and further consideration of this would be interesting.

8.5.3 Everyday information practices of ESOL learners

One of the most significant changes to this research was the change in focus to information practices solely within the two classes. While the ESOL class is more than a learning environment, it would still have been valuable to explore how these learners were interacting with information in their daily lives. A longitudinal participant-led study would be enormously insightful. Within this study it would be particularly beneficial to focus on ESOL learners with limited print literacy. As the literature review shows there is very limited research on the information literacy or practices of this group. Further research exploring topics such as how they interact with digital technology or manage personal information would be of considerable value.

8.5.4 Translating research to ESOL participants

There is one further outcome I would like to see from my research, and have written into my research design in figure 4.1. This is to find a way to more meaningfully communicate my research findings to my ESOL learner participants. This could also have benefits beyond my study. As my research showed it was difficult for my participants to understand and apply an information lens to their own practices. This critical reflexive capacity is an important part of information

literacy. It seems to me that if I could effectively convey my research findings to ESOL learners then I would also have found a way to help them develop an awareness of themselves as users of information.

8.6 Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis I discussed the three elements that I considered part of the process of my doctoral research: becoming a researcher, making a contribution to LIS, and providing a practical benefit to those in my case study site. The most challenging of these was benefiting my participants. As I have discussed this was difficult for me to do within my PhD. However, I can confidently say I have learnt to be a researcher. There are points when it is hard to disentangle my learning from the emergent and iterative research design. In this way, while I would agree that a case study is an invaluable researcher training ground (Flyvbjerg, 2011), I do not feel it is unforgiving of researcher weakness as there were always opportunities to correct missteps and recover from false starts. I also feel I have made contributions to our understanding of information sharing, migrant information practice and ESOL learners' information practices. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the researcher may not be the best person to identify the transferability of their research. I can identify with this and I feel that the value of my research may be in my findings rather than in my discussion of these findings. In this way it is the case study narrative identified by Flyvbjerg (2011) that is the centre of my research.

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Appendix A

Information grounds research

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Appendix B

Migrant research

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Appendix C

Ethics pilot study



Downloaded: 09/04/2015

Approved: 15/01/2015

Jessica Elmore
Registration number: 140134988
Information School
INFR33

Dear Jessica

PROJECT TITLE: An exploration of the relationship between English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning, the information literacy of participants, and its impact on their everyday lives

APPLICATION: Reference Number 002141

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 15/01/2015 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 002141 (dated 20/11/2014).
- Participant information sheet 003560 (20/11/2014)

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Jones
Ethics Administrator
Information School

Focus group information sheet

How do ESOL learners use information?

[read out loud after discussion/translation of the concept of information. Provide written copies in English and Arabic]

You are invited to be part of a **RESEARCH PROJECT** about how learning English helps people find, use and share information in their lives. Next year I will do some research finding out how ESOL classes help people use information. Now I am trying to find out the best way to do this research.

The work is being done by me, Jess Elmore, at The University of Sheffield. I am helped by my supervisors, Sheila Webber and Peter Stordy.

WHAT WILL I DO?

I will talk to your conversation group and ask you questions. This will only happen once.

I want to know how you use information in your life. I will show you some pictures (for example a doctors, a supermarket, a website) and ask you to talk about how you use information in these places.

I will write down your answers. I would also like to record the answers.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED?

I will use your answers to help me plan how to do my research better. They may be part of my PhD or other research that I will do. This means I might use some of your words as a quote. This may be published in the future.

YOUR RIGHTS:

I will not use your real name in my report.

All the information you give me will be kept safe and private.

At the end of my research I will delete all the information

You do not need to take part and you can decide to stop at any time

No one will listen to the recordings or see all your answers apart from me and my supervisors.

If you are not happy or have questions you can speak or write to the University:

Jess Elmore	jrelmore2@sheffield.ac.uk	07966 599 624
Sheila Webber	s.webber@sheffield.ac.uk	0114 222 2641
Jo Bates	ischool_ethics@sheffield.ac.uk	0114 222 2648

Information School University of Sheffield, Regent Court, 211 Portobello, Sheffield, S1 4DP

Appendix D

Ethics full study



Downloaded: 10/04/2015

Approved: 09/04/2015

Jessica Elmore
Registration number: 140134988
Information School
INFR33

Dear Jessica

PROJECT TITLE: An exploration of the relationship between English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning, the information literacy of participants, and its impact on their everyday lives

APPLICATION: Reference Number 002807

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 09/04/2015 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 002807 (dated 08/04/2015).
- Participant information sheet 005783 (24/02/2015)
- Participant consent form 005784 (24/02/2015)

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Jones
Ethics Administrator
Information School

Sheffield Information School Participant Consent Form (Group 1 & 2)

Title of Research Project: An exploration of the information literacy experiences of ESOL learners

Name of Researcher: Jess Elmore

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated *[insert date]* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential as far as possible. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials but that I may be identifiable to someone who knows the setting well.

4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

(or legal representative)

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies: Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

How do ESOL learners use information?

You are invited to be part of a **RESEARCH PROJECT** about how learning English helps people find, use and share information in their lives.

The work is being done by me, Jess Elmore, at The University of Sheffield. I am helped by my supervisors, Sheila Webber and Peter Stordy.

What will I do?

I will come and visit your ESOL classes several times between September 2015 and July 2016. I want to talk to you to as a group and observe some of your classes. I also want to talk to you away from your class. If you want you can decide to take photos, draw pictures or keep a diary to tell me about how you use information. We can meet lots of times or only once or twice. You can decide how much you want to take part. You can also decide not to take part at all.

When I talk to you I will write down your answers. Sometimes I will record your answers if that is OK. If you write a diary, draw pictures or take photos I will ask if I can make copies of your work to analyse and use in my research. The photos, writing or drawings will belong to you and you will decide if I can use them.

I will tell you what I have found out and ask you what you think before I publish.

How will the information be used?

I will use your answers to help me understand how ESOL learners use information. This will be published as part of my PhD. I also want to give some information to the Council so they can learn what they do well and what to do better.

Your rights:

I will not use your real name in my report.

All the information you give me will be kept safe and private.

You do not need to take part and you can decide to stop at any time.

No one will listen to any recordings or see all your answers apart from me and my supervisors.

All the pictures, drawings and writings you make will belong to you. I will only use them with your permission.

What are the risks?

People in your community might know I am doing research with your class.

I will spend a long time with your class. This may affect you in different ways. It might be annoying for you or you might feel sad when the research ends.

If you are not happy or have questions you can speak or write to the University:

Appendix E

Pilot study documentation

Pilot focus group plan

1. Introduce the words 'information' and 'research'. Check participants' understanding.

Read out information sheet, then hand out copies and check for consent and understanding

2. Show picture of class flyer

How did you find out about this class? Was it easy/ difficult...? Do you go to different classes? Where did you find out about them? Did you tell anyone else? Think about a new person in [this city], how could they find a class? Do you get information from this class?

3. Show following realia/pictures in turn. As many as feasible in time. Decide order from discussion but try to include; online, person and place. Contextualise as necessary from own experience if needed.

picture of my friend

my smartphone

a local newspaper

photograph of local library

a letter from my son's school

screenshot of Google search page

a recipe book

a printed map

a local bus timetable

Question prompts:

Do you get/give information from ..? In English? Another language? What kind of information? Any problems? Is it easy/difficult? Do you trust it? How do you know it's right? Has the information been wrong? Was it different when you were new to Sheffield/the UK? Before you could speak English? How else do you get information?

4. If time: introduce concept of information literacy using image of different translations

5. Ask for feedback, what did you think of the activity? What do you think of my research? What should I find out?

Appendix F

Initial interview questions

Tell me about ESOL provision at [this organisation].

What are the major issues for you at the moment?

What documents should I look at?

Who should I talk to?

What should I be asking?

What do you hope my research will achieve?

Are you familiar with the concept information literacy?

What do you understand it to be?

What do you think is the relationship between information literacy and ESOL learning?

What do you think about the information literacy experiences of ESOL learners?

Is there anything you would like to find out about the relationship between information literacy and ESOL?

Do you think there is anything generalisable about the information needs and behaviour of ESOL learners?

Are there particular conditions that can foster information literacy in the ESOL classroom?

(For teachers only) What activities do you do that you think are information literacy like (give examples from my document review)?

Talk briefly about pilot study [points of interest; use of mobile phones, how people find out about ESOL classes, information literacy of those who can't read]

Is there anything that surprises/interests you/would be good to follow up.

What about the role of digital literacy in community learning?

How do you see the role of technology in community learning?

Appendix G

Information diary tasks

Task 1 Information experience diary

Use this diary to write about times when you found, used or shared information. I have given some examples from my life. You can write about anything you like and are comfortable sharing. This might include areas such as health, transport, work, your ESOL learning, current affairs or family.

These questions might be useful

What happened? What was easy or difficult? Did you have any problems? How did you feel? Were you satisfied at the end? Is there anything else you need to do about the situation?

Three examples from my life

I had a conversation in the playground with another parent about [local] Council's plans to build a new school where we live. She was very upset and angry about this. I have read about these plans but not thought about it properly because I've been too busy. I also know that it is a complex decision and so I have been avoiding it. I know that I need to look at the proposed plans and go to one of the meetings that the Council is planning.

I have had a problem with a wisdom tooth. I went to the dentist and expected that she would say it needed to be extracted. I have had a wisdom tooth taken out before and didn't have any problems so I thought this would happen again. However she advised that I should wait and see. Since then I have spoken to two friends who told me about their experiences. They've both had wisdom teeth extracted. One found it very painful and had lots of complications while the other thought it was very simple surgery. I have also searched on the Internet

to find information from dentists and other patients. There are lots of different opinions but doesn't seem to be any clear evidence about whether it is better to remove wisdom teeth. I have decided I will follow my dentist's advice and wait and see. However I wish I had asked her more questions at the appointment.

I need to travel to a conference next week so I have booked a train to and from the airport, a return plane journey and a hotel. I booked these online and so the details have been emailed to me. I use a Google email account and a Google electronic calendar. This means that the travel details from my emails are saved into my calendar. This is very convenient because it means all my travel information is in one place. For example, I will get a message on my smartphone telling me when it is time to leave to catch the train. However it makes me uncomfortable because it shows how much information Google stores about me.

Task 2 Write down times when you wanted to find something out. You can write as much or as little as you want. You can also think about the examples I gave you before.

You can write in this online diary: <https://penzu.com/journals>. (You will need to register with an email address and password.)

Use these questions to help you structure your answer:

What did you want to find out? Where did you go to look for help? Did you have any problems? How did you feel? Do you need to do anything else? Did you share the information with anyone else?

Example 1

What did you want to find out? I had to change buses in town and couldn't find the right bus stop.

Where did you go to look for help? I stopped someone on the street to ask them. Did you have any problems? Yes, I had to ask three different people. The first person didn't know and the second ignored me.

How did you feel? I don't like asking people for directions so I was quite nervous by the time I asked the third person.

Do you need to do anything else? No, the last person I asked was very friendly and showed me the right stop.

Did you share the information with anyone else? No but I will remember for the next time I need to catch this bus.

Example 2

What did you want to find out? I was sent a letter saying that I have been over-paid working tax credits and I need to pay some money back. I wanted to find out how to appeal as I don't think this is right.

Where did you go to look for help? I asked my sister in law about it. She works for a different government department so I thought she could help me. She didn't know what to do so we searched on the Internet together. We looked at the gov.uk website but also read some forums where other people shared their experiences. We found a form that I need to fill in and send to the tax credit office. Did you have any problems? With my sister in law's help I found it easy to find the information I needed.

How did you feel? I feel angry because I know that I gave all the right information in the first place.

Do you need to do anything else? I need to fill in the form and send it back.

Did you share the information with anyone else? No

Example 3

What did you want to find out? I want to train to be a nurse once my English is good enough. I decided to find out what other qualifications I would need before I can start a degree.

Where did you go to look for help? I searched on [local university's] website to try and find out what the entry requirements are for their Nursing degree.

Did you have any problems? Yes, the website only mentioned A-levels and I couldn't find the information I needed about whether qualifications from my country were accepted.

How did you feel? I felt frustrated because I couldn't find a definite answer about whether my qualifications were OK.

Do you need to do anything else? I found out the University has an open day in December so I have booked to go and visit. I hope I will get the answers to my questions.

Did you share the information with anyone else? I told my friend about the open day because she is also hoping to go to University.

Appendix H

Group interviews

When you first came to the UK, how well could you speak English?

What kinds of information did you need?

Where you did get the information from?

Tell me about that time.

When did you start going to English classes?

How did you find out about the classes?

Talk about what you remember from those classes.

Now your English is better. Where do you get information from?

What do you find difficult?

When do you get information in English? When in other languages?

Tell me about the last time you found something out?

Tell me about the last time you had a problem getting information. What did you do?

How do you decide if something is true?

Do you still get information from your ESOL class? From each other, from T2?

What are your plans for the future?

What information do you need for these plans?

How will you find out what you need?

In addition to these general question I had specific questions to ask about the information diaries the learners had completed for me.

Appendix I

Observation activities

Class A	Observation activities
Visit 1	Obtaining informed consent. Lesson about food
Visit 2	Discussion about different information sources
Visit 3	Lesson on drawing and talking about learners' lives
Visit 4	Enrolment session for the new term
Visit 5	Session on managing personal documents
Visit 6	City farm planning visit
Visit 7	City farm visit
Visit 8	City farm follow up discussion
Visit 9	Short visit. Lesson on exam practice
Visit 10	CVI planning visit
Visit 11	CVI visit
Visit 12	CVI follow up discussion
Visit 13	Session with learners' book
Visit 14	Lesson about Eid
Visit 15	Museum planning visit
Visit 16	Museum visit
Visit 17	Museum follow up visit

Class B	Observation activities
Visit 1	Initial discussion and obtaining informed consent
Visit 2	Discussion about information diaries
Visit 3	Discussion about information diaries
Visit 4	Discussion about trip
Visit 5	Discussion about trip. Lesson on phrasal verbs
Visit 6	Museum visit planning
Visit 7	Museum visit follow up
Visit 8	Session on EU referendum

Appendix J

Sample observation

This observation was a lesson planned by me and T1. It was based on an idea of finding out more about learners' personal information management and helping them develop their language in this area. We had decided we would bring letters, leaflets and other items from our own lives to use as the basis of the class activity.

I arrive at the school half an hour before the start of the lesson. I sign in, collect a visitor badge and meet T1 in the classroom. We photocopy the documents that we brought from home. I sort the photocopies into different piles so the learners can work in pairs. T1 organises the classroom and we talk about the plan for the lesson. The learners start to arrive and talk amongst themselves. At the start of the lesson T1 takes the register and then explains the task. I start recording at this point. She teaches the word postbox by showing a picture and elicits from the learners all the different items that can come in the post. She writes these on cards. I type them on the interactive whiteboard. I contribute sometimes but T1 leads the lesson.

We then distribute the photocopied documents. She tells them to work in pairs, trying to work out what each document is, and then writing it on a post-it note. We leave the learners to work independently for much of the time. They sometimes ask for help and T1 generally tells them to try and work it out. I am more likely to try and explain to them. We also have conversations with learners inspired by some of the documents.

Just before the break V1 comes in. She talks to some of the learners about the

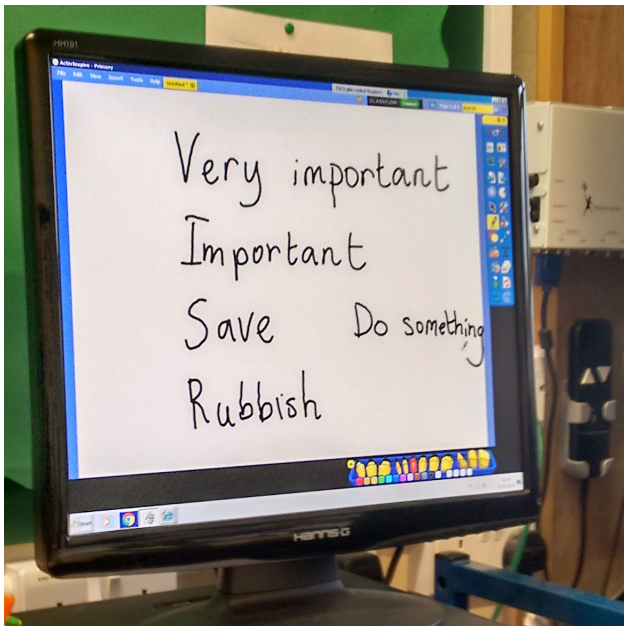
activity. T1 then tells everybody it is break time. A learner puts the kettle on and several others get out some food they have made. I mainly talk to T1 and we discuss what we are doing in the next part of the lesson. The learners carry on with their task during the break.

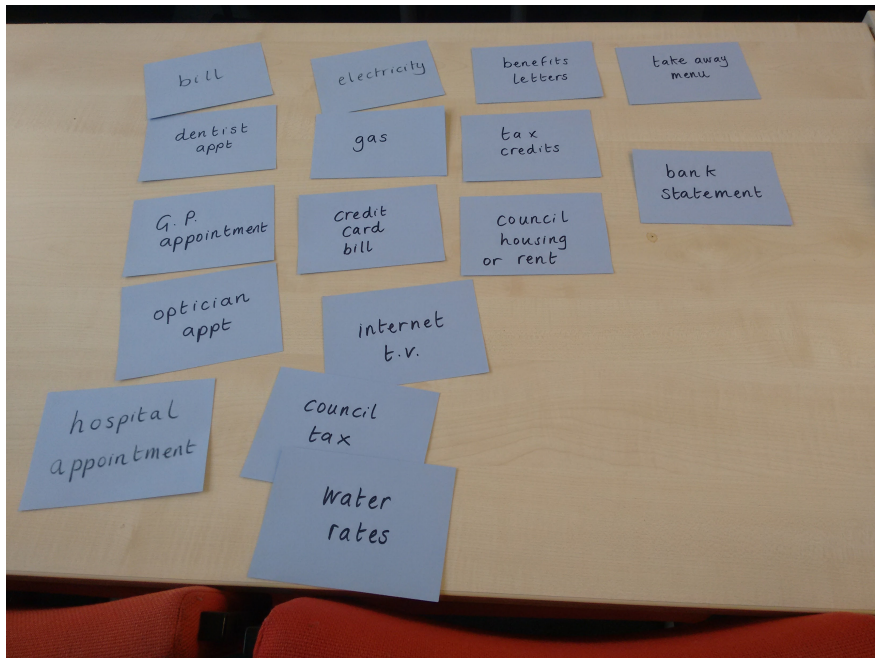
During the break T1 writes different categories for dealing with personal information. T1 tells everyone it is the end of break and explains the categories to them. A full account of the next section of the lesson is given on page 138. T1 then continues asking each pair to choose one item to talk about.

When every pair has finished this activity, she asks learners which documents were difficult to understand. There is a fairly sustained class discussion about this.

After this T1 finishes the lesson. The learners leave. T1 and I discuss how we felt the activity went. I take the photocopies of the documents with me so I can shred them, say goodbye and leave the school.

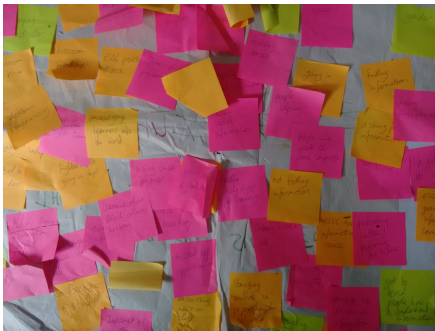
During the observation I made very few notes, however I have the recording which I listen to later that day as I write up my notes. I also took some photographs after the end of the lesson.





Appendix K

Analysing codes



English [do I have enough evidence to say most? Is it more that there isn't evidence of other activities], bureaucracy comes into lessons. Job centre Documents lesson, what is familiar what isn't?
17 Information needs to be digestible, in understandable format, can't separate it from emotion or culture or context Eg bus timetables [in class]
21 Different learners have different backgrounds leads to different information practices. Related to kind of migrant, refugee versus spousal visa but also relates to support network and education.
16 Helping others who speak the same language, but also cultural background, we are sisters
19 Local knowledge, knowledge of place, getting around, this together with bureaucracy constitute major information activities.
11 Literacy more than information literacy, managing in a written society. Does information literacy come in because of how they are managing not
15 Not much evidence of evaluating information but have strategies [how many can I actually identify? All day saver, actions in class]
14 Whether to trust or believe information resides in person, know a long time
13 Special status of ESOL classroom about place, physical location, in
3 Emotion, identity, culture, religion, affect information practice, confidence as attribute of information literacy.

Appendix L

Codes

a bit limited with IT in the classroom	Internet searching
a foreigner and stupid	intimacy
about learning	keeping in touch with home
asking & offering information	knowledge of british life
being helped	language affecting identity
bring that normal use into the classroom	language as object
can't get our rights and prefer to ignore that	language is and is not information problem
characteristics of ESOL learners	language learning and IL in combination
characteristics of ESOL provision	language learning for everyday life
children and language	Language problem or newcomer problem
class privilege	learn about cultural difference
classroom as intimate space	learners are accessing services
classroom as place of safety	learning not IL related
classroom doesn't prepare for everyday life	learning outside classroom
classroom literacy	life gets in way of learning
classroom tech	limited interaction in English
collaborative understanding	linking home and UK
common experience for ESOL learners	listen and extract key information
communication problems	listen for gist
communicative purpose	local information sources
confidence or lack of confidence	local knowledge
confidence transfer skills	looking for information in English
context	low literacy
criticising	making decisions
cultural norms	male learners
culture	managing everyday information needs
dealing with bureaucracy	managing information
defining ESOL	modelling behaviour
defining IL as human contact	negotiate system
defining information literacy	non-verbal
different kinds of migrants	not recognising informal info sources
different types of information	official information sources
difficulty of real world English	oral information
digital literacy	people who speak the same language
digital technology for everyday life	people's different values
diversity of ESOL learners	personal, face to face
dominance of English	physically asking
English as language for information activity	policing
English class is the most important thing	prefer online
ESOL and independence	prefer written
ESOL as stepping stone	proxy use of digital tech
ESOL classroom described as an information site	range of information strategies
ESOL learners progression	rejecting broad notion of IL
ESOL teacher as information source	rejecting theory
ESOL teacher challenges learners	relevance as skill in ESOL curriculum
ESOL teacher helping learners	religion and information

ESOL teacher shaping info practice	remembering early days in UK
ESOL teacher using information lens	remembering information
evaluating information	remembering-talking about home
everybody knows	repeating information
exam driven or not exam driven	research stuff
fact and opinion	sad stories about home countries
family as information source	safety
filtering information	selecting information as skill
finding ESOL class	She says she won't remember that.
finding information	shifting identities
food	skills to participate
friendliness of public	small steps
friends as information source	socialise.
friendships in class	somebody knowledgeable
gap between learners and teachers	someone experienced
gender	space
gestures	stages of settling
giving advice	starting from scratch
giving basic information	stories of problems
giving learners information	teacher communicating with learners
IL activity	teacher trusting class
IL as education	teacher using own life
IL as finding things out	teachers' knowledge of learners
IL as gateway	telling stories
IL in ESOL curriculum	touch
information activities	transferable skills
information changing behaviour	transferring understanding of IL
information demands of new country	trust and authority
information encountering	understand the gist
information literacy for learning	understanding ESOL classroom
information problems	understanding information
information sharing	using phones
information strategies	using social media
instant information	using technology
interacting in English with non English speakers	visual information

Appendix M

Writing narrative accounts

Stage 1 I identified 51 potential episodes of information sharing from a wider pool of data that had been coded “information sharing”. I include three here as examples:

1. Healthy Start leaflet. [T1] shared with the class. [] needed and took home, easy to identify benefit of information sharing
2. Cycling/banana skin /embarrassing stories
3. Cupping. After class [V1] talking about her experience, standing by the door, with learners me and [T1] separate. What meaning does the information have? Trusted source.

Stage 2 I narrowed this selection to twenty episodes for T1 and fifteen episodes for T2. I then started to craft these into narrative accounts.

Initial version of episode

T tells me we have had an amazing story from P the other day about going to a shop and slipping on a banana skin. T says I didn't ask you but when it happened did people help you? P says she ran from the shop because she was embarrassed. T says that is exactly what I would do. I describe cycling into a lamp post saying I fell over and hurt my leg really badly but I was so embarrassed I said I was fine and ran away. Because it was so stupid. T talks about her friend falling off his bike, skidding past a bus queue and landing in Halfords.

What is happening with the information here? T1 is happy about A3's story because of the language she used. I tell A3 my similar story, fitting in with the class, empathising, validating her experience. [Later conversation with T1 saw A3's story as valuable language learning.]

Stage 3 Final version of episode

This episode took place in a lesson where the learners drew pictures about themselves and their lives and then practised asking and answering questions. During the break time T1 tells me we had an amazing story from A3 the other day about going to a shop and slipping on a banana skin. I am surprised and ask whether she really slipped on a banana skin. T1 says everybody laughs when you say that but she really hurt herself. I say it's something I only hear in jokes. A3 tells me she hurt her back. T1 says I didn't ask you but when it happened did people help you? She says she ran from the shop because she was embarrassed. T1 says that is exactly what I would do. I describe cycling into a lamp post. I say I fell over and hurt my leg really badly but I was so embarrassed I said I was fine and ran away because I felt so stupid. T1 talks about her friend falling off his bike, skidding past a bus queue and landing in a hardware store. This is followed by lots of laughter. She concludes by saying it wasn't even the branch that repairs bikes. T1 then talks about A3's story about a medicinal drink that her mother-in-law makes or made. She says to the class: I have typed the story for you so we can all read it. She says it was a really interesting story.

Appendix N

Sample pages from learners' book

Lots of people liked the chickens at the farm. [___] remembered having chickens at home. [___] liked the little birds. There are birds like this in Pakistan.



You use video, WhatsApp and Skype to keep in touch with your home countries. [__] played us a video of her dad in Yemen. [__] laughed at the video and said he was like Michael Jackson.



Appendix O

Sample diary extract

From B

I came into a shop and saw in the corner a stuck of trolleys. I tried to take one, but I couldn't work out how to do it. Nobody was around, so I went to the first customer with the trolley, who had already left the payment till and asked him for his trolley. I still can see the look of surprise on his face. He removed his bags and let me have the trolley. I was happy, but my happiness was short lived. Suddenly near me had appeared a male employee. He stepped in front of me and said something, than he got one pound coin from the trolley slot , he put the money into his shirt pocket and quickly left. I didn't see him ever again, even though I tried to find him after I had realised what the situation was. After asking a woman how to get a trolley, I realised that the first man gave me trolley with one pound in it to save him the embarrassment of having an argument. Possibly the man understood that I was a foreigner and stupid. And second man, an employee, saw the situation and came to take one pound for himself. I was embarrassed also, but I saw the funny side of it and had a laugh to myself.

Appendix P

Extracts from sample letter and response

Dear [B4]

I have written a summary of what you have told me about your experiences of using information since you came to the UK. Please let me know if I have misunderstood what you told me or if there is anything else you think I should know.

... You described the confusing experience of trying to register for an ESOL class when you didn't understand anything except the instruction "follow me". You feel that different people learn English in different ways and at different speeds. For you, you need to learn by understanding the rules. You said that people who come to the UK and have to find work learn more quickly as they have to speak English every day.

You feel that your English now is good enough for you to manage in your everyday life. However, you told me how you are still suffering because of mistakes you made when you first arrived and your English was more limited...

You have also told me the difficulties you faced in everyday life when you first arrived, telling a story about trying to get a trolley in Poundland. I think this story shows how difficult it is to adjust to a new language and culture and how people can take advantage of new migrants. You still remember the feeling of being embarrassed and feeling stupid even though you can laugh about it now...

Dear Jess,

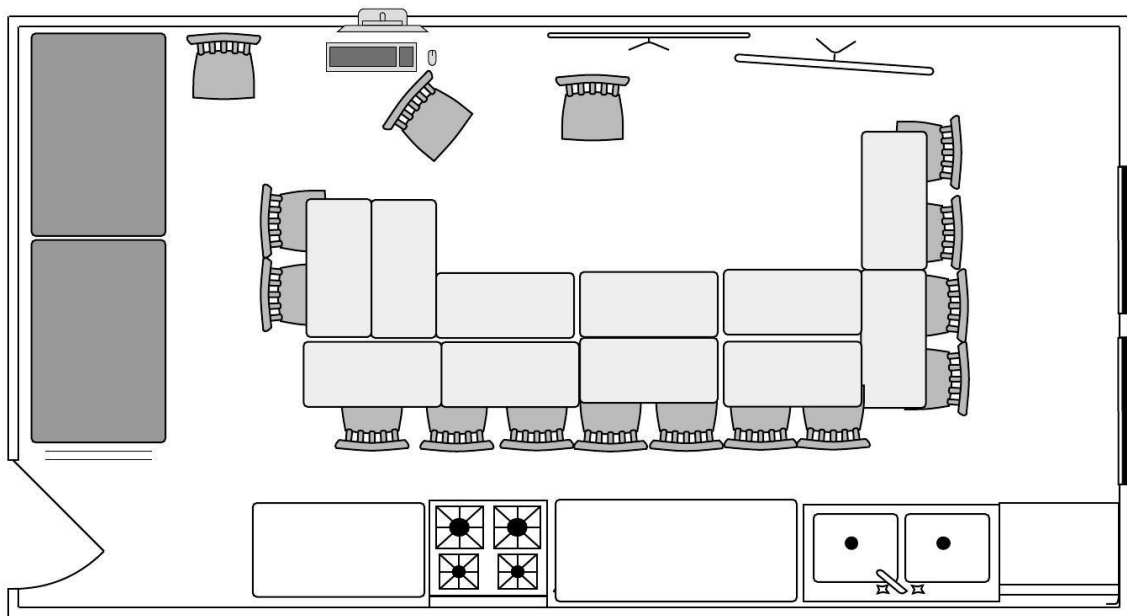
What a sad picture, only complaints, could you please ask us to write to you something positive about this great country? Everything is in black about my information.(It is my fault, perhaps).

There my daughter, who loves this country... There was born my grandson, who is full of life and doesn't want to speak other languages.

I do not agree with the 4th paragraph, where you said that people can take advantage of newcomers, perhaps the second man, who took one pound from the trolley was from EU countries (that type of person in every country), I do not believe that he was from England. I believe the first man, who gave me the trolley with one pound was English. When I came to England I have met a lot of good and friendly people and how kind they were!

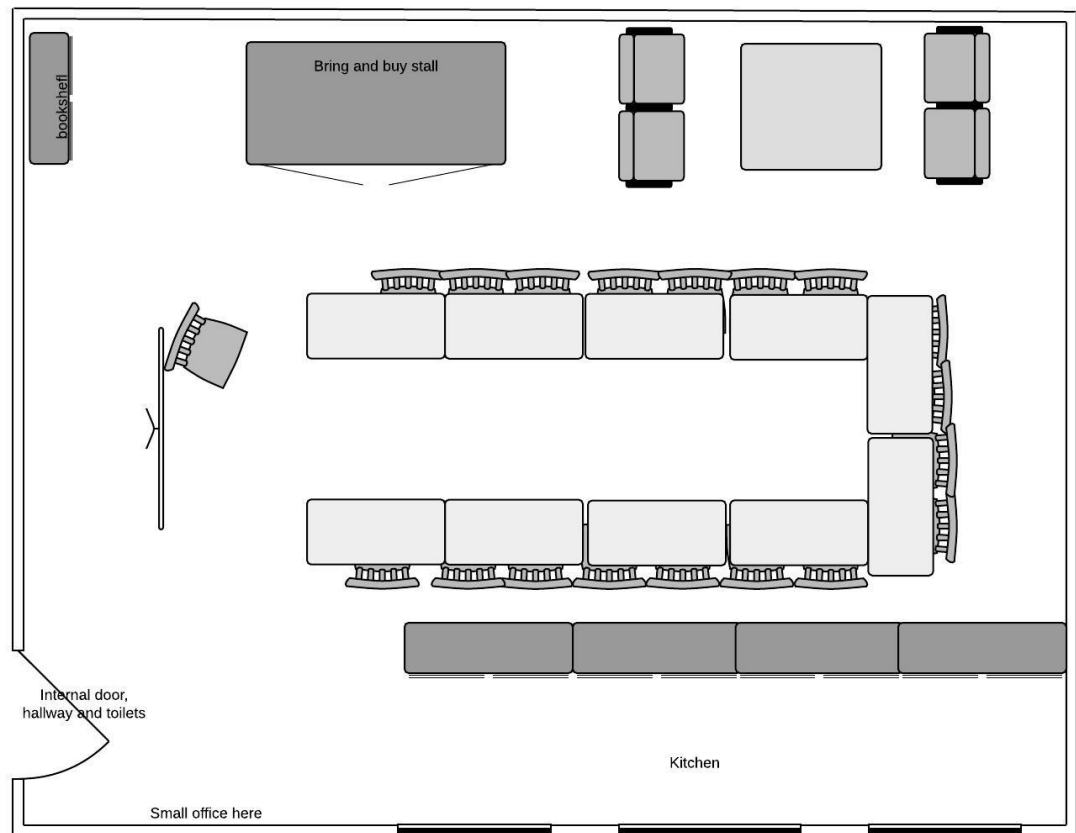
Appendix Q

Plan of classroom 1



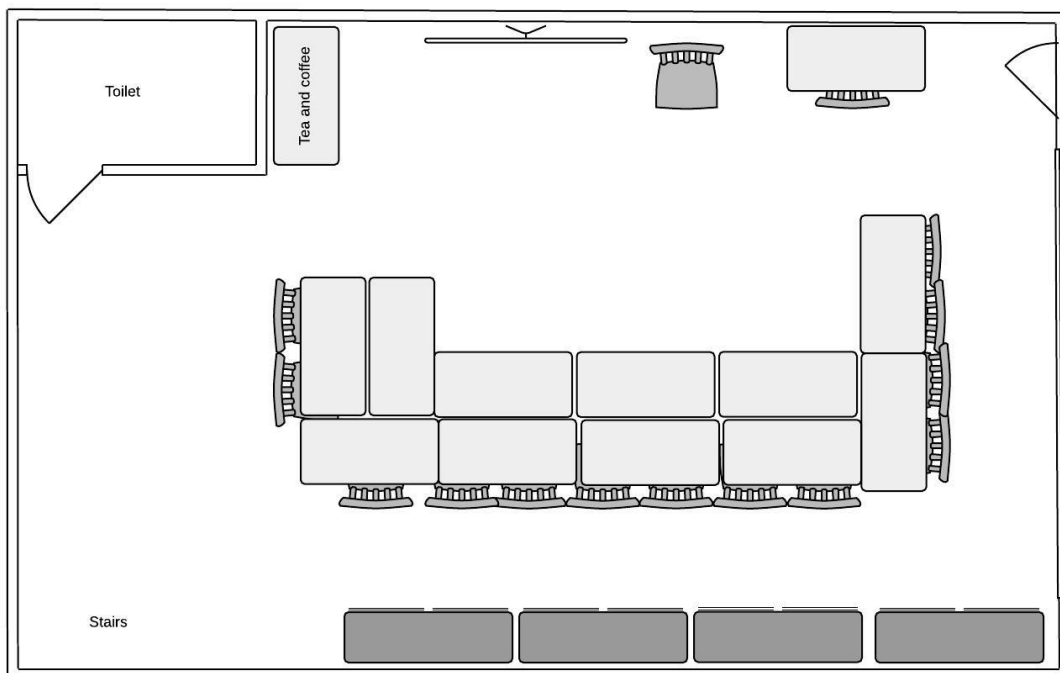
Appendix R

Plan of classroom 2



Appendix S

Plan of classroom 3



Appendix T

Presentations, publications and awards

Elmore, J. (2017, June) Information sharing in the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classroom: A case study. Paper presented at i3 research conference: Information: Interactions and impact 2017, Aberdeen, Scotland

Awarded the inaugural i3 Mark Hepworth memorial award for highest scoring abstract.

Elmore, J. (2017, May) Researching ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) learners: A reflexive account. Paper presented at Resonances, a post-graduate conference on qualitative research, University of Leeds, England

Elmore, J. (2016, June) ESOL learners' information practices: Communicating research to participants. Poster presented at the ninth annual Conceptions of Library and Information Science 2017, Uppsala, Sweden

Elmore, J. (2016, June) An exploration of the information practices of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners. Paper presented at the ninth annual Conceptions of Library and Information Science 2017 Doctoral Forum, Uppsala, Sweden

Elmore, J. (2016, June) How does the experience of being an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learner shape migrants' settlement into new information landscapes? Paper presented at 2nd annual postgraduate conference on migration "Looking beyond the refugee crisis", University of Sheffield, England

Elmore, J. (2016, June) Exploring ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners' information practices: A discussion of methods. Paper presented at White Rose Doctoral Training Centre fifth annual conference 2016, Leeds, England

Elmore, J. (2015). Exploring the information literacy experiences of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners: A discussion of methods. In The Third European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) October 19-22, 2015, Tallinn, Estonia (p. 104)

Elmore, J. (2015, July) Ethicalness is next to openness? An exploration of information literacy research with ESOL learners. Poster presented at iFutures 2015, Sheffield, England