The Empowerment of Pakistani Muslim Women Through Diverse Funds of Knowledge, Language, and Literacy Practices: A Study Undertaken in Rotherham Exploring English Language Learning from the 1980s to 2020

Zanib Rasool

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
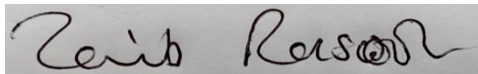of
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Declaration:

I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Signature:

Date: 10th October 2022

Abstract

My research focuses on stories of Pakistani Muslim female English language learners and explores the women's lived experience of learning the English language. The research also highlights the women's own diverse funds of knowledge, language and literacy practices that give them agency and a strong Islamic and cultural identity as learners and as mothers. The study begins with the stories of a cohort of Pakistani women who attended English classes in the 1980s at a local community centre. This was where I first met them as a community development worker. I share the accounts of ESOL learners, ESOL teachers, and BAME organisations that support them, and through their stories, provide an insight into changes in ESOL, from funding cuts to pedagogy. I undertook observations and held discussion groups with new female language learners from Pakistan preparing for the Life in the U.K. test, witnessing women under great pressure. According to Baynham (2006), the classroom "can be a complex communicative space" (p.25) that can become a disempowering environment depending on what is taught and how much autonomy the learners have. It is questioned whether compulsory testing genuinely contributes to citizenship preparation or is merely a gatekeeping mechanism that 'leads to social injustice' (Han et al., 2010).

The orientalist discourse of victims of patriarchy and culture casts a shadow over the lives of Pakistani Muslim women. It is argued by Volpp (2001) that the assumption that women are more oppressed in minority cultures goes back to colonialism. Mannani and Thompson (2015) argue, storytelling enables women to reposition themselves in the world, as my research participants did. My data challenges the public rhetoric of passive, oppressed females who "lack the social and cultural capital required for social mobility" (Yosso, 2006, p.70). The dominant discourse of Muslim women, prevented from learning English, self-segregated, and living parallel lives (Cantle, 2001), stigmatises them and makes integration difficult.

The research offers a platform for marginalised women to represent themselves as English language learners, thus contributing to knowledge from the learner's perspective, whose voices are often not heard in language and citizenship debates. I argue that my research findings show women want to learn English for various reasons, but there are limited resources, along with other barriers to integration. The literature review, the chosen methodology of storytelling, and the findings highlight how the current language and citizenship policies limit women's aspirations as language learners. My research is theoretically underpinned by three conceptual frameworks: Postcolonial Feminism, Critical Race Theory, and Third Space Theory, and contributes to knowledge by exploring intersectionality and power and how that shapes ESOL Pakistani female learners' experiences as language learners.

3

Acknowledgment

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late father, who was an inspiration and did not have the opportunities in life that he deserved. A man who never had any schooling and learned to read the Quran at the age of 50 and then went on to teach so many other people (may Allah grant him Jannah).

I also dedicate this work to my two younger brothers. I miss you every day, and I am sad that you could not see your big sister's journey and to my maternal grandparents, who brought me up and sacrificed so much.

List of Contents

List of Abbreviations

BAME- Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic

BERA - British Education Research Association

PBHU – Peace Be Upon Him

ESL- English as a Second Language

ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages

IRC - Immigration Removal Centres

MESH - Migrant English Support Hub

NECTLA - National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults

NHS - National Health Service

ONS - Office of National Statistics

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PIACC - Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

RMBC - Rotherham Metropolitan Brough Council

TESOL - Teaching English to Speakers of other languages

U.K.- United Kingdom

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction and setting the context

Section 1.1: Outline of the thesis

1.1.1. Introduction

My interest in ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) goes back to the 1980s when I supported Pakistani women as a community development worker. I visited the women's homes to encourage them to attend English classes and wondered what difference speaking English made to their lives. Roberts et al. (2007) argue that "classroom-based research has typically been rather insulated from other domains of the social world, resulting in a somewhat introspective body of research, not noted for looking outwards" (p.24). I wanted to look beyond the classroom and explore the lived experiences of English language learners in the wider milieu of their social and cultural world. When Pakistani women come together, diverse literacies happen. Street (2003) argues the ideological model of literacy "is not simply a technical and neutral skill; that it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" (p.77); fostered in relationships between women. I explore the women's own language and literacy practices that support their identities. Literacy is "patterned by social institutions and power relationships" (Barton and Hamilton, 2003, p.10). Those who lack power find their literacy practices go unnoticed and remain outside the mainstream.

I also decided to explore the changes experienced by new migrant Pakistani female language learners. The ESOL learners of the 1980s are now British citizens, but the new migrant women married to British men of Pakistani heritage have no citizenship status. They are also Muslim women who are surrounded by numerous discourses as "cultural others." Therefore, my interest is partly stimulated by current debates on the English language and citizenship, and criticism that the Muslim community holds its women back. I wondered how true these representations were by hearing the direct voices of the learners themselves. People's lives evolve, yet Muslim women, represented through the orientalist lens, are seen as immovable objects. Orientalism is a term coined by Said (1978) referring to the persistent but subtle European prejudices against Islam and its people and their culture. Today, Muslim women are judged through the postcolonial construct, and the lack of English is one way to highlight cultural differences that impact their independence. Smith (1987) rightly argues that "language acts as a central marker of the acute divisions" (p.637), making integration difficult.

1.1.2. Aims and objectives of the research

For many years, I have advocated for Pakistani women and challenged some of the assumptions about them. This advocacy has been the purpose of my doctoral research, and I wanted to offer them a platform to share their stories as English language learners. Witherall and Noddings (1991) argue that "stories are powerful research tools and provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems" (p.280), offering an insight into the nuances of learning the English language. Politicians have the power to legitimise stereotypical representations of "oppressed Muslim women" (van Es, 2016), passive victims who need the English language to save them from a backward culture without knowing anything about the women's lives. Alim and Smitherman (2012) argue that "white institutions define what is "standard," "official," and "normal" (p.171) and exercise power in the classroom through citizenship testing regimes, and one questions the relevance of such tests in supporting integration without exposure to British cultural life. The English language is seen as an empowerment tool so women can stand up for their rights, disregarding their own language and rights under Islam, and is a source of many Muslim women's agency.

I wanted to offer the women the opportunity to share stories about their own funds of knowledge that gave them autonomy and a sense of self-hood, as well as a voice in debates about language and citizenship. My research is documenting previously unheard stories of marginalisation and "making oppression structures visible that have been neglected" (Pande, 2020, 113), and the negative labelling of Muslim women, like my research participants, who have become a targeted group in policy. ESOL learners' experiences, if drawn out in research, can create a "knowledge bridge" between institutions and communities by illuminating barriers and challenges English language learners face, as well as understanding their motivation and aspirations.

1.1.3. The research questions

My research questions were:

1. How does the representation of Muslim female English language learners by policymakers and politicians differ from the experiences of Pakistani Muslim women?

2. What are some of the different methods for eliciting stories from learners and those who work in ESOL to understand changes in the field?

3. What are the challenges and barriers for Pakistani female English language learners in integrating with native speakers?

4. How does storytelling enable women to offer alternative narratives and reposition themselves as English language learners and citizens?

5. In what ways do different knowledge systems support Pakistani Muslim women's agency and identity in language learning settings?

The research questions are the objective of the study and the uncertainty the researcher wants to resolve, the "general concern that must be narrowed down to the concrete, researchable issues" (Hulley et al., 20013, p.2). My research questions are intended to elicit stories that capture the experiences of ESOL learners from Pakistan and those who support them, thus providing a timeline from 1980 to the present day. To understand integration and some of the complexities around policy and funding.

1.1.4. The rationale for the research

I wanted to understand the ESOL landscape and policies tied to the government's agenda on integration and immigration, and central to this are border spaces and foreign bodies that must fit in. The UK government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper: Building Stronger (2018) 'More United Communities' (Chapter 4) is dedicated to the English language: "Everyone living in England should be able to speak and understand English so they can integrate into life in this country" (DHCLG, 2018, p.35). That is what I expected to have happened to the women who accessed ESOL in the 1980s. It is argued "social integration is the process of creating unity, inclusion, and participation at all levels of society" (Cruz-Saco, 2008, p. 2), and can only happen if everyone speaks the same language. Through stories of previous ESOL learners and discussions with new learners, I wanted to examine how the political representation of Muslim women shapes their experiences. I will be focusing on the political language used to subjugate Muslim women's bodies; the old empire rhetoric played out through the English language today as Muslim women's struggles to be recognised as citizens. **(See Chapter 2, Literature Review).**

English language learners are often oriented towards a deficit discourse and seen as an educational problem rather than an asset. This is perpetuated "through education policies that focus on "fixing" students' linguistic limitations" (Shapiro, 2014, p.387). By trying to fix the problem, learner choices, decision-making, and autonomy are taken away. Tests are mere acts of demonstrating the state's power over subaltern women, some of whom may have had limited schooling and exposure to English speakers. I will be situating my research findings within the conceptual frame of post-colonial feminism and intersectionality to gain an insight into a particular cultural group's multi-faceted experience. The English language today is still

framed by the old discourse of saving Muslim women from their own kind and taking away their agency My work is also influenced by critical race theory: those who are culturally different face cultural racism, and if they are Muslim, they find themselves victims of Islamophobia, which impacts on their ability to be independent. The promotion of racist and Islamophobic ideologies based on cultural, ethnic and religious differences leads to unequal treatment of certain groups that impacts their agency. Goldberg (1993) and Barker (1982) refer to cultural racism as the negative stereotyping that leads to racist effects and does little to encourage integration. And finally, third space theory: classrooms have become spaces for promoting one history and one language; migrant women are creating third spaces of identity through their own knowledge systems. My **Findings Chapter (Section 4.5.)** will explore further the relationship between these theories and my data, addressing my research questions on how representation of Muslim women in policy differs from reality and how, through stories, the women reposition themselves as English language learners and citizens to gain agency.

1.1.5. Methodological approaches

I chose storytelling as a method to explore different philosophical approaches rooted in personal stories to understand and interpret women's lived experiences of learning the English language. Through stories, I explore their cultural experiences and their roles as wives, mothers, and carers and how those influence the learning of English, the balancing of family responsibilities with individual aspirations. Hartman (2015) argues that the interpretive method of women's accounts highlights some of the "nuances and hidden textures of experiences and offers us a richer appreciation of people's lives" (p.34). Stories can draw on individual experiences of their social world at the micro-level but also at the macro-level, the collective experience of Muslim women, such as public stigmatisation and labels; state control; and the imperial history of teaching other cultures the professed language of civilisation. Mohanty (2006) criticises the western methodological tools used in providing "proof" of the universality of powerless third-world women as victims. My methodology challenges the condition of universality by presenting different women's experiences over a period. Muslim women are not a homogenous group, and every woman is unique and experiences life differently. Storytelling is about diversity of voices (Boje, 2017) and a way of reaching those who would struggle to engage with other methods to communicate their lives, offering a flexible and diverse approach to collecting data.

1.1.6. Data collection

The method chosen for collecting the data was personal accounts of learners, teachers, and BAME organisations. Stories and conversations are an important source of data and, according to Kelly (2005), "stories are the building blocks of knowledge" (p.12), and they help social scientists understand the cultural lives of others; they provide "a medium for sharing, assessing, and interpreting events, experiences, and concepts to an audience" (ibid); and foster empathy. The observations and group discussions were open-structured conversations, fitting with indigenous story-sharing circles (Kovach, 2021). I held discussion groups with Pakistani female learners during the Life in the UK sessions to understand their experiences as recent language learners. I also undertook questionnaires with the said learners to understand their reasons for accessing the English language classes. I wanted a methodology that captured the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) of ethnic minority women's experiences in a gendered and racialised world. Research evolves. As Davis and Hughes (2014) point out, "research is a process of engaging in planned or unplanned interaction" (p.15) and reporting back. According to Piquemal (2001), research is a fluid practice that changes to accommodate the unexpected. My intention was to visit a community ESOL class accessed by new learners I had identified, but the group I was going to observe instead asked their ESOL tutor to deliver Life in the UK test preparation classes. I visited those sessions instead. The sessions have enhanced my research, raising concerns about the effectiveness of citizenship tests in supporting meaningful engagement between migrant women and native speakers **(See Findings, Section 4.4.).** My method allowed triangulation and offered me sufficient data to interpret and analyse Pakistani women's experiences relating to language learning, enabling me to break down the data into key themes and concepts relating to identity, independence, aspiration, agency and autonomy.

1.1.7. Significance of the research study

My research is intended to add to the existing body of knowledge on ESOL, presenting Pakistani Muslim women with the opportunity to articulate their lived experiences of learning the English language and complement earlier studies mentioned in the **Literature Review Chapter.** As migrant lives are fluid, changing, and evolving, we need up-to-date studies to keep up with their language and literacy practices. The English language has always been a privileged language, limiting access to elites in the colonial era, and today access is still limited through criteria and lack of funding. I wanted to explore the practical issues of learning English as told by the learners and the impact of policy on practice in the context of language and citizenship tests. The Oriental construct is reworked through policies that place Muslim women's bodies "on the geopolitical stage as anti-democratic and anti-liberal" (Zine, 2006,

p.2), and still retains currency in the twenty-first century. The othering of Muslim women is based on unfounded assumptions and stereotypes, as Ghaffer and Stevenson (2018) argue the "negative framing of Muslim women has a real implication for everyday experiences" (p. 62), including integration. Hopkins and Clayton (2020) in a report commissioned by Tell Mama mention that "more than half the Muslim respondents (55.9%) and 56.7% of female Muslim respondents had altered their behaviour because of Islamophobia" (p.16). The English language has the power to shape people into the image of the oppressor, but because Pakistani women are "cultural bearers" (Ali, 2003) and are perceived as not progressive enough by policymakers for retaining their language, culture, and faith, they are difficult to mould into the citizens the state desires.

1.1.8. My positionality

From an interpretive perspective, research is value-bound and cannot be separated from the researcher; I cannot stand completely outside my research participants' experiences. England (1994, cited in Del Casino, 2009) argues "the intersubjective nature of social life means that the researcher and the people being researched have shared meanings" (p. 243). Kathy Charmaz's (2017) view is that "what observers see and hear depends upon their prior interpretive frames, biographies, and interests, as well as research context and their relationship with research participants" (p.509). I share some of the complexities of being an insider researcher in **Section 3.3. of the Methodology Chapter**. My intention is to offer my research participants the space to share their stories and be reflective of my biography as a Pakistani Muslim woman. Giampapa (2011) argues that we are socially constructed beings and need to cast a reflective gaze on who we are and reflect on our position. I explain in the **Methodology Chapter** the approaches I used to be objective and not merge my experience with the participants. My position as an insider researcher gave me access to the women's experiences and allowed me to see the world through a Pakistani Muslim female ESOL learner's worldview.

1.1.9. Structure of the thesis

In the introductory chapter, I outline the aims of my research and its significance in the field of ESOL and the reason for the chosen methodological approach of stories to elicit the voices of ESOL learners and those who work with them. I will summarise the early migration of commonwealth citizens from Pakistan and migration patterns linked to kinship and marriage. I include my reflective account as a community development worker in the 1980s, supporting Pakistani women to access ESOL. The review of literature embeds the work of other scholars

in the same field. My literature review focuses on representation and storytelling as a way of questioning dominant ideologies of Muslim women, citizenship, and identity. Pakistani women's own knowledge systems, intersectionality, and the negative labelling of Muslim women draw out concepts of agency, autonomy, identity, independence, and aspiration. The theoretical underpinning of the research focuses on Postcolonial Feminism, Critical Race, and Third Space Theory. In my methodology chapter, I explain why I chose storytelling and the methods used to collect the data. I also reflect on my positionality, ontology (the reality of my experience), and epistemology (my knowledge as the knower) as an insider researcher. I will address the reliability and validity of my study and ethical considerations. Explain how the data was analysed and broken down into emergent themes to explain the lived experience of ESOL learners and theoretical themes to explain policy impact on the lives of Pakistani female Muslim language learners. The chapter on the research findings captures the voices of Pakistani women learning the English language and addresses some of the research questions through their stories, the motivation and challenges, and the difference learning English made to the women's lives and integration, as well as the changes seen by those learning English and those working in the field. I analyse the impact of citizenship tests on new language learners' experiences. I explore the initial emergent themes coming out of the data set, such as the women's own language and literacy practices, and then move to theoretical macro-level experiences to understand the impact of language and citizenship policies on new learners' lives. The concluding chapter brings together the findings and key concepts and how my data contributes to knowledge in the field of language learning and citizenship and the implications of my study. The limitations, recommendations and possible future areas of research.

Section 1.2: The arrival of the Pakistani diaspora community in the UK

1.2.1. Introduction

The Pakistani community in the UK is one of the oldest established migrant communities and is the subject of political discourses and public debates as Muslims. It is a community strengthened by kinship referred to as Biraderi (Bittles and Small, 2016), meaning brotherhood. Close bonds create a community, a shared identity, and a sense of belonging sustained through social interaction (Cobigo et al., 2016). A community is also created by spatial boundaries resulting from poverty, discrimination, and linguistic barriers. The Pakistani community in Britain is part of the larger South Asian faith diaspora community of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists.

Diaspora is a Greek term for "a nation or part of a nation separated from its own state or territory and dispersed among other nations but preserving its own national culture" (Dubnow, (1937), cited in Seligman and Johnson, 1997, p.126) that is today viewed as problematic in the West. The discourses about the Muslim community throughout history have shaped their experiences of being the 'other'. Discourse statements represent ideas about people or a race, produced by an authority having the power to make that representation (Nayar, 2012), such as political representation of Muslim women. The Pakistani community is viewed as being insular, inward-looking, and not willing to integrate by letting go of ties to their old homeland, its culture and language. The South Asian diaspora brought a rich cultural way of life and were not willing to part with it, and hence this is seen as a problem with national opinion. According to Khara (2020), the diaspora communities strengthen bilateral relationships, but policymakers dissociate themselves from the positive contribution made by these communities.

1.2.2. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Pakistan itself was created from the largest human migration in history. The partition of India resulted in the loss of millions of lives and the displacement of millions of people. At the same time, the British Empire came to an end. On August 14th, 1947, the new state of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was established based on religion. Pakistan means Pak - purity and stan - place. Pakistan is very rural and agricultural and is approximately three times the size of the UK. Pakistan is divided into four provinces: Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Punjab, and Sindh, as well as two administrative areas: Azad Kashmir and the Gilgit-Baltistan-Islamabad Capital Territory (Home Office, 2020). Most Pakistanis in Britain come from Azad Kashmir. Pakistan's population is around 176 million and is the sixth-largest country in the world with a substantial Muslim majority (Coleman and Capstick, 2011). Pakistan's population

is expected to reach 250 million by 2030. 60% of the population is younger than the age of 30 (UNESCO, 2019).

1.2.3. Pakistan languages and education

Pakistan is a multilingual country with 73 languages spoken (Abbas et al., 2018). Language planners in Pakistan are also struggling to instil a sense of identity and solidarity among their linguistic groups. In this complex linguistic landscape, it was decided that Urdu would be Pakistan's national language and a co-official language with English, used in administration, the judiciary, the military, and higher education. The Urdu language came into being in the 18th century (Rahman, 2011, p.19) and is associated with the Pakistani identity. The largest Pakistani community in Britain is Pahari speakers from the Jammu and Kashmir region, one of the largest ethnic non-European diaspora communities, and includes most of my research participants and myself. "Pahari is seldom portrayed as a language in its own right within a British context" (Hussain, 2014, p.483) and remains outside the official language categorisation. Pahari-Pothwari speakers make up two-thirds of the British Pakistani diaspora community (Nazir, 2020). The British during the colonial years portrayed Pahari/Punjabi "culture as uncivilized, crude, unsophisticated and inferior" Nawaz et al. (2012) p.74; Siddique (2011), which, even today, has led to Punjabi being viewed negatively. Many migrant Pakistani women come with language stigma before they even step into an ESOL class in Britain. Today, Punjabi is the 10th most widely spoken language globally (Kadyan et al., 2019). Punjabi has been promoted in folk music and dance; Bhangra music reverses its linguistic hierarchy (Pamment, 2017) from an inferior language to a popular language with young people, creating a Punjabi identity.

Not everyone in Pakistan had access to education or the English language. Rotherham's first-generation Pakistani men reminisce in a book titled '*Our Life Story'* (Elderly Asian men's social activity group, 2004) about their childhood and school days. One man mentions walking three hours each way to school at the age of 7. Some children could not finish school as their parents could not afford to buy them books.

> *I started school when I was eight* (…..) *I stopped when I was 12 because that would have meant going to middle school and we couldn't afford to buy the books, so I had to leave (Elderly Asian Men's Social Activity Group, 2004, p.8).*

To keep its privileged position as a lingua franca, English still caters to those with money who send their children to private schools. For Pakistan's elites, the English language helps them maintain their dominant position and creates what Shamim (2011) refers to as "linguistic

apartheid" amongst people. Similarly, Rahman (2004) refers to English language status as "educational apartheid". Those who can afford it have access to English with dreams of accessing the global economic market. Today, English maintains its hierarchical position through "competitiveness structured through a host of tests and assessments" (Piller and Cho, 2013, p. 23), and migrants are judged on how well they speak, read, and write English as well as how they interact in social and cultural settings.

1.2.4. South Asian population in the UK

People from Asian ethnic groups make up the UK's second-largest percentage of the population (at 7.5%) (2011 Census: Gov. UK. 2018-2019). The South Asian population living in the UK comes from three main countries, as follows:

Table 1 - Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi population breakdown

 The Indian population is estimated at 2.5%

 The Pakistan population is estimated at 2.0%

 The Bangladeshi population is estimated at 0.8%

(2011 Census. *The population of England and Wales:* Gov.UK).

Table 2 - Breakdown of the British population by ethnicity and region: Breakdown of population by UK regions

	Asian	Black	Mixed	White British	White other	Other
Region	%	%	%	%	%	%

East	4.8	2	1.9	85.3	5.5	0.5
East Midlands	6.5	1.8	1.9	85.4	3.9	0.6
London	18.5	13.3	5	44.9	14.9	3.4
North East	2.9	0.5	0.9	93.6	1.7	0.4
North West	6.2	1.4	1.6	87.1	3.1	0.6
South East	5.2	1.6	1.9	85.2	5.4	0.6
South West	2	0.9	1.4	91.8	3.6	0.3
Wales	2.3	0.6	1	93.2	2.4	0.5
West Midlands	10.8	3.3	2.4	79.2	3.6	0.9
Yorkshire and The Humber	7.3	1.5	1.6	85.8	3	0.8

(2011 Census. Regional Ethnic Diversity: Gov. UK).

The largest Asian population lives in London, followed by the West Midlands. The Yorkshire and Humber South Asian populations are well established, many coming to work in the steel and other heavy industries, textile mills and transport from the 1950s onwards, a pull factor (Martin and Zurcher, 2008) in their decision to live in a particular region.

1.2.4. Migrating of Pakistani community to Britain

The Pakistani community was a close-knit community when the first generation arrived in the 1960s, based on obligations, duty and responsibility supporting each other through hardship. It is argued by Jenkins (2014) that community is a powerful everyday notion as to how people organise their lives and the quality of their relationships in their place of settlement. These relationships between Pakistani community members created unity in a new place and a new "imagined Community" as termed by Anderson (2006), to replace the one they left behind, which is considered not compatible with the UK by policymakers. According to Cohen (1985), community is a cultural phenomenon and culture, like language, binds people together to share their own knowledge and literacy practices.

After the Second World War, "Britain called on workers in its ex-colonies to contribute to its economic reconstruction" (Joly and Wadia, 2017, p. 91), forming a migration chain from South Asia. The primary motive for Pakistani migration to Britain in the late 1950s and early 1960s was socio-economic. Britain used its historical links with postcolonial countries to bring a strong male workforce (Shaw, 2000) to Lancashire textiles, Midland manufacturing, and Yorkshire steel, providing industrial Britain with a young workforce who worked long hours for little pay.

The British Nationality Act of 1948 was passed, enabling workers from the colonies to enter the United Kingdom to fill the labour shortage left by the Second World War, and "between 1948 and 1962, some 500,000 non-white British subjects entered the UK" (Hansen, 1999, p. 68). The Act conferred the status of a "British Citizen" on "Commonwealth Citizens" of the colonies once occupied by the British Empire, including Pakistan. Many South Asians migrated to Britain, mainly from poorer farming families. Migration was far less individualistic but more of a family decision. The young men who were supported by their families to migrate to Britain would share their income by sending money back home to the family. The first arrivals facilitated the arrival of further kinsmen of fellow villagers, creating a cascading chain migration (Ballard,1996). One person would settle in the UK and would then help others from his village to come over and help them find employment and accommodation.

The initial migrants in the chain represented single men looking for work. Later, many men returned home to get married and called their wives and children to the UK to join them (Capstick 2011). The first generation of Pakistani women who came to this country to join their husbands had high hopes and aspirations to make a better life for their children, enduring years of loneliness. Werbner (1990) undertook fieldwork with the British Pakistani community in the 1980s and found that new migrants struggled to recapture kinship and faced stereotypes of being brown strangers. Luqman (2018), who set up the Tassibee project in Rotherham to support older Pakistani women, states that the first cohort of women found it difficult to adapt to the cultural life, the weather, and access to services. Not being able to speak English was a barrier for women, especially as they got older and their children moved away, leaving them isolated and having not learned English.

I worked for a community organisation called Al-Muneera in Rotherham that received Heritage Lottery funding to collect stories of first-generation immigrants from Pakistan. The project, "*Their Lives Our History' (2007)"* captured the women's narratives. A further project, "*Sheffield City of Steel: South Asian Men's Contribution"* (2011), explores stories of first-generation men who worked in the steel industry. Al-Muneera focused on young people's heritage and identity

to build confidence. The older generations' stories tell of strong community networks and solidarity, with friends and relatives offering a helping hand.

Mr. Jalal Din, who was a friend of my family and our neighbour for many years, describes his journey from Pakistan.

> *I came to England on 7th July 1957. My friend told me about the jobs in England and invited me here. I caught a bus from Mirpur to Karachi, where I had my passport made and boarded a plane from Karachi to Heathrow, London. I got a train to Sheffield and got a taxi to James Street, Rotherham.* (2011, p.11).

Soon, sons followed their fathers, as Sondhi (1997) states "after the first phase of migration, older male children were generally brought across to join their fathers, initially to keep the house and cook for the working parent and then to be introduced in turn into the workforce" (p.225). It must have been difficult for these young men to cope without their mothers and siblings.

> *My father was already in England and lived on Spring Street, where he rented a room. There were 20 men living in the house we stayed in. (…). My father used to cook dinner for me and my four relatives..*

> *When I first came, I went to what used to be Spurley Hey School for a few months to learn English. I then went to work on Greasbrough Road. I later found work at Isaac, Israel and Walker Limited, Chemical Works in Rotherham* (Mr. M. Munir MBE, 2011).

Wives and younger children followed suit subsequently. The British Nationality Act (1948) was followed by the Commonwealth and Immigration Act (1962), which was intended to restrict entry to those who had a work permit to enter the country to reduce the number of immigrants. This had the opposite effect, and according to Akhtar (2014), it accelerated migration as husbands sought to bring over their wives and children to "beat the ban" (p.233), which led to a sizeable Pakistani community in the UK.

Often, the girls were left with their grandmothers and only the boys were brought to England to work, and many felt England was not culturally suitable for girls. It must have been heart-breaking to leave some children behind. Mrs. Z. Begum describes that emotional separation.

> *I had to leave my 5-year-old daughter behind.*

> *By the time I was reunited with my daughter, 15 years had gone by. She hardly knew me - we were like strangers. In my mind, all I could see was a little girl. When we met again, I saw my daughter had turned into a beautiful young woman. I had to ask a relative who my daughter was.* (Al-Muneera, 2007, p.5).

Loss of home and family is a part of the diaspora story. Migrants gaining something from coming to England meant losing something else, such as separation from loved ones and isolation. Migration patterns change over time. Many Pakistanis today migrate to affluent Muslim countries to find work or across the border to India. In 2017, 22% of the 6 million Pakistani emigrants lived in Saudi Arabia, 18% in India, 16% in the United Arab Emirates, 15% in Europe, and 6% in the United States of America (International Organization for Migration, 2019). Not all new diaspora communities need to come to the West today to find work.

1.2.5. First-generation women and learning English

Even in those early days, as Layton-Henry (1992) acknowledges, there were concerns about how immigrants would integrate into British life, and women were especially a concern. Furthermore, how the cultural differences would be managed by all those who encountered a "more advanced culture would do well to adopt its practices" (Stopes-Roe and Cochrane, 1990, p.9). The first generation of female migrants had little public profile and used Islam as a means of maintaining a connection with the homeland and creating their own kin networks, "encapsulated in their own world" (Akhtar, 2014, p.234).

One of the obstacles was language, especially for first-generation Pakistani women, who had to rely on their husbands or take the children out of school to act as interpreters or find support amongst the wider kinship. The women did try and engage with the English language.

Mrs. Z. Begum came to England in 1968, arriving here with one suitcase and two children. She remembers some of the difficulties when buying things.

> *I would leave the money on the counter in the shop and wait for the change - I had no idea about English money and could not read the prices. I trusted the English shopkeeper. Learning to speak was a great achievement for me. I learned to write my name and then the alphabet. My son helped me to learn English - slowly I began to feel better, and it became easier.* (Al- Muneera, 2007, p.6).

There were some women, even then wanting to learn English and do things for themselves. They had volunteers and teachers going into their homes to teach English, as Mrs. R. Begum remembers.

A lady came to my house to teach me English. She helped me with phrases and the alphabet. By the end of it, I could read the names of places, and I even managed to catch a coach to Birmingham to visit my cousin. It was a great feeling of independence. Although I could not speak English very well, I understood most of it. (2007, Al-Muneera p.22).

Many Pakistani women, upon arriving in England in whatever decade, were determined to learn the English language for independence.

1.2.6. Marriage migration

Marriage migration is still a common route for women from Pakistan to enter Britain and is linked to the old networks of social solidarity based on what Ballard (1990), refers to as "parochial loyalties" (p.219) to kinship being constructed and reconstructed continuously. The links to Pakistan were important to the new arrivals. As Winder (2004) points out, "Muslims themselves were reluctant to sever any ties with the homeland" (p.387). Those ties continue today through marriage and apply to most of my research participants. Over the last two decades, total immigration to the UK has doubled, mainly due to marriage and permanent settlement, and over half of British Pakistani Muslims are married to spouses from overseas, often from their grandparents' homeland. (Charsley et al., 2020). Most of my research participants are wives of second and third-generation British Muslim men born in this country.

In recent years, there has been stricter control on overseas marriages, seen as impacting negatively on integration. There is hostility towards these transnational marriages and negative press. Spouses from Pakistan have been accused of bringing 'third world poverty' to places like Bradford, according to Ann Cryer, the MP for Keighley, in a newspaper, saying spouses from abroad cannot speak English and therefore cannot take part in the civic life of the country (Bourley, 2006). Such comments build hostility against women from Pakistan. Qureshi et al. (2014) highlight that in such marriages, often young people's personal happiness and choice are sacrificed for family unity, leading to sometimes divorce Some women are left very vulnerable to domestic violence, complex immigration laws, and kinship conflicts (Qureshi, 2020). Furthermore, the women are given limited time to learn English and sit the citizenship test, and passing the test is critical for them to remain in the UK.

1.2.7. Rotherham Pakistani community

Rotherham is a market town and a place where immigrants came to work because of its steel factories and mills, ironworks, and glassworks in the 1960s. "Rotherham steelworks were fully operating and coal mines ringed the town" (Pahl and Crompton, 2017, p.21), which drew workers from Pakistan in the 1950s and 1960s. A number of those workers settled in Rotherham and worked in Rotherham and Sheffield's steel industry and glassworks.

A significant number of Pakistanis came from Mirpur, Azad Kashmir, settled in Rotherham and spoke Mirpuri/Punjabi. Rotherham is the 53rd most deprived out of 326 English districts (RMBC/Rotherham NHS, 2011, p. 5), driven by high unemployment, low qualifications, skill levels, and poor health. A third of Rotherham's population lives in areas that are amongst the most deprived 20% in England, with poor housing, amenities, and environment. The population of Rotherham in 2014 was estimated at 260,100, with 90% being white British. The largest BME communities are Pakistani/Kashmiri, followed by Slovak/Czech Roma (RMBC 2016, p.6).

The BAME population tends to be congregated in the central areas of Rotherham, where new migrant communities have settled alongside established ethnic minority groups. This has led to spatial boundaries between white and minority communities and a lack of integration. Pryce (2017) states that the long-term polarisation of certain communities means it becomes more challenging for integration to take place, leading to fragmented communities. Rotherham is also a town that has seen a number of far-right marches impact on the local community. BAME women have been fearful of going out "in the face of what can sometimes boil over to become violent bigotry and racism" (Jamie, 2018, p.1). The far-right marches were instigated by outsiders but leave a legacy behind, especially making women vulnerable to hate crime.

1.2.8. Conclusion

From the colonial era onwards, English has been the language of privilege, therefore retaining its power by limiting access. English in colonial lands during the rule of the Empire was linked to high-status administration jobs and was not offered to the masses to rise above their station as they needed illiterate manual labourers (Pennycook, 2017). Today, in this country, access to English is limited to new arrivals due to a lack of resources. Learning the English language is the first step towards cultural integration for new arrivals if they have equal access to it.

Section 1.3: Auto-ethnographic reflections

1.3.1. Introduction

I am the daughter of immigrants who came here in the early 1960s from Dadyal in Azad Kashmir, Pakistan. My parents spoke limited English, and when required, I would have to miss school and act as an interpreter. As a child, it was difficult to understand and interpret the adult world. Education, in my opinion, is an important tool for women's autonomy and empowerment, reinforcing self-worth and independence, developing skills and knowledge to improve their situation and enhancing their capacity to respond to life challenges (Islam and Shukran, 2020; Bhat, 2015; Shetty and Hans, 2015).

I also recognise the obstacles women face trying to balance their learning with family commitments. I question the morality of the way Muslim women are marginalised in debates around language by the media, politicians, and policymakers. Even today, I meet young women in my town who ask me to signpost them to English classes and remind me that I supported their mother-in-law or aunt to access English classes in the 1980s when I worked as a community development worker for Rotherham's first BAME women's organisation. Hustedde and Ganowicz (2002) suggest that community developers "build the capacity of people when they encourage or teach others to create their own dreams, to learn new skills and knowledge" (p.3). I passionately believe that through education, women can create their own dreams and realities. For me, community development underpins the principles of social justice and equality, and I remember those days with great fondness. Today, the list of organisations I can signpost new migrant women to classes has diminished.

1.3.2. Community engagement and outreach

My experience of outreach as a community development worker involved walking in the pouring rain, door-knocking and going into homes and persuading family members to let a young bride who arrived recently from Pakistan attend English classes just a street away. The male members of the family, the husband and father-in-law, usually said 'yes'. I was persistent, and eventually they let the young woman come to an English class.

During the summer, we would take three or four coaches full of Pakistani women and children to the seaside. I remember going to Blackpool in the rain in August and everyone getting soaked. Trips to Alton Towers, Flamingo Land, and York were the only times the women left Rotherham. I remember running a toy library, a large cupboard full of toys that were loaned out, and running sewing classes, knitting classes, cooking classes, computer classes, and

fitness sessions. We also organised women's health sessions delivered by health visitors and community nurses. The centre where I worked was a busy community hub. There were enough funding streams.

Most women wanted to access English classes and valued the importance of learning English. The classes were always full. At that time, I did not fully understand the other commitments the women had in their lives that often made it difficult for them to attend an ESOL class every week due to family responsibilities. As one gets older, one sees the world from lots of different perspectives, and it dawns on you that acquiring English does not necessarily equate to equity or social justice. Speaking English does not necessarily mean you are accepted, as you will always be a Muslim woman seen through the intersectional colonial lens (Crenshaw, 1989) and different from white women. Throughout my life, I have struggled with my identity. Can one be British and Muslim? A report commissioned by the Racial Equality Council (2005) explores the term "Britishness" and what it means. One of the respondents, a Pakistani/Bangladeshi Londoner, stated:

> *I am British from head to toe, but I'm a Muslim British. So that's what the establishment doesn't like. They want us to leave the Muslim side and stand on the British side*. (ETHNOS, 2005b, p.40)

This resonates with me emotionally, as I cannot be British if I am expected to let go of my Muslim identity, which is my most important identity. I experience the everyday as a Muslim woman and understand some of the issues Muslim women face in modern Britain that a white researcher would not understand.

1.3.3. Conclusion

There are many discourses and assumptions about Muslim women that "others" them. Being Muslim and British is difficult to achieve if the state devalues your existing identities, heritage, culture and language. Muslim women find themselves outside the 'habitual order' and torn between their homeland and the fear of being rejected in the new place. Said (2000) argues exile is an experience of being "always out of place" (p.180), and this is how often Muslim women feel, even those born here like me. I wanted to know how women, like my research participants, who were not born in this country and spoke limited English were positioned in British society, which influenced my decision to conduct this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. ESOL policy and the language of politics

The purpose of the literature review is to site my research within the context of previous research in the same field and steer it towards the fundamental question of how this research adds to the existing body of knowledge and builds on "intellectual foundations" (Agalianos, 2006, p.43). My research primarily focuses on Pakistani female ESOL learners' experiences of learning the English language, citizenship, and some of the barriers and challenges. Reflecting on South Asian women's own diverse knowledge, language, and literacy practices worthy of recognition, giving them a sense of identity and autonomy. The work of other scholars provides a theoretical lens on how intersectional power shapes Pakistani Muslim women's lived experiences.

The themes I will focus on are linked to the research questions and stated below:

- Policy making and ESOL provision for British Asian Muslim women denying them agency
- Citizenship, identity, and who belongs and who does not.
- The barriers and challenges to learning English, independence and integration.
- Pakistani women's own spaces of empowerment and autonomy gained through different knowledge systems.
- Technology supporting female language learners' aspirations.
- The intersectional nature of Pakistani Muslim ESOL learners' lives and identities.

The literature review examines policymaking through a post-colonial lens, and today's language policies are linked to citizenship naturalisation tests, gatekeeping, assessment, and national identity (Loring and Ramanathan, 2016); Mora and Piper (2021); El-Enany (2020); Brah and Phoenix (2004); Abu-Lughod (2013); Mirza (2016, 2020); and Khaf (2020) all highlight the discrimination that Muslim women face in the West today. The policy representation of Muslim women takes away their agency and impacts Pakistani women's daily routines and independence, hindering integration with native speakers as highlighted by the women in this research.

I have reviewed the work of leading scholars in the field of language to gain an understanding of academic debates on language and citizenship tests, focusing on representation, power, intersectionality, gender, race, identity, individual agency, autonomy, independence and ESOL learners' aspirations. The work of Conteh (2015); Cooke (2002, 2009); Heller (2006,

2020); Simpson (2015, 2020, 2021); and I have also cited recent doctoral studies in the field of ESOL by Swinney (2017) and Elmore (2017). I will be citing the work of Collins (2000, 2015, 2017) and Crenshaw (1989, 1991); Foucault (1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 2003a, 2003b); Spivak (1988, 1993, 1999); Freire (1993, 1996); Fanon (1963, 1986, 2020); Said (1978, 1991, 1996, 2000); and Bhabha (2012) to position my research in a theorising space exploring the lived experience of Pakistani female ESOL learners. I aim to provide a "sufficient argument to justify the research topic" (Hart, 2018, p.117), identifying gaps in knowledge from an insider perspective.

Section 2.2. Policy making and ESOL provision for British Asian Muslim women denying them agency

2.2.1. Introduction: Postcolonial Feminism

According to Tyagi (2014), postcolonial feminist theory is concerned with the Western world's representation that distorts the experiences and realities of women from once colonised countries. As my findings will show, the reality of learning the English language differs from what is represented by policymakers, politicians, and the media. Hawkesworth (2016) refers to embodied power that produces "hierarchical groups through racializing and gendering" (p.3) by assigning places in the social order to different types of citizens. Ives et al. (2018) point out that "language is a positioning tool," placing racialised bodies in a position of inferiority. Language speakers are defined by their relational position in a social space, and language exchanges take place within social structures (Bourdieu, 1991) that Muslim women are not part of or allowed entry to. Schapiro (1994) argues that hierarchical relationships create relational boundaries and tension "between the self and the social surround" (p.4), leading to the marginalisation of women like my research participants in white spaces.

2.2.2. Defining Muslim women

Muslim women are not a homogenous group, and I am focusing on Pakistani women. My research participants are also Muslim women, and hence, the problem lies when language and citizenship policies group them together and deny them agency and their heritage identity. Kahf (1999) argues "Why not speak about representations of Arab women, Turkish women, African women? Such distinctions may be valid when it comes to social science analysis of women in Islam" (p13). If the government uses the term "Pakistani women," then the old construct of the Oriental Muslim female would disappear. As Al-Naseri (2004) points out, Islam embraces a huge range of nationalities and cultures, and each culture or nationality has a different interpretation of Islam and the rights of women. While Marcotte (2010) argues that "Muslim women's lives are as varied as the types of Islam and the social values they, their family, and their ethnic/cultural community embrace" (p.358), there are various manifestations of Islam, and a broad-brush approach should not be applied to all Muslim women. Zeitz (2017) argues that the Muslim woman's body has become a battleground of "ideological and political tug of war". (p.1). Ray (2003) also argues that "Asian womanness" has been predominantly coded in dominant discourse in oppressive ways" (p.861). My research participants challenge the postcolonial trajectory that places Muslim women in a subordinate position through western representation based on stereotypes.

2.2.3. Political representation of Muslim women as a problem

Sarby (2011) states that Muslim women have been inscribed as a negative female ideal "rooted in a complex web of social, political and historical matrices" (p. 9), creating the "other." Othering refers to a "process by which imperial discourse creates its others" (Mushtaq, 2010, p. 25), forming part of the Self/Other binary. When you are labelled the "other," it is difficult to integrate because you are told from the start that you are not one of us. Muslim women have always been a policy problem for European countries as to how they will fit into white spaces. "Problematization is based upon the premise that rather than policies reacting to "problems" to be solved, they in fact play a significant role in shaping or constituting the "problem," argues Van Aswegen et al. (2019, p.188). Pakistani women maintain the culture and traditions of the old country, and that is seen as problematic. As argued by Edward Said (1978). "Eurocentric policies construct the Muslim woman as a 'problem to be solved or confined" (p.207) and policies are intended to assimilate her into their new environment since her culture is perceived as not being compatible with Western culture. Razack (2004) argues that "Europe has long held a legal fascination with the Muslim woman's body as a culturally different body" (149). Culture is emotive; it breeds a sense of British superiority.

An example of political representation of Muslim communities was when, in 2016, the UK government allocated a £20 million Community Fund to teach English to isolated Muslim women. The previous year, in July 2015, the government cut ESOL funding by £45 million (Staufenberg, 2016), giving with one hand and taking away with the other. Politicians sometimes make misguided statements rather than acknowledge sporadic funding. In a national newspaper article, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, blamed Muslim men for their backward attitudes and for exerting damaging control over women in their families (Cameron, 2016a). As "passive" Muslim women, we are seen as having no autonomy under the western gaze. Such representations are harmful to community cohesion and divert attention away from ESOL funding cuts. Muslim women's agency and confidence were damaged by David Cameron's language, threatening to deport them if they did not learn English (2016b), which is ironic when the government claims to want to empower the women. At the time, Cameron was accused of singling out Muslim women and communities (Wigfield and Turner, 2016). His truth does not match reality. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) argue that power "fears the truth, power must suppress it" (p.129), diverting attention. As Fanon (2020) argues, words are fluid and deceitful, and to achieve power, they must trick the eye, in this instance, blaming the Muslim communities and covering the truth of inadequate resources.

Through digital spaces, Muslim women are challenging the stereotypes. An example of that is Muslim women's response to being referred to as "traditionally submissive" by David Cameron

in 2016. Around 3000 Muslim women went on Twitter using "#TraditionallySubmissive" (Wilson, 2016) to tell a different story, NHS doctors, teachers, sportswomen, academics, mothers and grandmothers. Ahmed (2019) argues that the "internet has opened up vast possibilities for expression and dialogue for Muslim women" (p.87), elevating Muslim women's voices, allowing them to debate and contradict, voices that can no longer be suppressed in the 21st century. Yasmin and Azim (2020) mention that there are three billion Muslim women who will be different and will not look or sound the same way. Through activism, Muslim women are reframing their lives in a positive way.

2.2.4. Muslim women's agency and autonomy

The way Muslim women are represented takes away their agency, which McNay (2016) refers to as the "capacity of a person to intervene in the world in a manner that is deemed, according to some criterion or another, to be independent and relatively autonomous" (p.40), having the freedom to decide. Jing and Benson (2013) argue that capacity is "what a person has the potential to do, rather than what they can do" (p.9). Sadly, women's potential and choices are curbed by the restrictive curriculum. Cole (2019) views agency as an action taken to express individual power to think and act for themselves. As English language learners, women have limited power in the classroom when the focus is on tests and exams. Their learning is dictated by government policy on naturalisation. According to Mustafa and Mische (1998), agency itself is an elusive term, "associated with: selfhood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom, and creativity" (p.962). My participants in the **Findings chapter** will talk about their selfhood and agency through their roles outside of the English class. McNay (2016) stresses that agency often "overlaps with a cluster of adjacent concepts: autonomy, free will, intentionality, choice, reflexivity" (p.40). Choice and self-worth are important aspects of autonomy, and the way Muslim women are represented chips away at their self-esteem. The women accessing ESOL want to learn English for everyday use, and tests and exams were not a priority, but that choice and decision-making is taken away from them when teachers must prepare them to take tests. In the context of learning, "autonomous learning" is associated with decisions that language learners make about their learning (Gao, 2013, p.235) and have some control of the learning process. I will explore how much control my research participants have over their learning and its relevance to their everyday lives.

2.2.5. Women's Empowerment through the English language

Vighnarajah (2021) contends that "English as a lingua franca plays an important role in cultivating the power of language across the globe" (2021, p.54) and that "English covers a wide spectrum of knowledge, attitudes, and values" (ibid, p.61), with the expectation that

migrants will abandon their native languages. Esch (2009) argues that English is seen as a neutral vehicle for international communication and encourages teachers to empower people through giving them the knowledge of English to balance social inequality. It is unimaginable that a language alone can make such a significant change in the world. The British Council sells the virtues of the English language as a language that changes lives (British Council, 2013) and with significant investment behind it in order to make it the lingua franca and the language of empowerment. According to Bush and Folger (1994), empowerment is "the restoration to individuals of a sense of their own value and strength and their own capacity to handle life's problems" (p. 12). The Pakistani women I interviewed were resilient and strong, and their empowerment came from a variety of sources. Haque et al. (2011) rightly state that "empowerment" is a very widely used term, particularly in the context of women and the poor, but is often misused and poorly defined. Muslim women stand relational to western women, connected by "womanhood". Edross (1997), exploring the dichotomy between traditional and modern discourses, argues that Muslim women's gender identity is defined through a "subjective positioning within and between modern versus traditional discourses on womanhood, coupled with ethnic-religious identity" (p. 29). Many Muslim women have managed to be traditional and modern, balancing traditional cultural values with successful careers on their terms.

Empowerment is a difficult word to define, as it means different things to different people. Griffen (1989) defines empowerment as women feeling listened to, valued, having self-worth and confidence, having some bargaining power, Often, Muslim women lack self-esteem and "internalise those messages" (Rowlands, 1997, p.11) that they are inferior and do not belong here. According to Cherayi and Jose (2016), Muslim women's empowerment is linked to personal autonomy, decision-making within the family and domestic consultation. Muslim women are often empowered in the home but disempowered in public spaces and don't have the political power that white women have. The discourse surrounding immigrants has not always been friendly. Lupton (1992) defines discourse as "a group of ideas and a patterned way of thinking" (p.145). Political thinking can be irrational, labelling Muslim women in a particular way without justification and disempowering women. It is argued by Syed and Pio (2009) that Muslim migrant women face "triple jeopardy (ethnicity/religion, gender, and migration)" (p.132). Gender alone makes it difficult for women to attend classes if they have children and there is no creche. Wadia (2016) also argues that Muslim women suffer a "triple penalty" and face discrimination in many areas of life, being stigmatised as passive and not well-informed. These assumptions constrain them.

2.2.6. White men saving Muslim women reconstructed in policy

Gedalof (2007) argues some bodies, designated as "not-belonging" (p.79) and Muslim women's bodies are marked by the colonial history of the Empire: "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak, 1988). Women in colonial India were seen as objects needing protection from their own kind. Through this misguided sentiment, English language policies are developed; if a woman can speak English, she is seen as progressive and empowered, denying her agency through her own language. Other women need protection when they are vulnerable, but it is only Muslim women who need saving. This point is argued by Brah and Phoenix (2004), referring to the fantasy of the veiled Muslim woman in need of rescue obsession. The subaltern is not considered a full citizen and is made invisible. The subaltern has "no history and cannot speak. The subaltern as a female is even more in the shadow" (Spivak, 1988, p.287), and remains a victim in Eurocentric eyes. Landry and Maclean (1996) argue the problem isn't so much that the subaltern can't speak; it is that the privileged don't hear her. If she was heard, she would cease to be a subaltern and her position would change. "Subaltern" is a military term referring to lower ranks (Busteed, 2005). Muslim women are a site of differences, binaries of opposition tied to colonial policies written in what Spivak (1993) refers to as the "essence of life". "You are written into these users of the essence. This is a strategy by which history plays you, your language plays you" (p.7). Whatever words are uttered by Muslim women come from a body that often wears the hijab and traditional dress.

Muslim women and Islam have become the markers of difference. Mustafa (2020) argues that by "depicting Muslim men as violent and oppressive, old stereotypical constructs continue to maintain currency" (p.4). These stereotypes inform language and citizenship policies and public attitudes. "Muslim women's liberation lies in the heroines' escape to the West" (Hasan, 2015, p.92) so that they can be free by embracing the Western way of life, and politicians and policymakers are unable to overcome this stumbling block. The English language is the saviour, argues Kassam (2014), by creating a liberal, good, modern "can-do woman" (p.543). As Muslim women, we are destined to never be the "can-do woman." If we were, we would not need saving. The state offers us paternalistic protection (Jiwami, 2009), if we become more theirs through the English-language rescue mission (Cooke, 2002).

2.2.7. Conclusion

Today's policy rhetoric vilifies all Muslim women who do not speak English. Brown et al. (2015) found misrepresentation leads to Muslims being treated with suspicion that "negatively impacts on collective self-esteem and cultural identity" (ibid, p.57). Representation of female language learners who share the Islamic faith is sensationalised in the media, leading to

40

ostracization. The lives of Pakistani Muslim women are oversimplified by the dichotomy of victimhood and the need for western intervention to liberate docile bodies. Muslim women are showered with Western empathy without a real insight into the lives of Pakistani women like my participants. How women are represented has a direct impact on their everyday agency. Moallern (2008) argues that "the question of representation and subalternity includes an interrogation of who is speaking on behalf of Muslim women" (p.107). I advocate that Muslim women can represent themselves if the opportunity to speak is presented to them, which would vastly enhance their agency and they would feel more empowered.

Section 2.3. Citizenship, identity and who belongs and who does not

2.3.1. Introduction to the Life in UK Test

Under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, the "Life in the UK" test came into force, creating "a new set of constraints for English language learners and teachers because achievements at particular language levels are linked to gaining citizenship" (Baynham and Simpson, 2010, p.423). The mandatory citizenship and language tests are a tool for "self-selection of new citizens who struggle to pass the tests "without any cultural or linguistic exposure" argues Goodman (2011, p.236) with native speakers and a lack of resources to prepare people for tests. It is argued by Cooke (2009) that "immigration, national identity, and citizenship were thus tied together discursively and in law" (p.72). She argues that testing is part of the re-assertion of nation-building responding to mass migration. The old rhetoric of the empire is recreated through citizenship tests; Simpson (2015) argues the notion of "Britishness" is as a way of creating a stable society through the myth of one language, arguing the importance of English as a language of equality is overstated. Equality is about a sense of fairness and justice, and it does not feel very just to force people like the Pakistani women in my research to take tests when they are not ready. Graham-Brown (2017) highlights a change in tone from a shared vision of a multicultural society to "a more assimilationist, with emphasis on the obligations of migrants" (p. 6) from the government. Differences should be celebrated, and obligations should involve a reciprocal relationship. No test can measure civil and political participation since citizenship is a lived commitment. The government, in its desperation to bring communities together, creates new policies without fully comprehending the impact.

2.3.2. Muslim women's identities

The ideology of one nation, one language is viewed as a tool for integration, a more unified identity. Diller and Moule (2005) define identity as "the stable inner sense of who a person is, which is formed by the successful integration of various experiences of the self into a coherent self-image" (p.120). Whilst "ethnic identity" refers to the "part of personal identity that contributes to the person's self-image as an ethnic group member" (2005, p.120). The most important identity for the Pakistani ESOL female learners was linked to their faith, home, and community, but also their own diverse knowledge systems and languages that gave them a strong Islamic and cultural identity. Wagner et al. (2012) state that "identity is always produced through and against the views of others, and so a minority's identity construction is always a response to how they have been stereotyped by the majority" (p.524). Hasan (2020) gives an example of reinforcing stereotypes: the stay-at-home non-Muslim women's choice is regarded as "devotion" while Muslim women's choice is regarded as being "oppressed". Identities are

constructed in relation to others, and if you are labelled in a negative way, those labels become your identity, such as victim, submissive, docile. Moghiss (2006) argues that identity is not static and is changing. Transforming with a renewed emphasis on Islam gives Muslims grounding in a new place. In a white society, Muslim identities will change as you adapt to new surroundings and your aspirations change. According to Noormohamed (2008), new identities for Muslim women are emerging as educated and politically engaged, creating "new images, paths, and identities for themselves in the evolving global marketplace" (p.72). Both Islamic and Western education have been a driver of women's empowerment and changing identities.

Women taking language and citizenship tests, like my research participants, are left to fend for themselves without any preparation, which is why they asked me to set up the Life in the UK classes. Mora and Piper (2021) argue that certain policies are very targeted since the Life in the UK test requires people, especially from the former colonies, to "prove their knowledge of "British values" extends longstanding othering processes" (2021, p. 497). In the United Kingdom, Muslim women have been specifically targeted in high-profile debates on English language proficiency, which began in 2016 with David Cameron, arguing that a lack of English language proficiency skills means they cannot engage with British values (Erel et al., 2018). Cameron makes no distinction between Muslim women who speak English and those who don't, applying a broad brush. Those who take the test are seen as outsiders, in contrast to those who have automatic citizenship by birth and may not feel any sense of duty and responsibility to the motherland. Shohamy (2006) argues that language is used to "create group membership ('us and them'), to demonstrate inclusion or exclusion, to determine loyalty or patriotism, to show economic status (haves/have-nots), and classification of people and personal identities" (p. xv). Muslim women are not seen as part of the imagined community (Anderson, 2006).

2.3.3. Conforming the body through exams and tests

Fairclough (2001) argues that language creates unequal relations of power associated closely with ideologies about language, cultural capital, and social status. Hyatt (2005) argues that "if language is invested with power relationships, then an understanding of power is central to an understanding of language use" (p. 46) since power shapes language learners' experiences. Powerful institutions create villains, like the hijab-wearing Muslim women. It is a "machinery for incitement, with its public presentations, its theatre of ritual crisis, carefully staged" (Foucault, 1978, p.55) and migrant women are the reluctant actresses who cannot read the script. Power is exerted over Pakistani women like my research participants through English language policies, modifying, correcting and transforming docile bodies (Foucault, 1982,

1979) to make them fit into white spaces. Power must do something since immigration can never be completely stopped but can be regulated. Parsons (1963) views power as coercive or consensual; "power comes down to one or the other" (p.232) and sometimes you really have no choice but to consent, like the women in my research; they cannot refuse to take the Life in the UK test. Some minority ethnic women have more power to challenge power. Power can engage softly and secure consent, or it can constrain and forbid secure compliance. The Life in the UK test is part of a power game that the state plays with some groups of ESOL learners. "Power needs to be seen" (Mills, 2003, p.35) and is constantly performed rather than achieved. One way to do that is to change the criteria for citizenship through tests. Power can do good and change the course of history, such as ending apartheid. Fairclough (2001) argues that "ideologies are closely linked to power" (p.3) and that power itself is not bad; it is how power is applied to the bodies of citizens and non-citizens that can oppress the body.

Citizenship is a complex concept when we all live hybrid global lives. Marshall (1950) suggested that citizenship had three elements: civil, political, and social-based on freedom and rights; political engagement; and economic welfare and security. Scheurich (1994) states that the function of policy is to normalise or discipline problem groups whose behaviour is inconsistent with the social order. Full membership is denied if one does not conform to speaking one language, "because a "normal" person naturally belongs to only one language and culture unit" (Blommaert et al. 2012, p.3). Language and citizenship policies sustain and nourish the empire's colonial history. Speaking other languages seems to have become a threat to the dominant speech community.

The Life in the UK test covers the values and principles of the United Kingdom and the history of wars and battles lost and won. As Cannadine (2002) states, "the British Empire may have vanished from the map, but it has not entirely vanished from the mind" (p.179). The test defines a narrow and selective imperial script. Swartz (1992) rightly argues that "master scripting silences multiple voices and perspectives" (p.341), privileging the white male voice. Master scripting is defined as "cultural script or dominant discourse" (Hammack, 2009, p.51) rooted in memories of a collective history and identity. The Life in the UK test is part of that grand master narrative. One of the test questions asks, "During which period did the British Empire become the largest empire in the world, with an estimated population of more than 400 million people?" (British Citizenship Test, Test 19, question 9). How does this question help migrants integrate? to be reminded once again of the harm done by colonialism to South Asia.

Teachers often lose agency and are expected to be intermediaries or brokers, argue Cooke and Peutrell, (2019), having to deliver the government's official vision of citizenship alongside supporting ESOL learners to function in their daily lives. Shah (2019) argues that the adult

ESOL citizenship education offer is unlikely to empower migrants or "deliver social cohesion and integration, or an actively participatory citizenry, unless issues of social justice and equity are addressed" (ibid, 2019, p.213), which leads to segregation. The lack of money to take part in cultural activities, visits to museums, art galleries, and sports events facilitate integration with the host community. Citizenship tests are mere tools of power used as a sanction by the government. Hashem and Aspinall (2010) found the introduction of the citizenship test did not significantly impact motivation for learning English. The London Bangladeshi women in their study wanted to learn English to remain close to their children due to the cultural gap between them and their children. Tests and qualifications should be a means of progression at a later stage. I argue for global citizenship as our language, behaviours, tastes, and habits become more diverse and the current British identity policy is too narrowly defined (Rasool, 2017). Today, learning the English language is about power over the subaltern that is demonstrated by the state through citizenship policies and language tests, new forms of power exercised through language ideologies, public policies, laws and state sanctions restricting entry to the UK. At least nine different acts of parliament over the past 20 years have shaped the legislative provisions of the immigration laws that impinge on migrants (Simpson, 2020, p. 490), and migrant women float in a dark tunnel created by law and policy and disempowered by a plethora of legislation.

2.3.4. Demonstrating good citizenship and loyalty

The Muslim Council of Britain explored Muslim integration in the UK, capturing Muslim voices. One young Muslim stated, "I'm already British; I recognise myself as British; but if the government and other agencies are saying integrate—it's telling me I need to lose some aspect of my identity and assume additional aspects recognised by the government" (Afzal, 2018, p.37), no one should be asked to give up their heritage identity. Young British Muslims feel their rights as British citizens to fair treatment and freedom of expression are not being respected (Karlsen, 2016). As cultural upholders of identity, Muslim women are particularly made to feel like outsiders. Nyhagen (2016) found that Muslim women identified greater barriers to citizenship than women of the Christian faith. Muslim women's religious identities are questioned, the way they dress ridiculed, and their sense of belonging undermined. The women felt they were under more pressure than Muslim men to demonstrate good citizenship. Muslim women face more discrimination in language policies than any other ESOL learner group.

Corbett (2006) questions whether citizenship tests unfairly target Muslims. Questions about pub hours, pub games, and the legal drinking age are irrelevant to most Muslim women. Corbett refers to the citizenship test as the "Muslim tests" with questions designed to scrutinise the potential new citizen's compatibility with local values. Sheehi (2011) argues that European anxiety over faith communities' being part of the national state has led to "identity politics" against Muslims, and Muslim women are expected to choose national identity over faith identity. Denmark has gone one step further and has made it a law that Muslim women must shake hands during citizenship ceremonies. These are deliberate targeted acts to cause distress to Muslim women who do not shake hands with men (Gander, 2018). Language tests are shaped by the social values and cultural norms of the elite members of the host society. As Badwan (2017) states, language tests have "started to impose their own standards and ideologies" (p.197), stratifying citizens.

Many people have questioned the utility of citizenship tests. Byrne (2017) argues knowledge gained from the test "was not critical and was thus ''forgettable" (p. 329). Her study participant, Amina from Bangladesh, articulates her frustration: "What's the point of having to learn all of those things because those people who were born in Britain, were brought up in Britain, they don't know anything about those [things]" (2017, p.330). It would be ethical if everyone took citizenship tests at the age of 18 before being given the right to vote Often, migrants feel more pressure to demonstrate citizenship. Halstead (2006) argues that citizenship is linked with a single culture, which is problematic in countries where a number of cultures are practiced. Benton and Nielson (2013) rightly point out that in Europe, Muslim integration is a contentious and debated issue at the heart of public policy, which is not improved by the current political rhetoric of Muslim communities not willing to embrace the national identity and values. Yet this view has been contradicted by surveys undertaken by Ipsos MORI in 2018 which found Muslims have a strong sense of belonging to Britain. Donald and Rattansi (1992) argue that the Muslim woman has become the subject of "contradictory and ambivalent stereotypification" (p.19), pitied because of her oppressive culture but also a danger to fundamental British values through her dress, her language, faith, and culture. This is described by Mirza (2013) as a contested site of disagreement. Many Muslim women struggle to find a rightful place in European societies.

2.3.5. Learning English to function day to day

Newcomers are eager to learn English in order to function in society. The ESOL curriculum itself is wide and varied, and Nation and Crabbe (2011) argue we need to find out what knowledge language learners need when they access English classes, and often a

prescriptive curriculum is delivered. Street (1995) refers to the "pedagogization of literacy" (p.113) where teachers teach and students learn, limiting a more creative pedagogy and co-produced knowledge. Depaepe et al. (2008) argue pedagogization as a concept is not dissimilar to "medicalization," focusing on a particular disease and not the whole person. In the context of literacy, it can be viewed as focusing on a set of text-based skills. Tests impose a Western conception of knowledge where "Knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable on those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire, 1993, p. 53); from this premise, ESOL is delivered to migrant women. The "life-world" (Husserl, 1970) experiences of Pakistani female ESOL learners should also be part of the ESOL curriculum. Badwan (2018) argues that classroom strategies are framed around drills, demonstrations, graded tasks, and correction of pronunciation. ESOL has become more about assessments and passing tests than preparing migrants for everyday life. Elmore (2017) highlights the ESOL classroom as a particular information ground, with informal information shared between learners themselves. One learner mentions her bus journey and how expensive it was and tells the others about the day saver ticket. Such information was judged valuable because it came from a trusted source gained through personal experience. Telling stories about our experiences is a way of gaining new knowledge about the outside world.

Swinney (2017) looked at ESOL in the Burngreave area of Sheffield during a period of significant funding cuts and found learners accessing English classes for a specific purpose. One of her research questions was: "who do you speak to in English?". The women mentioned talking to shop assistants in English or with their children's teacher (2017). Swinney advocates for more investment in ESOL classes and explains that students' use of interpreters "falls at each level of classroom progression until there are no students in the highest-level classes who use an interpreter" (ibid: 221). Early investment in ESOL saves costs in the long term. Swinney points to strong and resilient local networks that facilitated communication from employment to other opportunities. She refers to these as network "hubs of activity" and "super-connectors" (ibid, p. 222). Local networks across sectors are important in connecting what is happening on the ground and can feed into local ESOL strategies and plans. Thompson and Nasimi's (2020) case study is of a London charity supporting Muslim female migrants. The women mentioned feeling more confident after accessing language classes and reflecting on their long-term goals of accessing services independently, obtaining a driving license, or getting a job.

2.3.6. Conclusion

According to Loring and Ramanathan (2016), naturalisation tests are interconnected with public discourse about migrants linked to issues of belonging, national identity, and language

status. The subaltern reflects a social construct of visible differences that challenges state ideologies of citizenship. As Gramsci (1971) argued, moral and ideological leaders sell their hegemonic cultural values through pervasive language, as we see through one nation and one language ideology. These cultural values are not totally accepted or rejected, but rather assessed by migrants as to what advantage they gain from undertaking language and citizenship tests. Today, the people in power dangle citizen status on migrants to undertake the Life in the UK test—the rational choice is to have a stable home since the threat of deportation looms over them. Those who have power use force and leave "no alternative open to the subalterns: options are physically blocked or prevented by the principal" (Scott, 2001, p.15) and this is not the way to empower individuals.

El-Enany (2020) argues that Britain has become "a space of domestic colonialism masquerading as a post-colonial nation" (p.132) that continues its oppression of colonised Muslim women through citizenship and language tests. Even after passing the tests, true citizenship can be out of reach for some women if the state does not see them as worthy citizens. According to Morrice (2017), citizenship testing allows the government to "cherry-pick migrants" (p.598) who conform to an idealistic citizen subject. The learners that access ESOL are diverse, have multiple worldviews, and bring their own cultural knowledge to the classroom (McCaleb, 1994). Muslim women are told what they need to learn, how they should behave and dress, and become trapped in the government's policy-making wheels that keep on spinning. Edross (1997) argues that "Muslim women are constituted as mere subjects of religious discourse and tradition. They have come to be seen in isolation of the broader social context and the competing ideologies that contribute to the framing and shaping of identities" (Edross, 1997, p. 28). We must go beyond the East vs. West construct of women and look at individual lives. Endross's research looked at the experiences of African Muslim women, and my research focuses on Pakistani women. The world, as Edward Said (1991) reminds us, "is made of numerous identities, some of which interact in harmony and some antithetically" (p,17).The intersectionality of different identities makes Britain a more cohesive society, which needs to be valued.

Section 2.4. The barriers and challenges to learning English, independence, and integration

2.4.1. Introduction: Critical Race Theory

According to Rocco et al. (2014), critical race theory critiques power structures that lead to inequality in education, work, and society in general that dominate and oppress minorities. From a critical race position, racism is normalised in our society; it is in the fabric of our political institutions that make laws. Racism is the "ordinary business of society—the routines, practices, and institutions that we rely on" (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p.27), including education, that keeps minority groups in subordinate positions. In modern times, racism is culturally based and legitimised, argues van Dijk (1998), in the way white elites talk about ethnic relations manifest in institutional discriminative systems. Certain words have become acceptable, regardless of the offence they cause, such as referring to Muslim women as passive, unable to have opinions, and belonging to a regressive culture.

Taylor (1998) argues that "critical race theory challenges the experience of whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color" (p.2), a tool for exploring the realities of lived experiences, advocating for the experiences of the knower, their truth told through storytelling, creating a shared understanding of oppression of the "Other". Dixson and Anderson (2018) favour critical race theory since it explores intersectionality by recognising that "race is mediated by and interacts with other identity markers (i.e., gender, class, sexuality, linguistic background, and citizenship status)" (p.122). In Muslim women's case, it is their different lifestyle. What relational theories refer to the "oppositional culture" of one group without embedding that group in a configuration of relations comprised of other groups to which the former's cultural traits supposedly are formed in opposition?" (Desmond, 2014, p.567), leading to policies emphasising much greater differences, polarisation, creating a gulf between communities and stressing they are "not like us". Moore (2007) refers to a continuous "clash" of civilizations, pitting western secular values against fanatic religious fundamentalism (p.237) without much understanding of Muslim communities.

2.4.2. Culture, ideology, and policy

Critical race theory helps us to unravel the intersectionality of race and one aspect is culture, which derives from the Latin word "Coler" meaning cultivate (Sethi, 2021). Language is one way to cultivate migrants to the tastes and habits of the dominant group. Hooghe and Marks (2017) argue cultural intermixing and the erosion of national values can be viewed by some as a threat. Those who believe they have the most advanced culture are keen to spread their

49

cultural language, leaving their DNA footprint behind (Mir, 2006). Language defines a speech community with its own set of linguistic and cultural resources unique to that community, which monolingual policies do not consider. This is argued by Morgan (2014): "membership in a speech community includes local knowledge of the way language choice, variation and discourse represents identity" (p.6) and to take away the languages of a speech community would mean no community.

Adopting someone else's language would mean, for many migrants, a betrayal of the mother language and culture. van Dijk (1998) argues that ideologies have a cultural base with socially shared ideas and values that are central to the construction of ideologies. At the heart of language policymaking are cultural values and whose culture counts?. Conteh (2015) argues language is developed in a cultural setting and is shaped by everyday meanings and use, and learners need access to dominant culture to become efficient English language speakers. Research undertaken by ETHNOS for the Commission for Racial Equality in 2005 looked at "Britishness", a term often used today. A Black African research participant from Glasgow reminds us of the colonial history that is part of Britishness. "They think they are more superior, like they still rule the world" (ETHNOS, 2005a, p.27). People whose countries lived under the Empire feel this sense of British superiority and find themselves in this "half-way house", existing in a median state (Said,1996), drifting like outcasts, and migrant women find themselves at odds with their environment because of the way they dress or speak. Heller (2020) highlights the patriarchal nature of policy making "The language of the educated and male middle/upper class—the definers of the nation and its uniformized, regimented language —becomes the standard against which other languages and language variants are made intelligible as substandard" (p.124). Language policies do not consider the social nature of language. Pitt (2005) emphasises the importance of "socialisation rather than acquisition" (p.9), the social and cultural conventions of language use. Omar and Altaieb (2015) argue that "learning English as a second language (ESL) is problematic if it is taking place away from its cultural context" (p.739), since ESOL classes are delivered mainly in isolation.

2.4.3. Cultural Racism

I worked with Pakistani women accessing a domestic violence project in Rotherham who challenged the rhetoric of blaming their culture or Islam and asked the government not to degrade their culture in their name and stated: "We are aware that people think we don't know anything about literature and the arts and that we are not culturally articulate because we don't have the English language" (Rasool and Ahmed 2020, p.300). Racism is not only about race; it also disparages certain cultures. Moving away from your language and culture does not mean acceptance. As Fanon argues, the Black man "becomes whiter as he renounces his

blackness, his jungle" (1986, p.18). We are still Muslim women. Akala (2018) refers to the "irrational manifestations of its prejudices" (p.7) existing in Britain. Akala refers to Rudyard Kipling's (1899) description of Black people being seen as the "white man's burden" who is morally obliged to rule them as they cannot govern themselves. The final line of Kipling's poem "The judgement of your peers" resonates with me as we are judged by our white peers. Throughout history, the women of South Asia and Africa have been judged negatively. As Audre Lorde (2007) once said, we are deeply scarred as Black women born into a society that looks with contempt and loathing at anything black.

Foucault discusses the genealogy of race, the purification of race and bloodlines. This ideology unites the European race together. Foucault, in "*Society Must be Defended*", distinguishes between races, "a race that is portrayed as the true race, the race that holds power and is entitled to define the norm" (2003b, p.61) and those norms are white and Western-centric. Language discourse is created around racial lines and embodies the Aryan culture, repressing other races. Gillborn (2008) argues that "whiteness operates to define the boundaries of acceptability and normality; the rule of the game is defined by and for white people" (p.182). Those rules expect South Asian women to change and blend in. The symbolic boundaries are created as "desired barriers against the demonised "other" and as a means of exclusion" (Doevenspeck, 2011, p.129) unless they cross to the other side. The creation of language was a common act of human existence in pre-historical communities, and differences in languages were held to "indicate differences in moral and mental capacities" (Ashcroft, 2004, p.44). Today, the difference created by language is status and privilege, but race remains the dominant feature of language, shrouded in citizenship policies.

2.4.4. Independence, islamophobia, hate crime and integration

When policymakers discuss English, they do so in the context of Muslim women's independence, and my research participants also mention the importance of learning English for daily independence. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "independent" as not subject to control by others, self-governing, not required to rely on someone else. Because of hate crime on the street, their independence in public spaces is frequently limited, as is their confidence in taking public transport, and as Muslim women, we feel a lack of control when in public spaces. Both the independence and integration of Muslim women are linked to personal safety. The Faith Matters (2018) report highlights the increase in the gendered nature of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred that has become the norm. Highlighting incidents in public spaces or on transport networks (2018). The report mentions spikes in hate crimes increased after Boris Johnson, the Foreign Secretary at the time, in a newspaper column referred to women wearing veils as "letterboxes" and "bank robbers". These kinds of

comments do not help integration. Learning a language becomes difficult as many women will fear interacting with native speakers or visiting new locations, instead choosing to stay close to home amongst their own kind.

Tara-Chand (2019) argues that recent policies have brought Muslim women into the terrorism framework, fragmenting their identities and making them visible to racist attacks, with a particular focus on women who do not speak English and the argument that they are not aware of what is going on in their communities and potential terrorist threats. Jackson (2014) argues policies operating on a national scale impact on the daily lives and experiences of migrants, such as the Prevent Strategy (2011), which seem to focus on Muslims. Rollock and Gillborn (2011) argue that "racism serves to reinforce and advance white supremacy and maintain the status quo" (p.3), keeping the subaltern in the lower social positions created for them. Today, Muslim women and "Islam has become an all-encompassing scapegoat" (Ashcroft, 2004, p.118). The language used by some politicians, the media, and the public can make life uncomfortable for many Muslims in the West, especially women. According to Elahi and Khan (2017) in a report published by the Runnymede Trust, Muslim prejudice has grown even more. Since 7/7 and 9/11, Muslims have become policy targets in terms of a threat to civilisation. Hence, the policies on language, citizenship, and integration are developed through the "framing of Muslims that are centuries old but remerging in new and toxic ways" (2017, p.5). Hostility comes not just from the working class but also from the political elite. "Racism, both in its most blatant and incipient forms, is the foundation of fortress Europe" (Fanon, 1986, p. xix) leaving no place for the body to hide since it operates in many guises, as Fanon argued.

There has been significant emphasis on integration through language policies and citizenship tests, bringing together ESOL and immigration policy. "A key plank in British policy on "community cohesion" and "integration" (Baynham and Simpson, 2010, p.423). Social integration means living more connected lives, having better interactions amongst people from different backgrounds, and fostering positive relationships. The Mayor of London's "Strategy for Social Integration" (2018) defines social integration as:

> Social integration is the extent to which people positively interact and connect with others who are different to themselves. It is determined by the level of equality between people, the nature of their relationships, and their degree of participation in the communities in which they live (p.9).

This definition allows individuals to define their positive relationships but also recognises the inequality that can be a barrier. My research explores how female ESOL learners are integrating into community life.

The Council of Europe (1997) states integration should not be a one-way street but a social process with "legal rights, active participation in society based on a minimum standard of income, education and accommodation" (1992, p.15). Yet, the burden seems to be placed on new migrants to integrate. The fear of immigrants leads to a moral panic (Cohen, 1972), created by political language that cascades down to the ordinary person, leading to neighbourhood racism. During Brexit, the vote to leave sparked a sharp rise in hate crime, people being insulted in public spaces, transport, and shops (Cooke and Peutrell, 2019). My research participants are not only Pakistani but belonged to a visible faith community, and some women became fearful of crossing physical and social boundaries. The reality is that there is less tolerance towards immigrants, as Kundnani (2007) argues that Britain is a divided country and is becoming a racist society, with both policy and the media playing on the wider community's fears of immigration, creating a climate of distrust. Integration in areas of high crime and deprivation is much harder, and women feel intimidated. Phillipson et al.'s (2003) study focused on Bangladeshi women in Tower Hamlets who mention racism and abuse on the street, making integration difficult. Matulioniene and Pundziuviene's (2014) case study of ESOL participants mentioned "the absence of opportunities to communicate with native speakers and the unwillingness of native speakers to communicate with immigrants" (p.201) and financial difficulties meant you could not go places. Similar barriers to integration were mentioned in a study by Bryers et al. (2014). For ESOL learners in London, racism in public spaces and poverty were found to be barriers to integration.

2.4.5. Education, knowledge, and agency

Solorzane and Yosso (2002) argue that "critical race researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalise coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower" (p.26). Education structures are very formal, when community provision and community life itself is not. In the case of ESOL learners, regular attendance can sometimes be difficult if you have caring responsibilities and are labelled a bad learner and not committed to learning English. You are a bad learner if you cannot pass the tests, and the teachers are under pressure to get results. The learners and the teachers find themselves under the power of bureaucrats and funding targets. Armartya Sen (1999), saw education as offering freedom and agency to individuals to flourish and stated that education should "foster human capabilities and substantive freedoms" (p.10). We are seeing the opposite—the disempowering of women when the curriculum being taught does not consider other histories, cultures, and languages. Mainstream education has become the unwilling custodian of one culture and one language pedagogy and is held in the grip of policymakers who hold the public purse strings and fund education. Spivak (1999)

argues "the mainstream has never run clean, perhaps never can" (p.2). Politicians have made the mainstream even muddier. Policies tend to start from a colonial viewpoint that certain bodies will not belong until they conform. "The colonist and the colonised are old acquaintances," states Fanon (1963, p.2). The colonists will stop undermining the colonised once they have "proclaimed loud and clear that white values reign supreme" (ibid, 8). We find that only one particular "island's story" seems to dominate and swallow all the other islands and their stories.

2.4.6. Conclusion

Jerome and Clemitshaw (2012) argue that the modern homogenous identity is represented through a "community of citizens" (p.23). Individuals are linked to the nation-state that takes precedence over other identities. It is very difficult for some Muslims, who have been excluded from this notion of collectiveness, to now invest in this new narrative when the scars of colonialism still run deep. As Raveaud (2008) argues, there is a fear that "community identities can only exist to the detriment of universal citizenship" (p. 82). Such policies create a conflict amongst English language learners who experience divided loyalties between their country of origin and their country of residence; policymakers expect you to choose. A key part of belonging is experiencing a language through culture. Integration is now more difficult in the Brexit climate as immigration fears played a significant role in the British people's decision to leave the EU in June 2016, citing an article in The Conversation (Pencheva, 2019). Spotti (2013); and Alexander et al. (2007) argue the English language is symbolically used as a marker of cultural differences and excludes ethnic communities from the re-imagined national community. New citizens, such as the Pakistani female ESOL learners in my study and even those born here, frequently feel like "citizens on the margins." Moallem (2008) states that "race, gender, religion and cosmopolitanism cannot be separated from old and new forms of colonialism and new formation of empire" (p.106) which are sustained in Europe through the oppression of certain groups.

54

Section 2.5. Pakistani women's own spaces of empowerment and autonomy gained through different knowledge systems.

2.5.1. Introduction: Third Space Theory

Third space is defined by Homi K. Bhabha as "in-between" spaces that "provide a terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood" (2012, p. 2) and "sites of innovation, collaboration, and contestation" (ibid.). As someone who has worked with Pakistani women and comes from that community, we have our own third spaces of selfhood of self-discovery, knowledge-seeking, and sharing, which empowers us. Migrant women possess cultural knowledge, embodied knowledge, and practical day-to-day knowledge to survive in a new country. When the learning environment does not meet your sense of self, the women found the home a space of freedom and creativity, a place for hybridising knowledge. A "middle space" (Bahbah, 2012), where new knowledge and old knowledge meet in the middle ground, the Orient and Occident (Said 1978) knowledge do not compete but compliment. Covarr (2015) argues that "a third space is one occupied by an oppressed/colonised people which is neither central to their culture nor to their oppressors'/colonisers' culture, but which aids them to negotiate the two" (p.128). I will be addressing my research question of how different knowledge systems support women's agency and identity and how, through stories, women reposition themselves and offer an alternative narrative.

Like my own parents, migrants come to this country to improve the lives of their children and have high aspirations for them to do well. Aspiration is defined by Gorard et al. (2012) as "what an individual hopes will happen in the future" (p.6) and includes motivation, decision making, self-worth, and perception of oneself to make a difference. The women in my research were very motivated to learn to improve their life chances. They also wanted to teach their children about Islam and for them to be good Muslims and good to their parents in old age. Silvestri (2008) found in her study that European Muslim women's aspirations were ordinary: to be respected, to live in peace and feel part of society, and to have access to decent education and employment. Often, the ordinary is far out of reach of Muslim women in European societies.

5.5.2. Home a space of empowerment

Domestic space has long been viewed as a disempowering space by white feminists. There are a number of writers, argues Fedorak (2014), who are critical of Muslim women's seclusion in domestic compounds and see it as an oppressive space. The lives of Muslim women are explored through the white feminist lens, denying them agency. Worthington (2013) refers to

numerous books published about Muslim women: "the enduring orientalist-inspired image of the muted Muslim woman, swathed in black, gazing pleadingly from the grim shadows of religious oppression" (p.2) locked in the home. Worthington (2013) found many Muslim women in Australia were involved in education, volunteer work and paid employment. In a study on Pakistani middle-class women, Mirza (2020) found women were "juggling identities, social positions, and migration status to gain power and autonomy" (p.2) and argues that identities evolve across generations. Glynn (2002) states that the understanding and interpretation of Islam has been revivalist and refers to young Bangladeshi women's changing identities compared to their mothers, who are still restrained by Bengali traditions. The young women use Islamic knowledge to advocate for education and independence. While the world evolves around them, the Western framing of Muslim women's identities remains fixed in time. These representations of Muslim women do not align with many Pakistani women's lived experiences in contemporary Britain.

The South Asian woman is the symbolic representation of the nation. Einhorn (2006) argues "the construction of women–as–nation, figuring women as the "Mother Earth," the fecund body of the nation" (p. 202). She represents the moral values, social norms, linguistic competency, language, and literacy practices of the old home and keeps the memory alive. In gender, nationalism and postcolonial narratives "the woman – and usually the mother – figure stands for the national territory and for certain national values" (Boehmer, 2005, p.29) She is the Great Mother, Durga, Mama Afrika. "She is there at the beginning of the lives of individuals and of the nations" (ibid, p.88) and devoted to both. A lot of women's time and commitment is spent preserving tradition, culture and heritage language while at the same time trying to learn English. Monica Ali, in *Brick Lane* (2003), refers to South Asian women as the "bearers of their culture," and sometimes it feels like this role makes us more targeted by policy as we don't conform. Amrit Wilson also mentions roles given to Asian women by their families to be 'upholders and preservers of "our culture" (2018, p.10), passing heritage language, religious knowledge, and cultural values to their children. Culture is fluid and evolves; it is entangled with the "notions of identity and belonging" (Handa, 2003, p.19). Culture lives in your soul, which drifts to a place that was once home, and for many diaspora communities, there is always a yearning for the old life, and women preserve their culture through family events and celebrations. Pappano and Olwan (2016) found Muslim women made decisions regarding the home and tended to be responsible for most aspects of their children's lives, dealing with school systems. I have found, like O'Reilly (2004), that mothering is a site of empowerment "through which mothers have agency, authority, autonomy and authenticit" (p.13). The home can be a third space of empowerment and self-hood for many Pakistani women, when the ESOL learning environment does not offer that level of autonomy.

2.5.3. Community and faith literacies

Pakistani women's knowledge is situated in language, literacy, and cultural practices within everyday encounters where knowledge is created in different spaces. Mwangi et al. (2018) argue that "knowledge acquired from different sources throughout the lifespan merges to create an individual's lived knowledge" (p.1). Their cultural and Islamic knowledge gave them independence even if they didn't speak English. Muslims have a duty to seek knowledge and find themselves in a juxtaposition of contradictions. Rosowsky (2008) states, rightly, that Islam is a religion centred on literacy. The word "Iqra" means "read" and was the first word revealed in the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "Read, O Prophet, in the Name of your Lord Who created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen taught humanity what they knew not" (Surah Al' Alaq 96.1-5, Quran com. English translation). As Jouili and Amir-Moazami (2006) point out, a good, educated woman means a good, educated mother. "Their search for knowledge often goes hand-in-hand with an enhancement of the role and importance of motherhood" (p.622) and fulfilling their duties as mothers. Islam encourages seeking knowledge and does not distinguish between male and female, but sometimes old-fashioned cultural views hold women back, believing that a woman's place is in the home. Literacy is about relationships embedded in faith and history within a community. Gregory and William's (2000) ethnographic study looked at the literacy practises of Muslim and Jewish children in London and found they did not have many English books but did have access to religious textbooks, the Quran in classical Arabic and the Talmud in Hebrew. These ethnographic accounts offer us an insight into how diverse literacy is within immigrant homes and could be utilised in classroom settings rather than the English-only paradigm. Pakistani women have their own heritage languages (Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic) but may not be able to speak, read and write English well and are seen as illiterate. Yet, there are many white adults who struggle to read and write in this country, and according to the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) undertaken in 2015, 1 in 6 (16.4%/7.1 million people) adults in England have very poor literacy skills (OECD, 2015). But only Muslim women are identified as a problem, not white working-class women.

Literacy for Muslim communities is through conversations, Islamic circles, and events such as Eid 'Milad-Un-Nabi', celebrating the life of the prophet Muhammed (PBHU), involving Quranic text and the social element of cooking and sharing food (Rasool, 2019). These literacy practices that I see around me every day tend not to be noticed by white institutions. Guerrero-Arias (2021), argues that these practices are not part of the white man's system and are not seen as official literacy undertaken by functioning families, hence not deemed worth considering. Barton and Hamilton (2003) argue that literacy is a social practice and "how people make sense of their lives through everyday lives" (p.4) that are sustained as a

collective. My participants may not be fluent in English, but they read the Quran in Arabic and take part in daily prayers; they deal with financial literacy through shopping; and they access ESOL classes and read texts, acquiring technical skills like sentence structure, grammar, and phonics. The work of Brian Street (1984, 2003) offers a framework to question the Western concept of literacy and, over the years, has shaped my thinking of what literacy is and is a lens to view my own community literacy practices aligned with the ideological model of literacy and is a culturally sensitive way to view literacy (Rasool, 2019).

2.5.4. Pakistani women's language and literacy practices

Storytelling is an important part of South Asian community literacy practices. I recall sitting by the fire as a child and listening to my grandfather's stories, poetry, or Quran recitals. It is an intergenerational activity rooted in diasporic identity. The work of Kate Pahl promotes funds of knowledge within Pakistani households, and her work with the Ferham families in Rotherham focused on storytelling through objects (Pahl, 2010), a way of sharing collective history with the next generation. Pahl and Rowsell argue "stories connected to objects and home experience can provide a platform and a starting point for text-making" (2011, p.129). They rightly stress that "cultural artefacts bring a new dimension into literacy learning" (ibid, p.134). Different forms of literacy texts and practices are embedded in the histories of migrant learners who should not be discouraged from leaving them at home. In Blackledge's (2001) study of home-school literacy practices of Bangladeshi families, a mother tells him, "I tell the children stories in Sylheti; traditional stories, Islamic stories, and stories I make up myself" (p.359), strengthening children's identity and a wealth of untapped cultural and linguistic resources.

Many language learners, like my research participants, create their own third space that offers them agency outside the mainstream, thereby enabling them to grow intellectually and creatively; a safe hybrid space where Western knowledge meets Eastern wisdom. Pane (2007) argues first and second that spaces are binary, often competing, categories where people interact physically and socially. While third spaces are "hybrid spaces where the seemingly oppositional first and second spaces work together to generate new third space knowledge" (p.79), as I will illuminate in the Findings chapter. Women hybridise and integrate knowledge and learning from both cultures into their daily tasks of cooking, sewing, health and wellbeing. Finch (2011) argues that today, postmodern language teaching involves standardised testing, strict boundaries, individualisation, teacher-controlled learning, and teachers seen as funds of knowledge who transfer knowledge to "empty vessels" (p.52-53). Learning should be empowering and "human learning is best when it is participatory, proactive, communal, and collaborative," according to Bruner (1996, p.84). Learning would become enjoyable if migrants could bring their own social and cultural knowledge into a classroom to

support their learning of the English language. Knowledge is not just created in educational institutions. The women in my research are "nodes of communication" (Wenger, 1998, p.252) and knowledge transferers through their social networks, which are information hubs outside of mainstream education. The knowledge of migrant communities is transgenerational and transnational, and it is carried across often hostile territories and borders. Our knowledge is people, places, culture, language, and practices (Shava, 2013). The landscape changes, but the people continue to maintain their way of knowing. Munoz (2019) argues indigenous knowledge and traditions have survived colonisation and survival depends on the adoption of ancestral knowledge that has been preserved in "indigenous intellectual traditions that supported life" (p.68). Knowledge of medicinal plants and herbs is important in countries such as Pakistan, and that knowledge is brought here but practiced indoors in the homes of women.

2.5.5. A rich repertoire of languages spoken in the home

Asher (2008) defines South Asia as a "linguist paradise" (p.31). It is estimated that 700 languages are spoken in South Asia (Hock and Bashir, 2016). A wide range of minority languages are maintained in the home. Blackledge and Creese's (2010) study highlights the variety of languages spoken daily in England, with a range of linguistic resources being used by migrant families in Britain. Language is about identity, trajectories of who we are, and diaspora communities' languages follow them as they move from one continent to another. Lytra (2015) in her study of Turkish young people in Athens and London found "language was the most authentic indicator of national identity and allegiance" (p.185) and the use of Turkish in their own community constructed and maintained their identity and a sense of loyalty to the vernacular they spoke at home. The language I speak at home is Punjabi/Mirpuri, identifying me as someone of Pakistani heritage. The rich language repertoire is seen as a divider. Language policies render invisible the subaltern languages and cultures. We are seeing assimilation policies through the English language imposed on migrants. The English language is seen as the language of innovation. English is "our version of modernity," argues Smith (2012), excluding indigenous and minority languages. Policies are created through this narrow cultural prism of colonialism and work through the government's systems of power.

Earlier ethnographic studies undertaken by academics, such as Sneddon (2001), involved Gujarati and Urdu-speaking families in North London. The researcher found the four primary languages in use were English, Urdu, Gujarati, and Arabic: Urdu and Arabic for religious purposes, and Urdu and Gujarati for reading newspapers and magazines in the home. The mother of a 7-year-old in Sneddon's study recognises the need to speak English. Her child was misdiagnosed as having learning difficulties as she could not explain her concerns. Both

Hartley's (1994) and Saxena's (1994) studies also elaborate on the diversity of literacy practices in South Asian homes. Hartley's (1994) study highlights the cultural capital Gujarati Pakistani women possess, but it is viewed from the 'deficiency model'. One young woman had a command of five languages, which Hartley says puts her university education to shame. She also found literacy was a shared activity, with the male householder reading snippets of news from back home in the Urdu-Daily Jang newspaper to the rest of the family. Saxena's (1994) ethnographic study explored the literacy of Punjabi families and how they negotiate their everyday lives in Southall. When catching the bus to the temple, the grandmother, who does not speak or read English, uses visual imagery to aid her, focusing on the shapes of words in the advertising on the bus and recognising the bus driver.

2.5.6. Conclusion

I have examined other studies that explored different knowledge systems and the rich language and literacy practices within South Asian homes where women are creating third spaces to develop human capabilities and what Heller (2006) refers to as "fashionable icons of the new hybrids" (p.14). Like indigenous knowledge, the South Asian way of knowing is unique to its culture and society. The common misconception about indigenous and traditional knowledge is that it is unscientific and lacking sophistication (Ogungbure, 2013, p.12) and not seen as valid knowledge worthy of entering ESOL classes, yet it survived for centuries in contested territories. The women in my research possessed different knowledge, but because it could not be communicated in English, it was disqualified in the new environment and left on the margins of society like them. Colonialism, as Fanon (1963) argues, empties the native's brain of their knowledge. Looking at Muslim women's lives through a universalist lens does them injustice and, as Sen (1999) argues, denies them human capabilities and agency. As the literature review highlights, there is a need to move to a nuanced and multifaceted analysis of Muslim women's lives and not see them as a homogeneous group. My research participants are Pakistani women and have a different culture, language, traditions, and history than African Muslim women or Yemeni Muslim women. I have contextualised the cultural lives of Muslim female ESOL learners, which will be useful when analysing my data to understand how other studies align with my findings.

Section 2.6. Technology supporting female language learners' aspirations

2.6.1. Introduction: Empowerment through technology

Today, technology can support the identity formation of migrant women and improve the learning of the English language. Guerra-Nunez (2017) argues that technology offers a real potential to bridge the inequality gap by promoting student empowerment through access to diverse information and knowledge systems. Creswell (2019) "Communication (voice and messaging) over social media is considered particularly important for bringing a sense of connectedness and togetherness to refugees who are separated from friends and family" (p23). Technology is a medium for ESOL learners like my participants to share stories of family life with kin across transnational networks, transcending borders and reducing time and distance between them and their family in Pakistan. Their digital social literacy practices are grounded in everyday life. I found that technology allows women like my research participants to seek Islamic and cultural knowledge and reposition their identities.

A lot of learning happens outside of the classroom in the social and cultural environment. Kukulska-Hulme et al.'s research (2015) argues that there is a "disconnect between the world of language education and the multimodal text processing and creation that learners engage in beyond the classroom" (p.5). Kukulska-Hulme et al. (2015) advocate mobile pedagogy in English language development, such as Twitter or Facebook, digital e-books, class blogs, and online conversation clubs. Community literacy practices are always changing, adapting to new political and social landscapes and new opportunities that come from technology, making literacy more fluid, visual, and complex (Kress 2003).

2.6.2. Stories of family life and information sharing

According to Nisa (2019), Muslim women are active users of technology who have benefited from the rapid development of digital technologies. This includes English language learners who use social media platforms. As busy mothers with small children, the internet allows them to keep in touch with friends and reduces loneliness. Collier and Rowsell (2020) argue that "the digital is embedded in the fabric of a living literacies approach; it feeds into a new and innovative way of knowing" (p.94), flowing through rites and practices as people conduct everyday activities. One activity is the sharing of family photos: the birth of a child, birthdays, graduations, weddings, Eid celebrations, and images of food women cook; and connecting with family members, distributing family photos and updating stories about the family. Through digital space, my research participants were creating and recreating the family and their role

as mothers and homemakers, displaying good parenting and children as markers of the mother's success (Lazard et al., 2019).

Technology has become a site for women to share their cultural knowledge, such as herbalism, and negotiate their cultural identity through a shared history. It is argued by Bilge (2018) that "social media platforms serve as a cultural unifier" (p.1), bringing diaspora communities together to maintain ties to the homeland and make new friendships. In Rasool (2019), I highlight the use of technology to cascade information that was useful to women. One woman may read something on the internet and then share it orally with the other women, who cannot read English outside of school when drooping children off. This I call "school gate literacy" (2019, p.215). Women exchanging information such as discounts on cleaning products; it is practical knowledge embedded in the daily routine of running a household.

2.6.3. Women strengthening Islamic identity through virtual spaces

In her investigation of Muslim women's faith-related digital content, Warren (2018) claims that Muslim women are creating digital spaces of belonging to give them a voice, "spaces for identification and belonging" (p.1). When in physical spaces, they experience multiple forms of social, economic barriers and Islamophobia in their daily lives. The internet provides a safe environment for self-expression and human development. For Muslim women, virtual space is a way of connecting with the Ummah (Islamic community) through online religious activities such as women's Islamic circles, online Quranic classes, Islamic debates, and what Rosowsky (2008) refers to as "virtual allegiance" that facilitates religious identities of women like my research participants and a more liberal interpretation of Islam. The internet provides women with different knowledge sources to critically evaluate Islamic texts and gain a greater understanding of the role of women in Islam while also questioning Islamic knowledge once interpreted from a male perspective. Piela (2012) states Islam has a strong online presence, allowing for multiple interpretations, opinions, and translations of the religious texts, supporting women's independent quest to seek Islamic knowledge and apply their own interpretation to shape their various identities as Muslim women and mothers.

2.6.4. Conclusion

Technology has opened a new world for learners and offers access to vast systems of knowledge. Both digital skills and English language skills are key to an inclusive society, as mentioned in a report published by the Good Things Foundation which mentions that for English language learners, accessing the Internet independently can facilitate their inclusion and improve their language skills (Mathers et al., 2020). Through digital technology, women,

like my research participants, are learning all the time, and their smartphones are a lifeline. Technology is raising the learning aspirations of Pakistani women language learners.

Section 2.7. The intersectional nature of Pakistani Muslim female ESOL learners' lives and identities

2.7.1. Introduction to Intersectionality

My research explored the lived experience of Pakistani women learning the English language. The empirical data drawn from the findings identified three theoretical themes that underpin my thesis: Postcolonial Feminism and Representation; Critical Race Theory and Islamophobia; and Third Space Theory and Agency. Dutta and Pal (2010) argue that "at the crux of the theorising of dialog is the idea of ''listening to the other'' in the context of human experience" (p.369). By listening to the multifaceted experiences of Pakistani women, my data has identified power as a systematic theme. Policies operate in different ways on gendered and racialised bodies, whether it is state power, patriarchal power, or cultural power. It is a complex circuit that involves multiple types of power, from formal state power to the informal "power of obligations, social conformity, and cultural assumptions" (Ginty, 2021, p.99). I wanted to understand the impact of power on Pakistani female learners, from the political decisions of powerful institutions to the actions of individuals. Grenfell and Pahl (2019) argue that "theories tell us the way the world is and can be" (p.21). For Muslim women, the world can be unkind.

2.7.2. Gendered lives of South Asian women

All women face gender inequality, barriers, and challenges in their different intersectional roles. Due to family commitments, I am aware that some women cannot attend regular classes, affecting their learning of the English language; a few women who I met in the 1980s are still accessing ESOL today. Patter's (2010) ethnographic study highlights that learning English was not a priority in the 1980s for older women who relied on extended family members. Patter discovered that the younger group were more confident with high aspirations towards employment. Ray (2003) gives an insider's perspective, being of Indian heritage herself. She offers a lens on the intersectionality of South Asian women's lives and their role in the domestic sphere. Ray's study on Gujarati women highlights the unwritten rule of "family first" and learning second and having to "place their familial duties before learning" (p.18), which includes looking after the elderly relatives. The Wonder Foundation's (2016) consultation highlighted that "women with families are time and energy poor" (p.5), and learning is pushed down the priority list. Gender socialisation, especially of South Asian women, places great importance on being a good wife, a mother, and a homemaker; "since the moment we are born, we are being moulded into being what society wants us to be"

(Crespi, 2003, p. 2); and sometimes, personal ambitions are sacrificed. However, even in those times of absence from English classes, learning still happens. Since literacy is a living thing, argue Pahl and Rowsell (2020), building on everyday traditions and embedded in people's situations.

2.7.3. The state power structures

I found Collins' (2000) matrix of domination in "Black Feminist Thought" a useful tool to explain how power structures work. The matrix of domination describes four interlinking domains of power, and each domain serves the particular purpose of discriminating against certain bodies through policy at the macro-level and practise at the micro-level. Sanctions are imposed on women who are spouses of British-born men of Pakistani heritage, such as those in my study. The women, given time, could be better citizens than their husbands, but are under pressure as soon as they arrive in this country. As Blackledge (2005) argues, the state has the power to set the terms of good behaviour when it comes to language learners. Currently, good behaviour is tested through language and citizenship tests and ceremonies. Power flows from the legislator to network-like organisations and into the ESOL classroom to shape the behaviour of ESOL female learners, potential citizens who are tested, measured, monitored, and transformed into the desired subject who speak good English. Power circulates through funding bodies, educational institutions into the ESOL class, and "individuals circulate between its cogs" (Foucault, 1980, p.98), giving them little room to manoeuvre or have any autonomy.

According to Collins, *social organisations* create public policies and constitute the structural domain of power that includes government departments, educational institutions, hospitals, and banks, regulating everyday life and upholding social hierarchy through oppressive policies. Their actions shape the *disciplinary domain* of power, surveillance, and self-censorship. The *hegemonic domain* refers to inequalities created by power, and the *interpersonal domain* refers to the myriad of experiences of intersectional oppression (Collins, 2017). Each domain shapes and controls migrant women's experiences of social inequality.

Figure A - The interrelated domains of power

Structural Domain

Organises oppression

(Discriminatory Policies/
representation of Muslim
women)

Disciplinary Domain

Manages it

(Immigration Act, Home
Office detention
centres/Life in the UK test)

Migrant women

Interpersonal Domain

Influences the everyday
lived experiences

(Access to services/hate
crime and Islamophobia)

Hegemonic Domain

Justifies of domination
and oppression

(Political and media
sensationalism)

The above diagram shows how power operates over migrant women, making them vulnerable to the everyday Islamophobia and racism justified through oppressive state language policies and negative representation of women and sensationalism. We start with the structural domain, with some policies leaving women destitute if their marriage breaks down and they do not have British citizenship. Vink (2017) refers to such regimes as "legislated discrimination" and viewed as "closed" or "exclusive," and nation states deciding the rules of citizenship. Policies that discriminate, such as "No recourse to public funds." deny women access to welfare benefits and housing, Mirza (2016) argues that "immigration rules can equip perpetrators of abuse with a powerful tool of oppression where women can be faced with threats of deportation and be left economically destitute" (592).

The disciplinary domain is a strict regime that puts in place disciplinary measures like women being housed in places like Yarl's Wood detention centre while waiting for the Home Office decision. Women who are denied citizenship have been physically detained at removal centres while waiting on appeals. In 2018, around 100 migrant women went on a hunger strike

at Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre (IRC) for inhumane treatment, demanding the end of indefinite detention. The centre has been criticised by the House of Commons Home Office Select Committee (2019) for having serious problems. With new knowledge comes new institutions, i.e., deportation centres and new masters, i.e., border enforcement officers; 'the division and subdivision of power extending to the fine grain of individuality' (Foucault, 2003a, p. 46), bringing new knowledge of exclusion. The activist and writer Amrit Wilson (2018) argues that "violent border regimes are criminalising and oppressing all migrants" (p. 21), including women who have lived upstanding lives, are detained. According to Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982), power forbids and commands obedience. It produces nothing but "limit and lack" (ibid, p. 130). It lays down the law, and punishment is not far away. Power shapes migrant women's lives from the moment they arrive to when they gain citizenship and thereafter if they are Muslim.

The hegemonic domain is the justification through the media of the use of power and domination of Muslim women. Sometimes irrational arguments are put forward, such as linking radicalisation to the fact that mothers do not speak English, meaning that the women are incapable of challenging radical imams and their community in any other language but English. (Cameron, 2016b).

The interpersonal domain is the daily microaggression, discrimination in accessing services, and anti-immigrant feelings experienced by Pakistani women like my participants..

2.7.4. Intersectionality and power

Since we possess different shapes and shades of bodies, power is intersectional; it is about race, ethnicity, identity and gender which means power is felt differently. Intersectionality is a term coined by Crenshaw (1991) referring to the social categorisation of race, gender, disability, and class that can lead to some groups being disadvantaged and discriminated against within systems of power. In the case of my research participants, they are South Asian, Pakistani, Muslim, women, and migrant mothers, and these categories have discourses behind them. Collins (2015) argues intersecting systems of "power catalyse social formations of complex social inequalities that are organised via unequal material realities and distinctive social experiences for people who live within them" (p.14). If you are a member of a minority ethnic group, a woman, and a Muslim, you feel power three-folds. Collins (2017) argues that power is felt by social actors in subordinate positions within multiple power systems. They are also best placed to understand how power hierarchies and social inequalities shape their experiences as new language learners. Aziz (2012) argues that "Muslim women trapped at

the intersection of race, religion, and gender" (p.236), like my research participants, find it difficult to move beyond the ascribed labels.

My intersectional analysis, Figure B: reflects on the discourses that surround Muslim women. Collins (2017) states that "intersectionality provides a template for seeing multiple systems of power imminent, yet not all systems of power are equitable or even visible within a given matrix of domination" (p.25). One category of intersectionality is religion, and the ESOL learners are targeted as the political language used is "Muslim women" need to learn to speak English, not Pakistani or Bangladeshi.

Crenshaw (1989) recognises that "intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism" (p.140). Some of the Muslim women's experiences are similar to those of Black and white women, but not all. Muslim women are seen as "caged birds" (Abu-Lughod, 2013), and only the English language can set them free. They are labelled passive, belonging to a backward culture, objects and today, letterboxes for wearing the veil. As Khalifa (2021) points out, Muslim women are challenging "Islamophobia by wearing the hijab, not by giving it up." (p.177) as a form of activism as well as a religious obligation. The labels are drawn from the literature review that informs this study and the women's lived experiences that impact on their agency.

Figure B - On the Margins: Muslim women and intersectional power

Orientalist discourses

Other	**Subaltern**	**Submissive**	**Objects**

Backward Culture	**Letterboxes**	**Passive Females**	**Caged birds**

Racism	**Islamophobia**	**Discrimination**	**Sexism**
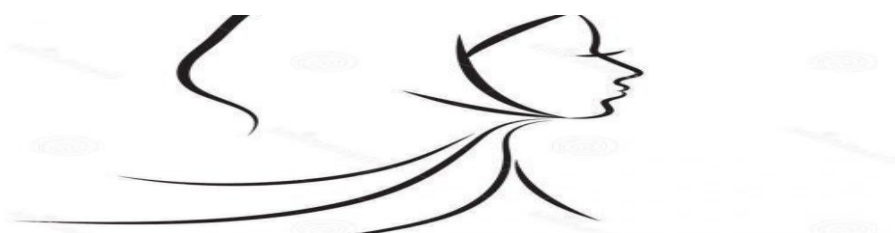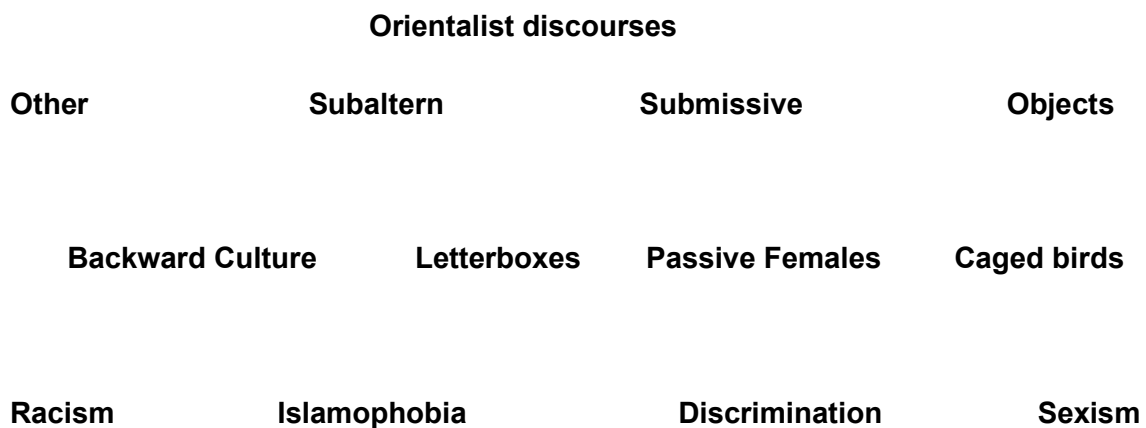
Muslim   **Migrant**   **Needs saving**

Symbolic Violence

Male Power   **Patriarchy**   **White Institutional privilege**

Identity   **Gender**   **Mother**   **Age**   **Disability**

Class   **Poverty**   **Disadvantaged**

Education   **Knowledge**   **Cultural Capital**   **Credentials**

ESOL Learner   **Naturalisation**   **Citizenship**

Today, the English language is associated with Muslim women's empowerment and agency. The negative labels disempower Muslim women and prevent them from reaching their potential. The presumption is that only the English language can empower women to become independent and autonomous, and Muslim women are perceived to lack all these things. According to Wallis and Robb (2013), Muslim women face far more discrimination than any other women, whatever their ethnic background. We see that in relation to employment, education, and access to services.

As Muslim women, whether English speakers or not, we find ourselves in hostile spaces and are told every day that we do not belong in these spaces. Ahmed (2017) offers an intriguing perspective on gender and space, using the metaphor of a train, with men taking up more space by lounging, taking up two seats, whereas a woman takes up less space to accommodate a man. Often, as outsiders, we feel pushed to the boundaries of that space. I see Muslim women having to accommodate themselves in limited spaces to give more room to others. For Muslim women, there is little space in white society, leaving us very little room to develop and grow, and we find ourselves caged in defined, restricted spaces. Space argues

Demetry (2013) says a bounded location is invested in meanings and values by those who occupy it, and those values often conflict, creating tension and you avoid those places.

Muslim women will only know how the different labels attached to our bodies feel. Heller and McElhinny (2017) rightly argue languages offer multiple positionalities and multiple ideologies, yet only some "become hegemonic and others marginalised or erased" (p.8) depending on the credentials of the language and its speakers. Research offers Muslim women the opportunity to speak their truth, and the current discourse of state-censored truth isolates non-speakers of the English language. There are very few avenues where the learners' voices can be directly heard and the reality of learning a language is articulated back to policymakers. Migrant women are not seen as legitimate speakers (Bourdieu, 1977) when they are not respected as worthy speakers to be heard by the state. Smith (2012) argues that 'representation of indigenous peoples by indigenous peoples is about countering the dominant society's image of indigenous peoples and their lifestyle and belief system' (p.252). As I have argued, the lived experience of Pakistani ESOL learners in Rotherham is different from the state's truth and representation. My research participants are creating a counter discourse through stories to challenge Orientalism by talking about the lives of British Pakistani women.

2.7.5. Conclusion

The metaphor of the body as a window into the world of power and privilege captures the everyday domination over Muslim female bodies. Foucault, Collins, and Crenshaw explain how power performs. I have explained how it operates on Pakistani Muslim women learning the English language. Kim and Shaw (2018) argue intersectionality is a tool for analysis that considers the "simultaneously experienced multiple social locations, identities, and institutions that shape individuals and collective experience within hierarchically structured systems of power and privilege" (p.2). The concept of women's autonomy, independence, and agency is viewed from a universal lens that does not consider religion and culture.

Power creates oppression, and it is always one-sided against those who face the most barriers, like the women I interviewed. Scheurich (1994) argues that vulnerable groups are a "medium through which the larger population is continually re-normalised" (p.312), the normal white citizen and the not-so-normal Muslim. Cummins (2000) states that language ideologies express who belongs and who does not. Faceless and nameless policymakers direct how English provision is delivered to migrants from Whitehall, having never met the women whose aspirations they play with. Policymakers do not directly talk to ESOL learners and engage through intermediaries, so they will never get close to the reality of the lives of my research participants. There were other theories, such as Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (1991,

70

1986, 1977), to theorise the lives of ESOL learners. However, I felt the theoretical frameworks I chose aligned more with Muslim women's lived experiences in contemporary Britain and for the analysis of data to support the findings of my research by focusing on the intersectional nature of power to address my research question on some of the barriers Muslim women face in accessing ESOL sessions and the challenges to integration linked to identity, gender, race and faith.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Section 3.1: Language learners share their lived experience.

3.1.1. Introduction

Methodology is defined by Campbell (2018) as "the philosophy that researchers bring to their research methods, the tools" (p.87). I draw on indigenous tools of storytelling aligned with South Asian epistemology. As Pakistani women, we are brought up around storytelling, which is embedded in our genealogy. The "indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational" (Wilson, 2001, p.176), shared through stories and social interactions. My methodological approach is rooted in the South Asian way of seeing and experiencing the world, drawing on the subjective experiences (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992) of ESOL female learners and exploring the political and historical context of those experiences through the stories of learners, teachers, and BAME organisations. The knowledge gained from stories offers a "deeper understanding of the subject material and extra insight," according to Wang and Geale (2015, p.195). I will offer a cultural interpretation of those stories, bringing a tapestry of different voices with me. My research offers an alternative story of the lived experiences of a small group of Pakistani female English language learners to share their trajectories. "Storytelling is a process of reclaiming the story, to own the story, rather than be defined or storied by others" (Chan, 2021, p.171). Storytelling can be a way of reclaiming the self (ibid, p182), and that is what my research participants did, repositioning themselves to gain agency.

3.1.2. Research questions

It is argued by Flick (2018) that questions do not appear from anywhere; "their origin lies in the researcher's personal biographies or his or her social contexts" (p.48). My research questions came partly from listening to debates on language learning and citizenship. The original questions **(see Appendix A)** were changed as the research evolved from the narrow focus of learning the English language to exploring women's own funds of knowledge that supported their identity.

The process of developing research questions

I formulated a 5-stage approach to developing my research questions as shown in the diagram below.

Figure C - The 5-stage approach to question development.

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│     Developed initial research questions  │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Undertook literature review and evaluated│
│  the questions.                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Amended the questions after the pilot.   │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Re-looked at the sub-questions after     │
│  further interviews.                      │
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│  Finalised questions for further data     │
│  collection                               │
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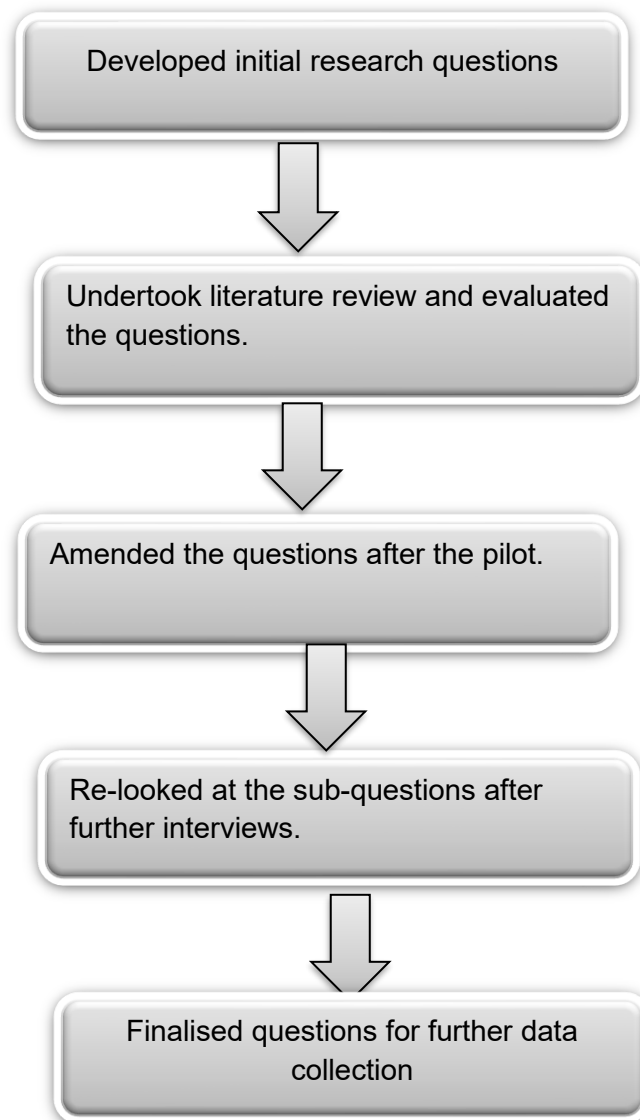
I also found Hancock et al's. (2009) argument helpful that research questions are intended to explore

• Why people behave the way they do?

• How opinions and attitudes are formed?

• How people are affected by the events that go on around them?

• How and why cultures and practices have developed in the way they have? (p.7).

73

I wanted to explore the women's experiences and interactions with the outside world. How those interactions affected English language learning since the political representation of migrant women has historically shaped public opinion and policy, the postcolonial construct of Muslim women as the "other". The women, through stories, highlighted their systems of cultural knowledge that they brought with them from Pakistan, creating their own "third spaces," places of empowerment and autonomy.

My research questions are:

1. How does the representation of Muslim female English language learners by policymakers and politicians differ from the experiences of Pakistani Muslim women?

2. What are some of the different methods for eliciting stories from learners and those who work in ESOL to understand changes in the field?

3. What are the challenges and barriers for Pakistani female English language learners in integrating with native speakers?

4. How does storytelling enable women to offer alternative narratives and reposition themselves as English language learners and citizens?

5. In what ways do different knowledge systems support Pakistani Muslim women's agency and identity in language learning settings?

3.1.3. Recruitment and selection of participants

To explore the experiences of ESOL learners, I decided to contact Pakistani women who accessed ESOL in the 1980s. I approached a friend and asked if her sister-in-law would like to take part, and I asked another acquaintance if her sister would like to participate. Both women agreed, and I contacted them directly. They became the participants in the pilot sessions. The two participants provided me with a list of women who attended ESOL in the 1980s. Snowball sampling or chain referral works well if the study group has close ties (Waters, 2015). They suggested the tutors and the BAME organisations that supported them. I contacted those former tutors they listed, and I approached some new tutors coming into ESOL who I knew.

Figure D - Snowballing Example
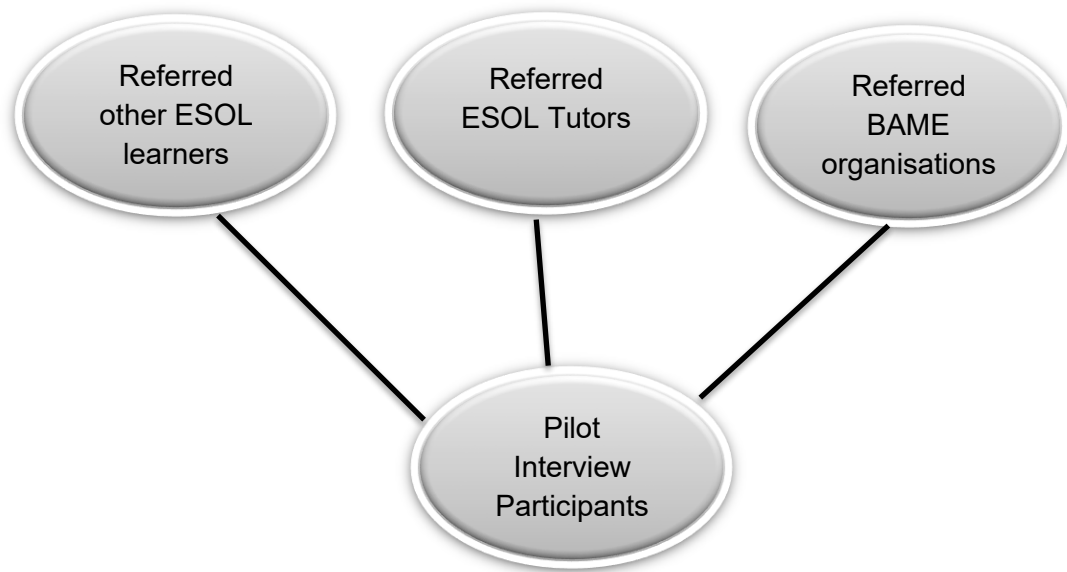
I knew the women, and if they were a completely unknown group of participants to me, it would have taken time to build their trust. I approached 11 women who I supported to access ESOL in the 1980s, and 8 agreed to be participants, and 3 declined. The recruitment was not difficult as the former learners wanted to share their experiences if it helped the new learners. Satar et al. (2015) refer to this as altruism.

I met the 1980s learners between February 2018 and April 2018 at the women's homes for between 1.5 to 2 hours, to make it more informal.

Each diverse group brings their own histories, culture, and literacy practices with them. I felt it was important that the new learners should share similar cultural characteristics with the 1980s learners, so they had to be Pakistani women. I have a cultural understanding of the Pakistani community compared to another minority community, being a Pakistani Muslim woman myself.

Four of the teachers and the BAME organisation representatives interviewed were Pakistani Muslim women. Three of the teachers were white British.

Below is the table with the research sample size.

Table 3 – Participant sample size

Participants	Numbers	Date data gathered
1980s ESOL learners	8	February to April 2018
Current English language learners	10	September and October 2018
ESOL teachers (retired and current)	7	April to August 2018
BAME organisation representatives	3	April to May 2018

See Appendix E: Table 4 - The 1980s' ESOL learners' profiles (The names given are pseudonyms).

Table 4 offers a brief biography of the 1980s learners' backgrounds, such as the region of Pakistan they came from, the languages they spoke, when they came to the UK, and when they accessed English language classes here. Past learners were able to reflect on what ESOL provision was like in the 1980s to address my research questions 1–5 on changes in ESOL experienced by them, offering a rare insight from former learners' perspectives.

See Appendix E: Table 5 - Profile of Life in the UK class learners

I met the new language learners as a group at the 'Life in the UK' class and took the approach of asking the women collectively to tell me which part of Pakistan they came from and what dialect they spoke, and I wrote down what they said.

They addressed research questions 1–5, offering an insight into new language learners' experiences, aspirations, barriers and challenges, and their place in British society as Pakistani Muslim women.

I did not know any of the new learners; the women were between 26 and 40 and had been in the country for 4 to 11 years.

Figure E – Map of Pakistan showing provinces and capital cities.

(On the worldmap.com)
https://i.pinimg.com/originals/29/62/8a/29628a19bf927ee41d1d40e4d1500ebc.jpg

The ESOL learners came from the Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir regions, mainly from villages. It was important to have a similar sample of women with a similar background, otherwise there would have been too many variations since Pakistani women are not a homogeneous group.

Recruitment of ESOL Tutors and BAME organisations.

See Appendix E: Table 6 -Tutor profile

I undertook semi-structured interviews with the ESOL teachers to gain a better understanding of ESOL community provision in relation to pedagogy, funding allocation, and policy changes that address research questions 1 to 3. Their interviews became stories, with tutors narrating their journeys as to why they went into teaching, such as: "it suited me to work around my child's school hours; or I got further qualifications whilst I was teaching in the community." Kelly (2005) states that "through stories, we explain how things are, why they are, and our role and purpose within them" (p.12), sharing the trajectory not only as English language teachers but also as women, mothers, and learners themselves.

I knew most of the ESOL tutors, having worked with them at one time or another, except for two tutors who I met for the first time during the research. In the 1980s. I worked with two of

the retired teachers and recruited learners for their English classes. They were interviewed together at their request and were able to aid one another with memories of people, time and places. Interviews with the teachers took place in various venues: places of work, a community centre, or a room in a café.

See Appendix E: Table 7 - BAME organisation profile

I also interviewed three BAME organisations' representatives to understand their role in supporting women whose first language is not English and how they engaged them in English classes. I worked for one of the organisations in the 1980s and then again in early 2000. They highlighted some of the barriers and challenges for the women and for themselves as the providers of services to women, offering an insight into how the ESOL landscape has changed, addressing my research questions 1 to 5. Participating in the research enabled them to share their life's work in supporting BAME women and tell their stories from when the organisations were set up and what motivated them. They mentioned opening their organisation against objections from male members of their own community, and today they describe an uncertain future due to precarious funding.

All the participant data was collected between February 2018 and October 2018 while working around the participants' availability.

3.1.4. The language in which the interviews were conducted

The narrative stories with the past ESOL learners were conducted both in English and Punjabi/Mirpuri, known also as "Pahari-Pothwari" (Nazir, 2020), spoken in Pakistan, Punjab, and the Azad Kashmir region. This is the language that I learned from my parents, and I speak it at home every day. I allowed the participants to decide the language they were comfortable with, and, during storytelling, they switched between the two languages, "code-switching," defined as "the alternative use of two languages in the same conversation' (Ngulube, 2015, p.1). Discussion groups with the new learners were conducted in Punjabi/Mirpuri due to their limited English. ESOL tutors and BAME organisation interviews were all in English. I downloaded the interviews onto my desktop. I stayed true to the participants' words, expressions, and statements, and transcribed them within a week of the interviews. Any digital recorded data, in Punjabi/Mirpuri, was translated by me into English. You cannot word for word translate Punjabi/Mirpuri to English due to syntax and cultural differences, but where I could, I did. Some words and concepts in one language do not flow well in another language and involve interpretation (van Nes, 2010). I relied on my everyday repertoire of words to interpret and substitute words, so meanings were not lost in translation. When you move into your own

language, the research setting becomes an empowering space. It is argued by Bonfiglio (2010) that "to maintain the mother tongue of the fatherland, nativity not only takes the native out of the foreigners but can also take the foreignness out of the native" (p.10), and when you speak your native language, the foreigner disappears.

3.1.5. Justification of methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define qualitative research as a "situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible" (p.3). The method chosen was storytelling; narrative interviews, semi-structured interviews and group discussions to understand the discourses surrounding Muslim women linked to gender, culture, and faith. Stories give power of representation to the learners, allowing them to reposition themselves as funds of knowledge (Gonzalez and Moll, et al. 1993), changing the public perception of passive/submissive Muslim women.

I chose narrative stories as one of my methodological tools as I grew up, like my participants, around storytelling, sitting by the coal fire listening to my grandfather's stories. Kitzinger (2007) states that "the way people talk about their experiences depends on who they are talking to, what they have been asked, and what shared knowledge they think can be assumed" (p.121). When I undertook the two pilot interviews with the 1980s ESOL learners, it felt like reminiscing with old acquaintances about what life was like in the 1980s, but they were "conversations with a purpose" (Webb and Webb, 1932, p.130). I met both women at the same time when I first went into community work in Rotherham.

The advantage of this method was that certain themes soon started to emerge. I would not have asked questions about the use of technology to support learning. During the first pilot stories and when observing the new learners in group discussions, I noted the use of technology to aid learning English through online dictionaries and Google Translate on their smart phones. I was not aware of how well they were digitally connected with family members abroad through FaceTime and WhatsApp, something I would have overlooked if not highlighted by the women themselves.

3.1.6. Emotional experience in research

My methodological framework captures the emotional experiences of learning a language. Phelan (1996) argues that "narratives communicate knowledge, feelings, values, and beliefs" (p.18). Learning a new language can be stressful. Sara Ahmed (2015) argues that the "cultural politics of emotions is deeply bound up with gendered histories of imperialism and capitalism,

in which violence against the bodies of subaltern women is both granted and taken for granted in the making of worlds" (p.170). Migrant women's bodies circulate in an emotional turmoil of anxiety and stress when undertaking language and citizenship tests and dealing with hostility. Ahmed (2015) stresses that "knowledge cannot be separated from the bodily world of feelings and sensations" (p.171). I can get tangled up in their emotional experiences and need space and time to reflect and untangle since research is "sticky and messy". It is argued by Cook (2009) that researchers need to both create and delve into the messy area to make the research authentic. This was rather than viewing the messy area as negative and avoiding it. In fact, it played a positive role in creating depth within the research.

Some may argue there is no place for emotions in research since emotions influence our thinking, logic, perception, memory, reasoning, and decision-making (Chai et al. (2017); Islam (2017); Jung et al. (2014). Emotions can have a disruptive effect on our objectivity, how we analyse and interpret the data, and the arguments we put forward. I have found emotions play a pivotal role in data collection and interpretation, enhancing qualitative research but can also blur our vision as we grapple with our feelings. Collins and Copper (2014) advocate caution and "self-awareness" throughout the entire research process, reflecting on one's emotions and how they will impact one's research. This position is argued by Svasek (2005): emotions "play an essential role in fieldwork encounters; they affect how those encounters are translated into ethnographic accounts, and they influence the theoretical debates that characterise and define the discipline" (p.1). Dealing with emotions is a balancing act. I see the emotions of the participants as a justifiable part of the research coming from the data. According to Lisa Given (2008), qualitative data is not a subjective paradigm or value-free and is linked to the emotional attachment of the researcher. When I got too emotionally close, I read the interview transcripts to help me focus on the participant's views. The emotions of the researcher can lead to blindness and one-sided views. I will address my positionality in **Section 3.3. of this chapter.**

3.1.7. Conclusion

The methodology I chose draws out stories through interviews and discussion groups to address the research questions of women's lived experiences of learning the English language and offer insight into their own knowledge systems. The decision taken on the data collection method is strongly associated with the South Asian way of knowledge sharing. Stories are anchored by individual accounts of events (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). The methodology had to resonate with the "experiential knowledge" of the ESOL learners; as Cerezo et al. argue, '"persons of color hold critical knowledge from their lived experiences" (2013, p.9). Stories illuminate the multi-layered experiences of Pakistani women negotiating the English language in a politically challenging environment where citizenship is debated and contested.

Section 3. 2: Research Design and Method

3. 2. 1. Introduction

According to Carter and Little (2007), "methods are the nuts and bolts of research practice" (p.1325). It is important to reflect on your research design and consider the participants' gender, age, language, and cultural background. The methods I selected illuminate "knowledge from personal experience" (Neuman, 1991, p.2) held by the ESOL learners. My research participants, as "human beings are caught between illusion and reality" (Yacobi, 2013, p. 202), the illusion that Muslim women do not want to learn English or are being prevented. This can be challenged by a methodology that draws on the realities of migrant women (Savin-Baden and Niekerk, 2007), learning the English language through stories. Heller et al. (2018) state that research is about engaging in the participant's social world as experienced or explained by them I wanted knowledge from "multiple knower positions" from the standpoint (Harding, 2004) of women involved in ESOL, the changes in ESOL provision experienced by them, and the implications of change on new learners.

3.2.2. Stories: as a methodological tool to capture the lived experiences of Pakistani women

A methodology is a "coordinated set of lenses through which to interpret the world" (Cole, 1998, p.338). Exploring lives through stories, discussions and talk from a "worldview that honours orality as a means of transmitting knowledge," argues Kovach (2010, p. 42). According to Squire et al. (2014), "narratives build up human meanings" (p.5) for the storyteller of the everyday milieu. The lived experience, Clandinin (2013) argues, is "storied both in the living and telling" (p.18). I undertook eight story interviews with previous ESOL learners **(Appendix E-Table 4),** of their unique individual accounts (Ziebland, 2013). The methods I have chosen allowed me to examine key themes from the entire data set to offer interpretation from a cultural lens: the Eurocentric way these women are marginalised. (**See Literature Review Chapter).**

I see narrative methods giving agency and voice to those who do not have much power. Richardson (1997) argues that "voice" is a contested term, and it risks speaking for those who have been silenced. I have seen speakers become gatekeepers and position themselves to become the privileged voice, for example, white women speaking for minority women. I attempted not to be the privileged voice in this research and listened tentatively to the interviews to the voices of the research participants. What the women knew, the practical and experiential knowing (Reason and Bradbury, 2006), could not have been captured by Western

standardised methods such as structured interviews or surveys. Chase (2011) argues narrative research often "critiques cultural discourses, institutions, organisations, and interactions that produce social inequalities" (p.430), unravelling the impact of language learning policies and ideologies on migrant women. As an insider, I understand the culture but not the experience of accessing ESOL classes and the challenges that come with it.

3.2.3. Philosophical approaches embedded in narratives

Narratives, as an interpretive approach, include storytelling as a methodology in the social sciences to study human life (Mitchell and Egudo, 2003) to help make sense of events and people's actions through ethnographic techniques such as observation and interviews, which have their roots in several philosophical approaches, such as cultural relativism, interpretivism, social-constructivism, and feminism, to help understand the experiences of my research participants negotiating two distinct cultures and various languages. I will explain how each approach influenced my research methodology.

I begin with cultural relativism. Bhaskar was of the view that the social world could be observed in the same way as the natural world. Bhaskar (2008) argues that "the world is what men can experience" (p.48). These encounters could be interpreted in discrete units. I looked at patterns and themes in the ESOL learners' stories, discussing their reality. Stories create a narrative that will be "loyal to the truth of native culture" (Keyder, 1999, p.62) and challenges the orientalist depreciation of the lives of the "other," allowing the women to talk about their culture, heritage, and identity from their own frame of reference. According to Baghraman (2001), the truth varies greatly in standards, rationality, and ethical rights. Truth is often subjective (Josang, 2016) based upon our individual experiences. Contemporary media reporting on immigration becomes the truth in an era of misinformation that fits with anti-immigrant sentiments. Kalpokas (2019) rightly says facts are not just twisted, misrepresented, or omitted; they are made up and presented as the truth to serve a particular political purpose.

Cultural relativists deny that any standpoint is uniquely privileged and allow for minority worldviews. Lakatos (2018) argues that cultural relativism "is not just recognition of cultural differences in thought or value, but also implies specific ways in which evaluations or judgments are made" (p.13). Cultural relativism challenges Western values against which the rest of the world is judged, with South Asian women becoming victims of cultural discrimination through policy and everyday interactions.

Interpretative research methods include life history, biographies, participant observation, and open-ended interviews. Interpretivism explores the world through the participant's eyes and

seeks to "understand in depth the relationship of human beings to their environment" (Thanh and Thanh, 2015. p.26). The world is interpreted through stories of Muslim women, who feel the wrath of the world, and only we can interpret the feelings of being the "other." Sheridan and Chamberlain (2011) mention that "a great deal of qualitative research utilises talk, interpreted by the researcher, to gain insight into the intricacy and texture of participants' experiences" (p.315).

Lewis-Beck et al. (2004) argue that "interpretative methods seek to make visible the problematic lived experiences of ordinary people" (p.508) through narratives. The interpretative paradigm allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants, and you can only do that if you interpret the data accurately. I kept going back to the data and drawing on common experiences to interpret the data, and our position in the world can only be interpreted through our lived experience. (Corbally et al. (2014) state that "interpretivism is a paradigm which recognises that the 'truth' of a phenomenon is dependent upon its interpretation by others" (p.38). I translated their experience of learning a new language as voiced by them, keeping to their truth.

Social constructivism refers to knowledge being constructed through interaction with others, and stories become meaningful if they are shared. Stories help develop identities, construct cultural realities and sense-making (Ihlen et al., 2011, Woodwiss et al., 2017). Meanings are constructed through values, culture, norms, and beliefs. The sociocultural theory was developed by Vygotsky (1962); he suggested that learning takes place collaboratively with other members of society. Lavadenz (2010) argues that learning is influenced by social, cultural, and historical factors through meaningful social interactions with native speakers. I explored what those interactions were and how meaningful they were in improving the women's English language skills.

Constructivism rejects the notion that knowledge is true and corresponds to reality. Jean Piaget (1896–1980), cited in Ackermann, 2001), stated that "knowledge is not information to be delivered at the end, and encoded, memorised, retrieved, and applied to the other end. Instead, knowledge is an experience that is acquired through interaction with the world, people, and things" (p.3) and relaying those experiences through stories. Language is a social tool and a relationship builder that brings people together to share knowledge and learn from one another, but if integration is limited, learning about other cultures and knowledge systems will be difficult.

Feminist theories on gender are "socially constructed within the bounds of larger social institutions and structures" (Nawyn, 2010, p.751), through which stories are explored to

understand gender power relations between migrant women and the wider society. Through their stories, women define their own power and agency. Feminism provides a platform for women's voices and "storytelling remains one of the most powerful language and literacy practices" (Richardson, 2003, p.82) for sharing migrant women's subaltern positions in white societies and allowing them to speak their reality.

3.2.4. Weaknesses and strengths of my methodology

Like all methodological frameworks, narratives and stories have their strengths and drawbacks. "We often think in story form, speak in story form, and bring meaning to our lives through story" (Atkinson, 1998, p.1). Storytelling is ingrained in the human psyche and is a cross-cultural activity. Polkinghorne (2006) argues narratives validate the human experience "in such a way that rich and deep descriptions are produced; break the data into meaning units and code it into meaningful concepts" (p.73) and are flexible by allowing for different points of view and providing data on topics that I had not considered, such as how confident the women were in using social media and making good use of their mobile phones. It authenticates the individual voice and experiences, offering an insight into the cultural aspects of Pakistani women's lives and relationships. Riley and Hawe (2005) argue that narratives can lead to the "blurring of interpretive boundaries between the analyst and research participants" (p.234). I found interpreting other people's stories is never easy, but coming from the same cultural background, there was a deeper understanding of women's cultural roles and how they influence learning. Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk (2007) point out that "stories are difficult to interpret in terms of relationships between the storytelling in the interview and the story-making in the presentation of the data" (p.467). Interpreting someone else's life is a challenge and requires reflection.

3.2.5. Pilot interviews

I undertook two pilot interviews in February 2018 to test the research questions and understand former English language learners' experiences, exploring what provision was like when they accessed ESOL in the 1980s compared to today. I did not directly ask the research questions. But I was able to assess how well their stories addressed the research questions, such as understanding the difference speaking English made to their lives. The two pilot interview participants were related but had different experiences of ESOL, different levels of confidence, and family support. One of the participants gave her interview in English, but the other interview was conducted in Punjabi/Mirpuri. Certain themes started to emerge after the first two interviews.

I was able to test the questions and evaluate the data themes, such as the level of access to ESOL classes in the community and the lack of childcare. I saw the women's faces light up when they talked about the diverse knowledge they held, such as sewing, craft making, and herbalism, so I ensured they all had an opportunity to talk about that. As the interviews progressed, the women started to redefine themselves as autonomous learners, having some degree of power in the home as mothers and gaining agency in relation to the family and their various identities in the home and within their community when agency is denied to them in the public domain. Telling stories gives more control to the participants, who share what they feel comfortable about their lives. Sometimes you venture into other areas, and as an interviewer, you politely try and get the participant back on track. Spradley's (2016) advice is that the researcher needs to take control of the interview, directing it to those channels that secure the data. Once or twice, I had to ask direct questions such as, "By the way, do you remember the names of your ESOL teachers?" to come back to the research.

The theme emerging from the pilot interviews was that women were highly motivated to learn English. Some of the barriers included family responsibilities and not being able to attend every week because of extended family commitments. It was impressive how the women continued their learning journey after leaving ESOL classes and adopted learning strategies to improve their English. **(See Appendix G, coded pilot interview).** I transcribed the interviews on the same day and then compared the two interviews over the course of a week.

The pilot reinforced that the women's stories could give me the data I required and allowed the women to elaborate on their learning journey. Their stories shaped the other interviews, for example, prompting me to explore women's use of technology for learning and how women were blending their knowledge of sewing and cooking and using their multilingual skills in a learning context. Alvarez and Urla (2002) argue that both the researcher and the interviewee are engaged in "creating meaning of the questions and answers that constitute the narrative as they negotiate understanding through language' (p. 40) and in relation to each other. Our stories are "shaped by our experiences with others and our sense of how those others perceive us and respond to us" (Combs and Freedman, 2016, p.213). We construct stories through our biographies as Pakistani women and our understanding of our cultural lives.

The recurring codes and themes that appeared in the first pilot interview were used to create categories to concentrate on during group discussions with new learners, giving me a loose structure to work from. Data 'interpretation occurs as soon as data collection starts, the initial interpretations are progressively refined, and the conclusions gain in precision as the study advances' (Lesaffre et al., 2009. p.125). As I gathered more data from the 1980s learners, some similar themes emerged as in the pilot interviews and some different.

3. 2. 6. Semi-structured interviews

I undertook semi-structured interviews to gain the views of teachers and organisations facilitating the delivery of English language courses. O'Reilly (2012) describes the different forms of ethnographic interviews as opportunistic chats that are less structured, "collaborative rather than interrogative, guided rather than structured, flexible, and usually informal" (p.5). The questions I developed were guidelines allowing flexibility. A storyteller in a conversational interview takes the listener into a past time. It is possible through individual stories to explore "gender inequalities, racial oppression, and other practices of power" (Riessman, 1993, p.5), such as unequal pay for teachers. Themes appeared relating to pedagogy, funding, and policy.

The former ESOL teachers offered an understanding of changes in policy, pedagogy and funding, while the new teachers to ESOL could not provide a historical context but offered a lens on current issues such as language and citizenship tests. I draw out specific information to contrast and compare with the other data, capturing the independent thoughts of individuals (Adams, 2010). I was able to delve deeper with retired teachers and long-established providers to understand what the ESOL field was like years ago and due to an existing professional relationship with most of the tutors, who felt comfortable discussing some of their frustrations in relation to pay and the pastoral role that took a lot of their time, commitment, and emotions. Structured interviews would have been too standardised to give a diverse perspective from multiple sources of knowledge.

3. 2. 7. Observations of the Life in the UK class

Observation is defined by Clough and Nutbrown (2012) as simply "looking openly," exploring all avenues and themes relating to the topic of the research. I sat with the women around the table when they came in and registered. I stayed there as I had a good viewpoint and did not follow them to the computers. I observed the conversations between learners and the teacher, providing an insight into classroom dynamics. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) argue that "there are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the world of-and between-the observer and the observed" (p.29). I made notes on: learners arriving early; good interaction between the women, including with the tutor; friendly atmosphere; conversation in both languages (English and Punjabi/Mirpuri). I saw the women struggle to use the mouse on the computers. They were better at using their smartphones to search for words in the online English dictionary. The group observations highlighted the women's motivation; they tended to arrive well before the class was due to start, wanting to pass the Life in the UK test. I categorised these into themes such as punctuality and attendance, physical environment, and use of resources.

The observations required concentration; often different conversations were taking place, creche workers came in when a child was unsettled, and mothers had to go and see to the toddlers. Baker (2006) states observations enable us to "study people in their natural environment in order to understand "things" from their perspective" (p.171). The observation with the new learners contextualised the learning environment, addressing my research question on changes experienced by the learners, such as the expectation that they undertake the citizenship test to secure residency. I observed women desperate to pass the test and at the same time dealing with health, housing, and family issues. The classroom did not feel as relaxed as it did in the past, partly due to the stress of taking the citizenship test. A lot of language learners suffer from test anxiety (Aydin et al. 2020).

3. 2. 8. Group discussions

I held discussion groups with the women preparing for the Life in the U.K. test and had informal conversations with 10 Pakistani female learners. Davis (2017) argues focus groups help 'gain immersion into people's lives' (p.2)—in this instance, what it feels like for migrant women with limited English. Some women sat around the table with me while a few went on the computer to do the test questions. "Sister, do you mind if I do my test questions while talking to you?" If they were not sitting at the computer and doing the test questions, they may have shared more.

Group discussions create multiple and socially constructed realities, favoured by the indigenous paradigm, exploring multiple realities (Held, 2019). A relationship is developed between the researcher and their subject since knowledge systems are built on relationships. (Wilson, 2001). You learn about someone else's life and have access to their inner thoughts. My focus group was in its natural setting, within a learning environment, rather than setting up a specific group to capture participants' thoughts and feelings, what and how they think and why (Morgan, 2019; Kitzinger (1995). The discussion groups offered an insight into new learners' individual and collective experiences of learning the English language: the isolation, uncertainty, and emotional stress. Certain themes started to emerge, such as the lack of funding for longer courses and the lack of childcare being a barrier for mothers.

It is a difficult process to manage to ensure everyone is heard. I invited all the women to take part by directing a question to them. I also talked to them when the others were leaving the sessions.

I met the women five times at the Life in the UK class (3 observation sessions and 2 group discussions) and built a good rapport with them.

3. 2. 9. Questionnaires

One of the bilingual ESOL tutors supported the design of the questionnaire. A multiple-choice questionnaire was developed to measure new migrant women's attitudes toward the English language and their motivation. The questionnaire was used to ascertain why the women attended ESOL classes. The questionnaires provided me with data on their reasons for learning the English language and could be quantified **(Appendix J and K, questionnaire and results).**These same women were also participants in the observations and group discussions. While I did favour qualitative data collection methods, in this aspect I changed my approach to quantitative. In this instance, this was because I wanted to measure the women's reasons for learning English in order of priority, and during the group discussions, they emphasised further their reasons for attending the English language classes, adding depth.

3. 2. 10. Field Notes

I attended two events relating to ESOL that I felt would be relevant. One event was the consultation on the National Strategy for the English Language in England, held at the Department of Education in Sheffield on May 13th, 2019. Facilitating the workshop were representatives from the Learning and Work Institution (an independent research organisation), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Further Education, and the Home Office. I also attended the Learning English in Yorkshire and Humber; Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) event held at Voluntary Action Sheffield on February 13th, 2020, attended by ESOL practitioners and providers of ESOL. My field notes from the events provided contextual background to my research on ESOL and highlighted the current issue relating to ESOL, which addressed my research question on how policy influences ESOL provision. I listened to people working in the ESOL field, from policymakers to ESOL providers and tutors **(Appendices L and M).**

3. 2.11. Method strength and weakness

As I expected, the women's stories gave me a lot of data to analyse. Campbell et al. (2006) state that "in recounting the conversation, we have co-opted the representation by selecting from the conversations what we need to make our case" (p. 8). The power is held by the researcher and requires reflexivity to ensure the researcher is equitable when selecting the data. My behaviour is dictated by the chosen methodological framework and my conscience

to offer a balanced view and include different opinions and perspectives; to look for data that supports my arguments but also data that does not. I was mindful of this when I did the analysis of the data. A good research design "minimises bias and maximises the reliability of the data collected and analysed" (Tripathy and Tripathy, 2017, p. 29), offering an understanding of the world around you and guiding the research on the right path. I feel I chose the right research design that worked for my participants and gave me information on ESOL learners' experiences in the classroom and the outside world.

As I chose multiple sources, perspectives, and contexts, I carefully went through a lot of data to find the key themes. It can also create tension between the two methods. For example, if a participant says they are very motivated to learn English, but then you notice they are arriving late and talking on their phone for the majority of the lesson.

3. 2.12. Conclusion

Through my chosen qualitative framework, I wanted to explore the "texture and weave of everyday life" (Mason, 2002, p.1), which complements Pakistani women's own knowledge. Conversations, talk, stories are informal, less structured ways of doing community work for me. It is argued by Vogt (2008) that 'a good research design is justifiable in terms of the research questions' (p.4). I feel my methodological approach was best to address my research questions, allowing sufficient interaction with the ESOL learners and those who support them to understand the changes and the context in which the English language is taught and learned today. Storytelling methods of information gathering provided a critical investigation of relationships between various phenomena (Kerlinger, 1986). This allowed me to compare those micro-level life experiences in the data set, as told by the participants through verbatim quotations, with the wider macro-level representation of women in policies.

Section 3. 3: Insider Researcher and Reflexivity

3.3.1. Introduction

Today, a researcher can cross boundaries to study one's own culture, offering insider interpretations (Kassam and Bashuna, 2004). I will be providing a deeper, contextualised, multi-layered understanding of Pakistani women's lives by interpreting my data from an emic lens (Pike, 1967), "emic" meaning an insider view from within a cultural community. Being an insider researcher adds pressure not to let the women down and do justice to their experiences of learning English. Haraway (2003) argues that "science has been about a search for translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality" (p.26). I will be offering cultural translations and meanings of the ESOL learners' stories. I found that being an insider researcher can be complex and can lead to multiple positionality tensions.

3. 3. 2. Objectivity and Truth

Current literature recognises the challenges of total objectivity; for example, McLean (2019) advocates for the positionality of the researcher to be explicitly stated. I feel strongly that ESOL learners, as Muslim women, have been "othered" and publicly stigmatised for not learning English when there is not enough provision to access. My argument needs to bring the learner's voice and experiences through the data to understand the complexities of their lives. In this research, I want to explore the duality of learning the English language as a tool for empowerment but also disempowerment, in the context of policy. McLean contends that reflectivity necessitates shifting from the traditional objective position of a neutral observer to that of an "active participant in the social world of the research site" (2019, p.93).This all helps to recognise how one's identity impacts the research processes.

Complete objectivity is not achievable, as Greenbank (2003) argues that "Researchers may attempt to eliminate the effect of bias; they are unlikely to eradicate it totally, and therefore this assumption of value-neutral research is flawed" (p.792). I reflected and distanced my personal experience from the participants' experiences and went back to the data, re-reading it to get clarity.

Douglass and Moustakas (1985) argue that "the most objective assessment is one that takes the personal viewpoint fully into account; the heuristic lens legitimises the researcher's own experiences" (p.43).

The heuristic view offers a three-phase model (ibid, pp. 45-46):

Immersion (internal frame of reference, self-reflection): My internal frame of reference is driven by ethics and professional standards, and I have always tried to listen objectively to the issues of the women I have worked with in the community in a non-judgemental way.

Acquisition (tactical knowing, intuition, self-dialogue): knowing, sensing, and feeling oppression is an everyday experience for me and my participants, which is legitimate knowledge.

Realization (intentionality, verification): Listening to new migrant women ESOL learners' experiences and comparing them to the experiences of women who came here from abroad in the 1980s. My research seeks to present the experiences of two cohorts of women who entered Britain during different social, political, and economic climates.

3. 3. 3. Reflexivity

According to King and Horrocks (2019), "reflexivity invites us to look "inwards" and "outwards," exploring the intersecting relationship between existing knowledge, our experiences, research role, and the world around us" (p.125). Having worked in the community for the last 30 years, my research is embedded in the community, uncovering inequalities and injustices that prevent integration. "Critical self-reflection is a way of considering the ethics of the power-knowledge relationship with participants" (Ortlipp, 2008, p.702). One must hold oneself accountable by critically examining oneself and asking why I am doing this, where am I taking this research, and is that what the participants also want? If the researcher was male and white, the way the data was collected and analysed, the findings would differ. Male researchers hold more power and a privileged position just because of their gender.

I kept reflective notes to keep track of my own reality. I did this after every interview and during the analysis of the data. I wrote a paragraph or a bullet-point summary. Bourke (2014) argues that research is shaped by who the researcher is. Self-integration is a soul-searching process and keeps you grounded in the research process.

This is my reflective note dated November 25, 2018:

During the writing of the thesis, I struggled to keep a distance between my experience and the participants. We all live in the same small town, and we have been experiencing hostility since the far-right marches. You are made to feel like an outsider. I was called

scum at the bank by an elderly man today who I had never met before. I wonder if the ESOL learners are experiencing this.

Feminist researchers argue that "the researcher/theorist is grounded as an actual person in a concrete setting" (Stanley, 2013, p.12). My experience sometimes overlapped with that of the participants, where everyday micro-aggression is often accepted as the norm and impacts our sense of belonging and independence and can colour your judgement in data analysis, something I became aware of when I was interpreting the data.

Lorelli et al. (2017) refer to a list of things that support research trustworthiness: familiarising yourself with the data, including prolonged engagement and triangulation, keeping detailed notes; consistency in the data collection method; generating initial codes, and creating and naming themes. I kept detailed notes, took time to familiarise myself with the data, and relied on triangulation. According to Billups (2021), research credibility is established through persistent observations of multiple data sources.

Rossman and Rallis (2017) argue that "the researcher is a learner" (p.3) who makes the decisions on the direction of the study. The direction of this study came from the data itself, and decisions were taken as objectively as possible based on recurring themes and patterns within the data set. By focusing on repeated themes in my findings, I believe I am moving away from my reality by bringing in the research participants. Clough and Nutbrown (2012) advocate for "making "faithful" interpretation of the data we hear" (p.102) with honesty and integrity.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that "the concept of truth is an elusive one" (p.14) and discuss different truths: empirical truth, logical truth, and ethical truth. Empirical truth is factual and evidence-based, for example, crime statistics. They also mention metaphysical truth that cannot be tested for truthfulness against some external measures corresponding with nature, logic, or set by professional standards. Whittemore et al. (2001) assess validity as the "process whereby ideals are sought through attention to specified criteria, claims to knowledge are made explicit, and techniques are employed to address the most pressing threat to validity" (p.527.528). Truth is challenging, and in qualitative research, truth itself can be subjective.

As McCall et al. (2019) argue, "stories do not reveal one, single discoverable truth because truth is a matter of degree and perspective" (p. 2). Truth depends on individual experiences and how they recall their story and the emotions attached to it. The negotiation of data interpretation and the presentation of data can be problematic. As an insider researcher knowing some of the past learners, you become aware of small discrepancies in the women's stories, such as when a participant mentions that during her marriage, her husband hindered

her progress in learning English, but you are aware that volunteers came to her family home before her marriage and she has been going to ESOL classes for more than a decade after her marriage but is still not there with her English. Ntinda (2020) argues one should question whose account is being told, the researcher or the participants, and what is being shared by the researcher. The truth was told from the participant's lens.

I developed some processes that would add rigour and trustworthiness while keeping the participants' voices central.

See Appendix F: Table 8 – Self-reflection criteria.

3.3.4. Positionality: The complexity of being an insider/outsider

Positionality is the central cornerstone of qualitative research, and the status of a researcher as an insider or outsider plays an important role in everything from data collection to interpretation of the research itself. Parashar (2019) argues that positionality is determined by where one stands in relation to "the other" (p.257). I will explore the complexity of being an insider researcher and the multifaceted relationships that often place me in juxtaposition to my researcher participants. Sometimes I am an outsider within my own Pakistani community and an insider within the white British community, depending on how one is positioned by those communities.

Often, Pakistani women tell their stories through their children and grandchildren as a way of framing their lives and sharing the passage of time. "Without stories, we have no way of connecting what it means to be human with the pathway of our existence" (Ranco and Haverkamp, 2022, p.1). We are born daughters and become sisters, eventually wives and mothers. Sometimes a few of us divert from that pathway. What makes one woman happy and fulfilled may not necessarily make another. When some of the women I worked with in the 1980s talked about themselves in the context of being mothers, I started to feel like an outsider as a single woman not moving from the daughter position. Frost (2014) contends that "during the research process, the researcher (re) positions herself/himself, and is, in turn, (re)positioned by participants" (p.90), arguing that a shared identity of "womanhood" and maternal identity can facilitate closeness and a shared repertoire, or it can inhibit, as in my case. As the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, the role of the mother became more powerful, with children's photos around and my role as a researcher, less so. The intersectionality of motherhood and marital status constructed the identities of most of my research participants that I did not share. I recognise that the highest and most privileged

status Islam gives to women is being a mother, above any doctorate, and rightly so. In honouring my research participants' position as mothers, I also honour my own mother.

Islam gives mothers a status greater than that which can be found in any other religion:

> A man asked the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, "Who is most deserving of my good company?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man asked, "Then who?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man asked again, "Then who?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man asked again, "Then who?" The Prophet said, "Your father." Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5626, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2548. (Daily Hadith online. Translated in English)

Often, during my interactions with some of the women, I felt they still saw me in the role of a development worker or a daughter, and time stood still. Yet my life did evolve professionally and educationally; it's just that my life was mapped differently to theirs. The greatest joy of my life are my nephews and nieces, who say I am like a mother to them.

The other great joy in my life has been learning and seeking knowledge. The holy Quran states that knowledge is a necessity and is compulsory for both men and women. Learning makes you a better human being. It stretches your mind and gives you the ability to think and see the world from different perspectives:

> The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Seeking knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim" (Al-Bukhari-9). He also said, "If you have three daughters, or three sisters, or two daughters, or two sisters, keep them in good company and educate them well." (al-Sunan, 1:81, Ismail, 2019, p.375).

The new learners, some of whom I had not met before this research, saw me as someone who works in the community. A few knew me as a governor of a primary school their children attended. They recognised the professional roles I held, and during the group discussions and observation sessions, they commented that I do a lot of good work in the community and that I have helped lots of women. The new ESOL learners positioned me in a more professional role and gave me back agency and an identity beyond the mother role.

Table 9 - Insider/outsider

Insider	Outsider

Pakistani Community Heritage	British Muslim
Islamic Faith	Western Education Knowledge System
Culture	Identity
Heritage Language	Lived Experience
Community Role	Professional Role
Daughter	Single Woman
Aunty	Mother

I am a British-born Muslim woman of Pakistani heritage; my knowledge mainly comes from the western education system and my Islamic faith. There is an educational gap between me and some of my participants, and I have always been mindful of that in our interactions.

My childhood experiences were different I spent my childhood devouring books at the local public library. The women had knowledge of the outdoors, the land, livestock, and plants ingrained in them, coming from villages where people lived off the land. Hence the knowledge of herbalism that they brought with them. I don't have the same fund of knowledge. I can never sew, knit, or make things. Since I was born here, I also have a sense of place and home that the women I interviewed may not feel and see Pakistan as their real home.

3.3.5. Cultural identity and a shared history

I did share with my participants the Pakistani diaspora history as a daughter of immigrants, a rich culture, a heritage language, and the Islamic faith. Tynan (2021) contents that "as

indigenous people, we "are" our relationships with other people" (p.598) and further states "relationality is multiple truths" (p.606). Our lives are different in many ways, but what brings us together is our kinship bonds that unite us as a diaspora community.

We share the same cultural identity, customs and norms, which is important to me as it is to them. "Culture prescribes commonly accepted roles and behavioural norms, communication patterns, and affectivity" (Wenzel, 2017, p.934). Even though I was born in Britain, I feel it is important to know your roots. My traditions and values are linked to my Pakistani culture, but as time passes, the old traditions become more fluid to adapt to the society one lives in.

My socialisation may have been different, but as with most Muslim women of my generation, the expectation was that you should prioritise your family obligations over your personal ambitions. I would be expected to have a cultural understanding of the role of women within a Pakistani household and our duties, such as looking after the older family members. Maton (2014) argues that knowledge is "socially constructed within cultural and historical conditions" (p.6). Cultural integrity is important to me, as is being true to one's own cultural community and history. This can be achieved, argue Pelzang and Hutchinson (2018), by adapting and applying research in a "culturally meaningful way" (p.1), requiring a working knowledge of people, places, and social and political realities, and being aware that the women's cultural world may differ from the Western lens of empowerment of women.

The family is frequently portrayed in feminist literature as a barrier to women's liberation and a gender divide in women's domestic labour (Oakley, 2005). Other cultures see family and children as a strength. Many of my research participants grounded their interviews in their mother role and made references to it. "I am learning English for my children's sake." As a Muslim researcher, I had to acknowledge the power they held during our interactions by virtue of that role.

3.3.6. Repositioning of power

I defined my relationship with the women from the cultural/Islamic lens rather than the western paradigm of a western-educated single woman holding the power in this research. The participants referred to their culture, Islam, and identity to reposition themselves; and for them, status and autonomy came from lots of sources: the Quran, the family, the children, rather than just speaking the English language. Gregory and Ruby (2011) refer to the role of insider/outsider as "paradigmatic moments of complexity, clashes, and collusion" (p.162). The clash for me was the status of an unmarried woman, and I carefully negotiated that during the interviews by moving the conversation on to other themes. This mainly happened with some

of the ESOL learners, and after reflecting, I can see the importance of this issue to the women, even if I felt there was some criticism of my choice. I had to make sure this was documented, even if it was difficult to write about.

The researcher needs to be reflective of clashes and acknowledge that they still hold the power when writing their research and change their positionality in a way that makes them more at ease, and that creates an ethical dilemma. Rather than allowing our positions to clash, I allowed my role as a researcher to blur with my private role as a daughter to reduce the tension and took the position that some of my research participants defined for me. Otherwise, the power and status struggle could have led to the research focus being lost.

Williams (2013) argues that "our culture teaches us viewpoints – ways of interpreting the world" (p.148), and the way we interpret the world is different because of our subaltern position in society; nevertheless, it is legitimate knowledge. I am immersed in the same cultural world, and ethically, this can pose a challenge if I cannot distance my own experiences and find a way to relocate myself in the study without disturbing the research process too much. Kwame (2017) states a researcher "assumes multiple identities and positions in relation to the participants" (p.224). I found a helpful blog written by Jacqui Burne, whose study participant was her father (Burne, 2017). Byrne advises on reflexivity and "not to become an all-knowing observer" and being aware of others' subjective truths, which can be different from the researchers. I accept my subjectivity and truth will be different from theirs. I sympathise and get annoyed at how English language learners are positioned in policy and stigmatised. I need to consider that they may not be aware of the imperial rhetoric about them as language learners. One way to address the blurring of boundaries is to go back to the data and extract their views and opinions. Richardson (1997) argues "we cannot write from inside the heads of anyone but ourselves without losing credibility as ethnographers" (p.67). This poses a challenge of how to write from the participants' perspective, and all you can do is go back to the data. Voloder (2013) argues insiders mobilise "insider capital" (p.1). The insider researcher interprets the cultural world and the social realities of the lives of women (Emerson et al. 2011) to explain their gendered position within a Pakistani household. As a community development worker, I would visit the homes of the new arrivals and get permission from the extended family members before they could attend a community course. A white researcher might see this as controlling others by making decisions for them, but in my culture, it is considered a sign of respect to seek permission from the head of the family for their blessing.

The disadvantage of being an insider researcher is argued by Saidin and Yaacob (2016): "insiders may be blindsided by some issues in their research as they do not consider certain

issues as important as how outsiders would see them" (p. 850). As an insider, they argue, you could place the experiences of common everyday happenings into the background. I considered this and that my research will be presented to a wider audience who may not know and will need explanations of everyday interactions to offer an in-depth cultural understanding. There is the risk that one interprets the data to fit one's own psychological schema, beliefs, and opinions, so I had to check the interview recordings to ensure I was not slipping myself into the data.

3.3.7. Standing in the gap

When marginalised groups enter universities, it can be a lonely experience with a fear of rejection by the university and the community, so you find yourself "standing in the gap". The process of having to move between community and university involves advocating for your community, who sometimes do not see "your battles with oppressive systems and think you have crossed over to the other side," argue Brown et al. (2019, p.99). My own experience of education was not always positive and often blighted by racism. The only way to survive school was to sit in the corner and remain silent. When I was about to leave school, the careers officer pointed me in the direction of a sewing factory where Asian girls worked, which killed my aspirations at 16, and I left school bruised and battered.

I did not want to stand on one side of the gap with the research participants on the other side and a gulf between us. When gathering the data, I was mindful to try and stay on their side of the gap, to better understand their lives and not look down on their lives exploring with them their lived experiences. I feel that by doing so, I have not looked at their lives through a western lens and focused on learning the English language but also on other aspects of their lives. Learning the English language is only a small part of a larger picture that leads to the agency and empowerment of Pakistani Muslim women. I can empathise with the women as my starting point was that I did not leave school with good grades and then spent some years after school caring for my younger siblings. I also recognise I am a different person now due to my life and professional experiences and qualifications. I am writing about their lives to gain a doctorate; but genuinely want to tell their stories.

3.3.8. Conclusion

I found that reflection is an ongoing process throughout the entire research. I've tried to offer a balanced view in my research findings by gathering data in a variety of ways, from stories to observation, and from a variety of learner perspectives, tutors, and organisations that support women. I spent time evaluating the data and reflecting on issues, such as inadequate funding

for ESOL, rather than women not willing to learn English or prevented from learning. I drew from the interviews the data that supported or challenged this argument. Reality cannot be totally independent of the researchers occupying the same space as their participants, but you still need to consider detachment and find the researcher space to think through the research process and your position in the whole process. It was important that the voices of my participants remained predominately at the forefront, allowing them to redefine themselves and share their experiences and knowledge, as it is their story to tell. Through stories, argues Creede et al. (2012), we "build our sense of who we are within the context of multiple other stories, revealing the layered effect of these embedded stories" (p.28). Reworking our marginalised positions by empowering ourselves through our stories of how we overcame adversity, stories shift power and move my research participants from the margins to the centre (hooks, 1984).

Section 3.4: Community knowledge and practices

3.4.1. Introduction

My knowledge comes from various sources, including my community and Islamic faith, and reflects my values. Often, the majority culture, argues Cochran et al. (2008), "disregards knowledge that is gained through another set of values and world views" (p.24). This is supported by Apple (2013), who states that "only specific groups' knowledge becomes official knowledge" (p. 62), while other knowledge lies in the shadows of imperial knowledge since knowledge itself is wrapped in a power struggle. Foley (2003) argues that what counts as knowledge is from western epistemology since traditional research has had power and control over the knowledge of the "other." The knowledge of the "other" gains status when that knowledge is represented to institutions through the lens of the coloniser. Smith (2012) rightly argues that indigenous people have their own stories to tell and are the most researched people in the world yet remain voiceless in research. Only western knowledge and ideas are seen as universal and rational, disregarding minority knowledge.

3.4.2. My cultural knowledge

My knowledge gives me roots to nourish and links me to my ancestors. It gives me agency, identity, and a sense of being and is lived knowledge grounded in everyday life in the form of testimonies, oral stories, visual images, and poetry, all creating and reproducing cultural knowledge in sync with South Asian traditions. As argued by me in Rasool (2019), women from the Pakistani community are involved in multi-literacies that are "epistemologically rooted, value-based, and relational to others" (p. 218); we have our own cultural knowledge base that empowers us. Through a sharing of historical and social resources (Wenger, 1998), such as herbalism, the women in my research are viewed from a deficit lens of *tabula rasa* for not speaking English well. Policy reports, such as the Casey Review (2016) on integration, never promote the knowledge and skills migrant women possess. What is repeatedly published is that Muslim women cannot speak English. These reports never shine a positive light on Muslim women as to what they contribute to British society.

To meet the standard required for a doctoral thesis, I must translate women's cultural lives into academic knowledge. This is a complex process, involving the amalgamation of participants' voices with the researcher's interpretation of the data.

3.4.3. Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology is the starting point of the research, and according to Blaikie:

"Ontological assumptions are concerned with what kinds of social phenomena do or can exist, the conditions of their existence, and the ways in which they are related" (2010, p.92). As Muslims, we believe that some things exist in the abstract and in concrete reality, and they cannot always be explained in a scientific way.

"Epistemological assumptions are concerned with what kinds of knowledge are possible, how we know those things—and what criteria for deciding when knowledge is both adequate and legitimate" (2010, p.92). My Islamic knowledge is revealed in the Holy Quran and learned by attending the mosque as a child, which is further reinforced by interacting with other Muslims.

3.4.4. Ontology - the reality of my experiences

The reality of the world is subjective and socially constructed. Knowledge, according to radical constructivism, should fit into the experiential world of the knower. This "experiential world is constituted and structured by the knower's own ways and means of perceiving and conceiving, and in this elementary sense, it is always and irrevocably subjective" (Glassersfeld, 1996, p.307). You cannot quantify people's subjective experiences as those experiences will differ, so interpretation can be difficult. When coding the themes and analysing the data, you may focus on the collective experience and leave singular experiences out, undermining the storyteller. There is a risk that the researcher takes by making a judgement on the importance of what is said.

As I was there with some women on their initial learning journey, I am also the knower, along with my research participants. Woodson (2006) advocates ontological insight into the lived experiences of oppressed and colonised peoples; these should not be seen as insignificant or missed: "education of any people should begin with the people themselves" (2006, p.18); how true that is. My ontological perspective relates to my personal experience as a community development worker who supported women to access ESOL classes, and I have chosen the methodology that would support my ontological reality and my research participants. Thomson (2014) argues that by being there you provide "some kind of orientation and moral compass" (p. 54). My research is with women from my community who live in the same town as me. I am not far from their reality.

3.4.5. Epistemology- the knowledge of the knower

Bryman and Bell (2016) argue that "epistemic issues concern what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline" (p.24). Whose knowledge counts and what constitutes legitimate and true knowledge of the social world are debatable. Knowledge is hierarchical and stratified, with community knowledge being considered lower ranked than other forms of knowledge, such as academic knowledge (Rasool, 2017). Knowledge is created through social realities, argues Willig (2013), and constructed from a particular ethnic and racial lens of the researcher and the researched. Dunbar (2008) mentions race as the "backdrop" to his lived experience and, as a Black scholar, was encouraged to remove himself as a "raced object" (p.89). Dunbar argues institutions are not "affirming and legitimising our own way of knowing and doing" (2008, p. 91), privileging only institutionalised knowledge. Intersectionality invites us to approach 'knowledge and knowers as located within multiple interpretative locations and horizons' (May, 2015, p.38). Since one occupies many spaces and has multiple identities and roles in one lifetime, you become a knower of many forms of diverse knowledge.

3.4.6. Classical and contemporary epistemologists' argument

Different knowledge systems, worldviews, and truths exist. The British education system and migrant women's knowledge systems I explored how the women navigated these two modes of knowing:

- What knowledge consist of (e.g., justified true belief) (Islam, 2019, p.16). Knowledge consists of having a belief that bears "a discernible mark of truth" (Dutant, 2015, p. 96). Knowledge is gained from various sources: family, the community, educational institutions, and religious texts.

- What knowledge is based on (e.g., sensory experience and/or pure reason) (Islam, 2019, p.16). The anxiety of many Muslim women is that they are blamed for the breakdown of social cohesion. Perry (2013) argues that "Islamophobic violence against women is a reality" (p.13), focusing on the single obsessive narrative of violence in the private sphere, disregarding violence suffered in the public arena.

- What the extent of our knowledge is (e.g., objective, conceiver-independent facts as well as subjective, conceiver-dependent facts) (Islam, 2019, p.16). Complete objectivity is not possible. You try to reduce your subjectivity by reflecting and going

back to your data to guide you. Lazarus (2018) argues we need to revise theories and ideas and "tell the history of humanity and knowledge from the knowledge point of those who have been colonised and excluded" (p.50) and what knowledge they need to function in white societies.

3.4.7. The values of the researcher

From the initial framing of the hypothesis, values come into play. Hypothesis is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "an idea or explanation that is based on a few known facts but that has not yet been proved to be true or correct" (Hornby, 2002, p. 640). We make judgments and assumptions about other people's lives. I explore some of the assumptions made by policymakers about non-speakers of English, so my research design is angled towards that aim. Research paradigms are a set of basic beliefs that define the values of research. Positivism explores the nature of knowledge following a systematic scientific lens based on the laws of probability and can be applied to a large group of people (Aliyu et al. 2019). This does not allow much room for intersectionality, and does not fit well with my research process, and excludes individual emotions and feelings of how welcomed migrants feel by the host society. My research process is close to critical theory, where knowledge is lived experience and understood in an economic and social context (Aliyu, 2019), exploring power, race, ethnicity, and inequality in relation to the lives of ESOL Muslim female learners.

Axiology refers to the role of values and ethics within the research process (Saunders et al. 2019). Researchers are to reflect on their role and how their values impact the empirical data and findings. Values are standards, according to Rokeach (1979, p. 6), underlining behaviours and actions towards others and society in general. Values are installed in us through socialisation. Different communities have different value systems as well as shared values. I see values as universal human values that apply to all. King and Horrocks (2019) argue that "whatever the design, context, or structure of the research, we must always be mindful of the ethical implications for all those involved in the process" (p.103). My values are embedded in my community "where moral discourse is nurtured and shared" (Christians, 2008, p.206), and I learned those moral values from the community I am researching. Heshusius and Ballard (1996) argue that "critical self-reflection requires that we rigorously challenge our motivations, ideas, and assumptions from alternative perspectives. But it does not require the pretense that we believe in nothing, in that our work is independent of our values" (p.30). Reflecting on one's core values, a sense of fairness is important to me. Greenbank (2003) argues that how data is collected, analysed, interpreted, and presented is likely to "reflect [the researcher's] (often unconscious) values" (p. 792), which can no doubt influence the research process and findings. Values support logic, reasoning, and justification for the research topic, the

recruitment of research participants, the chosen methodology and method for data collection, and the interpretation of findings; values are intertwined in the whole research process.

3.4.8. Triangulation

One method to support the credibility of my research was the triangulation of data sources and triangulation of theories to engage with multiple voices and perspectives to achieve data saturation by authenticating more than one voice. Patton (1999) identified four types of triangulations: methods triangulation, data source triangulation, analyst triangulation, and theory/perspective triangulation. Gray (2017) also argues we gain "credibility through the use of persistent observations (of data, methods, theories, and investigations)" (p.194). I used two of the triangulation multi-methods mentioned by Patton (1999) and Gray (2004): firstly, method triangulation in securing cross-data validity checks in understanding the specific experiences of the women learners. Through method triangulation, I was able to find categories and themes that were supported by more than one participant, such as high motivation and aspirations. Some of these themes apply to both past and new ESOL learners, such as the lack of opportunity for integration. I also engaged in different theoretical perspectives to understand the collective experience (theory/perspective triangulation) to offer consistency in the findings and limit bias in interpretation.

Theoretical triangulation allowed me to explore multiple theories, analysing and interpreting different research questions to map the consistency of my findings from different viewpoints of those involved in ESOL. Heale and Forbes (2013) state triangulation can lead to three results (p.98): the results may converge and lead to the same conclusions (1); the results may relate to different objects or phenomena but may be complementary to each other and used to supplement the individual results; and (2); the results may be divergent or contradictory (3). All three add to research rigour and validity, and in my research, the first two results were related to the participants' responses to topics such as family dynamics and cultural norms, as well as new topics appearing such as the use of ICT, which added to the results of the findings. According to Ness (2015), "data triangulation is a method to get to data saturation" (p.1411). I felt I had exhausted the key themes coming from different sources of data. Flick (2018) argues triangulation can be "fruitful if it produces new and additional insight" (p.200), such as the women's use of social media and technology that came out of the first two pilot interviews with an ESOL learner from the 1980s and was substantiated by group discussions and observations with new learners. My methodology authenticates the voices of the participants from their vantage point "through the lens of ethical practice and social justice" (Kearns, 2013, p.502). Silverman (2011) emphasises the importance of rigorous data analysis

to gain theoretical insight, in this case, by creating a framework from which to explore the reality of English language learners' lives.

3.4.9. Conclusion

Our beliefs and values make us human, and equally, values prevent us from being totally objective. I am aware I must clarify my positionality, beliefs, and values at the outset and reflect on how they can impact my research process. I have acknowledged the need to be reflective and mentioned the steps I have taken to reduce my own voice and subjectivity. I have chosen a methodological approach that supports community knowledge and provides me with ways of addressing my research questions. Through the triangulation of method and theory, I enhance the validity of my research. Anzaldua (1990) argues that as women of color, it is essential that we also occupy theorising spaces and not give them up to white academics: "by bringing in our own approaches and methodologies, we transform that theorising space" (1990, p. xxv) and offer academia an alternative worldview and allow theorising of knowledge from a cultural lens, embedding the voices of the knowers within the research context and raising awareness of the challenges of learning English. Ngulube (2015) rightly states that "valid research should address matters of social inequality and improve the lives of the marginalised" (p. 20).

Section 3.5: Ethics

3.5.1. Introduction

Research ethics are a vital part of the research, and the participants' wellbeing should take precedence, and it should not be a disempowering experience for them. Researchers have not always been ethical towards certain groups, such as minorities, the disabled, or indigenous communities. As Smith (2012) argues, "research is a dirty word for indigenous communities and is linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (p.1). Smith angrily writes that "it is a history that still offends the deepest sense of humanity" (ibid.), referring to scientists measuring Black people's skulls to test their intelligence and mental capacity. This has left a legacy of distrust amongst indigenous communities, and researchers from those communities have a role to play in bridging and rebuilding the relationship between indigenous communities and academia. I am passionate about social justice and, as a minority ethnic researcher, I want to address some of the inequalities created by looking at minority lives through a Western lens. Those research findings reflect the Western paradigm. Hornby (2002) defines "ethics" in the Oxford Dictionary as "moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviour or 'a system of moral principles or rules of behaviour" (p. 427). We can say with confidence today that "research ethics are a cornerstone of modern data collection" (Sterling and Gass, 2017, p. 50).

3.5.2. Research principles

I have followed the research ethics set by my university and submitted my ethics application along with the participant information sheet and consent form **(Appendix C and D, also translated into Urdu)** through the online ethics application system and received approval in February 2018 **(Appendix B).**

The Association of Social Sciences advocates that:

> All social science should respect the privacy, autonomy, diversity, values, and dignity of individuals, groups, and communities (BERA, 2018, p.4).

I understand my responsibilities to the research participants to respect their privacy and dignity, ensure no harm is caused by my research, and keep the data secure.

3.5.3. Ethical considerations

I am an experienced community worker who has worked with vulnerable women. The participants were given information sheets outlining the research and the option of withdrawing at any time, and they were given the opportunity to ask questions.

The women's confidentiality was respected, and thus I have not included in the text anything that would identify them and cause harm. Confidentiality was important given the research was conducted within a defined small community. I removed any data that would identify participants. I was aware of my position of trust. I used initials to identify the participants and kept interview transcripts in a locked cabinet. Some things were omitted as they would identify the participants—for example, names of family members, family fallouts, and personal issues that they would not have disclosed to an outsider researcher. I had to question my own viewpoint and check that what I wrote was validated by the interviews, discussions and observations. I am aware of my responsibilities and duty of care to the women, including a "legal duty, an ethical duty, and a professional duty" (Dowie, 2017, p.47). Richards and Schwartz (2002) suggest using pseudonyms or initials when transcribing to avoid identifying the research participants, and this is something I did. Some interview transcriptions were sent via email, while others were taken to the participants for approval. I only contacted the participants if I needed clarification, and that happened with four participants. Honesty and transparency are important values to me. I wanted the participants to fully understand what my research entailed. and what they were committing themselves to and how their interviews would be used. I intend to meet the participants to share the findings; it may be difficult to contact the new ESOL learners as their sessions have come to an end.

I was careful not to direct their stories, as that was not my trajectory. One former learner mentioned that her husband did not like her going to English classes, and I was aware that there had been violence in the marriage. She had grown up children who have the right to privacy and, living in a small, tight-knit community, she would have been identifiable if I had asked more questions and was able to manage these tensions. The new learners were not hesitant in their responses either and trusted me to share some of their personal issues, as I was seen as one of them. This puts the insider researcher in a powerful position and could make the participants vulnerable.

3.5.4. Conclusion

Ethics guide our research and foster trust in academic and research institutions, and I have reflected on my own values. Research should benefit the communities, in this case, offering a

platform to Muslim women learning English. Never forgetting the overarching principle that one's research should not make the participants more vulnerable or cause harm, and to remind oneself that research is intended to be of public benefit. It is argued by Greenbank (2003) that "the moral values of researchers obviously have an important role to play in determining their research ethics" (p.797). I pride myself on working ethically with community members during my career.

Section 3.6: Data analysis - Breaking down the data

3.6.1. Introduction

LeCompte and Schensul (1999) state that data analysis reduces data to "a story worth telling" (p. 2) and interpretation of the data tells readers what the story means, a dual role of making the stories meaningful for insiders and meaningful to-or translated for–outsiders. Storytelling does not impose categories, and our engagement with storytelling is "a place to begin inquiry rather than as a place on which to fix pre-existing categories and meanings" (Gallagher, 2011, p.53). The categories emerged from the women's narratives, working with fragments of narratives to complete a story, collaborating with other storytellers about Pakistani women's similar educational experiences. Stories add texture when presenting human experiences. Data analysis is a journey of discovery, and while the data is being reduced, you should be mindful that you are still able to address the research questions adequately. According to Ashirwadam (n.d.), data analysis "is vital to finding the answers to the research question" (p.1). The researcher draws inferences and conclusions from the data to address the research questions and creates meaning and a story for the audience by assessing and interpreting events, experiences, and concepts to an audience. (Kelly, 2005, p.12). Pakistani female language learners reflect on their roles as women, as language learners, and as mothers, and position their stories to give them greater identity, agency and power.

Figure F - The process of data analysis: three-tier approach
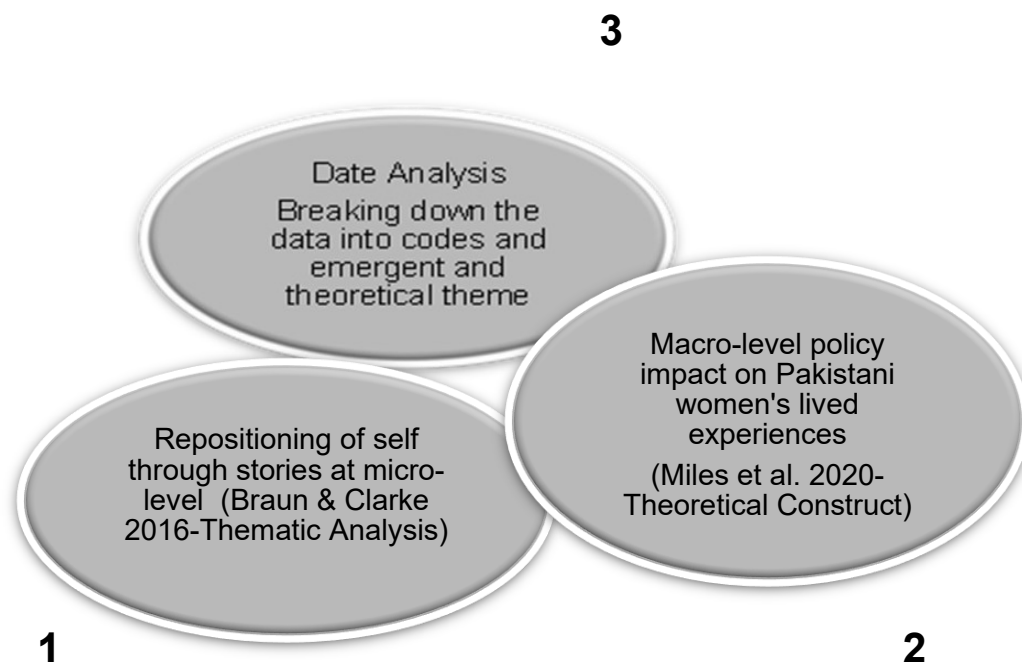
As the above diagram shows, I started with the coding of the stories and reduced the data into codes and key themes. I divided the findings into two subsections so that the research questions could be adequately addressed. The micro-level (emergent themes) reality of Pakistani female language learners' experiences is told by the women and those who work in the ESOL field, and I explore the macro-level policies (theoretical themes) that impact ESOL learners and teachers and the organisations.

3.6.2. Defining data

I bring together different data sources to address my research questions and gain an understanding of the reality of women's lives who have limited English language skills. "Data can be defined as a class of information objects, made up of units of binary code that are intended to be stored, processed, and transmitted" (Zine, 2006, p.482). I am bringing the richness of my data through stories and a diversity of voices, capturing the lived experience of learning the English language of a group of Pakistani Muslim women in the town of Rotherham.

I adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework to code my initial data (complete coding, selective coding, and emergent data themes). I then selected some of the key primary concepts from Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, such as identity, aspirations, and agency, and applied them to the second cycle of coding, following Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2020) framework that led to theoretical themes (descriptions, explanations, and theoretical constructs). The abstract ideas came from the data framed by post-colonial feminism, critical race theory, and third space theory. I did not want to box my research at the start of the process by selecting a theory and then gathering the data to test it. Due to the complexity of the cultural lives of migrant women, I wanted to let the data take me to the theories. My approach was inductive, and I worked from the bottom up and used participants' stories to generate a theory connected to the data and themes (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011) to support the findings of my study.

3.6.3. Why thematic analysis?

Thematic analysis is an effective analytical tool to examine women's lives and the many roles they hold in the home and community that influence their learning. The term "thematic analysis" refers both to the thematic structure of headings and to the explication of the theme

110

(which may include some narrative description, explanation, and/or substantiating quotations or reflections)" (Finlay, 2021, p.104). I used thematic analysis to interpret the raw data in determining the key recurring themes. Clarke and Braun (2017) advocate thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 297) that capture the lived experience, views and perspectives, behaviour, and practices. As I used several methods to collect my data, thematic analysis seemed to be the most logical approach to analyse and interpret the data. Thematic analysis is an analytical process that helps the researcher make sense of the data, offering a critical lens on the broader social and political issues of migration and belonging. According to Boje (2014), storytelling is bound up with the pragmatic function of the everyday. The ordinary and sometimes extraordinary events tied to diaspora history and language isolation as articulated by my research participants.

Bleakley (2005) refers to stories as raw data and knowledge is actively constructed through generating data that gives "dramatic insight into the lives of those socially marginalised" (p.523). Meanings are produced from the data on how people experience and deal with obstacles and challenges based on their lived experiences (Bold, 2011). Stories allow for the participants' perspective to draw from different data sources to analyse and interpret the cultural experiences of Muslim women. I found patterns across different intersectional experiences; the learner role and the mother role; and how it can motivate you to learn for your children's sake, but also how it can become a barrier if there is no childcare in ESOL classes.

Qualitative data focuses on people's life experiences and, according to Miles et al. (2020), it is "well suited for locating the meaning people place on events, processes, and structures of their lives" (p.11). ESOL learners in a new country face instability, and the loss of place and agency becomes part of their new reality. "To be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner" (Nowell et al. 2017, p.1). To ensure credibility and rigour, I kept going back to the research questions and different data sources to explore the participants' responses to the research questions. Bold (2011) argues that "the aim of any analysis is to produce credible and trustworthy evidence to support the researcher's initial questions, identified issues, or proposed hypotheses" (p141). This requires time and actively listening to the participants. One strives to set a social context to create a coherent story (McAlpine, 2016), grounded in the everyday experiences of language learners told through their embodied and subjective accounts.

3.6.4. Computer coding programmes

I decided not to use computer software for data coding, such as NVivo or ATLAS, as I wanted to stay close to my data and manage it myself. Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest becoming "intimately familiar with your data" (p.204). I like to visualise things on documents, so writing themes down on a flip chart and cards aided my memory. Computer coding can help with managing large volumes of data effectively, and it is easier to count the frequency, the number of times something is mentioned. My time and commitment in analysing the data made it more of a shared experience to listen to the women's loss of home and family ties by coming to a new country to give their children better opportunities and resonated with my mother's story. I am more aware of the women's plight after working with them for years. I am not afraid of putting the effort in.

3.6.5. The coding processes

According to Finlay (2021) "a good" thematic analysis doesn't simply emerge – it has to be actively "worked with"; it involves painstaking extraction and reconstruction" (p.104). it is a painstaking process of pulling the data into themes that is "actively involved, searching, resonating, creating, crafting until just the right words/images are found" (2021, p.108) that resonate with the participants, my cultural community, and the wider audience. Creating knowledge through a qualitative approach is never easy since generating knowledge this way, according to Polkinghorne (2006), "is not a mechanical process; rather it is a result of practices of diligence, creativity, and wise judgment" (p.72). It is also time-consuming and generates a lot of data, and you need to be selective, which was a struggle. While you are coding, you are making "connections to other parts of the data" (Miles et al. 2020, p. 87). Certain themes emerged, creating "a picture of dominant patterns in the data" (Braun and Clark, 2013, p.249) that gradually started to address the research questions. As researchers, we bring our lived experiences, opinions, prejudgements, and "personal philosophies" (Smith and Noble, 2014) that can strengthen the research but can also allow personal feelings to distort the interpretation of data. Therefore, accurate coding is essential, going back to the transcripts so you can carry forward into the findings your research participants' lived experiences.

Figure G - The process of coding the data.

I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 16-22) six-phase approach to thematic analysis as a framework for coding my initial data as described below.

```
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Familiarising-hours │      │     Generating      │      │    Searching for    │
│     of reading,      │ ──▶  │  initial codes and  │ ──▶  │  themes, reviewing  │
│   immersing in the   │      │   concepts such     │      │     codes, and      │
│    data, making      │      │    as identity,     │      │    identifying      │
│  notes, writing key  │      │     aspirations,    │      │  patterns, mother   │
│       themes         │      │       agency        │      │  role, diverse      │
│                      │      │                     │      │    knowledge        │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
                                                                     │
                                                                     ▼
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│     Producing        │      │    Defining and     │      │     Reviewing       │
│    compelling        │      │   naming themes,    │      │     potential       │
│     stories of       │ ◀──  │    summarising      │ ◀──  │   themes, quality   │
│   women's lived      │      │  the essence of a   │      │     checking        │
│    experience of     │      │   theme in a few    │      │    referred by      │
│  learning English    │      │      seconds        │      │    Braun and        │
│                      │      │                     │      │      Clarke         │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
```

3.6.6. Emergent themes on the micro-level female ESOL learners lived experience.

Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to different analytical approaches for analyses:

> **Complete coding**: identifying everything of interest or relevant to your research questions.

> **Selective coding**: "data reduction," selecting the phenomenon you are interested in.

The first stage of complete coding took a substantial amount of time in total; the whole data analysis took 2 months spread over 6 months.

From the transcripts of the interviews, I started coding all the raw data I felt was relevant to the research and the themes mentioned by more than one interviewee. I moved from the narrative interviews and coded the group discussions and observations. All the data sources were coded.

Figure H - Key themes and concepts coming out of the women's stories
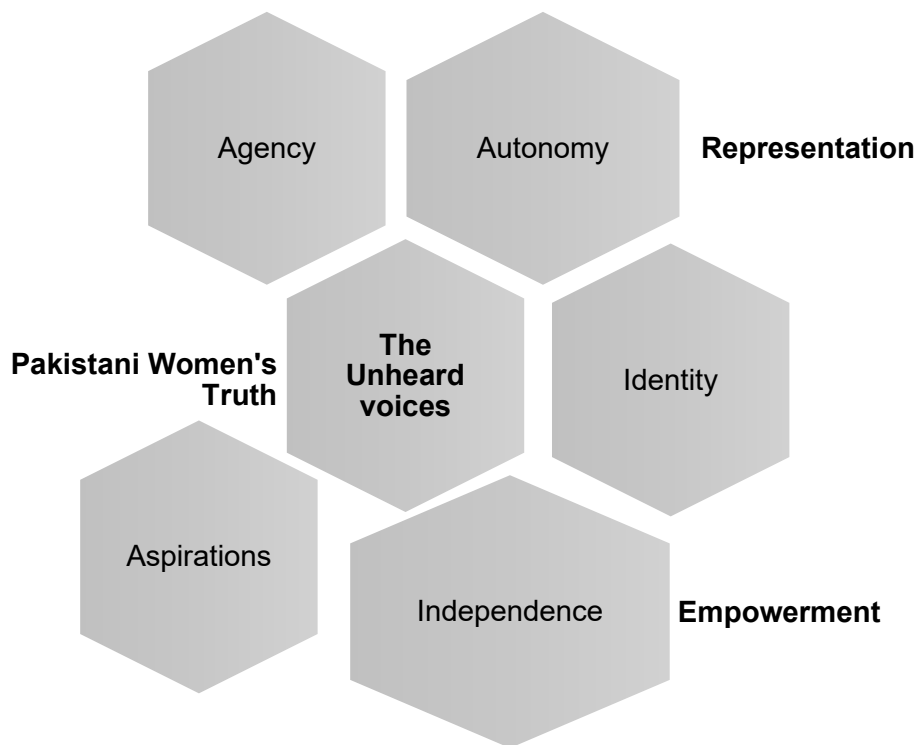
Figure H refers to key concepts that emerged from the women's stories, such as independence, identity, and aspirations that frame the findings. The three key themes include representation and how the women positioned themselves through stories in opposition to the way the state views them, and that process empowered them and gave them agency and autonomy. In this instance, truth is from their world view, allowing for a "deep understanding of the participants" world as they perceive it and the meanings they ascribe to the elements of their world. This pursuit of truth turns inward towards participants' contextualised meanings. (Court, 2013, p. 13). We may go through the same experiences but may feel those experiences differently, and those diverse embodied experiences become our reality of the truth.

The process of coding, according to Creswell (2013), involves aggregating the textual or visual data into small categories of information' by creating indexes or categories to "collect similar segments together" (p.184). I discovered the home was also a learning space and technology opens new avenues for learners.

I brought together all the key emerging concepts from the first round of coding, such as agency, independence, and aspirations, and applied them to the second round of coding using the Miles et al. (2020) model that created patterns and theoretical constructs highlighting gender inequality, power, and stigmatisation. **(See Appendix I).** There were some codes that

could not be theorised, like the diversity of learners, teacher qualifications, and accessible venues that I defined as micro-level experiences. The themes that were theorised were those macro-level experiences such as state power, the othering of gendered bodies, and Islamophobia.

3.6.6. The theoretical themes on the impact of policy on Muslim women's experiences at a macro-level

I applied the second round of coding to add rigour to gain a deeper insight that moved the data to a theoretical base. To describe, explain, and develop theoretical constructs of the embodied experience of women, I used the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2020) framework. The feelings, emotions and subjectivity; the relationships between the cultural, social, and political environments are examined, the ideologies and discourses that surround the bodies of migrant women with limited English. Chiappelli (2016) refers to the embodied experiences of migrant women, the feeling of displacement, oppression, forced integration, being made invisible, and at the same time, overexposed by the media, like my research participants, trapped in the hierarchy of power.

Theoretical themes from the dataset provided a conceptual frame, including power, gendered stigmatisation, and space. Adom et al. (2018) argue that "theoretical and conceptual frameworks explain the path of research and ground it firmly in theoretical constructs" (p. 438), finding an anchor for my data to explain the lived experiences of women learning a new language. I will briefly explain the theoretical themes.

Theoretical concepts	Conceptual frame
Representation/colonialism/power/female body	Postcolonial Feminism

Power over migrant women through representation as the other. State policies on citizenship mean certain groups of women are under pressure to pass the Life in the UK. test to secure residency. The rhetoric of the old Empire and saving women from their own kind continues through ESOL policies denying them agency and autonomy.

Truth and reality/integration/Islamophobia/racism	Critical Race Theory

The women's lived experience of being the "other" in an environment that does not accommodate their bodies as outsiders. The women speak their truth and mention the lack of opportunity for integration, white flight, and the everyday micro-aggression towards Muslim women, restricting their independence and aspirations as citizens.

Empowerment/Safe spaces/creative spaces/agency   Third Space Theory

Home was a learning space that offered them a sense of identity linked to faith and culture. Through their knowledge of Islam, they felt empowered. The women had high aspirations and mentioned their own hybrid spaces for social, cultural, and faith literacies. Pakistani women were creating their own agency through Islam and the mother role. The ESOL learners talked about creating their own virtual space through information technology as white spaces become more hostile.

3.6.7. Conclusion

The approach I mentioned in the introduction gave me clarity and made it easier to manage and analyse the data. The two cycles of coding theorised the women's individual and collective experiences as language learners and citizens, moving from objects to subjects and changing their social location. Pessar and Mahler (2003) refer "to persons' positions within inter-connected power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based, and other socially stratifying factors" (p. 816).The participants, through their stories, gain agency and the power of voice to challenge the power structures. I also realised that data cannot be compartmentalised into neat boxes since life is not like that; it is unruly and unpredictable like the lives of my research participants. As an insider researcher, I am translating some of the unruliness and unpredictability that come with learning the English language. Cook (2009) argues that investigation in messy areas is "the place where long-held views shaped by professional knowledge, practical judgment, experience, and intuition are seen through other lenses" (p.2). I wanted to explore the messiness of ESOL policy and practice, the gulf between policymakers and migrant women.

Findings Chapter 4

Section 4.1. The Unheard Voices

4.1.1. Introduction

My research is on Pakistani women's experiences of learning the English language and citizenship and addresses my research questions of how stories can reposition women's agency by sharing their reality as English language learners, which differs from the political representation of them. The empowerment of Pakistani women comes from diverse and rich knowledge systems, language and literacy practices that are often overlooked in policy. The women's stories help us to understand the trajectory of learning a new language and some of the challenges to integration with native speakers. Through stories, they highlight their own diverse knowledge systems that support their agency and identity, allowing "us to glimpse something of the complexities of human lives, selves, and endeavours" (Andrews et al. 2004, p.103), challenging the East/West dichotomy of oppressed Muslim women. Pakistani Muslim women, like my research participants, are mythical figures in numerous misconceptions and discourses, positioning them as immovable "passive" objects, the European representation of the Orient (Said, 1978). The progressive West and Oriental backwardness persist in the public sphere in contemporary Britain.

The findings section in qualitative research argues Kumar (2011) helps us to "understand, explain, explore, discover, and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences of a group of people" (p.104). This was achieved through listening to the women's stories of their cultural lives. The key themes from the data highlighted power, gender inequality, and hostility in white spaces, but the home for my research participants was an autonomous space of empowerment and hybrid learning. The women's stories draw out key concepts such as agency, autonomy, identity, and independence gained through their own literacy practices; family and faith; and their aspirations to learn English and become more independent in their daily lives. The chosen theories allow me to explain the key concepts and how they align with those theories. Post-colonial feminism allows us to explore representation, gender and power, the policies that impact Muslim women's collective experiences. The daily microaggressions and Islamophobia are examined through a critical race lens, and women's own sources of knowledge are celebrated as a third space. My research validates the accounts from the perspective of the ESOL learners themselves, adding to the existing body of knowledge by listening to previously unheard voices.

Figure I – Theoretical lens on Pakistani female English language learners' experiences

Pakistani women's experiences of learning the English language and literacy practices are theoretically framed by post-colonial feminism. Intersectional power and the representation of Muslim women in policy shape women's experiences of learning a new language and the policy discourse of saving Muslim women. **(See Literature Review, section 2.2.7).** The way ESOL learners are represented in policy as passive victims with labels attached to their bodies, with the state deploying power over them. The female learners I observed experienced a sense of powerlessness, a lack of **autonomy and agency** in the learning environment. Critical race theory illuminates Muslim women's struggles to find a place of belonging, being ostracised by policy language that impacts their **independence and aspirations**. Racism, Islamophobia, and the political language relating to Muslim women create physical and ethnic boundaries and increase hostility against the "other". Muslim women share their truth and reality relating to the challenges of integration with native speakers. Through third space theory, I explore women's stores of empowerment through their own knowledge systems, supporting Muslim women's **cultural identities** and roles and giving them a sense of self through the merging of different knowledge systems. Storytelling allows women on the margins to share their lived experiences and offer an alternative story.

Figure I

Postcolonial Feminism
Representation (Saving Muslim women/passive victim labels - taking away women's agency and autonomy)

Crtical Race Theory
Muslim women's truth (Islamaphobia and ethnic boundaries - impacting on women's independence and aspirations)

Third Space Theory
Spaces of empowement (Hybrid knowledge/selfhood- supporting thier cultural identites)

Storytelling (ESOL learners, teachers, and BAME organisations share their stories and offer an alternative narrative)

The women and those who work with them through stories challenge the representation of them and share their lived experiences of English learning and working in the ESOL field, addressing the research questions below. Each section mentioned below focuses on a particular research question.

1. How does the representation of Muslim female English language learners by policymakers and politicians differ from the experiences of Pakistani Muslim women? (Section 4.2.).

2. What are some of the different methods for eliciting stories from learners and those who work in ESOL to understand changes in the field? (Section 4.3.).

3. What are the challenges and barriers for Pakistani female English language learners in integrating with native speakers? (Section 4.4.).

4. How does storytelling enable women to offer alternative narratives and reposition themselves as English language learners and citizens? (Section 4.2. & 4.3.).

5. In what ways do different knowledge systems support Pakistani Muslim women's agency and identity in language learning settings? (Section 4.5.).

Section 4.2. The impact on Pakistani Women's lived experiences of learning the English language

4.2. Postcolonial Feminism: The representation of Muslim female English language learners by powerholders and the reality of Pakistani women's experiences.

4.2.1. Introduction

The postcolonial feminism lens allows us to examine how Muslim women are represented. Gandhi (1998) argues "she is simply the medium through which competing discourses represent their claim" (p. 90) and no one directly speaks to her about her aspirations as a language learner. Representation can be understood as broadly meaning "standing in for someone or something or acting as a substitute for the real thing" (Webb, 2009, p.2-3). When you continue to substitute Muslim women, they become invisible in public debates. "The subaltern cannot speak wherever her speech is mediated through interpretation and replication mechanisms that foreclose her exercise of power through speech" (Wagner, 2012, p.101). When I attended the Consultation on the National ESOL Strategy in May 2019 for stakeholders organised by the relevant government departments, one practitioner I remember asking the facilitators: *"Where is the voice of learners and why have they not been invited to this event?"* **(See Appendix L)** and were told "you were invited to represent them." This persistent ignoring of English language learners and talking through intermediaries denies them agency and the opportunity to share their experiences. The representation of Muslim women in the West has never been positive, with women being seen in a negative light as passive, disadvantaged, and lacking cultural capital; labels that permanently attach to their bodies **(See Figure B, pp.68-69),** impacting on their educational aspirations. I will be stitching together different stories to enable a "collective sensemaking" (Bietti et al., 2019) of the ESOL environment. As a methodological tool, storytelling resonates with my participants, allowing me to integrate individual stories to understand the collective experiences of a diasporic community. **(See Methodology chapter, section 3.2.).**

4.2.2. Different stories and realities

The women's stories went through two cycles of data analysis **(See section 3.6.5.),** drawing out key themes and concepts that offered an insight into the complex cultural lives of Pakistani women and questioning the negative narratives about their lives. Certain themes reappeared a number of times in the data set, such as women's agency and aspirations **(See Appendix G-I),** which the findings focus on. According to Jawad and Benn (2003), "Muslim women form a highly diverse and complex group and assumptions about them are often ill-conceived,

misinformed, and grossly misrepresented." The dominant narrative is that they do not want to speak English and prefer to be segregated.

The women I spoke to all mentioned the importance of learning English for independence, like this woman.

> *I needed to gain confidence and made myself attend classes as I needed to learn English; otherwise, life would be hard in a new country'.* (1980s learner, Sharaz, March 17th, 2018).

This statement was also reiterated by the BAME organisations.

> *Women want to learn English and are motivated. I don't agree with what politicians say: that minority women don't want to learn English or integrate. If you show respect to them and have a tutor who is not criticising them, it builds their confidence and trust. We had 40 to 50 women coming here a week, and they were motivated to learn.* (BAME organisation C, April 25th, 2018).

The government has little awareness of who the English language learners are and views all Muslim women as uneducated, which is challenged by another BAME organisation.

> *We have had women who come from the sub-continent*, *India or Pakistan would need ESOL, but they may have good qualifications from abroad. The majority concept out there is that they don't speak English and, therefore, don't have skills; they have knowledge and skills but just a lack of the ability to speak English.*

> *Women do want to learn English*; *we had a service user who studied political science in Pakistan. Her mother was a principle back home, and this woman was a lecturer. She spoke fantastic English. She is now working. We have had some very intelligent women who have struggled to find employment and do further training because their English proficiency is low*. (BAME organisation A advocacy worker, May 6th, 2018*)*.

By not looking at individual women, the ESOL classes are not tailored to the needs of different women. Some new migrant women have had professional identities back home and were independent with their own income, and when they come here they lose their autonomy and the capacity to make decisions about their learning, ending up in mix-ability sessions. Some women who had no schooling were "learning to learn" (Al-Farah, 2009) for the first time, and this slowed the progress of advanced learners placed in the same ESOL class.

4.2.3. Male power and patriarchy: Muslim men exerting control over women

The UK government is fixed in its obsession that Muslim women are passive and prevented from seeking knowledge or learning English, and Muslim men are seen as the oppressors of Muslim women and speaking English can save them. Fowler (2007) argues the "myth of universal male dominance and female subordination with little regard to important variations in experience from man to man, woman to woman, region to region" (p.200) and culture to culture. I would be in denial if I did not acknowledge patriarchal power after working with Pakistani women for many years. There are some men from my community that exert control over women and will not want them to learn English to remain dependent on them. Postcolonial feminist writers from the global South, like Abu-Lughod (2013), Mohanty (2006), and Spivak (1988), challenge this supposed Eastern oppression and Western freedom binary.

Even in the 1980s, many Pakistani women were accessing courses, including ESOL, with different providers at different venues. The women were out of the house, accessing lots of community courses in a week, which counters the narrative that women are not allowed to come out of their homes by male patriarchs. In fact, most of the women said the opposite about the support they received from male family members.

> *My father wanted me to learn English. He really encouraged me to learn English, saying, "In this country, you need to know English." I first started English with a teacher called Christine. She was a volunteer teacher, and I could read but was shy to speak. I used to go to the multicultural centre English classes twice a week. I was attending a full week of classes. Wherever there were classes, I went. (1980s learner, Sara, April 20th, 2018).*

Another 1980s learner mentioned her father-in-law being supportive and encouraging her to access English. Politicians do injustice to many Muslim men like this father-in-law.

> *My father-in-law encouraged me to go to classes and learn English, so I learned quickly, and within seven months I started speaking English. After 3 months of attending classes, my father-in-law said, "I will drop you off and you have to catch a bus and make your own way home. That is how you are going to learn English." Then he said, "You can go on a bus and come back on a bus." When I knew how to do this, he then started to pick me up and drop me off at the English classes.* (1980s learner, Noreen, April 9th, 2018).

Only one out of eight 1980s learners said her husband stopped her from accessing ESOL. Her parents encouraged her, but when she married, that changed, and when they divorced, she returned to classes.

Some of the women's husbands worked as taxi drivers and could not afford to take time off work to act as interpreters for their wives, and learning English allows women to be more independent, deal with services, their children's school, and so on. Postcolonial constructs of Oriental women lacking agency and in need of saviours to free them from Muslim men are deeply embedded in political thought. The representation of Muslim women as oppressed, caged bodies has been sustained for centuries by the West (Abu-Lughold, 2013), whilst white women are portrayed as free and the "other" in bondage (Janson, 2011). This leads to the disempowerment of certain women. Marandi and Tari (2012) argue that negative constructions of Muslim women's lives ignore their "diverse realities and experiences" (p.19). The passive victim labels are challenged by my research participants' stories.

4.2.4. Autonomy: state power, the control of knowledge, and the learners' experiences

A key element of language learning is autonomous learning, where learners take charge of their own learning (Thanh Van, 2011), setting their own goals and strategies, determining what knowledge they need to survive in a new country at that moment in time. When I observed life in the UK, I did not see much choice, independent learning, or autonomy, with learners under pressure to understand random questions that could not really be applied to their everyday lives, such as the relevance of the number of wives Henry VIII had, in assisting them to catch the right bus. The women accessing Life in the UK class I visited had a short 10-week course to prepare them for a test when they had limited English to fully understand the test questions, as highlighted in my observation notes.

> *The women get frustrated, finding the mouse on the computer difficult to negotiate. They use their phones at home to access the Life in the UK test papers but will have to use a laptop or computer at the test centre.*
>
> *They are stressed about other things happening in their lives, like looking for accommodation, ill-health. One woman broke down in tears; she had just lost her husband. Handouts are given explaining the Life in the UK test questions (different ways the questions may be asked during the tests). They did not fully understand the questions and were memorising them.* (Observation of Life UK class notes, September 11th, 15th, and 25th, 2018).

123

The organisations in my research saw language and citizenship tests as discriminatory since only certain groups had to take the tests to live in this country. According to Garcia (1995), "immigration law and politics have been historically intertwined with racial prejudice" (p.119). Naturalisation tests like the Life in the UK test are one way of highlighting the differences between Muslim women and the natives of the country.

This BAME organisation felt the government had little awareness of Muslim women's lives.

> *There is a lot of pressure on people around English and citizenship. This targets mainly BME women who face the challenges of passing ELT language tests to obtain U.K. citizenship. The government is discriminating, and don't see how a woman who is forced to stay in the home by her controlling husband or in-laws (perpetrators). How will she access ESOL or how is she going to learn English? The government shows little awareness of the plight of some of the BME women survivors of domestic abuse.* (BAME organisation A manager, May 6th, 2018*).*

This organisation is a domestic violence project and talks from a particular client perspective, and the government, to get a balanced view and opinion, needs to listen to the ESOL learners themselves.

One of the retired tutors expresses her views on citizenship tests and feels it causes more anxiety to learners who face multiple barriers already.

> *One of the things that came up before we left was that women had to have English to stay in the country; they had to have a qualification. There were strict guidelines coming from the government.*
>
> *The Life in the UK test is ridiculous. These are really difficult questions. I am not up to date with current policies; I finished 12 years ago. People learn at their own speed.* (Retired teacher, Julie, April 5th, 2018).

Citizenship tests are shaped by the colonial trajectory of the empire. Bassel and Khan (2004) argue that citizenship tests are integrated into the colonial genealogy of a modern state. Heller and McElhinny (2017) argue, "colonialism justifies itself through the construction of selves and others, often defined along racialised and religious lines" (p.31) and today, once again, policies are developed from a postcolonial lens. Viewed through the lens of postcolonial feminism, assessments and tests are mere "symbolic acts of subjugation to state power" (van Oers et al. 2010, p.18). Integration tends to be defined by elite white men in power who, in colonial

India, decided Oriental women needed saving, and today policies are framed by the same memories, histories, perceptions, and judgments, according to Ostler (2012).

The women were fearful of failing the tests, and it is well documented that test anxiety can be counterproductive and have a negative effect on the learner; it can be debilitating (Ansari, 2015). It seems unfair that some migrants from Europe don't have to take the test, whilst others who are associated with the old Empire must be measured and classified as citizens.

Power blinds and policymakers do not look beyond their own assumptions about Muslim women. Lowenheim and Gazit (2009) argue

> Citizenship tests are a practice of disciplinary power, prohibiting certain thoughts and expressions or being coerced to behave in certain ways and 'conform to certain norms through the threat of punishment (denying the status of a citizen or even expelling those who fail/lie in the test)' (p158).

Threats of expulsion are not the best way to empower women and are mere acts of oppression by a powerful state.

One of the 1980s ESOL learners mentions her engagement in the civic process and shows it is possible to become active citizens without having to take a test.

> *I started a petition when the school my son was attending was going to close. My sister-in-law wrote the petition, and I got people to sign it. I did not speak much English, but I did it. I went to local meetings about community issues with my sister-in-law, and I listened and, as I could not speak good English, she translated. (*1980s learner, Sharaz, March 17th, 2018).

The other women mentioned selling Asian food to fundraise for their children's school at the annual summer fair or taking a sewing machine into school to sew children's pantomime costumes. Saleema, one of the 1980s learners, with a group of other language learners, makes patchwork quilts at the BAME organisation they attend for local charities.

Even women with limited English can be active citizens compared to many who were born here. Pakistani women's activism is often a part of their daily lives. As Muslims, those good deeds are not highlighted, as charity is about giving quietly. Today, citizenship is about governability and state power, which must be demonstrated in some way. Kochenov (2019) argues that "citizenship has always been a political tool wielded by the powers that be" (p.24). The English language and citizenship are inextricably bound up with power, which forces the Muslim female body to conform to the norms of the majority culture, as mentioned in the

literature review **(See section 2. 3: 3. Literature Review).** Cooke (2009), Simpson (2011), and Goodman (2015) argue against such oppressive tests that create unequal power relations (Fairclough 2001) and don't really facilitate integration. Hashem and Aspinall (2010) found in their study of Bangladeshi women's citizenship that the tests did not influence women's motivation to learn English and are unlikely to empower them, according to Shah (2019). Citizenship is about national identity, and the construction of European nations is built on the "idea of "natural" units with deep roots in history, language, and religion" (Strath, 2008, p.24). My participants speak a different language and practise a different religion, and no matter how many citizenship tests are imposed on them, they will never be natural units.

4.2.5. Becoming more independent

The government gives the impression that ESOL is adequately funded, and the fault lies with Muslim women who do not access the provision. I found no indication that these women did not want to learn English. In the 1980s, women wanted to learn English for everyday living, but now their aspirations include finding work and having financial independence.

> *We talked about everyday life; the ladies didn't want to work previously because they had small children. We did a lot of conversational English. We recorded them and then played it back to them. We give them a topic, such as phoning a doctor.* (Retired tutor, Denise, April 5th, 2018).

The term independence is criticised by postcolonial feminists for applying universality "(an idealised form) of the Western way of life" (Khader, 2019, p.2). The women in my research lived within the boundaries of Islam, and if asked, they would argue they were free spiritually.

I remember the ESOL classrooms being full of women wanting to learn English in the 1908s, and now demand is even higher, as are the educational aspirations of Pakistani women.

> *The set up at the multi-cultural centre was ideal, everything was there; it was local and had a crèche; it was a nice atmosphere. They were packed like sardines in those two classrooms.* (Retired tutor, Julie, April 5th, 2018).

In the 1980s, there was no expectation for women to take citizenship and English language tests. In the Life in the UK sessions, I observed restrictive learning, repetitive learning, and memorising information, most of which the women would not need in their daily life.

126

The tutor keeps telling them to speak English.

"You can do the test," the tutor encourages them.

The tutor explains the test questions and breaks them down.

*Life in the UK Tests: 13. Who is responsible for the economy? explaining the role of the Chancellor or Exchanger (that he was a person who looked after the country's money and how it was spent). Some of the questions were difficult to explain, such as: when was the last successful invasion of Britain? (*Observation of Life UK class, September 11th, 15th, and 25th, 2018).

Stephen Ball (2013) rightly argues that "we need to break away from the passionless transmission of inert information" (p. 26) based on tests and performances, or in other words "from exam factories to communities of discovery" (ibid, p. 27), which would be more empowering.

In the 1980s, outreach was the key to engaging BAME women. Face-to-face conversations about English classes tended to work well, whether it was visiting homes like I used to or standing outside the school gate and talking to mothers.

*Going back to when I started teaching. It was not then the case that the classes were set, and women were coming. I had to do a lot of outreach to get them to come into a class, and word of mouth played an important part, they told their friends. English is an important language tool for integration into the community, etc. (*Retired Tutor, Tahira, May 15, 2018).

The teachers emphasised that the retention and punctuality had improved as women became aware of the importance of learning English and the current learners were more motivated, as this teacher mentions.

Women from all over the world living here want to access English so they can access services like schools, doctors, and help children with homework, life itself, and going shopping. Women are more motivated than they were in the past. (Tutor Shazia, April 30th, 2018).

They wanted to learn to support their children, deal with school issues, make appointments and not have to find someone to come to their appointments with them, go on other courses and get a job. (Group discussion, Life in the UK sessions, October 2nd and 9th, 2018).

I observed the women accessing the Life in the UK class arrive early and were eager to learn. Arriving around 9.30 am for a 10 am start, they dropped their children off at the school and brought the toddlers with them. Women were very apologetic if they missed a week due to illness or an appointment.

Demand for ESOL exceeds supply as most learners could only access community ESOL for two hours a week and if they wanted to do more, they needed to go to the college.

> *I think ESOL should be more widely available and easily accessible without any criteria. If they want longer and accredited courses, they have to come to college.* (Tutor, Maria, June 8th, 2018).

> *Two or four hours a week is not enough to learn a new language; they need more intense sessions and different patterns of delivery*. (Appendix M, field notes, National ESOL strategy consultation, May 13th, 2019).

A briefing paper by Highton et al. (2019) also found demand for the English language was significant in the community, and many of the providers said they struggled to meet the demand with waiting lists or had to increase class sizes to accommodate the demand, increasing pressure on teachers to teach learners of mixed ability.

The Life in the UK class participants whom I visited asked me to set up an ESOL community class for them as they were not confident enough to go to the college and preferred small group sessions at local venues. I referred the women to another provider in the community. I found out later that the provider ceased delivery of ESOL provision due to funding issues.

The demand for English was articulated by the teachers, the BAME organisations and the women themselves. Some women are divorced, have no family, and need to be independent.

> *There are a number of single women who struggle as they don't have partners, live independently and need to do form filling and go to doctors. Some of the motivation is to help their children. Some mothers cannot read school letters; some want to go out and work and need English. It is a form of communication which is a necessity.* (Tutor Maria, June 8th, 2018).

The government does not need to use a stick to make the women learn English as they understand the importance of speaking the language of their place of residence. Similar things were mentioned by practitioners that came together at the MESH event that I attended in 2019.

Never met anyone wanting to not learn English. Everyone is motivated; they want to be independent.

*People do not want their confidential information to spread, which is a reason to learn English. (*See Appendix N: Learning English in Yorkshire and the Humber.) Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) event, February 13th, 2019).

The current learners also formed new friendship networks in the community classes, an incentive to attend ESOL classes, as my observation notes highlight.

New friendships are being formed, reducing isolation as the women keep in touch outside the classroom and meet up. The women shared news and stories before the start of the class and during the break. Sharing local news (births, deaths, marriages, and snippets of news from Pakistan). (Observation of Life UK class, September 11th, 15th, and 25th, 2018*).*

During the sessions, other services were invited to provide the women with a range of information. Having access to information gives women independence to deal with issues that impact on them and how to get support. Elmore (2017) also found that the ESOL classroom was an information ground.

4.2.6. Conclusion

According to postcolonial feminism, "nationalist discourses are largely male-centric and control women by capturing them in traditional stereotypes" (Tyagi, 2014, p.47), drawn from mediaeval Islam, and Muslim women today in the West have become tropes for being too traditional and religious, not fitting with the vision of modernity of an independent woman. Shohamy (2006) argues language policies have a hidden agenda that, on the surface, may not be that obvious but marginalises certain groups. ESOL learners will struggle to pass the citizenship and language tests without linguistic and cultural exposure, argued by Goodman (2011). The Life in the UK test has become outdated and is a mere instrument to promote the Empire. Like Ahmed (2015), I argue meaningful citizenship is a lived experience rather than a passport secured through citizenship and language tests. If you make Muslim women feel valued and respected, it becomes easier for them to envisage themselves as citizens.

The political representation of Muslim women is challenged through the ESOL learners' stories and those who work with them in the community. Smith (2012) argues that representation of indigenous people is about countering the dominant ideology and offering an alternative. I

have given the women the opportunity to share their realities of learning English by listening to their stories. Denzin (1989) argues that the lived experience of interacting subjects and the accounts of such experiences are best given by the people who experience them. This woman's motivation was her Islamic beliefs.

> *I attended family learning classes; I read books from the children's library to make sense of letters and words. Seeking knowledge is important in Islam.* (Appendix H, 1980s learner, Rozma, March 28th, 2018).

The Pakistani women I met understood the value of learning English for independence and would have attended more sessions if they were funded in the community. Female language learners are also a diverse group and require access to ESOL at different levels but end up in the same ESOL class. Most of them mentioned support from family members and the need to be knowledgeable mothers, and that included learning English. Their activism and civic duties were invisible, but nevertheless, they were contributing to their communities. Postcolonial feminism allows us to unravel Muslim women's lives in modern Europe, exposing power and gender inequality as they struggle to gain agency as citizens living in the West. Since the Occident culture defines freedom, choice, and independence from a western lens, Pakistani women's agency and independence were linked to their families, children, and their Islamic faith, which gave them a "sense of selfhood" (Bhabah, 2012).

4.3. Storytelling enables women to offer alternative narratives and reposition themselves as active English language learners and positive citizens

4.3.1. Introduction

Storytelling is often referred to as "yarning" by Aboriginal people, and as opposed to narrative inquiry, yarning is more informal and relaxed discussions and sharing of a journey between researcher and participants (Geia et al. 2013). Our journeys started together in the 1980s. I chose storytelling to capture South Asian women's trajectories. This approach fits with the Pakistani community's epistemological way of knowing by crafting stories about a life lived and what we know. My research participants yarned their stories using old and new threads to narrate the story of ESOL from the 1980s to 2020.

In this section, I start with semi-structured interviews that draw stories of the BAME organisations who set up their organisations to support marginalised women and the dedicated ESOL teachers who support new language learners, followed by ESOL learners who share their experiences.

4.3.2. BAME organisation stories of survival

Telling stories allows organisations to share their vision and commitment to the women in their community and their aspirations for them. The manager of this organisation explains her reasons for setting up the organisation after learning how isolated Pakistani women were in their homes.

> *When I came to Rotherham, I never saw an Asian lady on the street. They were all behind closed doors, frightened to come out. The language barrier was one of the biggest challenges for them. Women heard about the sessions through word of mouth, and they were looking for a place to get together and learn English, and they were fed up with taking interpreters. They wanted a place where they could go and get help. We had plenty of courses every day, from knitting, sewing, typing, family learning, and English.*

> *At that time in Rotherham, when the centre was set up, there was only the Pakistani community in Rotherham and a small Yemeni community, and those women were also isolated. We have about 26 different cultural backgrounds of women accessing ESOL today at the centre. Eastern European, Roma, Middle Eastern, Iranian, Iraqi, African, and Somalian women. (*BAME organisation C manager, April 25th, 2018*).

This organisation that I spoke to worked from cultural and Islamic perspectives to engage older women in learning.

> *We looked at bringing the women out through faith. In the Quran, it says, "you are never too old to learn." Islam encourages the gaining of knowledge. I use Islam as a vehicle to reach these women and talk to their families. I set up a prayer group as a vehicle to get the women to come and build their interest. For me, it was getting their interest and motivation, choosing something they really wanted, knowing what rights they have under Islam, and being confident in themselves.*

> *They came to pray and gain confidence, and realised they needed English; they lived in this country, they needed to go to doctors, catch a bus, needed to know prices when they went to the market. The ladies mentioned going to the market asking the stall holders the price and being told "Can't you see, it is all written there, so why are you asking me?", embarrassing them. People were not sympathetic. (*Organisation B, Manager, May 12th, 2018).

While the women learn English, they also increase Islamic knowledge of women's rights, delivered from a woman's perspective rather than by male Imams. Muslim feminist scholars interpret the Quran as a vehicle of empowerment, "equality and justice from inside the Muslim tradition…...they seek to change the terms of traditional Islamic discourses on gender" (Mir-Hosseini, 2019, p.109). Knowledge of Islam gave women power and autonomy, and women are today part of the production of Islamic knowledge.

An ESOL provider summarises some changes they have seen, more bureaucracy and less funding as they struggle to keep running their provision.

> *ESOL provision became more structured, a qualification framework for teachers, schemes of work and lesson plans needed to be produced, and inspections and reviews. Funding for ESOL has been reduced more and more. There is a lot of paperwork and less money. (*BAME organisation C Manager, April 25th, 2018).

Another BAME organisation mentioned not being able to receive full cost recovery and having to cover some of the essential costs themselves.

> *You don't get room hire if you have your own building. There is a cost. We get delivery costs but not admin costs or outreach costs. We have to pay a mortgage on the building. (*BAME organisation, B Manager, May 12th, 2018).

The BAME organisations' commitment to women in their community has been steadfast throughout numerous funding and policy changes. The leaders of the organisations have kept their provision going despite the austerity measures and public funding cuts and are forever looking for funding. Policymakers' expectation of migrants to "learn the dominant language of their new home is a marker of social inclusion: an insistence that migrants have an obligation to learn and use the language" (Simpson, 2021, p.5) but don't consider the government's obligation to provide sufficient funds.

A House of Commons briefing paper in 2019 by Hubble et al., highlighted the prolonged changes and restrictions in ESOL impacting the delivery of ESOL on the ground, as mentioned by my research participants. The automatic free admission of ESOL was withdrawn in 2007-08, and a further withdrawal of ESOL, plus mandate funding in 2015-2016, and various other changes, has led to waiting lists.

One of the biggest challenges for women today is childcare, compared to the 1980s, when ESOL classes had childcare provision on-site. If there is no childcare, they cannot attend until the child goes to school and may lose motivation by then. The husbands may not want them to attend English classes, as highlighted by politicians and mentioned by this project.

> *If there was no crèche, they could not come. Their husbands did not clearly want them to become independent. Whenever we applied for funding, we ensured the crèche was included. A crèche is key to women accessing courses. Most of our women require a crèche, and it has been one of the main barriers for them. If there is no crèche, who is going to look after the children? (*BAME organisation A advocacy worker, May 6th, 2018).

A number of reports mention that voluntary sector groups are currently operating on reduced funding opportunities, offering limited childcare provision (Refugee Council 2017, Ware, 2018), preventing women from accessing ESOL.

4.3.3. The gendered occupation of teaching

The teachers grounded their stories in the ESOL field as experts and offered a snapshot of changes in ESOL experiences. The teachers shared the identity of the mother with the learners and talked about going into community ESOL, which allows them the flexibility to work and gain further qualifications around their children.

I always wanted to be a teacher, but sadly, I did not get the GCSEs I needed. I started teaching when my youngest son was two years old. I did basic skills (literacy) through WEA. I then got my ESOL qualification. One of my friends did a course, Yorkshire and Humberside Certificate for Further Education for 2 years. It was for people who had subject qualifications but not teaching skills, so I did that. (Retired tutor, Julie, April 5th, 2018).

As highlighted by other academics in the literature review, such as Cooke and Simpson (2008), learners have become more diverse and come from different backgrounds with different aspirations, abilities and education levels. It can become challenging for teachers to accommodate everyone and requires a skilled teacher to adapt the sessions.

I get learners at different levels, most of them will be basic and some up to entry-level 3. (Tutor, Shazia, April 30, 2018).

Al-Subaiei (2017) mentions that mixed-ability classes are very detrimental to learners of the English language. Miraini and Chunawala (2015) also mention pedagogical challenges and different learning styles, learner interests, and prior knowledge, requiring teachers to be multi-skilled in utilising different teaching styles and learning strategies.

In the English language learning environment, power is present and plays with both the students and teachers, resulting in gender inequality. Education, as seen through a postcolonial lens, is "an instrument of power" according to Gerrard and Sriprakash (2017, p.4) because it operates on the values of white males, subjectifying female learners and teachers. Policy decisions tend to be made by men who control the purse strings, directing practice in the classroom, such as introducing citizenship tests.

The community teachers never complained during their interviews but mentioned that they were only paid for the delivery of the sessions and not for planning, evaluating, or buying resources. Their stories highlight gender inequality in community teaching provision.

*Julie worked with women who were at a basic level, and I worked with those who were a bit more advanced in another classroom. My learners did a lot more. My ladies had to do a bit more. We also did more work than we were paid for, such as marking and assessing the work. There was very little guidance. (*Tutor, Denise, April 5, 2018).

The same things were mentioned by new teachers, creating resources in their own unpaid time. A two-hour delivery could involve another couple of hours of pre-and-post-session work.

There are some resources we can tap into, but we develop our own when we know what topic we are going to deliver and at what level the students are at. We do lesson planning and the initial assessments. We get paid for the delivery but not for any planning or spending time buying resources. That time is not paid for. (Tutor, Yasmin, August 28th, 2018).

The unofficial role of teachers was also counsellors and advice workers. They needed to have a wealth of information about where to signpost the women for housing matters, financial issues, domestic violence, and knowledge of health services. The teachers took on a "welfare and missionary role" (Khanna et al. 1998, p. 13). The pastoral role requires more work after the classes dealing with students' problems.

They had problems with the family, especially their husbands. We supported them with everyday living more than anything. How to get help with housing or make an appointment. We had a lady who was tortured and had her leg broken with a rifle. It was something to do with her husband's politics, and she had to go to Northern General for treatment. We did as much counselling as teaching. We cared about them. (Retired Tutor, Julie, April 5, 2018).

The teachers were greatly impacted when learners, especially those seeking asylum, settled in Rotherham and attended classes; and then they were dispersed to other towns or deported, and they never saw them again. There does not seem to be any support for community teachers' wellbeing.

Only those women who migrate will understand this heart-wrenching loss and rootlessness. As a result, BAME organisations like this one provided a lifeline to women who wanted to meet other women from their own cultural background.

The biggest problem for new women is depression and coping with a new place and missing their family. (BAME organisation C manager, April 25th, 2018*).*

Women's basic needs must be met before their learning goals, and if one's psychological needs are not met, then they will struggle (Maslow 1943). Some women were struggling with mental health issues, housing issues, family issues, and the trauma of leaving their family and friends behind.

Housing was an issue. We had a lady who had water leaking into her house. It was a private landlord. We put them in the right direction. They had financial

issues. There were a lot of health issues and hospital appointments. (Denise, retired teacher, April 5th, 2018).

The multi-roles of teachers were highlighted by Roberts et al. (2004), who found students attending Blackburn College required cross-agency support. Students had mental health issues, suffering trauma, and depression. They noticed one teacher, Wendy, after the class finished, was ringing around making appointments for students, acting as an untrained and unpaid social worker and providing ongoing pastoral care.

I found all the ESOL tutors passionate about supporting women's integration and went the extra mile. As you can tell from their comments, as women, they wanted to help other women and gain job satisfaction.

> *I enjoy teaching as I have always had a passion for helping people in some way or another. I get a lot of job satisfaction from teaching, especially when the learners grasp what you have taught them.* (Tutor, Maria, June 8th, 2018).

> *It pleases me to see people I teach English develop their English language skills. I feel my delivery has been successful. I love meeting new people and giving life-changing experiences to others. I enjoy knowing when I walk away from a class that they have learned something. It inspires me. (*Tutor, Shazia, April 30th, 2018).

4.3.4. Strategies to improve English outside the classroom

The women shared anecdotes of their strategies to improve their English when not in the classroom. Once-a-week sessions were not sufficient to learn a new language. The learners in my research tried to take control of their own learning by accessing books, magazines, libraries, children's programmes, the internet to improve their English language.

> *I love learning. I used to read Okay Magazine and Women's Own when I first came here. I used to read ladies' problem pages and recipes.* (Appendix G, 1980s learner, Henna, February 26th, 2018).

> *I learned English by watching children's programmes like Telly Tubby's, CBBC, Blue Peter, and cartoons on Disney channels with the children when they were growing up. I used to get library books for the children and used to read them*

*myself. I look at the images. Now it's all-digital, internet and computers. (*1980s learner, Saleema, 28th February 2018).

During the Life in the UK discussion groups, some of the new learners mentioned watching cartoons with their children to pick up English words, speaking English with their children; and going to the library. (Group discussion, Life in the UK sessions, October 2nd and 9th, 2018).

If family members were bilingual and spoke English, it accelerated the learning of the English language. As this former ESOL learner explains, family conversations frequently consist of code-switching between languages: the mother tongue with the older generation and English with the children, and if it is spoken every day, you will pick up new words and phrases.

Everyone in my family spoke English, so I learned quickly; my extended family is well educated. (1980s learner, Noreen, April 9th, 2018).

One lady interviewed was very confident, and the other lacked confidence and was anxious about speaking in public.

*I found English hard to learn in the beginning. If you don't know something, then you will find it hard. I was not shy; I got things wrong but kept going. (*1980s learner, Haleena, March 21st, 2018).

The classroom can also become a comfort zone and can lead to a lack of confidence in speaking English outside in the real world.

*I feel embarrassed to talk in front of too many people. Learning is hard when you are older. I don't want to get it wrong. When I go shopping, the prices are written down in the shops. You know what size clothes you wear, so you don't need to ask; it is written down. (*1980s learner, Saleema, February 28th, 2018).

Badwan (2017) also makes a distinction between language learners and language users due to the way the language is delivered and learned in the classroom and how it is used in the real world. Learning in the confinement of a classroom and taking that learning into the real world is a big step for some women. Some foreign language learners may suffer from language anxiety (Nazarova and Umurova, 2016), while others have lots of confidence even if they get it wrong.

4.3.5. The women's motivation to learn

During our conversations, the women referred to the Quran and the Hadith (meaning stories in Arabic). The Hadith narrates the life of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBHU) and is a major source of moral guidance and a point of religious reference for Muslims. The women emphasised their Islamic duty as Muslims to seek knowledge. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "Whoever takes a path upon which to obtain knowledge, Allah makes the path to paradise easy for them" (Shah and Farooq, 2022, p.55). I interpret this to mean all-knowledge systems. Learning English requires time, commitment, dedication, and, above all, motivation, which is described as "the process whereby goal-directed activities are initiated and sustained'"(Cook and Artino, 2016, p.997). The women's stories highlight their motivation to learn the English language and the strategies they deployed as autonomous learners.

A former ESOL tutor shares stories of the early days. The women had family members to help them, so they were less motivated.

> *Why should you learn English? We are managing, we are coping. They had their family around them, like husbands, sons, and daughters, doing things for them. But to be independent, the younger women thought their mothers should do something. Once families started living further away, those dynamics changed as well; women saw education as bringing money, success, and affluence. Language can influence your thinking and your attitude.* (Retired tutor, Tahira, May 15, 2018).

As the extended family model changed, the need to learn English became more apparent when the children moved away, the husband passed away, and the support was not there.

> *Some of the women in their 40s had grown up children and were doing the interpreting for them. They felt their time had gone. They did not have confidence and did not go out much on their own; they could not read the numbers on the bus and going to the doctor meant taking your child with you. We have a woman who is elderly and whose husband did everything for her. He passed away, and she is unable to deal with the bank or financial matters. (BAME organisation, B Manager, May 12th, 2018).*

BAME organisations are no longer able to provide translation and interpreting services as they once did due to funding cuts. When I was a development worker, my role was to go to the hospital, housing, and other services with the women who did not speak English and act as an interpreter.

Motivation is the key to any success and depends on a student's attitude and determination despite obstacles. Sengkey and Galag (2018) refer to instrumental motivation in language learning to obtain a reasonable standard of English to find work or go into higher education, whilst integrative motivation is to be part of that community's life when they can speak English.

I undertook with the new learners attending the Life in the UK session a questionnaire asking: Why do you want to learn English? **(See Appendix J and K).** The women had to tick, in order of priority, their main reasons. All the women said they wanted to learn English to support their children with schoolwork like other mothers. They came to a foreign country to give their children a better life. They mentioned their families wanted them to learn English, so they did not rely on their children and take them out of school. Furthermore, some of the women also mentioned wanting to integrate with other people in the town and deal with daily life tasks such as travel and shopping.

Learning a language can be isolating and you need to be self-motivated like this lady.

> *I had to keep telling myself, I have to learn; it's good for me and for my children as well. When my children started going to St. Ann's School, they used to have book days where you went into the school and listened to children read, or you read a book to them and asked them questions. It was called "Better Reading". My sister-in-law and I used to go and give an hour a week to any child in the school and listen to them read*. (Appendix G, 1980s learner, Henna, February 26th, 2018).

The desire to learn is mentioned by another ESOL learner and attending a number of courses meant she learned English quicker.

> *I learned some English from Pakistan but was shy to speak here. I needed to gain confidence and motivate myself to attend classes as I needed to learn English to go to doctors on my own. When my children started school, I went on family learning courses and did lots of courses at their school so I could help my children. I translated stories from English into Urdu. For two years, I attended various literacy classes to assist my children's learning, including story-sack making, numeracy, and phonics. I also did first aid, food and hygiene, and sewing classes, and I did an A-level in Urdu. (1980s learner, Sharaz, March 17th, 2018).*

Lieblich et al. (1998) argue "stories provide coherence and consistency to one's experience" (p.7). In this case, the consistency of their stories is their motivation comes down to their roles

as mothers, inspiring them to keep learning. A mother is the child's first learning institution in Islam.

4.3.6. Learning for everyday functions

Most learners accessed ESOL to help them function in a new country. The ESOL teachers worked extremely hard to make learning relevant to learners' everyday lives so they could undertake mundane tasks that English speakers take for granted.

Two former ESOL teachers describe the broad content of the topics covered in their English classes to help women in everyday life.

> *We cover health, weather, transportation, shopping, cooking, and the list goes on and on. I enjoy teaching as I have always had a passion for helping people in some way or another. I get a lot of job satisfaction from teaching, especially when the learners grasp what you have taught them.* (Tutor, Maria, June 8th, 2018).

> *We covered everyday things like taking them to the bus station, how to make a doctor's appointment, and role-play, shopping, using transport to Meadowhall. They loved Meadowhall. They did not know of areas like Derbyshire. We also organised trips to Bradford, and the seaside and other places*. (Retired tutor, Julie, April 5th, 2018).

The outside classroom activities enriched the learning experience by using public transport or visiting a cultural site. With limited funding, transport for days out is a luxury today. What Julie and Denise describe was a norm in the past for teachers to get the students out of the classroom to stimulate learning, as mentioned by Betty Jacob (1994), who worked for a voluntary organisation in East London, "organising coach trips to well-known places to widen their students' knowledge of this country. The sharing of picnic lunches sitting on the grass at stately homes or at the seaside was enjoyable for everyone." (p. 28). Language cannot be learned without understanding the history and culture of the language of the people that speak it, and that cannot be done through the Life in the UK test. I enjoyed reminiscing with some of the learners about the days when we did coach trips out.

The mothers also expressed sadness over losing their own heritage language and seeing their children speak only English at home, another reason why their mothers needed to learn English to keep up with their children's lives. The dominant language in many Pakistani homes is English, including my own.

I have to speak English to my children as they cannot speak Punjabi. It is sad that children are losing their own language. I find reading and writing difficult, but I feel okay speaking English. I was shy at first about speaking English in case I got it wrong. (Appendix H, 1980s learner, Rozma, March 28th, 2018).

There are many reasons why the women wanted to learn English, and fewer reasons for not wanting to learn English.

The BAME organisations were strong advocates of the English language and stressed the importance of learning English for women living in England and encouraged them to learn.

When you come into a new society, you must adjust, and communication is very important. If you cannot communicate, you are isolated and dependent on your husband or some relative. (BAME organisation C manager, April 25th, 2018*).*

Women are empowered if they speak English. As soon as they are secure, they need English, and we encourage them. It is a must to get by. They go to a bank and must use English in a supermarket. It is very important to them, and we do stress that to them. It is beneficial for them. They have to have the confidence to verbalise. English is internationally recognised. (BAME organisation A advocacy worker, May 6th, 2018).

4.3.7. Family first and caring responsibilities

The women's stories highlighted some of their caring responsibilities and were hidden carers who received little state support. Often, this meant their personal aspirations were sacrificed. Culturally, the concepts of identity, agency, and aspiration can mean different things to different women. Through the prism of white feminism, Muslim women are seen as being constrained; that autonomy and liberal values do not apply to them. My research participants would argue that they gain independence through their religion and family role, giving them a sense of identity and "selfhood." Muslim women's piety is a form of agency and looking after the elderly means reward (thawab) in the afterlife. This has been recognised in gender studies by theorising their agency, liberation, and choice through their relationship with God. (Sehlikoglu, 2018). Writers like Pakistan's Saba Mahmood (2011) have restored Muslim women's agency as religious beings and their "ethical self-making", having higher aspirations for a place in paradise (jannah). Islam is a framework for self-guided choice and moral autonomy for many Muslim women.

Caring for elderly relatives such as parents or in-laws is one of the responsibilities of women. That is something mentioned in the **Literature Review (Section 2.6.2.,** Crespi, 2003; Patter, 2010; Ray, 2015) and applied to the women in my research. Due to Pakistani women's cultural expectations and gender socialization, duty and responsibility to kin can be a barrier to regular class attendance.

> *Sometimes I did not go to classes; with children, it is hard sometimes. The minibus came at 10 am, and you have a big family and are making breakfast and you are not ready. (*Appendix G, 1980s' learner, Henna, 26th Feb 2018).

The same was mentioned by a new learner attending the Life in the UK class.

> *Extended family commitments, family duties, and mother-in-law had a hospital appointment. I had to go with her.*
>
> *My mother was not well last week, and I had to look after her, so I missed the class. (*Group discussion, Life in the UK sessions, October 2nd and 9th, 2018).

One woman registered for the class, but her mother became ill, so she flew to Pakistan to see her and missed four sessions of the Life in the UK class. The sessions were only for 10 weeks. There is a cultural expectation for younger women in the family to care for the elderly, and health appointments occasionally interfere with English classes. As Ali (2015) explains, South Asian women's lives are shaped in the context of the family. In her study, obligations, duties, and responsibilities towards kin are mentioned, and family Izzat (respect, honour). Caring obligations mainly fall on women due to men going out to work. Islam places a duty on you to care for the elderly. "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or more attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor" (Quran 17: 23–24, IslamiCity, n.d., translated into English). This was accepted by most women, so there would be disruptions in their learning and caring for the elderly took priority. We do our duty as a mother, wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law.

4.3.8. Pakistani women's aspirations as language learners

Stories from 1980s students demonstrate how far they have progressed. They talked about their children and their aspirations for them, and how pleased they were that some of their children were at university. "Stories articulate our deepest desires and aspirations, connecting us to each other and the world" (Sabnani, 2014, p.92). Eliciting stories from research

142

participants requires a connection and for you to share a bit of your own life. I talked about my own mother and siblings. It is a reciprocal relationship. All eight women were consistent in sharing positively what it meant to learn English for their independence. Muslim women's aspirations have changed from totally focusing on their children, and for younger women, finding employment was an aspiration. A role model for most Muslim women is Khadija Bint Khuwaylid, the wife of the prophet Mohammed (BPUH), who was a successful businesswoman, and often, in gatherings, women mention her name as a source of inspiration, "the mother of the faithful" (Tawfiq, 2020).

I found that the women measured success very differently from Western accreditation and certificates. Learning English was clearly measured against what functions they could carry out independently. Most of the learners mentioned going to the doctors independently and feeling empowered, and that was important to their privacy.

> I *remember I went to see a doctor, a lady doctor. My mother-in-law was translating for me. My doctor said to my mother-in-law, "Let her try and tell me herself, and if she cannot do it, then you explain that she needs to do this herself". That doctor was so nice. Every time I went, the lady doctor encouraged me to speak directly to her in English. From there on, I built my confidence and I started to speak broken English. By the time I had my third child, I went to the doctor on my own and did not need anyone to come with me.* (Appendix G, 1980s learner, Henna, February 25th, 2018).

Some of the 1980s learners found employment and acquiring the English language helped them.

> *I benefited from learning English and sewing as it led to employment. I was a sewing supervisor and then became the coordinator. It was a safe environment to learn in. I worked there for 18 years. It was a good place. a safe place to learn. (*1980s learner, Sara, April 20th, 2018).

> *I did a childcare course at Rotherham College and qualified as a crèche worker. I used to work as a crèche worker for Rotherham Council's adult community learning programme; it was 2 hours of crèche support while mums went into classes, sewing classes, and art classes in the library; and I was a crèche worker at St Ann's school where community classes were being delivered.* (1980s ESOL learner, Noreen, April 9th, 2018).

143

The new ESOL learners were starting to find places where they could go and learn more, such as the libraries, sewing groups, cooking classes, exercise and fitness classes, and meeting other people. If there are opportunities, Pakistani Muslim women will take them up.

> *The new learners also wanted to progress in their learning and wanted to get into employment, and two of the Life in the UK learners had even found work in a sandwich-making factory and in a warehouse.* (Group discussion, Life in the UK sessions, October 2nd and 9th, 2018).

The group discussions allowed women to share their collective stories of their hopes and aspirations when they learned English.

4.3.9. Conclusion

Stories are opportunistic chats, conversational interviews that shape people's multiple realities, as argued by Riessman (1993); O' Riley (2012); Combs and Freeman (2016); and Held (2019) in the Methodology chapter. During the group discussions, the women talked about their motivation, and the younger women wanted to be more independent and find employment. New learners are experiencing more difficulties in accessing ESOL in the community compared to past learners as there are fewer providers of ESOL in the community. The family structures have changed, and the women in old age find themselves alone when children move away, and they cannot do routine tasks that require English. The women's main focus was on learning English for everyday use, like going to the doctors without an interpreter, which was a yardstick to measure independence and later moving to other learning. As I have mentioned, independence is linked to freedom to travel without fear, and the women highlight some of the issues in the next section that prevent integration. **See the Literature Review, section 2.4.** Autonomy, agency and independence are viewed from a western lens. The women also had family responsibilities that compromised regular attendance. "Muslim women abiding by their community's rules will therefore often appear to be lacking individual autonomy" (Lepinard, 2011, p.209). Yet faith and piety can be sources of women's personal autonomy and reward in the next life. My participants, like me, are women of faith, and religious autonomy and agency are frequently masked in the name of universalism (Bano, 2017), and the dichotomy of a backward religion and the Western liberation of Muslim women through the English language has played out for centuries.

The women I spoke to were active learners, accessing the library and the internet to increase their knowledge. The teachers and the BAME organisations mention a lack of funding and childcare provision. Learning a new language takes time and some women face lots of

barriers, some of which are caused by the state itself, such as lack of funding and political discourses about Muslim women. There was no funding to take the learners out of the classroom to cultural spaces. ESOL is very much a gendered profession, low-paid, and inequality seems to run through ESOL, from the treatment of the learners to the teachers and the organisations that struggle to deliver ESOL on the ground with limited resources. The demand for ESOL is high and has been for a long time. The stories also illuminate the resilience of women who work in the ESOL field, seeing less and less in the way of funding and more government agendas influencing what is taught in the classroom. Storytelling is about the diversity of voices (Boje, 2014) that have not been heard before, and through different methods I captured those stories. "The dominant culture is an agent of disconnection; the resulting relational images are such that a healthy sense of a racial-ethnic self is undermined" (Walker 1999, p.1) and policy and political language often undermine women's "selfhood." The dominant culture has the power to define one group as superior to the other, relationally creating the object and the subject and stratifying women's bodies, languages, and culture. Stories are a way of challenging the postcolonial construct of Muslim women as fixed objects stuck in mediaeval times.

4.4. Critical Race Theory: The barriers and challenges to integration with native speakers

4.4.1. Introduction

Policymakers and politicians argue that "the ability to speak English will allow immigrants to integrate better, create more cohesive communities, and reduce segregation" (Ahmed, 2008, p.1), but they are not looking at how this will happen at the community level. Poverty, housing policies, employment, racism, and Islamophobia all impact integration between different groups. Martinez (2014) argues "the frame of naturalisation of racism allows those situated in the dominant culture to explain away racial phenomena by suggesting that they are natural occurrences" (p.15). Critical race theorists argue racism reinforces the ideology of white superiority and entitlement taken for granted, continually re-creating inequality to serve the interests of some (Walton, 2020). Muslim women face multiple layers of discrimination rooted in religion, language, gender, and migration. In the year ending March 2021, just under half (45%) of religious hate crime offences were targeted against Muslims (2,703 offences), higher than any other faith group (Home Office, 2021). This impacts women's independence, agency, and freedom. The government is obsessed with women learning English but does not fully consider the impact of hate crime. Zempi, (2020) argues Islamophobia has increased significantly in this country, and "Muslim women are seen as "easy" "weak" targets to attack because of the visibility of their Muslim identity" (p.98). My research participants discuss some of the barriers to integration, their truth and reality. Our epistemologies shape our truth and reality and how we see and feel the world, and 'truth from the subjective knower comes through her personal intuition' (Mathews, 2003, p.100). The knowers share their stories relating to the challenges to integration that are often not fully comprehended in policy.

4.4.2. Everyday microaggression

Racism has been highlighted recently in football and cricket as being deeply rooted in our society, and for Muslim women, it is an everyday occurrence. Russell (2017) argues that "Islamophobia today is a new form of racism in Europe based on faith. Race is defined not only by looks but also by language" (Bennett et al. 2015, p. 136) and marks us as being different. One of the women who came here in the 1980s and could speak English well but likes to speak both languages when outside in the public domain, describes an incident when out shopping with her son.

> *I went shopping with my teenage son and was teaching him words in Urdu as he*
> *cannot speak any other language than English when an old lady shouted at us in*

a queue. She was very rude and told us to speak English (Sharaz, 1980s learner, 17th March 2018).

This kind of regular occurrence is a way of telling others they are different by shouting foreigners speak English (Hohti, 2021) in Anglo-dominant white spaces. The mother mentioned her son was embarrassed and felt their language was inferior, a reason why they were losing their heritage language, as their children did not want to speak it.

Critical race theorists argue that the "majority of racism remains hidden beneath a veneer of normality" (Gillborn, 2015, p. 278), deeply enduring parts of the everyday existences of people of colour (Brown and Jackson, 2021, p.19). Everyday comments and behaviours make integration challenging. Watson (2022) points out that the critical race theory lens allows us to cast a "light on the lived realities of people of colour" (p.11). The women gave examples of everyday micro-aggression, defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue et al. 2007, p. 271). These experiences prevent integration, and without social contact with native speakers, you will struggle to improve your English. These kinds of daily experiences are mentioned by Bryers et al. (2014); Matulioniene and Pundziuviene (2014); and Cooke and Peutrell (2019) in the Literature Review.

A learner explains some of the difficulties she has had travelling on public transport. Often, they need to travel to get to the ESOL classes and tend to ask for local venues close to home.

I got on a bus, and the driver said, "This is not your bus," and he would not let me get on. It was the right bus, and I missed my class, so I like classes near where I live. (Group discussion, Life in the UK sessions, October 2nd and 9th, 2018).

These are not isolated incidents, and today (Chan-Malik, 2018) argues "Muslim women's lived experiences are reflected through race and gender and the 'historical and ongoing precarity of Muslim life, which produces women's continual desire for safety and security" (p.38). Fear and insecurity create an invisible barrier between communities and prevent integration in its tracks. Often, women suffer from accent racism and feel embarrassed speaking English and lose confidence. One lady I know was shouted at in the public library, "you talk bud-bud English," a derogatory term that mimics the South Asian accent. (Rasool and Makuve, 2022).

It is important for women to know how to report such incidents. During one of the Life in the UK sessions, a community advocate employed by a local organisation attended the session to talk to the women about hate crime and where to report it.

One lady in the Life in the UK class said she lived in a flat, and every time she came out with her children, the man next door was waiting with his massive Alsatian, and the children got very frightened when she took them to school. She felt intimidated.

Another woman said her neighbours were very hostile and called her names; she wanted to move and did not feel safe. (Observation of Life UK class, September 11th, 15th, and 25th, 2018).

The women highlight, through their stories and counter-stories, that racism is so deeply entrenched in the culture of our society that it has become the norm. The language used by the government and the media about immigrants is not helpful either and creates hostility, increasing segregation, as one former tutor states:

The government keeps changing the goalpost and some of the way immigrants are spoken about is just wrong. I really get annoyed when it is said that they come here for benefits. They may have better lives there. (Retired teacher, Denise, April 5th, 2018).

4.4.3. White flight and segregation

The women I spoke to wanted to integrate and found it difficult to do so, living in ethnic areas with very few white neighbours. Harrison and Phillips (2010) observing the housing market found that newly arrived immigrants had little choice but to occupy the bottom end of the market, purchasing inner-city terrace properties abandoned by white householders. White families move out as more migrants enter the area looking for low-cost housing, clustering together to create migrant neighbourhoods. Harrison and Phillips mention clustering for social and cultural reasons and "blatant discrimination" (ibid., 2010, p.20). Through no fault of their own, the women lived where the housing was cheaper, given the unemployment rates in this community in Rotherham.

The women emphasise demographic changes and a lack of opportunities to speak English in their local community, where many languages are spoken today, but not necessarily English,

so the opportunity to practise and exchange pleasantries with neighbours is no longer available. Practice makes perfect, but some of the women have no one to practice English with and have limited conversations in English, such as when out shopping or visiting the doctor. Without social conversations with native speakers, it is difficult to learn about the culture and the social norms of a European language.

Two 1980s ESOL learners, Haleema and Naila, live on the same street and have seen lots of changes in their neighbourhood.

> *We had English friends who used to come to our house, so we practiced English with them, Jackie, Susan, Sue, Mimi, Becky, and I used to sit and talk to them. (*1980s learner, Haleema, March 21st, 2018).

Now the likes of Jackie and Susan have flown away to whiter areas. As more migrants moved in, everyday encounters tended to be with people from the same background or other migrants. The case of "white flight" meant there was less opportunity to speak English with the native speakers of English. Finney (2014) describes the imagery of racial ghettos as places of deviance, deprivation, and danger associated with migrants and argues that "Britain is pulling apart along racial lines as whites flee minority neighbourhoods" (p.8). Those living in these neighbourhoods are blamed for living parallel lives (Cantle, 2001). Learning English in a classroom has its limitations if the women cannot practice their English outside of the classroom. Therefore, progression will be slower. Despite living in this country for a long time, some learners can get by without needing to leave their local area (Salmon and Trace, n.d.), as this woman describes.

> *All my neighbours are foreigners like me now; the English people don't live here. I can buy everything from the Asian shops. My doctor is also Asian. I always lived here. There are a lot of shops owned by Pakistani people, from newsagents to take-aways, and meat and grocery shops. My neighbours are from Pakistan, and we now have Roma living here. I can speak some English to get by.* (1980s learner, Naila, March 21st, 2018).

In this instance, you have everything you need to survive without English if you don't venture outside the immediate neighbourhood. Gradually, minority communities become inward-looking and detached from the rest of society. Bryers et al. (2014) explored integration with ESOL learners in London; they saw integration as a "two-way street," the onus should not be just on the migrant to adapt. Bryers's research participants said they had significant barriers

in communicating with the locals, having to contend with "changes to immigration policy and hostile rhetoric towards migrants" (ibid, p.32).

4.4.4. Conclusion

Critical race theory shines an unforgiving light on how certain groups of women are treated in Western spaces, pushing them to the margins. Delgado (1989) argues that stories humanise us. "Stories are useful tools for the underdog because they invite the listener to suspend judgment, listen for the story's point, and test it against his or her own version of reality" (1989, p.2440). The critical race lens of storytelling allows women to name their realities and deconstruct the lives of Muslim women living in Europe. My research brings into scholarly argument the experiences of a particular group of ESOL learners, Pakistani Muslim women living in South Yorkshire.

The opportunity to learn English is difficult if you live in an area where all the minority ethnic communities are living together, and you work with the same group of people. The local shops are run by the same community members. The women's stories highlight some of the racism they face, they don't choose to live parallel lives (Cantle, 2001) but, nevertheless, are blamed for it. Learning English requires social integration with native speakers. Norton's (2000) longitudinal case study of immigrant women in Canada highlights, through exploring relationships between the women and the wider Canadian population, that language learning is marked by inequitable relations of power where migrants are denied access to Anglophone social networks; the women in Norton's study "found the outside world was frequently hostile and uninviting" (p.113), which some of my research participants have also mentioned.

Section 4.5. Repositioning of self through stories

4.5. Third Space Theory: The different knowledge systems that support Pakistani women's agency and identity in language learning settings

4.5.1. Introduction

The home was a place of sanctuary for the women and a space of empowerment. During this research, I visited the 1980s learners in their homes. They were proud of their skills and showed me things they made for the home: flower arrangements, cushions, curtains, a fusion of East-West designs. In third spaces, as Nagra (2017) argues, "new identities emerge from the knowledge of the coloniser and the colonised; the mixing of ideas and practices produces new cultural forms" (p. 206). My research participants were creating a third space that is a "transnational and traditional sense of the hybridity of imagined communities" (Bhabha, 2012, p.7). Pakistani women were sustaining the memories of the old home in a new place but also drawing on new knowledge learned in community classes they attended, leading to the formation of new identities and new ways of knowing. I examine women's hybrid knowledge through the lens of third space theory to gain a greater insight into their diverse knowledge systems and move from the position of mere ESOL learners to knowledge producers.

4.5.2. Cultural spaces of empowerment

The home can be a place to improve your English language skills, and learning did not stop for my participants when they left the ESOL classroom. My findings show the women had a thirst for knowledge and were committed to learning, and ESOL classes built their confidence. Two of the women enrolled on Islamic courses and utilised their other languages, including English.

> *I also took other community classes. I did GCSE in Urdu. I did an Islamic diploma for 2 years through Nottingham University. It was a distance learning course. It was in Arabic, Urdu and English, and I got 97% out of 100%.* (1980s learner, Sharaz, March 17th, 2018).

> *For the last 2 years, I have been doing Islamic studies in Tinsley twice a week for over 2 years. The course is delivered in English over 3 years, and you will become very knowledgeable about Islam. You have to make lots of notes. If I don't know a word in English, I write it in Urdu and then come home and check it in the English*

dictionary and spell it properly. If I do not know, I will ask my son. It is a high-level course I am doing. (Appendix G, 1980s' learner, Henna, February 26th, 2018).

Knowledge is metaphorically carried in a suitcase that migrants bring with them to a new place. For example, Pakistani women's knowledge of herbalism is passed from older members to younger ones and goes back centuries to improve health and wellbeing. Henna communicated her herbal knowledge in English to the younger generation of women born here. She explained to me in English the names of herbs and plants I was not familiar with.

I also like the following herbal remedies: for pain in knee joints, turmeric in hot milk is good with some ginger and some cinnamon. You put honey in it to sweeten it. This will reduce joint pain and give you a good night's sleep. (Appendix G, 1980s' learner, Henna, February 26th, 2018).

The women's homes were cultural knowledge spaces. The word "culture" was first defined by the anthropologist Edward Tyler as that "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1871, p.1). Culture defines a nation as the "customs, beliefs, and practices of a people" (Scruton, 2005, p.1). Scruton also points to the fluid nature of culture. As we drift from place to place, so does our culture in its new home and changes, hybridises as our minds become open to other knowledge systems and worldviews. Muslim women were creating their own third space, a safe hybrid space where Western knowledge meets Eastern wisdom. Hybridity, in its simplest terms, refers to "the coming together of different entities to create something new" (Trede et al. 2019, p.21). Henna and the other women mentioned going on YouTube cooking channels to make new dishes for their events. Korteweg (2008) argues that religion informs agency. It can be said Henna's agency is embedded in religion and celebrating Eid Milad-ul-Nabi, a literacy event (Heath, 1983) that brings the whole community together to share Islamic knowledge.

I go on YouTube for recipes like making lasagne, shepherd's pie, and egg fried rice. I use black pepper, lots of herbs, like oregano, and Chinese herbs. I try to make dishes from Morocco; couscous, falafel. I can cook for 100 people and often do so for Eid Milad ul-Nabi. (Appendix G, 1980s' learner, Henna, February 26th, 2018).

Eid Milad ul-Nabi is an event celebrating the life of the prophet Muhammed (PBUH), which involves reciting verses from the Quran and further Islamic literature, both oral and written.

Often, the women translated the Quranic text into English for the younger generation and had to be highly knowledgeable.

One needs to view agency from a diverse lens as being embedded in multiple ways of knowing, through family and community relationships, rather than looking at it from a white feminist concept of freedom, choice and individuality. Henna's story is one of Islamic empowerment. As Muslim women grow older, they gain more power in decision-making. "Women's social worlds are constituted by a normative moral framework of kinship and family, in which the predominant patriarchal family unit's lifecycle places them in a seeming position of power (i.e., women gain status and power as they grow older)" (Purewal and Jasnai, 2017, p112) in recognition of Islam bestowing on the mother the highest status.

4.5.3. Hybrid knowledge through use of technology

Minority women find their own places to "reclaim their identity by creating a third space, a space within the already-determined first space," argues Benson (2010, p. 556), which challenges these stereotypes of immigrant women as lacking cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). I see the home as the first space, the internet as the second space, and knowledge hybridisation as the third space, giving a sense of autonomy and control. The internet has changed the literacy practices in the home, and women need knowledge of English to access information. Richards (2015) argues that social media and the internet have opened new opportunities for language learners. Technology provides another learning space outside of the traditional classroom environment.

One of the women mentions her sewing skills and how she takes Western designs from the internet for inspiration.

> *In community sewing classes, I learned how to put a zip on, make pockets, over-lock, and use patterns. I can use Google, WhatsApp, and text. I go on you-tube to look at clothing designs. I sew clothes, and I can take ideas from western designs and mix Eastern and Western fashion. I copy the designs. (*Appendix H, Rozma, 28th March 2018*).*

When I interviewed Rozma, the sewing machine was in a corner of the room, an I-pad next to it, and an array of fabrics and cotton around her. She was in her element.

Moje et al. (2004) state "the notion of hybridity can apply to the integration of competing knowledge and discourses: to the texts one reads and writes: to the spaces, contexts, and

153

relationships one encounters" (p.42) and that is what my research participants did by integrating diverse knowledge systems to create something different.

The women I interviewed had lots of skills, and the only thing lacking was the English language, and are represented, spoken and written about from a deficit perspective.

> *At one time, if you needed information, you had to look around for help. Now it is all on the internet. You can find anything.* (1980s ESOL learner, Sara, April 20th, 2018).

> *I look at websites to learn about eating healthy. Look up illnesses on the NHS website. My doctor tells me I have high blood pressure.* (Appendix H, 1980s learner, Rozma, March 28th, 2018).

Something that came out of the research was the use of iPhones to access the internet and social media such as FaceTime, WhatsApp, and so on. The use of technology by ESOL learners opens new possibilities for them. The women mentioned social networks they belonged to via WhatsApp groups that allowed them to connect with other women and Islam.

> *I can use social media and WhatsApp. I usually send Islamic motivational messages to my children or get photos of my grandchildren. I can do text, but I cannot do e-mail.* (1980s learner, Sharaz, 17th March 2018).

> *I listened to verses from the Quran on the internet during the day when I am cooking in the kitchen.* (1980s learner, Haleema, March 21st, 2018).

> *I can use social media, computer, internet, text, WhatsApp, snap-chat, Facebook, you name it. When my granddaughters go to nursery their parents send me their photos and I have to text them and say they are "looking pretty". I go on Facebook when I am free. I just mess around.* (Appendix G, 1980s' learner, Henna, February 26th, 2018).

Technology was a theme that appeared in most conversations with ESOL learners, and I found some used technology more competently than I could. The use of social media connected the women with their families back home, which made them keen to grasp the use of modern communication methods.

> *I talked to Ammi (mother) on FaceTime. The children showed me and brought me*
> *a good phone. (Appendix H, Rozma, 28th March 2018).*

The new ESOL learners were also very keen to learn about technology, and it was a way of reducing loneliness by getting instant access to family back in Pakistan.

> *We use social media to keep in contact with family in other towns and in Pakistan.*

> *I use my mobile phone to do the Life in the UK tests.*

> *We get WhatsApp messages from the teacher about classes.*

> *I use Google translate to check English words I don't understand. I use social*
> *media like WhatsApp and sometimes I text in English to friends.*

> *I found out about the class through messages on my phone and texts from my*
> *teacher. (*Group discussion, Life in the UK sessions, October 2nd and 9th, 2018).

Through technology, the teachers also reminded the women of the classes and sent links to various English language learning websites. Henriksen (2010) argues that digital communication technology can develop new types of social networks.

Some women read information online and then relayed it to other women. That required them to read it in English, understand it, and explain it in Urdu or Punjabi. The information then cascades down to other women.

> *I find out about the class through messages on my phone and text messages from*
> *my teacher, and I tell the others. (Group discussion, Life in the UK sessions, 2nd*
> *and 9th October 2018).*

Literacy is rooted in social and cultural practices, and it defines a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), like the Pakistani community, through the sharing of cultural resources in the everyday. There are different forms of literacy and knowledge that exist: 'multiple epistemologies, or ways of knowing' (Hall and Tandon, 2017, p.13) and these should be celebrated.

4.5.4. Conclusion

If we look at Muslim women's home lives through the lens of third space theory, one can challenge the Oriental construct of victims locked up in the home. The home was a learning

space that enhanced the women's agency and identity, supported their English language learning but also sustained their own cultural and Islamic practices and languages, merging and hybridising both knowledge systems to improve their confidence. The women were creating their own new in-between spaces in the home and linking existing funds of knowledge with new knowledge acquired from community sessions. "Moving in between-cultural traditions and revealing hybrid forms of life and art" (Homi Bhabha, 2012, p. xiii), and knitting together different cultural knowledge systems and ways of being and were not willing to accept colonial knowledge, a single culture, or a language. The women have shown that competing knowledge and languages can come together to create newness. The women I spoke to were very creative and had funds of knowledge. Gonzalez et al. (1993) referred to as the households "rich in social and intellectual resources" (p.2), the abundant and diverse knowledge Pakistani women possess, from craft-making to herbal remedies.

A lot of their learning and knowledge seeking was happening outside the ESOL classes. Women were creating their own knowledge systems, and Bandura (2006) argues "these systems, in turn, organise and influence people's lives" (p.164) knowledge, languages, and literacy practices. It is a shame that policymakers cannot look beyond Pakistani women's ability to speak English. As Cornell West (2017) rightly asks, "Can genuine human relationships flourish for black people in a society that assaults black intelligence, black moral character, and black possibility?" (p. 85). Whatever knowledge the women possess appears to be left on the margins, denying them empowerment. The achievements of the exile are always undermined (Said, 2000, p.174).

4.5.5. Overall chapter conclusion

I have examined Pakistani women's lives through the framework of postcolonial feminism to understand the gender inequalities linked to the old construct of Muslim women, labelled as passive victims. Since Muslim women are carriers of their culture. Bilge and Denis (2010) argue that they are "impacted by multiple axes of power relations (race, class, sexualities, age, nationality, religion, caste, able-bodiedness)" (p.3) and positioned as subordinate to white women, shaping their lived experience in the West. My empirical data captured through the women's stories challenges the powerless victim label. From an Islamic perspective, choice, independence, agency, and autonomy are defined differently. Archer (2002) explored post-16 educational choices of Muslim girls and found alternative models of "choice" from a cultural aspect where young Muslim women negotiated "educational choices within the family context, rather than as solo individuals" (pp. 369) but still maintained their choice. My participants did exactly that; they negotiated choice within the family context that gave them agency and used Islam as a vehicle for empowerment. Today, the internet is supporting Muslim women's

knowledge of Islam and strengthening their identities as mentioned by (Rosowsky (2008); Piela (2012); and Warren, (2018).

Policies are often designed to create racial inequalities and oppression. As Breen (2018) argues, "societal structures ensure that racial inequity is sustained at the biting point of tolerable discomfort for marginalised racialised communities" (p.36), that puts women under immense pressure to take language and citizenship tests. Through a critical race theory lens, I examined some of the nuances of everyday microaggressions that Muslim women endure. This leads to alienation, making it difficult to integrate with native speakers. When white spaces become hostile to women like my research participants, the home becomes a space for liberation and creative freedom. They were creating their own empowering spaces in their homes and communities, and their knowledge systems are explored through third space theory, which allows us to gain an insight into the intersectional lives of Pakistani women and their hybrid literacy and language practices. They were developing plural identities and diverse cultural practices, thereby constructing their own citizenship and sense of belonging (Boland, 2020).

Chapter 5: Discussion on the findings of the Study

Section 5.1: Alternative stories of ESOL learners

5.1.1. Introduction

The aim of my study was to offer Pakistani Muslim female ESOL learners the opportunity to share their experiences of learning the English language and citizenship through stories. Gillborn (2017) argues narratives are counter-stories of lived experiences; "myths and assumptions and received wisdoms can be questioned by shifting the grounds of debate or presenting analysis in ways that turn dominant assumptions on their head" (p.102). Through this study, Pakistani Muslim women had the opportunity to challenge certain stereotypes about them and speak their reality, giving the power of representation to the learners and unmuting subaltern voices (Spivak 1988) ignored by those in power. The women, through stories, share their own cultural knowledge that supports their agency and identity.

I have explored some of the barriers women face, their motivation to learn English, the differences it has made to their lives, and the ramifications of citizenship policies. The lived experiences of my research participants challenge the government's discourse of Muslim women unwilling to learn English and segregate themselves. My findings tell a different story: that there are very few opportunities presented to the women to integrate with native English speakers. **(See section 4.4 of the Findings Chapter).** Language, according to scholars (Matulioniene and Pundziuviene, 2014; Omar and Altaieb, 2015), is a social and cultural tool that cannot be learned in a classroom in isolation from outside interactions. Not one ESOL learner who took part in my research said they did not want to speak English or learn about British culture and way of life—the desire to learn English existed in the 1980s and is still there.

> *It is very important for women to learn English; you cannot live in this country without knowing English.* (1980s learner, Noreen, April 9th, 2018).

> *Some are very motivated and will come, sun or rain. Of course, they want to move on with their lives; they want to progress.* (Community Tutor, Yasmin, August 28th, 2018).

The government's representation of Muslim women and the reality significantly differ, as articulated by the ESOL learners and those who support them. The government's negative representation of Muslim women as victims is mentioned by Kahf (2002); Brah and Phoenix (2004); Abu-Lughod (2013; and Mushtaq, (2010).

5.1.2. The micro-level experiences of Pakistani women learners and those who work in the field.

My research findings show that women want to learn English for many reasons. These range from supporting their children to finding employment, medical appointments to travelling independently, and demand-driven survival literacy (Rasool, 2017). They had hopes and aspirations, like other women, for personal fulfilment through education. The women measured success not by the Western paradigm of certificates and qualifications but by being able to attend appointments without a family interpreter, feeling a sense of independence, as Rozma mentions:

> I couldn't speak English, so someone accompanied me to the ante-natal classes when my first two children were born, but after my third child was born, I felt more confident enough to go on my own. It has been 18 years since I have been going to see the doctor on my own. If you live in this country, you need to learn English. It is necessary. *(Appendix H, 1980s learner, Rozma, March 28th, 2018).*

Family dynamics have changed, with children moving away and elderly mothers finding themselves isolated because of their inability to speak English. The BAME organisations mention a lack of funding to offer interpretation and translation support. Pakistani parents are reluctant to take children out of school and understand the importance of education. Consequently, learning English has become a necessity with the loss of previous support networks.

BAME organisations provided a safe space for diverse knowledge, celebrating cultural practices and organising religious literacy events (Heath,1983; Conteh and Brock, 2010) argue that safe spaces can also be teaching and learning spaces "where culture is constructed and mediated, sometimes contested" (p.40). These would include the once busy community hubs supporting women to adjust to their new environment, offering first-step learning activities from knitting to computer classes. A healthy ESOL landscape existed in the 1980s. Today, providers struggle with funding to offer more ESOL classes with childcare. Often, women could only access once-a-week English lessons in the community, which was inadequate, and the number of ESOL deliverers had reduced over the years.

> *I think it has become difficult now to find funding to run courses and cover all your costs.* (BAME organisation, B Manager, May 12th, 2018).

The teachers were managing large classes of learners from different cultural backgrounds with mixed abilities, preparing them for life in a new country. Badwan (2017) argues that teachers were torn between preparing learners for tests and accommodating learning that

159

supported them in the outside world, identifying a gap in how language is delivered in the classroom and used in the real world. Gender inequality runs through the ESOL field, with dedicated female teachers undervalued, not adequately paid for their work, planning lessons and creating resources in their own time. Undertaking the emotional labour of dealing with learners' personal issues. One former ESOL teacher echoes these sentiments for all: "*We cared about them.*"

One of the biggest barriers was childcare. There was no childcare unless the providers could find funding. Women were arguably being penalised for their gender and having babies. One former ESOL learner sympathises with the new learners.

> *We used to have crèche workers, but not many courses offer a creche these days.*
> (Appendix H, Rozma, 1980s learner, March 28th, 2018).

Another challenge for Pakistani women as part of their gender roles was caring for elderly parents and in-laws, "family first" (Ray, 2015; Crespi 2003), making it difficult to attend classes on a regular basis. Migration brings with it the psychological pain of being apart from family; the women were lonely, so attending English classes enabled them to make new friendships. Sometimes women need stable housing and income before they can access learning and have other basic needs satisfied (Maslow, 1943).

> *The biggest problem for women is depression and coping with a new place and missing the family.* (BAME organisation C manager, April 25th, 2018).

Some new learners struggle with mental health issues, and it can be difficult to focus on learning. I observed new learners under pressure to undertake the citizenship test. The state flexes its power and makes the women take this unnecessary test. Maybe it is time to delete the citizenship test as it has become a tool of oppression, denying women agency and should be removed like the statutes of slave traders glorying the Empire. Other researchers such as Mora and Pipper (2021) and El-Enany (2020) argue the test is the continuation of colonialism in national domestic spaces, and Corbett (2006) questions the unfairness of a test that targets certain migrants, referred to by some as the "Muslim test." The women mentioned during group discussions their struggles with the citizenship test, which I also observed.

5.1.3. Theoretical insight at macro-level into Muslim women's collective experiences as language learners

At a theoretical level, Pakistani Muslim women carry the memories of the old Empire; women from the Orient need saving (Spivak, 1988; Abu-Lughod, 2013) refers to it as the "moral

crusade," an obsession. Brah and Phoenix (2004) refer to the fixation on the "veiled Muslim woman." The rhetoric of Muslim women being oppressed and controlled by male patriarchs is challenged by my research participants. As one 1980s learner, Sara, stated, "*if there was a course in the community, I would attend a full week of classes*." Collins (2000) argues that policies are created within power structures that label Muslim women's bodies in a disparaging way. (**See Figure I in the Literature Review**). The British Muslim Council argues the government needs to move away from long-term fixed stereotypes unchanged in the last 25 years (Ali 2015); the world evolves, but Muslim women are trapped in a time capsule.

As soon as Pakistani women arrive in this country, power relations and discourses come into play and they are blamed for lack of integration, not fitting in and thus becoming a political problem (Blommaert et al. 2012; Gedalof, 2007; Scheurich, 1995; and Van Aswagen et al. 2019). They are judged too harshly and too quickly. Good citizenship behaviour according to Vigoda-Gadot (2006), "represents the willingness of individuals to invest effort and energy in their social environment beyond any formal requirement and with no expectation of formal rewards" (p.77). Citizenship is a lifetime commitment and cannot be measured by tests and ceremonies. von Busekist and Boudou (2018) challenge the validity of language and citizenship testing regimes and argue the tests are coercive, creating an unfair burden on migrants. von Busekist and Boudou (2018) argue that language should be one of the building blocks of citizenship, along with stable housing, reasonable income, access to health care, and social support networks.

During the Life in the UK class, I saw women under pressure trying to learn about the culture, language, and history of a country they had not lived in long enough to understand its values and norms. Brooks (2013) argues the test is outdated with random, impractical, and inconsistent questions. The tests have been criticised by Byrne (2017) as being forgettable and not relevant to the learners' everyday needs. The citizenship test, I cannot emphasise enough, is not going to help them understand the British way of life without exposure to cultural networks. The retired teachers mention taking the women out of the classroom to integrate them.

> *We took them to Bradford and to the seaside. We took them to the museum and the library which was across the road.* (Retired teacher, Denise, April 5th, 2018).

Teachers like Julie and Denise, who I interviewed, saw little merit in testing people. The BAME domestic violence organisation felt the government showed little understanding of the plight of some women.

> *If a referral is made, we do an assessment with them. If they are high risk, then their life and safety come first. That is paramount before they can think of other things.* (BAME organisation A, May 6th, 2018).

Tests are intended to distinguish between the 'deserving citizens' and the "undeserving others" (Montfort et al. 2019, p.24) judged through Eurocentric eyes..

My research highlights the lack of integration. The likes of Jackie, Susan, and Sue, who used to teach 1980s learner Halima English, have moved away to white areas, and through no fault of their own, my research participants find they are living parallel lives (Cantle, 2001). Policies create a distance between the native and the alien, and fear leading to white flight since "purified spaces of belonging take place through the production of the figure of the good citizen" (Ahmed, 2000, p.32). Migrant communities are seen as dangerous, taking over our jobs and neighbourhoods, leads to less integration and more clustering of communities in their own silos, preventing integration. The blame is squarely placed on English language learners rather than on housing policies, poverty, and unemployment rates in minority communities. From a critical race theory, "urban and high-poverty spaces are preparing their students to take orders," argues Milner (2013, p.33), to know their place in white societies that prevent them from achieving their aspirations.

The women's narratives focus on the lack of opportunities to speak English outside of the classroom environment. One of my research participants moved from the inner town centre to a white neighbourhood but still had little interaction with native speakers.

> *I moved here. My brother and mother also live close by. We see each other a lot, and there are some other Asian families that have houses here. I drive a car, so I go where I want to go and come home. I don't know the neighbours that well.* (1980s learner, Sara, April 20th, 2018).

There is a need to understand the root causes of segregation and find ways of encouraging integration through the physical environment. The opportunities for integration will be limited if your neighbours are like you: new migrants from abroad or second and third-generation immigrant communities maintaining the heritage language. Baynham et al.'s (2007) study mentions the lack of opportunity for interaction with English speakers outside the classroom and emphasises the need to connect "the classroom with learners' outside lives" (p.8).

Political language does not help integration, nor does the way the media talk about and categorise about Muslim women. In an IPSOS MORI survey in 2017, after Brexit, many people wanted immigration reduced and felt that immigrants received priority over welfare and

jobs. Dempster et al. (2020) and Nchindia (2020) also found limited intercultural communication between ESOL learners and the host society and concerns over their lack of cultural awareness. My research participants are Pakistani Muslim women with limited English skills, defined as a problem by their "linguistic isolation and limited awareness of cultural difference, and entanglement in "backward practices," argues Gedalof (2007, p.90). There is a lack of sensitivity towards their feelings, which creates hostility and less tolerance for differences. My research participants mention being told to speak English in public by dear old white ladies who may never have interacted with Muslim women but are drawn to the negative political narratives framing Muslim women. Public attitudes appear to be influenced by the political language describing Muslim women. Huber and Solozano (2015) refer to micro-aggression as "the layered, cumulative, and often subtle and unconscious forms of racism that target people of color" (p.302) that impact women's independence in public spaces. Muslim academics like Aziz (2012); Mirza (2013); and Razack (2004) have highlighted increased Islamophobia and violence towards Muslim women. Segregation is likely to grow as Piekut et al. (2019) argue that the nature, causes, and impact of segregation need to be examined. The relationship with native speakers is unequal, and they decide whether to let migrants into their world. Norton (2000) touches on power between groups and argues that language learning is marked by inequitable relations of power, where migrants are denied access to social networks. Norton found work offered women some exposure to the English language, but they had little access to anglophone social networks. My research explored women's interactions with the outside world and found, like Norton, there was limited interaction with native speakers. One woman in my study mentions volunteering at a school and listening to children read. Another participant mentioned.

> *I helped at my child's school and made Pakistani food and sold it at the school summer festival to raise funds for the school*. (1980s learner, Sharaz, 17th March 2018).

The women I found had created their own third space (Bhabha, 2012) and were autonomous learners in continually developing their knowledge, from accessing the library to learning about Islam. Blackledge and Creese (2010) rightly argue that the English-speaking world is "out of step with the plural linguistic practices of its population" (p.5). Educators need to harness the full potential of ESOL learners' knowledge. As Nisa (2019) points out, technology is opening new opportunities and was an integral part of many ESOL learners' lives and reduced some of the isolation by connecting with their families back home. Learning new recipes or fashion designs and developing their Islamic identities and knowledge (Warren, 2018). One should not assume that if women are unable to communicate in English, they will be unable to use technology. I observed the use of technology and hybrid multilingual text, switching from Urdu

163

to English. Technology has become a tool for learning, from checking the online Urdu dictionary for meanings of words to doing Google searches. I recognise there is digital poverty leading to inequality in ICT access (Caceres, 2007).

The women, through their stories, talk about their own knowledge systems, often practised in the home, sewing, herbalism, cooking, organising Quranic literacy events, and gaining autonomy and supporting their identities as mothers and their Pakistani cultural identity as well as their religious identity. As one 1980s learner stated, *'I have remedies for cough, asthma, stomach pain, and headache'.* Third spaces are spaces for relocation of each other's knowledge (Bhabha, 2012), since classroom learning is becoming less creative and less about choice and more influenced by policy linked to the citizenship agenda. The Western-centric way of thinking relegates their knowledge to the home. Wright (2016) argues that nation builders impose their values and knowledge on others. The Islamic and cultural knowledge the women possessed gave them agency and a sense of well-being. As Spivak (1999) argues, it demotes the subject of "thinking or knowledge" (p.93) and leaves the subaltern in a state of blank emptiness as her language and knowledge are erased within mainstream discursive spaces. This banality of injustice marginalises their knowledge.

While the Life in the UK test was about promoting one's history and one's culture, learners can take back control in third spaces and gain agency by deciding what knowledge they need. Third spaces shift the narrative of Muslim women portrayed as disempowered, oppressed, and "most notably, always kept under the veil of ignorance and at home" (Hasan, 2015, p.90). The home can be a space of liberation. The women were investing their own knowledge, meanings, and values in the spaces they occupied (Demetry 2013), such as the home. They talked passionately about their knowledge, but no one asked them what they knew. My interviewees, I found, wanted to represent themselves in the best possible light. All human beings have weaknesses and struggles. I felt that they wanted to be represented as strong, knowledgeable women but just did not speak English that well, and that is how I tried to represent them in this thesis. I saw them as a great source of knowledge (Foley, 2012) and active learners. They were chosen for their lived experiences of learning the English language to represent the voice of ESOL learners. My research builds on the work of Conteh, (2015); Cooke, (2002, 2009); Badwan, (2017; 2018); Heller, (2006, 2020); Simpson, (2015, 2020, 2021); who highlight the gap in learning English in the classroom and using it in the wider everyday world as it is learned away from cultural settings without interaction with native English speakers.

5.1.4. Personal reflections of being a Muslim woman

As a Muslim woman, I did find the research emotional. This was something I did not expect, but one's body becomes sensitive to political criticism and the oppressive use of power (Foucault, 1979; Zine, 2006; Ahmed, 2017) and you start internalising some of the public narratives about Muslim women. When language is debated by politicians, the terminology is always "Muslim women". There are many other migrant women who cannot speak English, but they are not Muslim and are not publicly named and shamed. It is argued by Eijberts and Roggeband (2016) that while other migrants have been invisible in the public arena, Muslim women are represented in dominant discourse as deviant and are targeted. We have become the folk devils (Cohen, 1972) of modern Europe. While analysing 200 articles from eight popular UK newspapers from 2015 to 2016, Gill (2017) found that the UK press perpetuated negative stereotypes of Muslim women with no mentions of their contributions.

I do get annoyed, and it was a challenge to keep an emotional distance. Muslim women's experiences of marginalisation are marked by disadvantage and discrimination. As Ahmed (2017) argues, power is intersectional, and as Muslim women, we suffer gender inequality, race and faith discrimination, and oppression in white societies. In European countries, we are banned from wearing the clothes of our choice and have our human rights infringed upon. The English language has unwillingly become part of the machinery of disempowerment of Muslim women. As Asian women, "we wear the mask that grins and lies" (Paul Lawrence Dunbar, 1872–1908) and hide our emotions. I found it upsetting when a participant accessing the Life in UK class cried; her husband had recently passed away and to remain here, she had to sit the Life in UK test and was struggling with two small children. As an insider researcher, I believe I have enriched the study by clarifying the reality from the myth, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the lives of Pakistani women. As an insider researcher, I have mentioned my own lived experiences of education in **section 3.3.7. of the Methodology chapter**. My data challenges the public rhetoric of passive, oppressed females who "lack the social and cultural capital required for social mobility" (Yosso, 2006, p.70). Edros, (1997); Haque et al. (2011); Chrayi and Jose, (2016) rightly argue that Muslim women's independence, autonomy and agency are viewed from the narrow western worldview and that they face triple jeopardy/penalty (Wadia, 2016; Syed and Pio, 2009), because of their faith and cultural identity and are denied agency in European countries.

5.1.5. Conclusion

The English language is part and parcel of the unfinished history of the Empire. The grand narrative of a civilised language brings enlightenment, constructing the "Self" and the "Other"

(Pennycook, 1998, p.8), with Muslim women portrayed as victims who need saving (Spivak,1988). Even when the first migrants arrived, there were concerns about how they would adapt to a more civilised culture and way of life, yet these migrants brought a rich and diverse culture to the grey cities of Britain. In modern times, the English language is linked to Britishness, citizenship, border controls, national security, social capital, and social cohesion (Zetter et al., 2006; Mirza (2013); with Muslim women playing a central role in English language and citizenship policies made visible when it suits the state's agenda.

The women I spoke to wanted to learn English without the government using a stick and carrot approach of sanctions, punishment, and rewards. One of the 1980s learners speaks for most of my research participants, saying:

> *You cannot live in a country without knowing its language. It is hard now to just get by*. (1980s learner, Sharaz, 17th March 2018).

The discourse around Muslim women, citizenship, and learning the English language is embedded in the geopolitics of Orientalism rather than a genuine commitment to supporting Muslim women's integration. The language of the state demonises women, leaving them powerless to challenge them. The English language retains its privileges and "competitiveness," argues (Piller and Cho, 2013) through testing, assessments, and ranking to establish hierarchy and social worth based on how well you speak and write English. The state selects citizens it sees as worthy through passing tests (Goodman, 2011). You learn to speak English well if you have social interactions with the host community. Language and citizenship tests are yardsticks to measure the "other" who never really make the grade. These are symbolic acts of power over subaltern groups like my research participants. As Freire (1996) argues, "in order to have the continuous opportunity to express their "generosity," the oppressor must perpetuate injustice as well" (p.26). The way Muslim women are portrayed by those in power is unjust; the state needs to sing a different tune. My research shows that Muslim women are knowledgeable, autonomous and independent learners and contributes to other similar studies such as Blackledge and Creese (2010) and Pahl's (2010) work with Pakistani women in Rotherham. I know through my community work that there are some women in my community that are under patriarchal control and have difficult lives, but that can apply to all women of any ethnicity. Heller (2006) remarks that language "brings that state to the people by giving them the state's language". (p.8), but not all people. It can also exclude, as it does with Muslim women, like my research participants. I offer a different perspective; as Sara Ahmed (2017) argues, "in a world in which human is still defined as a man, we have to fight for women as women" (p.15). Other studies have highlighted the changes in the ESOL field, from lack of funding to pedagogy changes to policy influences mentioned in the Literature

Review. My study explores changes over a longer period, capturing the trajectory of ESOL itself through the stories of past and current ESOL learners, building on the theoretical works of Spivak (1988, 1993, 1999); Freire (1991, 1996); Fanon (1963; 1986, 2020); Said (1978, 1996, 2000); and Bhabha (2012).

Section 5.2: Conclusion, limitations, implications, and recommendations

5.2.1. Introduction

I have critically analysed English language and citizenship policies and the divisive language of policy. My research participants provided a detailed account of English language provision from the 1980s to the present day and highlighted that the demand for learning English is there, but the resources are not. I have illuminated the complex nature of citizenship tests and the immense pressure women are under. As an insider researcher, I can attest to the gradual dilution of community networks. Nowadays, new migrants must "stand on their own two feet" from day one and be independent. Learning English is important for daily survival, which the women in my research have stressed many times. It is acknowledged by the participants that English is an internationally recognised language. The women also emphasised the importance of their own knowledge systems, language and literacy practices.

5.2.2. Challenges and limitations of the research

My research questions were addressed through narratives, stories, and conversations with the Pakistani female ESOL learners and the women who supported them. I feel the research questions have been addressed by the participants and provide a timeline to understand political and social changes in the ESOL field. But having reflected, I think I could have explored how much actual communication in English happened outside the classroom and in what context. It would have been insightful to know who they regularly interacted with apart from the doctor or a shopkeeper, and whether their conversations were limited to accessing services. Due to new learners' limited English, it would have been difficult for them to fill in a weekly diary of interactions, but perhaps the 1980s learners could have kept log diaries; equally, you do not want to make the research onerous for participants.

Storytelling as a methodology extracts the lived realities of Pakistani women, providing an understanding of the women's motivations and barriers. As Jamil (2018) argues, by analysing the social conditions of the group and personal experiences, we can then truly understand their lives, and I feel my chosen methods provided a useful insight. My intention, as I mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, was to observe ESOL classes attended by new learners, but this changed to citizenship classes, and I observed women preparing to sit the Life in the UK test. If I had time, I would have liked to have followed the same learners as they moved to an accredited ESOL class in the community. Due to time constraints, resources, and a full-time job, I was not able to undertake more detailed interviews with new migrant female ESOL learners. However, I did 3 observation sessions and held 2 group discussions; a longer period of observation could have been fruitful to see if the women's understanding of the Life

in the UK questions improved and the use of the computer. This may be viewed as insufficient time for the orientation of a complex study on language and citizenship issues.

My study is specific to Rotherham and most of the women are from the same part of Pakistan, Azad Kashmir, and share lots of similarities and connections through kinship. Larger British cities have a more diverse Pakistani population that comes from various cities in Pakistan and different class structures. These women may be more competent English speakers because of the education they received in Pakistani schools, depending on their family income. The outcome of the research would be different.

5.2.3. Implications and recommendations from the findings

Most research will have some sort of implication. Research implication requires an appraisal of findings and conclusions drawn to the extent to which the findings can influence theory, policy, and practice or shape public consideration on issues raised (Khan, 2008). While recommendations, according to Polonsky and Waller (2015), are desired actions that could be implemented based on the findings of this research. I offer three implications and three recommendations from this study.

1. Empowering women in the classroom

The ESOL classroom can be disempowering, lacking learner autonomy if the women's own knowledge stays outside, and I have seen women lose interest eventually. I suggest that tutors encourage students to share their knowledge in the ESOL classroom, and policymakers should not be over-eager with tests that can put first-time learners off. Students should bring their home literacy practices, objects, and photos and share their stories to build confidence. The work of Pahl (2014, 2015) in Rotherham has shown the importance of home literacy practices in the lives of Pakistani families. Teachers can utilise existing students' funds of knowledge and make learning English more empowering for women. Freire (1996) argues that "liberating education consists of acts in cognition, not transferrals of information" (p.60). Learning does not need to start from a deficit "banking concept" as argued by Freire, with migrant women seen as empty vessels into which you pour Western knowledge. In most Pakistani homes, rich literacy and language practices exist that are not acknowledged by policymakers in their single obsession with assimilation through the English language.

2. Changing the narrative

The political language creates resentment towards Muslim women. The new ESOL learners mentioned the hostility towards them during my observation sessions.

The women felt it was because they did not wear English clothes that they were singled out. They were keen to emphasise that not everyone was the same. (Observation notes of the Life in the UK class, September 11th, 15th, and 25th, 2018).

The targeting of Muslim women through micro-aggressive policies is leading to daily hostility and racism in public places and needs to be brought to the attention of politicians and policymakers. They should carefully consider the language they use when talking about Muslim women. ESOL female learners have aspirations but face so many barriers and do not have the same level playing field as other learners and should not be penalised by policies. The master script (Hammack, 2009; Swartz, 1992) offers a one-sided view and an untrue representation. The political language needs to be kinder, less dramatic, and fair in representation, rather than bringing in policies to appease the wider public. The buck must stop with the policymakers who reinforce the legacy of colonialism by making certain groups feel inferior, which scholars like Fanon, Said, and Spivak have written about. As Kramsch (1998) argues, "people identify themselves as members of a society to the extent that they can have a place in the society's history" (p. 7). My research participants could be supported to be part of Britain's present and envisaged future if there was a genuine commitment; I am not sure how many Muslim women feel part of a society that does not want them.

3. Change in public attitudes

The British public, once very welcoming to new immigrants, has become hostile towards anyone different in post-Brexit Britain. Mrs. Shah, who came in 1964, tells of the time she got lost in the town and could not find her way home.

I remember when I went to town with my children and lost my way home. I was so frightened that I met two English ladies. Luckily, they recognised me and knew where I lived. They brought me home. Some of the English were very good like that and would help us. (Al-Muneera, 2007).

Racism never really went away; it just gave us a "sense of false hope that we had eradicated racism in our society, but it was always there, bubbling away under the surface" (Rasool, 2017, p.10). My research shows a lack of opportunity to integrate due to white flight, and poverty means new migrants can only afford cheaper housing in town centre areas like in Rotherham. One significant reason for the lack of integration is racism, Islamophobia, and women's fear of leaving their neighbourhoods, given the attacks on Muslim women as Eurocentric narratives have singled them out as being different, making women feel uncomfortable venturing into new places. The politics of foreigners creates "a problem in need of a solution" (Honig, 2001),

and one never truly feels at home every time you hear the words "speak English." Not everyone is anti-immigrant, and those who are not so inclined need to do more to welcome new families into their neighbourhood. They need to challenge the negative attitudes rather than just being bystanders; they need to be upstanders. A cup of tea and a friendly chat can mean a lot to someone new to a neighbourhood. Two of my research participants live in a predominately white neighbourhood but never mentioned any interactions with their white neighbours. They mentioned meeting up with family and friends from their own background.

> *When my children are in school, I visit my family and friends in other areas. (1980s learner*, Saleema, February 28th, 2018).

5.2.4. Recommendations from the study

As a former community development worker, I see potential in our communities as an untapped resource. For me, community development is about strengthening our informal networks. Communities are "places where people encounter fragmentation, differences, challenges, affirmation, cooperation, and support" (Defilppis and Saegert, 2012, p.5). Under such opposition and differences, sometimes some good can take place. The power to change things often lies with the community at the micro-level.

Based on my research, I suggest three areas that can support and develop women's English language skills in more informal settings:

1. Community libraries as safe learning spaces

I have seen new migrants accessing libraries with their children, and I have seen lonely, isolated older white women spending a lot of time in libraries, passing ships at night. Libraries can be safe, dialogical spaces to set up conversation clubs. A community development approach to English language learning would "build social capital" by utilising the resources that exist in the community (Cavaye, 2006), in this instance, by bringing two different groups of women together in a safe space. Volunteers can support language learning as they did in the past when the first group of immigrants came here. Conversation clubs have been mentioned by the government but require investment as there are costs to volunteering, such as training, expenses, and the supervision of volunteers.

2. Learning in the home

Children are encouraged to do homework and activities to reinforce their learning at home; ESOL learners can be encouraged to do the same as once-a-week ESOL classes are just not enough. ESOL teachers are very busy, but there are other resources to develop learning

materials, packs, and audiotapes, such as university students wanting to go into teaching or retired ESOL tutors. When developing such projects, it is important to consider the women's own funds of knowledge.

3. Technology to support language learning

ESOL learners tend to be viewed from a deficit perspective, and often their skills are not recognised, such as their use of technology. We live in a digital age and there are many English language websites learners can be directed to, such as BBC Learning English and the British Council, and they can learn English in their own homes online. The home can become a language-empowerment space that reinforces classroom lessons and offers them agency and autonomy as learners. They need to have access to broadband and IT, as well as training to use a laptop or an I-pad.

5.2.5. Suggestions for further studies

Further research on students' online world would be useful in developing on-learning material that can escalate the learning of English. The women I observed used online dictionaries to check words, spellings and meanings; the internet for health information; or to connect to friends and family. I did not fully grasp how competent the women were in using their smartphones and social media and how well connected the women were through the virtual world when the real world was hostile to them. Because the women had limited English skills, this area of research has been neglected as assumptions are made that if they do not speak the English language, they will not be able to use new technology. Some of the tutors I interviewed were supporting their students by teaching ESOL online during COVID-19. This is a much-needed area of research in relation to adult language learners; there are several studies on young people's social media use and networks from migrant backgrounds, such as Smith and Kumi-Yeboah (2015) and Loucky and Ware (2017).

A larger-scale study is needed to scrutinise the figures for migrants who cannot speak English. My research is very small scale and offers a snapshot of what the ESOL landscape looks like in Rotherham. The British Muslim Council suggests 6% of the Muslim population cannot speak English (Ali, 2015, p.35). According to data from the 2011 census, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were five times more likely than their male counterparts not to speak English, according to the government's website (Gov. UK. 2018). The figures do not tell us the age of the women; they can be older first-generation women or new migrant women from other parts of the Muslim world. A correlation cannot be drawn between the lack of English language skills amongst Muslim women and funding of ESOL provision region by region. For example, more Muslim Bangladeshi communities live in the South of England, and if the women do not have

enough ESOL provision to access, they will naturally struggle with speaking English. There is no regional breakdown of the data linked with ESOL provision in those regions.

A more in-depth study is needed on how new immigrant women negotiate everyday places and spaces like supermarkets, public transport, hospitals, banks, etc. There have been several longitudinal case studies on classroom learning, but not enough on migrant women's lives outside the ESOL classrooms, the daily routines where knowledge of the English language is required. A longer ethnographic study could highlight further areas for policy development. A study with ESOL female learners from Pakistan for two to three years to observe their lives outside the classroom and their journey to integrate into the wider British community, like Norton's (2000) Canadian study. Earlier ethnographic studies by Hartley (1994); Saxene (1994); Sneddon (2001); Blackledge and Creese (2010) have become outdated, and we need new knowledge of migrant literacy and language practices to understand their lives. We need to build on the current research undertaken by researchers such as Swinney (2017) and Elmore (2017) on ESOL learners in Sheffield.

What would be something for me to consider is going back and interviewing the new learners who participated in this research in 10 years' time, to see the distance they have travelled in becoming proficient in the English language. Another possibility is a study like this with Middle Eastern or another new ethnic group of women. We need studies to explore the link between higher education from their home country and professional jobs and the length of time it takes to become proficient in English in this country and achieve their aspirational goals.

One of the tutors in the interview mentioned that these learners had good education:

> *We had some women from the Middle East and other countries who were well educated like their husbands and needed advanced classes.* (Retired tutor, Denise, April 5th, 2018).

Ray (2015) examines the lives of Gujarati female English language learners who mentioned being treated as second-class citizens due to the colour of their skin and their lack of English language fluency. There is relatively limited research that examines white female Muslim Eastern European English language learners' lived experiences and how they are treated; this is a research area to be considered.

5.2.6. Contribution to knowledge

Theoretical Reflections

Using Kimberli Crenshaw's intersectionality lens (1989, 1991), I explain how power shapes women's lives **(See Muslim women and intersectional power, Figure B, pp. 68-69).** I explore Pakistani Muslim women's trajectories as language learners to understand the power relations and social inequality created through policymaking. Macro-level policies that impact on Pakistani women's aspirations and citizenship and at micro-level make integration more challenging. Intersectionality provides a lens to understand the empirical relationship between policy language and the daily experiences of Muslim female English language learners. I applied the intersectional frame to Pakistani female ESOL learners. Silveman and Marvasti (2008) argue that "any scientific finding is usually to be assessed in relation to the theoretical perspective from which it derives and to which it may contribute" (p.130). My contribution is to offer a further intersectional insight that frames Muslim women's lived experiences of learning a new language. The negative labels such as "passive", "disadvantaged", "needs saving" and the association with a "backward culture": the construct of subalternity in contemporary Britain continues through East and West discourse, further marginalising and disempowering Muslim women like my research participants. Thomas (2017) argues that drawing out theories "hinges upon your own knowledge of your subject and how your findings sit in relation to the knowledge" (p. 286). As an insider researcher, I know how damaging these labels are when they are used to represent Muslim women, being binaries of opposition to Western women, caged birds denied agency.

The literature review allowed me to draw out key concepts about Muslim women and labels that become attached to the "docile bodies" and how those then shape Pakistani Muslim women's experiences as English language learners. The colonisation of the Oriental female is nurtured by the political language of policymaking that cannot look beyond the labels and acknowledge the diverse language and literacy practises of women like my research participants. ESOL learners face a myriad of challenges to integration due to assumptions and negative stereotypes. My findings are analysed and interpreted by grounding my research in Crenshaw's intersectional model to help understand the multifaceted lives of Muslim women. The women's stories challenge those labels and illuminate the women's other identities and roles that empower them, as well as their own cultural and Islamic knowledge systems that give them autonomy, independence and identity.

174

Methodological Reflections

The women's stories frame their ontological understanding through conversations during semi-structed interviews and group discussions, sharing their subjective emotions and embodied experiences. Stories help to address the knowledge gap by securing the ESOL learners' voices that are often left out of policymaking. Life stories, as Lawthom et al. (2004) argue, "occupy a central place in generating knowledge, challenging expert discourses, and exploring people's lives in the context of alienation and empowerment" (p. ix). Stories can generate new knowledge from the worldviews of those who live on the margins, helping us understand the lived experiences of language learners. Storytellers have a clear function within communities and are "memory makers of their communities—celebrating the past and providing explanation of the present and searching out meanings for the future" according to Bathmaker and Harnett (2010, p.161). It is a methodological tool that explores ESOL's learners' experiences and those who work with them over a period of time.

Stories are an ethnographic tool that offers a critical understanding of the lives of Pakistani women outside the ESOL classroom. The women discuss their goals and roles as mothers, their Islamic knowledge and diverse literacy practices, the languages they speak, and their identities as "cultural upholders." Their knowledge is embedded in everyday life, which gives them agency that educational institutions may not recognise. Any other method would not have captured the women's home and cultural lives and their own funds of knowledge. Storytelling resonated with all the women I encountered during the research, whatever their ethnic background, education level and age. Contractor (2012) argues that "Muslim women's version of events-her story-is neither told nor heard. Due to sociological and historical conditions, Muslim women have been marginalised from the process that produced, recorded, and disseminated histories of Muslim women" (p.1). Those histories have been mainly represented through the white male lens of politicians and policymakers, silencing the voices of those being represented: "patriarchy took away her voice" (Contractor, 2012, p.4). Storytelling is a more gender and culturally sensitive method of engaging women who may find research intimidating. It allowed me to really engage with the realities and nuances of my participants' everyday lives and gain a deeper insight into Pakistani women's cultural lives and religious empowerment. Through their stories of everyday life Muslim women reclaim power by telling their everyday stories and challenging dominant discourses about them. My methodological approach allowed all the women involved in ESOL to tell their stories and their truths. In my study, 18 ESOL learners, 7 ESOL tutors, and 3 BAME organisations in Rotherham offered an alternative lens to the dominant discourse about Muslim women that does them injustice.

5.2.7. Reflections on Practice

My research highlights the need to take English language learning outside the classroom into the real world and facilitate their participation in community life, become more independent and bridge the wide gulf between ESOL language learners and the wider public. Conteh (2015) rightly argues that "languages are formed in cultural settings" (p.14). A language cannot be learned as an isolated unit without learning about the social and cultural aspects of the language being learned, and that can only happen through a concerted effort to bring different people together. There are initiatives like 'Talk English' projects (https://www.talk-english.co.uk) that run in Kirklees, Oldham, Bolton, Rochdale, Salford and Manchester that connect learners to the places, spaces, and people in their local area, involving qualified ESOL teachers and supported by volunteers. This project delivers a lot of English learning outside the classroom, involving one-to-one mentoring from volunteers, visits to parks, museums and galleries, art and craft sessions, community walks and talks, and coffee mornings offering.

In Rotherham, there are some lovely parks, stately homes like Wentworth Woodhouse, and other historical sites. By bringing different people together in these spaces, stereotypes of Muslim women can be challenged, and the women can gain a sense of place. In 2021, I held my first art exhibition, "The Suitcase," at Wentworth Woodhouse. It told the stories of first-generation Pakistani women who came to Rotherham in the 1960s, and a number of the women from my local neighbourhood went. Wentworth Woodhouse provided a coach to transport the women there. Many of them were ESOL learners, and this was the first time they had been to a stately home. They received a tour of the building and the splendid gardens from the volunteers. The women in their feedback stated that they were worried and thought they would not be welcomed in such a white space. ESOL providers should plan their provision by mapping what events are taking place in the local community during the academic year that ESOL learners can be supported to attend and take the learning outdoors to build confidence in the learners. Integration can be a slow and lonely process, and if Muslim female ESOL learners remain hidden away in classrooms, then the Oriental constructs about them and the labels will continue and lead to long-term polarisation between them and the host community.

5.2.8. Concluding remarks

My research offers Pakistani Muslim women the stage to share their lived experiences of learning the English language over three decades, from the 1980s to the present day. Eltahawy (2019) articulates the position of Muslim women in white societies, being seen as "less than". Personal stories are a way of negotiating who we are and countering negative

labels (van Es (2016; and Yasmin & Azim, 2020), enabling women to tell their stories. The voices of ESOL learners are clear that they want to learn English and understand the currency of the English language as a global language, and that living in England and not being able to speak that language would be their misfortune. The criticism of Muslim women who speak limited English is unfair as no other migrant group is stigmatised in the way Muslim women are as language learners and find themselves not belonging anywhere. The women have identified barriers, challenges, and their motivations, enabling us to get closer to their experiences. Those in power need to change the framing of Muslim women, and the English language should not be used as a political football to score points over Muslim women. Taylor-Gatto (2005) passionately reminds us that the role of education should be a unique experience that makes you spiritually rich and is your road map in life. What we are finding today is the opposite: that the Orient discourse appears in a new form and learning the English language has become a powerful vehicle for elite racism against women who cannot speak English. The old rhetoric of East versus the West, the surrogate West today, language and citizenship policies shape discourses about Muslim women, "European superiority and Orient backwardness" (Said, 1978, p.7), and Muslim women feel the violent touch of the western world.

> *Where I live, white people have moved away, and my neighbours are Pakistanis. When I go to town, some people are not very nice, don't like you, and say not-so-nice things about my religion and call me names*. (Appendix H, 1980s learner, Rozma, March 28th, 2018).

This lady stays in the town centre area where other diverse groups live, despite coming to England in 1986. She does not know the rest of her town. According to Goldberg (1993), physical boundaries or perceived barriers act as buffers, dividing racial residential zones and minority groups keep away from white areas. I have argued that learning English takes time and requires investment both on the part of the state and the learners. There are also other underlying issues that need to be considered, such as poverty, discrimination, and financial investment in ESOL. I urge that before laws are created and policies implemented and representations are made about Muslim women, the policymakers need to talk directly to the ESOL learners.

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204

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210

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Appendix

Appendix A - The original research questions

1. What are Pakistani women's everyday lived experiences of the English language?
2. How does policy drive ESOL provision and curriculum?
3. Why do women attend English classes and the impact it has?
4. What does ESOL provision look like at the community level?
5. What are some of the challenges and women's motivations in accessing ESOL?

Appendix B- Ethical approval

Zanib Rasool

Registration number: 150242338

School of Education

Programme: EdD programme

Dear Zanib

PROJECT TITLE: Why should we learn English? Exploring Pakistani women's everyday lived experiences of English language.

APPLICATION: Reference Number 017382

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 02/02/2018 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 017382 (form submission date: 31/12/2017); (expected project end date: 25/08/2019).

- Participant information sheet 1038532 version 1 (31/12/2017). Participant consent form 1038533 version 1 (31/12/2017).

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.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt

Ethics Administrator School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy:
- https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ethicsandintegrity/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy:
- https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- The researcher is responsible for effectively managing the data collected both during and after the end of the project in line with best practice, and any relevant legislative, regulatory or contractual requirement.

Appendix C - **Information sheet**

Title of Research: Why should we learn English? Exploring Pakistani women's everyday lived experiences of the English language.

Date…………………………………………...

Dear ………………………………………………

My name is Zanib Rasool, and I am a doctoral student with the University of Sheffield undertaking research on minority ethnic women's experiences of ESOL (English as a Second Language)**.** This research forms part of my qualification for a Doctorate in Education. The research is not funded by any source and will be conducted over 2 years by me.

You have been identified as someone who could support the research, and I am inviting you to consider taking part and would truly value your support in this.

I would appreciate it if you could read this information sheet so you can make an informed decision to take part or not. If you need to ask further questions or need clarification, please contact me (my details can be found at the end).

What is the project's purpose?

The aim of the research is to gain a better understanding of the impact of learning the English language on women's everyday lives and to understand some of the barriers women in the past and women who are new to this country face in accessing ESOL and how policy impacts on that. Your views and opinions are vital to the research as a learner, ESOL provider or as an ESOL teacher, since research can inform policy and it is important that those who deliver ESOL or access ESOL provision have a voice.

Why you have been chosen?

The groups to be interviewed are:

·   Pakistani women who I supported to access ESOL provision in the 1980s.

·   ESOL providers and ESOL teachers

·   I will observe current ESOL classes and hold focus groups with women who are new ESOL learners from different communities wanting to learn English.

You have been identified as fitting one of the above categories and a key person to this research and the knowledge you can provide.

Do I have to take part?

There is no obligation on you to take part, and taking part is entirely voluntary and you can withraw at any time and do not have to give an explanation for your withdrawal.

What will happen on the project?

I will visit you and undertake interviews, which will last between 2 to 3 hours. I can visit you at the place a of your convenience at a time that suits you.

I will transcribe the interviews and will visit you or email your interview for your approval. You can make amendments.

Before my research thesis is submitted, I will provide you with the chapter that you have contributed to for your final approval.

It is my intention to have a few copies of my thesis printed and left in community venues where ESOL is delivered such as libraries, community centres, etc. so women have access to the research they contributed to.

What are the benefits of taking part?

I hope that this research will be of interest to you and the research process will provide an insight into your own ESOL experience. It could add to the body of existing knowledge on ESOL provision and inform on the current debate around migration and learning the English language.

What are the disadvantages of taking part?

There are no obvious disadvantages, but if the telling of your stories may cause distress, then we will stop immediately.

How will I be protected? Do I have to give my name?

No, you can be totally anonymous within the project. You do not have to give your name. We will make sure your responses are kept in a locked file and you will not be recognised externally. If you do want to be named, that is fine too. Some of you that hold professional

positions in the community are likely to be recognised and will be advised to check your interviews carefully.

Contact details

If you have any questions, I am happy to answer them.

My email address is: zrasool1@sheffield.ac.uk

My mobile number is: 07904 958167

You can also contact my supervisor, Mark Payne.

His email address is: mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk

We also have an ethics coordinator, Dr. David Hyatt, who is in charge of ethics at the School of Education. His email is d.hyatt@sheffield.ac.uk.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this information and agreeing to give your valuable time to this research. Without your help, I will not be able to achieve this objective.

Yours sincerely,

Zanib Rasool

(Doctoral Student)

The School of Education

University of Sheffield

Appendix D - Participant consent form

Title of Research: Why should we learn English? Exploring Pakistani women's everyday lived experiences of the English language.

Name of researcher: Zanib Rasool

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and have discussed this with Zanib and have had the opportunity to ask questions   YES NO

(Please circle)

I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time.
                                                                                            YES

NO

I would like to be named in the research   YES   NO

I wish to remain anonymous   YES   NO

I understand however I can withdraw permission anytime and decide to remain anonymous
                                                                                   YES   NO

I agree to take part in the research   YES   NO

Name of participant………………………………………

Signed……………………………………………………….

Dated…………………………………................................

Name of researcher……………………………………….

Signed …………………………………………………..

Dated……………………………………………………....

You will be given a copy of this consent form and the information sheet before any interview takes place.

I will type up your interview/discussions and share them with you as soon as practicable. You can at that stage check the accuracy and have the opportunity to add anything missing which you think is important or ask for a statement to be removed from your interview.

Before submission of the research thesis to Sheffield University, you will receive a copy of the thesis chapter you contributed to giving you a final opportunity to comment.

Appendix E - Study participants profiles

Table 4 – The 1980s ESOL learners' profile. The names given are pseudonyms.

Participant	Region of Pakistan Language spoken	Entry to the UK	Data collection method	Previous knowledge of English and access to English classes in the UK
Henna	Born in Karachi Sindh province moved later to Mirpur Azad Kashmir. Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri, Urdu, Arabic, English.	Arrived in the U.K. in 1984 on a spousal visa.	A pilot narrative interview was undertaken at the participant's home. 2 hours (digitally recorded and note-taking).	English was taught at her school in Pakistan studied up to level 12 in matric (Higher Secondary School Certificate). Attended classes in1985 at Malting Centre Rotherham.
Saleema	Born in Dina, Jhelum District of Punjab.	Arrived in the U.K in 1975 as the daughter of a British national.	Pilot narrative was interview undertaken at the participant's home.	English was taught at her school in Pakistan and achieved level 7.

241		Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri and some English.	1.5 hours (recorded and not- taking).	Went to school for 6 months in Rotherham and then an ESOL tutor came to her home for 1 hour a week.
Haleena	Born in Gujarat/Punjab province.	Arrived in the U.K in 1983 on a spousal visa. Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri Gujarati, Urdu, and English	Narrative interview undertaken at the participant's home. 1.5 hour (recorded and note taking).	Went to school in Pakistan, English started when you reached level 6, read up to level 9. Went to the Multi-cultural centre and classes at Valley Road (was not sure about the date but not too long after arrival).

Sharaz	Born in Dina, Jhelum District of Punjab.	Arrived in the UK in 1988 as a daughter of British national.

Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri, Urdu, and English. | Narrative interview was undertaken at the participant's home.

2 hours (recorded and note-taking). | English was taught at her school in Pakistan and completed level 10 matrix exams at 16 at High School.

Accessed ESOL classes in her local community in 1989. |
| Naila | Born in England and lived in Chakswari, Mirpur, Azad Kashmir from the age of 7. | Came back to the U.K in 1979.

Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri, Urdu, and English. | Narrative interview was undertaken at the participant's home.

1.5 hour (recorded and note-taking). | Did not attend school in Pakistan.

Started English classes in 1982 at the Multi-cultural Centre. |
| Sara | Born in Mirpur, Dadyal, Azad Kashmir. | Arrived in the U.K in 1984 as the daughter of a British national.

Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri. | Narrative interview was undertaken at the participant's home.

2 hours (recorded and note-taking). | Went to school in Pakistan and English was taught but left before matric exams.

A volunteer tutor came home to teach English upon arrival. |

		Urdu, and English.		
Rozma	Born in Dina, Jhelum District of Punjab.	Arrived in the UK in 1986 on a spousal visa.

Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri, and English. | Narrative interview was undertaken at the participant's home.

2 hours (recorded and note-taking). | Attended primary school sporadically and did not go to High School did have some exposure to learning English.

Accessed English classes later when son started school. |

Noreen	Born in Chakswari, Mirpur, Azad Kashmir.	Arrived at the age of 16 (not sure of the date). Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri, Urdu, and English.	Narrative interview was under knee at the participant's home. 2 hours (recorded and note-taking).	Went to school in Pakistan but English was not taught English until 6th grade left school by then. Went to the Multi-cultural centre ESOL classes in the 80s.

Table 5 – New ESOL learners' profiles

Number of participants	Region of Pakistan Language spoken	Age and number of years in the U.K.	Data collection methods and the dates data collected.	Previous knowledge of English and access to ESOL classes in the U.K.
10 Saima Shazwana Naeema Sagina Halima Mariam Sadia Zahidah Shanaz Sheena	Mirpur city, Dadyal, Chakswari in Azad Kahsmir Islamabad. Rawalpindi in Punjab province. Spoke Punjabi/Mirpuri/ Urdu and little English.	Age 29-42 4 to 11 years in the U.K.	3 observation sessions of Life in the U.K. of 2 hours (notetaking) in September 2018. 2 group discussions in the Life in the U.K. class of 1.5 hours (notetaking) in October 2018. 10 motivation questionnaires with Life in the U.K. participants.in October 2018.	6 learned English in Pakistan at 5th grade (primary school) and 4 up to 10th grade (final year of high school) having one lesson a week at least. More than 50% of the women finished High school. Most had been accessing ESOL classes for at least the last 2 years at the local library, Unity Centre, United Multi-Cultural Centre.

Table 6 – ESOL Tutor profile

Tutors	Tutor profile
Julie	Retired; became a community ESOL tutor in the 1980s and taught for 26 years. 2-hour interview
Denise	Retired; taught ESOL for 20 years in the community. 2-hour interview
Tahira	Retired; worked for 30 years in the higher education sector focusing on language and literacy starting as an ESOL tutor. 1 hour interview
Sharon	Volunteer home tutor during the 1980s. 1 hour interview
Shazia	Worked 14 years in adult courses in the community, college, and a private company focusing on ESOL, citizenship, and ICT. 1.5-hour interview
Maria	New ESOL Tutor was teaching in the community but was moving to college to deliver accredited courses. Nearly qualified. 1 hour interview
Yasmin	New to teaching and working in the community as a Tutor delivering a number of courses including the English language. 1 hour interview

Table 7 - BAME organisation profile

Organization A	Organisation B	Organisation C
Interview with the Tutor/Advocacy Worker.	Interview with the Project Manager of organisation.	Interview with the Chief Executive.
Organisation established in 2004.	Organisation established in 1993.	Organisation established in 1982.
A survivor-led organisation supporting victims of domestic violence.	Supports socially excluded and disadvantaged women with a focus on mental wellbeing.	Deliver women's education programmes and supporting empowerment of marginalised women.
1.5-hour interview	1.5-hour interview	2-hour interview

Appendix F – Table 9: Self-reflection criteria

Criteria	Description	What I did
Credibility	Checking, and rechecking. Taking detailed notes. Triangulation. Confidence in the findings for the audience.	I rechecked the audio recordings and the transcripts. I adopted multiple sources in translating the data (method triangulation and theoretical triangulation).
Transferability	Provide a thick description, extensive detail of the process taken in gathering the data. Findings can be interpreted in similar settings if research is conducted in a similar way.	I took extensive notes to provide a robust outline of my research data collection method and how and where it was gathered to provide a fuller picture of the ESOL landscape.
Truth	Defining truth is value-based and there are different truths.	My truth is ethical and subjective, I believe in the teaching of the Quran and that guided my research.
Dependability	Logical, sequential, and consistent processes.	I explained how and why the participants were selected as experts on the lived experience of learning the English language or as tutors.
Conformity	Interpretation, findings, and conclusions derived from the data.	I will explain how the data was interpreted; the voice of the participants as verbalised, narrated by them in the text.

Audit trail	Keeping good records of raw data, field notes.	I kept detailed records on my computer and handwritten notes, audio recordings that I referred to
Reflexivity	Keeping self-critical account.	As the research was in my hometown and I have had some hostile experiences being a Muslim woman and made to feel like an outsider. I had to reflect on my own positionality and objectivity and kept a journal that I made quick notes in.
Authenticity	The research is genuine and credible, demonstrating saturation, and ethically conducted.	The research was undertaken with integrity to highlight the issues of learning the English language and the discourse that surrounds it and authenticated by the statements of the participants. Verbatim quotes from the data as spoken by the women and keep my voice apart.

Appendix G - Coded Pilot Interview with 1980s learner– Henna (26th February 2018)

Braun and Clarke (2013) First round of coding

Interview extract	Complete coding	Selective coding	Emerging themes
I studied in Pakistan up to level 12 in matric (Higher Secondary School Certificate).	Previous knowledge of English from Pakistan,	English a world language/Linga Franca	The colonial legacy of the empire left behind. Power of the English language
My mother-in-law sent a sponsor letter for me to come to England to marry my husband. She came to Pakistan with my sister-in-law, and they brought me to England. I was 19 years old when I came to England.	Coming to Britain as a young bride, The most likely route is to come to the UK is after marrying a British national.	Different ways of entering Britain.	State borders, and control.
I started English in 1985. I knew basic English from Pakistan already; I could read and understand but struggled with conversations in English. I went to the Malting Centre for English classes soon after I arrived.	Assessing own English proficiency and wanting to improve English immediately. Local venues for learning.	The Pakistan education system embeds English language. Motivated to learn English.	High aspirations to learn English.
My aunty and my mother-in-law went to English classes, but they stopped. My mother-in-law encouraged me to keep going. She said, "I know you can write, so	Support from female family members, Encouragement to carry on going to ESOL classes from family.	Family support, self-driven. The mother's role and	Identity and power through the mother role and status given to mothers in Islam.

		responsibility to the children. Social actors within the family who support learning (husband, mother in-law).	
you need to learn to speak English fluently." I give credit to my mother-in-law for getting me to learn English. My husband also supported this; he was very good. My mother-in-law said, "One day when she has children, she needs to know English".	Children are a motivation to learn English.		
I did embroidery classes, knitting and crochet classes as well. I went on to do City and Guilds 7307 teaching certificate at the Multi-Cultural Centre. I did other community classes, basic computer courses, and typing. I did a childcare course, level 1. I did GCSE in Urdu.	Attending other learning. .	Autonomy gained through continuous learning and developing new skills and knowledge.	A pro-active learner gaining agency. Learner aspirations.
I went to English classes for 1 year and got pregnant with my first child and I stopped going as I was not feeling too well.	Women stopped accessing classes during pregnancy which hindered learning.	Motherhood becomes a barrier.	Gender and biological role of women.
I remember I went to see a doctor, a lady doctor. My mother-in-law was translating for me. My	Building confidence to deal with personal medical problems.	Being able to access health services without	Autonomy and different ways to measure success from a

doctor said to my mother-in-law, "Let her try and tell me herself, and if she cannot do it, then you explain that she needs to do this herself." That doctor was so nice. Every time I went, the lady doctor encouraged me to speak directly to her in English. From there on, I built my confidence and I started to speak broken English. By the time I had my third child; I went to the doctor on my own and did not need anyone to come with me	Success is measured by going to doctors' appointments rather than a certificate and tests.	interpreters from the family. A yardstick to measure competency in English by each pregnancy.	non-Western lens. Becoming more independent as English language improves.
Sometimes I did not go to classes; with children, it is hard sometimes. The minibus came at 10 am, and you have a big family and are making breakfast and you are not ready	Role of a wife within the extended family.	Caring responsibilities before learning. Looking after others, piety.	Cultural expectations and gender socialisation.
For the last 2 years, I have been doing Islamic studies in Tinsley, twice a week for over 2 years. The course is delivered in English over 3 years, and you will become very knowledgeable about Islam. You have to make lots of notes. If I don't know a word in English, I write it in Urdu and then come	Utilising English, Urdu, and Quranic Arabic, Maintaining Islamic practices and knowledge,	Multilingual, able to speak more than one language.	Faith literacies and multilingualism supporting diverse identities of Muslim women. Aspirations to seek knowledge from different sources

home and check it in an English dictionary and spell it properly. If I do not know, I will ask my son. It is a high-level course I am doing.			Agency through Islam.
I had to keep telling myself, I have to learn, I have to learn, it's good for me and for my children as well. When my children started going to St. Ann's School, they used to have book days where you went into the school and listened to children read, or you read a book to them and asked them questions. I used to do that at St. Ann's School. It was called "Better Reading". My sister-in-law and I used to go and give an hour a week to any child in the school and listen to them read	Schools aiding and supporting mother's English language. Volunteering and giving something back.	Strategies to improve English speaking,	Space for learning and integration and citizenship. Challenging passive label and policy representation of ESOL learners.
When my mother-in-law became diabetic, I went with her to group sessions where they gave information about what to eat and what not to. It was very useful information, and I used to talk to people and get more knowledge	A thirst for learning. Acquiring new lived knowledge.	Health literacy Learning outside the classroom.	Utilising English in the everyday.
I can use social media, computers, the internet,	Grasping new technology and	Living in a technological	New spaces, third spaces for

text, WhatsApp, snap- chat, Facebook, you name it. When my granddaughters go to nursery, their parents send me their photos, and I have to text them and say they are "looking pretty". When I go on Facebook when I am free, I just mess around.	opening different opportunities Keep connected with the younger generation.	world and eager to engage.	communication and learning.
Sometimes, when I go to the doctor and there are elderly people there struggling with the receptionist, I help them and explain. Sometimes they have interpreters, and sometimes they ask if anyone can help, and I stand up and offer my help.	Using English skills to help others. Feeling of pride and achievement.	Everyday use of English skills.	Confidence and independent .
I love learning, I used to read Okay magazine, and Women's Own when I first came here. I used to read ladies' problem pages and recipes.	Reinforcing learning outside the classroom.	.Proactive learners and not passive.	Autonomous learners ,
I also like the following herbal remedies, for pain in knee joints, turmeric in hot milk is good with some ginger and some cinnamon. You put honey in it to sweeten it. This will reduce joint pain and ensure you have a good night's sleep. I have remedies for coughs,	Knowledge sharing with others. Keep old knowledge alive from the home country. Women hold a lot of knowledge that is not utilised in ESOL classes.	Traditional and cultural knowledge carriers.	Funds of knowledge., gaining agency and a sense of personal fulfilment Old and new knowledge hybridized. Empowerment

254

asthma, stomach pain, and headaches; fennel boiled in water is good. If you have a headache related to stress, you put your feet in a bowl of warm water and then in cold water. A glove of garlic in hot oil is good for earaches. You put the oil in your ear and a warm cloth over your ear and the pain will soon go away. We learned all this from our elderly people. Herbs don't give you side effects, and my kitchen is full of spices and herbs. It is cheaper. If your face is dry, mix glycerine oil with rose water and put it on your face. You can put this on your hands, working women's hands; after 24 hours in the kitchen, they will get dry.			through different knowledge systems.
I go on you-tube for recipes like making lasagne, Shepherd's pie, and egg fried rice. I use black pepper, lots of herbs, like oregano, and Chinese herbs. I try to make dishes from Morocco, cuscus, falafel. I can cook for 100 people and often do so for Eid Milad ul-Nabi.	Using both English and ICT skills taking advantage of technology. Self-development.	Home a third learning space. Islamic literacy event (Eid Milad- ul-Nabi).	Lifelong learning and Islamic ethos of seeking knowledge Empowerment and agency through Islamic events.

I am okay; I struggle sometimes with just hard words. My daughter in laws say if you need us to go with you, we will, and I say "No I am okay" I can go to doctors, dentist and optician. I go on my own.	Not rely on family for everyday English language support	Confident and motivated to do things for herself	Autonomy and independence

Appendix H – Coded Interview 1980s learner – Rozma (March 28th, 2018)

Braun and Clarke (2013)

Interview Extracts	Complete Coding	Selected Coding	Emerging Themes
I did go to school in Pakistan but only up to primary school and then decided not to go whilst my sister did until she was 16. So, I had no prior knowledge of the English language. My husband and father-in-law wanted me to go to English classes and his family. The school gave me leaflets on community classes held in the school; I started basic English and moved on to levels 1 and 2 in English. I liked the school venue. I knew other mums	Support from family. Support from men in the family. School is a site for learning and encouraging new parents.	Patriarch support. . .	Challenging the representation of Muslim men.
I also attended sewing classes for 6 months. I did an accredited sewing course and soft furnishing. Food and hygiene, health and safety, first aid. I now take part in community sports sessions. I like venues close to home that feel more comfortable and familiar.	Doing other courses from sewing to sport Accessibility of local venues.	English classes create a ripple effect of opening other learning opportunities.	Motivation to learn. Autonomy and deciding on what other knowledge is needed.

I remember Julie coming to teach at the local community centre. I also had a Pakistani teacher who taught me English for a short time. They were also very nice teachers. I could tell them my problems. . I did start a computer course but left halfway as I became ill.	Good interaction with teachers. Unofficial counsellors.	Good teachers. Empathy with students.	Positive role of teachers.
We used to have crèche workers, but not many courses offer a creche these days

I did not access English classes in this county straight away until my eldest son started nursery.

I attended family learning classes; I read books from the children's library to make sense of letters and words. Seeking knowledge is important in Islam. | Lack of childcare for ESOL classes now.

Family learning is a first step for the engagement of many parents. The library is a resource for learning. | Children and responsibility.

Importance of learning in Islam | The biological and gender role and gender inequality.

Islam supporting women empowerment. |
| In community sewing classes, I learned how to put zips on, pockets, over-lock, and use patterns.

I helped at a lunch club for a few years in my local area, supporting older | Learning new skills

Supporting other women in the community at lunch club | Reduce isolation by accessing other things.

Social group for women. | Women's social networks, |

Asian women, and it was good to meet other women.			
I couldn't speak English, so someone accompanied me to the ante-natal classes when my first two children were born, but after my third child was born, I felt more confident enough to go on my own. It has been 18 years since I have been going to see the doctor on my own. If you live in this country, you need to learn English. It is necessary.	Pregnancy a measuring stick for competency in English	Being able to do things on their own	Success and independence measured by learners in context of functioning with daily life,
I have to speak English to my children as they cannot speak Punjabi. It is sad that children are losing their own language. I find reading and writing difficult, but I feel okay speaking English. I was shy at first about speaking English in case I got it wrong, and it is harder to learn when you get older. .	English needed to communicate with children.

Picking up English in the home when children are talking.
Fear of getting it wrong.
Lack of confidence.
Age a factor. | English becoming the dominant language in the home . | The loss of heritage language. |
| I can use Google, WhatsApp, and text. I go on you-tube to look at clothing designs, I sew clothes, and I can take ideas from | The use of social media to improve sewing skills. Using social media to keep in | Social media and technology empowering women. | Technology use. Hybridising knowledge (East v west fashion). |

western designs and mix Eastern and Western fashion. I copy the designs. I keep up to date through Facebook on what sports activities are going on locally. I look at websites to learn about eating healthy. Look up illnesses on the NHS website. doctor tells me I have high blood pressure. I talked to Ammi (mother) on FaceTime. The children showed me and brought me a good phone.	touch with community activities and family.		
Where I live, white people have moved away, and my neighbours are Pakistanis. When I go to town, some people are not very nice, don't like you, and say not-so-nice things about my religion and call me names.	Creation of BAME neighbourhoods. Made to feel an outsider.	Lack of integration.	Reality and her truth. Daily microaggression reduces women's opportunity to be independent.

Appendix I - Theoretical themes of 1980s leaners narratives

Coding of eight of the 1980s ESOL learners' stories

(Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2020)- Second round of coding

Describe	Explain	Theoretical Construct
Agency through storytelling, their truth	Women are very motivated and have high aspirations of wanting to learn English for employment and to support their children and contribute to society. Autonomous learners challenge the narrative that women do not want to learn English and the label "passive." The majority of the male members of the family support them, husbands, fathers, and fathers-in-law,	Postcolonial feminism Telling a different story and representing themselves, challenging dominant Eurocentric ideologies and labels, and are not asking to be saved.
Defining own success	Success for the women was going to the doctors on their own, the everyday use of English in accessing health services, and sharing their knowledge with others. Knowledge was important in terms of negotiating the everyday and less measured by certificates and accreditation levels.	The non-Western lens of measuring education success and agency.
Cultural and traditional knowledge supporting diverse identities of ESOL learners.	The women were eager to learn new things, developing hybrid knowledge, multilingual repertoire, and translation of Islamic text into English, as	Repositioning themselves as knowledgeable women in third spaces. Hybrid knowledge (Traditional and new knowledge).

	well as sharing knowledge of herbalism, sewing, and cultural fusion fashion. progressing on to other learning and blending skills and knowledge	
English as a world language and women had high aspirations to gain qualifications and find employment	English is seen as the language that opens doors; and heritage language is less valued by their children. Mothers need to speak English to communicate with their own children. English is the language of modernity. Also wanted to maintain their own heritage language and culture. .	All the women expressed the importance of learning English.
Segregation between communities impacting on women's ability to be more independent.	The women mentioned their neighbours were from ethnic minority backgrounds and spoke community languages like them, so they could not practice English as much as they wanted. Pakistani women are blamed for not integrating. They move into white areas, and white families move out. When the women were in public spaces, they were told to speak English even though they were speaking their native language.	Critical race theory The reality of white flight and everyday microaggression, lack of integration with native speakers. Living parallel lives.

	Lack of opportunity to speak to native speakers and practice English.	
Family commitments	Pakistani women are culturally expected to look after the elderly and take care of them, which can impact on learning. Women are socialised into prescribed roles: homemaker, mother, and carer.	Gender socialisation and caring responsibilities.
Spaces for learning/Safe spaces	Home was a space for learning and the use of information technology for learning. Islamic knowledge and faith literacy events.	Third space of empowerment.
Autonomous learners.	Women use different strategies to improve their English language. Women were not passive learners, they went to the library, watched children's programmes, and used social media to improve their English.	Learning strategies to improve English challenging passive label, independent learners and having agency.
Power and control	Sometimes the barrier was the family. Women may have to prioritise family responsibilities, such as caring for elderly in-laws, before enrolling in ESOL. 'Family First' before personal aspirations	Cultural power over Muslim women to do their duty, gender expectation.

Political environment	The women mentioned everyday racism, especially targeting Muslim women. People are not nice to them when they go to the town and often make comments about them and their religion.	How women are represented in policy and by politicians increases Islamophobia
Faith literacies and multilingualism	The women discussed Eid Milad un-Nabi and other religious events and the number of languages they spoke, from Quranic Arabic to heritage languages. They emphasise the importance of faith in their everyday lives and often quote Quranic text in relation to learning and emphasising their roles and status as mothers in Islam	Faith literacy and women's empowerment through Islam.
New technology and a virtual world.	ICT and social media were important and featured a lot in learning English and finding information, as well as learning new skills and connecting with family in Pakistan.	Connecting with technology and reducing isolation, new learning spaces.
Arm's length policies	The women were labelled as passive, and not willing to learn English or integrate by policymakers without knowing about their lives. The lack of understanding of Muslim women's lives	Stigmatisation, state power and negative representation of a particular group of ESOL learners.

Biological and mother role.	Having children can prevent regular attendance with lack of childcare at ESOL community sessions. Children are both a motivation to learn and a barrier.	Gender inequality.

Appendix J - Participant Motivational Questionnaire

New learners

Please rank the following in order of importance to you from 1 to 12 where 12 is the most important to you and 1 is least important.

Why do you want to learn English?

I WANT TO LEARN ENGLISH

a. To help me integrate with other people in Rotherham.

b. Attending English classes helps me to meet other people and make new friends?

c. To help me get on with day-to-day life, such as shopping, travelling on the bus; know what to say when I am ill and have to see my doctor?

d. To feel more confident to get out of the house more and not feel lonely?

e. To help my children with their schoolwork and be able to talk to their teachers?

f. To learn about the British culture and way of life, books, films, music?

g. If I improve my English, I can do other courses and go to college?

h. To find a job and you need to have good English?

i. By having good English, I can help other people in my community who cannot speak English?

j. My husband and family want me to learn English, so I do not have to rely on them?

k. I want to learn English so I can use a computer and the internet and keep in touch with family in other parts of the world?

l. English is now a world language, and you have to learn it to get on in life?

Appendix K - Participant motivation questionnaire result

Questionnaire on the reason why women are motivated to learn English.
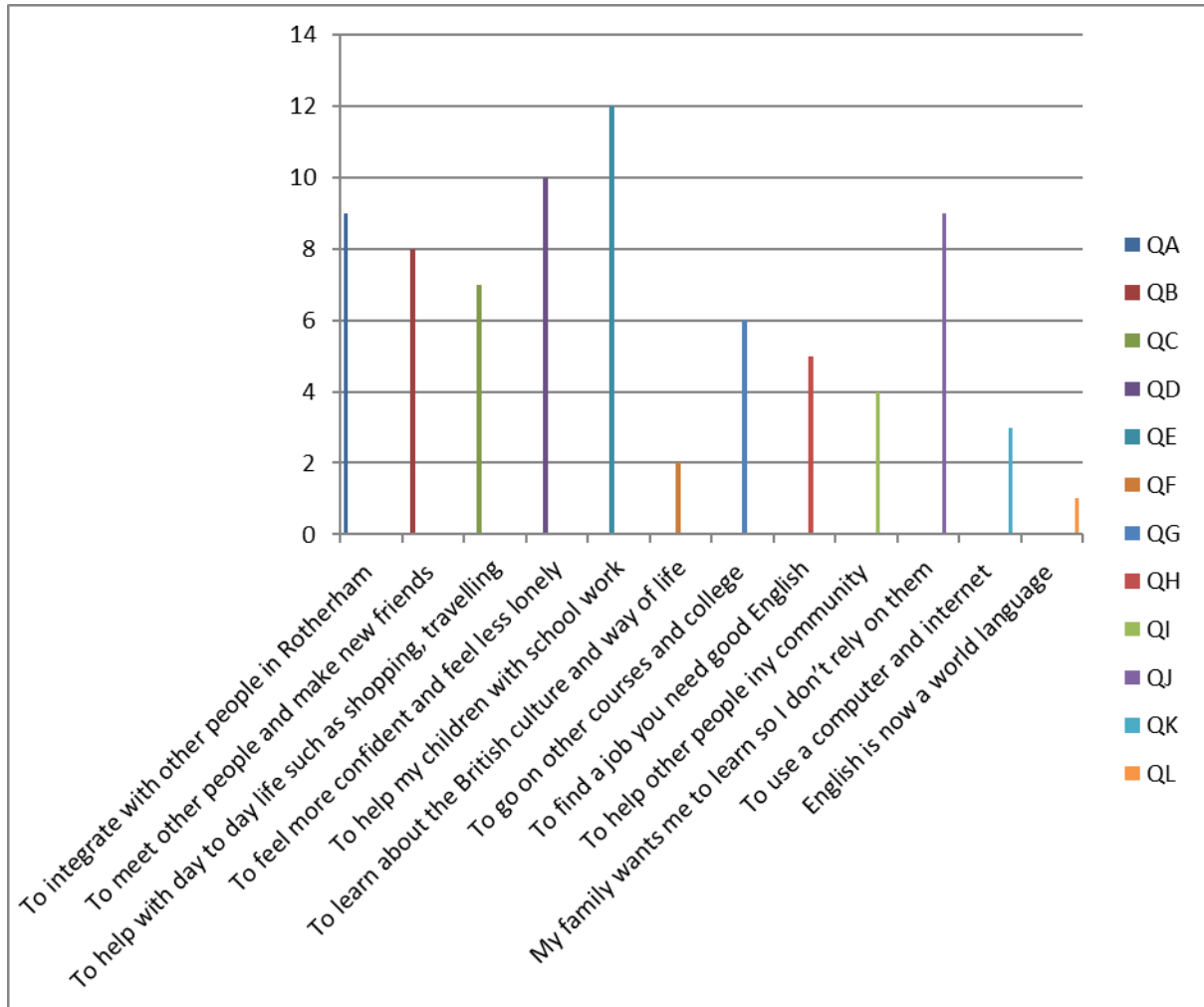
Appendix L - Field notes

Consultation on the development of National Strategy for the English Language in England

As a community worker, I attend a number of meetings and workshops as part of my job, and one such workshop was the development of the National Strategy for the English Language in England, held at the Department of Education in Sheffield on Monday May 13th, 2019.

In attendance and facilitating the workshop were representatives from the Learning and Work Institution (an independent research organisation), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Further Education, and the Home Office.

The event was attended by ESOL providers (voluntary/private), ESOL teachers, and community organisation representatives.

The integrated community strategy mentions developing an ESOL strategy.

- The following areas were discussed:
- The reach of ESOL provision
- Availability and accessibility
- Effectiveness

Volunteers teaching at conversation clubs and home tutoring, befriending service

Where is the voice of the learner and why have they not been invited to this event?

Teachers need to have a qualification standard. Anyone can now deliver ESOL, and teachers need to deliver at all levels (PGCE, subject-specific).

job insecurity, payment from £15 per hour to £30 per hour. Planning time is not paid for.

Volunteers also need some training.

Asylum seekers need to be in this country for 6 months before they can access ESOL. By then, they have lost their motivation. Integration and English should start on day one.

Explore online learning (blended learning: classroom/online/conversation clubs) Digital literacy.

Portal with resources, localised, central government to host the site.

Resource sharing website.

Bus passes learners.

short-term funding.

Some young women with children cannot attend because there is no crèche funding.

Deliver from a deficit standpoint.

Multicultural learners who speak more than one language

Not recognise the diversity of learners; it is a one-way street at the moment.

It is difficult to access buildings for learning, schools are academies and choose not to run adult courses for parents.

Family learning is no longer there, which engages parents as a first step into learning.

Having multicultural teachers and drawing on multilingualism skills, diversity of staff.

ESOL is delivered at the employer's workplace.

Vocational learning.

Learning needs to be linked to music, art, craft, and health.

On zero-hour contracts, I am not able to attend regular ESOL classes.

Cuts in children's centre, Sure Starts have disappeared, women's organisations have had cuts, and they deliver ESOL.

Two or four hours a week is not enough to learn a new language, they need more intense sessions and different patterns of delivery.

Outreach provision, handholding, community workers

269

Deliver at hairdressers, car washes, places people use.

ESOL networks and local infrastructure (local authorities' loss of staff who worked on the ESOL agenda, bringing partners together), local coordinators.

Demand exceeds supply.

GP, health visitor, or midwife referral

Quality needs to be looked at. If an organisation gets funding, who is checking standards and quality?

Why is ESOL not provided by the state like other further education provisions?

Free internet access (G4S housing). Younger asylum seekers are ICT savvy.

A box (radio, picture dictionaries) for new learners to take home.

WhatsApp groups.

Mapping of local provision.

Individuals' learning goals rather than just focusing on levels. People come to learn for different reasons, from employment and learning to helping children and everyday functions, capturing gender perspective.

Students reflect on their own learning.

Phonics for adults.

Additional support and counselling.

Teachers and boundaries and safeguarding

Learners were not directly consulted at these workshops.

Appendix M - Field notes

Learning English in Yorkshire and Humber.
Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) event held at Voluntary Action Sheffield on February 13th, 2019.

There is now a regional website.

Information on English language courses across South Yorkshire and Humber. (List of providers by region, eligibility criteria).

To create local and regional learning resources.

Refugee council speaker.

Learners struggle with regional accents.

Never met anyone wanting to not learn English. Everyone is motivated; they want to be independent.

People do not want their confidential information to spread, which is a reason to learn English.

The English language provision is not sufficient.

Learner diversity, culture, religion, age, language, and educational background

Consider different learning styles.

Need resources that meet the learner's needs.

SAVTE (Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English) mental health. resources for ESOL.

Mental health is a barrier to learning.

PTSD, depression, anxiety, OCD, drugs, and alcohol).

The trauma of leaving the homeland

Memory problems and poor sleep patterns

Panic attacks and flashbacks.

Improve and develop a vocabulary around mental health to reduce stigma.

Encourage mental health conversations between learners and care professionals.

Easy or read storybooks.

Match learners' expectations.

Informal conversation club, informal drop-in sessions for women

Confidence-building courses for women.

Flexibility.

Online digital (housing, GP, benefit).

Learning disabilities were not assessed.

Take learning outside of class and practice it.